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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

Public Accounts Committee

**Report on Public Administration
Recurrent Expenditure
(Waste-Watch)**

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REPORT NUMBER 6

OCTOBER 1988

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Recurrent Expenditure
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Country Liberal Party

Member for Karama. First elected 1984.

Other Committees:- House, Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers.

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Other Committees:- House, Privileges, Publications, Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers, Environment.

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Other Committees:- House, New Parliament House.

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Member for Jingili. First elected 1984.

Other Committees:- Publications, Subordinate Legislation and Tabled Papers, New Parliament House, Constitutional Development.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

REPORT ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION RECURRENT EXPENDITURE

(WASTE-WATCH)

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

On 5 June 1987, the Public Accounts Committee was provided with a reference by the Chief Minister to investigate and report on the efficiency of public administration recurrent expenditure.

Subsequently, on 6 July 1987, the Committee also accepted the Chief Minister's request to undertake a "Waste-Watch" role on public sector spending as an extension to its Terms of Reference.

In acceding to the Chief Minister's request, the Committee, for the first time since Self Government, has provided the general public and public servants with a direct opportunity to:-

- (a) voice their concerns in respect of perceived examples of public sector inefficiency and misuse of government funds and assets; and to
- (b) suggest areas or aspects of government expenditure where savings or improvements could be made.

The Committee was most appreciative of the assistance provided by Mr Tony De Silva, who was seconded from the N.T. Education Department from 28 September 1987 to 31 March 1988 as Senior Research Officer on this inquiry.

CHAPTER TWO

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference provided by the Chief Minister on 5 June were:-

"To investigate and report upon the levels, patterns and efficiency of expenditure in all Government Departments, Statutory Corporations and Instrumentalities in those areas which generally comprise recurrent administrative expenditure and which are more particularly described in the Treasurer's Directions as the following classifications of expenditure:-

- . Salaries and payments in the nature of a salary;
- . Administrative Expenses;
- . Capital Items;
- . Repairs and Maintenance; and
- . Property Management

The Committee may, at its discretion, and from time to time, report in full or in part on any matter raised in relation to this Reference."

NOTE: *The Committee is precluded by Standing Order 21A of the Legislative Assembly from inquiring into Government policy. However, while the Committee does not seek to question the adequacy of Government policy, it must inform itself about the nature of Government policy in order to determine whether policy is being efficiently, effectively and economically implemented.*

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The Committee placed advertisements in the NT News and arranged for all public sector employees to have access to 'suggestion box' facilities by providing each with a pre-addressed envelope for return to the Committee via departmental mail systems.

Submissions that were within the Terms of Reference were discussed at committee meetings and appropriate action was initiated in two phases.

The first phase involved some correspondence with Chief Executive Officers of departments and statutory corporations and private individuals. Departments and corporations were requested to provide a wide range of information and evidence which was then deliberated on by the Committee, with a view to determining whether further action or evidence was required in order to make recommendations. In some instances, the Committee visited departments and statutory corporations to inspect documents, speak with employees and view departmental activities.

The second phase also involved correspondence with departments and statutory corporations where Chief Executive Officers were provided with summaries of submissions relevant to their respective departments. In seeking responses to these matters the Committee took the view that the information provided would also give departments some idea of how their operations are perceived by the public and their staff.

The responses from Departments and Statutory Corporations are at Appendices A - P.

Details of levels of expenditure according to 1987/88 appropriations were extracted and the total public sector budget is apportioned as follows:-

	\$000
Salaries and Payments in the nature of salaries:	438,904
Administrative Expenses:	188,817
Capital Items:	14,422
Other Services:	239,621

	\$000
Repairs and Maintenance:	46,542
Capital Works:	100,306
Property Management:	36,217
TOTAL	1,064,829

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY

This exercise has demonstrated a considerable degree of interest by the public and more particularly public servants in the areas of public administration and expenditure. Nevertheless, the response rate, particularly during a period of dispute between public sector unions and the government over conditions of service, was lower than could have been expected. The possibility that many public servants might have accepted the alternative method, of registering suggestions and allegations, offered by the N.T. Trades and Labour Council was noted by the Committee. Its then Secretary, Mr Rod Ellis, was therefore invited to make a submission to the inquiry. In a limited response, Mr Ellis chose to generalise on the single issue of public servants' conditions of service. Despite further approaches, Mr Ellis made no further submission on behalf of the Trades and Labour Council.

Despite the relatively low response rate with less than 2% of public sector employees contacting the Committee, each department and statutory corporation had, on average, around 16 matters referred for consideration and comment. These ranged from allegations of misuse of government property, including some specific examples of waste, to matters of incompetence of senior managers based on skill deficiencies through to alcohol abuse.

Not all matters were considered to fall within the Committee's terms of reference and such issues may be referred to the appropriate Minister for any necessary action.

The basic issue in considering wasteful management practice is performance accountability. The Committee is of the view that where management is held to account for the effective, efficient and economic use of human and other resources by reference to levels of achievement against agreed objectives and performance targets, there would be very little wasteful management practised. Instances that did occur would be more identifiable and appropriate corrective action could be taken.

This is an era of "let the managers manage" and the extension of that philosophy could well be that "almost anything goes". The essential ingredient of letting managers manage is to free them of the constraints of some of the red tape that has long been claimed to adversely affect efficiency. Given an environment of limited performance accountability however, management can defend what might appear to be wasteful practices with almost total impunity. On this basis the Committee has generally been limited

to tabulating allegations and suggestions together with the comments of respective Chief Executive Officers.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUBMISSIONS

A total of 257 submissions was received during the period 20 July 1987 to 16 February 1988, with the majority of submissions being received between the months of August and November 1987.

45 (18%) persons identified themselves while 212 (82%) preferred to remain anonymous.

The total number of submissions resulted in a grand total of six hundred and fifty one issues as follows:-

Within Terms of Reference	-	495
Government policy	-	123
Other	-	<u>33</u>
Total		<u>651</u>

Each issue within the Terms of Reference has been placed in one of 14 categories according to the following table.

<u>ISSUES RELATED TO</u>	<u>NO. RECEIVED</u>
PUBLIC SERVANTS (GENERAL)	79
USE OF GOVERNMENT MOTOR VEHICLES	74
NUMBERS AND LEVELS OF STAFF	58
CONDITIONS OF SERVICE	47
EDUCATION	35
GOVERNMENT PROCEDURES INCLUDING ADMINISTRATION OF LEGISLATION	27
HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES	17
GOVERNMENT ASSETS/HOLDINGS/PROPERTY	15
CO-ORDINATION/RATIONALISATION OF GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS OR ACTIVITIES	12

TENDERS/CONTRACTS	11
CONSERVATION	7
WORKS	7
HOUSING	4
GENERAL MANAGEMENT ISSUES	102
TOTAL	495

The following summaries of specific issues raised in submissions demonstrates the diversity of public comment on public sector spending.

SUBMISSIONS

PUBLIC SERVANTS

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Employee Assistance Scheme
This submission requested that the service be available to all public servants |
| 1 | Private local telephone calls at public expense |
| 3 | First class air travel (official)
These submissions suggested that first class air travel be restricted to Chief Executive Officers, Judges and MLA's |
| 8 | Economy class air travel (official)
All of these submissions suggested that all official air travel be at economy class |
| 1 | Overtime
This was a suggestion that a ceiling be placed on the amount of overtime each employee may work |
| 1 | Aboriginal and other ethnic staff
This submission claimed that these public servants are unproductive |

- 10 **Flexitime**
 These were all concerned with the control or abolition of flexitime
- 12 **Tea, coffee and milk**
 These submissions suggested the provision of daily free tea, coffee and milk
- 14 **Morning teas, lunches**
 These submissions suggested that free morning teas and lunches should not be available during meetings, conferences etc
- 3 **Replacement of office furniture**
 These suggestions regarded the replacement of office furniture for executives, which are in good condition, as unnecessary
- 3 **Elimination of promotions appeal system**
- 1 **Smoking in government offices**
 This submission called for the banning of cigarette smoking in all government offices
- 1 **Reports to management**
 This submission contended that it should be compulsory for reports to be provided by public servants who travel interstate on official duty
- 1 **Reduction of sick leave and overtime**
 This was a proposal outlining procedures for the reduction of overtime and sick leave
- 1 **Duties of potentially excess officers**
 This submission concerned the productive employment of employees declared potentially excess to requirements

- 1 **Class of travel for officers accompanying MLA's and departmental heads**
- This was a suggestion that public servants who accompany persons who are eligible to travel first class, should travel economy class
- 1 **Staff development and training**
- This submission advocated that this function should be undertaken by the Office of the Public Service Commissioner
- 1 **Career structure for professional staff**
- This was a contention that the establishment of a suitable career structure would reduce the high turnover of professional staff
- 8 **Recruitment procedures**
- These submissions felt that there was a need to streamline recruitment procedures
- 1 **Tertiary administration fee**
- This submission was concerned with the reimbursement of the tertiary administration fee to all public servants undertaking tertiary study
- 1 **Staff orientation and inservice training**
- This submission contended that the implementation of staff orientation and inservice training will prevent a high turnover of staff
- 1 **Dismissal due to inefficiency**
- This was a call for suitable procedures to allow for the suspension and dismissal of inefficient public servants
- 1 **Retrenchment**
- A suggestion that unqualified senior management personnel should be retrenched
- 2 **Qualifications**
- These submissions contended that there is a need for more professionally qualified public servants

1

Excess officers

This submission alleged that redundancy options are available to some employees even though suitable vacancies in the service exist

SUBMISSIONS

USE OF GOVERNMENT MOTOR VEHICLES

- 4 **Policies and guidelines**
- These submissions relate to the general absence of service wide policies and guidelines
- 34 **Home garaging**
- All of these submissions relate to the abuse of home garaging provisions and to suggestions that home garaging should only apply to departmental heads, their deputies and those officers on call out
- 10 **Cost of vehicles**
- These were queries and suggestions relating to the costs of the vehicle fleet especially where vehicles are used only for travel to and from home
- 1 **Minibus courier service**
- This submission relates to the disposal of a large number of vehicles and the simultaneous establishment of a minibus courier service
- 2 **Establishment of car pools**
- 2 **Upmarket vehicles**
- These submissions suggest that upmarket vehicles should not be purchased
- 5 **Minimum kilometerage**
- These submissions relate to the establishment of guidelines in respect of the minimum kilometerage on official duties (other than home garaging) that should be met if the use of a vehicle is to be justified
- 1 **Sale of vehicles**
- This submission suggests that vehicles should be auctioned in lots of one
- 1 **Increasing home garaging**

3 **Vehicles with private number plates**

These submissions relate to the reduction of vehicles with private number plates

2 **Fleet management**

These are suggestions concerned with the establishment of a fleet for statutory corporations in each region

2 **Use of private vehicles**

These submissions claim that the payment of allowances for use of private vehicles for government business is a cheaper alternative to the government vehicle fleet

2 **Logos**

These submissions suggest that all government vehicles should be identified with the relevant departmental logo

1 **Darwin Port Authority**

A suggestion to reduce the fleet available to the Darwin Port Authority

1 **Darwin Institute of Technology**

This was an allegation that the vehicles allocated to Deans are not available for use as pool vehicles

1 **Department of Transport & Works**

This submission related to a contention that there are too many vehicles available to this department and that vehicles are mainly used for private purposes

1 **Conservation Commission**

This was an allegation that many vehicles are home garaged without prior approval

1 **Department of Health and Community Services**

This was a recommendation that responsibility for servicing and maintaining departmental vehicles be with suitably qualified staff

SUBMISSIONS

NUMBERS AND LEVELS OF STAFF

- 2 **Staffing of Public Service Commissioner's Office**
- These submissions claimed that the recruitment of staff to the Public Service Commissioner's Office was excessive (as evidenced by notification of vacancies in the Gazette of 7 July 1987) and not justified in the light of the Government's cost cutting measures in the public sector
- 1 **Recruitment of Staff from Interstate**
- This was a suggestion that recruitment of staff from interstate should take place only if there were no suitable persons in the Northern Territory
- 1 **Efficiency and Effectiveness of Public Service Commissioner's Office**
- This submission claimed that the costs of maintaining the Public Service Commissioner's Office are not justified
- 1 **Under-utilisation of NCOM consultants (6 positions) Department of the Treasury**
- 1 **Reclassification of position of Director, Southern Region, Department of Education**
- This was a claim that the reclassification of this position from Executive Level E4 to Executive Level E5 upon the transfer of the original incumbent of the E4 position, was unnecessary
- 1 **Special projects pool - Department of Education**
- This was an allegation that the Secretary utilises a 'special projects' pool of 15 positions to allocate positions to various areas of the department at his discretion without having to go through the existing procedures for establishment variation and thus pre-empting consideration by Cabinet Committee
- 1 **Underemployed and inappropriately placed senior staff - Department of Education**

2 **Duties of teachers in administrative positions
- Department of Education**

These submissions claimed that teachers in administrative positions perform clerical duties which can be adequately carried out by public servants on lower salaries

1 **Classification Creep - Darwin Institute of
Technology**

This submission claimed that some positions were upgraded without any corresponding increase in responsibility or duties.

1 **Top heavy management positions in the Department
of Transport and Works**

1 **Non-requirement for position of Divisional Head,
Planning and Building, Department of Lands and
Housing**

1 **Rationalisation of numbers and levels of staff,
Land Excision, Department of Lands and Housing**

1 **Non-requirement for position of Ministerial
Outpost Officer, Department of Industries and
Development**

24 **Overclassified top heavy structure of the NTPS**

3 **Lack of base level support staff**

1 **Escalation of Corporate Management Divisions in
departments and statutory corporations**

1 **Organisation Reviews**

This submission claimed that the constant organisation reviews in departments and statutory corporations are unnecessary

3 **Non-requirement for positions of doormen**

5 **Non-requirement for positions of tea-lady**

3 **Organisation design**

These suggestions proposed the use of studies to determine the most efficient and effective

organisational structures for NTPS departments and statutory corporations

- 1 **Duplication of roles in Communicable Diseases Section - Department of Health and Community Services**

This submission claimed that there is a considerable overlapping of roles in respect of professional staff in the section

- 1 **Duplication of administrative and educational functions - Katherine Institute of Aboriginal Health**

This related to a claim that the administrative and educational functions of the Institute are being duplicated by other government institutions

- 1 **Non-requirement for position of Regional Health Surveyor, Alice Springs, Department of Health and Community Services**

SUBMISSIONS

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

- 1 **Long Service Leave**
- This submission suggested that the accrual period for long service leave should be limited to a maximum period of two years only
- 1 **Housing allowance - (By-Law 54)**
- This was a suggestion that the payment of this allowance should cease if the employee's dependant/s are in receipt of a separate income
- 1 **Reimbursement of fares for children attending school and required to live away from home - (By-Law 57)**
- This submission suggested that fares should not be available to children who attend school interstate
- 1 **Reimbursement of fares - illness or accident - (By-Law 58)**
- This proposal was submitted on the basis that duplication could be avoided if this By-Law was repealed and all claims for illness or accident be handled by the Patients Assistance Travel Scheme administered by the Department of Health and Community Services
- 2 **Recreation Leave fares - payment of cash in lieu**
- 1 **Recreation Leave fares - destinations**
- This submission concerned travel to locations other than capital cities
- 12 **Travelling allowance at commercial rates**
- All of these suggestions advocated the payment of travelling allowance at commercial rates only on proof of expenditure incurred
- 3 **Flat rate of travelling allowance within the NT**

3 **Accommodation - contractual arrangements**

These submissions suggested the establishment of Government contracts for accommodation with hotels/motels in the NT

3 **Travelling allowance at rural rates**

8 **Rates of travelling allowance**

1 **Travelling allowance where board and lodging provided**

This submission suggested that travelling allowance should not be payable where official board and lodging is provided

1 **Fares on permanent appointment**

This suggestion was concerned with the removal of airfares on permanent appointment

1 **Recreation leave**

An option on recreation leave which advocated twelve weeks on half pay

1 **Sick leave**

This submission contended that employees be compulsorily required to take sick leave when ill

1 **Travelling time**

This was a complaint concerning the abuse of the travelling time provisions on temporary transfer

3 **Recreation leave airfares from other sources**

These suggestions concern the provision of recreation leave airfares to spouses of public servants who are also in receipt of airfares from other sources

1 **Meal allowances**

This submission suggested that meal allowances should not be paid where overtime is performed at an employee's normal workplace

1 **Disturbance allowance - (By-Law 60)**

This was a suggestion that this By-Law be repealed.

1 **Temperate clothing allowance - (By-Law 61)**

This submission suggested that this by law be repealed or that the allowance be reduced

SUBMISSIONS

EDUCATION

- 1 **Effectiveness of the Territory Training Centre**
- This submission alleged that apprentices at the Territory Training Centre receive inadequate training as compared to apprentices in private enterprise
- 1 **Use of government flat by Principal, Batchelor College**
- This was an allegation that the Principal used the flat, rent free
- 1 **Charging of fees - Batchelor College**
- This submission queried why students of Batchelor College are not charged fees
- 1 **Part-time lecturing**
- This submission related to Department of Education staff performing part-time lecturing duties at Darwin Institute of Technology
- 1 **Entry requirements for students to Batchelor College**
- This submission suggested that prospective students should be required to meet higher entry requirements
- 1 **Payment of fees for adult education classes - Department of Education**
- This was a suggestion that fees should be payable by students attending Adult Education classes
- 1 **Adult Education Courses**
- This submission contended that the type of courses offered for Aboriginal adults should be ones where immediate results were apparent
- 1 **Head Leased Accommodation - Katherine**
- This submission concerned extensive vacant accommodation rented by the Department of Education for the purpose of housing teachers

- 1 **Requirement for excessive paperwork for excursions
- Department of Education**
- 1 **Time Sheets - Aboriginal employees**

A query relating to the necessity for filling in time sheets for Aboriginal employees of the Department of Education when no such requirement existed for any other employees
- 1 **Cost of Accommodation - Teacher Induction**

This related to the high costs of accommodation provided during induction courses for teachers of remote area schools
- 1 **Cost of paper - Student Assessment Programme
(primary schools)**
- 1 **Cost of postage**

This submission concerned general carelessness with postage rates and duplication in respect of mail sent from the Department of Education
- 4 **Cost of Publicity/Policy documents - Department of
Education**
- .1 **Indonesian Student/Teacher Exchange Programme**

This was a query relating to the costs borne by the NT Government towards the scheme
- 6 **Cost and distribution of 'Education NT' newspaper**
- 1 **Costs of the Biennial Regional Symposium for
Supervisors of Schools**
- 2 **Overtime - Supply Section, Department of Education**

These submissions claimed that there is a substantial abuse of the overtime facility
- 1 **Teacher Salaries Section**

This was an allegation that this section of the Department of Education is inefficient
- 1 **Cost of Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme**

1 **Primary Schools, Darwin**

This submission suggested that one of two schools in the Darwin area should be closed down

1 **Primary Schools, Tennant Creek**

This submission suggested that one primary school instead of two is sufficient for Tennant Creek

1 **Office Accommodation - Department of Education**

This submission suggested that all of the administrative areas of the Department should be housed in the one building

1 **Cost of Recruitment of Foreign Students - Darwin Institute of Technology**

1 **Staff Turnover - Darwin Institute of Technology**

This was a claim that there is a high turnover of staff because of unsatisfactory administrative structures and management attitudes at the Darwin Institute of Technology

1 **Cost effectiveness of the Katherine Rural College**

SUBMISSIONS

GOVERNMENT PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

- 1 **Method of purchase of domestic furniture**
- This submission concerned the degree of administration involved with the Domestic Furniture Purchase Scheme
- 2 **Costs of non-campaign advertising**
- This was a suggestion relating to the taking out of an advertising space order contract and the centralising of the total non-campaign advertising function
- 1 **Sewerage bills**
- This submission concerned the billing of the body corporate rather than individual owners of units
- 1 **Coding of expenditure**
- This was a claim that expenditure is sometimes not correctly charged to the allocated appropriation
- 1 **Method of operation of petty cash system**
- This submission concerned the misuse of the petty cash system leading to a possible loss of control over expenditure
- 1 **Cessation of waivers on overpayments**
- 2 **Co-ordination of air charter travel**
- 1 **NT Planning Authority**
- This submission suggested the payment of fees for development and rezoning applications
- 1 **NT Fire Service**
- A suggestion that fees be charged for services provided by the NT Fire Service
- 1 **Ministerial Liaison**
- This submission suggested that all issues on government activity either from the public or politicians should be addressed to the relevant

Minister through the respective government departments and statutory corporations

1 **Cash pay run**

This submission suggested that the cash pay run should be abolished

1 **Government Electricity and Water accounts**

A proposal that government departments and statutory corporations should not be billed for electricity and water usage

1 **Government Printer**

This was a comparison of the costs of printing for similar work undertaken by the Government Printer and commercial printers

1 **Lack of service wide policy on Government computing**

2 **Centralisation of Computing**

These submissions related to the role and function of the Division of Computing and Information Technology, Department of the Treasury

1 **Implementation of Program Budgeting**

1 **Overpayments - Salary and Allowances**

This was a matter concerned with the introduction of a policy regarding the recovery of moneys occurring through overpayments in the nature of salary and allowances

1 **Rebates - Power and Water Authority**

This submission concerned rebates available for purchase of solar heaters and airconditioners

1 **Travel Allocation - Department of Law**

This was an allegation that travel funds are not strictly monitored

1 **Water Usage billing**

This submission suggested annual billing of water usage

1 **Concurrent reading and invoicing of water and power usage**

2 **Procedures for purchasing and payment of accounts**

1 **NT Government magazine**

This submission suggested the production of one NT Government magazine to replace magazines published by individual departments

SUBMISSIONS

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

- 1 **Administration of St John Ambulance Service**
- This submission alleged that the management of the St John Ambulance Service gave priority to administration over ambulance work
- 1 **Coalition of Low Income Earners**
- This was a claim that aid provided by the government was abused because the behaviour of some recipients was unacceptable
- 1 **Renal Unit, Alice Springs**
- This submission alleged that the operations of the unit were inefficient owing to the lack of suitably qualified and experienced staff
- 1 **Catering - Custodial Institutions**
- This was a query concerning the need for supplies to be ordered through the Darwin Hospital Supply Section
- 1 **Electricity Usage - Darwin Prison**
- This was a suggestion relating to the adjustment to the timer system of the overhead security lighting system
- 1 **Beatrice Hill rehabilitation**
- This was a query concerning the cessation to the pastoral property programme
- 1 **Provision of free spectacles**
- This submission suggested that free spectacles be provided only on the basis of a means test
- 1 **Change of roster system for hospital nursing staff**
- 1 **Refundable deposits for loan of wooden crutches**
- 1 **Requirement for a Supervisory Catering Officer - Custodial Institutions**

1 **Overtime and Sick Leave - Staff of Darwin Prison**

This was a proposal for the reduction of sick leave and overtime

3 **Use of hospital services**

These were concerns regarding the use/abuse of hospital services and facilities by private medical practitioners

1 **Catering - Alice Springs Hospital**

This submission concerned the provision of expensive cuts of meat for patient meals

1 **Canteen - Alice Springs Hospital**

This was a claim that tighter controls in respect of the issue of meals were necessary

1 **Cost effectiveness of mental health services**

SUBMISSIONS

GOVERNMENT ASSETS/HOLDINGS/PROPERTY

6 **Effective use of airconditioning in government offices**

1 **Berry Springs School**

This submission related to the repainting of the school after tenders were called for the building of a new school

1 **Assets transfer system**

Procedures were provided here for a system for checking the availability of surplus assets among departments and statutory corporations prior to the purchase of similar items

3 **Abuse of assets**

These were claims that there is unauthorised 'borrowing' of government assets (eg. computers, typewriters, electrical equipment etc) by public servants

1 **Office furniture**

This submission concerned the employment of a tradesman to repair otherwise discarded office furniture

1 **Computer Acquisition**

This submission queried the acquisition of an IBM 3090 (model 400) mainframe computer by the Division of Computing and Technology, Department of the Treasury

1 **Computer Facilities**

This was a call for a technical review of all government computing facilities

1 **Procedures for disposal of plant and equipment**

SUBMISSIONS

CO-ORDINATION/RATIONALISATION OF GOVERNMENT
FUNCTIONS

- 1 **Courier Services**
- This submission concerned the rationalisation of courier services in the Palmerston/Darwin rural area
- 1 **Libraries**
- This was a suggestion that the Department of Lands and Housing and the Department of the Treasury libraries should be amalgamated
- 1 **Co-ordination of Government public relations activities**
- 1 **Biological Research Institute**
- This submission concerned the establishment of a biological research institute by bringing together government scientists, academics from the University College of the Northern Territory and others into a single research institute
- 1 **Co-ordination of survey work**
- This submission suggested that a single government department or authority should co-ordinate and have responsibility for all government survey work
- 3 **Centralisation of personnel and administration functions**
- 4 **Centralisation of all government purchasing**

SUBMISSIONS

TENDERS/CONTRACTS

- 1 **Period Contracts**
- This related to a claim that capital items were purchased outside established period contracts in respect of Katherine High School
- 1 **Cleaning Contracts**
- Suggestions for the efficient monitoring of cleaning contracts were provided in this submission
- 1 **Catering Contracts - Yirara College**
- This was a claim that the college was not able to grow its own fruit and vegetables because of contractual restrictions
- 1 **Cost of contracts - repairs and maintenance**
- This submission contended that it was cheaper for schools to employ janitors rather than rely on contractors
- 2 **Procedures for Supply and Tender**
- 2 **Maintenance Contracts - Conservation Commission**
- This submission called for the institution of maintenance contracts for cleaning, firewood delivery, mowing etc instead of the employment of in-house labour
- 2 **Shell Fuel/Oil Purchase contract**
- These submissions alleged that the costs of this contract were excessive for the services provided
- 1 **Contracts for Supplies**
- This submission suggested that more attention should be paid to the purchase of good quality items for buildings etc

SUBMISSIONS

CONSERVATION

- 1 **Berry Springs Zoo project**
- This submission claims that the project will cost twice its original budget and that duplication in some areas is contributing to cost escalation
- 4 **Coburg patrol boats**
- These submissions were concerned with the cost effectiveness of the two patrol boats at Coburg
- 1 **Cost of Crocodile capture programme**
- 1 **Cost effectiveness of Territory Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council**

SUBMISSIONS

WORKS

- 1 **Airconditioning - Royal Darwin Hospital**
This was a claim that the airconditioning temperatures at the Royal Darwin Hospital are too low
- 1 **Road maintenance gangs at weekends**
This was a query concerning the necessity for having road maintenance gangs work on weekends
- 1 **Highway grass slashing**
A claim that highway grass slashing is sometimes unnecessary
- 2 **Shell card contract**
These submissions queried the high costs of this arrangement
- 1 **Remedial Works**
This submission concerned the cost of remedial works on the Moulden Low Flow and Roseberry stormwater drainage works
- 1 **Standard project signboards**
This submission contended that standard project signboards were not necessary in isolated areas

SUBMISSIONS

HOUSING

1

Mortgage conditions

This was a query regarding the existence of procedures for the detection of occupancy of government mortgaged properties by tenants of mortgagees

1

Mortgage payment vouchers

This submission queried the necessity to issue payment vouchers when fortnightly deductions are made from salary

1

Waiting time

This was a suggestion that the waiting time for Housing Commission homes be extended to two years

1

Turn around time

Procedures for reducing the turn around time in respect of vacated dwellings were offered in this submission

SUBMISSIONS

GENERAL MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 14 Costs of indoor plant hire
- 18 Tighter controls on the issue of office stationery
- 1 Non issue of NT News newspaper to schools
- This submission claimed that the NT News newspaper was biased and that it therefore should not be distributed to schools
- 3 Cost of semi-official telephones
- 3 Tighter controls on STD phone calls
- 1 Consultants for Annual Show
- This submission suggested that all departments should combine to produce a co-ordinated NT Government display, which precludes the employment of outside consultants
- 1 Cost of Territory Digest Magazine
- 16 Wastage of paper
- These submissions concerned the wastage of paper through the production of irrelevant memos and circulars, unnecessarily large distribution lists and other extravagant usage
- 1 Publication of self government advertisement
- A query relating to the publication of an advertisement four weeks after the official celebration
- 1 Commonwealth Diesel Fuel rebate
- This submission related to some departments and statutory corporations not claiming the rebate for fuel used in isolated areas
- 1 Associations Incorporations Act
- This submission concerned the forwarding of notices in relation to the Associations Incorporation Act, irrespective of whether any breach of regulations was involved

1 Forwarding of electricity bills to Housing Commission

1 Unnecessary street lighting

This was a claim that Bradshaw Terrace street lights were not turned off during the day despite continuous complaints

1 Miscellaneous expenditure

This submission concerned items of expenditure incurred by the Department of Transport & Works specifically for entertainment and music and the purchase of sun cream

1 Valuation fees

This submission concerned the payment of valuation fees by the Housing Commission for valuation services carried out by the Commonwealth Valuer General

1 Tourism advertising

This was a query concerning the lack of Northern Territory tourism advertising in Singapore newspapers

1 Procedures for handling trivial allegations against police

1 Contingency plan for emergencies in Aboriginal settlements

4 Use of staff for personal gain

These submissions concerned the use of Conservation Commission staff for personal gain by senior executive staff of the Commission.

