

Commonwealth Government records

about the Northern Territory



Commonwealth Government Records about the Northern Territory

Ted Ling

National Archives of Australia

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This guide contains images of people who are now deceased.

Foreword

The title of this guide, *Commonwealth Government Records about the Northern Territory*, seems designed to disguise the rich offerings within its covers lest there be an outbreak of historical research and writing.

Ted Ling and the many staff at the National Archives, in both the Darwin and Canberra offices, and at the Northern Territory Archives Service have put together a scintillating storyline of the Commonwealth Administration of the Territory from 1911 to self-government in 1978, introduced by a brief but delightful account of earlier attempts at settlement and the South Australian attempts to form a viable colony from 1863 to the late 1890s when the dream had faded away. At each point you are guided to selected records, which if you choose to go there, will open the door of discovery into a host of topics, as diverse as Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory, customs, immigration and population, law and order, and territory personalities.

I suspect that this guide will make it easy for those who ask questions such as, 'how or why did that come about?' to get to the heart of the matter. I have frequently called upon the National Archives to track down historical documents. With this guide my appetite for digging down is whetted.

All associated with its production deserve congratulations. For generations to come researchers will praise them, as the Territory story is told in ever more depth and detail.

Tom Pauling AO QC
Administrator of the Northern Territory

3 June 2011

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Introduction

National Archives of Australia

The National Archives of Australia preserves and cares for a diverse archival collection documenting the relationship between the Australian Government and the Australian people – a rich resource for the study of Australian history, society and people.

The collection spans almost 200 years of Australian history. Its main focus is material documenting federal government activities since Federation in 1901. The Archives has significant holdings of 19th century records about functions transferred by the colonies to the Commonwealth Government at the time of Federation and subsequently.

Archival resources about the Northern Territory

This guide has been produced to commemorate the centenary of the Commonwealth Government's acquisition of the Northern Territory from South Australia. The Commonwealth assumed responsibility for the administration of the Northern Territory from 1 January 1911. Its administration ended with the granting of self-government on 1 July 1978, although, for particular functions, the Commonwealth still maintains a strong presence in the Territory.

The guide's prime focus is the Commonwealth's period of administration (often referred to as 'the Commonwealth era'), although it does begin with a chapter on the South Australian period from 1863 to 1911 (see chapter 1), and there is selected coverage of Territory issues and events after 1978.

The chapters in the guide focus on specific periods and events during the Commonwealth era and use them as a means to present and describe the key archival collections that are available. The guide does not claim to be exhaustive: it does not seek to include every record associated with the Northern Territory. Importantly, it does aim to educate and inform, and to highlight many areas of further research.

The majority of records listed in the guide are in the custody of the National Archives of Australia – mainly held by the Canberra and Darwin offices. Also listed in this guide are records in the Northern Territory Archives Service, located in Darwin, and some in other institutions, including State Records of South Australia, the archival authority for the South Australian Government; the National Library of Australia; and the Australian War Memorial.

After the Northern Territory achieved self-government in 1978, a number of administrative functions – including local services, lands and mining – passed from the Commonwealth to the Northern Territory Government. The records dealing with those functions, which had previously been in the custody of the National Archives, were transferred to the Northern Territory Archives Service. This occurred in accordance with the fundamental archival principle that 'records follow function', that is, if a particular administrative function moves from one level of government to another, the records dealing with that function are also relocated.

Archives of the Northern Territory are sometimes fragmentary. There are several reasons for this – first, the harshness of the tropical climate, which has been a distinct deterrent to long-term preservation of records. Second, the bombing of Darwin in February 1942, with the subsequent evacuation of civilian administration to Alice Springs and the imposition of Australian military administration in the 'Top End' for the duration of World War II. Third, there was the destruction of Darwin caused by Cyclone Tracy in 1974. Nevertheless, substantial quantities of records are available for research, both in Darwin and Canberra.

Commonwealth administration of the Northern Territory

Effectively, the Commonwealth's administration of the Northern Territory encompassed three levels. Each level of administration established its own recordkeeping systems, and each of these systems requires research in order to provide a composite picture of the period.

Administration from the National Capital

The first level of administration came from the Commonwealth Government, based in Canberra from 1927 (and in Melbourne between 1901 and 1927). Most important was the Central Office of whichever Department administered the Northern Territory at a particular time. Administration of the Northern Territory was also reliant on the deliberations and decisions of the Parliament and the Cabinet.

Departmental policy and administrative records

The Central Office of whichever Department administered the Northern Territory at a particular time produced policy and administrative records, which are now held by the National Archives of Australia in Canberra. The principal record series are:

A1	correspondence files created by the Departments of External Affairs/ Home and Territories/Interior from 1901 to 1938
A3	correspondence files created by the Departments of External Affairs/ Home and Territories from 1912 to 1925
A659	correspondence files created by the Departments of Interior/ Immigration from 1939 to 1950
A431	correspondence created by the Departments of Interior/Territories commencing from 1946
A452	correspondence files created by the Departments of Territories/Interior/ Northern Territory from 1951 to 1975
A1734	correspondence files created by the Departments of Interior/Northern Territory/Northern Australia from 1968 to 1978.

Cabinet submissions and decisions

Cabinet is the formal policy and decision-making arm of the Australian Government. The two major records of Cabinet are *submissions* (sometimes referred to as 'agenda') which contain the information presented to Cabinet, and *decisions*, which are the formal result of Cabinet's deliberations. The beginnings of an organised Cabinet recordkeeping system did not occur until 1919 during the prime ministership of William Morris (Billy) Hughes. In subsequent years the systems were improved, and the records became better organised and more extensive. All records of Cabinet are held by the National Archives in Canberra.

Parliamentary Papers

Many reports of government agencies as well as those of specific government inquiries are printed as Parliamentary Papers. These include, for example, the annual report of the Northern Territory Administrator. Bound copies of *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* dating from 1901 are held by the National Library of Australia, as well as most State and Territory libraries, and the libraries of Australia's larger universities.

Administrator of the Northern Territory

The second level of administration was the Administrator of the Northern Territory, located in Darwin. It was with the office of the Administrator that Departments in Melbourne or Canberra, and respective Ministers and Departmental Secretaries, principally dealt. The Administrator's records are held by the National Archives of Australia in Darwin. The principal record series are:

F1	main correspondence files from 1915 to 1978
F423	classified (confidential) correspondence files from 1946 to 1978
F425	classified (secret) correspondence files from 1946 to 1978

Northern Territory administration

At a third level was the Northern Territory Administration, which consisted of various branches, for example, Lands and Survey, Mining and Police, responsible for providing services within the Territory. It was from the branches that the Administrator would seek advice when corresponding with Commonwealth Departments or the Minister. Most branch records are held by the Northern Territory Archives Service in Darwin.

Access to records

Access to records held by the National Archives is regulated by the *Archives Act 1983*. Under the Act, records in the open access period are generally available for public access. A change to the public access provisions of the Act implemented on 1 January 2011 will see the open access period commence after 20 years – a ten year reduction from the previous 30 years. This change is being phased in between 2011 and 2020, with the closed period reducing by a year each 1 January. More information on accessing records is available in Fact Sheet 10 – *Access to records under the Archives Act*.

Under the *Archives Act 1983*, there is also provision to withhold information from public access for a longer period of time if it is still considered sensitive. The information withheld from public access falls into two broad areas: sensitive personal information and information about the security of the Commonwealth and its residents.

To view *original* records listed in this guide, a researcher will need to visit the institution in which they are held. In the case of records held by the National Archives, it is necessary to visit the reading room of the particular office of the organisation where the records are shown as being located.








Many of the records held by the National Archives are available as *digital copies* on the National Archives website, www.naa.gov.au. Preliminary research online using the RecordSearch database will identify digitised records.

Inquiries about gaining access to records listed in this guide held by institutions other than the National Archives should be directed to the institution concerned.








Using this guide

The aim of this guide is to make it easier for those with an interest in researching Northern Territory history to locate and use Commonwealth records about the administration of the Territory.

At the end of each major section in the text is a table listing the selected most relevant records relating to the subject covered. Records are listed as *record series*, or as *record items*, and are arranged by the institution in which they are located. A sample table, with an explanation of each of its elements is provided below:

	Selected records relating to the lands and Survey functions		
	LANDS		
	National Archives, Darwin		
	Correspondence files – 'L' (Lands) prefix, 1975–79		E236
	Northern Territory Archives Service		
	Correspondence files relating to land sales, reservations, and townships, 1887–1949		NTRS3345
	Correspondence files – 'L' (Lands) prefix, 1924–90		NTRS2500
	LAND BOARDS		
	National Archives, Canberra		
	Minutes of meetings – Northern Territory Land Board, 1931–38		A1, 1938/1181
	Northern Territory Archives Service		
	Land Classification Board – Minute book, 1912–24		NTRS2821
	Land Board [I] Minute book, 1924–27		F26

Key:

-  **Table title** – describes the subject area of records listed in the table.
-  **Subject sub-heading** – indicates significant subject areas – where there is more than one – of records listed in the table.
-  **Location sub-heading** – used to indicate the office of the National Archives or name of the institution in which records are located.
-  **Title of record series** – a series is the organisational arrangement used by creators of records to control and manage records. It may contain one or more record items. Some series may contain hundreds or thousands of items. The date range of the series contents is included at the end of the title.
-  **Series number** – the archives control number applied to the series. This number is necessary to identify records for storage and retrieval purposes. In cases where the series consists of a single item the series number will be sufficient information to allow for its retrieval.
-  **Item title** – A record item is usually a file or volume (it may also be a photograph, map or other format). The title is usually applied by the person or agency creating the record. The date range of the item contents is included at the end of the title.
-  **Series number and item control symbol** – The combination of series number and item control symbol identifies a record item and allows for its storage and retrieval. This information about an item is almost always required for it to be retrieved from storage.

