



# 1991 Northern Territory Cabinet Records

Public release of the Cabinet Records



*Back row: Hon. Steve Hatton MLA , Hon Max Ortmann MLA , Hon. Mike Reed MLA, Hon. Daryl Manzie MLA, Hon. Fred Finch MLA*

*Front row: Hon. Roger Vale MLA, Hon. Marshall Perron MLA, Administrator Hon. Justice James Muirhead AC, Hon. Barry Coulter MLA, Hon. Shane Stone, MLA.*

*Image courtesy of Library & Archives NT,*

*Department of the Chief Minister, NTRS 3823 P1, Box 11, BW2950, Image 18 [Ministers, 13 November 1990]*

Strictly embargoed NOT for release until 1 January 2022

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## Public release of the Cabinet records

Under the Northern Territory *Information Act*, public sector organisations are required to transfer their records to Library & Archives NT not later than 30 years after the record was created.

Most archived records enter an “open access period”, whereby they are available for public perusal 30 years after the record was created. This includes the Cabinet records. The original copies of all Northern Territory Cabinet submissions and decisions are filed by meeting date, and bound into books. These books are then transferred to Library & Archives NT for safekeeping and preservation.

Those Cabinet records created in 1991 will reach 30 years of age on 1 January 2022 and will be made available for public access.

### The Cabinet

The Northern Territory Cabinet consists of those elected members of the Legislative Assembly who have been appointed as Ministers by the Northern Territory Administrator.

The Cabinet generally meets on a weekly basis to make decisions on matters such as major policy issues, proposals with significant expenditure or employment implications, matters which involve important initiatives or departures from previous arrangements, proposals with implications for Australian, state and local government relations, legislation, and high level government appointments.

### Cabinet submissions

Most business comes before Cabinet by way of formal Cabinet submissions, each of which is allocated a consecutive number. Cabinet submissions generally follow a set format. Submissions are usually prepared by Government agencies at the direction of, or with the agreement of, the Minister responsible for that agency. Submissions may also include comments from other Northern Territory Government agencies which were consulted during the development of the submission.

### Cabinet decisions

Each decision made by Cabinet is formally recorded in a separate document known as a Cabinet decision. Like Cabinet submissions, each Cabinet decision is given its own consecutive number. Most Cabinet decisions will have a corresponding Cabinet submission, but Cabinet may also issue a Cabinet decision without a submission.

### Other Cabinet papers

Ministers may from time to time present memoranda to Cabinet, or table a document at a Cabinet meeting. These documents will generally be incorporated in the formal records of the Cabinet meeting. Such documents will usually result in a Cabinet decision, but not in every case.

## Composition of the Cabinet in 1991

### **FOURTH PERRON MINISTRY (13 November 1990 to 29 November 1992)**

Hon MB Perron MLA	Chief Minister Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services
Hon BF Coulter MLA	Treasurer Minister for Mines and Energy
Hon DW Manzie MLA	Attorney-General Minister for Health and Community Services
Hon SP Hatton MLA	Minister for Industries and Development
Hon SL Stone MLA	Minister for Education and the Arts Minister for Employment and Training
Hon FA Finch MLA	Minister for Transport and Works
Hon MA Reed MLA	Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries Minister for Conservation Minister for Correctional Services
Hon RWS Vale MLA	Minister for Tourism Minister for Sport, Recreation, Ethnic Affairs and Local Government
Hon MH Ortmann MLA	Minister for Lands and Housing

## The Year was 1991

### Local

**January** – Ansett airlines first ever January sale offers discounted airfares from Darwin to Alice Springs from \$648 to \$299 and Darwin to Sydney was reduced from \$1,156 to \$499.

**18 May** – the inaugural Arafura Sports Festival begins in Darwin bringing together 20 teams from Australia and South East Asia to compete in more than 20 sports.

**26 June** – The Strehlow Research Centre, housing ethnographic collections of film, sound, archival records and objects relating to Indigenous ceremonial life of the Arrernte people of Central Australia, is opened in the Araluen Precinct Alice Springs.

