



# 1988 Northern Territory Cabinet Records

Public release of the Cabinet Records



*First Perron Ministry (14 July 1988 to 31 July 1989)*

*Rear: EH [Eric] Poole, TR [Terry] McCarthy, T [Tom] Harris, FA [Fred] Finch, MA [Mike] Reed,*

*Front: DF [Don] Dale, BF [Barry] Coulter, MB [Marshall] Perron, DW [Daryl] Manzie*

*Image courtesy of Northern Territory Archives Service.*

*Department of the Chief Minister, NTRS 3813 P1, Item 11*

**Strictly embargoed NOT for release until 1 January 2019**

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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 the Northern Territory Archives Service 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 the Northern Territory Archives Service for safekeeping and preservation.

Those Cabinet records created in 1988 will reach 30 years of age on 1 January 2019 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 1988

### FOURTH HATTON MINISTRY 21 December 1987 to 5 April 1988

Hon S P Hatton MLA	Chief Minister
Hon R A Hanrahan MLA*	Minister for Education Minister for Tourism
Hon B F Coulter MLA	Treasurer Minister for Mines and Energy
Hon M B Perron MLA	Minister for Industries and Development
Hon D W Manzie MLA	Attorney-General Minister for Lands and Housing Minister for Conservation
Hon D F Dale MLA	Minister for Health and Community Services
Hon T R McCarthy MLA	Minister for Labour and Administrative Services**
Hon F A Finch MLA	Minister for Transport and Works

\*Resigned from Ministry on 5 April 1988

\*\*Became Ministerial Office of Labour, Administrative Services and Local Government on 15 February 1988



[Darwin Airport, Banner reads Welcome to Darwin Northern Territory, Singapore Airlines, 27 March 1988]

Image courtesy of Northern Territory Archives Service,  
Department of the Chief Minister,  
NTRS 3823 P1, BW 2710, Item 20

**FIFTH HATTON MINISTRY      6 April 1988 to 13 July 1988**

Hon S P Hatton MLA*	Chief Minister
Hon B F Coulter MLA	Treasurer Minister for Mines and Energy
Hon M B Perron MLA	Minister for Industries and Development
Hon D W Manzie MLA	Attorney-General Minister for Lands and Housing Minister for Conservation
Hon D F Dale MLA	Minister for Health and Community Services
Hon T R McCarthy MLA	Minister for Labour and Administrative Services and Local Government
Hon F A Finch MLA	Minister for Transport and Works
Hon T Harris MLA	Minister for Education Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Constitutional Development
Hon E H Poole MLA	Minister for Tourism Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Central Australian Affairs

*\*Resigned as Chief Minister on 13 July 1988*

**FIRST PERRON MINISTRY      14 July 1988 to 30 July 1989**

Hon M B Perron MLA	Chief Minister Treasurer
Hon B F Coulter MLA	Minister for Mines and Energy Minister for Industries and Development
Hon D W Manzie MLA	Attorney-General Minister for Lands and Housing Minister for Conservation
Hon D F Dale MLA*	Minister for Health and Community Services
Hon T Harris MLA	Minister for Education Minister Assisting the Chief Minister on Constitutional Development
Hon F A Finch MLA	Minister for Transport and Works
Hon T R McCarthy MLA	Minister for Labour and Administrative Services and Local Government
Hon E H Poole MLA	Minister for Tourism Minister Assisting the Chief Minister on Central Australian Affairs
Hon M A Reed MLA	Minister for Primary Industry and Fisheries

*\*Resigned from Ministry on 27 July 1989*

## The year was 1988

### An historical overview of the Territory at the time

- 22 January, Australia's biggest earthquake occurs at Tennant Creek. Three consecutive earthquakes occurred, with the largest having a magnitude of 6.6.
- 2 February, Prince Charles and Princess Diana commence a two day visit to the Northern Territory.
- 11 March, the Spencer and Gillen Gallery (later renamed the Central Australian Museum) a regional branch of the Museum and Art Galleries Board of the NT, officially opens in Alice Springs.
- 27 March, Singapore Airlines becomes the fifth international airline to operate regular weekly services to Darwin.
- 6 April, the fifth Hatton Ministry is appointed.
- 23 April, the Atrium Hotel on the Esplanade, Darwin, is opened.
- 26 May, the Cullen Bay Marina Agreement was signed between the developer Darwin Marina Estates and NT Government, allowing work to commence on the marina and housing development.
- July, Headquarters Northern Command, responsible for coordinating Australian Defence Force access and support for combined maritime surveillance and security operations, is created in Darwin.
- 12 June, Prime Minister Bob Hawke is presented with the Barunga Statement at the annual Barunga sporting and cultural festival. Written on bark, the Statement calls for Aboriginal self-management, a system of land rights, compensation for loss of lands, respect for Aboriginal identity, end to discrimination, and the granting of full civil, economic, social and cultural rights. Prime Minister Hawke responds by saying that he wishes to conclude a treaty between Aboriginal and other Australians by 1990.