Wherever there are references to series in this guide, it is very likely that a researcher wishing to find relevant records will need to conduct further research to identify the record items in the series that are of greatest interest. This further research can be conducted either online using RecordSearch or by checking paper indexes (also known as *finding aids*) in National Archives reading rooms.

Citing records

The correct citation of archival records in the National Archives and other collections is important, both when requesting the records and when referring to them in written or published works. Using proper citations will not only help staff locate records more readily but also help other researchers to find that material.

The correct form of citation for records held by the National Archives of Australia is expressed as follows: the name *National Archives of Australia* followed by a colon, the series number followed by a comma, and then the item control symbol.

An example is:

National Archives of Australia: A1, 1938/1181

The name National Archives of Australia may be abbreviated to 'NAA', provided the full name has been used in the first citation. Further details about correctly citing records from the National Archives collections are available in Fact Sheet 7 – *Citing archival records* online at www.naa.gov.au.

For other institutions referred to in this guide, the citation should provide the name of the institution followed by the reference or call number of the collection. An example is:

Northern Territory Archives Service: NTRS2821

Terminology for currency and measures used in this guide

In 1966 Australia introduced a system of currency based on dollars and cents to replace the system of pounds, shillings and pence used previously, and from the early 1970s began phasing in the metric system of weights and measures to replace the imperial system.

Information provided in the text of this guide makes reference to both imperial and metric units of currency and measures according to how it has been used in the sources cited. No attempt has been made to convert those units expressed in imperial terms.

For those interested in making comparisons and conversions the following conversion scales may be applied:

Currency

One pound (£1) = Two dollars (\$2.00)

One shilling (1/-) = 10 cents (10c)
(or 12 pence)

Distance and area

One mile = 1.6 kilometres

One acre = 0.40 hectares

One square mile = 259 hectares



Part 1 Administering the Northern Territory: 1863-1978



1 The Northern Territory of South Australia, 1863–1911

The Northern Territory is an area of approximately 1,349 million square kilometres (521,000 square miles). Its eastern, western and southern borders are fixed by latitudes and longitudes shared with the States of Queensland, Western Australia and South Australia respectively, while the northern border joins the Arafura Sea. The Territory was originally part of New South Wales until ceded to South Australia in 1863, and then to the Commonwealth in 1911. The Commonwealth granted the Territory limited self-government in 1978.

The Territory has two very different climatic regions. In the north, Darwin and the hinterland (also known as the 'Top End'), the climate is tropical with distinct wet and dry seasons. The nature of the climate has had a limiting effect on both pastoral and agricultural pursuits. The southern half of the Territory has an arid or desert climate. The propensity for extended droughts across this area has also had a considerable impact on primary industries.

The three largest urban centres in the Territory are Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine. Darwin – originally called Port Darwin and later Palmerston – was named after the British naturalist Charles Darwin. Alice Springs was named after Alice Todd, the wife of Charles Todd, a postmaster-general of South Australia. Katherine was named by explorer John McDouall Stuart in honour of Katherine Chambers, the daughter of his benefactor James Chambers.

The harshness of the Territory's climate and its remoteness from the remainder of Australia for many years retarded its development. Government reports from the 19th and early 20th centuries often refer to stagnation and lament the lack of development and progress within the Territory. At the same time the characteristics of distance and remoteness, and the Territory's closeness to Asia, have helped to create a distinct identity. Darwin is closer to Singapore than it is to Canberra, Sydney or Melbourne.

For several hundred years traders from Macassar (located on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi) came to the Territory searching for trepang. Dutch and French explorers sailed along the northern coast and gave Territory locations names such as Groote Eylandt, Arnhem Land, and Vanderlin Island. The British established a series of northern forts in the 1820s, primarily to ensure that no other country laid claim to the area. Chinese immigrants came to the Territory in large numbers from the 1870s onwards in response to the first gold rushes, but Asian immigration was curtailed from Federation with the introduction of the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*.

Most Australians living in the southern states knew little about the Territory. It was too remote to warrant their concern. It was only as a result of World War II, with the perceived threat of invasion and the substantial build-up of defence forces, that many Australians began to experience and understand the Territory, and concern for its development began to increase, as did tourism to the area in the 1950s.

The Territory's population also began to increase and in 2010 it stood at 220,000. When the Commonwealth assumed responsibility for the Territory in 1911, the non-Aboriginal population was less than 3,300. The numbers remained similarly low until the war.

For much of its early years the pastoral industry was the only industry of any note in the Territory. Following World War II, and with substantial financial assistance from the Commonwealth Government, both mining and tourism have increased dramatically, and the pastoral industry is today third in order of economic importance to the Territory.

Naming of the Northern Territory

The Territory's name derives from its geographical location, but occasionally alternative names have been suggested, the most favoured being Kingsland. In 1904 explorer Herbert Vere Barclay was quoted as saying that Queensland was the best of all the States and the Northern Territory was better than Queensland, and this was why 'some time ago I recommended that we should go one better, and call it Kingsland'.¹

In March 1935, H F Morriss from Surrey in the United Kingdom suggested that the Territory should be renamed Kingsland to honour the silver jubilee of King George V.² In August 1948, H Bryant from Randwick wrote to Prime Minister Ben Chifley with the same suggestion, arguing that the new name would be more attractive to the large number of immigrants then arriving in the country.³ When asked for his opinion Joseph Carrodus, Secretary of the Department of the Interior, the Department responsible for the Northern Territory, said that the name change was unwarranted. Apart from the cost of changing Acts, Ordinances, documents, and letter paper, a change of name was not warranted until development within the Territory justified its becoming a State. Yet ironically the defeated statehood referendum held in October 1998 would not have resulted in a name change. It was clearly understood at the time that had the referendum been successful the Northern Territory would have retained its name.

Early exploration of the Northern Territory

The first white settlement of the Northern Territory occurred in 1824 when the British Government established a military and trading post named Fort Dundas on Melville Island. Other settlements soon followed – Fort Wellington at Raffles Bay (1827) and Fort Essington on the Cobourg Peninsula (1838). These settlements marked Britain's claim to the whole of the Australian continent and were mainly concerned with British commercial and strategic interests in the Indian Ocean. All failed and were abandoned by 1849. None of the settlements involved the granting of land tenure.

In 1846 the British Government issued letters patent to establish a colony of North Australia, including the present Northern Territory, as a settlement for former convicts, but with a change of administration, the proposal was abandoned.⁴

Although the colony of South Australia was founded in 1836, its outer boundaries were initially defined merely as meridians of longitude and parallels of latitude, with its northern boundary set at the 26th parallel of latitude.

The northern regions of the colony remained relatively unexplored until the 1850s. Benjamin Herschel Babbage explored the region to the northeast of Adelaide in 1856 and pushed on to Lake Torrens. The following year, George Goyder, then Assistant Surveyor-General of South Australia, covered the same territory. Augustus Charles Gregory explored the Northern Territory's interior from Victoria River in 1855–56 and travelled through Elsey Creek to the Gulf of Carpentaria. The much speculated inland sea and fertile tablelands, however, were not located.

By 1858 South Australian pastoral interests were seeking more land, and they pressed the Government to explore the region as far north as the nominal border at the 26th parallel of latitude. This was in turn followed by an expedition led by the Surveyor-General, Arthur Henry Freeling. The South Australian Government ultimately offered



Image 1. Pictorial map of the Northern Territory showing the location of cities, towns and other sites, 1938. NM: A876, GL373

a reward of £2,000 to the first person to successfully traverse the continent from Adelaide to the Arafura Sea. Backed by pastoralists James Chambers and William Finke, John McDouall Stuart made several unsuccessful attempts, but on his sixth expedition over four years, he reached his goal in July 1862, at Adam Bay, east of present day Darwin, and claimed the reward.

After this period of intense exploration, South Australians knew more about the northern regions of their colony and about its potential as pastoral land. Following the reports of explorers Babbage, Goyder and Freeling, and the publication of Stuart's report of his expeditions, the South Australian Government was now keen to annex the northern areas beyond the 26th parallel of latitude.

By this time Queensland was also laying claims to the Northern Territory. The South Australian Government used the work of explorers such as Stuart to justify its claim to include the Territory within the boundaries of its colony. The issue was ultimately settled in South Australia's favour, primarily because it had been responsible for most of the Territory's early exploration and, in the end, Queensland dropped its claim.

Annexation of the Northern Territory to South Australia

On 6 July 1863 Queen Victoria signed the Letters Patent that formally annexed what had previously been a nameless part of New South Wales as the Northern Territory of South Australia.⁵ The document defined and named the area, laid the legal basis for government, and ensured that the Territory's citizens had the same rights to political representation as other South Australians.