1 Cessation of use of computers for project management - Department of Industries and Development

5 Office furniture

These related to the cost of office furniture for the public service generally

7 **Accelerated year end spending**

These submissions are the subject of a specific reference on Accelerated Year End Spending which has been considered by the Committee

9 **Waste watch scheme**

These submissions queried the usefulness of the waste watch exercise

1 **Use of consultants**

This was a complaint that departments and statutory corporations are over inclined to use consultants from 'outside' when the required expertise is available within the service

1 **Water wastage - Royal Darwin Hospital**

This was an allegation that hospital garden hoses were continually left turned on and water allowed to run into drains etc

1 **Food Services - Alice Springs Hospital**

This submission related to the superior quality of meals, the provision of free food and refreshments to staff and the lack of sufficient controls in the canteen

1 **Non repair of cistern - Darwin Institute of Technology**

2 **Relocation of staff for Arid Zone Research Institute to Alice Springs town centre - Department of Industries and Development**

1 **Public Relations**

This was a claim that public relations activities were let out to the private sector when resources were available within the service

1 **Sales tax**

This submission concerned the non deduction of sales tax for government purchases by commercial organisations

1

Cost of travel for pastoral inspectors

This was a query relating to the costs of travel for Darwin based pastoral inspectors required to inspect pastoral properties Territory wide

CHAPTER SIX

WASTE WATCH OBSERVATIONS

The Committee's investigations have resulted in Departments and Statutory Corporations either taking appropriate action to review some of their existing policies/practices or to introduce policies/practices based on matters raised. In this regard, the Committee has noted matters in respect of the following Departments and Statutory Corporations.

Department of Education

1. The establishment of a working group to consider the question of rationalising the number of schools in view of falling enrolments at some schools.
2. The consideration of office accommodation with a view to housing all administrative sections of the department in the one building.

Conservation Commission

1. The current review of the total boating requirements and costs for the Coburg project.
2. The investigation of alternative methods for crocodile capture.
3. The conducting of negotiations with Correctional Services with a view to having their field based prison operations provide assistance on contract maintenance services - eg. collection of firewood.

Department of Transport and Works

1. The taking of necessary measures resulting in substantial savings, to improve the efficiency of the airconditioning system at Royal Darwin Hospital.

Department of the Chief Minister

1. The co-ordination of departments and statutory corporations to ensure, where possible, common use of air charters to Aboriginal communities.

Department of the Treasury

1. The establishment of procedures to ensure that annual claims for the Commonwealth Diesel Fuel Rebate are submitted by departments and statutory corporations and that the rebates are recognised in the context of annual budget deliberations.
2. The taking of steps to ensure that the Northern Territory Budget is program-related and performance orientated.

Power and Water Authority

1. The intended feasibility study for issuing one water bill annually and subdividing the bill for payment in four instalments.
2. The implementation of common meter readings for water and power usage.

Police Force of the Northern Territory

1. The preparation of a counter disaster plan for aboriginal settlements.

Department of Labour and Administrative Services

1. The proposed investigation of the operation of the flexitime scheme with a view to overcoming any problems associated with the scheme.
2. The consideration of alternative procedures for managing employee grievances in relation to staff selection and promotion.
3. The intention to review policies in relation to smoking in government offices.
4. The acknowledgement that current recruitment procedures are inefficient and the consideration of implementing necessary changes.
5. The intention to review the payment of Travelling Allowance, Disturbance Allowance and Temperate Clothing Allowance.
6. The intention to abolish by-law 57 - Reimbursement of fares - children attending school and required to live away from home.
7. The reviewing of the functions of the Government Printing Office in an attempt to improve its viability.

8. The conducting of a review of government library and information services which recommended that consideration be given to amalgamating the libraries of the Department of Lands and Housing and the Department of Treasury, both of which are located in the AMP building.

Department of Health and Community Services

1. The intention to adjust the timer system of the overhead security lighting at Darwin Prison to suit later sunset times during the wet season.
2. The review of the administrative role of the Katherine Institute of Aboriginal Health with a view to the amalgamation of all administrative responsibilities of the department, in the Katherine region.
3. The regulation of hospital services and materials provided to private medical practitioners.
4. The review of the provision of free meals from the Alice Springs hospital dining room.
5. The review of departmental requirements for indoor plants.

Department of Lands and Housing

1. The review of the rate of fees charged for development and rezoning applications.
2. The review of departmental requirements for indoor plants.

CHAPTER SEVEN

WASTE WATCH CONCERNS

Chapter five attempts to tabulate the diverse range of suggestions and allegations received during this inquiry. Although the Committee has deliberately avoided detailed analysis of any matter raised, it is concerned at the general perception of inadequate co-ordination and policy directives in certain 'high profile' areas of public administration.

Public Servants are a major target for criticism both in terms of their employment conditions and levels of efficiency. The Committee accepts that such public servant 'bashing' has a long history; not confined to the Northern Territory. Such a history however, does not detract from the need to be able to account for what public servants are actually achieving. This matter would only be resolved in the event that public servants were given clear aims and objectives and their achievements could be quantified and costed.

The mechanism to reach this resolve is currently vested in the Secretary, Department of Labour and Administrative Services, as Public Service Commissioner and the Committee has addressed the lack of positive activity in this matter by the Commissioner in previous reports.

The Committee notes that a review of the government vehicle fleet was initiated by the Department of the Chief Minister for the Co-Ordination Committee during the currency of the waste-watch inquiry.

Guidelines subsequently issued by the Public Service Commissioner attempt to address allegations and suggestions received by the Public Accounts Committee concerning waste through misuse and abuse of privilege. These guidelines however, fail to demonstrate that any accountability measures have been put in place to monitor adherence. Perhaps the annual report of the Public Service Commissioner might cover this aspect. (See Appendix S).

General Issues cover a wide range of subjects from what could appear to be petty matters through to serious suggestions regarding eliminating waste and improving efficiency. The Committee has chosen not to judge the management practises which draw most criticism, but is concerned at the lack of clear policy guidelines against which such management practices can be reviewed. Steps should be taken to establish service wide policies relating to:-

- (a) Official Telephones to Private Residences. Some public servants are considered entitled to free telephone installation and all calls free whilst others can claim up to 240 metered calls a year.
- (b) Office Stationery. This was an issue raised by a significant number of respondents who considered that unreasonable wastage occurs, particularly when departmental names change.
- (c) Indoor Potted Plants. The Committee believes this issue attracted the attention it did because of the visual impact they are designed to have. Management invests in indoor plants to create the impression of a pleasant and prosperous work environment. At a time when government is trying to cut costs, many people query the rationale of such expenditure.
- (d) Official Hospitality. This has similar aspects to the potted plant example. Whilst there is a rationale for the practice, it is difficult for those who are being asked to accept cut-backs to accept that others continue to enjoy the "freebies".
- (e) Office Furniture. It is difficult to accept that in terms of economic restraint, the government authorises significant expenditure on new and replacement furniture when most of what is replaced is bought at auction to be used in the private sector.
- (f) Public Relations Expenditure. It must appear incongruous that money is being spent on promoting the activities of the public sector when workers are being asked to achieve more with less resources. There is a need to promote the public services of the Territory but this must be efficiently co-ordinated.
- (g) "Special" Job Pools. It is alleged that larger departments circumvent the requirements of government that a Cabinet Committee on Establishment consider the creation of all new positions. Failure to declare obsolete positions as savings, to be used at a later date as required, effectively pre-empts government's ability to consider staffing priorities across the service as a whole.
- (h) Media Advertising. It has been submitted that considerable savings are available from establishing a central advertising facility to co-ordinate placement and negotiate bulk rates. This would appear to be a very sensible suggestion, and would only require the

extension of existing policies to cover intra-Territory advertising.

The concerns expressed in this section of the report reflect on some of the issues that appear to have a high public profile and thus draw greatest attention and criticism. The Committee is generally concerned that these issues could represent the tip of the iceberg, in terms of the totality of practises in which waste is present or in which greater efficiencies are available.

The Committee's primary concern then is that there is no central agency of government that exercises an efficiency and effectiveness monitor based on quantifiable costs and achievements. Thus, the size of the iceberg is unknown.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CENTRAL AGENCIES

The bureaucratic structure of the public sector in the Northern Territory is little different to that managing the affairs of any government anywhere. There are essentially two categories of organisation; operational and control.

Operational organisations are those departments and statutory corporations having legislative responsibilities and authority to provide services, on behalf of the government, to the public of the Northern Territory. These are by far the majority of the organisations serving government, employing around 97% of all employees and include health services, power and water, housing and roads authorities, for example.

Control organisations are those central agencies comprising:-

Northern Territory Treasury;
Public Service Commissioner (Labour and Administrative Services);
Department of the Chief Minister; and
Auditor-General

"Central agencies are a major element of the framework by which accountability relationships concerning resources management are established between central executive management and individual organisational units within the public sector. Examples of central agencies are treasuries, public service boards, local government departments, and departments of finance. Their existence reflects the important principle that it is the responsibility of central management to ensure that sound arrangements are in place for the efficient and effective use of resources in accordance with prevailing policies and priorities."

This definition of Central Agencies, provided by the Australian Accounting Bodies, stops short of reference to control. It is the control aspect of central agency responsibility however that is critical to the accountability of operational organisations for getting the right jobs done right at the right cost.

Baker and Koppel of the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Administration refer to control by Central Agencies in the Canadian context in the government publication *Optimum* (1987 volume 18-3):-

"Central agencies, non-existent until 1940 save for the Treasury Board, have been a force to be reckoned with in terms of public service control. As already noted, the Glassco Commission underscored the need for strong central management if, as it advocated, there was to be extensive delegation to the departments and agencies. The Commission also identified certain functions of service-wide management and control that could only be exercised by central agencies.

Today, there is a strong and very active Privy Council Office, a Prime Minister's Office, a Federal/Provincial Relations Office, the Department of Finance, the Treasury Board Secretariat, the Office of the Comptroller General and, in some aspects of its functioning, the Public Service Commission - all acting for the government in a control role. They seek to ensure that public service activities do take place in a controlled, systematic fashion that conforms with Cabinet intentions in relation to both the substance of activities and the manner of proceeding. Thus, there are central agency controls in the form of directives, guidelines, standards, systems and procedures. Other central controls take the form of monitoring, review, and evaluation, linked to major reporting requirements. There are control initiatives in the less obvious form of professional education, training and development. Finally, there is the powerful control role of central agencies in supporting Cabinet policy making, programming and resource allocation.

Three agencies play a special role in relation to management control: the Treasury Board Secretariat, the Office of the Comptroller General (since 1978), and the Auditor General's Office. Out of some combination of initiatives among these three have emerged the major control systems of the past two decades. Such systems include the key resourcing systems in the areas of financial management, human resource management, material management and property management; performance measurement; program evaluation; internal audit; the comprehensive audit; program budgeting; management information systems; and accountability systems. Co-operation between the Treasury Board Secretariat and the Department of Finance has also been a major factor in developing a powerful service-wide control in the form of the Policy and Expenditure Management System (PEMS)."

It is the view of the Committee, that effective control by the Territory's Central Agencies would significantly curtail waste in public sector administration and expenditure. In order that the perceptions of the Central Agencies concerned could be considered, each was asked to respond on its respective responsibilities for performance management assessment and

reporting together with a statement of its understanding of the roles of each of the other three Central agencies.

Copies of the original requests together with respective replies appear on the following pages:-

Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Telephone 81 2262
Telex AA 85154
Telegrams Comparlas

G.P.O. Box 3721
Darwin
N.T. 5794

Our ref: 3/4/15

Mr E.M. Isaacson,
Auditor-General,
Office of the Auditor-General,
G.P.O. Box 4594,
DARWIN. N.T. 5794

Dear Elliott,

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you and your Principal Auditors regarding the respective roles of your Office and my Committee.

In what might be seen as an extension of our discussions, I have written to the Chief Executive Officers of the other three Central Agencies within the N.T. administration requiring reports on their respective roles in efficiency and effectiveness assessment and reporting.

From the above, the Committee intends to clarify the discrete roles of all four Central Agencies, including your own, with a view to ensuring a positive and mutually co-operative move in the direction of public sector performance management accountability.

I accept your statements on the aims of your Office over the next two years, and am most interested in the "second aim - to establish a recognised resource for the improvement of operational efficiency of Northern Territory public administration." This role is consistent with the direction being pursued by my Committee of performance management accountability. It is also in line with developments in other Auditors General Offices. The Australian Audit Office, for instance, sees its role as encompassing "evaluation of economy, efficiency and effectiveness of management of departments and other Commonwealth bodies, including review of:-

- . utilisation of human, financial and other resources;

- . information systems, performance resources and monitoring arrangements;
- . procedures followed by auditors for remedying identified deficiencies."

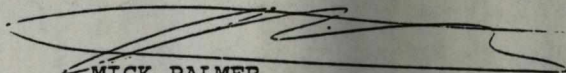
Obviously, given that the A.A.O. approach is fairly representative of other audit offices, the current thrust is towards performance or value for money auditing and this greatly interests the Public Accounts Committee and I am sure, the Parliament of the Northern Territory.

I would appreciate a report from your Office on the extent to which you envisage being able to develop in the performance auditing role and how you perceive the respective roles of the other three Central Agencies in the area of assessment and reporting on performance management, being:-

Chief Ministers
Treasury, and
Public Service Commissioner

Please note that your report is required by 18 September 1987.

Yours sincerely,



MICK PALMER
Chairman

17/8/87

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL

G.P.O. BOX 4594
DARWIN, N.T. 5794

TELEPHONE: 89 7155
REFERENCE: 100-06-001
160-06-001
8/20/a

Mr M J Palmer MLA
Chairman
Public Accounts Committee
GPO Box 3721
DARWIN NT 5794

Dear Mick,

I respond to your letter of 17 August 1987 in which you indicate your intention to clarify the respective roles of the four central agencies in efficiency and effectiveness assessment and reporting.

However, before addressing the issues on which you have sought comments, I would like to amend the record on a number of points in your letter -

- . The second aim of my Office over the next two years is actually "to establish a recognised resource for the promotion of improvement in the operational efficiency of Northern Territory public administration". The qualification of "promotion" is an important point having regard to my position of special independence, as without this word the aim would tend to imply I was responsible for improving operational efficiency. Clearly I have only a review and reporting role.
- . I could not agree that the Australian Audit Office approach to "evaluation of economy, efficiency and effectiveness" is "fairly representative of other audit offices" or that there is a current thrust towards performance or value for money auditing.

Each of my peers operates under his own unique mandate and in the case of the Australian Auditor-General a separate efficiency audit mandate apart from the traditional one. There is a varying degree of interest in, and/or responsibility for, performance or value for money auditing in each Australian and similar overseas jurisdiction. However, it would be fair to say that more interest is being evidenced currently than has been the case in yesteryears.

As Chairman of the recent Australia Area Auditors-General Conference at which this subject was aired, I would say that Conference members are conscious of the trend toward value for money work but also aware that this is influenced by individual mandates.

The extent to which I would be able to develop in a performance or value for money audit role over the next 2 years would be influenced critically and substantially by the prevailing management policies put in place by the three central agencies and each auditee.

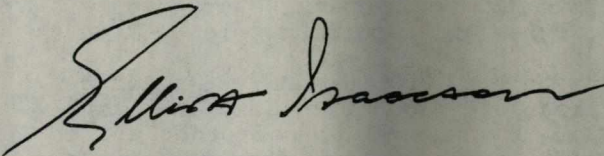
As my resources permit and on an auditee by auditee basis to begin with, I envisage making enquiries as to managements' own arrangements for measuring performance against then prevailing policies and standards.

It is neither appropriate nor desirable for me to set unilaterally the policies and management performance standards against which I will later audit, assess performance and report. Furthermore, a move to set such policies and standards, would, I presume, require a deep and continuing commitment from the Executive and at this stage I see little indication of this commitment, of the ready availability of the quite considerable expert advice that would be required to sustain such a thrust if this issue became a policy priority or of how responsibility might be allocated amongst the 3 central agencies.

It is therefore against this background and only because you have asked that I attempt, on the attachment, to set out how I see the central agencies current roles in respect of performance management.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely,



E M ISAACSON
Auditor-General

24 August 1987

Attach

PERCEPTION OF ROLE OF CENTRAL AGENCIES IN RESPECT OF
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

PREMISE: Central agencies are a major element of the framework by which accountability relationships concerning resources management are established between central executive management and individual organisational units within the public sector. Examples of central agencies are treasuries, public service boards, local government departments, and departments of finance. Their existence reflects the important principle that it is the responsibility of central management to ensure that sound arrangements are in place for the efficient and effective use of resources in accordance with prevailing policies and priorities.

(Extract from Introductory Statement on Applicability of Statements of Auditing Standards and Statements of Auditing Practice to Auditing in the Public Sector - issued by the Australian Accounting Bodies).

As applied to the Administrative Arrangements currently existing in the Northern Territory, this premise could be said to mean that in respect of:

1. Department of the Chief Minister - it is the co-ordinating agent for the Northern Territory Government, monitoring progress and achievement of the Government's overall policy objectives with a special responsibility for the Internal Audit Bureau whose charter is set out in the Treasurer's Directions 17/2-5.
2. Northern Territory Treasury - it is responsible for the development and promulgation of financial administration policies and directions and the co-ordination and central management of the Northern Territory Government's financial activities and resources with a specific emphasis on the provision of advice to the Treasurer to enable him to discharge his duties under the Financial Administration and Audit Act.
3. Public Service Commissioner - he is required to take all necessary steps to promote and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the public service in the areas of his responsibility covered by the Public Service Act.

Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

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Darwin
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Our ref: 3/4/15

Mr A.G. Morris,
Secretary,
Department of the Chief Minister,
G.P.O. Box 4396,
DARWIN. N.T. 5794

Dear Allan,

My Committee is currently attempting to identify the extent to which the four Central Agencies:-

- . Chief Ministers;
- . Auditor General;
- . Public Service Commissioner;
- . Treasury

have responsibilities in the matter of N.T. public sector performance assessment and reporting.

I have written to each of the other Central Agencies requiring reports on the subject and would appreciate a similar report from you.

It is the Committee's view that your department, in supporting the role of Co-ordinator-General, and the Internal Audit Bureau, as well as providing considered advice to Government on other matters, would share a common interest in any attempt to assess the relative performance of the N.T. public sector.

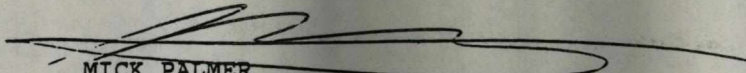
Could you please consider this matter in the light of the respective roles of the other Central Agencies and provide a report to my Committee addressing:-

- . the extent of responsibility currently held by your department in the area of performance management accountability, including any advice to Government on resource allocation;

- . your department's perception of the relative responsibilities of the other three Central Agencies in the area of performance management assessment and reporting;
- . the views of your department in any changes considered desirable in the relative responsibilities of the four Central Agencies in this specific area.

A report by 18 September 1987 is required.

Yours sincerely,


MICK PALMER
Chairman 17/8/87

226B



NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

G.P.O. BOX 4396
DARWIN N.T. 5794
TELEPHONE: 89 6172

SECRETARY
DEPARTMENT OF THE CHIEF MINISTER

2108

- 1 OCT 1987

Mr M Palmer
Chairman
Public Accounts Committee
GPO Box 3721
DARWIN NT 5794

Dear Mr Palmer

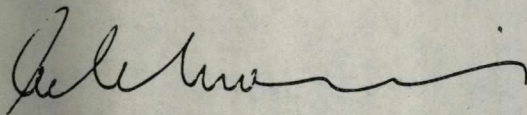
I refer to your letter of 17 August in which you asked me to provide a report for the Committee on matters which touch upon the responsibilities of a number of Government Departments and Authorities.

I have given very careful consideration to the request you have made to me. I am sure you will appreciate that I have some difficulty in commenting on those matters which, in effect, call for an opinion as to the activities of other agencies of Government. Put simply, I do not see that it would be helpful or constructive to express an opinion as to the role or performance of other agencies of Government. I am also very conscious of the fact that the Administrative Arrangements under which Government agencies have responsibility for various matters are entirely the prerogative of the Chief Minister and it would clearly be inappropriate for me to offer views which may not accord with those of the Chief Minister.

I am mindful of the breadth of interest of the Public Accounts Committee and I have endeavoured to provide responses to a range of questions which the Committee has put to me over recent months. It is important, in providing such responses directly to the Committee, that I be completely satisfied that the questions properly fall within a reasonable view of the terms of reference of the Committee, or that the issues have been specifically referred to the Committee by the Government. The matters put to me in your letter of 17 August 1987 are ones which I would not feel should be answered without some indication from you that the Government had requested the Public Accounts Committee to examine and report on them. This is a matter which you may care to clarify with the Chief Minister.

I have sent a copy of this letter to the Chief Minister,
Auditor-General, Public Service Commissioner and the
Under-Treasurer.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'A G Morris', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

A G MORRIS

cc Chief Minister
 Auditor-General
 Public Service Commissioner
 Under-Treasurer



NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

G.P.O. BOX 4396
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SECRETARY
DEPARTMENT OF THE CHIEF MINISTER

07/2

- 7 DEC 1987

Mr M J Palmer
Chairman
Public Accounts Committee
GPO Box 3721
DARWIN NT 5794

Dear Mr Palmer

I refer to your letter of 17 August 1987 in which you asked me to comment on matters which touch upon the responsibilities of a number of Government Departments and Authorities. I note that you have written in similar terms to the Auditor-General, the Public Service Commissioner and the Under-Treasurer.

The Department of the Chief Minister, as a central agency within the Northern Territory Public Service, clearly has a degree of interest and involvement in the issues which you have raised. Our involvement covers two broad areas - our general interest as a central agency and our particular responsibilities through the activities of the Internal Audit Bureau.

The role of the Internal Audit Bureau is a particularly important one in the Northern Territory Public Service. Under the relevant legislation and other administrative requirements, Chief Executive Officers of Departments and Authorities have responsibilities as accountable officers for the proper financial management of their Departments or Authorities. Given the relatively small size of the public sector in the Northern Territory, there would clearly be considerable unnecessary expense in providing for each Department and Authority some form of internal audit capacity. The Territory Government's response has been to provide a central bureau which can assist each Chief Executive Office in the fulfillment of responsibilities as accountable officer. The Internal Audit Bureau undertakes on a regular and programmed basis a review of financial systems and controls and advises the Chief Executive Officer accordingly. The Department of the Chief Minister does not interpose itself between the Bureau and the client Department and Authority in this process.

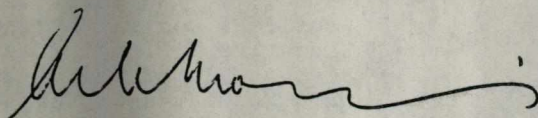
The broader questions of management accountability and resource allocation raise a somewhat different set of issues. The approach to resource allocation is a central feature of budgetary formulation, development and implementation. The Northern Territory Government pursues a traditional approach in this area with particular responsibility attaching to the Northern Territory Treasury. I believe this approach has served the Government well and the effectiveness of this approach is evident with the recent development of budgets which have been extremely well received, notwithstanding the need to achieve significant cuts in sensitive areas. I do not consider that there is a need for significant change to the traditional budgetary processes, although we are all committed to identifying and implementing improvements as an on-going process.

The Office of the Public Service Commissioner also has important responsibilities in relation to the effective and efficient performance of the public service and these responsibilities are carried out in various ways, including a careful monitoring of staffing levels and classifications, attention to equal opportunity and merit principles and an overview of the personnel and management practices within the public service.

Your letter also makes reference to my role as Co-ordinator General. No formal responsibilities are attached to my role as Co-ordinator General in respect of the issues you have raised. As Co-ordinator General I have an involvement in a number of interdepartmental issues and, of course, with the Co-ordination Committee. The Committee is concerned with the performance of the public sector and its corporate approach to major issues could be expected to contribute significantly in this regard.

I regret the delay in replying to your letter, but I trust this information will be helpful. I would be happy to elaborate on any aspect of interest to the Committee or to appear before the Committee if that is considered desirable.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A G Morris', with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

A G MORRIS



Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Telephone 81 2262
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G.P.O. Box 3721
Darwin
N.T. 5794

Our ref: 3/4/15

Mr S.P. Saville, OBE
Public Service Commissioner,
Office of the Public Service Commissioner,
G.P.O. Box 4371,
DARWIN. N.T. 5794

Dear Syd,

My Committee is appreciative of the briefings and others papers provided by your Office and again confirms that it will require a report and discussion on your Property Management responsibilities in due course.

In the interim, following general discussions within Committee on the subject of accountability, the Committee is anxious to address the respective roles of the four Central Agencies in effectiveness and efficiency matters across the NT public sector.

In this regard, I require a report from you which discusses:-

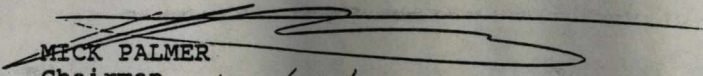
1. the extent of your responsibilities for efficiency and effectiveness assessment and reporting to Government;
2. how those responsibilities are met through your Office's organisation structure;
3. specific mechanisms within your Office for objective assessment of the contribution being made towards improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the public service as the result of your Office's ongoing activities;
4. your perception of the role of your Office relative to other Central Agencies being Treasury, Chief Ministers and Auditor-General in public sector efficiency and effectiveness reporting.

The Committee, in considering your report, will reflect specifically on the following sections of the NT Public Service Act:-

Section 14(1)	Duties of Commissioner
Section 14(2)	Duties of Commissioner
Section 16(1)	Reports by Commissioner
Section 16(3)	Reports by Commissioner
Section 26	Establishments for Departments and Prescribed Authorities

Please note that I require the above report by 18 September 1987.

Yours sincerely,


MICK PALMER
Chairman

14/8/87

225H

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER FOR THE NORTHERN TERRITORY



DEVELOPMENT HOUSE,
76 ESPLANADE,
DARWIN

G.P.O. BOX 4371,
DARWIN, N.T. 5794
TELEPHONE: 89 4411
TELEX: AA85308
FAX: 089-411895

S.P. Saville
6/10/87

October 1987

87/2181

Chairman
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Assembly of the
Northern Territory
GPO Box 3721
DARWIN NT 5794

Dear Sir

Reference is made to your letter of 14 August 1987 where you asked me to provide you with a report addressing our role in respect of effectiveness and efficiency matters across the NT public sector.