*[Prince Charles and Princess Diana farewell, Prince Charles waves to the crowd, Darwin Airport, 3 February 1988]*

*Image courtesy of Northern Territory Archives Service, Department of the Chief Minister, NTRS 3822, Item Visits Royal, 418*



*[10 Year Self Government Flag Raising, Darwin, 1 July 1988]*

*Image courtesy of Northern Territory Archives Service, Department of the Chief Minister, NTRS 3822, Item Ceremonies 10 Year Self Government Flag Raising, 368b*

- 1 July, from this date for inter-governmental financial purposes the Northern Territory is treated by the Commonwealth as a state.
- 1 July, the Northern Territory celebrates a decade of Self Government.
- 2 July, the first Greek Glenti, is held in Darwin.
- 14 July, Marshall Perron succeeds Steve Hatton as Chief Minister. The First Perron Ministry is appointed. Mike Reed replaces Steve Hatton in the Ministry.
- 31 July, the second Perron Ministry is appointed following the resignation of Don Dale due to ill health.
- 31 October, Darwin Private Hospital, the Northern Territory's first private hospital is officially opened on Rocklands Drive, Tiwi.
- 25 November, Alice Springs celebrates the centenary of its proclamation as a town.
- Community Education Centres are established in major remote communities by the NT Department of Education.

## National Scene

- 26 January, Sydney Harbour is the focal point for Bicentenary celebrations marking 200 years since the arrival of the First Fleet to Botany Bay.
- 26 January, more than 40,000 people, including Aboriginal people from across the country, stage the largest march in Sydney since the early 1970s Vietnam Moratorium demonstrations. The protesters march through Sydney chanting for land rights.
- 30 April, the World Expo 88 opens



[Smith Street Mall, Darwin, February 1988]

Image courtesy of Northern Territory Archives Service,  
Department of the Chief Minister,  
NTRS 3822, Item Darwin Streets, 218

- in Brisbane, Queensland. The theme of the Expo is "Leisure in the Age of Technology", and the mascot for the Expo is an Australian platypus named Expo Oz. The exhibition runs for 6 months hosting pavilions from over 70 countries and thrusts Brisbane into the international spotlight.
- 9 May, Queen Elizabeth II opens the new Parliament House in Canberra.
- 3 August, Federal Opposition Leader John Howard's draft One Australia policy taps into concerns over Asian immigration and sparks damaging debate on this issue within the Coalition.
- 17 August, Foreign Minister Bill Hayden is announced as the next Governor-General. In the subsequent ministerial reshuffle, Gareth Evans receives the Foreign Affairs and Trade portfolio, Ralph Willis receives Industrial Relations, and Robert Ray receives Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs.
- 19 August, the Gazettal is signed by the Governor General, Sir Ninian Stephen, declaring Australia's floral emblem officially to be the Golden Wattle, *Acacia pycnantha*.





[Dawn Fraser and competitors at the podium, Alice Springs Masters Games, October 1988]

Image courtesy of Northern Territory Archives Service, Department of the Chief Minister, NTRS 3822, Item Sports Events: Masters Games 88, 671

- 1 September, a ceremony is held at the Australian National Botanic Gardens to mark the declaration of the floral emblem, where the Prime Minister's wife, Mrs Hazel Hawke, plants a Golden Wattle.
- 3 September, the 1988 Australian Referendum asking questions on four issues including 4 year maximum terms for members of both Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament, to provide for fair and democratic parliamentary elections throughout Australia; to recognise local government; to extend the right to trial by jury, to extend freedom of religion and to ensure fair terms for persons whose property is acquired by any government. None were passed with the failure generally attributed to the open ended and nondescriptive wording of the proposed amendments to the Constitution.
- 5 November, Olympic Dam, the world's largest uranium deposit and the largest underground mine in Australia opens, 560 kilometres north of Adelaide, South Australia.
- 29 November, the four acts granting the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) self-government are given Royal Assent.

## International Scene

- 15 May, after more than 8 years of fighting, a truce is called and the Soviet Army begins withdrawing from Afghanistan.
- 3 July, Iran Air Flight 655 is accidentally shot down by a missile launched from the USS Vincennes, killing a total of 290 people on board.
- 11 August, Al-Qaeda is formed by Osama bin Laden
- 20 August, The Iran-Iraq War ends, with an estimated one million lives lost.
- 29 September, NASA resumes Space Shuttle flights, grounded after the Challenger disaster, with Space Shuttle Discovery.
- 17 September to the 2 October, The Summer Olympics, officially known as the Games of the XXIV Olympiad, open in Seoul, South Korea.
- 8 November, George HW Bush is elected in the United States presidential election.