Northern Territory Act 1863

The South Australian Government proposed to hold the first land sales in 1864 and drafted a Bill that was debated in some haste to ensure its passage in the 1863 Parliamentary session, the first sitting after the Letters Patent arrived in the colony. The Bill was duly passed and became known as the *Northern Territory Act 1863*.

The legislation provided for the regulation and disposal of wastelands in the Northern Territory, but it did not address the question of land settlement, nor direct any revenue to Territory development. The South Australian Parliament held the view that the Territory must pay for itself and, at least at first, this actually happened.

The 1863 Act expedited the siting and surveying of a principal town in the Territory, contingent upon the arrival of the Government Resident, who would be the administration's principal representative. The town would be known as Palmerston (after the British Prime Minister, Viscount Palmerston), and would be mapped out in half-acre lots.

Land sales commenced on 1 March 1864 and speculators in Adelaide and London acquired most of it, sight unseen. In just six months a total of 250,000 acres (100,000 hectares) were sold, a welcome if temporary boost to Government revenue. The records from this period consist of a series of volumes that record the registration of applications and payment of fees.

Selected records relating to the 1864 land sales	
National Archives, Darwin	
Colonial applications for land in the Northern Territory received in Adelaide, 1864	E1626
Register of applications for land in the Northern Territory received in Adelaide, 1864	E1627
Letters of allotment for applications of land in the Northern Territory received in Adelaide, 1864	E1628
English applications for land in the Northern Territory received in London, 1864	E1629
Memorandum of deposit for land applications (London), 1864	E1630
Registers of applications (London), 1864	E1631
Signed receipts for preliminary land orders (Adelaide), 1864	E1632
Numerical list of preliminary land orders issued in the Northern Territory (Adelaide), 1864	E1633

Establishing the Northern Territory's principal town

The *Northern Territory Act 1863* and the 1864 land sales were both predicated on a rapid survey of the Territory and the establishment of the town of Palmerston so that the allocation of land titles could proceed. The survey, however, proved more difficult than originally anticipated.

Boyle Travers Finniss led the first survey in 1864.⁶ He was appointed as Government Resident and placed in charge of a large party, with the principal goal of surveying a suitable site for Palmerston. Yet his party had not actually left Adelaide when the 1864 land sales were held. It was several months before their journey to the Territory began, and they had set up their base camp and initiated exploratory parties to report on the nature of the country.

A salubrious climate was considered essential to the new settlement, and Finniss was instructed to avoid swamps, mud banks, and landlocked harbours. The site nominated for Palmerston was Escape Cliffs, near the entrance to Adelaide River (about 58 kilometres northeast of present day Darwin), where the expedition was to commence its survey. The party arrived at Escape Cliffs late in June 1864; however, it failed to find a suitable site.

A year after Finniss' arrival in the Territory only one-tenth of the amount of land already sold during the 1864 sales was surveyed and the expedition was recalled at the end of 1865. Disgruntled buyers began legal action while the Government sought ways to meet its obligations under the sale contracts. Litigation continued until 1873 and cost the South Australian Government more than £73,000 in compensation.

Northern Territory Amendment Act 1868

To appease prospective land purchasers, the South Australian Parliament passed the Northern Territory Amendment Act in 1868. The Act is sometimes referred to as the Strangways Act after H B T Strangways who formed a Ministry on 5 November 1868 and attempted to reconcile South Australia's rival parties on land reform issues.

The Act enabled holders of preliminary land orders to either apply for a refund of their money or an increased acreage of land. Once again, offers could be made in Adelaide or London. Some land holders doubled the area of land to which they were entitled. Yet not everyone was appeased; in April 1870 a disgruntled purchaser from London wrote to the South Australian administration angrily demanding:

What do you mean to do with the dead men whose money you took in 1864?
Do you mean to offer them your land in their graves or invite their executors
to go out and settle in some of the northern swamps and cultivate some of the
scrub that is so much eulogised?⁷

To remedy the situation the Government despatched George Goyder, who was now the South Australian Surveyor-General, in 1869 and allowed him to select his own site for the Territory's main township.⁸ He chose Port Darwin (basically the site of present day Darwin), and his survey camp became the nucleus of the town. Within six months Goyder and his team had surveyed 665,000 acres (269,000 hectares) of town and country lands.

Following Goyder's survey, and with settlers arriving in the Territory, the long awaited ballots for the choice of allotments could finally take place, as originally specified in the 1863 Act. Applications had to be lodged with the Crown Lands Office in Adelaide before 10 May 1870. A series of ballots took place that same month.

The records from this period consist of a series of volumes that record the registration of applications, payment of fees, requests for additional allocation of lands or refund of purchase fees, and the awarding of land titles. The allocation of land titles was recorded in the 'Grant Books'.

Selected records relating to land purchase under amended legislation and 1870 land ballots		
National Archives, Darwin		
Applications for increased area of land under the Northern Territory Amendment Act 1868 (Adelaide register), 1869–72		E1634
Applications for increased area of land under the Northern Territory Amendment Act 1868 (London register), 1869–72		E1635
Register of requests for refund of purchase money under the Northern Territory Amendment Act 1868 (London register), 1869–70		E1636
Register of Northern Territory plans deposited in the South Australian Land Office, 1869–1910		E1625
Register of ballots for priority of choice in selection of country sections of land in the Northern Territory, 1870		E1637
Registers recording order of choice in the selection of town and country land in the Northern Territory, 1870		E1638
Register of selections of sections of land following the ballot of May 1870, 1870–73		E1639
Register of Northern Territory land orders (Adelaide register), 1870–83		E1640
Register of Northern Territory land orders (London register), 1870–83		E1641
Registers of grants of land in the Northern Territory arising from the original land orders (Grant Books), 1870–1914		E1642

With the selection of Palmerston as the capital, and the appointment of William Douglas as Government Resident in 1870, South Australia's administration of the Northern Territory could now begin in earnest. Robert Gardiner, a senior surveyor and draftsman in the State Survey Department of South Australia, was appointed officer-in-charge of the Palmerston Lands Office in 1870. His first task was to sort out the ballot for the surveyed sections of land surrounding Palmerston, and then to allocate the town sections that had been the subject of the 1864 and 1868 land orders. Following this, titles were issued through the Adelaide Survey Office from 1871 and thereafter.

Other administrative agencies were established from 1869 onwards, including a meteorological observatory, police inspector's office, and medical office. With the development of mining, and following a series of gold discoveries, a Chief Warden's Office was established in 1873. Regional police stations were also established from 1873 onwards.

One of the Government's earliest priorities was the construction of an overland telegraph line from Adelaide to Palmerston. In 1865 it had approved the construction of a telegraph line from Adelaide to Port Augusta. In 1870 the Government agreed to fund a continuation of the line to Palmerston, while the British–Australian Telegraph Company agreed to provide a cable from an existing connection at Java to Palmerston. The Australian component of the work was completed in August 1872 and the first messages were sent in October 1872. The residents of Palmerston were now in contact with the United Kingdom as well as the southern colonies of Australia.⁹

Selected records of early government administration in Darwin	
GOVERNMENT OBSERVATORY	
National Archives, Sydney	
Rainfall and river height observations, 1869–ongoing	E1680
National Archives, Darwin	
Rainfall record book, Northern Territory and South Australia, 1857–1920	NTAC1976/110
Meteorological register for Fort Point, Palmerston (Adams Bay), and Powells Creek, 1869–1907	NTAC1976/106
Rainfall records, Northern Territory recording stations, 1869–1976	NTAC1980/351
Field books, Port Darwin, 1884–1907	NTAC1976/108
CONSTRUCTION OF OVERLAND TELEGRAPH LINE	
State Records of South Australia	
Records relating to the construction of the overland telegraph line, 1870–72	GRG154
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Souvenir poster of a letter regarding completion of the British–Australian telegraph line, undated	NTRS798

Establishment of the pastoral industry

In addition to the sale of town and country lands the 1863 Act also provided for the administration of Crown lands by granting pastoral leases in response to calls by South Australian pastoralists for access to northern lands.

Survey delays meant that between 1864 and 1872, while a small number of applications for pastoral leases were received, no leases were issued. The granting of pastoral leases did not begin until after the passage of the *Northern Territory Lands Act 1872*. This Act allowed persons to apply for land outside settled districts and to use that land for pastoral purposes. Leases were initially for 14 years (although this was later amended to 21 years or 42 years), and covered an area between 25 and 300 square miles, at a rental of sixpence per square mile.

The first pastoral leases were issued to Andrew Tennant and to John and Robert Love on 1 April 1872 for a property near Alice Springs. Leases for properties in the eastern Barkly Tableland were taken out soon after, including Alexandria in 1877, followed by properties in the western Victoria River area, including Victoria River Downs and Wave Hill. In some cases properties were leased by individuals, but many properties were ultimately acquired by large companies. By the end of the 19th century over 4,000 applications for pastoral leases were received.

Leases for other purposes including agriculture and timber were also allocated at this time.