I apologise for the late response. However, the nature of the information sought is such that I felt it necessary to seek advice before responding in detail as I would need to comment on the operational aspects of other departments, possibly in conflict with the CEO/Minister relationship and responsibilities.

The response provided by the Secretary, Department of the Chief Minister, to your request, indicates that he too shares these concerns.

In light of that response, your advice on how you wish this issue to be progressed is now sought.

Yours faithfully

S.P. Saville

S.P. SAVILLE
Public Service Commissioner

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER FOR THE NORTHERN TERRITORY



DEVELOPMENT HOUSE,
76 ESPLANADE,
DARWIN

G.P.O. BOX 4371,
DARWIN, N.T. 5794
TELEPHONE: 89 4411
TELEX: AA 85308

5 December 1987

Your Ref : 3/4/85
Our Ref : 87/2181

(3/2)

Chairman
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Assembly of the Northern
Territory
GPO Box 3721
DARWIN NT 5794

Dear Sir

Reference is made to your letter of 14 August 1987 where you asked me to respond to your Committee addressing our role in effectiveness and efficiency matters across the NT public sector.

Before addressing the questions posed in your letter, it is appropriate to discuss the extent of application of the Public Service Act within the NT public sector. In general terms, the Public Service Act only applies to some 10000 public servants out of a total workforce of approximately 15000.

Staff excluded from the provisions of the Act are teachers, police, fire officers and prison officers (to the extent that some conditions are covered by arbitral awards). Total organisations excluded are the Power and Water Authority, Darwin Institute of Technology, Territory Insurance Office, Aboriginal Sacred Sites, Trade Development Zone, TAB and the University College of the Northern Territory.

In addition, the Conservation Commission also have powers under their own act to employ staff. The status of staff employed is not yet clear.

When addressing the question of effectiveness and efficiency within the context of the Public Service Act, it is a mistake to confine the discussion to individual sections of the Act. Rather, the total Act needs to be considered as a whole, particular in relation to the intentions of the Act which is to address human resource management.

Section 19(5) spells out the relationship to exist between Chief Executive Officers (CEO's) and their Minister. Essentially a CEO is responsible to the Minister for the general management and efficient conduct of the Departments business and activities.

Further, Section 22 (2) requires each CEO to report to their Minister, whenever necessary, in regard to:

- . any alterations necessary or expedient for the more efficient and effective management or working of the Department, and
- . any alterations necessary in the terms and conditions of employment of employees.

Similar provision exist under Section 24(2) for reports by prescribed authorities.

Clearly, day to day matters within a department or prescribed authority are to be resolved within the CEO/Minister relationship. To this end I see my duties within Section 14 (1) to ensure that guidelines exist for general policy.

This is achieved by issuing and updating the By-Laws and General Orders. In recent times, new Sections 1,2 and 15-20 of the General Orders have been issued while section 10, 11 and 12 are about to be issued. At the same time the By-Laws and, in fact, the Public Service Act itself are the subject of much discussion as to how best they can be updated.

Interim advice is also issued through circulars, memoranda and bulletins.

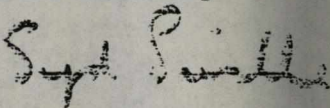
As far as Section 14(2) is concerned I hold the view that this Section gives "authority" to the role of internal and external audit functions. To this end, Section 26 has been used to create an establishment for both these functions - one within the Department of the Chief Minister and one under the Auditor-General.

Within Section 19(5) 19(8), 22(2) and 24(2), the Secretary, Department of the Chief Minister and the Auditor-General would then be responsible to their Minister for the day to day operation of these audit functions.

It should be noted that while the Administrator determines the number of employees for each Department under Section 26(1) of the Act, Section 26(2) requires me to consult with CEO's prior to responding to the Administrator. Such consultation aims at ensuring that there is agreement as to the numbers and levels for the efficient and effective administration of functions.

The requirements of Section 16 are met by my Department, as they relate to human resource management, through the production of an annual report. It is my view that the Under-Treasurer and Auditor-General have a similar responsibility to report on efficiency and effectiveness for financial matters and administration.

Yours sincerely



S.P. SAVILLE
Secretary
Department of Labour and Administrative
Services

Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Telephone 81 2262
Telex AA 85154
Telegrams Comparlas

G.P.O. Box 3721
Darwin
N.T. 5794

Our ref: 3/4/15

Dr N. Conn,
Under Treasurer,
Northern Territory Treasury,
G.P.O. Box 1974,
DARWIN. N.T. 5794

Dear Neil,

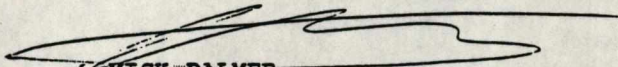
The Public Accounts Committee is seeking comments of the Chief Executive Officers of each of the four Central Agencies (Treasury, Auditor-General, Chief Minister's and Public Service Commissioner) on relative and respective responsibilities for assessing and reporting on efficiency and effectiveness matters across the NT public sector.

The former Under Treasurer provided a briefing to my Committee in August 1986 on the role of the Treasury. That, together with a reading of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, suggests that Treasury's responsibilities essentially focus on compliance with rules and processes designed to control and limit departmental expenditure.

I would appreciate your views on this assessment which, if correct, provides little consideration to the achievement of output goals/objectives or to the promotion of efficient and effective financial management. The latter is seen as critical in the current and foreseeable climate of constraint. My Committee is now attempting to identify the extent of responsibility of each of the four Central Agencies in matters of performance assessment and reporting.

Could I please have your report on this matter before 18 September 1987.

Yours sincerely,


MICK PALMER
Chairman

14/8/87

225I



NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

UNDER TREASURER
THE TREASURY

G.P.O. BOX 1974
DARWIN, N.T. 5794
TELEX: AA 85541
VOCADEX: 81 8348
TELEPHONE: 89 6033

26 August 1987

Ref: 41.1.4

Mr M Palmer, MLA
Chairman,
Public Accounts Committee
GPO Box 3721
DARWIN NT 5794

Dear Mr Palmer

Thank you for your letter of 14 August in which you sought my comments on relative and respective responsibilities for assessing and reporting on efficiency and effectiveness matters across the Northern Territory Public Sector.

Since, as you know, I am going on leave Friday I thought I should give you a prompt response before my departure. No doubt we will have the opportunity to discuss the matter more fully on my return.

In a nutshell, I regard an appropriately refined Budget-making and Budget-monitoring process to be probably the most effective, and certainly the most efficient, means of achieving what I think you have in mind.

As I said during our brief informal conversation with the Chief Minister last week, I believe that Treasury has and should retain this central role in the process of reporting on the effectiveness of public sector expenditure decisions. It has it essentially through the preparation of Budget documentation and the oversight of the explanatory documents which accompany the Budget, as well as through the comprehensive data bank built up for other purposes such as Grants Commission assessments. There is no particular significance to be attached to the 30th of June; which just happens to be a conventional reporting date in the middle of a continuum of present Budget monitoring and future Budget considerations. The monitoring of current Budget performance, in short, is inextricably linked to preparation of the next.

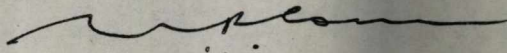
I consider it would be a very worthwhile step to place more explicit emphasis on performance measures as an integral part of the Budget reporting process, including the Explanatory Notes, since the preparation of the Budget for the year ahead develops inevitably from Budget performance in the year just ending. In most States there have been determined efforts to move to a program budgeting approach to resource allocation and performance measures, and we are moving steadily in the same direction.

I have some problems on the efficiency question, since although Treasury does have some monetary indicators available, the question of whether a task could be done more efficiently by a different arrangement or level of resources is not usually part of Treasury's brief. I note that the Public Service Act includes amongst the Commissioner's duties the task of promoting and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Public Service.

The Act of direct relevance to my responsibilities, however, places the broader task of efficient resource use squarely in the laps of individual Accountable Officers and that is where I think there may be a problem of implementation and perception. The Accountable Officer in the Northern Territory is given a central role which he or she perceives to be threatened regularly by Departments such as mine, and Committees such as yours. No doubt we will have the opportunity, in due course, to discuss the relationship that should exist between such perceptions and the realities of budget-making and publicly accounting for expenditure.

Since I will not be in town at the due date for responses, I have taken the liberty of copying this letter to the Chief Executive Officer of the other Central agencies that you nominate, as well as to my Minister for his information.

Yours sincerely



N R CONN

As can be seen from the foregoing responses, the Central Agencies appear to have adopted an advisory consultative stance towards the operational departments with little or no evidence of control.

The Committee would expect to be challenged on the above observation by the Central Agencies who would either reject the prospect of having a control role, or would consider that adequate controls already exist.

On the first argument the Committee has the firm view that controls must be exercised to:-

- (i) gauge the performance of the public sector in meeting government program objectives, and more importantly,
- (ii) improve public sector performance through greater levels of efficiency, effectiveness and economy.

On the argument that existing controls are adequate it is interesting to reflect on the observations of the Queensland Government's Public Sector Review Committee in its July 1987 report:-

"Economic performance is one of the central issues facing Governments today. When considering strategies, Cabinet has to give attention to budgetary plans, including revenue and spending to ensure that these correspond to its goals for the economy. In other words, it needs to know the economic costs and benefits of proposed programs and to weigh this information against planned program objectives.

The Treasury Department has, in the past, achieved its expenditure control objectives. But its orientation is towards control of input to programs and not to output achievements of Departmental objectives. In the public administration context, it is contended that the Treasury Department's role in the central co-ordination process needs review."

The imbalance between input control over output control in the Territory public sector equally requires review. One only needs to refer to the latest Annual Report of the Public Service Commissioner, which is comprehensive in its statistical data on the size and profile of public sector employees but provides no information on the achievement of the public sector; there is no output data on which productivity can be assessed.

Each of the Territory's Central Agencies has an important role to play in identifying and reducing waste in public sector administration and expenditure. The Public Accounts Committee might have identified a number of specific examples of waste

through its Waste-Watch inquiry, but it is far more important to address the causes rather than merely treat the symptoms.

The cause of waste in public administration and expenditure is the lack of output related accountability by departments and statutory corporations through respective Ministers to parliament. This accountability for performance involves Central Agencies through both the Financial Administration and Audit Act and the Public Service Act.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSIONS

The Waste-Watch inquiry has been useful in providing a public forum for the airing of grievances regarding government expenditure.

There appears to be very little in the way of co-ordinated strategies within the bureaucracy to either accept such grievances, detect wasteful practices and procedures or provide a mechanism for the reduction of waste through performance monitoring and reporting.

Most if not all of the matters raised should be capable of internal resolution by the bureaucracy.

The fact that an external body such as the Public Accounts Committee has had to undertake this inquiry suggests that the necessary function of performance monitoring and review is not being adequately addressed.

There is confusion between the wording of Section 14(1) of the Public Service Act and the role required by Government of the Public Service Commissioner.

In the absence of any involvement of the Public Service Commissioner to "take all necessary steps to promote and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Public Service", as prescribed at Section 14(1) of the Public Service Act other than "the control of and effective use of human resources", *no Central Agency has a clear mandate to report to Government on the efficient use of human or any other resources in the public service. This is to say waste is not being watched.

The Public Accounts Committee recognises that at least some of the issues raised by members of the public are worthy of more detailed investigation than is possible through the Committee's limited resources, and this would appear to be a matter which the former Chief Minister considered worthy of some priority, as evidenced by his terms of reference for this inquiry.

It is difficult for the Committee to be specific, but it is equally difficult for it to accept that some degree of waste does not exist and given that a mere 1% improvement in efficiency of the public sector could produce savings of around \$6 million per annum, the matters of performance assessment and value for money must be fully addressed.

* *Public Service Commissioner evidence before Public Accounts Committee, 8 December 1987 and Legislative Assembly debate - Thursday 26 May 1988.*

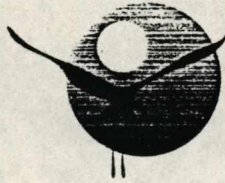
CHAPTER TEN

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends that:-

1. A staff suggestion scheme be introduced and managed by an appropriate Authority.
2. A working group be established comprising representatives of each Central Agency to develop strategies for detecting and addressing instances of waste through performance monitoring and reporting.
3. A review of the role of the Public Service Commissioner be immediately undertaken addressing the conflict between the practical undertakings of the Commissioner in relation to Sections 14(1) and 14(2) of the Public Service Act and the clear intention of that Act.
4. Efficiency targets be introduced throughout the public sector requiring management to reduce resource input costs relative to agreed levels of output.
5. That the Public Accounts Committee maintain a watching brief over the introduction and management of waste control and performance improvement strategies.

APPENDICES A - P CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER RESPONSES



Northern Territory
Tourist Commission

In Reply
Please Quote:

A2/35

28 January 1988

Mr. M. Palmer,
Chairman
Public Accounts Committee,
GPO Box 3721,
DARWIN NT 5794

Dear Mr. Palmer,

RE: "WASTE WATCH"

I refer to your recent letter in which you queried the apparent lack of evidence of Northern Territory advertising in Singapore newspapers.

The Tourist Commission's international marketing activities differ from its domestic activities. Within Australia the NT Tourist Commission (NTTC)/NT Government Tourist Bureaux (NTGTB) utilise most media (TV, radio, newspapers) in its promotional and advertising activities, however, internationally our efforts are aligned in the main to the travel trade e.g. tour wholesalers, airlines and travel agents. Our objective is to have the Territory included in major tour promotions and for these then to be promoted by the travel trade to the public.

Generally speaking, this is the way all states operate internationally and with the exception of Victoria, who do television advertising in the United States, it would be a very rare occasion for Australian States to market direct to the public, via the general media, internationally.

I trust the above answers your query satisfactorily and should you have any further queries on the matter, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

ROBERT S. DOYLE
CHAIRMAN

**POWER
— AND —
WATER
AUTHORITY**
POWER DIRECTORATE



Jape Plaza, 18-20 Cavenagh Street • GPO Box 1921, Darwin NT 5794

Enquiries 82 7016
File No. 38/4/60

Telephone (089) 82 7111
Telex AA85395
Facsimile 82 7212

25 February 1988

Q29/

The Chairman
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Assembly of the
Northern Territory
GPO Box 3721
DARWIN NT 5794

Dear Mr Palmer

RE: 'WASTE WATCH'

I refer to your letter dated 20 January 1988 seeking comments on some outstanding matters following upon the 'Waste Watch' review, and apologise for the delay in responding.

I am aware that you have a reply from Kevin Jordan addressing a number of the matters raised from the Water Directorate side.

PAWA REBATES

The Authority currently gives a \$50 rebate for the purchase of new airconditioning equipment. This policy came into operation in July 1987 as part of a package of new Electricity Tariffs which has the specific objective of improving the commercial position of the Authority.

The rebate is intended to stimulate the purchase of airconditioning equipment which represents a very large proportion of the load of the electricity supply system in the Northern Territory.

At the same time as this policy came into place, the previous 10% rebates on the purchase of solar hot water heating and solar photovoltaic equipment ceased on the basis that these rebates were not assisting the commercial position of the Authority.

These changes were approved by Cabinet and are now part of Government policy.

POSTAGE ELECTRICITY BILLS

Electricity bills are produced on a daily basis and currently sorted into Post Code area to take advantage of lower bulk postage rates available. Housing Commission, Federal, NT and Local Government together with 'normal' customers are all included.

(DC25/2)

We have acted on the PAC suggestion and commenced sorting Housing Commission electricity accounts separately and sending them via the established courier service.

WATER USAGE BILLING/WATER METER READINGS

The frequency of water/sewerage billing and electricity billing is under review. Many aspects need to be considered including cost, impact on cash flow, the high transient population in the Northern Territory and so on.

Ideally, we would like to offer our customers a range of options, e.g., monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly or even longer, to best meet their budgeting requirements and the commercial objectives of the Authority.

Billing on the basis of estimated usage rather than actual consumption has not proven effective or popular throughout Australia. This method generates mistrust and creates additional administrative work in answering queries and complaints.

WATER METER READINGS - CONCURRENT READING AND INVOICING OF WATER AND POWER USAGE

It is probably true to say that invoicing of both water and electricity at the same time and frequency (say half yearly) would result in significant savings.

Whether the majority of our customers could afford to pay a half yearly bill is another matter.

Generally, the better off in society would prefer less frequent billing whilst the majority would prefer more frequent billing up to a point.

Longer term billing impacts adversely upon the Authorities' cash flow and increases the risk of bad debts.

Shorter term billing creates a cost penalty for postage, meter reading, stationery and cashiering.

The solution we are seeking in our review is that happy medium that will best suit the majority of our customers and the requirements of PAWA.

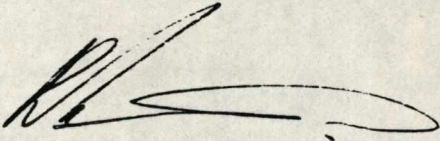
UNNECESSARY STREET LIGHTING

The Authority operates street lighting throughout the Northern Territory on behalf of local Councils and the Department of Transport and Works as the authorities responsible for roads.

Street lights are almost universally controlled by time clocks which are designed to turn on at dusk and off at dawn. The Authority receives criticism when this equipment fails if the lights remain on during the day or fail to come on at night. Maintenance on time switches is very high largely due to the effect of lightning.

It is the Authority's view that because of considerations of public safety where a time switch is inoperative, it is better that the lights be left on during the day rather than be switched off altogether. It is acknowledged that this involves some wastage of electricity, however, the total consumption of electricity in all street lighting systems, is less than 2% of the total system consumption and the vast majority of street lights in the system operate correctly at any point in time.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R J MAGIN', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

R J MAGIN
Managing Director
Corporate Services

**POWER
AND
WATER
AUTHORITY**
WATER DIRECTORATE



SASCO House, 8 Cavenagh Street • GPO Box 1096, Darwin NT 5794

Enquiries 89 6600
File No. 4.29.123

Telephone
Telex AA85644
Facsimile (089) 41 0703

Bz/2

The Chairman
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory
GPO Box 3721
DARWIN NT 5794

Dear Mr Palmer

'WASTE WATCH'

(Your 3.4.15 of 20/1/88)

Although your letter was addressed to me, some of the matters are the province of Power Directorate and I have referred those questions to Owen Peake.

P.A.W.A. rebates : Power Directorate.
Postage - electricity bills : Power Directorate.

WATER USAGE BILLING:

The reasons for four billings are twofold:-

- (i) to reduce the impact on the property owner by having more frequent but lower bills (in the business area there are moves for monthly billing to further ease the financial impost);
- (ii) provide a more even cash flow to Treasury and obtain maximum investment benefit.

To issue one bill annually and subdivide for four instalments could have some merit and will be studied

but there will be adverse reaction from the real property rental people. The debt follows the land under the Water Act, and tenants leaving after say 11 months occupancy but before the next assessment, could run up very high excess water accounts and leave them for the property owner, who is responsible in the final analysis.

WATER METER READINGS

Meter reading is not only to determine the bill.

It also serves as the maintenance run to ensure that the meter is working correctly.

It serves to highlight excessive consumption, either through over-use or through leaking pipes or fittings on the property. The owner is advised through the bill when his consumption is excessive, which lets him control the excess and reduce his bills.

Regular readings reduce the need to assess water rates when meters are o/s by early detection.

They also meet the Ombudsman's concern at long assessment periods and were instituted during the days of annual billing to reduce public dissatisfaction with assessments.

CONCURRENT READING AND INVOICING OF WATER AND POWER USAGE

The PAWA is committed to common meter reading by Cabinet instruction.

We are proceeding to implement common readings in Tennant Creek, then to Katherine and Alice Springs as we co-locate the business section.

Darwin will come later.


It is not possible at this stage to present a common account because we have two entirely different computer systems for billing. Nevertheless our Authority does have this as an eventual goal but it will take time and money to implement.

UNNECESSARY STREET LIGHTING

I believe this is probably Roads Division, Department of Transport and Works but I have queried Power Directorate in case they have some responsibility.

I trust these responses are adequate but should you require amplification of any item, please advise me.

Yours sincerely



K F JORDAN
Managing Director

29 January 1988

KJ029101



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

GPO BOX 1341, Darwin NT 5794, Australia, Telephone (089) 46 2211, Facsimile (089) 41 0460, Telex AA84060

2 February 1988

Bz/2

Mr M Palmer MLA
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory
G P O Box 3721
DARWIN NT 5794

Dear Mr Palmer

The concept of a biological research institute is a good one in that by bringing scientists and others together in a single institution the research capacity of the group is enhanced by their interactions. A unit larger than any of the contributing organisation research groups would also undoubtedly gain greater prestige, both by the volume of the work undertaken and by the increased likelihood of favourable public and professional reaction from the good results which are likely to ensue. Such an institute would also benefit the postgraduate research students of the University College, both by an increased number of potential supervisors and by the greater variety of experience for them to consult.

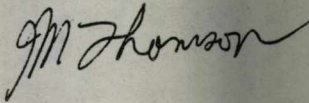
What is not clear from your letter is the arrangement that is envisaged for housing such an institute. I note that you refer to the possibility that the Conservation Commission's herbarium and wildlife research complex would not have to move to accommodation in Palmerston if the institute came into being. But the space available in the University College complex would be inadequate to cope with the numbers of people that would form the institute. Although there are buildings not in use in the University College complex at the moment, our prospective needs will mean that one of the remaining buildings will be in use in 1989 and the other in 1990. Although we could examine space possibilities in more detail, my own feeling is that such an institution would require its own building and even if space could be found for at least some of the elements within the current buildings, extensive refurbishment would be necessary to create the necessary laboratories.

There would be also need for discussions on responsibility and accountability and also funding considerations. I have doubts, for example, that being a member of a biological research institute sited on the University College campus would in fact gain access to outside funding resources if these members of staff remain public servants attached to their departments. If they are to be employees of the institute, which in turn is associated with the University College, the possibilities are certainly increased but it would be even more so if they were staff appointed to the University. If either of these last two possibilities were acted upon the

.../2

institute or the University College could then contract to conduct research on behalf of the Territory Government, the cost of which presumably could be covered as indicated in your letter by transferring the current research funding levels in the parent department or authority to the institute or the University College. As you suggest if such an institute existed possibilities of the members of staff obtaining funding from outside sources would certainly be increased.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J M Thomson".

Professor J M Thomson
Warden

F9-Gen



DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIES AND DEVELOPMENT

Office of the Secretary
GPO Box 4160
DARWIN NT 5794

Mr M Palmer
Chairman
Public Accounts Committee
GPO Box 3721
DARWIN NT 5794

B3/2

Dear Mr Palmer

I refer to your letter, reference 3/4/15 of 21 January entitled "WASTE WATCH" and offer the following comments.

Ministerial Outpost Officer

The accusations contained under this heading are entirely false. The decision to decentralise the Secretariat function was taken because of the inability of the Animal Industry executive to cope with the workload and had nothing to do with any work being carried out by a 'typist'.

The position was advertised and processed in the usual way including PSCO participation on the interview panel.

Computerisation

- (a) I can only assume that the claim referring to 'project management' is actually directed at the 'programme budgeting' task force operation previously being undertaken by the old Primary Production Department.

Its curtailment was not carried out in an arbitrary manner and indeed was a decision taken by Management Board members based on the large costs (both direct and indirect) associated with the project, its complexity, the questionable quality and accuracy of the output and the inability of the officers concerned to demonstrate its value to the Department.

Individual Divisions within the Department will continue to use the system on selected, significant projects but it will not be used as an alternative means of balancing the Departments budget.

- (b) The assertion regarding Scientists and the use of personal computers is too general to answer. The Department has a large stock of such equipment and I have no evidence of any individuals being enable to access a unit. Perhaps if your claimant could be more specific I may be able to be of more assistance.

Staff Relocation Alice Springs

The accusation here is that the old Primary Production Department has been relocated into Alice Springs AZRI necessitating additional office accommodation.

Both elements are incorrect.

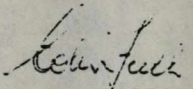
The transfer involved only a small administrative unit which for reasons of operational efficiency was amalgamated with the staff from the old Department of Business, Technology and Communications. This had the dual effect of reducing overall numbers and being closer to the Department of Transport and Works which oversights our Management Services function.

This small unit could have been (and indeed has been) catered for in the office area previously occupied by the old Department of Business, Technology and Communications.

The need for new office space was created by the Department of Lands and Housing wishing to consolidate its staff into one building and asking this Department to relocate.

Should you wish to pursue the issue I suggest that the appropriate body would be the Property Services Manager of the Department of Labour and Administrative Services.

Yours sincerely


C J FULLER

17 February 1988



NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

UNDER TREASURER
THE TREASURY

G.P.O. BOX 1974
DARWIN, N.T. 5794
TELEX: AA 85541
VOCADEX: 81 8348
TELEPHONE: 89 6033

In Reply Please Quote
41-1-10:JG:kc

D 11/2/88.

Mr M Palmer, MLA
Chairman
Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Assembly of the NT
GPO Box 3721
DARWIN NT 5794

Dear Mr Palmer

RE: "WASTE WATCH"

I refer to your letter of 21 January 1988 seeking comments on a number of suggestions raised in the context of the above exercise.

Detailed responses to the issues listed are included at Attachment A. In general terms, these responses indicate that the worthwhile suggestions have already been introduced or are in the process of introduction.

Yours sincerely

N R CONN

Attach

9.2.88

DETAILED RESPONSES TO PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE "WASTE WATCH" ISSUES

COMPUTING AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(a) Personal Computers

A Service-wide policy on the acquisition of personal computers was introduced in September 1985. Period contracts for supply of approved equipment and funding policies were established. Details were promulgated to all areas of Government at that time.

A further review, recently completed, indicated that a number of changes to previous arrangements were appropriate to further improve cost effectiveness.

Current arrangements now provide for the use of established Government contracts throughout Australia providing such equipment is of an approved type for use in the Government network and is supplied and serviced locally. These arrangements were reviewed by the Tender Board and endorsed by the Industrial Supplies Office prior to implementation.

The basis for the assertion that considerable economies could be made is not known.

(b) Acquisition of IBM 3090 (Model 400) Mainframe Computer

The option of continued use of older technology through the acquisition of second-hand units was investigated at length and in depth during the tender process for the present machine and discarded on the basis that it was the least cost effective of all options reviewed.

The analysis and conclusions reached were reviewed by independent expert Consultant Systems Auditors, Arthur Young International (Sydney), who confirmed that the "alternative" option mentioned was \$6.9M less cost effective over the projected life of the equipment than the decision taken.

(c) Centralisation of Computing Facilities

This claim has no basis in fact.

As a result of decisions taken subsequent to the last major review of computing directions in 1985, two significant elements of the central processing budget, systems development and network equipment costs, were re-allocated to the control of user departments. In the 1987/88 year this represented some \$6M or approximately 40% of the total central budget.

Notwithstanding, there has been a trend over the past two to three years for departments to opt for increased use of the central resources as a result of the economies of scale available in this approach.

Where it can be demonstrated that a distributed processing approach can provide a more effective solution to a Government business need, this can and will be supported, and there are clear procedures in

place within the budgetary development process to permit such developments to occur.

UNDER UTILISED NCOM CONSULTANTS

The structure of NCOM staffing arrangements is similar to other major public sector computer bureau operations. Operatives in the Senior Project Management role are the key to effective co-ordination of NCOM services.

In normal circumstances there are in fact only four officers engaged in the direct departmental support function. The roles are clearly defined and understood by the current holders of the positions.