**28 June** – FM Radio station Hot 100 goes to air in Darwin.

**18 October** – Kings Canyon Resort on Luritja Road via the Lasseter Highway between Alice Springs and Uluru, Central Australia is opened.

**29 November** – The new Supreme Court building, part of the State Square project, is officially opened by the Administrator the Honourable James Muirhead AC QC.

### National

**2 January** – Warship HMAS *Westralia* leaves for the Persian Gulf.

**10 January** – amongst escalating fears of full-scale war with Iraq, Australia orders its diplomats out of Bagdad.

**14 January** – a flood emergency is declared in the Queensland Gulf Country.

**17 January** – Prime Minister Bob Hawke gives battle orders to the Navy stationed in the Persian Gulf, following discussion with US President George Bush and the commencement of US air strikes on Iraq the day before. In the week following, peace marches across Australia demand for the withdrawal of Australian forces from the Gulf.



**Chief Minister Marshall Perron, Opening of the Strehlow Research Centre, Alice Springs, 26 June 1991**

Image courtesy of Strehlow Research Centre, Museum and Art Gallery of the NT, Photographer Barry Skipsey.

On 22 January at a special sitting of Parliament, a resolution supporting Australia's commitment to the Gulf War is passed, however seven Labor MHRs and three Senators join the Democrats in opposition.

**26 January** – Professor Fred Hollows, an ophthalmologist who became known for his work in restoring eyesight for thousands of people across the world, is named Australian of the Year.

**9 May** – the Report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody is released. No criminal charges were recommended, nor was compensation for victims' families, but changes were recommended to the way Aboriginal people were dealt with when in police custody.

**3 June** – after revelations of an agreement between Treasurer Paul Keating and Prime Minister Bob Hawke about the leadership of the Australian Labour Party, Paul Keating makes his first challenge against Bob Hawke. Hawke wins 66-44 and Keating resigns as Treasurer. Brian Howe becomes deputy Prime Minister and John Kerin becomes Treasurer. Simon Crean is promoted to the position of Primary Industry Minister.

**4 July** – Leading Sydney heart surgeon Dr Victor Chang is shot and killed near his home in the Sydney suburb of Mosman. His murder is the result of a bungled kidnapping and extortion attempt.

**August** - The census conducted in August 1991 revealed that Australia's population stood at approximately 17 million people. Of people counted in Australia 54.3% were aged less than 35 years and 11.3% were aged 60 years or older. The median individual income in Australia was \$13, 950 and median annual household income was \$29, 377. The median housing loan repayment was \$563 per month, and median weekly rental was \$110.

**15 September** - Federal Leader of the Opposition John Hewson reaffirms a consumption tax (Goods and Services tax), as integral to the Coalition's electoral strategy.

**24 September** - the perjury trial of former Queensland Premier Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen begins in Brisbane, ending in a hung jury 10:2. Prosecutors decide against a retrial on the basis of Joh's advancing age and divided public opinion.

**October to December** - a devastating blue-green algal bloom occurs in the Darling River and the NSW government declares a state of emergency following the deaths of over a thousand livestock from severe drought.

**19 December** - Paul Keating makes his second attempt at the Labour leadership, and wins the challenge 56-51 to become Australia's 24<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister.



**New Parliament House [construction site, January 1991]**

Image courtesy of Library & Archives NT, Department of the Chief Minister, NTRS 3823 P1, Box 11, BW2959, Image 30

## International

**24 January** - the Government of Papua New Guinea signs a peace agreement with separatist leaders from Bougainville Island, bringing an end to fighting which had been ongoing since 1988.

**29 January** - in South Africa, Nelson Mandela of the African National Congress and Mangosuthu Buthelezi of the Inkatha Freedom Party agree to end violence between the two organisations.

**18 February** - the provisional Irish Republican Army launches a mortar attack on 10 Downing Street during a British Government Cabinet meeting and later explode bombs at Paddington and Victoria Tube stations London.

**26 February** - Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein announces withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait. Iraqi soldiers set fire to Kuwaiti oil fields as they retreat. These fires last until November. The US President George Bush declares victory over Iraq and orders a cease fire, and US troops begin to leave the Persian Gulf in March.