Pastoral records for this period include applications for leases and the allocation of leases, the latter often including a small drawing of the property concerned, together with its boundaries and topographical features, and the payment of rents for leases.

Selected records relating to 19th century pastoral leases	
National Archives, Darwin	
Northern Territory applications for pastoral leases, 1864–1900	E1652
Register of pastoral applications, 1867–1910	E1619
Registers of pastoral leases, 1872–1915	E1588
Registers of rents, 1872–1916	E1617
Northern Territory pastoral leases, 1872–1913	E1646
Register of Northern Territory pastoral rents (Adelaide register), 1872–92	E1648
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Registers of Northern Territory pastoral leases, 1872–1930	NTRS2747

Early years of mining

In addition to pastoralism, mining was the other activity upon which the South Australian Government pinned its hopes for the development of the Territory.

Gold discoveries

The first mineral discovery was gold. It was found in small quantities in a number of locations in the 1860s, but in 1872 a much larger find was discovered at Pine Creek, about 250 kilometres south of Darwin. The discovery led to an influx of southern settlers, and more significantly, large numbers of Chinese immigrants. Carment and Harlow

noted that Chinese miners ultimately outnumbered white miners by seven to one.¹⁰ South Australia's *Chinese Restriction Act 1868* was primarily intended to limit the numbers of Chinese immigrants to the Territory.

In 1873 the South Australian Government established a Warden's Office to monitor activities on the Pine Creek goldfield. That same year the *Mining Act 1873* provided for the allocation of mining leases and divided the Territory into a series of mining districts. The Pine Creek Warden's Office remained until 1921 when its functions were passed to the newly created Department of Lands and Mining. A rail link from Palmerston to Pine Creek was opened in 1889.

In 1897 gold was discovered at Arltunga, 110 kilometres east of Alice Springs. Again a Warden's Office was established to monitor activities on the goldfield. A battery and cyanide plant were established to process the ore. Crushing commenced in February 1898 and continued until 1912 when the works were closed.

Other mineral discoveries

Other minerals were discovered in the Territory during this period. Among them was copper, discovered at Pine Creek in 1872 and then at Daly River, south-west of Darwin in 1882. Mica was found at Harts Range, 215 kilometres north-east of Alice Springs, from 1892. Tin was located at Mount Wells, also near Pine Creek, in 1898, and wolfram was found at Hatches Creek, between Alice Springs and Tennant Creek, in 1892.

In 1902 the Government established smelting works just outside of Palmerston (Darwin), at a place known as 2.5 Mile. One year later the works were relocated to Daly River to assist with the mining of copper, but by 1908 they had closed down.

Despite the discoveries, and despite the Government's high hopes for the industry, there were few mining successes during the South Australian era. Conditions on the goldfields and in the mines were harsh. The distance from settlements, remoteness, the vagaries of the seasons, high prices for goods and services, and fluctuating metal prices all combined to limit the effectiveness of the mining industry. As with the pastoral industry, mining was also plagued by speculators. In his report for 1889 the Government Resident referred to the taking up of mineral licences as a 'mania',¹¹ and other annual reports cite similar difficulties faced by the administration when dealing with persons who acquired licences but never used them, forcing the administration into a time-consuming practice of forfeiting those licences.

While the Government gave considerable encouragement to the industry with the construction of batteries and plants (Jones noted that by 1911 there were 14 batteries and six cyanide plants in the Territory), only two mines were producing anything of value – gold from Pine Creek and tin from Mount Wells. Most mines were worked by individuals rather than large companies. What was lacking was financial assistance to those miners. The Commonwealth was about to inherit what could only be described as an ailing mining industry with a very poor reputation in southern and overseas financial circles.¹²

Most records relating to mining at this time are held by the Northern Territory Archives Service in Darwin.

Selected records relating to mining		
National Archives, Sydney		
Contract drawings, Palmerston and Pine Creek railway line, 1885–88 (<i>part of this series is held in Adelaide</i>)		D2280
State Records of South Australia		
Correspondence and other papers regarding gold mining, 1876–1913		GRS/24
Northern Territory Archives Service		
Plans of Northern Territory gold claims, 1873–1920		F906
Plans of gold mining leases, 1874–1915		F907
Register of special surveys and applications for leases, 1881–1910		F897
Book of plans Northern Territory mineral claims, 1881–1918		F908
Book of plans Northern Territory mineral leases, 1881–1917		F909
Copies of gold mining leases, 1882–1938		F490
Register of applications for mineral leases, 1888–1904		NTRS3278
Office copies of mineral leases, 1899–1928		F489
Register of ore returns and statements of ore treated, 1899–1916		F745
Register of gold leases, 1889–1970		NTRS3279
Reports on Northern Territory goldfields, 1903–27		NTRS389
Register of mineral claims, 1904–15		NTRS493
Account sales of ore for Palmerston Government Smelting Works, 1905–08		NTRS400
Warden's registers, Alice Springs, 1906–40		F1086
Correspondence dockets, 1908–09		NTRS2700

Rural land reviews and changes

The expected boom in the pastoral industry also failed to eventuate. Stock routes were initially developed as a means of taking cattle to market in Queensland or South Australia, as there were few markets within the Territory. One of the earliest stock routes, the Murrarji Track, dated from the 1880s. It extended from the western side of the Territory, near Wave Hill, to Newcastle Waters. It passed through harsh terrain and vegetation.¹³ Stock routes remained in use until the emergence of a regular road train service in the 1960s, when they were gradually closed down.

Other difficulties for the pastoral industry included the vagaries of the climate, lack of local markets, lack of reliable water, and the emergence of diseases such as redwater (a tick-borne bacterial infection affecting cattle).

Subsequent legislative changes did little to promote rural activity, and the *Northern Territory Crown Lands Act 1890* was passed in an attempt to revitalise the industry. It provided for leases on a perpetual basis, rather than 42 years and, in some cases, land could be purchased outright.

Royal Commission of 1895

On 15 January 1895 the South Australian Government appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into all matters relating to the Northern Territory with a view to further developing its resources and establishing better government. The Commission held 35 meetings and heard from 69 witnesses before reporting later that year.¹⁴

The Commission found that most lands, particularly town lands surrounding Palmerston, were acquired by speculators who charged excessive rents for their use; the delays in undertaking the initial surveys had created more confusion; there was a lack of an overall government policy towards the Territory's development; a failure to take into account the distinctly tropical nature of the north of the Territory; and a lack of financial support for pastoralists and miners.

The Commission concluded that while the Territory's poor record of development was due to sustained mismanagement, it felt that additional government expenditure would result in 'prosperous settlement'. At the same time, South Australian parliamentarians were becoming increasingly concerned with the level of debt that was being accrued by the Territory.

One of the Commission's recommendations was to modify pastoral laws to provide favourable rent reviews to cattlemen who had made improvements on their leases. It also recommended that lessees should have rights of appeal should their land be resumed for developmental purposes. The South Australian administration was prepared to grant freehold usage of land up to a maximum of 5,000 acres, but was also, as a result of experience, equally determined to avoid alienating large areas of land unless it was shown that permanent occupation would result. The occupancy of large amounts of land by absentee landlord companies which made little use of it would later be a regular feature of the Commonwealth era.

The South Australian Government accepted the Commission's recommendations in the *Northern Territory Crown Lands Act 1899*. The legislation gave pastoralists greater protection in the event that their land was resumed for Crown purposes. They were also entitled to payment for any improvements they had made on their land and for compensation in the event of the loss of their leases.

End of the South Australian era

Despite a number of government initiatives, by the beginning of the 20th century most measures to develop the Territory had had little effect. Industries were losing money or failing completely, and there was a lack of new settlers. By 1901 the population stood at 3,894, comprising 3,493 men and 401 women. This comprised Europeans, Chinese, Japanese, Malays and others, but not Aboriginal people.¹⁵

With the establishment of the Commonwealth in 1901, South Australia lost control of customs and immigration in the Territory, and the State was incurring further financial losses. The high costs associated with the Territory's administration and little financial return led South Australia to negotiate the surrender of the Territory to the Commonwealth. One of the reasons advanced in favour of a transfer to the Commonwealth was the contention that whichever administration had control over the Territory should have full legislative and financial responsibility for it.

As early as the 1880s, the continued failure of Territory enterprises had led to suggestions that it be returned to Britain. This was argued by witnesses who appeared before the Royal Commission in 1895, although only one suggested federal responsibility as the solution. By the time the Commonwealth came into existence in 1901, however, it was clear that Australian nationalist sentiment was strong enough to ensure that no part of the continent would be returned to Britain. If South Australia was to rid itself of the Territory, the Commonwealth was the only likely taker.

South Australian Premier Frederick Holder first proposed a Commonwealth takeover in April 1901, but negotiations for the surrender extended over a number of years, partly caused by frequent changes to the Commonwealth Government. In December 1907,

Prime Minister Alfred Deakin and South Australian Premier Tom Price executed a formal agreement for the Northern Territory's transfer. The South Australian Parliament then passed the *Northern Territory Surrender Act 1908*.

Reciprocal Commonwealth legislation was slow in coming. Deakin and his advisors disagreed with some provisions of the South Australian Act. No sooner was that resolved than the Deakin Government fell to the Labor Opposition under Andrew Fisher. The Fisher Ministry, preoccupied with Labor's social aims, put aside the question of the Territory's transfer.