[Triathlon team, Alice Springs Masters Games, October 1988]

Image courtesy of Northern Territory Archives Service, Department of the Chief Minister, NTRS 3822, Item Sports Events: Masters Games 88, 651

- 1 December, the first World AIDS Day is held.
- 2 December, a cyclone in Bangladesh leaves 5 million homeless and thousands dead.
- 21 December, Pan Am Flight 103 is blown up over Lockerbie, Scotland, killing a total of 270 people. Those responsible are believed to be Libyans.

## Popular Culture

- 2 January, Imparja Television starts broadcasting to remote Central Australia via satellite, having an official launch on 15 January.
- 17 January, The first episode of Australian soap drama Home and Away goes to air.
- 17 January, A Current Affair debuts on Channel Nine, hosted by Jana Wendt.
- The highest grossing Hollywood films of 1988, include *Rain Man* starring Dustin Hoffman and Tom Cruise; *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* starring Bob Hoskins and the voice of Charles Fleischer as animated character Roger Rabbit; *Coming to America* starring Eddie Murphy; *Crocodile Dundee II* starring Australian Paul Hogan and Linda Kozlowski; *Twins* starring Danny DeVito and Arnold Schwarzenegger; *Rambo III* starring Sylvester Stallone; *Big* starring Tom Hanks; and *Die Hard* starring Bruce Willis.
- Australian movie releases included *Young Einstein*, starring Yahoo Serious; *The Man from Snowy River II* starring Tom Burlinson and Sigrid Thornton; John Hillcoat directed *Ghosts of the Civil dead* starring David Field, and Nick Cave; and Fred Schepisi directed, *Evil Angels*, starring Meryl Streep and Sam Neill.



[Bicentennial Bush Ball, Elliot, 1 May 1988]

Image courtesy of Northern Territory Archives Service,  
Department of the Chief Minister,  
NTRS 3822, Item Entertainment Nightlife,  
Bicentennial Bush Ball Elliot 1 May 1988, 6

- Top 10 Selling music singles in Australia include (*I've had*) *The time of my life*, Bill Medley and Jennifer Warnes (featured in the film *Dirty Dancing*); *Simply Irresistible* by Robert Palmer; *The Flame* by Cheap Trick; *Get outta my dream, get into my car* by Billy Ocean; *I should be so lucky* by Kylie Minogue; *Perfect* by Fairground Attraction; *What a wonderful world* by Louie Armstrong; *Never gonna give you up* by Rick Astley; *Age of reason* by John Farnham; and *Better be home soon* by Crowded House.

## References:

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- NT News publication, various editions from 1988
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# Cabinet highlights from 1988

## Selected highlights from the 1988 cabinet documents

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## Formation of a two-man NT Police Force Gold Squad

**Submission No. 4726 / Decision No. 5491 of 26 February 1988**

Between 1986 and 1987 the Northern Territory experienced a marked increase in the number of gold mines operating (from 11 to 16), which led to a subsequent increase in gold production. However as mines and production increased, so did criminal activity. The Chamber of Mines estimated a loss of \$1 million in gold royalties over the previous five years due to theft.

With a 277% increase in gold production projected between 1986 and 1988, the Government agreed to the formation of a two-man gold squad to specialise in the investigation of all criminal activity associated with the gold mining industry.

Members of the two-man police gold squad would receive specialised training and knowledge of gold production. Close liaison with the Chamber of Mines and Department of Mines and Energy would greatly enhance investigations involving the gold mining industry.

Establishment of the Gold Squad was conditional on a levy on Territory gold producers of 20 cents per ounce of gold produced in the NT, and a review of the effectiveness of the Gold Squad after three years.

## Development of kenaf-based pulp and/or paper industry

**Submission No. 4746 / Decision No. 5516 of 15 March 1988**

In 1987, Government was briefed by the then Department of Industries and Development on the possible development of a kenaf based pulp and/or paper industry.

Kenaf is a tropical hibiscus plant of the mallow family, yielding a fibre resembling jute used to make ropes and coarse cloth. Other products under investigation for development in the NT included peanuts and soybeans.

Government noted the estimated costs for 1988/89 to continue investigations into the agronomy of kenaf (and testing of other annual fibre crops) and development of a cropping system, with kenaf as the principal crop. Following consideration of the Submission, Government endorsed the following:

- the objective to develop a proposal for commercial investment in a pulp/paper industry based on locally grown kenaf and other non-woody fibre crops;
- the principle of substantial private enterprise involvement in the development of a kenaf industry as soon as possible; and
- progress to date, and the plans for 1988/89 for work on crop agronomy, computerised crop modelling, pulping and paper making tests, market analyses, locational analysis and a study of possible commercial structures.