**15 April** - The European Economic Community lifts economic sanctions on South Africa.

**18 April** - As required in Resolution 687, Iraq declares some of its chemical weapons and materials to the UN, claiming that it does not have a biological weapons program.

**19 April** - A tropical cyclone hits Bangladesh, killing an estimated 138,000 people.



**[Irish Ambassador with Rose of Tralee contestants at NTG function, 9 May 1991]**

Image courtesy of Library & Archives NT, Department of the Chief Minister, NTRS 3824 P1, Box 3, Envelope 289, Image nn

**5 June** – South Africa repeals the last legal foundations of apartheid.

**12 June** – Boris Yeltsin is elected President of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic.

**15 June** – Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines erupts, with the final death toll exceeding 800.

**25 June** – Croatia and Slovenia declare their independence from Yugoslavia.

**1 July** – the world's first GSM (Global System for Mobile Communications) telephone call is made in Finland.

**6 August** – Tim Berners-Lee announces the World Wide Web project and software.

**August** – the Dissolution of the Soviet Union unfolds with the restoration of the white-blue-red tricolour flag to Russia, and subsequent declarations of independence for the countries of Estonia, Latvia, Ukraine, Moldova, Kyrgystan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikstan.

**12 November** – Indonesian troops open fire on a group of mourners and pro-independence demonstrators at the Santa Cruz Cemetery in Dili, East Timor during the Indonesian occupation of East Timor (Timor-Leste).

**26 December** – The Soviet Union is formally dissolved also ending the Cold War.

DARWIN THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS

# Wallflowering

by Peta Murray

3 ONLY PERFORMANCES

featuring  
kay brown  
jim vile

with the  
Darwin Ballroom  
Dancing Centre  
and the  
Cloudland Theatre  
Orchestra

directed by  
Stephen  
Clark

THUR FRI SAT  
15 • 16 • 17 • AUG

TICKETS AT D.P.A.C.  
OR DIAL AND CHARGE  
811222

Darwin Theatre Company acknowledges the assistance provided through the NT Government's Office of the Arts and Cultural Affairs, and the Australia Council, the Federal Government's Arts Funding and Advisory Body

[Darwin Theatre Group, Poster for performance of Wallflower 15-17 August 1991]  
Image courtesy of Library & Archives NT, Darwin Theatre Group, NTRS 27 P3, Poster



[Arafura Sports Festival mascot with staff, 11 April 1991]  
Image courtesy of Library & Archives NT, Department of the Chief Minister, NTRS 3823 P1, Box 11, BW2963, Image 24a

## Popular culture, Arts, Sport, and Entertainment

**17 January** – Seven TV Network breakfast program *Sunrise* makes its first broadcast.

**23 January** – Billy Joel arrives for his Australian *The Storm Front* Tour, playing in Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth.

**10 February** – Animated comedy series *The Simpsons*, from the United States debuts on Australian TV Network Ten.

**15 March** – Steve Vizard wins the Gold Logie award for TV entertainment.

**3 June** – Warner Bros. Movie World on the Gold coast in Queensland is opened.

**23 June** – Sega releases *Sonic the hedgehog* for Sega Genesis home video game console.

**16 July** – Australian live comedy and music series *the Big Gig* airs its final episode on ABC TV.

**September** – TV mini-series *Brides of Christ* goes to air on ABC TV, winning Logie awards in the following year for post popular telemovie or mini-series, amongst others.

**September** – Yothu Yindu, rock band from East Arnhem Land, release their second studio album *Tribal Voice*, which includes the single 'Treaty'. This album broke new ground bringing the voice, language, stories and issues of Indigenous people to local and international attention.

**24 September** – on the same day, rock band Nirvana, release their breakout album *Nevermind*, and the Red Hot Chili Peppers, release *Blood Sugar Sex Magik*.

**24 November** – Freddie Mercury, lead singer of British rock band *Queen* dies in London. On the same day Eric Carr drummer from American band *Kiss* dies of heart cancer in the US.

**3 December** – American sitcom *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* starring American rap artist Will Smith makes its debut on Australian TV for the Nine Network. The series launched Smith's career as a star of television and later film.