In May 1909 Deakin, at the head of the newly created Fusion Party, returned to power. Five months later, the Fusion ministry introduced the Northern Territory Acceptance Bill into the House of Representatives. Most Members conceded that, for reasons of defence and development, the Commonwealth should acquire the Territory, but beneath the debate lay a deep sense of uneasiness born of the South Australian experience. Deakin alone expressed a bright pan-Australian vision. The Bill was delayed by the Senate and lapsed at the end of the Parliamentary session.

When Andrew Fisher's Labor Ministry was returned to power, it reintroduced the Northern Territory Acceptance Bill in 1910. Deakin threw the whole force of his influence behind it. The legislation provided for the transfer of the Northern Territory to the Commonwealth as the third Commonwealth territory (after Papua and the Federal Capital Territory).

From 1 January 1911 the Northern Territory became the responsibility of the Commonwealth. All relevant South Australian laws remained in force, subject to any later changes by the Commonwealth. In acquiring the Territory the Commonwealth assumed not only ownership of all its assets but also its obligations and financial liabilities. The Commonwealth also agreed to complete the railway line between Darwin and Adelaide, which at the time was in two sections: north from Darwin to Pine Creek, and south from Adelaide to Oodnadatta.

The *Northern Territory (Administration) Act 1910*, passed by the Commonwealth Parliament, included provision for the appointment of an Administrator of the Northern Territory, and the power of the Governor-General to make Ordinances for the Territory. This Act became the basic instrument of governance for the Territory.

There was, however, one crucial difference between South Australia's administration of the Territory and the future Commonwealth administration. Under South Australia, Northern Territory's white settlers, both men and women, had political representation. This right was lost with the transfer to the Commonwealth. It would not be until 1922 that the Territory had a representative in the House of Representatives. The loss of representation quickly led to dissatisfaction among local residents.

Selected records relating to the northern territory acceptance act

National Archives, Canberra

Northern Territory Acceptance Act, 1907–10	A2863, 1910/20
An Act to provide for the acceptance of the Northern Territory, 1910	A1559, 1910/20
Northern Territory Acceptance Act, 1910–11	A406, E1911/5839

Pastoral permits 1902–11

While negotiations between the Commonwealth and South Australia for the transfer of the Territory were under way, pastoral leases were no longer issued. In their place pastoral permits were granted. The South Australian Government gave an assurance that when the policy of granting leases was resumed, permit holders would have first right to long-term leases. Some 319 pastoral permits were granted in this period and formed the basis of an interim tenure until they lapsed or were incorporated into future Commonwealth pastoral lease grants.

Whereas leases were usually for 21 or 42 years, permits were for a 12-month period only and were renewed annually at a rent of 1 shilling per square mile. The first permit was awarded in August 1902. Persons wishing to renew their permits had to return the original permit and pay an application fee of £10. Permits could be renewed through the administration in Adelaide or Darwin. They were in parchment form, usually with a diagram of the property attached.

The issuing of permits was discontinued from December 1911¹⁶ and by January 1914 only 108 permits were still in force, comprising an area of 25,798 square miles. They were gradually phased out afterwards.

Selected records relating to pastoral permits	
National Archives, Darwin	
Register of pastoral permits, 1867–1910	E1619
Registers of pastoral permits, 1872–1915	E1588
Register of pastoral permits and grazing licences, 1902–17	E1589
Northern Territory pastoral permits, 1902–17	E1651
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Copies of pastoral permits, 1902–22	NTRS 3626

Fletcher argued that the permit system hindered development of the Territory's pastoral industry. The system empowered the Minister to terminate arrangements at any time with just three months notice, and without payment of compensation. The lack of tenure in turn led to limited capital improvements on properties. The permit system did, however, give pastoralists of limited means the opportunity of a start in the industry.¹⁷

Administration of the Northern Territory of South Australia

South Australia's administration of the Northern Territory was conducted by the responsible Minister in Adelaide in concert with the Government Resident in Palmerston (Darwin), who was supported by a small number of local departments. The Government Resident was required to submit an annual progress report to the relevant Minister. These reports, found in South Australia's Parliamentary Papers, provide a snapshot of events at the time.¹⁸ The high turnover of Ministers during this period (there were 34 Ministers over a period of 48 years) meant that there was little opportunity to establish consistent policy making and development.

Key records from this time are held by State Records of South Australia. They consist of letters and telegrams sent between the Minister and the Government Resident. In addition, there is a series called correspondence docketts held by the National Archives in Canberra which contain information on many aspects of Northern Territory administration, including appointment of officials, matters relating to land selection, purchase and leasing, mineral leases, surveys, exploration reports, administration of Aboriginal people, railways, hospitals, water supplies and police. They were transferred from the South Australian Government shortly after the handover of the Northern Territory.

Selected records relating to South Australia's administration of the northern territory	
National Archives, Canberra	
Correspondence dockets, Northern Territory, 1868–1911	A1640
State Records of South Australia	
Letters sent by the Secretary, Office of the Minister controlling the Northern Territory, Adelaide, 1868–1910	GRS/4
Letters received by Office of the Minister controlling the Northern Territory, Adelaide, 1868–1910	GRS/1
Letters received by the Government Resident, Palmerston, 1870–1911	GRS/10
Copies of telegrams sent by the Office of the Minister controlling the Northern Territory, Adelaide, 1872–1911	GRS/7
Telegrams received by the Office of the Minister controlling the Northern Territory, Adelaide, 1872–92	GRS/8
Copies of memoranda sent by the Office of the Minister controlling the Northern Territory, Adelaide, 1892–1910	GRS/15

Conclusion

During its period of administration of the Northern Territory, South Australia spent £6 million, established Palmerston as the Territory's capital, built an overland telegraph line from Adelaide to Darwin which was completed in 1872, completed a railway line from Darwin southwards to Pine Creek in 1889, developed a series of stock routes to take cattle to market, and introduced a leasing system for pastoral and mining lands. There was, however, little infrastructure within the Territory, with few roads and few markets for cattle. The pastoral industry failed to achieve success, while both mining and agriculture were struggling. At the end of its tenure, the State had accumulated a massive debt, which was transferred to the Commonwealth in 1911.

South Australia's administration of the Northern Territory failed for many reasons. Early land sales were thwarted by speculators, concerned solely with quick profits, rather than the long-term development of the region. Insufficient recognition was given to the vagaries of the climate and the poor quality of the soil for agricultural purposes. There was administrative instability with frequent changes to Ministers and departments responsible for the Territory, which prevented the application of consistent policies.

South Australia acquired the Northern Territory at the urging of its pastoralists who sought more lands to occupy. The industry, however, was hampered by drought and the emergence of disease. Duncan blamed the Government for the industry's stagnation, arguing that pastoral leases were too restrictive and did not provide pastoralists with security of tenure.¹⁹ This same argument would be used repeatedly in the Commonwealth era but is not credible. Leases were as liberal as they could be, given the circumstances. The Commonwealth too would make many changes to its rural leasing system, all of which favoured rural industries, but for many years those industries failed to respond to the Commonwealth's changes.

In the end, South Australia was ill-equipped to undertake the development of a region as vast as the Northern Territory, with all of its special needs. The State simply did not have the resources that development truly required. Such resources would not be forthcoming until World War II, and only then with the perceived fear of enemy attack and invasion.

Notes

- ¹ *North Queensland Register*, 12 January 1911.
- ² NAA: A461, A412/1/2 part 1, Northern Territory miscellaneous, 2 March 1935.
- ³ NAA: A461, A412/1/2 part 2, Northern Territory miscellaneous, 26 August 1948.
- ⁴ Alistair Heatley and Graham Nicholson, *Select Constitutional Documents on the Northern Territory* (Darwin, 1989), p. 27.
- ⁵ The original document is held by State Records of South Australia; SRSA Adelaide: GRG224/31.
- ⁶ Finnis kept a diary recording events relating to the survey; State Records of South Australia: GRG35/637.
- ⁷ NAA: E1636, Register of requests for refund of purchase money under the *Northern Territory Amendment Act 1868* (London register), 1869–70.
- ⁸ Goyder kept a diary which recorded events relating to the survey; State Records of South Australia: GRG35/655.
- ⁹ John McDouall Stuart's exploration of the Northern Territory, and the subsequent construction of the overland telegraph line, was the subject of a documentary entitled *A Wire Through the Heart* shown on ABC television in 2007.
- ¹⁰ David Carment and Sue Harlow, 'A History of Mining in the Northern Territory', in Donovan and Associates, *A Mining History of Australia*, Part 1 (Blackwood, 1995), p. 116.
- ¹¹ Government Resident's Report on the Northern Territory for the Year 1889, p. 7.
- ¹² Timothy G Jones, *Pegging the Northern Territory: The History of Mining in the Northern Territory of Australia, 1873–1946*, p. 144.
- ¹³ Darrell Lewis, *The Murrniji Track: Ghost Road of the Drovers* (Rockhampton, 2007).
- ¹⁴ Report of the Northern Territory Commission; together with the Minutes of Proceedings, Evidence and Appendices; *South Australia Parliamentary Papers* (1895), volume 2, paper 19.
- ¹⁵ Northern Territory Report of the Administrator for the Year 1912, p. 65; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1913), volume III, pp. 227–385.
- ¹⁶ NAA: A3, NT1914/3401, Pastoral permits Northern Territory.
- ¹⁷ Valerie Fletcher, 'Good Years and Bad Governments: The Northern Territory Pastoral Industry, 1901–1910', *Journal of Northern Territory History*, issue 8 (1997), pp. 13–26.
- ¹⁸ Copies of reports for the period 1879–1910 are also held by the National Archives in Canberra. NAA: AA1968/288.
- ¹⁹ Ross Duncan, *The Northern Territory Pastoral Industry* (Melbourne, 1967), pp. 149–56.