Despite the claim to the contrary, with only isolated exceptions, the skill levels in information technology management in departments requires reinforcement and the independent input provided by NCOM.

TECHNICAL REVIEW OF COMPUTING FACILITIES

The strategies adopted in the provision of mainstream computing services are directed to industry standardisation, which is critically important in maintaining reliability and staff support to such operations in the Northern Territory. In this regard the Northern Territory Government follows strategies almost identical to other major public institutions and many prominent private sector organisations throughout Australia.

The current technology approach has been addressed in depth on numerous occasions by both internal and independent reviews which, without exception or reservation, have confirmed the approach to be totally appropriate to the Northern Territory situation.

The claim that the present advisory group is only representative of one supplier's products and designs is baseless.

PROGRAM BUDGETING

The Northern Territory budget system presently is based on activity budgeting, which is similar in concept to program budgeting. Expenditure within Departments and Authorities is categorised to defined activities and funds are allocated to and managed within those activities. Managers are encouraged to undertake their responsibilities within the total approved appropriation and in doing so it is recognised that transfers of funds may be necessary. While funds are appropriated by sub-division (known in some States as "line items") within these activities, there are well established mechanisms which allow transfers both between activities and between sub-divisions. The emphasis is not on the line item but on managing within the total appropriation. It is therefore not correct to suggest that "line item budgeting" exists in the Northern Territory, and the inference of waste is therefore groundless.

In the Territory, performance or effectiveness measures are the responsibility of Ministers and their Departments. Activities and programs are assessed regularly and decisions are made within portfolios on the effectiveness of particular expenditures. A range of methods is used as it is recognised that particular efficiency and effectiveness measures cannot be used in isolation or as the only method of evaluation.

COMMONWEALTH DIESEL FUEL REBATE

In 1986 the Northern Territory Department of Mines and Energy commissioned Peat, Marwick, Mitchell to investigate the potential for Government bodies to claim the Commonwealth Diesel Fuel Rebate.

Following their report Mines and Energy co-ordinated a claim by various Northern Territory Government Departments and Authorities for rebate of duty paid on purchases of diesel fuel for the years 1985/86 and 1986/87.

Claims valued at \$1.3M have been lodged with the Australian Customs Service, which administers the rebate scheme, and payments to date have been \$1.2M. It is believed that these claims encompass the Territory's entitlement for rebate with the exception of one Authority which is collating the data required in order for a claim to be made.

Treasury is currently settling procedures to ensure annual claims are submitted and that the rebates are recognised in the context of the Budget deliberations each year.

OVERPAYMENTS - SALARY AND ALLOWANCES

The implementation of a rigid formula for recovering overpayments of salary and allowances is considered undesirable. Errors occur in a number of ways and may be either employer or employee related, and so flexibility is needed to cope with individual circumstances.

Present Treasurer's Directions provide discretion for the Accountable Officer to determine a fair and equitable recovery process, dependent on those circumstances.



COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE
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11 FEB 1988

Mr. M.J. Palmer,
Chairman,
Public Accounts Committee,
Legislative Assembly of
the Northern Territory,
G.P.O. Box 3721,
DARWIN N.T. 5794

① 15/2

Dear Mr. Palmer,

RE: "WASTE WATCH"

I have your correspondence number 3/4/15 of 21 January 1988 regarding submissions made to the Public Accounts Committee concerning this Department.

I have considered each of the matters raised and offer the following explanations:-

1. THE DRUM

The Drum is an internal publication prepared by the Community Relations Branch of this department. It provides me with the opportunity to communicate with all Members through the editorial. The content is almost entirely internal and the cost of this publication is allocated from within the Community Relations Branch budget.

The N.T. Police News is an organ of the Police Association, and as such, reflects the views of that Association which are not always identical to my own or the Department's policy. The content is often external, coming from other police magazines and journals and the cost of the magazine, I understand, is met by advertising revenue.

Both magazines express legitimate and essential views, but there is obviously a divergence of philosophies. The publications do not share, as the submission suggested, common content.

2. NHULUNBUY POLICE STATION

(a) There are presently four (4) vehicles on strength at the Nhulunbuy Police Station, with an additional vehicle allocated for use by the School Based Constable. The Daihatsu utility mentioned in the submission has been disposed of. I believe that the present fleet is adequate and not excessive, in view of the requirement to provide a long range patrol vehicle and taking into account vehicle maintenance scheduling and the station strength of 30 members.

The School Based Constable's micro car is required for his diverse duties and does not reduce the number of vehicles available to operational members.

The motorcycle on strength is used solely by the Police Aide and provides him with the necessary independence to carry out his duties. It is also considerably cheaper than providing him with a motor vehicle.

(b) Most complaints against police are dealt with by the Divisional Officer during his normal station inspection duties. Travelling costs are minimal in this area as the officer concerned utilises the Police Airwing, except in the case of an urgent or serious complaint which would require his immediate attention. His use of the Police aircraft also contributes to ensuring its economic utilisation. Essentially, however, Complaints against Police must be seen to have been investigated properly and objectively. For this reason alone it would be inappropriate to allow complaints to be handled "in-house" by the Officer in Charge of the station.

(c) The payment of a \$50 fee for the investigation of complaints has been mooted before but is impractical as it could prevent people without money making complaints on legitimate matters.

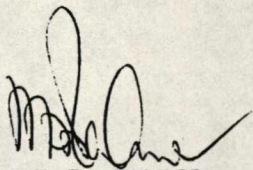
(d) It is the policy of the Department that promotion examinations are supervised by Commissioned Officers. The attendance of an officer at smaller centres saves the expense of a number of members travelling to other centres to sit examinations.

3. COUNTER DISASTER PLAN - PAPUNYA

A draft local Counter Disaster Plan for Papunya will soon be presented to the Counter Disaster Council for approval before printing and distribution. The Plan has been prepared by the Northern Territory Emergency Services staff, with the co-operation and assistance of the local Counter Disaster Committee which includes Police members stationed at Papunya.

I trust the above satisfactorily answers the matters raised in the submissions to your Committee and should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M.J. Palmer', written in a cursive style.

M. J. PALMER
COMMISSIONER OF POLICE



NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT OF LAW

16 February 1988

The Honourable Mick Palmer, M.L.A.
 Chairman
 Public Accounts Committee
 GPO Box 3721
DARWIN NT 5794

B. 18/2

Dear Mr. Palmer,

RE: 'WASTEWATCH'

I refer to your letter of 21 January 1988 in which you sought my comments on various allegations concerning expenditure in the Department of Law. My comments follow:

Associations Incorporation Act

The experience of Corporate Affairs Office staff in the past has been that many incorporated associations have a large turnover in committee members and new members are often completely unaware of the provisions of the Associations Incorporation Act. For this reason it is the practice of the Office to remind all associations of their obligations once each year. Occasionally an association which has already met its obligations (i.e. submitted the required returns) has received a reminder. Closer checking in the future will eliminate this.

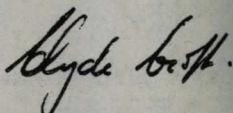
Travel Allocation

The allegation that, because travel funding is not strictly monitored..."there is an excess of unwarranted travel undertaken by the departmental head and divisional heads"... is refuted. Travel expenditure, as with all other Departmental expenditure, is monitored on a continuing basis and the Departmental budget is a standing agenda item at Board of Management meetings.

Additional funding was transferred to the division from which the Departmental Head's travel was funded during the 1986/87 financial year. This was necessitated by the separation of the offices of Secretary and Solicitor-General late in the 1985/86 financial year and the consequent need to provide additional funding for the Solicitor-General from within the Department's budget in 1986/87. On Treasury advice funds were transferred from other Divisions for this purpose.

If you require more detailed information please let me know and I will arrange for it to be provided.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Clyde Croft".

(CLYDE CROFT)

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA
SECRETARY

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND HOUSING

Telephone : 89 7722

Quote in Reply:

G.P.O. BOX 1680
DARWIN, N.T. 5794
Telex: AA85453
Facsimile: 89 6067

B 19/2

Mr Mick Palmer MLA,
Chairman,
Public Accounts Committee,
G.P.O. Box 3721,
DARWIN N.T. 5794.

Dear Mr Palmer,

I refer to your letter dated 21 January 1988 (Your reference 3/4/15) regarding some outstanding matters under consideration as part of the "Waste Watch" exercise. I will address each issue in the order in which they are raised in your letter.

Payment Vouchers

Fifty pre-printed vouchers are automatically produced at minimal cost for each purchaser upon the mortgage being taken. Subsequent supplies are only made available upon request.

In the case of purchasers making payments through payroll deductions or by bank authority, the vouchers are still of use, ie:

- . in making initial payments before authorised payments commence
- . in making make-up payments following the interest rate adjustment each year, until authorised payments are adjusted
- . in making any other payment adjustments, eg. during unpaid leave.

The vouchers also provide the purchaser with the correct account number to make these direct payments.

Fee Transfer Scheme

The rationale behind this suggestion is unclear.

The Housing Commission as landlord accepts responsibility for maintenance required as a result of "fair wear and tear". This is regardless of whether the tenant is about to vacate or is remaining in the premises.



Maintenance assessed as the tenant's responsibility is charged to the tenant. Payment is required before the tenant is deemed eligible to transfer to or receive an allocation of another dwelling.

Extension of Waiting Time

The ideal waiting time for public housing is considered to be twelve months for families and six months for pensioners. Waiting times are generally well below the twelve months at present. To insist that people should wait two years would currently result in vacant dwellings and thereby substantial rent loss and criticism. The dwellings would also be subject to vandalism if vacant for extended periods. Rents would need to be increased to recoup these costs.

Any extension of the waiting times, even if considered desirable, would therefore have to be phased in over an extended period. While such a course might exclude "transients", it would also inevitably cause added hardship for genuine applicants.

Valuation Fees

The N.T. Housing Commission charges a fee of \$58.00 per valuation. This fee represents about one third of the true cost of valuation. The valuations are in fact paid by the Department of Lands and Housing. Last year the cost of valuations was \$181 000 for a total of 979 valuations. The revenue collected by the N.T. Housing Commission recovered about a third of this cost. The allegation that valuation fees are used "for unauthorised purposes by the Housing Commission" is untrue. The N.T. Housing Commission, as a statutory authority, is entitled to retain revenue to meet its operational needs, and this would be taken into account by Treasury in the Budgetary context.

Establishment

- (a) Division Head (Planning and Building), classification E4, is a position required to direct and co-ordinate related functions. The assertion that "a major proportion of the planning function (forward planning) has been allocated elsewhere" is untrue. This transfer, in fact, brings closer the relationship between the Planning and Building Branches. Before creation of the Policy and Planning Division, with forward planning as one of its primary objections, this function did not form a major proportion of Planning Branch activities. Statutory Planning then, as now, was an extremely demanding function in terms of resources.

Also, the apparently suggested creation of a Director of Planning, classification E5, is believed to be an inappropriately high level at this time in the Territory's development.

(b) There is no longer a Unit of this Department dealing solely with excision of living areas from pastoral leases. The Aboriginal Land Branch also deals with co-ordination of land claim investigations and submissions by all Government departments. Nevertheless, it has already been recognised that position levels may have been inappropriate and the two senior positions are now classified E3 and E2.

In both of these circumstances the Co-ordination Committee has examined and supported the levels which have been established.

Co-ordination of Survey Work

The concept that all survey work should be the responsibility of one department is not new and has been tried before. In the last days of the Commonwealth administration this was supposed to be the situation. However, even then, there were areas where this just was not feasible. I believe that the Water Resources and Road Construction Authorities always retained some survey capacity and quite rightly so. After self government, the survey functions necessary for their operations devolved to the various N.T. Departments.

There may be a misconception of what is achieved by survey, as not all work is suitable for mapping or similar requirements. In some situations a lot of survey work is needed for the task in hand, and when that is completed there is no further requirement for the information. A survey for road design and construction would be such a task. The road construction would so change the shape of the area that storing the original information would serve no further purpose. It may also be that the surveys are on a differing datum such that they would not fit into a totally integrated system and the cost of changing this may well be uneconomical.

Broadly it can be said that all work to produce standard or similar type maps is undertaken by or under the control of this Department. In the instance quoted of road surveys, it is often the situation where this Department has mapped the broad area so that the proposed road can be located in the best position. The ultimate Mapnet concept is that information on all utilities will be stored in individual layers for the use of all interested parties. This will depend on each contributing organisation developing a Mapnet compatible computer facility.

Referring to the suggestions concerning individual departments, my comments are:-

Transport and Works - Both our organisations have total station survey instruments which record on magnetic tape which is used to produce computer plots. My understanding is that while this Department's programmes do no more than produce a detail presentation of the survey, the Transport and Works programmes can go further and produce the information needed for road design. Surveyors undertaking road surveys gather information in a different manner to other work and it is thus more economical for big organisations to have specialist groups doing the work.

Water Directorate - Co-ordination and levelling of bores seems a relatively simple survey task but I am sure that technical officer surveyors in that organisation are trained to undertake many other duties. This makes it hard to have a single survey organisation.

Police - The Police need to gather details of accident or crime scenes immediately they are on the site and they have trained their officers accordingly. This Department has in the past undertaken to produce plans of some of these incidents and may do so in the future for particularly important situations. The Mapping and Information Division does produce monthly plans showing crime and accident statistics for certain areas such as the northern suburbs. The storage of the ever changing details of all developed land in the Territory at sufficiently large scale for use in individual incidents would be a monumental survey and recording task that would be uneconomical.

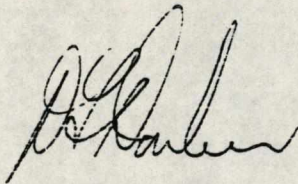
Sacred Sites Authority - The Authority does make use of the Mapnet system to store some information on boundaries of sites. The confidentiality of some sites requires reduced access to the information. Similarly the custodians would be reluctant to allow a wide diversity of survey parties to visit them to survey the boundaries. Production of the plots mentioned by the Public Accounts Committee is usually carried out by terrestrial photogrammetry. This Department does not have the equipment to carry out such work easily. It is a specialised task carried out at the moment by Commonwealth authorities. It is doubtful if there is sufficient demand to duplicate resources.

Conservation Commission - This Department does carry out some work for the Commission in the areas mentioned but it does not store it in Mapnet. However as mentioned previously the concept of Mapnet is that the Commission should develop its own layers of information within the system.

As a general comment I believe that each survey organisation in the government is conscious of the work of the others and makes use of it as appropriate. There is very little duplication, if any, that I am aware of.

I trust the foregoing comments will enable your Committee to resolve the various issues that have been raised, but should you require further information I will be pleased to assist.

Yours sincerely



D. F. DARBEN

18/2/88



SECRETARY
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND WORKS
DARWIN

Mr M Palmer
Chairman
Public Accounts Committee
GPO Box 3721
DARWIN NT 5794

B 19/2

Dear Mr Palmer

'WASTE WATCH'

I refer to your letter of 20 January concerning 'Waste Watch' and offer the following comments on the matters raised in your correspondence.

STREETLIGHTING SYSTEMS

The streetlighting provided in McMillans Road accords with the Australian Standards for this type of road as determined in consultation with various bodies including, for example, the Road Safety Council.

Any lesser level of lighting would constitute a safety hazard.

SUPPLY AND TENDERS

1. Contracts

- a) This is a fundamental requirement of any government contract.
- b) Period Contracts by their very nature would not require approvals of either building plans or from Authorities at the acceptance stage.

Approvals, licences, permits are obtained during the course of the contract if or as required.

- c) All Period Contracts contain progress payment conditions. Payments are made against a valuation of works completed to the standard specified. There are also normally moneys withheld from payments in the form of retentions or guarantees to ensure due performance of the work.

.... /2



Continued or serious breaches of contract invariably lead to the termination of the contract with resultant loss to the Contractor.

2. Tenders for Supplies

- a) By decision of Cabinet as now contained in the and Treasury Regulations at least three representative
- b) quotations are to be sought from established traders for supplies from \$501 - \$3,000. (Accepted quotes to be in writing).

The Department is required to publicly advertise quotations over \$3,000.

The above are requirements of Government and not the Department.

3. Contracts - Aboriginal Settlements

It is Government policy to utilise private enterprise wherever practicable, and this policy has been pursued in the execution of work on Aboriginal settlements.

There is no known evidence to substantiate the claim that the present method of undertaking this type of work is not effective.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

- i) The staffing profile for this Department, ie. the number of staff at each designation, was approved by Cabinet as recently as November 1987.
- ii) Co-Ordination Committee reviewed the top structures ie. E4 and above, of all Departments and Authorities in November 1987. Only one position was recommended for change - the position of Area Manager Katherine was down-graded from E4 to E3 which was a result of declining workload in that Region.
- iii) This Department has 63 positions in the E1-E7 range out of a total MSL of 1369, ie. 4.6% of our MSL is covered by the Executive levels. These 63 positions cover five Divisions in five Regions.



HIGHWAY GRASS SLASHING

Grass cutting and litter collection on the verges of rural roads contributes significantly to safe travel particularly with the problem of kangaroos and other animals, but also in aiding visibility at sharp curves and by providing a more relaxing driving environment.

Grass slashing is scheduled three times per year being November/December, February/March and May and each cycle takes approximately 4-6 weeks to complete. The amount of cutting involved varies depending on the extent and timing of early rains and of work in particular locations. The task includes litter collection.

The costing of each cycle is the same so obviously there is some cross subsidy between easy and difficult cutting and costs for the remaining cycles could reasonably be expected to increase if the early "wet season" cut was discontinued.

The need for three cutting cycles is kept under constant review as it does absorb funds that could be spent elsewhere and at this time the priorities afforded the task are believed to be correct.

SHELL CARD ARRANGEMENTS

The "Shell Card" contract is for the supply of fuels and oils for Government vehicles and does not include provision for any other service such as that raised in the query.

STANDARD PROJECT SIGNBOARDS

It is a requirement of both the Federal and Northern Territory Governments that all projects be adequately signed to advise the nature of work and the source of funds.

Neither Government has given any directive that there should be an exemption in particular localities.

REMEDIAL WORKS

Both the Moulden and Roseberry stormwater drains are the major drainage outfalls for the catchment they serve.



They are designed to proper engineering standards to dispose of both the overland flow and the flow from underground pipe drainage beneath the road systems in their respective areas and, as such, represent an integral part of the stormwater drainage system.

Remedial works undertaken were necessary to prevent deterioration of the assets and to ensure their proper functioning and integrity.

EXPENDITURE - ENTERTAINMENT

Transport and Works Alice Springs held an inaugural Ball in September 1987.

The function was organised to promote an improved corporate relationship and to assist in fostering good relations with Departmental clients, contractors and consultants.

A subsidy of \$500 from the Departmental Entertainment vote was authorised for the event to attract as many participants as possible in order to achieve the objectives of the event.

Bearing in mind that the budget of the Alice Springs Area exceeds \$18 million, I believe the exercise represented both value for the money expended and also sound corporate management practice.

SUN CREAM

This purchase of Blockout Cream was made for our Road Division's Survey Team First Aid Kit.

Given the harsh nature of the climate in Central Australia, particularly during summer, and given the requirement for Road's Survey personnel to spend extended periods in the sun and heat, responsible attempts are made to provide appropriate protection for these staff.

Whilst provision of protective clothing has proved most beneficial, additional protection afforded by Blockout Cream to exposed parts of the body has been considered justified and its provision will continue.



This common sense approach is of course well supported by strong media anti-cancer advertising campaigns and medical opinion that our Department cannot afford to ignore. The prevention of skin cancer may well avoid further claims against the Department.

I trust that the above provides sufficient information to deal with the issues raised.

Thank you for the opportunity provided to offer comment.

Yours sincerely

I D GORDON

17 February 1988

CONSERVATION COMMISSION OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY



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N.T. 5750 AUSTRALIA
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OUR REF: D88/106
YOUR REF: 3/4/15

B-13/2

Mr Mick Palmer
Chairman
Public Accounts Committee
GPO Box 3721
DARWIN NT 5794

Dear Mr Palmer

RE: 'WASTE WATCH'

The following comments are provided in response to the matters raised in your letter of 21 January 1988.

CROCODILE CONSULTANCY

G Webb Pty Ltd are currently employed as consultants to the Conservation Commission on a four year contract to research and develop management prescriptions for the conservation of crocodiles in the wild and their successful utilisation in the fledging crocodile ranching industry.

The consultancy is funded at \$305,000 per annum (with CPI related adjustment) on the basis that existing available Commission facilities are provided for accommodation, research and logistic support. The provision of such support avoids the need for significant additional cash expenditure and effectively uses existing Commission resources.

The consultant team consists of nine (9) researchers plus additional post graduate students and visiting specialists attracted to working with the team. The NT crocodile research effort is widely regarded as the World leader in this important wildlife management and biology area. The team is composed of specialists in biology, animal husbandry, statistical methods, data analysis, population determination and monitoring, and crocodile management.

EXE-D5067

The Conservation Commission does not have sufficient resources to provide an equivalent research effort in this specialised area with such a high level of scientific recognition. The four (4) research officers in the Commission's Wildlife Research (North) are required to cover a diverse range of wildlife issues including cane toad control, feral animal control and biology, habitat definition and management, waterfowl management, biological surveys and rare and endangered species. This research project is required to be responsive to the issues of the day and cannot also mount the type of sustained input of effort required to address the urgent issues of crocodile conservation and utilisation.

In relation to the Crocodile consultancy, it should be noted that, under contract, the period for research is defined and limited, the objectives of the research are explicit and achievement of targets is under regular (yearly) assessment.

The Conservation Commission readily acknowledges the competence effectiveness and achievements of G Webb Pty Ltd. Some 70 scientific publications on crocodiles, the films "Living With Crocodiles", "Forgotten Crocodiles of the Stone Country" (funded by National Geographic), the benchmark publication "Wildlife Management - Crocodiles and Alligators", the achievement of CITES listing to allow international trade, articles in National and International magazines are directly attributable to the Contract for Consultancy. In addition, acting as an independent entity but consistent with the management strategy he has helped to develop, Dr Webb conducts some 100 media interviews per year on crocodiles, has sold the US film rights to two novels on crocodiles ("Dark Age" and "Arnhem Connection") and attracts funding and other assistance from outside sources. These activities effectively double the Territory's public awareness and information program on crocodiles at no cost to Government.

The Commission would expect that at the expiry of the current contract the developing crocodile industry would have achieved economic viability (expected to exceed \$1.5 million in export earnings per year) and would make significant financial contribution to additional research which may be required.

In summary the Conservation Commission believes the approach of a Contract for Consultancy in developing crocodile management and a new industry for the Territory is demonstrably productive, efficient and cost effective.

CAR FLEET

Prior to the Commission's move to Palmerston in December 1987, there were 81 sedans, station wagons, and 4 wd's, plus 8 commercial trucks located at the Commission's Berrimah offices. Of this number, 19 vehicles had home garaging approval. Regular checks have been carried out on home garaging and additional home garaging was only on approved 'over-night' or casual requirements.

USE OF STAFF FOR PERSONAL GAIN

As items (a) and (c) of these allegations refer to myself personally I have referred the matters to the Ombudsman for independent investigation and report, which will be provided to you upon receipt. In addition, Item (d) has also been referred to the Ombudsman for investigation.

Item (b) - Following Cyclone Gretel the Commission assisted the Darwin City Council and other Government agencies with clean up operations. The Commission's role was:

- . lopping, straightening of trees and clean-up up of urban parks, medians and road verges; and
- . cutting up large trees in house yards, particularly those endangering property or facilities and those when occupants were disadvantaged in some manner.

The operation was carried out with the approval of the Minister for Conservation and the officer who was in charge of the clean up has indicated that he has no knowledge of the allegation that senior executives had their yards cleaned up.

Item (d) - Investigations by the Commission indicate that only two Commission employees have recently constructed boats at their residences. Neither of these officers are on the Executive and the Commission's only qualified carpenter has denied that he carried out any work on these boats during normal working hours.

COST CONTAINMENT AT BERRY SPRINGS WILDLIFE PARK (ZOO)

The original budget for the Wildlife Park, as approved by Government in 1982, was for a construction estimated to cost \$4m. In the subsequent report to Government, the Commission identified that the prolonged construction period had resulted in an erosion of real value of money and that an indexation of construction costs to 1986/87 dollars was estimated at \$1m.

Further to this, additional works have been identified which had not been included in the original concept but had subsequently been found to be essential for the efficient and effective operation of the Wildlife Park. The estimated additional cost of these works totals \$1.2m.

The aquatic exhibit as a Bicentennial project had already been approved by Government to a total of \$760,000 including an additional Bicentennial component of \$0.5m. Government approved the revised construction costs for the Wildlife Park and in summary, these are presented as follows:

1982 approval -	\$4.0m
Indexation to 1986/87 dollars -	\$1.0m
Bicentennial proposal -	\$0.5m
Additional works -	<u>\$1.2m</u>
 Total -	 <u>\$6.7m</u>

The plant nursery is not a duplication. A small holding nursery has been established at Berry Springs Wildlife Park to hold and grow on all plants required for landscaping of the aviaries and other exhibits. The Commission nursery at Berrimah is in the process of being closed down. The holding nursery at Berry Springs Wildlife Park is a site nursery, for holding, growing on and hardening off plants required for the Wildlife Park.

COBOURG PATROL BOATS

The Commission is currently reviewing the total boating requirements and costs for the Cobourg project. The results of this review should be available early in March and the information will be provided to the Committee at that time.

The Commission is concerned at the high cost of maintenance for the two large Cobourg vessels and with the extended delays in completing repairs. The suitability of the vessels to the requirements of the project is also being investigated as part of the review exercise.

Downtime awaiting parts to be supplied from overseas sources has contributed to the repair problem. Where both vessels could not be kept operational, priority has gone to the Smith Point area and at times the Cape Don vessel has been relocated to Smith Point as the backup vessel.

Maintenance of the vessels involve the local Ranger staff on a day-to-day basis and a Darwin based contractor for more involved operations. This is carried out through visitation by aircraft and due to Cape Don accommodation difficulties

is generally restricted to a daily basis. A further consideration in the current review is the possibility of regular scheduled maintenance runs to Darwin where servicing may be of a higher standard.

CONTRACT - CROCODILE CAPTURE

Public safety is a major consideration of the Northern Territory's Crocodile Management Strategy. As a facet of this program the Conservation Commission responds to all reports of problem crocodiles throughout the Top End. Gove, Borroloola, and Darwin Harbour are special cases and all crocodiles are treated as problem animals. The response, usually, is to capture the animals and relocate them to remote areas or to the crocodile farms.

The work is time consuming, arduous and unpleasant and demands a high level of skill. The Conservation Commission is investigating alternative methods of handling the problem including contract capture. The nature of the task which causes such a drain on Commission resources is a major constraint in developing an effective contract to capture.

Commission rangers removed 140 crocodiles from Darwin Harbour during 1987. While a number of large animals (3 m +) were captured, the majority were less than 2 m. Time to capture may vary from 3 or 4 individuals per night to nil capture in six nights of search. Given that Government requires an immediate response to crocodile reports in Darwin Harbour and the logistic support needed to maintain a 24 hour, year round callout service the Commission has as yet not been able to develop contractual arrangements that are cost effective and practical.

The Commission is also working with the three crocodile farms to come up with an alternative solution. In the meantime the Commission will continue to utilise its resources to ensure minimum public risk at major population centres and recreation areas.

CONTRACT MAINTENANCE.

The Commission would generally prefer to use contract services for maintenance activities on parks and reserves under Commission control, and wherever possible, such services are engaged. One of the major constraints on the wider use of contract maintenance services for cleaning, firewood collection, etc. operations is insufficient funding allocation. All project areas have suffered cuts in real funding levels in recent years and at Berry Springs Nature Park, for example, this has meant that maintenance contracts issued for 1986/87 could not be renewed in 1987/88. Similar situations have arisen in other areas and staff resources have had to be utilised.