International movie releases include the *The Silence of the Lambs*, starring Jodie Foster and Anthony Hopkins; *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*, starring Arnold Schwarzenegger and

Linda Hamilton; Disney animation *Beauty and the Beast*; *Thelma and Louise*, featuring Susan Sarandon and Gena Davis; *Cape Fear* directed by Martin Scorsese starring Robert De Niro, Nick Nolte and Jessica Lange; comedian Billy Crystal featured in the western comedy *City Slickers* and musical comedy-drama *The Commitments* with its popular soundtrack returns the 1965 song 'Mustang Sally' to the popular music charts.

In Australia the top five popular music singles listed by the Australian Recording Industry Association included Bryan Adams, 'Everything I do I do it for you', Ratcat EP 'Tingles', the 'Grease Mega-mix' combining songs from the 1978 movie *Grease*; Daryl Braithwaite 'The Horses' and Guns'n'Roses hit single 'You could be mine'.

In 1991 music bands such as Nirvana set the trend in fashion with blue denim jeans, tee shirts, cardigans and sweaters, cord jackets, polos and Converse shoes. Denim was ripped, knitwear was ragged, and hair was worn long and floppy, flattop or the 'messy blowout' style popularised by Cindy Crawford.

## References:

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*Dry Paddocks, Damp Policies: Drought Assistance Strategies and their Effectiveness* – Parliament of Australia ([aph.gov.au](http://aph.gov.au))



Jenny Armour and the 'Bombing of Darwin' commemoration quilt, Northern Territory State Reference Library, circa 1991

Image courtesy of Library & Archives NT, <https://hdl.handle.net/10070/333226>



## Cabinet highlights from 1991

This document is a summary of selected Cabinet records from 1991 that may interest the community.

A scan of each record is published on the NT Archives Service website from 1 January 2022.

To allow media stories to be prepared, the Media will be provided with copies of the Cabinet record (on an embargoed basis) prior to the opening of the 1991 Cabinet records on 1 January 2022.

### NT UNIVERSITY MASTER PLAN

**Submission No. 5750 / Decision No. 6705 of 22 January 1991**

In 1990, Government noted the NT University's Master Plan and endorsed cost-sharing arrangements with the Commonwealth. The purpose of this Submission was to inform Government of the revised building program and of government funding. Master Plan staging details and costings are attached, along with a list of Commonwealth infrastructure projects for Australian Universities funded between 1991 and 1993.

Government approved funding for site works, which would commence after receipt of approvals for town planning, environmental, traffic, services, etc.

The Submission discusses funding for the Centre for the Aboriginal and Islander Studies building, Student Amenities building, stage 1 of the Library, a major Lecture Theatre, and an Administration building.

### WORLD WAR II COMMEMORATIVE PROGRAMME MILITARY HISTORY AND HERITAGE SITES

**Submission No. 5800 / Decision No. 6773 of 9 April 1991**

In 1991, Government approved funding for a Military History Heritage Sites and Trails Program to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin in 1992.



[State Reference Library shop front, 25 Cavenagh Street, Darwin, circa 1991]

Image courtesy of Library & Archives NT, <https://hdl.handle.net/10070/331296>

A photographic map of proposed military heritage sites from Darwin to Alice Springs is attached, along with works proposed.

The Submission also indicates sites with visible relics from the only war fought on Australian soil; sites which extend from Alice Springs to Nhulunbuy. The majority of sites are within 7km of the Stuart Highway and accessible by conventional vehicles for 99% of the year. It also provides the locations of a selection of relics, including munition stores, trenches, and gun emplacements near old airstrips.

### NEW NORTHERN TERRITORY HOMENORTH LOAN PORTFOLIO SCHEME

**Submission No. 5863 / Decision No. 6850 of 28 May 1991 (relates to Decisions 6851 and 6858)**

Government approved a package of home assistance schemes aimed at assisting low and middle income groups to attain home ownership. As described in the strategy document, 'Housing for the 90's', the goal of increasing home ownership in the Northern Territory is complementary to that of reducing the proportions of public rental stock and the transfer of Housing Commission dwellings to private ownership.