2 Early Commonwealth Years, 1911–21

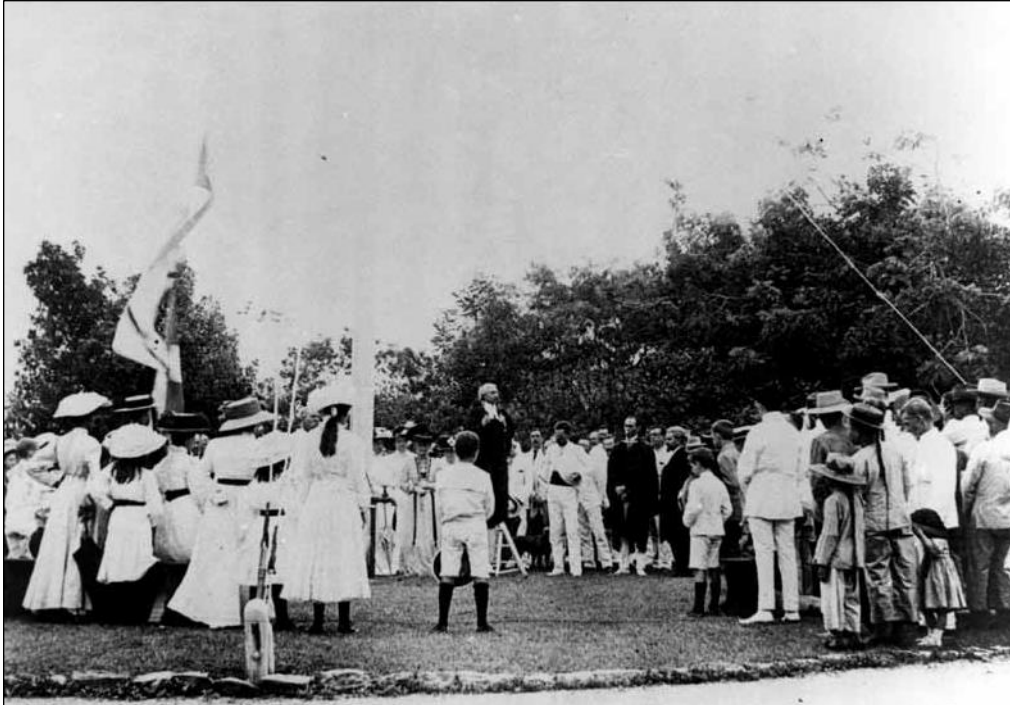


Image 2. Raising the flag in Darwin on 2 January 1911 when the Commonwealth formally took over the Northern Territory. Courtesy Northern Territory Library, PH0298/0014

The Commonwealth assumed responsibility for the administration of the Northern Territory on 1 January 1911. One of its first actions, on 3 March 1911, was to change the capital's name from Palmerston to Darwin in honour of the British naturalist, Charles Darwin. He had been previously recognised in the naming of the adjacent harbour (Port Darwin) in 1839, and many residents had for some time simply referred to their town as Port Darwin.

In 1911 the Territory's non-Aboriginal population was 3,271, a figure which included 2,673 males and 598 females. The Aboriginal population was estimated at 50,000.¹

One of the few viable industries was pastoralism. In 1911 there were 255 pastoral leases comprising 108,048 square miles of land, and 201 pastoral permits comprising 53,674 square miles, and there were 459,780 cattle.² Leases were held under different South Australian Acts, which had different terms and conditions. This, coupled with early Commonwealth legislation, proved to be a major handicap.

The only agricultural industries of any note were market gardens in Darwin maintained by Chinese residents, and a small botanic garden on the outskirts of Darwin. Indeed, in his annual report for 1911 the Acting Administrator, Samuel Mitchell, noted that there were only 'a half-dozen people who were engaged in agriculture'.³

Darwin itself was a ramshackle town with few purpose-built buildings and minimal infrastructure. There was no electric power, reticulated water or sewerage systems. Darwin's Chinatown was regarded with disfavour by white settlers as an area of vice and poor sanitation.

Closer settlement

The Commonwealth's principal objective in its administration of Territory lands was always closer settlement. When the first Crown Lands Ordinances were debated in Parliament in 1912, Senator Edward Millen said, 'we are...under the strongest of all obligations to adopt the policy which is likely to prove the most effective in bringing in as quickly as possible a considerable number of desirable settlers'.⁴ It was even considered in late 1978, after the Territory had achieved self-government. A departmental memo posed the question: 'Is closer settlement to be fostered or the "open range" method retained?'⁵

Closer settlement was not a Commonwealth invention; the practice was developed by the Australian colonies in the 19th century. By the 1890s the colonies had collectively alienated vast quantities of land, only a fraction of which was actively used. Large portions, held on speculation, were predominantly idle. The position had become such that governments were forced to reacquire land by voluntary or compulsory means – often at considerable cost – in order to provide for more settlers. Closer settlement acts were passed by most colonies between 1891 and 1901. The Commonwealth's intention was to prevent pastoralists from acquiring large estates and failing to develop them. Yet this determination clouded the Commonwealth's judgement, and caused an over-zealous adherence to closer settlement, particularly in the period prior to World War II.

The Commonwealth's continued pursuit of closer settlement in the Territory was related to the national interest. Although politicians and officials did not always use the term, it was clear that they viewed closer settlement in that context. The Commonwealth saw its actions as benefiting the entire nation, not merely the north. Writing in his doctoral thesis in 1960, Rex Patterson, who served as Minister for the Northern Territory from 1973 to 1975, expressed this view succinctly when noting that governments had to 'consider policies that were designed to achieve the most favourable outcome accruing to the society of Australia as a whole, rather than to the society residing in the northern portion of the continent alone'.⁶

The first motive for pursuing closer settlement was basic. There were concerns that a sparsely populated 'empty north' represented a risk to the defence of the nation. The second reason was more altruistic; a closely settled territory was seen as a socially desirable goal. There was abhorrence that large quantities of Crown land (effectively the Commonwealth's land) were occupied through the payment of minimal rents without being used. The third reason was the belief that a populated north could make a greater contribution to the national purse and the Commonwealth could ultimately recoup some of its development costs.

The role of Aboriginal people in the pursuit of the closer settlement principle was seen as minimal. They provided a substantial workforce for the pastoral industry, but they generally lived in small, scattered communities, and their 'natural tendency to rove' introduced an uncertain element into their employment. Atlee Hunt (Secretary of the Commonwealth Department with responsibility for the Territory from 1911 to 1921) considered the solution was their continued employment with menial tasks benefiting white settlers.⁷ It was expected that Aboriginal people would generally support closer settlement, without necessarily becoming settlers themselves. For many years there was also the widely held perception that they were a doomed race and would gradually die out.⁸

Establishment of the first Commonwealth administration

After its acquisition of the Territory in 1911, the Commonwealth Government invited a number of scientific experts to visit and report on various aspects of the Territory's future development, including the following:

- Walter Campbell, a retired New South Wales agricultural administrator, who visited the Territory between May and September 1911 to advise on suitable sites on which to test the Territory's agricultural possibilities. He selected sites for three experimental farms.
- Anton Breinl, Director of the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine, who was asked to report on the healthiness of the region for Europeans. He concluded the climate was suitable for a white population.
- Geologist Walter George Woolnough, who was asked to undertake geological studies in the Territory. He completed a journey from Darwin to Camooweal, and was impressed with the mineral potential of the area.
- Baldwin Spencer, Professor of Biology at the University of Melbourne, who was asked to study Aboriginal people.
- John Gilruth, a veterinarian, also from the University of Melbourne, who reported on the stock and stock carrying capacity of the country.

At the same time, Herbert Barclay was asked to investigate and report on a stock route from Newcastle Waters westwards to Victoria River, and to recommend suitable sites for water. He had done similar work on the eastern Barkly Tableland in 1903 and 1904. He conducted the survey between July and August 1911, over a distance of 235 miles, and wrote that, given adequate supplies of water, the country was suitable for closer settlement.⁹

Selected records relating to early Scientific expeditions in the northern territory

National Archives, Canberra

W S Campbell reports on the Northern Territory, 1910–14	A3, NT1912/5132
Northern Territory preliminary scientific expedition 1911– Professor Spencer's report on Aborigines, 1911–12	A1, 1912/2991
Reports by Captain H V Barclay on certain bores on the Barkly Tablelands and on the stock route Victoria River to Newcastle Waters, 1911–14	A3, NT1914/3682
Professor W G Woolnough on the subject of his returning to the Northern Territory, 1912	A1, 1912/2589

With the principle of closer settlement firmly in mind, the Commonwealth quickly began to establish its new administration. John Gilruth was appointed as the Territory's Administrator in 1912, with Henry Carey as his secretary.