*[Swearing in of Chief Minister Perron, 14 July 1988]*

*Image courtesy of Northern Territory Archives Service, Department of the Chief Minister, NTRS 3823 P1, BW 2735, Item 1*

## Priorities for park development in the Northern Territory : 1988 to 1993

**Submission No. 4861 / Decision No. 5638 of 7 June 1988**

This submission provided a set of priorities for the development between 1988 and 1993 of parks that fall under the care, control and management of the then Conservation Commission of the Northern Territory.

Proposals were based on a tourism study and a road development strategy which would form the basis for wealth generation in the tourist industry, have positive employment implications, and facilitate other resource development in the Northern Territory.

Park development was approved on the following priorities:

- Priority 1 parks requiring enhanced access and facilities - including the 'Wetland' parks east of Darwin, Berry Springs Wildlife Park, Litchfield Park, Katherine Gorge National Park, Upper Roper Park at Mataranka, Yulara, Kings Canyon, the West Macdonnell Ranges area, and Alice Springs.
- Priority 2 parks were associated with major tourist routes (Stuart, Barkly and Victoria Highways) to cater for the needs of the travelling public, and
- Priority 3 parks were associated with tourist outback adventure where 4WD access and basic facilities would be provided.

Parks categorised under the priorities are listed in the submission.



*[Florence Falls, Litchfield National Park, 23 July 1985]  
Image courtesy of Northern Territory Archives Service,  
Department of the Chief Minister,  
NTRS 3822 P1, Scenic Darwin Region, Slide 155*

## Natural Death Bill

**Submission No. 4909 / Decision No. 5688 of 9 August 1988**

The purpose of this submission was to approve introduction into the Legislative Assembly of the Natural Death Bill to give legal effect to directions against artificial prolongation of the dying process. The Natural Death Bill 1988 (serial 113) – papers tabled 249, 256, 307 would only apply to terminally ill adults of sound mind and with no reasonable prospect of any temporary or permanent recovery.

The aim of the Bill was to ensure a terminally ill patient would be able to issue a direction that extraordinary measures are not to be taken when death is inevitable and imminent. The Bill would allow people who are about to die to have a say in their dying process, thus lending them a final dignity.

The Bill was closely modelled on the South Australian Natural Death Act passed in 1983 and was similar to Victorian legislation.

The Bill was passed in the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory on 4 October 1988 and the Act was repealed by the Andrews Bill in the Commonwealth Parliament, which was assented to on 27 March 1997.

## Education Act - Truancy

### Submission No. 4951 / Decision No. 5741 of 26 September 1988

The purpose of this Submission was to seek approval to draft an amendment to empower authorised persons to escort truant children from public places to the schools at which they are enrolled.

The submission outlines the advantages and disadvantages to the option of amending the Act; to only police officers currently based at schools to be authorised as truant officers; and to making truancy a criminal offence.

Following consideration of the above issues, Government approved the drafting of legislation to amend the Education Act to empower authorised persons who observe children apparently of compulsory school age in public places where there is reasonable ground for believing that such children should be at school, to request of the children their ages and name of their school, and to escort the children from those places to the custody of the Principal of their school.

## Northern Territory Law Reform Committee report on de facto relationships

### Submission No. 5032 / Decision No. 5844 of 25 November 1988

The submission contains a report by the Northern Territory Law Reform Committee who examined the law of de facto relationships, excluding the issues of custody and maintenance of children. At the time, the percentage of de facto relationships in the Northern Territory was 14.5% of all couples – more than twice the national average.

Submissions were considered from community and church groups, along with statistical and social information on de facto relationships, and legal reforms and studies in Australia, New Zealand and Canada.

The Committee concluded that the existing law contained a number of anomalies in the way it treated de facto couples and recommended the law be changed. Its principal recommendations were:

- De facto couples should be able to make contracts regulating their financial relationships and the division of property upon separation,
- Courts be empowered to settle property disputes in a fair and just way, instead of being determined by a set of technical legal rules,
- Courts be empowered to order maintenance of de facto partners in limited circumstances.

Government agreed to the Report of the NT Law Reform Committee on De Facto Relationships to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly to allow public discussion of its recommendations.

Tabled paper no. 684 is available at [https://parliament.nt.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/479370/5th-Assembly-Tabled-Papers.pdf](https://parliament.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/479370/5th-Assembly-Tabled-Papers.pdf)



[New Executive Council meeting, 14 July 1988]

Image courtesy of Northern Territory Archives Service,  
Department of the Chief Minister,  
NTRS 3823 P1, BW 2735, Item 7