The HomeNorth Loan Portfolio is a package of home assistance schemes comprising of:

1. HomeNorth Easy Start – a first mortgage scheme for first home buyers with family incomes ranging between \$300 and \$600 per week.
2. HomeNorth Extra Start – a second mortgage assistance scheme to assist those with family incomes ranging between \$601 and \$900 per week.
3. HomeNorth Sales – a low interest vendor financing scheme to assist tenants of Housing Commission dwellings to purchase the home they occupy.

The schemes are subject to assessments of family income to ensure the eligibility under the Commonwealth State Housing Agreements and the Home Purchase Assistance Account. Details of income levels, interest rates and repayments are attached to the Submission.

## RIDING IN THE BACK OF TRUCKS

### Submission No. 5902 / Decision No. 6902 of 4 July 1991

Consistent with the road safety policy to reduce the Northern Territory's road fatality and injury levels, Government approved amendments to traffic legislation to ban riding in the open load space of vehicles from 1 January 1994, and the requirement for drivers of vehicles to have a zero blood-alcohol level when carrying passengers in the open load space.

These amendments followed the high number of deaths of persons killed while riding unrestrained in the open load space of vehicles between 1978 and 1990, the statistics of which are contained in the Submission.

The Submission includes the cost to the community for spinal injuries, and discusses a road safety research study undertaken by the United Kingdom, which examined back of trucks accidents in Papua New Guinea and the effectiveness of roll cages.



[Poster, Darwin's Bougainvillea Festival 1991]

Image courtesy of Library & Archives NT, <https://hdl.handle.net/10070/385153>

The Submission also approved amendment to motor vehicle legislation to give the Registrar of Motor Vehicles the power to approve modification of vehicles used in remote communities to provide protection for passengers travelling in an open load space in the event of a roll-over. This provision was required for vehicles in remote communities where conventional transport was not a practical proposition due to poor local road conditions. Remote communities were given two years to modify vehicles.

An education and publicity program by the Road Safety Council was also approved.

## INFORMATION PAPER – BERRY SPRINGS DISTRICT CENTRE

**Submission No. 5905 / Decision No. 6909 of 11 July 1991**

The role of a district centre is to provide commercial, industry, recreational and community uses to cater for those attracted to the locality as a place to live or visit.

The purpose of this Submission was to note the scale and location of a district centre to serve a Berry Springs catchment population estimated at 14,000. This estimate was derived from the population horizon of one million contained in the Darwin Regional Land Use Structure Plan 1990, of which 10% were expected to reside in rural residential circumstances. In March 1991, the population of the Berry Springs catchment was estimated at between 800 and 900 persons.

Attached to the Submission is the 'Berry Springs District Centre – Progress Report'. The report includes an evaluation of two other site options, development phases, design principles including commercial and retail services, tourist accommodation, a junior high school site, residential lot sizes and use of septic tanks, infrastructure considerations including possible adverse impacts of run-off and effluent on the Berry Springs Nature Park and Territory Wildlife Park, and strategies to minimise the impact of stormwater drainage on the District Centre and Berry Creek.

Government noted the information in the Report.



[Legislative Assembly swearing in MLA's, Official Opening, 4 December 1990]

Image courtesy of Library & Archives NT, Department of the Chief Minister, NTRS 3823 P1, Box 11, BW2957, Image 27



[Correctional Services, Opening of Don Dale Centre, 27 November 1991]

Image courtesy of Library & Archives NT, Department of the Chief Minister, NTRS 3825 P1, Box 11, Envelope 37, Image 5

## PROPOSED PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT AND MANAGEMENT ACT

**Submission No. 5950 / Decision No. 6965 of 16 August 1991**

The purpose of this Submission was to approve the drafting of a Public Sector Employment and Management bill incorporating principles relating to the delineation of the functions, responsibilities and accountability of both Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and the Public Service Commissioner, simplification of human resource management procedures, and increased staff mobility across the Public Sector.

The need for new legislation arose when it was identified that separate employment arrangements for the public service, the teaching service, and the Power and Water Authority posed barriers to Government's capacity to deploy and manage staff, as circumstances demand. The new legislation provided the opportunity for flexible management structures to be introduced and deficiencies identified by CEOs to be addressed.