A number of departments, including those for lands, survey, mines, agriculture, and education, were created to support the Administrator and the following senior officials were appointed: David Bevan (Chief Justice), George Ryland (Director of Lands), Theo Day (Chief Surveyor), William Clarke (Agriculture), Harold Jensen (Mines), James Beckett (Chief Protector of Aborigines), H V Francis (Railways), William Stretton (Customs and Excise), and Nicholas Waters (Police).

While a number of departments were responsible to the Administrator, others including railways, post, customs, tax, quarantine and lighthouses reported directly to the Commonwealth Government (based in Melbourne until 1927). Divided responsibilities quickly led to friction and general dissatisfaction.

Initially it was the Commonwealth's expectation that the Northern Territory's development would rely on pastoralism, agriculture and mining. Gilruth was very impressed with the Territory's potential for future development. In his annual report for 1912 he wrote:

I am more than over-favorably impressed with the potentialities and am perfectly satisfied, from my own experience and general observations, that neither by reason of climate, nor of poverty of soil, does its development by white people present insuperable difficulties, or even difficulties of a very extraordinary nature'.¹⁰

Recognising that the pastoral industry was an integral part of the Territory's future, the Commonwealth created a Land Classification Board in 1912, with members George Ryland, William Clarke and Theo Day. Its role was to classify vacant Crown lands prior to leasing, approve applications for leases, determine lease rents and monitor leaseholders' compliance with the terms of their leases. An Advances to Settlers Ordinance introduced in 1913 provided financial assistance for new settlers to the Territory. Pastoral permits, first introduced in 1902, were replaced with grazing licences from July 1912.

Although the Board began its activities with an extensive inspection of the Territory, its usefulness was to be short-lived. Ryland left the Territory in 1914 after falling out with Gilruth, as did Day who returned to South Australia in 1916. He later took legal action against the Commonwealth arising from a dispute over travel costs.

Selected records of the land classification board	
National Archives, Darwin	
George Ryland's tour of the Roper River, 1912–68	F1, 1969/240
Pamphlet <i>Land Settlement Northern Territory of Australia</i> , 1912	M1407, 1
George Ryland – report relating to activities as Director of Lands, 1912	M1407, 3
George Ryland – notebook and diary, 1912	M1407, 5
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Minutes of meetings, 1912–24	NTRS2821

Despite Walter Campbell's recommendation for three experimental agricultural farms, only two sites came into operation. One was at Batchelor, 100 kilometres south of Darwin (named for Egerton Lee Batchelor, the first Commonwealth Minister responsible for the Northern Territory who died in office on 8 October 1911), and the other at Daly River.

One additional farm, a sheep and horse breeding station at Mataranka, 400 kilometres south of Darwin, was established with the encouragement of Gilruth in 1913.

By 1920 all three farms had failed for reasons involving the climate, insect pests and the overall environment. Writing in 1969 Lockwood claimed the farms had wasted £65,000 and added the assertion that the Commonwealth paid over £10,000 in order to grow just one overly large pumpkin.¹¹

Selected records relating to batchelor, daly river and mataranka experimental farms		
National Archives, Canberra		
BATCHELOR FARM		
Batchelor demonstration farm – report of results of operations, 1912–13		A3, NT1913/11631
Batchelor and Daly River demonstration farms – report on progress, 1912–15		A431, 1948/834
Grasses planted at Batchelor farm, 1920		A3, NT1920/3138
Report of country east of Batchelor farm, 1920		A3, NT1920/1236
DALY RIVER FARM		
F G Manning regarding Daly River farm, 1912		A3, NT1912/4541
Batchelor and Daly River demonstration farms – report on progress, 1912–13		A431, 1948/834
Cotton grown on Daly River farm – Oenpelli station, 1917–20		A3, NT1921/281
MATARANKA FARM		
Mataranka demonstration farm, 1912–21		A431, 1946/1757
Mataranka sheep station reports by Administrator on visits, 1913–18		A3, NT1918/693
Director of Lands visit to Mataranka farm, 1919		A3, NT1919/4350

Early Commonwealth legislation for the Northern Territory

The Commonwealth's administration of the Territory was provided for by the *Northern Territory (Administration) Act 1910*. Under Section 13 of the Act the Governor-General could issue ordinances to provide direction in matters of ongoing administration. The power to issue and amend ordinances passed to the Legislative Assembly in 1947. Periodically amended, the *Northern Territory (Administration) Act 1910* remained the basis of government in the Territory until the advent of self-government in 1978.

The first ordinance made under the Act was the Northern Territory Government Ordinance (Number 1 of 1911), defining the powers and functions of the Administrator. Other noteworthy ordinances at this time were:

- Council of Advice Ordinance (2 of 1911),
- Tin Dredging Ordinance (4 of 1911),
- Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Ordinance (6 of 1911),
- Supreme Court Ordinance (9 of 1911),
- Fisheries Ordinance (13 of 1911),
- Aboriginals Ordinance (16 of 1911),
- Crown Lands Ordinance (8 of 1912),
- Encouragement of Mining Ordinance (4 of 1913), and
- Advances to Settlers Ordinance (5 of 1913).

Royal Commission on Northern Territory Railways and Ports, 1913–14

In March 1913 the Commonwealth appointed a Royal Commission on Northern Territory Railways and Ports to investigate and report on the desirability of creating new railway lines and shipping ports, and their possible locations.

The Commission's report, presented in February 1914, found that in other parts of Australia railways had followed early settlement, while in the Territory there was a unique opportunity for railway policy to lead settlement. The drawback was that it was impossible to venture financial results of any railway lines that might be built.

Selected records relating to the royal commission on northern territory railways and ports (ca 2130)	
National Archives, Canberra	
Draft maps and plans of Royal Commission on Northern Territory railways and ports, 1897–1914	CP661/19
Royal Commission on Northern Territory railways and ports, 1910–14	A3, NT1914/3884
Royal Commission on Northern Territory railways and ports, 1912–13	A3, NT1915/2632
Royal Commission on Northern Territory railways and ports, 1913–15	A3, NT1915/899 part 1
Northern Territory railway development, commission on, 1914–15	A2, 1915/74
Royal Commission on Northern Territory railways and ports, 1914–15	A3, NT1915/3170
Royal Commission on Northern Territory railways and ports – minority report, 1914	A3, NT1915/899 part 2
Royal Commission on Northern Territory railways and ports, 1914–22	A3, NT1914/5404
Royal Commission on Northern Territory railways and ports – railway proposals recommended by a majority of the Commission, 1914–50 (a duplicate copy of this item is held as A6133, 7)	A6133, 6
<i>Royal Commission report</i> Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers (1914)	Volume II, pp.677–731

In June 1914, just four months after the Royal Commission had reported, the Minister with responsibility for the Northern Territory, Patrick Mahon Glynn, issued a statement that outlined the Commonwealth's policy on development for the Territory.¹²

The policy stated that the Government proposed to develop the Territory via a series of railways and roads, new stock routes and the maintenance of old ones, improvements to water supplies, and closer settlement of the western Victoria River and eastern Barkly Tableland Districts. The Government would not undertake any works that could be carried out by private enterprise, and assistance would be rendered only in cases where conditions appeared to afford special facilities for the permanent establishment of new settlements. Settlers would be encouraged to come to the Territory to work on the proposed railways and occupy land near the rail lines.

Glynn's policy included an ambitious eight-year program of railway construction costing £10 million. He said the Territory would involve a necessary expense on the Commonwealth, and expenditure could not proceed on a commercial basis, but by way of advances to be repaid in the future. Relying on the betterment principle, some of the costs would be met by landowners, lessees and others who directly benefited from the works. In March that year, the Treasurer, John Forrest, had suggested the works be financed by the establishment of a trust fund and the subsequent raising of a loan. Glynn rejected the idea as the debt would be borne by all Australians.¹³

The policy statement was issued just two months prior to the outbreak of World War I, which was to have a severe impact on Commonwealth expenditure over the next four years and beyond. Joseph Cook's Government, of which Glynn was a member, lost office in September 1914, and once again Andrew Fisher formed a Labor Government. The policy was scrapped.

One of the features of the Commonwealth's early administration of the Northern Territory was the emergence of large cattle companies, particularly the British companies, Bovril's and Vestey's. Bovril's acquired the lease for Victoria River Downs in 1909, and Vestey's took up the lease for Wave Hill in 1914. Both properties were located in the western Victoria River District. These two companies would have considerable influence in the future of the Territory's pastoral industry.

Establishment of Vestey's meatworks

In June 1914 the Commonwealth signed a contract with Vestey Brothers (Vestey's) for the company to construct and operate a meatworks in Darwin and, in return, the Commonwealth would extend the existing railway line from Pine Creek to Emungalan (Katherine), a distance of 88 kilometres. It was expected that the meatworks would process a large number of cattle, many of which would be exported, and would provide impetus to the Territory's economy. The extension of the rail line would assist Vestey's, whose principal property, Wave Hill, was located west of Katherine. The line was completed in December 1917.