Contracts for cleaning, mowing and slashing are successfully used in the Pine Creek/Daly Project area and contracts are also in operation at the Rapid Creek Water Gardens.

With respect to firewood collection, this has not previously been contracted due to the high cost of such an operation and often remote location where the service is required. However the Commission has approached Correctional Services with a view to providing meaningful work for field based prison operations. Negotiations on this are still at an early stage, and there are likely to be a number of logistical problems to overcome, however this could become a significant contributor to cost reductions even if introduced to selected areas only.

BIOLOGICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The Conservation Commission Wildlife Research Project has established a strong level of contact and co-operation with the University College of the NT. Research staff are used as supervisors of post graduate studies and as specialist guest lecturers. Research opportunities are co-ordinated wherever possible.

The primary objectives of University research and Commission research needs are at variance. A significant proportion of University research is for basic research and academic purposes and concentrates on learning and teaching scientific method. These research projects are, of necessity, different in scope and duration to achieve academic recognition for the researcher.

The Commission carries out applied research with the primary objective of improved management of ecosystems and the environment. The work is intensely practical, the direction of research being set by managers needs. Each researcher carries out a diverse range of investigations at any one time and are subject to redeployment at managements direction to address urgent needs or respond to changed priorities. Much of the work is long term and need not involve the same research worker during the entire period. All work is the property of the Commission.

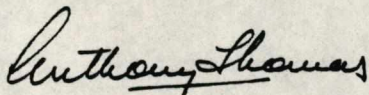
With regard to the specific points raised

- a) The herbarium accommodation has improved with its relocation to Palmerston. Only a specifically designed herbarium building could satisfy the long-term needs of a herbarium.

Similarly the wildlife research function should, in time, be housed in a specifically designed facility. Because it is essential for research findings and data bases to be effectively communicated and implemented in management, the Commission would seek to have such facilities located in proximity to managers. In the meantime the Commission is making arrangements to improve the accommodation of Wildlife Research.

- b) The Conservation Commission is committed to actively assisting the University College in their chosen field of research specialisation.
- c) The Conservation Commission wildlife research projects currently obtain about half of their operational funding from outside sources. To further assist in obtaining external funding, the Commission is seeking Research Institute status for the purposes of tax concessions to donors. It is considered that, with its different priorities, seeking funding in the name of the University College would not improve the chances of obtaining outside funding and could in fact dilute the level of outside funding for the Commission's Research projects.

Your sincerely



W.A. Thomas
Director of Conservation

19 February 1988

CONSERVATION COMMISSION OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY



HEAD OFFICE
P.O. BOX 496, PALMERSTON
N.T. 5787 AUSTRALIA
TELEPHONE: (089) 89 4411
TELEX: PARKS AA85336; FACSIMILE: (089) 32 3849

OUR REF: D88/102

YOUR REF: 3/4/15

CONFIDENTIAL

Chairman
Public Accounts Committee
Department of the Legislative Assembly
of the Northern Territory
G.P.O. Box 3721
DARWIN, N.T. 5794

Dear Sir,

I refer to your letter dated 21 January 1988 which included three allegations made against me personally. You will recall that I wrote to you on 4 February 1988 to advise that I had requested the Ombudsman to independently investigate these allegations as I am of the opinion that it is inappropriate for me to personally carry out such an investigation under these circumstances.

The Ombudsman has now provided me with a report dated 16 May 1988, a copy of which is attached.

Due to the nature of the Ombudsman's findings, I do not anticipate any adverse finding by your Committee. However, if your Committee contemplates any further action in these matters or any adverse finding, it is my request that I should be granted the opportunity to appear before your Committee, and that I should be given prior notice of the details of any allegations, charges or action contemplated.

Yours faithfully,

Anthony Thomas

W.A. Thomas
Director of Conservation

26 MAY 1988

CONFIDENTIAL

OMBUDSMAN INVESTIGATION INTO ALLEGATIONS THAT

MR W.A. THOMAS USED THE SERVICES OF THE

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

FOR PERSONAL GAIN

On 4 February 1988 the Director of Conservation, Mr W.A. Thomas asked that I independently investigate three allegations against him by the Legislative Assembly Public Accounts Committee (L.A.P.A.C.). Mr Thomas considered that it was inappropriate for him to personally carry out an investigation and asked me to provide a report to the L.A.P.A.C.

The Complaints

The allegations are that:

- . Mr Thomas had staff completely landscape and install a drip system, spa and fence in his Government house in Alice Springs through the utilisation of staff and funds allocated to the Park Development Section for 1986/87
- . Mr Thomas had repairs carried out on his personal boat trailer by Commission mechanics
- . a carpenter was required to work on the construction of an executive's personal sail boat in Commission time.

My enquiries into these matters are complete; they have included interviews with staff of the L.A.P.A.C., the Conservation Commission and the Department of Lands and Housing; and inspection of relevant documents.

The Investigation

N.B. Details of the investigation and discussion have been deleted by the Public Accounts Committee with the concurrence of the N.T. Ombudsman, Dr Rhodes.

Conclusions

Accepting that a total expenditure limit of \$150,000 for housing for the Director was specified by the then Chief Minister, Mr I. Tuxworth, I have established that those budgetary constraints have not been exceeded. I established that the payment of costs

associated with purchasing/installing the spa and erecting the fence was not borne by the 1986/87 Park Development Fund as alleged but from the N.T.H.C. in its upgrading costs. I have established that the landscaping was carried out to upgrade the premises owned by the N.T.H.C. and not for the personal gain of Mr Thomas.

Repairs were carried out on Mr Thomas' personal boat trailer by Conservation Commission staff mechanics in Commission time. However, the allegation that this work was authorised by Mr Thomas cannot be resolved. After considering the facts surrounding the matter, I consider it is minor and, having regard to the relocation of Mr Thomas, not one of personal gain. In the circumstances, it was to the benefit of the public purse and not to the benefit of Mr Thomas in that the boat was not relocated to Alice Springs.

In relation to the allegation that a carpenter worked on a sail boat in Commission time, I found no evidence to corroborate the allegation.

ORIGINAL SIGNED AND DATED: 16/5/88

(DR K. RHODES)



DARWIN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Our Ref: 86/139

18 February 1988

Chairman
Public Account Committee
GPO Box 3721
DARWIN 5794

Dear Sir,

RE: "WASTE WATCH"

In reply to your letter 3/4/15 of 21 January 1988 I make the following comments on the issues raised.

BENEFITS FOR DEANS

- Travel Budget.

The Institute allocates its monies for travel across all Branches and Faculties and in turn each Faculty/Branch must present a program of travel for the year to the Budget Committee. I can assure you that there is insufficient allocation of travel monies to permit a specific allocation of \$17,000 per Dean. In fact all Faculties allocate their travel resources through their Faculty Boards at the beginning of each financial year and reviews are conducted by these Boards continually throughout the year.

- Travel First Class

Until the Cabinet Decision of late 1987, Deans, Deputy Directors and the Director were entitled to travel first class as were staff at similar levels within the Northern Territory Public Service. In order to utilise funds more effectively the Deans very often utilised economy or business class travel rather than first class. Since the Cabinet Decision on first class travel the only person in the Institute who travels first class is the Director.

- Use of Car

The administration policy operating within the Institute is that each Dean puts his car into the Institute car pool at 8.00am each day and does not have access to it until close of business for the day. If the Dean wishes to utilise a car during the day he, like any other officer, must make an advance booking. This policy has been within the Institute for many years and records clearly substantiate this policy. In the event of a car not being available each Dean has the opportunity to use Cabcharge.



- Personal Rainbow Computers

All Secretaries to Deans are provided with word processors and this is normal for the level of work being carried out. The Administrative Officer in each Faculty is generally allocated a personal computer and the Secretaries have access to these computers if necessary. Of the four Deans only two Deans have computers and they are the Dean of Business and the Dean of Applied Science. Both Deans use their computers extensively in the pursuance of their particular discipline. It should be pointed out that a significant number of academic staff in both these Faculties are also provided with desk top computers for lecturing, curriculum development etc.

RECRUITMENT OF FOREIGN STUDENTS

Attached for your information is a submission made to the Chief Minister on 9 December 1987. The attachment clearly indicates how the Institute is handling its promotions for foreign students. When the Institute first involved itself with foreign students, the courses were generally of a short duration. There was much liaison with foreign governments who sought our expertise and skills. Our professionalism has paid off in that in 1987 the Institute attracted 10 full time full fee paying students and in 1988 this number has increased to approximately 60. One can readily appreciate the spin offs to the N.T. economy in terms of accommodation, living expenses, parents' visits etc. directly attributable to these foreign students. In addition the Institute is providing facilities and dedicated staff for the students out of the revenue obtained.

CISTERN - BUILDING 23

From the information provided in the PAC letter it is not possible to identify any particular cistern in Building 23 that is running non-stop. Normally when cisterns are causing problems the cleaners report to Operations on a daily basis and remedial action is taken as soon as possible. Our records indicate that the plumber had serviced the cisterns in Building 23 approximately 12 times in 1987. The reason for this has been that fine grit has been coming through the water mains due to building activity in the area. The grit has caused leaks. There is no knowledge of any particular cistern running non-stop.

STAFF TURNOVER

- The information provided does not agree with the statistics currently available within the Institute. It is stated that 70% of the DIT budget goes into lecturers salaries. This is incorrect. In fact approximately 80% of the total annual appropriation of DIT is for the payment of salaries for all staff. Within the approved staffing level of 469 the ratio of academic staff to administrative staff is about 1:1.

For your information the following staff turnover statistics are provided to indicate the turnover rates for the period 1.1.87 to 31.10.87 and the calendar year 1986.

STAFF TURNOVER STATISTICS

	<u>1.1.87-31.10.87</u>	<u>1.7.87-31.10.87</u>	<u>1986</u>
	%	%	%
Administration	6.25	2.29	14.64
Library	11.53	5.76	25.53
Business	9.76	2.4	21.6
Arts	14.31	5.24	26.07
Applied Science	9.62	2.32	19.44
Education	26.64	4.08	36.71

It will be noted that in 1986, following the restructure of the Institute, there was a high turnover of academic staff and now that the Institute has settled down the turnover has lessened considerably. There are of course other reasons for the small staff turnover in 1987, mainly relating to the economic situation. Jobs are generally scarcer.

- Administrative and Attitudinal

The comments made in respect of Administrative and Attitudinal are perceived as being a thrust of an academic and in this respect the comments are noted and respected. It should be noted that upon taking up duties as Director of the Darwin Institute of Technology I gave DIT a highly effective and efficient administrative profile with appointed personnel with administrative and academic expertise to occupy all senior administrative positions. These senior staff report to me through various committees and Faculty boards which have representation from all levels of staff. Further I hold regular meetings with the Staff Association on matters of concern as they affect the Institute. The Staff Association Executive contains representatives from both academic and administration areas. In view of this continual liaison I believe that all members of the Institute have an opportunity to positively participate in, and contribute to, the administration and governance of the Institute.

Finally I should point out that the "Green Paper" released by Mr Dawkins in December 1987 refers to various aspects of management in higher education institutions. The paper refers to a whole range of management issues including institutional management and utilisation of resources in relation to productivity. I am satisfied the Institute meets, in every sense, the Commonwealth Government's expectations of the new type of higher education institution.

MEMO/CIRCULAR DISTRIBUTION

The problem here is a 'no win' situation for the Institute. When we put notices on to notice boards people complain they never saw them and, when we send circulars to everybody, the complaint is that it is a waste of paper. Either way the management is seen as being in the wrong. We are re-assessing the situation with a view to economy.

SENIOR STAFF REVIEW AND CLASSIFICATION CREEP

The restructure of the Institute took place just over two years ago and following an in-depth review by the Public Service Commissioner's Office and the DIT Council, the salaries of senior management were tied to the appropriate salary scale as applied through the Academic Salaries Tribunal. In the matter of restructure some positions were changed and abolished, eg the Bursar position at E4 level was abolished. Whilst the Institute has its own Conditions of Service which approximate those currently existing within the NTPS, it must be pointed out that all senior administrative positions are already identified within existing counterparts in other NTPS departments. Because of the current system of appropriating a salary per position, both Treasury and the PSC's Office do get involved with any movements in senior administrative positions and therefore it is not a matter for the Institute to upgrade unilaterally without reference to these government departments. The present structure of senior management within the Institute clearly has parity with similar tertiary institutions in respect of academic salary scales and, as applicable, with administrative salary scales in the NTPS.

I believe that these comments respond positively to the issues raised in your letter and should you seek further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

KEVIN W DAVIS
Director

MEMORANDUM

DARWIN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Sent to CM - 16/12/87

TO: CHIEF MINISTER

THROUGH: MINISTER FOR ~~EDUCATION~~ *SD*

FROM: DIRECTOR *1789*

DATE: 9 DECEMBER 1987 REF: 1631

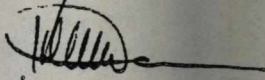
SUBJECT: INFORMATION ON OVERSEAS TRAVEL BY DARWIN
INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY STAFF, AND STUDENT
RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION RATES

The following information is attached.

- Travel to South East Asia by Institute staff during the last two years (Attachment A). A total of 16 trips to South East Asia were made during the period 9.6.1985 to 5.12.1987 for the purposes of recruitment and the setting up of agencies and offices in the region.
- Student recruitment, retention and success. The Institute has conducted a number of short courses since 1982. To date, these have attracted 106 students and have generated substantial revenue (Attachment B).
- As a result of the Darwin Institute of Technology's recruitment drive we presently have 10 full fee paying overseas students studying at the Institute, mainly in the fields of business and applied science (Attachment C). These students are expected to continue studying in 1988. The target for 1988 is 30 full fee paying students. Currently 62 students have applied to study next year and 45 offers of places have been sent out.
- Attachment D lists educational trade fairs that will be conducted in the region during the next six months. The Institute feels that it is important to be represented at at least some of these exhibitions and deposits have already been paid on exhibitions in both Hong Kong and Thailand.
- Attachment E gives a summary of overseas student numbers, expected rates of growth, and expected revenue, which is anticipated to be \$900,000 by 1989.

RS2:163

Attachment F details developments in setting up offices and agencies in South East Asia, and affiliations with local Colleges/Institutes. Short courses have already been conducted at our Brunei office and courses in Hairdressing, Building and Construction Management, Welding and Concrete, and Project Management are being developed. Attachment F also lists prospective overseas students showing their country of origin and the courses in which they wish to enrol.



KEVIN W DAVIS

Travel to South East Asia during the last two years by Institute staff for the purposes of recruitment, publicity, attendance at trade fairs, and organising agencies and offices in the region.

NAMES	DATES TRAVELLED	PLACES VISITED
Dr K Solomon	09/06/85 - 26/06/85	Brunei, Kota Kinabalu, Kuching, Singapore, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Pt Moresby
Dr K Solomon Dr H Gittleson	17/11/86 - 30/11/86	Brunei, Sabah, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Jakarta, Singapore
Mr K Davis Dr K Solomon	14/03/86 - 25/03/86	Brunei, Sabah, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Singapore
Mr K Davis Dr K Solomon	17/08/86 - 29/08/86	Brunei, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Singapore, Jakarta
Mr K Davis Dr K Solomon	25/10/86 - 01/11/86	Singapore, Brunei, Jakarta
Dr H Gittleson Mr K Downer	08/11/86 - 01/12/86	Singapore, Bangkok, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur
Mr P Gregory	29/11/86 - 06/12/86	Singapore
Mr K Davis Dr K Solomon	01/03/87 - 14/03/87	Brunei, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur
Dr K Solomon Dr L Greenword Dr H Gittleson	20/04/87 - 29/04/87	Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Brunei
Dr K Solomon Mr J Syme	08/06/87 - 13/06/87	Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Brunei
Dr K Solomon Dr G Davidson	01/08/87 - 08/08/87	Singapore, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Brunei
Mr K Davis Dr K Solomon	16/08/87 - 20/08/87	Brunei
Dr F Cameron	02/09/87 - 10/09/87	Singapore, Hong Kong, Brunei
Dr G Davidson	18/10/87 - 31/10/87	Jakarta, Singapore
Dr K Solomon	18/10/87 - 31/10/87	Brunei, Sabah, Singapore
Mr M Vallentine	28/11/87 - 05/12/87	Singapore, Brunei, Sabah, Kuching

INTERNATIONAL COURSES CONDUCTED SINCE 1982
DIVISION OF EXTENSION SERVICES

<u>Number of students</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Country of origin</u>	<u>Title of course</u>
14	1982	Sarawak Indonesia Malaysia	Middle Management
6	1983	Brunei	Horticulture, Library Technician Construction Practice
11	1983	Indonesia	Middle Management
11	1984	Malaysia Brunei	Construction Practice
7	1984	Malaysia Brunei	Executive Management
1	1984	Brunei	Horticulture
15	1984	New Guinea	Small Business
6	1985	Brunei	Building Inspectors, Architectural and Construction Drafting, Construction Practice
17	1986	11 Asian Countries	Computers and Their Application in Management
7	1986	Malaysia Brunei	Construction Practice
3	1986	Malaysia Thailand	Middle Management
1	1986	Brunei	Management
2	1987	Brunei	Construction Practice
2	1987	Brunei	Management
3	1987	Brunei	Combined Senior Management
<hr/>			
106			

NAME	COURSE	ATTENTION FEE \$200	ANNUAL COURSE FEE	ACCUMULATION	OTHERS
<u>LIM HOCK SAH</u> PATRICK	CERT IN BUILDING AND QUANTITY SURVEYING	R/N: 04075 DATE: 5.12.86	\$5000 R/N: 4000 (15.1.81)		
<u>LAU GEK FONG</u> DANNY	ASSOCIATE DIPLOMA IN ARCHITECTURAL DRAFTING	R/N: 02481 DATE: 24.11.86	\$5000 R/N: 04042 (2.12.86)		
<u>LEIGH BROWN</u>	CERT IN BUILDING AND QUANTITY SURVEYING		\$5000 R/N: 4001 (15.1.81)	SINGLE	
<u>SHAHRUDIN BIN MUSTAPHA</u>	ASSOCIATE DIPLOMA IN ELECTRONICS AND COMMUNICATIONS	R/N: 02480 DATE: 24.11.86	\$5000 (10.12.86)		} WITHDRAWN FROM COURSE 12/2/87.

1

NAME	COURSE	APPLICATION FEE \$200	ANNUAL COURSE FEES	ACCOMMODATION	OTHERS
SANATH U <u>RUHUNAGE</u>	ASSOCIATE DIPLOMA IN ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING		\$5000 R/N:04162 (15.12.86)		

NAME	COURSE	ATLANTA \$200	ANNUAL COST IES	ACCOMMODATION	OTHERS
TAN WOON CHENG JIMMY	BACHELOR OF BUSINESS (ACCOUNTING) Follow up GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN ADMINISTRATION		\$6000 R/N:04202 (2.1.87)	MARRIED ON-CAMPUS (Prefers Off-Campus)	

NAME	COURSE	TOTAL AMOUNT \$200	TOTAL COST HIS	ACCOMMODATION	OTHERS
BUWONO <u>HARTONO</u>	ELICOS/BRIDGING MATHS		\$3000 R/N: ()		
JULIUS <u>SUTJIADI</u>	BACHELOR OF BUSINESS (COMPUTING)		\$5993 R/N:04281 (6.1.87)	SINGLE	
RULY <u>SJAFIANI</u>	BACHELOR OF BUSINESS (ACCOUNTING)	R/N:02479 DATE:24.11.86	\$6000 R/N:01743 (20.11.86)	SINGLE	
BUDIMAN <u>HENDRAWAN</u>	BACHELOR OF BUSINESS (ACCOUNTING)		\$6000 R/N:0742 (20.11.86)	DOUBLE \$100 R/N:04214 (5.1.87)	
ALAN <u>YAZID</u>	BACHELOR OF BUSINESS	R/N:	\$6000 R/N:		

ATTACHMENT D

Date	Event	Venue	Cost
December '87 3-6	International Education Career Development Week	SINGAPORE	
February 5 - 8	"Australia Only" Education Exhibition	HONG KONG	\$500 (pai dep.
March 11-13	<u>Career '88</u>	SINGAPORE	\$900
March - April	H-IMS Exhibition and Conference <u>Academia '88</u> - 2nd Asia - Pacific International Exhibition on Academic Institutions and Educational Tools Fair; 12 March - 11 April '88		
March 25-28	Academia '88	HONG KONG	\$3,000
April 2-4	Academia '88	JAKARTA	\$3,000
April 2-4	Academia '88	SINGAPORE	\$3,000
April 8-11	Academia '88	MALAYSIA	\$3,000
April 19-21	Austrade Education and Training Mission	SINGAPORE	
April last week	Seminar for Invited Guests - 3 open days - 2 days for follow-up appointments, interviews etc.	KOREA (Seoul)	\$2,500
May	Education and Training Program	THAILAND	\$500 (pai dep.
May	Austrade organised presentation	KOREA	
June	Austrade organised presentation	INDONESIA	

NOTES ON OVERSEAS STUDENTS ATTENDING DARWIN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY IN 1988

-
- . Target for 1988 was thirty (30) full fee paying students. DIT currently has a record of 62 students who have applied to study at DIT next year.
 - . These students have applied for entry into a range of courses across the Business, Education, Arts and Applied Science faculties. By far the most popular course for overseas students is Bachelor of Business in Accounting. Approximately one third of the applications are for entry into this course.
 - . The majority of students are from Hong Kong, followed by Brunei and Malaysia. Others come from Fiji, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and China.
 - . Charges for full fee overseas students range from A\$5,000 - A\$6,000 per year plus A\$200 application fee. The program should generate in excess of \$250,000 by the middle of 1988.
 - . The Institute is handling 35-40 written enquiries per week from potential students from overseas countries, seeking information and applications for DIT courses.
 - . At the current rate of growth, DIT can expect to attract in excess of 100 new students for 1989. If 100 is added to the 60 continuing students for 1989, the revenue for the Institute in that year will amount to about \$900,000. Thus the program has excellent potential for expansion.
 - . Considerable attention has been given during 1987 to marketing DIT courses throughout the Asian countries and this has generated excellent results. Marketing the Institute courses will again be given a high profile in 1988.
 - . It should be noted that the international program is fully self funding and does not affect Territory or Commonwealth funding for DIT TAFE or Advanced Education courses.
 - . The Institute also runs short courses in Brunei and will be offering short courses in Malaysia in the near future. These also generate substantial revenue for the International Programs account.
 - . DIT will also be offering about 20 places in 1988 to subsidised students from overseas. These students do not attract funding as they are Australian Government sponsored. They do, however, bring extra business to the Territory.

OVERSEAS REPORT TO COUNCILBRUNEI

The office has officially opened and His Excellency the High Commissioner for Australia, Mr John Storey, attended the "soft" opening with local invited guests.

Courses have already commenced with

1. A five day Management Course for Senior Government Officers at the Government Training Centre conducted by Dr K Solomon.
2. First Aid Course for Brunei Armed Forces, the Department of Sport, and two local schools to be run 22-28 November 1987.
3. Senior Management Courses on Evaluation of Programmes by Dr Anona Armstrong of Melbourne to be held 22-28 November 1987.

Courses on Hairdressing, Building and Construction Management, Welding, Concrete and Project Management are being developed.

Mrs Ratna Hj Mohd Said has been appointed as secretary to Mr Foo.

SABAH

Dr Solomon visited the AMC School of Business in Kota Kinabalu. This is a very impressive private business college established in spacious new premises in the centre of the city. It wishes to enter a twinning teaching arrangement commencing in first semester 1988. It is recommended that we affiliate with this institution as it will provide large numbers of full fee-paying students on transfer to DIT.

Also the College is affiliated with a large private college in Sarawak and they also wish to arrange twinning with the Institute.

INDONESIA

Dr Davidson undertook an intensive marketing tour in Indonesia, visiting Jakarta and four provincial centres. It is anticipated that considerable numbers of students will be applying to study at DIT in 1988-9.

OVERSEAS RECRUITING

To date, we have 25 students who have paid deposits with at least another 10 in the pipeline, and another 10-15 to come. It is anticipated that we will double our projected intake with at least 60 students for 1988, and a projected income of at least \$300,000.

In addition, we have had over 180 applications from sponsored students from overseas. However, these do not attract any funding as they are Australian government sponsored. They do, however, bring extra business to the Territory. We will restrict enrolments in this category to approximately 30.

For your information I attach (Attachment 181A) a list of prospective overseas students showing their country of origin and the courses in which they wish to enrol.

KEITH SOLOMON
Deputy Director

12 November 1987

COUCO2/KS13



CONFIDENTIAL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

PO Box 4821 Darwin NT 5794

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Telephone: (089) 89 5857
Telex: AA85056

PMS/364/MMB

87/1540

Mr Mick Palmer MLA
Chairman
Public Accounts Committee
of the Legislative Assembly
of the Northern Territory
PO Box 3721
DARWIN NT 5794

B24/2

Dear Mr Palmer

Attached to this letter are the answers to the allegations of waste by the Department of Education made to your committee in its Wastewatch role. These answers are supplied in the order and with the headings used in your letter of 21 January 1988.

You will note that the answers vary in length and fullness. This is because as you pointed out in your letter some of the allegations made are irrelevant or inapplicable.

The Department of Education notes that some of the allegations made could indicate some of its employees may have a distorted perception of the work performed by their colleagues in functional areas other than their own.

As a consequence these employees are inclined to draw the wrong conclusions as to the value of their colleagues' work.

While I believe this problem is not confined to this Department, it is a matter which will continue to be a focus of both on the job and inservice training programs conducted by the Department.

The assistance of your committee in drawing these matters to the attention of the Department is appreciated.

Yours sincerely

G A Hodgson
G A HODGSON
ACTING SECRETARY

19 FEB 1988

1. ESTABLISHMENT ISSUES (Various)

(A) RECLASSIFICATION OF POSITION OF DIRECTOR
(SOUTHERN REGION)

The reclassification of this position was considered necessary due to the restructuring of Senior Executive responsibilities in the Department of Education.

The original Senior Executive Establishment consisted of one x E7 and 3 x E6 officers.

Following the devolution of major new responsibilities to the Southern Region e.g. responsibility for all TAFE matters, schools operations, staffing, finance etc, a review of Senior Executive levels was conducted.

The end result of this review, and that conducted by the Co-ordination Committee in November 1987, was that the Senior Executive structure was varied by the abolition of:

- . 3 x E4
- . 1 x E6
- . 2 x E5 positions

Given these major changes in responsibilities, the increased accountability of the Assistant Secretary (South), the trend to devolution of administration and the overall cost effectiveness of Executive modifications, the reclassification is considered to be administratively and economically sound.

(B) SPECIAL PROJECTS POOL

The Special Projects Pool was created to enable the Department of Education to react positively to the changing needs of both the general community and the institutions charged with the responsibility of delivering education services within the framework of Government policy.

The positions in this pool were created with the approval of Government and are directly controlled by the accountable officer - the Departmental Head.

It has been past practice to allocate these positions for a variety of purposes i.e. as temporary appointments for short term projects, special projects officers e.g. the Bicentennial Co-ordinator; as a placement to enable a project to commence prior to becoming self funding e.g. the Centre for Appropriate Technology, and as placement for officers responsible for special projects of an ongoing nature.

These positions provide the Department of Education with the flexibility to respond immediately to changing Government priorities without the need to rely on over establishment positions.

Since the 'pool' was created a large number of projects have been started and completed and educational institutions' varying staffing needs have been catered for without affecting the efficient operations of other sections of the Department.