In the Decision, Government approved the drafting of a bill that will apply to all public sector employees, and will include objectives relating to personnel and management practices, ethical values and the conduct of employees. It also replaced the Office of the Public Service Commissioner with the Office of a Commissioner for Public Employment whose functions, as the statutory employer, will be concerned with issues of corporate principles and policies rather than with departmental operational matters.

Further detail is available in the Submission.

## PROPOSED EQUAL OPPORTUNITY LEGISLATION - PRINCIPLES

Submission No. 6018 / Decision No. 7064  
of 15 October 1991

The purpose of this Submission was to note the Report of the Working Party on Equal Opportunity legislation, and to consider the grounds and areas for equal opportunity legislation.

Australian States started developing equal opportunity or anti-discrimination legislation in 1977.

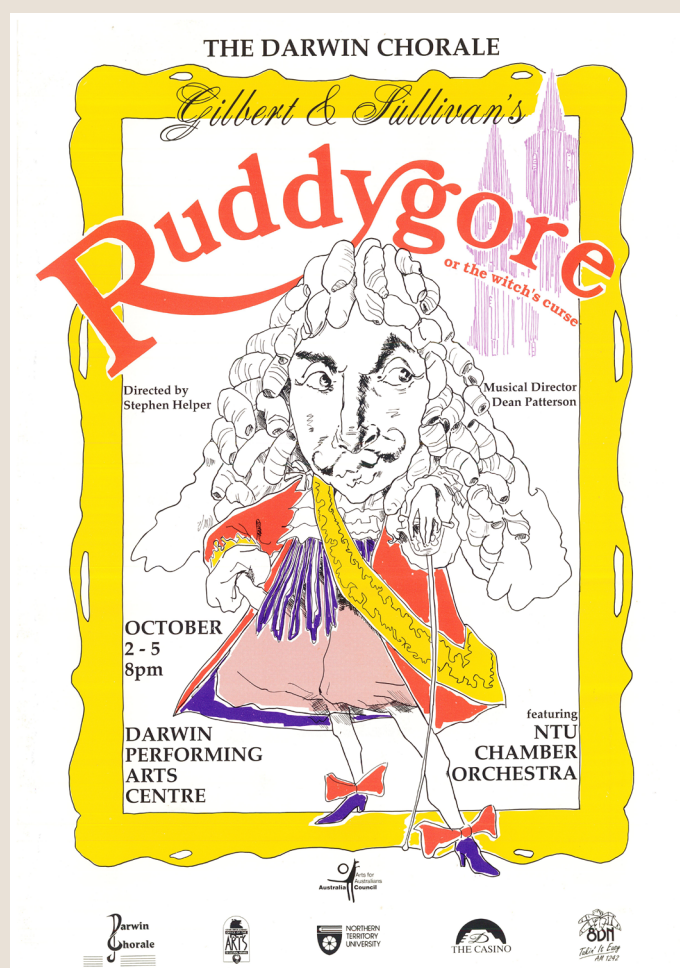
In 1990, the Territory Government approved the drafting of equal opportunity legislation that reflect the preferences of the Territory community, and would support the policy statements of previous Ministers and Chief Ministers: "... that each person has the right to be treated with dignity and to make decisions unrestricted by assumptions based on prejudice".

A comparative table is attached, showing the grounds of discrimination applicable in other Australian State and Commonwealth Governments.

700 copies of a community discussion paper were distributed to seek public comment on the grounds of discrimination, and on areas for prohibition of discrimination. 30 written submissions were received, which indicated wide community support for the proposed grounds for discrimination.

The Submission discusses the community's position on grounds for discrimination including age, sexuality, sexual harassment, and impairment or disability. It also discusses additional grounds for discrimination identified by the Working Party but not included in the discussion paper.

Also attached is a summary of case studies on actual complaints handed by the Western Australian, South Australian and Commonwealth Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.



[Program for Darwin Chorale performance of Ruddygore, 2-5 October 1991]

Image courtesy of Library & Archives NT, Darwin Chorale Collection, Program for 1991 Performance of Ruddygore