

Northern Territory Archives Service Executive Council Records

In 1978 the Commonwealth passed *The Northern Territory (Self Government) Act 1978* establishing the Northern Territory as a distinct political entity under the Crown, with limited state-like powers, effective on the 1st July 1978. The Act gave the Northern Territory self-government, extending local autonomy to the Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory, and providing power to the Administrator to grant or deny assent to proposed law. Following this, the first Ministry of the new Northern Territory Government was appointed and the Legislative Assembly was given authority and responsibility for the finances of the government of the Northern Territory.

Executive Council

The Executive Council consisting of Ministers of the Northern Territory Government is responsible for providing advice to the Administrator of the Northern Territory in relation to matters in respect of which the Ministers have executive authority. Acting on advice from the Executive Council, the Administrator appoints Chief Executive Officers and other statutory appointments, makes regulations, proclaims parks and reserves, and authorises administrative arrangements orders. In most cases papers presented to the Executive Council have previously been endorsed by the Cabinet.

The records of the Executive Council are held in the strictest confidence until they are released 30 years after their creation.

Access to Executive Council Records

On the 1st January each year the records of the Northern Territory Government's Executive Council, are released for public access, having reached 30 years since their creation.

The Northern Territory Archives Service is responsible for managing, preserving and providing access to Territory Archives. Archives Advices nos.1-6 relating to access may be downloaded as PDF documents from: <http://www.nt.gov.au/nreta/ntas/records/archive/index.html>

In accordance with the *Information Act* (sections 141 and 142), government agencies transfer permanent value records of their business and activity to the archives service for inclusion in the Territory Archives. An access agreement is negotiated by the responsible agency and the archives service when the records are transferred. Public access to government archives is restricted for a minimum of 30 years, unless it is in the public interest for the records to be restricted for longer.

The Cabinet Office in the Department of the Chief Minister provides secretariat services to Cabinet and the Executive Council, and is the agency responsible for the records of Cabinet and Executive Council. An access agreement negotiated between the Northern Territory Archives Service and the Department of the Chief Minister provides for an annual opening of Cabinet submissions and decisions and of the Executive Council meeting papers, at the 1st of January each year after the records become 30 years old (some items may be restricted for longer periods where sensitive information has been identified).

Executive Council Records

The Executive Council meeting papers (NTRS 3351) include an agenda for each meeting followed by business papers with the related attachments. The decision or action is usually noted on the business paper. Minutes of the previous meetings were provided until 25 September 1978. Items of interest include the establishment of new Northern Territory

Government departments on 21 August 1978; the Administrative Arrangement Orders for the first NT Government on 1 July 1978, and a business paper relating to a lease for a brick works which includes photographs of brick buildings in Darwin in 1977 (Business Paper 216, meeting 27 September 1977).

The table below lists the records of Cabinet, and other significant related series, available for public access from 1st January 2009,

Main series

Series	Title	Description	Series Date Range
NTRS 3351	Executive Council meeting papers	Agenda and business papers with related attachments 12 Volumes are open from 1 January 2009	1969-1979
NTRS 3352	Index to Executive Council meeting papers	An index created by the Cabinet Office in 2008 to assist with accessing the meeting papers. The index lists business papers submitted to each meeting Index 1977-1978 is open from 1 January 2009	1977-1979

Related Series

Series	Title	Description	Series Date Range
NTRS 2575	Cabinet submissions and decisions	Cabinet submissions, decisions, and associated papers including budget information Volumes 5-17, Meeting number 28 on the 7 December 1977 to Meeting number 64 on the 22 December 1978, are open from 1 January 2009	1971-2003
NTRS 3353	Index to Cabinet submissions and decisions	Annual indexes, created by the Cabinet Office to assist with accessing the volumes. The index provides details of the meeting number, meeting date, decision number, and title of submission	1977-1978
NTRS 3354	Copyprints relating to members of the Northern Territory Cabinet	Copyprints taken from original photographs of the first Ministry. Image number 1 is open for access from the 1 January 2009	ca 1978- ca 1979

Further information

These series can be accessed by appointment in the Search Room of the Northern Territory Archives Service, Darwin, open from 9.00am-12 noon, 1.00pm-4.00pm weekdays.

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