(C) REVIEW OF NTTS POSITIONS (ADMINISTRATION)

Where positions within the Department of Education which appear to administrative but are classified as Teaching Service positions it is because specific educational training and background is considered essential and educational input and decision making is integral to the position.

The Materials Development Unit includes two NTTS officers, an Education Officer and a Senior Education Officer.

THE EDUCATION OFFICER MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT is primarily a writer who works with teachers and curriculum advisors to produce teaching materials for classroom use. The officer is particularly involved in areas like History, Geography and Environmental Science where commercially available materials do not adequately provide for the Northern Territory Curriculum.

The officer's work involves research, writing and selection production of materials for use in particular topics, i.e. picture sets, slides, text blackline matters, slide notes and teacher notes. He/she is responsible for the ordering and supply of slide materials. The Education Officer Materials Development conducts teacher inservice and school visits to advise on the use of resource materials in the classroom.

THE SENIOR EDUCATION OFFICER MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT is responsible for the overall quality control of materials produced by the unit. While this includes areas like layout design and printing which would be associated with any printery, the more important functions are in relation to education quality and appropriateness and instructional design. The officer is responsible for the implementation of departmental policy on matriculation, grammar and the avoidance of discrimination and bias - areas which can be quite subtle but are critical in the educational context.

The SEO Materials Development initiates educational projects and gives assistance to curriculum officers preparing educational materials and to teachers involved in the writing of correspondence materials in particular. His expertise in instructional design covers such areas as insertion and placement of questions, level and appropriateness of language for the student group, activities and examples as well as conventions of style of presentation and design considerations.

While the SEO Materials Development has overall responsibility for the printery, day to day management is the responsibility of the Production Manager who is an NTPS Officer.

(D) UNDER UTILISED AND INAPPROPRIATELY PLACED STAFF *

If has been alleged that certain staff have been under utilised and inappropriately placed.

Each of the officers referred to originally occupied positions which have been abolished as a result of Administrative reviews. In such circumstances it is not always possible to relocate officers to positions which utilise their specific skills.

Additionally, several other related factors need to be considered in individual cases - factors which are not readily observable to staff not closely associated with the actual events.

MR

Paid as Band 4 Secondary Principal but has no effective position.

Mr was identified as being potentially excess at his substantive level of B4S on 16.4.87. He was given formal notice of his situation by the Teaching Service Commissioner on 6.5.87. To date it has not been possible to identify a suitable vacancy for him at this level. He is being dealt with according to the provisions of the NTPS Redeployment and Redundancy Award and if he has not been placed at his substantive level by the beginning of Semester 1 1989 he will either be transferred to a lower position or retired. At the moment he is on long service leave (4.1 - 26.2.88). Prior to that he was on sick leave for the period 21.8.87 - 30.11.87. Mr is being held against a position doing special projects.

* NAMES DELETED BY PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

MR :

Paid as NTPS level E4 and now in an E3 position.

Mr position was identified for abolition on 3.7.87. It was actually abolished on 24.1.88. Mr has been notified as being potentially excess to DOLAS and attempts are being made to match him up with a suitable position at the E4 level - to date unsuccessfully. Mr is being held against a position pending redeployment.

MR :

Paid as NTPS level E7.

was on recreation leave for the period 24.12.86 to 26.2.87 and sick leave for the period 9.4.87 to date. He was examined by the CMO on 23.12.87 but the report has not yet been received. Given leave dates it is not surprising he has not had a 'real' job since 24.12.86 at least. There are not many positions at level in the NTPS.

MR :

Paid as NTPS level E4.

Mr has been on sick leave since 25.6.87. He was examined by the CMO on 21.10.87 who recommended Mr be granted further sick leave to 1.3.88 when he should be re-examined by the CMO. Mr position was identified for abolition on 3.7.87 and was actually abolished on 24.11.87. DOLAS has been notified of Mr situation but it is understood they are not actively pursuing redeployment for him due to his absence on sick leave.

2. FEES FOR STUDENT TEACHERS - BATCHELOR COLLEGE

TAFEAC has approved a scale of fees for TAFE courses and is currently seeking Commonwealth approval for them. This is necessary as the Commonwealth provides funds to states and territories for 'fees foregone' when fees were abolished in the early seventies.

An administration fee (\$263 this year) is payable by all advanced education students - 'student teachers'. This is paid through the Abstudy grants which all students at Batchelor receive.

It is expected that should fees become payable for other courses students in receipt of Abstudy grants again will have their fees paid.

Numbers of students will be eligible for exemption from paying fees (if not in receipts of study grants) following the criteria set out by the Commonwealth. -

It is also worth noting that students and dependents pay board and lodging while in residence.

3. PART-TIME LECTURING - DARWIN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Investigations reveal that officers conducting work for DIT do so within the guidelines on outside employment laid down by the Department of Education.

4. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS - BATCHELOR COLLEGE

It is government policy to train Aboriginal teachers for schools in Aboriginal communities - '100 teachers by 1990'.

It is useful to compare developments in Aboriginal teacher education with those in developing countries in the past. In these countries when a formal education system was established, the first trial teachers were often those who could speak, read and write (to some degree) the colonial language. Over the years increasingly higher education standards were demanded of prospective teachers.

The current entry requirements for Aboriginal teachers include:

- . a minimum rating of two on the Australian Second Language Proficiency Rating Scale (adapted)
- . endorsement of application by community leaders
- . usually a reference from the local Principal, relating to ability to cope with the course
- . preferably (and usually) experience as an assistant in a school situation these requirements are kept under constant review.

A special one-semester Access Course is now provided for prospective teachers to upgrade their academic qualifications, especially in English and Maths.

In addition a standard is set in each of three years leading to the Associate Diploma of Teaching which, if not attained, precludes the student from proceeding further. The training provided for this is not wasted as most return to schools as assistants or to other forms of employment in their communities.

The allegation that 'at present any Aboriginal person who is vaguely interested in teaching is accepted into the course', is without foundation.

5. FEES FOR ADULT EDUCATION

The Department is conscious of the need to recover or offset costs associated with courses where possible. It is anticipated that collection of fees in Aboriginal Communities may face both actual and political problems.

Interim advice to Open College Regional Co-ordinators has been given as follows:

ISSUE:

Introduction of a sliding scale of administration charges for all TAFE Courses from the beginning of Second Semester 1987. TAFEAC endorsed the Administration charge ranging from a maximum of \$50 to a minimum of \$10 for each student enrolled at the institution being levied as from the beginning of Second semester 1987.

DRAFT RATES RECEIVED FROM:

Nhulunbuy Region

\$10 per student, per term for recreational and vocational courses
\$40 per student, per year - full year courses

Darwin Rural

\$10 per student, per term for recreational and vocational courses
\$40 per student, per year - full year courses

Darwin Region

\$10 per student, per term for recreational or vocational courses
\$25 per student, per semester - for full time courses

Tennant Creek Region

\$10 per student - 20 hours or less - all courses
\$20 per student - 40 hours or less - all courses
\$30 per student - 60 hours or less - all courses
\$40 per student - 80 hours or less - all courses
\$50 per student - 100 hours or less - all courses

Katherine Region

\$2.50 per student, per term - all courses

Alice Springs

\$10 per student, per term - all courses

FOR INTERIM CONSIDERATION

1. Administration fee format, common to all regions \$10 per student, per term for recreation and vocational courses (term = maximum period of 10 weeks)
\$50 per student, per year for full time courses.
2. The Administration fee to be applied to all Open College courses across the board.
3. Aboriginal persons i.e. pensioners, unemployed, part-time or full-time employees enrolling in Open College Courses be responsible for obtaining their own assistance toward fees i.e.

- full time students - obtain assistance for total course fees
 - part time students - obtain assistance for administration fee, except recreational courses.
4. Commonwealth assistance through the Department of Employment, Education and Training (EDDT) (was DEIR/COM ED.) toward administration fees may not be available after 1987 through Ab. Study assistance.
 5. If the fee is applied to all TAFE courses across the board, consideration could be given to a suitable simple procedure of accessing (e.g bulk billing) financial assistance from DEET. This could obviate the immediate difficulties that could arise as per point 3 and avoid the horrendous load of paperwork the applications could generate with the Regional Co-ordinators.
 6. EXCEPTIONS OR REDUCTIONS:
can be applied to the disadvantaged (i.e. unemployed and pensioners).

For non Aboriginal persons enrolling in Open College courses, some of the following categories could receive assistance through DEET with Aust. Study criteria.

- full time students - 16 years + income assessment
- part time students - 75% min study load, etc
- part time employees as part time students - 75% min study load, maximum \$2 000 income etc
- supporting parents benefit, widows pension (Class A), and invalid pensioners are all eligible for supplementary assistance
- unemployed persons (cancel U.B. on enrolment) eligible for study benefits
- old age pensioners not eligible unless cancel pension during time of study

The expected small number of exemptions or reductions given to the disadvantaged who are not eligible for assistance could be offset by increasing the minimum number of enrolments to balance course costs.

6. RELEVANCE OF COURSES

Courses/programs are offered which assist Aboriginal individuals and Communities gain those skills which enable self management to be achieved. Courses/programs are provided on a demand basis. The examples given were particularly inappropriate! Skills relate to both ~~practical physical skills~~ and skills relate to both ~~practical physical skills and skills~~ relating to management and negotiating processes etc together with a broad program enabling an understanding of local, state and national government functioning and structure.

Accordingly, no serious consideration can be given to the charge that the courses are a waste of money.

7. VACANT HEAD LEASED ACCOMMODATION - KATHERINE

There was a number of vacant head leased premises in Katherine during September 1987. Housing Commission accommodation became available into which teachers moved. Some units were left vacant due to teacher resignations.

All units in Katherine are occupied for the start of the 1988 school year.

8. YIRARA COLLEGE(A) TENDERS

At present an area of approximately 25 x 30 metres is used as a vegetable plot by students as part of their rural studies program.

It is considered that the produce from this plot would be minimal and certainly not sufficient to supply the College with vegetables for a reasonable period of time.

If this produce was used by the College the nett effect to contractors would be minimal.

It is envisaged that such a project on a major scale may not be economically viable for the following reasons:

- An Establishment Grant would be needed to provide appropriate machinery and irrigation equipment in addition to that which exists to maintain it.
 - Climatic factors such as floods, drought or frost may result in total crop loss.
 - Additional qualified supervisory staff may be required to supervise students, and to maintain the project during school holiday periods.
 - Possible opposition from Aboriginal groups/communities.
 - Possible union opposition (demarcation) students as opposed to gardeners.
 - Loss of revenue to local business may conflict with government policy on privatisation.
 - Increase in water usage would necessitate additional funding to the College's budget.
- * Perhaps a feasibility study by Department of Primary Production staff would provide pertinent information.

(B) JANITOR POSITION

A recent establishment review of Yirara College resulted in a reduction in gardening staff as well as the abolition of the Janitor's position. While a position of Curator was created, it is considered that the present incumbent is not licensed to perform such duties particularly those of an electrical nature.

If such a person was licensed union pressure would warrant the position being reclassified to that of an electrician, thus reducing the flexibility of using this position for a variety of tasks.

9. PAPERWORK FOR 'EXTENDED' EXCURSIONS

The NT Department of Education has a policy on excursions.

Excursions can be classified as follows:

Category A

Movement generally on foot or bicycle in the immediate vicinity of the school. Examples are environmental studies, visit to a local conservation reserve, social science or SACE visit to the local shops, football match on a nearby oval. These can be approved by the Head Teacher and do not require parental approval as they are covered by the parent's/guardian's written consent on the enrolment form.

Category B

Other excursions within the community but further afield, not involving absence overnight, and generally requiring transport. These may be approved by Band 3 and 4 Head Teachers in their own school in cases where they do not take longer than the normal school day. The teacher is the Requesting Officer and the Head Teacher the Approving Officer. Parental approval is required.

Comment

No Departmental forms apply.

Category C

Excursions which involve travel within the region but beyond the community and which may involve overnight accommodation. Movement Requisitions (Form NTE 122) are required to cover staff on duty away from their normal place of duty. The teacher is the Requesting Officer and the Head Teacher is the Recommending Officer. The Regional Superintendent is the Approving Officer. Parental approval is required and parents must be advised on all details of the excursion.

Comment

Form NTE 210 "Application for Extended Excursion" must be completed by the teacher. It covers all aspects of travel, names of accompanying adults, list of students, proposed itinerary and safety precautions. Schools are requested to attach the educational program to be followed during the excursion.

It is the professional responsibility of teachers to complete all documentation and for the Principal to certify that the excursion will be conducted in accordance with relevant circulars and policy. This also enables the relevant Departmental officer to assist camp organisers wherever possible in the planning stages and provide advice on current qualifications required for teaching a range of adventure activities.

The Departmental policy on excursions details the general responsibilities of teachers in relation to:

- i) Exercising proper care and supervision throughout the duration of the excursion.
- ii) Providing a meaningful learning experience through professional research and activities.

Documentation by way of forms, approvals etc are essential in order to protect all people involved with the excursion.

10. TIME SHEETS - ABORIGINAL EMPLOYEES

Time sheets used in Aboriginal schools are very easy to fill out, and cut down on leave forms due to the use of the symbols U/A, which means unauthorised absence. If leave forms were required for each U/A, salaries would be overwhelmed in paper.

11. TEACHER INDUCTION/RECALL PROGRAMS

(A) ACCOMMODATION STANDARDS FOR INDUCTION PROGRAMS

The Teacher Induction Programs conducted at the commencement of each school year are invaluable exercises.

The programs provide all new staff with the opportunity to learn of Departmental requirements, procedures and policies while at the same time being provided with information specific to the requirements of their new positions.

There has however, been unfair criticism of the venue of this program in the past.

Given that the program is seen by all to be invaluable (resulting in a potential reduction in the numbers of resignations of teaching staff), the only criticism has been of the accommodation offered to participants.

In conducting such courses, officers of the Department of Education Professional and Career Development Unit investigate and evaluate a series of offers for accommodation and allowances. In recent years, it has proven more economical to accommodate participants at motel/hotels and pay incidental allowances rather than pay each participant Travelling Allowance - to which they would be otherwise entitled.

The attached sheets indicates, costs which may have been incurred for the 1988 induction course.

Principal points to note include:

- i) If all participants were paid Travelling Allowance the total cost for 110 people x 6 days would have been \$62 766 (plus venue hire).
- ii) A full package at the Beaufort Hotel would have cost \$65 356.
- iii) The package utilised involved the Travelodge and the University College at a cost of \$52 886 or \$9 880 less than the amount involved through payment of Travel Allowance.

(B) INDUCTION RECALL PROGRAM

This program is for those new staff whose postings are at isolated Aboriginal community schools.

A copy of a report submitted by the Professional and Career Development Unit of the Personnel Branch regarding the 1987 Induction Recall Program, is attached.

Other than the very positive comments passed by participants and noted in the body of the report it should be kept in mind that this activity is fully funded by the Commonwealth Government.

12. STUDENT ASSESSMENT PROGRAM (PRIMARY SCHOOLS)

The maximum number sheets for any child involved in the program would be 30 to 40. This arises because of the consensus decision to make testing useful for classroom diagnostic purposes. A simple summative test for system diagnostic purposes would cut the amount of paper by half. This approach is going to be trialled in Year 7 Maths this year.

The testing program was introduced on basis of agreements following some controversy. It tried to meet the demands of all sides in the argument.

Part of reasons for complaints of waste may be:

- a) The inability at school level to make full use of the diagnostic capability of the tests.
- b) Failure by people outside schools to realise that all the copied tests are reusable, except for the answer sheets.

Each student has to do 10 sub tests in reading and mathematics taken from the item pool. The testing is spread out during a semester, although most seem to test during a concentrated period e.g. a month. The original working party used the item pool approach to fulfil two goals : (1) the need for public reporting and (2) the construction of an instructional tool in the classroom. To achieve goal no (1), tests from the item pool had to be used. Using the item pool, there are a large number of items in each test (to allow testing of particular objectives). This provides diagnostic information for classroom instruction. Replacing the item pool with a summative test (as suggested for Maths Year 7 for 1988) would reduce the number of items per objective and cover more content and consequently use less paper. The move in the future is towards summative tests in maths and perhaps when the climate is right for reading as well. The item pool concept serves the classroom better but uses more paper than required for the purpose of public reporting.

13. POSTAGE

Central Registry staff have no control over sections of the Department using different envelopes. The normal 37 cents stamped envelope will not handle large sheets of paper hence the use of the costlier stamped envelope.

14. QUALITY OF PUBLICITY AND POLICY DOCUMENTS

The claim that the "high quality" of Towards the 90's is unnecessary demonstrates a lack of knowledge of the printing industry by the complainant.

The price differential between so-called "glossy" paper and non-glossy bond paper is negligible and, in the case of - Towards the 90's, the contracting printer used old stocks of paper which were actually cheaper than a standard quality bond.

The only part of Towards the 90s which could be considered some small extravagance is the three-colour cover. The use of three colours rather than one increased the cost of the publication by approximately seven cents per copy, or \$375 over the whole production run of 5 000 copies.

The complaint about schools in the Northern Territory probably refers to the book Northern Territory Schools published as a one-off project in 1985. No reprint of this book in a similar format is intended.

There is no such publication as "Schools in the Northern Territory".

However, the complaint may refer to the colour booklet Territory Education. This is not a recruitment information booklet, but an intentionally high quality information booklet about the Northern Territory education system. It is aimed at parents whose children are about to enter the system for the first time and especially those who are thinking of moving to the Territory. It has been used as a part of packages of materials sent interstate and overseas by organisations such as the Trade Development Zone Authority to promote the Northern Territory.

The fact that it has also proved useful as a recruitment item is a coincidental additional advantage and its value as such greatly exceeds the \$1.30 per copy production cost.

We believe that we have a quality education system to "sell" and to try to promote it by means of "cheap looking" materials would be highly counter-productive, particularly overseas where it is expected that not only education systems, but individual schools and tertiary institutions, will present materials of the highest standard.

It should be noted that the purpose of Northern Territory Schools from the viewpoint of Personnel Branch centres on its distribution to Universities and Colleges of Advanced Education in southern States. It is part of the recruitment package, devised by Personnel Branch to attract suitable applicants to the NT. The document is designed to give a factual account of conditions to be expected at a particular school. The written content is supported by photographs geared to portray an accurate assessment of NT schools to prospective recruits. To put a monetary figure on the value of this book overlooks its value in attracting applicants. From the Department of Education's Personnel Branch's view, it would be wrong to present shoddy or poor quality material to prospective recruits, particularly when the Department is competing in a tight market for the services of teachers.

15. NEWSPAPER - "EDUCATION NT"

"It has been suggested that the Education NT Newsletter paper does not warrant such widespread distribution on the basis that most parents are not interested in education per se, but direct their activities to their local school, if at all."

The thinking behind this suggestion appears to be in direct conflict with the thrust of clearly stated Government policy which is to encourage broad community participation in education decision making through a variety of avenues, including a wide range of advisory committees and, in particular, participation in school council activities.

The newspaper is considered the most practical and economical means available of communicating a great variety of information to the community as a whole - not only parents - in order to assist and/or stimulate the desired breadth of participation in the educational process. From this aspect alone, the publication is considered to service an extremely useful purpose.

It would not only be impossible to obtain the necessary wide distribution of such information through other media, but the cost would be prohibitive.

"It is also suggested that anything of importance in the education field has been previously published in the NT news anyway."

This is, by and large, a fallacy.

While the "NT News" does publish items about education fairly frequently, there have unfortunately been many cases of inaccurate or slanted reporting which have been damaging or misleading rather than informative.

In general, the "NT News" has shown a preference for sensational rather than comprehensive or accurate reporting, as evidenced by a recent article on a new handwriting system in which a Departmental interviewee was a typically misquoted concerning the reasons for introducing the new system.

While the "NT News" is read widely in Darwin, its circulation in other areas is much more limited and there are indications that people in other urban centres and remote areas particularly appreciate receiving "Education NT". News and feature articles on education happenings in centres other than Darwin are also appreciated by local school and office staff who would see any suggestion that "NT News" coverage is adequate as simply confirming the existence of a "Berrimah Line".

"It is also claimed that this publication is sent to all post office boxes and private households thereby causing duplication. In addition, it is reported that all Education department employees also receive a copy, thus causing further duplication."

This claim is not quite accurate.

To avoid perceived waste, the earlier practice of distribution through private boxes at the Darwin and Casuarina post offices ceased some issues ago and, from the outset, Australia Post was requested not to distribute through business post office boxes.

Within the Department in Darwin, copies are distributed via the internal courier system to all employees. This does not represent waste as no postal charges are incurred and the number of copies involved is considerably fewer than the "run-on" number received above the designated print run and for which there is no extra printing charge.

It is regarded as appropriate that courtesy copies are sent by mail to a number of people who hold public office or senior official positions as well as to education departments and interested organisations and institutions interstate.

"....perhaps it is best distributed through the school network where every student is given a copy to be taken home to parents, guardians, etc."

This form of distribution, used for the first four issues of the paper, was found to be most unsatisfactory as it produced rather than avoided waste. Complaints were received that copies were not reaching their destinations and, in many cases, it was apparent that students simply did not bother to take the paper home or give it to their parents.

It is also clear that, on occasion, copies were not given to students by some teachers, apparently because the paper does not always give controversial issues the kind of coverage they would prefer the public to be exposed to,.

In any case, distribution through schools could not achieve the key objective of ensuring that the paper is readily available to the whole community, parents and non-parents alike.

This distribution system also depended on the services of the Department's Supply Section for bulk handling throughout the Territory, breaking down supplies into individual schools' quotas and delivering them. Since the restructuring of the Section, such a service can no longer be provided and the cost of using a commercial alternative would be prohibitive.

16. INDONESIAN STUDENT/TEACHER EXCHANGE

The program has its origins in an informal student excursion program to Bali from Darwin High School which then developed into an exchange of students for an extended period and in 1975 included a teacher exchange component.

The initial focus of the exchange program was cultural awareness and international relationships recognising the proximity of the republic of Indonesia to the Northern Territory and the potential for the development of significant trade relationships.

In recent years the focus of the teacher component of the program has changed recognising the growth of popularity of Indonesian as foreign language in the NT curriculum and the need to develop Indonesian is the most popular language choice of NT students being taught at both primary and secondary level. The teacher exchange component was thus seen as providing a major impetus to the teaching of Indonesian in NT schools.

Exchange of students continues to promote awareness and understanding and provides opportunity to develop language fluency by active communication in the language.

The Exchange Program was formalised as a middle-level aid program with the signing of a Memorandum of Co-operation between the NT Department of Education and the Indonesian Department of Elementary and Primary Education.

The Memorandum, signed in Jakarta by the Secretary of the NT Department of Education, Mr G Spring and the Director General of Primary and Elementary Education Professor Dr Hasan Walinono, provided for the expansion of the program to include, in addition to the Province of Bali, the Provinces of Nusa Tenggara Barat (Lombok) Nusa Tenggara Timur (Kumpang) and Maluku (Ambon).

The Northern Territory Government announced the expansion of the exchange program under the Memorandum on 19 August 1985, and further announced that it would meet, through the Department of Education all costs associated with the expanded program. The expanded program was implemented in January 1986.

The program is managed by a committee comprising senior departmental officers, representatives from the Darwin Indonesian community, the Indonesian Consulate, a former exchange teacher and a former exchange student.

The program is advertised annually and applicants are required to meet stringent selection criteria. All applicants are interviewed to determine relative suitability.

It is suggested that this arrangement be significantly amended as there does not appear to be any monetary commitment to the scheme on the part of the Indonesian Government.

Formal agreements with the support of governments are sensitive matters and the Memorandum of Cooperation mentioned involved the Governments of the Northern Territory, Republic of Indonesia and the Commonwealth of Australia. Negotiations are actioned at the highest level involving personal contact and dialogue. Given that the Memorandum of Cooperation is no longer acceptable by the Northern Territory Government correct procedure would require the negotiation of a new Memorandum of Cooperation and not as suggested, amendment to the existing agreement.

It should be noted from the background information that the initiative and continued thrust to further develop the Exchange Program has emanated from the Northern Territory. There are potential benefits in pursuit of Government policy concerning the teaching of Indonesian in our Schools. It is considered that these benefits are cost effective when considering the relatively small budget for the program and will be addressed further.

Whilst it may appear that there is no monetary commitment to the scheme on the part of the Republic of Indonesia, this assumption is incorrect. In accordance with the Memorandum of Cooperation there are specific costs met by the Indonesian Government and of greater importance, there is a growing acceptance of subsidiary costs at the Provincial level as the benefits of the program are realised.

- the salaries of Indonesian teachers on exchange to the territory are maintained by the Indonesian authorities
- all Provincial Departments provide an allowance for their students on exchange to the Territory
- the Indonesian Government exempts all program participants from the expensive Fiscal Departure Tax
- the Indonesian Government has given a commitment to actively contribute resources to the development of the National Indonesia Curriculum Project. This project is to be undertaken by the Department and funded by the Asian Studies Council
- the Governor of Maluku Province provides financial assistance to families hosting Territory students on exchange and a rental subsidy for the Territory teacher of exchange

A narrow assessment of the program based solely on what the Territory pays compared to what Indonesia pays, totally disregards subsidiary and important benefits to the Territory such as:

- native speakers of Indonesia are involved in school Indonesia language programs and are also able to contribute to cultural studies
- access to long term residential status within Indonesia for Territory teachers. Obvious cultural and language acquisition to be utilized by the Department for Indonesian language programs in our schools. This practical inservice training opportunity is both cost and time effective. The training of a teacher of Indonesia with the award of a Teaching Scholarship and recruitment costs approximately \$17 000 and takes four years
- the potential of exchange students making a commitment to pursue Indonesia language studies and eventually qualifying as teachers
- the program is in direct support of the government Indonesian language policy
- the program establishes a Territory presence in the eastern region of the Republic of Indonesia in support of greater cooperation between the Northern Territory Government and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia.

17. BIENNIAL REGIONAL SYMPOSIA

These Symposia have been conducted for the past twenty years. There have now been 10 Symposia conducted in a variety of Asian/Pacific centres including Tongo, Vanuatu, Kuala Lumpur, Brunei and Darwin.

Originally, these symposia were co-ordinated by the British Government, however distance and lack of local knowledge created difficulties and following the 5th Symposium the NT assumed the role of co-ordinator/organiser.

Funding for the conduct of the Symposia is made available by the British Government. The NT contribution is limited to the provision of an Executive Officer and air fares for 2-3 participants.

The symposia are arranged around a theme that is of relevance to all participating nations and common goals, objectives and problems are assessed in a formally established setting. Overall, the symposia offer senior Departmental officers from the NT and several Asian and Pacific Nations the opportunity to exchange views, approaches and attitudes and to develop a network among peers at little cost to the NT.

The Regional Symposia offer the NT the opportunity to publicise our facilities and to consolidate or finalise agreements for services, and programs etc with participating countries.

It is Government policy to promote the NT in the Asian region and the symposia referred to provide a perfect opportunity to do so.

The NT has now organised 5 Symposia.

While this Department will participate in future meetings, greater emphasis is to be placed on initial organisation and co-ordination by host countries - again, funded by the British Government.

18. DEPARTMENTAL PUBLICATIONS

The NT Department of Education Staff Bulletin is published fortnightly and distributed to Schools, Educational Units and Head and regional Offices. It is the official organ of notification for members of the Northern Territory Service. In it, vacancies, promotions, transfers, Inservice Courses, Exchange and study award opportunities and general notices are recorded.

The distribution of the Staff Bulletin has been monitored and its circulation reduced significantly from approximately 1400 to 700. One per floor would be a drastic move particularly as Career Development Section are making increasing use of the Bulletin to advise of In Service activities which are available.

A copy of a recent Staff Bulletin is attached.

19. MISUSE OF OVERTIME - SUPPLY SECTION(A) MISUSE OF OVERTIME FACILITY

The claim of misuse of overtime is refuted as the high level of overtime worked at Supply Section Winnellie is due to a number of contributing factors i.e. staffing cuts over recent years have resulted in extra work for personnel who are expected to cover during periods of sick leave, recreation leave, maternity leave and long service leave whilst at the same time coping with their own work load which has not reduced in intensity.

(B) OVERTIME IN EXCESS OF 58 HOURS PER FORTNIGHT

The claim forms were submitted for several pay periods at once. In actual fact there were not instances in any one fortnight as claimed. The overtime in question was due to an administrative oversight and in fact the hours attributed to a two week period were for several weeks.

(C) OVERTIME CLAIMED DURING SICK LEAVE

More specific evidence is required of names, dates etc to allow for a full investigation. Without specific evidence of such a claim no substantial verification can be ascertained.

20. NTTS SALARIES SECTION

Training both on the job and course work is a feature of work in Salaries. Therefore, the emphasis is on making staff more efficient. Present staff members have demonstrated a high degree of knowledge in recent promotion interviews.

21. DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD SCHEME (DEAS)

DEAS receives about \$100 000 per year from the Department. There are approximately 350 active participants at present not 20 as claimed. Between April 1984 and October 1987 518 young people joined DEAS, with 127 of them joining last year. Participants come from Alice Springs, Barunga, Darwin, Jabiru, Katherine, Maningrida, Nguiu, Nhulunbuy, Oenpelli and Pularumpi.

22. CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS

The problem of falling enrolments at some schools is acknowledged. A working group has been set up to consider options available to the Department which will ensure community support while maximising savings available through rationalising the number of schools needed in the Northern Territory.

23.

ACCOMMODATION

The Department recognises the advantages of being housed in a single building. Long term plans are being considered to secure this objective. The status of existing leases on such buildings as the T&G and Tamar House will influence the timing of such a move.



NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

**DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

Our Ref : 87/3302

February 1988

Mr Mick Palmer
Chairman
Public Accounts Committee
GPO Box 3721
DARWIN NT 5794

Dear Mr Palmer

WASTE WATCH

I refer to your letter, reference 3/4/15, of 21 January 1988 which sought comment on a number of issues raised in your "Waste Watch" enquiry.

Your request for comment is appreciated, and I note particularly the acknowledgement that a number of issues reflect public perception of the public sector. It seems unfortunate that such misconceptions are held by people.

Depending on how widespread these views are, it would seem that a public relations effort would assist in assuring the public that their taxes are not being misspent.

I have provided brief responses to all of the points raised in your letter, and my staff will be able to assist you further on any specific matter requiring clarification.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE - EXCESSIVE COSTS

Minute from Government Printer at Attachment A.

FLEXITIME

Flexitime has become a reasonably entrenched condition of public sector employment, and has recently been the subject of a consent award in the Australian Public Service. Abolition of the scheme would prove unpopular, and probably difficult to achieve.

Additionally, a well administered flexible working hours scheme is of mutual advantage to the employer and the employee. It does allow for the more productive use of available working hours.

Failings of the scheme fall to management, and it is the intention of this Office to investigate the operation of the scheme in the Northern Territory Public Service with a view to overcoming those management problems.

CLASS OF AIR TRAVEL

The decision on the class of Travel as reflected in Memorandum 87/7 was made by the Chief Minister, and resulted in some disquiet among senior departmental staff. To apply the restrictions on first class travel to those nominated in the Public Accounts Committee documentation would result in only a very small saving in terms of total budget allocations and would seem unduly petty.

PROMOTIONS APPEAL SYSTEM

The Promotions Appeal System is entrenched in the legislation and is seen by staff associations, at least, to be a corner stone of public service employment provisions.

No matter how rigidly the selection procedures are followed there will always be an employee who believes that his/her claims to a position are greater than those of another employee, and will seek redress against non-selection through the appeal system.

Alternative procedures for managing employee grievances in relation to selection/promotion are available and are being considered in the context of total public sector employment provisions.

TRAVELLING TIME ON TEMPORARY TRANSFER

It is difficult to ascertain, if, in the situation quoted, all circumstances of the matter were mentioned.

It is not unusual for employees to go to new locations in their own vehicles. Departmental vehicles are not always available at the temporary location for the use of the employee, and this means that the individual is without a personal means of transport. For a transfer of ten weeks duration this would seem unnecessarily harsh.

This being the case, and in the interests of the employees personal safety, I also do not regard three days travelling to go from Darwin to Alice Springs excessive. It is possible also that the employee had departmental business to conduct at intervening locations en route to Alice Springs. This is a common occurrence.

Finally, it is often difficult to induce staff to take up temporary duty away from their families and home locations. It is quite proper that they are regarded as being "on duty" whilst travelling and any "leeway" exercised by a Department in these situations makes for good employee relations.

REPORTS ON INTERSTATE TRAVEL

One would assume that Chief Executive Officers all have this requirement in their Departments already, and experience indicates this is generally in place.

This is not a matter that the Public Service commissioner should need to give a direction on.

SMOKING IN THE WORKPLACE

Although no studies have been conducted in the Northern Territory, it is generally accepted that smoking is a significant factor in absenteeism in smokers.

There is also increasing evidence of the adverse health effects of passive smoking.

The Public Service Commissioner's Office is preparing a Cabinet Submission for circulation, which calls for the reduction of smoking in all government premises. This would extend to employers and clients jointly.

SICK LEAVE - PAYMENT IN LIEU

This is often suggested as a means of combating absenteeism, although the hardworking, but genuinely ill employees could be seen to be being penalised at the expense of the workers who are lucky enough to have their health and simply hoard their sick leave in anticipation of a payout.

As a cost saving mechanism this is a "red herring", as to pay out sick leave on cessation when the employee's salary is at its maximum is far more expensive than paying for sick leave near the time it actually accrues when the salary is less. Certainly if it was implemented for all staff now, the costs would be substantial.

There are very few employers who actually pay out unused sick leave, and this is generally only in areas of chronic absenteeism, and where attendance is critical. The South East Queensland Electricity Board (SEQEB) is a prime example.

It is understood that when contacted on the effectiveness of the scheme by personnel within the Department of Transport and Works, staff at SEQEB argued against it. The scheme was expensive, penalised genuine employees who were sick, and caused resentment amongst employees in less critical areas who did not have the benefit.

This is the likely outcome if it were introduced to our Public Service.

AIRFARES FOR SPOUSES OF PUBLIC SERVANTS - NHULUNBUY & ALYANGULA

For other than a small group of male compulsory transferees, (approx. 70), criteria applicable for the granting of airfares is subject to:

- (a) Meeting the dependency criteria, ie. dependent must be resident with the employee and not be in receipt of income exceeding \$185.60 per week;
- (b) Must not be in receipt of airfare entitlements from any other source, ie. another employer, Social Security, student airfare entitlements etc..

Without having further information on specific instances where this criteria may appear not to have been followed, I am unable to comment further.

REPAIRS TO OFFICE FURNITURE

Although there is no central control of office furniture, they are accountable items which each Department would be required to hold on an inventory.

The disposal of an accountable item is dependent upon a responsible member of a Department declaring an item to be unserviceable and "beyond economic repair".

Most Departments have an office services section who can generally effect minor repairs.

UTILISATION OF POTENTIALLY EXCESS AND UNDECLARED STAFF

This comment relates more appropriately to two issues. One is declaring excess staff; the other is utilising excess staff.

On the first point, it is true that some Departments did not declare staff as potentially excess for a substantial part of 1987. This was due to the time taken in finalising formal establishments.

Now that Executive Council has confirmed staffing levels, Departments have been able to form an accurate view of their positions, and are now declaring any excess staff that exist.

This Office is satisfied:

- (a) That Departments have in place, mechanisms to assist in the placement of their potentially excess staff;
- (b) That Chief Executives Officers have responsibility for effective use of resources;
- (c) That we monitor the staffing of the public sector accurately.

CLEANING CONTRACTS - GOVERNMENT OFFICES

Attachment B.

INTERSTATE RECRUITMENT

Very tight controls exist on the process of recruiting interstate. These controls take the form of restrictions on advertising in the press, and on recruitment from outside the Public Service "per se".

The effect of this is that:

- (a) Existing Public Service staff are canvassed to ensure no suitable applicant is already employed.

Having said this however, recruitment of a number of specialist medical, scientific technical, legal and senior management staff from interstate will remain a necessity for some time in the future.

- (b) Base grade recruitment, (including professional and technical), is from CES Offices in the first instance.
- (c) Positions which are advertised outside the Public Service generally appear in the Local Northern Territory paper and the "Australian". This ensures wide coverage which includes local applicants.

Given tight departmental budgets for administration, CEO will be drawn to a suitable local applicant, rather than a considerably more expensive and logistically difficult interstate applicant.

FIRST CLASS TRAVEL

A Departmental Head, Minister, Judge or Head of a Prescribed Authority is a very senior member of the administration of the Northern Territory. As such their finite time is subject to great demand.

It is often the case that a four or five hour plane trip is the only opportunity they have to be briefed on a number of subjects, including the reason/strategy for the trip.

The accompaniment of an advisor is essential to this process, and not a waste of funds.

ABOLISH MEAL ALLOWANCE AT HOME STATION (OVERTIME):

Any alternative arrangement to that presently in place would result in a higher cost of administration. The reality is that most staff working overtime are not in a position to easily return home for a meal. Under these circumstances it is quite proper that they receive an allowance to offset the cost of purchasing a meal during a period outside of their normal hours of duty.

The alternative is to make it a reimbursement on the production of receipts, which would, at the end of the day, cost more.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING:

The decision to abolish the Management Development Centre of the old Public Service Commissioner's Office was taken in line with Government policy that work that can be performed by the private sector transfer to them.

In the case of training, this has occurred with moderate success.

The issue of staff development however, is rather more complex than simply employing a few training officers and conducting courses.

Departments have responsibility for their own staff, and generally conduct their own needs analysis to determine an individual's development requirements.

This has been the case since self government, and I see no economies in varying that procedure.

CAREER STRUCTURE FOR PROFESSIONAL STAFF

There is a high turnover of employees in all sectors of the Northern Territory Public Service and it is true that the loss of professionals presents problems.

It is the view of this Office that an adequate career structure exists for professionals, and it is not this issue that results in turnover.

The problems that do exist are that there is only a limited number of professional positions, as we are basically a small employer, and there is limited scope for advancement within the structure. This follows from higher level professionals being less likely to leave.

Other reasons given by professionals for leaving are "professional isolation" and limited "fields" of work.

The Public Service is limited in its ability to address either of these problems.

RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

It is acknowledged that our current procedures are not efficient in terms of the timely selection and filling of vacancies.

The major reason for the delays is the appeals system which in this day and age has reached the end of its usefulness.

Although changes will require amendments to the Public Service Act and the support of unions, it is likely that amendments to the Act will include this area as a priority.

It is likely that changes along the lines of the Commonwealth will be implemented. That is a merit protection agency of some sort, which was not required to hear appeals, and methods would exist where appeals could be obviated by the constitution of a selection panel.

Changes along these lines in the Commonwealth have reduced the total selection time from an average of nine months to under three months.

RECRUITMENT - PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

Recruitment to the Public Service Commissioner's Office cited was directly attributable to expanded functions as a result of the March 1987 Administrative Arrangements.

The provisions of the recruitment freeze were complied with to the extent that:

- (a) The Chief Executive Officer was satisfied that the positions were necessary;
- (b) Four potentially excess officers were placed in these positions;
- (c) The recent review of classifications basically confirmed the level of positions.

EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

The cost/effectiveness of any government operation is always questionable, because there is no output which can be measured in dollar terms.

The Office of the Public Service commissioner has effectively been closed flowing from the March 1987 Administrative Arrangements.

The Public Service Commissioner continues to exist as an appointment within the Public Service Act. To fulfil those responsibilities, three divisions exist within the Department of Labour and Administrative Services. They are Personnel Services, Industrial Relations, and Equal Employment Opportunities.

I am satisfied that is the minimum required to fulfil my statutory obligations, and to satisfy the requirements of the Government.

TERTIARY ADMINISTRATION FEE

It is our view that the current Northern Territory Public Service study leave provisions are extremely generous in terms of "time off" to study (up to a maximum of one day's leave per week is permissible).

It is not unreasonable for individuals to bear a small portion of the cost associated with their desire to upgrade their qualifications, which generally are of most benefit to the individual, rather than the employing organisation. Despite the Auditor-General's comments, and the precedent set by the Northern Territory Teaching Service, there would appear to be no persuasive reason to change the current ruling not to reimburse. Such a change would in fact incur a substantial cost to the Northern Territory Public Service against the very considerable incentives that are already available to encourage public servants to upgrade their formal qualifications.

BY-LAW 37 - TRAVELLING ALLOWANCE

There is considerable feeling within the Public Service, that Travelling Allowance should be reviewed, and there is apparent merit in making those payments based on a reimbursement of actual costs incurred.

It is a matter that will be dealt with by this Office as a part of the ongoing review of Public Service Terms and Conditions of Service. The specific points in your Memorandum are dealt with briefly as follows:

1. The matter of credit cards for actual accommodation costs has merit, and it is understood that the matter of credit cards for other government services is being considered. The cash advance to cover meals and incidentals would save administrative costs of acquital, compared with production of receipts. It would however, mean no change from current procedure;
2. As with 1. above, savings should be weighed against any increase in administrative costs;
3. A flat rate ignores differences between centres, and with the type of travel being undertaken, ie. Camping Allowance, staying with friends etc.;
4. As Above;
5. Paying rural Travel Allowance does not address the issue of endeavouring to ensure our employees are not out of pocket for travelling on our behalf;
6. As above, except that Camping Allowance would still not seem warranted if no expense could be proven. That is given the logic of this suggestion;
7. Establishment of contracts has been considered in the past, but is basically not practicable. Hotel occupancy varies to such an extent that hotels/motels could not guarantee available rooms; we on the other hand could not promise specific use.

The proposal would remove flexibility for all concerned;

8. Where accommodation and board is provided, public servants are supposed to utilise it, and are only entitled to Travel Allowance for components which are not provided.

BY-LAW 56 - REIMBURSEMENT OF FARES ON LEAVE

1. It is true that payment of airfares in cash would avoid Fringe Benefit Tax. It would also result in our employees being taxed directly and effectively losing the benefit.

Cash payment is not favoured by unions, by airlines, or by a number of employees, It would be an industrially difficult change as indicated in June last year.

2. This was true in that all airfares were paid to capital cities, and some inconsistent rules applied. Now however, all airfares that accrue are paid to Adelaide/return or whatever is the lowest.

BY-LAW 57 : REIMBURSEMENT OF FARES - CHILDREN ATTENDING SCHOOL AND REQUIRED TO LIVE AWAY FROM HOME

This view is supported, and it is timely that this condition of service be abolished.

BY- 58 - FARES ON ILLNESS OR ACCIDENT

Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistant Scheme (IPTAAS) is not available to all, and in fact, in the instance where an employee was in receipt of fares from another source, eg. By-law 58, the individual would be ineligible to "double dip" through PATS.

The major difference between the two benefits is that PATS requires a patient contribution.

BY-LAW 60 - DISTURBANCE ALLOWANCE

This is a reasonable condition, and is consistent with the Northern Territory Public Service meeting an employee's full removal costs on appointment or promotion. The compromise may be the payment on removals of a flat amount, eg. \$5,000 per uplift, as many private sector employers do.

BY-LAW 61 - TEMPERATE CLOTHING ALLOWANCE

This could be argued as an anomalous condition of service, given the high mobility of the Northern Territory population, and the expectation that people should dress appropriately for their employment.

However, in favour of the By-law is that it is only payable every two years, and applies to all staff, not just senior employees.

It is a condition of service that this Department will review.

MATERNITY LEAVE

This is an unreasonable proposition, given that it is common for two people to be involved in propagating the species.

An enlightened society would conclude that there was some inequity in women, as a group, suffering for providing a future generation of Territorians.

BRACKET CREEP

The general level of positions in the Northern Territory Public Service has been the subject of two Cabinet initiated Reviews in November/December 1987.

The conclusion of these Reviews was that with the exception of a few positions, the Public Service was properly classified.

One of the recommendations of these reviews was that the number of classification levels in the Public Service was leading to a perception of top heaviness, and that people at the bottom of the Service were not receiving an adequate salary. It has been proposed that a broadbanding of positions would assist in overcoming these perceptions, as well as keeping people in positions longer and adding stability across the Service.

It is true however, that each Department/Prescribed Authority has to have an infrastructure of Divisional Heads, Ministerial liaison, policy, legislation and Branch Heads. The Australia-wide principles of position classification require a certain level of remuneration.

The smaller a Department the greater the perception that the organisation is top heavy.

The revised Administrative Arrangements in March 1987 have gone a long way to rationalising the number of Executive positions, but this will not become clear until existing staff leave the system.

ORGANISATION DESIGN/REVIEWS

Chief Executive Officers have the responsibility for the organisation of their Department/Agency. The structure of these has recently (November/December 1987) been scrutinised by the Co-ordination Committee and some re-organisation recommended.

It is consistent with the general approach that heads of government agencies should be both responsible and accountable for the structure and staffing of their agencies that an organisation design model is not imposed on these agencies.

The role of a central agency such as the Department of Labour and Administrative Services in organisation design consultancy to other agencies is being considered in the context of a general reconsideration of the role of the Department.

TEA LADIES/DOORMEN

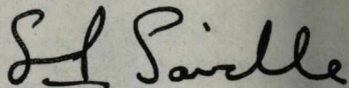
Only very few Departments have tea ladies, and these are being phased out either as a matter of policy, or of economy.

The only doormen employed would double as security guards, and are justified in their limited employment.

CORPORATE MANAGEMENT DIVISIONS/DEPARTMENTS

Positions and functions in this area were scrutinised as part of the recent review of classifications.

A Task Force was established during 1987 to report on the potential for centralisation of management services functions of smaller Departments. The report indicated only minimal savings in terms of staffing and dollars compared with what departments considered to be the greater efficiency of having the services provided locally.



S.P. SAVILLE
Secretary

Attch.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

MINUTE

To: SECRETARY Through DEPUTY SECRETARY

M49:JMcF

From: GOVERNMENT PRINTER

Our File Reference No: 88/398

Subject: EXCESSIVE PRINTING COST : GOVERNMENT PRINTER

I refer to the letter from the Public Accounts Committee in relation to their "Waste Watch" role and the comments offered in respect of Government Printing Office costs.

The question of costs within the Government Printing Offices as it compares with the private sector is particularly vexatious.

Without entering into the question of how the Department of Education were able to circumvent using the Government Printing Office for all their printing requirements unable to be produced inhouse, the simple facts are that the Government Printing Office has been winning approximately 1/3 of their work in recent times against all tenderers. On the surface, this would indicate that we are relatively competitive given that the remaining 2/3 of work is not all won by the same tenderer.

However, we still do face a cost burden not necessarily picked up by the private sector. Such costs include:

1. **BUILDING**

It could be argued that our current factory, designed and built by the Commonwealth, is over designed when compared to other print shops. This made the building expensive both in construction costs and running costs, e.g. total atmospheric control, uninterrupted power supply etc.

Given that we are required to run on a cost recovery basis, the cost of these factors (depreciation, running costs, etc.) do impact on our hourly charge-out rate.

2. **STAFFING**

Staff are permanently employed under the Public Service Act. This limits our flexibility to a certain extent when production is low. Rather than being able to lay staff off (particularly non-tradespeople) we carry them as an additional cost.

Another more serious problem associated with employment under the Public Service Act is discipline and termination. Despite the claim to the contrary, reality is that it is almost impossible to dismiss someone.

An unsuccessful dismissal or discipline attempt within the Government Printing Office not only impacts on morale but still leaves the initial problem in place. All of these factors can, and do, impact on productivity which again increases unit costs.

The Government Printing Office has also willingly accepted that we have a role to support the private sector to the extent that work more readily able to be undertaken by them, e.g. 4 colour, is generally subcontracted to them. Consistent with this philosophy, approximately \$864,000 was subcontracted to the private sector in 1986/87. To 31 January 1988, we have seen \$426,000 subcontracted during 1987/88.

While it may be argued that the 10% - 20% on cost added (depending on the nature of the work, degree of supervision etc.) could be saved by dealing direct with private printers, this argument is not totally supported. Despite the on-cost, we are often able to obtain cheaper prices because of volumes while at the same time, ensure that the quality of work is to a suitable standard, a difficult task if a department does not have anyone suitably trained. It should be noted though that our ability to obtain cheaper print cost on a contract basis is being eroded by the fact that departments and authorities are circumventing the Government Printing Office, thereby reducing the volume that would be subcontracted. Unfortunately this has now become a vicious circle between our costs and the ever reducing volume of work we receive.

Our bargaining power in respect of subcontract work is only strong while all work is continued to be channelled through the Government Printing Office.

The question as to why departments should use the Government Printing Office can best be illustrated I believe by a simple analogy to the commercial world.

Let us assume that we have a holding company (e.g. BHP) and a range of subsidiary companies (BHP Whyalla Ship Building, Steel Production etc.)

If the holding company decides that one of its policies is to use its own products (irrespective of price) then that is the policy all subsidiary companies will follow. The only way that the corporate policy is changed is if a commercial decision is made to close that subsidiary company.

The point is that individual subsidiary companies do not make the decision themselves because they quite often do not know the overriding corporate objective of the holding company. In our case these could be to:

- i) Ensure a vehicle that can and will respond to all legislative needs.
- ii) Produce confidential material in a secure environment.
- iii) React to urgent needs for printed material (particularly when sensitive, e.g. Chamberlain case, Royal Visit).
- iv) Provide a venue for suitable industry training.
- v) Serve as a focal point so that the total cost of print services for the Government are brought to account. This would also enable better print prices to be obtained from subcontractors because of the guaranteed volume of available work.
- vi) Provide the right quality product at the right time at the right price (price is not such an important issue according to research by the Queensland Government Printing Office).

Having said the above we still have a responsibility to efficiently and effectively manage the function of the Government Printing Office to ensure that costs are reasonable. Our interaction with the private sector needs to be carefully balanced given that there is a place for the two organisations and that the Government Printing Office can, and does, subcontract a reasonable portion of its work to the private sector.

Areas under review in an attempt to improve the viability of the Government Printing Office include:

- Client Services are reviewing their "Client list" with a view to getting "on the road" and selling our services to departments and authorities, i.e. a market orientated approach.
- Review the organisational structure and equipment within the Government Printing Office with a view to tightening up operations while improving productivity (possibly needing new technology, e.g. pre-production area).
- Reviewing our product lines to ensure that we specialise in those areas that are cost effective and questioning our production techniques/output in those areas where we are making losses (a conscious decision may be that we will continue with some of the operations for other reasons).
- Looking at ways of improving the provision of quotes and the production of the final product in a timely manner.
- Reviewing all expense items, e.g. computing costs, electricity, rentals etc, to ensure that optimum value is obtained for their cost.

6 am
JOHN COSSONS
Government Printer

February 1988

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

Your Ref:
Our Ref:

/ March 1988

Mr Mick Palmer MLA
Chairman, Public Accounts Committee
GPO Box 3721
DARWIN NT 5794

② 2/3

Attention: Tony de Silva

RE: "WASTE WATCH"

I refer to your letter of 21 January 1988 seeking comments with regard to a number of matters raised in relation to this Department regarding "Waste Watch". These issues have now been considered and my comments on each of them are detailed below.

RENAL UNIT - ALICE SPRINGS

The Unit is at present being run by three nurses (two specially trained, one 'on the job' training) on a three days/week basis. As soon as two more trained staff can be recruited, it will be run 6 shifts, 6 days per week. The program is geared to be running at full capacity by 30 June 1988.

All 8 dialysis patients are Aboriginal: those not inclined to stay in Alice Springs currently have two choices: to obtain a kidney transplant or to become acutely and seriously ill. It is not practicable at this stage to consider remote area dialysis.

CATERING - CUSTODIAL INSTITUTIONS

The Department does not believe that any cost-ineffective duplication is taking place. Institutions are encouraged to provide a fair degree of "home-grown" self-sufficiency, particularly Gunn Point and Beatrice Hill, and are essentially independent in regard to catering matters.

The information you have received does not appear to be correct.

ELECTRICITY USAGE - DARWIN PRISON

It is agreed that cost savings could be effected in this regard. This has already been referred to the Superintendent of the Prison who will take the necessary measures.

BEATRICE HILL REHABILITATION PROJECT

The objective as stated is largely correct and is being carried out. It appears the referred to "idle machinery" is simply stored there, having been acquired "free" from Transport and Works. Some of it is useless until repaired, and it was intended for Rural Venues as and when they get under way.

PROVISION OF FREE SPECTACLES

Assistance with the purchase of spectacles, up to a ceiling, is provided under the Pensioner Concessions as approved by Cabinet. Cabinet have indicated clearly that the pensioner concessions for aged persons are not to be subject to a means test.

DUPLICATION OF ROLES - COMMUNICABLE DISEASES AREA

This Department needed to establish a policy unit to address the issues related to AIDS and to review policies in regard to other communicable diseases.

The task of this unit is now completed and it is the intention that the central office unit will be disbanded, and the role and functions of the unit will be relocated to the Darwin Region.

The Communicable Diseases branch in Darwin Region will have an operational role at regional level as well as a Territory-wide policy responsibility.

The date on which this will become effective is 1 March, 1988.

ROSTERING OF HOSPITAL NURSING STAFF

The claim that savings could be achieved if alterations were made to the present system of rostering nurses at Royal Darwin Hospital is correct.

The present system is a result of negotiations with the Royal Australian Nursing Federation (RANF) regarding:

- a) Introduction of the 38 hour week (19 day month); and
- b) Rest Relief After Overtime/Minimum Break Between Shifts.

38 Hour Week

Royal Darwin Hospital was advised the reduced working hours (38 hour week) was to be implemented as a 19 day month i.e. one additional paid day off per 4 week cycle (a total of 13 per year).

This method of implementation required an extra 31 nurses for Royal Darwin Hospital alone.

Rest Relief After Overtime/Minimum Break Between Shifts

Following inclusion of these clauses in the Northern Territory Nurses Award, RANF negotiated implementation of a 10 hour night duty - this was not part of the Arbitrator's decision and was opposed by Royal Darwin Hospital Nursing Management.

The 2 hour overlap created by introduction of the 10 hour night shift cannot be used effectively as the patient's day (i.e. the time things like meals, dressings, medications are done) cannot be varied significantly.

Implementation of the 10 hour night duty shift required an extra 6 nurses as night duty nurses work only 15 shifts per months.

Summary

Alterations to the present system of rostering nurses by:

- a) shortening the working day;
- b) eliminating the 10 hour night duty; and
- c) eliminating the paid day off per 4 week cycle

could save 37 nursing positions at an approximate cost of \$1 million.

This action, as suggested by the "Waste Watch" correspondent, would be unacceptable to not only the RANF, but other Unions as well, with likely widespread industrial disruption.

LOAN OF WOODEN CRUTCHES - ROYAL DARWIN HOSPITAL

In June 1980, a policy decision was taken to restrict crutches to medical necessity but not to pursue a deposit.

The deposit system has been trialled for years but failed because -

- a) many clients could not afford the deposit and there was difficulty and cost in assessing income status - particularly after hours;

- b) those patients not receiving crutches because of the deposit often causing further medical problems by continuing to bear weight on a damaged limb;
- c) even wealthy patients often have insufficient money on their person when they are involved in an accident. If alone, it was impractical to ask victim to return home for the money;
- d) patients were admitted if unable to mobilise following accidents. The lack of crutches could increase the admission rate.

WATER WASTAGE

Time switches have been tried but a number have been stolen.

Due to the size of the ground and easy accessibility after hour, theft is relatively easy. Other attempts to regulate water are susceptible to vandalism. Practices have been modified after the recent Power and Water Authority campaign to conserve water.

DEPARTMENTAL VEHICLE MAINTENANCE - WINNELLIE

Nine Departmental vehicles are located at the Winnellie Complex, Albatross Street. This includes three vehicles maintained by the Darwin Prison for Correctional Services Training Centre.

The remaining six vehicles are maintained by the Transport Section of this Region, including:

Regular monthly checks by Transport Section staff, maintaining correct levels of engine oil, battery and radiator water, brake and clutch fluids and the checking for tyre, radiator hoses and fan belt wear.

Co-ordination of repairs and maintenance as required and the servicing every 10 000 kilometres or three months.

Drivers are required to maintain tyre pressure and fuel levels and notify the Transport Section of any malfunction or fault of the vehicle.

Three vehicles of the fleet located at Winnellie have been identified for replacement. Whilst the vehicles are aged and the exterior paint work has deteriorated, they are maintained at a roadworthy standard.

Details of repairs and maintenance carried out on the Winnellie vehicles during the period November 1987 - January 1988.

1. **NTG 854166 1983 DATSUN BLUEBIRD SEDAN**
 - a. 26 Nov 87 R&M - Check for overheating, remove radiator and overhaul, check cooling system. Replace radiator. Service and tune vehicle. Replace two tyres and balance. \$489.85
 - b. 8 Dec 87 R&M - Check front and rear brakes. Machine discs and replace front pads/bearings. Fit new wheel cylinders and linings, adjust and bleed brakes. \$378.05
2. **NTG 854355 1983 TOYOTA HILUX TWINCAB UTE**
 - a. Dec 87 R&M - Service, replace wiper blades and accelerator pedal. \$ 98.25
 - b. Jan 87 R&M - Tow to workshop, drain petrol from tank, remove ejectors and overhaul, fill tank with diesel and prime. \$332.20
3. **NTG 854927 1984 TOYOTA HILUX TWINCAB UTE**
 - a. Nov 87 R&M - Re-gas air-conditioning unit. \$ 25.00
 - b. Dec 87 R&M - Replace wiper blades. \$ 11.00
 - c. Service as arranged by Asset Control; Winnellie.
4. **NTG 855025 1984 FORD FALCON STATION WAGON**
 - a. Dec 87 R&M - Supply, fit and balance 4 new tyres, check vehicle. \$432.00
 - b. Jan 88 R&M - Check brakes, replace pads and wheel bearings, replace wiper blades, service and tune vehicle. \$296.60

5. NTG 857381 1987 NISSAN NAVARA TWINCAB UTE

a. Delivered January 1988

Jan 88 R&M - Modify and relocate registration plates.
\$ 31.10

b. Feb 88 R&M - 1000 kilometre service, replace air
filter.
\$ 17.85

6. NTG 803086 1987 TOYOTA COROLLA HATCHBACK

a. Nov 87 R&M - 1000 kilometre service. New vehicle.

CORRECTIONAL SERVICESA. Supervisory Catering Officer

There is some merit in this suggestion. However an additional Superintendent I or II position would be required and to be effective the officer would have to undertake all the duties in the proposed and ideal duty statement. The Department does not have MSL cover for such a position.

It is not possible to co-opt one of our current CPO (Industries) in the job without replacing him in the institution although we do have an officer with the capacity for the role.

Without seeing the reasoning behind "a saving of \$130 000 at a conservative estimate", it is difficult to comment on this figure especially when a Superintendent's pay, 9 weeks leave, travelling time, T/A and overtime are taken into account.

However, a Superintendent (Catering) would be welcome, but needs a close examination.

B. Reduction in Overtime and Sick Leave

As the proposal applies to Prison Officers we would be pleased to see it applied. However we would anticipate extremely heavy reactions from the NTPOA, including stop works, etc. The writer is correct when he alludes to Prison Officers taking what they see as their rightful sick days. Darwin Prison has a very effective sick leave roster and it is not the additional money which is an answer.

On a basic gross of \$17 000, every prison officer earns at least \$36 000 p.a. With 9 weeks leave, penalties, no 8 hour breaks, etc. they enjoy European holidays, a high, living standard and most indicate it is time off they prefer. This is one of the reasons why the offer of \$38 000 to work in the Rural Venue setting was rejected - it is easier to earn \$38 000+ and stay in Darwin with the family.

Our overtime costs are exacerbated largely with hospital and court escorts. Since 1 October, 1987, we have averaged six officers per day on overtime = \$1 000, guarding between 2-6 prisoners at Royal Darwin Hospital. The Courts have no interest in respect of production of prisoners, other than to have their demands complied with, so that there is always an abundance of overtime, which is to a large degree the attraction of the job.

Any attempt to reduce it has Departmental support.

KATHERINE INSTITUTE OF ABORIGINAL HEALTH

The training of Aboriginal Health Workers (AHW's) at the Institute has been severely hampered of late because of the lack of adequate training personnel. During 1987 one tutor position was vacant the whole year and 2 other tutor positions were vacant for the latter 6 months of the year. The filling of these positions was deferred due to the uncertainty of the future of the Institute and the review of the Katherine Region.

One of the tutor positions has now been permanently filled by an Aboriginal. The other tutor position will be filled in February on a temporary basis. A new position for an AHW Co-ordinator has been advertised Australia-wide and an appointment will be made as soon as possible. The Co-ordinator will be responsible for overseeing the educational programs in the NT including KIAH.

The Institute has suffered quite dramatic budget cuts over the last 5 years. Its vehicle replacement program is very rarely met and vehicles well over their replacement dates are used on field trips.

Extensive travel to outlying communities is necessary to ensure effective supervision and consultation. The large distances covered could suggest overusage to some, but in this instance it clearly shows that appropriate field work is conducted by the Institute.

The administrative role of the Institute will be discussed in more detail in coming weeks. An amalgamation of administrative responsibilities with the Region is to become a major talking point. The appointment of the new Regional Director for Katherine Region may delay these discussions.

Duplication of training facilities or programs for AHW's does not exist in the Katherine and Darwin Regions. Such specialised courses for AHW's do not exist at either Batchelor College or the Darwin Institute of Technology.

It is understood that preliminary discussions have been held between officers of this Department and Batchelor College to examine the feasibility of developing courses to cater for those qualified AHW's who wish to expand their training in the areas of administration, tutoring or even preparation for entry into further medical studies.

REGIONAL HEALTH SURVEYOR ALICE SPRINGS & BARKLY REGION

The possibility of providing the Public Health Program to the Region (including Tennant Creek) with only two Health Surveyors was considered very closely recently. Due to a) the huge geographic area of responsibility, b) the wide ranging and at times, time consuming tasks, c) the need for all year cover, and d) the fact that it is considered not rational to attempt to carry out the Region's strategic plan in Public Health with less than three Health Surveyors, the current staffing format will be retained. Much of the claimed \$30 000 saving would be taken up with overtime, were there only two staff.

CHILD HEALTH UNIT (CHU) ALICE SPRINGS

The move of the CHU to Alice Springs Hospital will cost approximately \$90 000 in new works, but will save approximately \$100 000 in salaries in 1987/88. The former cost is a one off cost, the latter saving will be approximately \$170 000 in 1988/89 and more in ensuing years.

Aboriginal Hostels Ltd is already used to house many of the boarders previously accommodated at CHU.

The vacating of the CHU premise in Bloomfield Street will, in short term, allow for the housing of a number of community groups. In the longer term, it will yield a very valuable and saleable asset.

HOSPITAL SERVICES AND PRIVATE MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS *(a) Alice Springs Hospital

A small number of private medical practitioners have long range beepers issued by Alice Springs Hospital from time to time. The last applicant for permanent allocation was rejected by the Regional Director on the basis that private enterprise now provides a comparable service. Beepers will be reclaimed progressively provided hospital services are in no way compromised.

(b) Royal Darwin Hospital - Dr

This radiologist has an arrangement with RDH to lease an area in the hospital for the purpose of treating patients. Up until recently, he had paid sessions but since the arrival of the new staff radiologist, there has been a restriction on the amount of materials used by Dr over the past few months.

Expensive items such as films have not been used by Dr as they cannot be used in his imaging equipment.

The restrictions applied to Dr have been in the area of use of staff which although useful sometimes in teaching situations, is no longer considered appropriate as Dr does employ his own staff for private investigations.

ALICE SPRINGS HOSPITAL

1. Investigation of usage of expensive cuts of meat revealed that on one occasion porterhouse steak was mistakenly used, however, under normal circumstances topside steak is used. Meals are prepared in accordance with the standard menu used throughout the Northern Territory Hospitals.
2. Sandwiches and fruit are provided for medical staff attending weekly clinical meetings. These meetings are considered vital in assisting staff to update knowledge. The decision to provide lunch at these meetings was made by the Hospital Executive, to encourage staff to attend meetings held during the lunch time period.
3. Bread is made available for staff on evening shift as there are no canteen or dining room facilities available of an evening. No individual cooking facilities are available in the nursing home and medical officers' accommodation. A total of six (6) loaves of bread and two (2) tubs of margarine are provided daily.

* NAMES DELETED BY PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

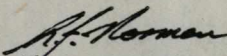
10.

4. Continental breakfast (cereal and toast) is available free of charge for staff. This has been found to be more cost-effective than paying staff to prepare and serve meals and collect payment as the cost of such salaries far exceeded the cost of the meals.

However, the system for issue of meals from the hospital dining room is currently under review.

I hope that these comments are sufficient for your purposes. Please contact Ms Sheri Dudley on 80 2960 if you require further clarification.

Yours sincerely


RAY NORMAN



NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT OF THE CHIEF MINISTER

G.P.O. BOX 4396
DARWIN, N.T. 5794

11 MAR 1988

Q 11/3/88
 Mr Mick Palmer
 Chairman
 Public Accounts Committee
 G P O Box 3721
 DARWIN NT 5794

Dear Mr Palmer,

I refer to your letter concerning "waste watch", which seeks information on areas of Government expenditure where possible savings or improved efficiencies may be made. The matters raised, with comments, are set out below.

ASSETS TRANSFER SYSTEM:

Under the present procedure, each Department provides a list of surplus assets for disposal to the Department of Transport and Works. This list is circulated to all Departments prior to disposal by auction.

It may be of interest that a service wide check of all surplus assets was undertaken in December 1987 and a report provided to the Co-ordination Committee. The Report confirmed that Departments do not hold large amounts of surplus items.

CO-ORDINATION OF PUBLIC RELATIONS ACTIVITIES:

At the time of Self Government, the Northern Territory Information Service was set up within this Department. The Service was established to:

- . Promote and publicise the development of the Northern Territory.
- . Inform the public of the decisions and actions of the Government.
- . Service Government in the specialised area of information collection and dissemination.
- . Promotion of the Northern Territory by participation in both intra territory and inter state Shows.

The Service ceased operations during the 1982/83 financial year. The Service's overall operations and costs were assessed and it was decided that a more accountable system would be for Departments to be responsible for determining and managing their own requirements within an approved budgetary and time frame work.

ELECTRICITY AND WATER ACCOUNTS:

This category is not applicable to this Department.

SEMI OFFICIAL TELEPHONES:

This Department applies stringent criteria to the approvals for semi official telephone entitlements.

PERSONAL STD AND TELEPHONE CALLS:

The suggestion is in fact Departmental policy.

ANNUAL SHOW - USE OF CONSULTANTS:

The comments supplied concerning "Co-ordination of Public Relations Activities" apply to this suggestion. Part of the Northern Territory Information Service's responsibility was to participate in Shows promoting the overall Northern Territory.

TERRITORY DIGEST:

The Northern Territory Digest mailing list is monitored by computer. A computer printout is provided regularly which shows addressees by categories and is updated by deletion of addresses of "return to sender" copies.

Names are only added to the mailing list on receipt of a written request which gives reasons for interest in the publication. Additions are made to the list to achieve the objective of having the Digest stories republished and used as leads as widely as possible in both Australian and overseas media.

It should be noted that any reduction in the p. would increase the unit cost of the Publication.

OFFICE STATIONERY:

This Department has a lockable Stationery Store w is managed by the Officer in Charge, General Serv. Stores are distributed on receipt of Stores Requis Requests and the stock is continually monitored.

FREE TEA, COFFEE, LUNCHES, MORNING TEAS:

Expenditure on official hospitality is subject to strict practices and procedures and is monitored at Departmental Head level.

OFFICE FURNITURE, ABUSE OF GOVERNMENT ASSETS, WASTAGE OF PAPER:

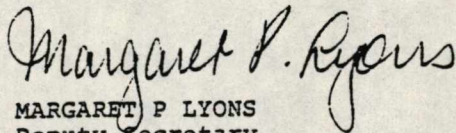
No comment, as the suggestions are not applicable and have no impact on savings or improved efficiencies.

SELF GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING:

The placing of the Self Government advertisement on 27 July 1987 was queried by the Director, Protocol. The Manager of the Northern Territory News advised that:

- . During the July 1987 industrial disputes, a series of advertisements were placed to communicate Government policies.
- . One full page was cancelled after the cancellation deadline and as the deadline had not been met, payment was still required for the space.
- . So that the space was not wasted, the Self Government material which promoted the Territory was substituted.

Yours sincerely


MARGARET P LYONS
Deputy Secretary

APPENDICES Q - U

ISSUES OUTSIDE TERMS OF REFERENCE(GOVERNMENT POLICY)

- 8 Relocation of government offices arising from the amalgamation of government departments
- 4 Necessity for drivers of ministerial cars
- 22 Relocation of Conservation Commission offices from Berrimah to Palmerston
- 3 Relocation of Director of Conservation Commission from Berrimah to Palmerston
- 4 Reduction of aboriginal aid and welfare
- 15 Subsidising of private enterprise (Sheraton, Beaufort, Casino)
- 4 Cost of Ministerial protocol (attendance at conferences, opening ceremonies etc)
- 30 Executive 'perks' (credit cards, swimming pools, etc)
- 1 Review of public administration by Joint Parliamentary Committee
- 1 Advertising of self government
- 1 Withdrawal of moves for Statehood
- 1 Contribution by government for bicentennial celebrations
- 1 Cessation of crocodile conservation programme
- 1 Office accommodation of government departments in government owned buildings
- 1 Cessation of University College of the Northern Territory
- 4 Relocation of Palmerston Community Library to Driver Education Centre
- 3 Proposed sale of Darwin Dental Clinic
- 1 Proposed sale of land at Tortilla Flats
- 1 Payment of school fees by aboriginal students

- 1 Cessation of two tier home loan scheme
- 1 Reinstatement of Dr Keith Fleming
- 1 Amalgamation of departments
- 1 Rationalisation of Technical and Further Education in the Northern Territory
- 1 Discontinuation of Housing Transfer Scheme
- 1 Discontinuation of Health Works
- 1 Turnover of Chief Executive Officers
- 5 Elimination of 17 1/2% leave loading
- 1 Government involvement with Kakadu National Park Stage 2
- 1 Handover of management of low-level nature park, Katherine to Katherine Town Council
- 1 Sale of Housing Commission homes to the private sector
- 2 Amalgamation of University College of the Northern Territory with the Darwin Institute of Technology

ISSUES OUTSIDE TERMS OF REFERENCE(OTHER)

- 3 Termination of maternity leave provisions
- 2 Work for the dole
- 7 Reduction of the number of members of parliament
- 1 Injustices of the Chamberlain case
- 1 Removal of office of Administrator
- 1 Qualifications and experience of members of Cabinet
- 1 Greening of rural areas
- 4 Water wastage - Council ovals, median strips
- 1 MLA's administrative expenses to be met from personal expense accounts
- 5 Reduction of politicians expense accounts
- 1 Pay increases for nursing staff
- 1 Termination of allowance for aboriginal students
- 1 Termination of free housing for janitors employed by Department of Education
- 1 Reduction of salary for all public servants and politicians
- 1 Free termite control in Palmerston
- 1 Salary of Chief Minister
- 1 Administrative expenditure of Adult Migrant Education programme



PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER FOR THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

DEVELOPMENT HOUSE,
76 ESPLANADE,
DARWING.P.O. BOX 4371,
DARWIN, N.T. 5794
TELEPHONE: 89 5511
TELEX: AA85308
FAX: 089-411895

Ref: 87/104

MEMORANDUM**RESTRICTED**

1988/7

12th May 1988

TO: ALL DEPARTMENT HEADS (AND/OR PRESCRIBED AUTHORITIES)
AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

GOVERNMENT MOTOR VEHICLE GUIDELINES

The following guidelines have been established for the management of Government Motor Vehicles and are effective from the date of this Memorandum.

Where the implementation of these guidelines withdraws 'home-garaging' facilities for officers who, prior to the implementation, had access to home-garaging, Chief Executive Officers are to ensure that reasonable notice is given of the withdrawal of this facility.

Management of the Government motor vehicle fleet in individual Departments and Authorities is the responsibility of Chief Executive Officers within the framework of Government-wide guidelines.

Definitions

"Vehicle" refers to sedans, station wagons, utilities and panel vans. These Guidelines do not cover other vehicles such as trucks or motor cycles.

"On-call" means circumstances where an officer must be available to perform duties outside standard working hours.

"Pool" refers to all home-garaged vehicles, together with those other vehicles for departmental use that are securely housed outside working hours in a car park or compound.

Vehicle Type

All Government fleet vehicles should be selected from economic, fuel efficient models, which effectively meet the basic needs of Department and Authorities.

Model selection and provision of accessories should be on the basis of demonstrated need only.

Consideration should initially be given to the basic model of any vehicle type, and top of range models should generally not be purchased.

Exceptions should only be approved where there is a demonstrated need for performance of specialised duties, e.g. police pursuit vehicles.

Four wheel drive vehicles are the subject of a separate section in these guidelines.

Incognito Number Plates

All officers at Executive level E5 and above are entitled to home-garage a departmental vehicle with incognito number plates. This entitlement also extends to the senior regional representative of Departments or Authorities where that representative is at E2 level or above.

Where officers occupying positions such as community welfare officers are considered to have a special case for incognito plates, this will be a matter for decision by the Minister concerned acting on advice from the Public Service Commissioner.

Home-Garaging

Home-garaging of departmental vehicles is available, at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer, to those officers at Executive Level E4. Incognito plates are not available in these cases.

Below the level of E4, home-garaging is only available, on an "as required" basis, to those officers genuinely "on call".

Pool Vehicles

All vehicles are departmental assets and Chief Executive Officers are to utilize the concept of a pool of vehicles.

All home-garaged vehicles, including those of the Chief Executive Officers and their Deputies, are to be made available,

during normal working hours and when officers are on leave or away on business, for official use by departmental officers.

Chief Executive Officers are to ensure that the number of vehicles operated by the Department is the minimum required for the efficient performance of the Department's functions.

Four Wheel Drive Vehicles

Four wheel drive vehicles are to be acquired and home-garaged on a strict need basis. "Need" is defined as a substantial requirement for off-road use.

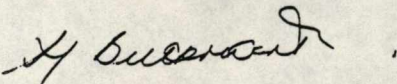
Occasional off-road use is not sufficient reason for acquisition and home-garaging of a four wheel drive vehicle.

In most cases when off-road use of a four wheel drive vehicle is required, the use of a pool four wheel drive vehicle will be most appropriate.

Replacement of Vehicles

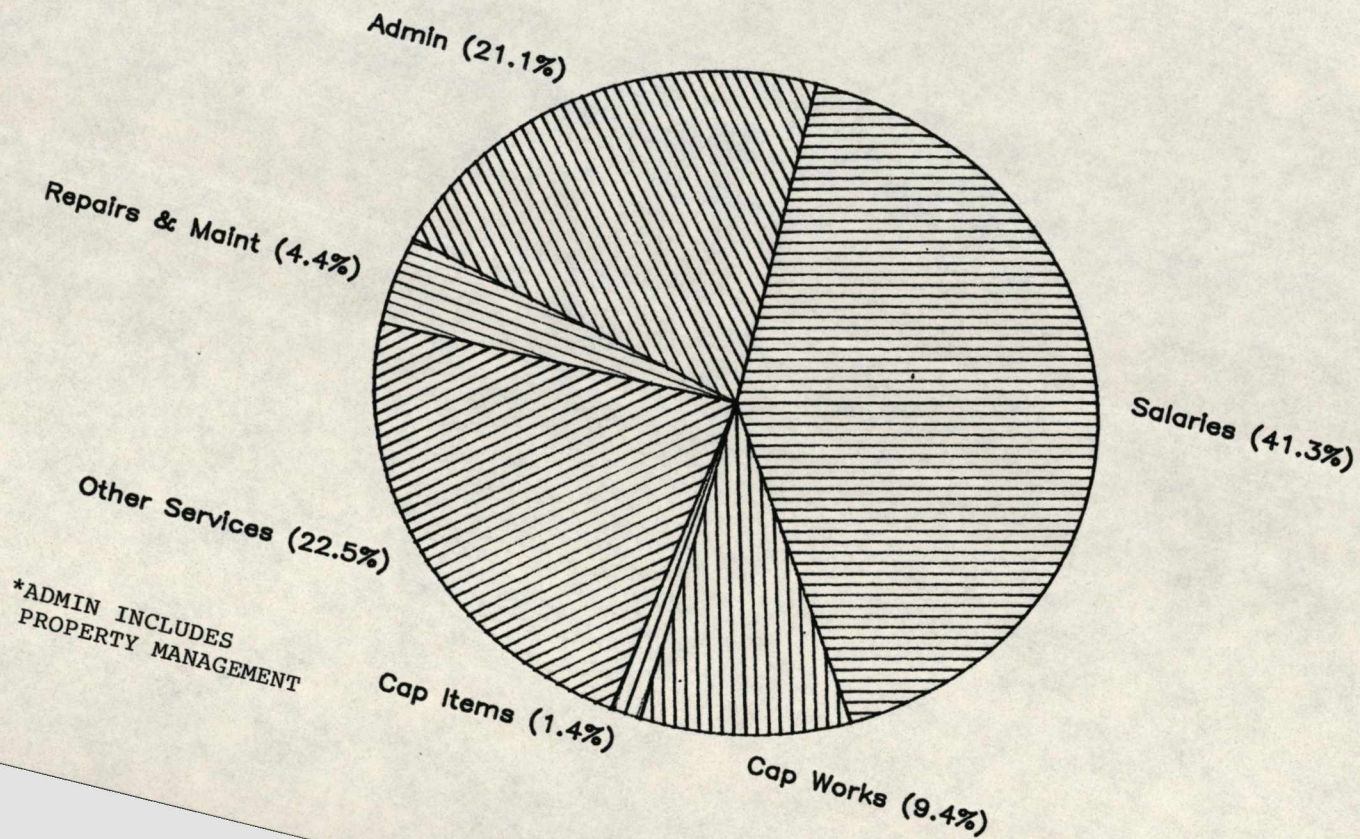
The timing of vehicle replacement is at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer subject to any over-all Government policy on replacement. The decision on replacement of vehicles is to be made on the basis of optimising the fleet, having regard to costs of maintenance and repairs, other running costs, depreciation and replacement cost.

Inquiries on the implementation of these guidelines should be directed to the Director, Personnel Services, - Hayden Hill (895080).



S BUTTERWORTH
Delegate of the Public Service Commissioner

1987/88 APPROPRIATION ANALYSIS



*ADMIN INCLUDES
PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Telephone (089) 46 1411
 Telex AA85154
 Fax 81 2528
 Telegrams Comparas

G.P.O. BOX 3721
 DARWIN, N.T. 5794

TERMS OF REFERENCE

STANDING ORDER 21A PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

- (1) A Standing Committee of Public Accounts to consist of five Members shall be appointed at the commencement of each Assembly.
- (2) The duties of the Committee shall be -
 - (a) to examine the accounts of the receipts and expenditure of the Northern Territory and each statement and report transmitted to the Legislative Assembly by the Auditor-General, pursuant to the Financial Administration and Audit Act;
 - (b) to report to the Legislative Assembly with such comments as it thinks fit, any item or matters in or arising in connection with those accounts, statements or reports, or in connection with the receipt or disbursement of the moneys to which they relate, to which the Committee is of the opinion that the attention of Parliament should be drawn;
 - (c) to report to the Legislative Assembly any alteration which the Committee thinks desirable in the form of the public accounts or in the method of keeping them or in the method of receipt, control, issue or payment of public moneys;
 - (d) to inquire into and report to the Legislative Assembly on any question in connection with the public accounts of the Territory -
 - (i) which is referred to it by a resolution of the Assembly; or
 - (ii) which is referred to it by the Administrator or a Minister; and
 - (e) to examine the reports of the Auditor-General laid before the Legislative Assembly with the accounts of a

Public Authority of the Northern Territory (including any documents annexed or appended to those reports).

- (3) The Committee shall examine only those accounts of receipts and expenditure of the Northern Territory and reports of the Auditor-General for financial years commencing after 30 June 1986: provided that this shall not prevent the consideration by the Committee of matters included in reports of the Auditor-General for the year ending 30 June 1986 which have or may have a continuing effect on the form of the public accounts; the method of receipt, control, issue or payment of public moneys.
- (4) Prior to determining whether to undertake an inquiry into any matter which may have arisen in connection with the public accounts of the Territory, pursuant to paragraphs (2) (a) and (e), with the concurrence of the Committee, the Chairman is empowered to write to the Chief Executive Officer of the relevant Department or Public Authority for a report on the matter.
- (5) The Committee shall take care not to inquire into any matters which are being examined by a Select Committee of the Assembly especially appointed to inquire into such matters and any question arising in connection therewith may be referred to the Assembly for determination.
- (6) The Committee shall elect a Government Member as Chairman.
- (7) The Chairman of the Committee may, from time to time, appoint a Member of the Committee to be the Deputy Chairman of the Committee and the Member so appointed shall act as Chairman of the Committee at any time when there is no Chairman or when the Chairman is not present at a meeting of the Committee.
- (8) In the event of an equality of voting, the Chairman, or the Deputy Chairman when acting as Chairman, shall have a casting vote.
- (9) The Committee shall have power to appoint sub-committees and to refer to any such sub-committee any matter which the Committee is empowered to examine.
- (10) Three Members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum of the Committee and two Members of a sub-committee shall constitute a quorum of the sub-committee.
- (11) The Committee or any sub-committee shall have power to send for persons, papers and records, to adjourn from place to

place, to meet and transact business in public or private session and to sit during any adjournment of the Assembly.

- (12) The Committee shall be empowered to print from day to day such papers and evidence as may be ordered by it and, unless otherwise ordered by the Committee, a daily Hansard shall be published of such proceedings of the Committee as take place in public.
- (13) The Committee may proceed to the despatch of business notwithstanding that all Members have not been appointed and notwithstanding any vacancy.
- (14) The Committee shall report annually and shall have leave to report from time to time and to report its proceedings and evidence taken; and any Member of the Committee shall have power to add a protest or dissent to any Report.
- (15) Unless otherwise ordered by the Committee, all documents received by the Committee during its inquiry shall remain in the custody of the Assembly: provided that, on the application of a department or person, any document, if not likely to be further required, may, in the Speaker's discretion, be returned to the Department or person from whom it was obtained.
- (16) The Committee shall be provided with all necessary staff, facilities and resources and shall be empowered, with the approval of the Speaker, to appoint persons with specialist knowledge for the purposes of the Committee.
- (17) The foregoing provisions of this Resolution, so far as they are inconsistent with the Standing Orders, have effect notwithstanding anything contained in the Standing Orders; and