The meatworks was also completed in 1917, at a substantially higher cost than was originally estimated. It operated for three years before closing in 1920. Over the three years of operation there were frequent strikes and union demands for higher wages, and the meatworks never processed the number of cattle that was anticipated. After a short season in 1925 it closed permanently. The closure had a devastating impact on Darwin's economy. The lack of a local meatworks meant that cattle had to be sent long distances over stock routes to markets in adjoining states.

Causes of the closure ranged from union militancy and demands for higher wages to Vestey's deliberately overcapitalising the works to ensure it failed, thus protecting their interests in Argentina. Powell has suggested that Vestey's viewed operations on a world-wide scale and simply closed the works in response to economic forces generated far outside Australia.¹⁴

In April 1933 Senator George Pearce had discussions with Vestey's principal representative in Australia, Charles Conacher, to canvas the possibility of the works reopening, but these were unsuccessful.¹⁵ The meatworks gradually fell into a state of disrepair. They were demolished in the 1950s, and the site is now the home of Darwin's principal high school.

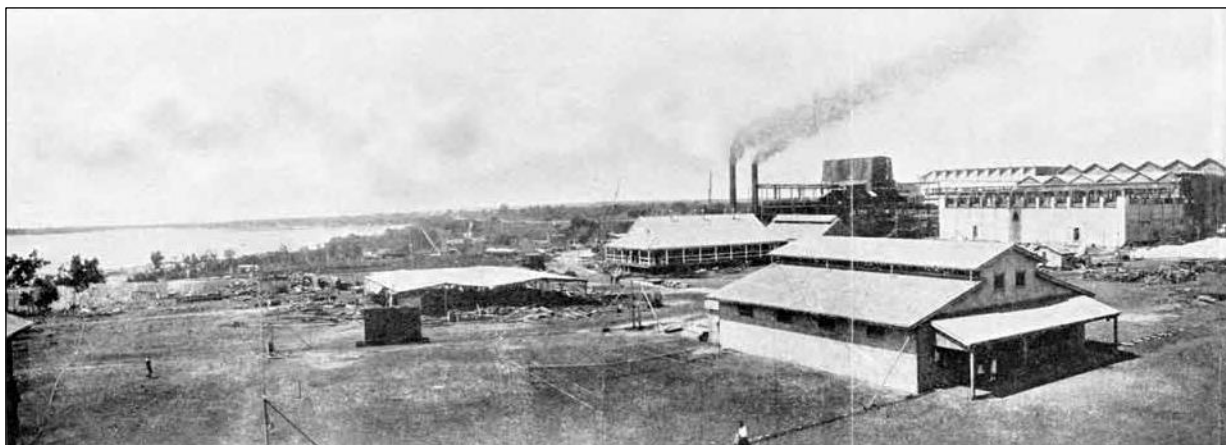


Image 3. Vestey's meatworks on the outskirts of Darwin, 1919. *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1917–19), volume VI, p. 1155

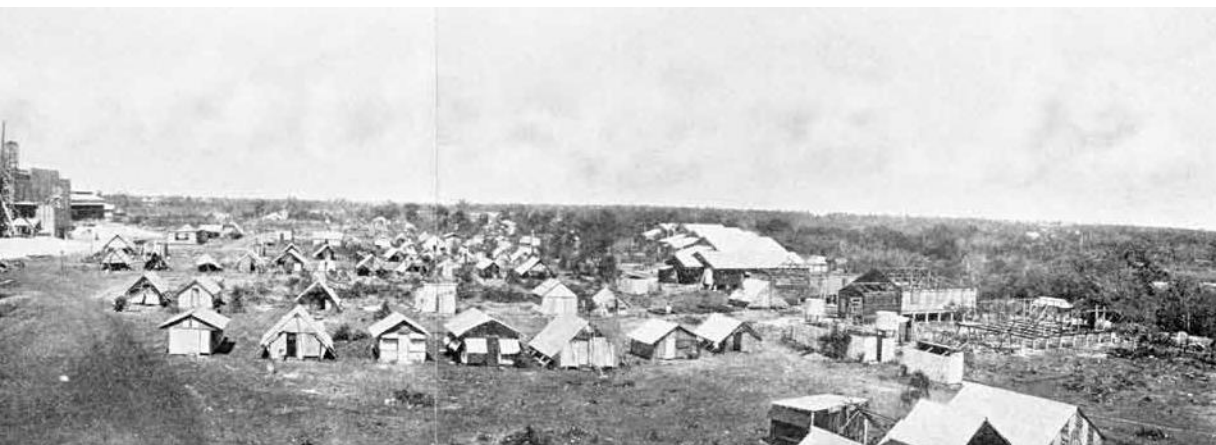
Selected records relating to Vestey's meatworks		
National Archives, Canberra		
Vestey Bros freezing works – erection, 1912–15		A3, NT1916/1230
Construction of railway sidings for Vestey Bros, 1914–20		A3, NT1920/841
Vestey Bros – agreement regarding freezing works, 1914		A3, NT1914/6267
Vestey Bros meat works, 1915–17		A3, NT1917/258
Meat works, Darwin – formal opening, 1917		A3, NT1917/726
Meatworks – North Australian Meat Company – registration, 1917		A3, NT1917/1753
Vestey Bros – agreement with Government regarding meat works, 1918–24		A3, NT1922/4851
Vestey Bros – lack of shipping space and closing of works, 1919/21		A3, NT1921/3421

Patrick Glynn returned as Minister in 1917 and issued an updated version of his 1914 policy statement.¹⁶ After reiterating the Government's intentions for an extensive program of capital works, he added a cautionary note that 'the war, which now prescribes duty and directs expenditure, for a time blocks projects essential to development'.¹⁷ World War I had a stifling effect on development in the Territory and elsewhere. Powell noted that it began at a time when Commonwealth revenues were buoyant, having been restricted since 1908 due to commitments to defence and aged pensions.¹⁸

Administrator of the Northern Territory

The Commonwealth's official representative in the Northern Territory was the Administrator. The first to be appointed to the position was John Anderson Gilruth, in 1912.

As indicated earlier, problems soon emerged between the administration in Darwin and Melbourne. A number of Darwin-based departments were responsible directly to their Ministers in Melbourne, and showed little loyalty either to the Administrator or the administration in Darwin.



On 28 January 1915, Cabinet determined that the Administrator would have local authority, that is, he would be fully acquainted with proceedings, have a right of comment, and be the Government's Chief Executive Officer in the Territory, but he would still have to go through relevant Ministers if there were any problems.¹⁹ Cabinet's decision changed nothing, and the conflicts continued.

The Administrator was assisted by a Council of Advice formed in 1912 but it appears to have lapsed by 1914. A second Council was created in 1919 to advise the Minister on matters pertaining to the Territory. It comprised a chairman and seven members.

The key recordkeeping system of the Administrator's office until self-government in 1978 (registered as series F1) is held by the National Archives in Darwin. The earliest files in the series date from 1922.

Other Darwin departments, including Lands, Mining and Police, also maintained their own record collections.

Selected records relating to the early commonwealth administration of the northern territory

National Archives, Canberra

Council of Advice Ordinance, 1919 A3, NT1919/3248

Minutes of meetings, Council of Advice, 1919–20 A3, NT1920/3769

National Archives, Darwin

Council of Advice – minute book, 1911–13 F239

Administrator – correspondence files, 1915–78 F1

Northern Territory Archives Service

Chief Inspector of Stock – general correspondence files, 1910–41 NTRS896

Mines Branch – correspondence files, 1910–15 NTRS2881

Agriculture – correspondence regarding agricultural leases, 1913–81 NTRS3340

Lands and Survey – correspondence regarding town leases, 1913–81 NTRS3343

Lands and Survey Branch – correspondence files, 1887–1949 NTRS3345

Theodore Ernest Day – personal papers, 1916–43 NTRS340

While the Commonwealth continued to administer the Territory from the seat of government (first Melbourne, and then Canberra from 1927), various departments, including External Affairs, Home and Territories, and Interior, had responsibility for determining Territory policies. A number of registered record series held by the National Archives in Canberra record the liaison between these departments and Darwin, and the level of policy making emanating from them.

Selected central departmental records relating to the administration of the northern territory

National Archives, Canberra

Department of External Affairs / Home and Territories / Home Affairs / Interior – correspondence files, 1903–38	A1
Prime Minister's Department – correspondence files, 1904–20	A2
Department of External Affairs / Home and Territories – Northern Territory correspondence files, 1912–25	A3
Miscellaneous memos relating to the Northern Territory from office to Minister Glynn, 1919	A519
Draft Handbook of the Northern Territory – compiled by Hon Staniforth Smith, 1921	A238

Civil unrest and the 'Darwin Rebellion'

The effects of World War I, the closure of Vestey's meatworks, the lack of employment opportunities, and the loss of political representation following the Commonwealth's acquisition of the Territory had all helped to foment local unrest, particularly in Darwin. These events coincided with the rise of militant unionism, including the North Australian Workers' Union and its leader Harold Nelson. Their catchcry would quickly become 'no taxation without representation'.

In 1916, Harold Jensen, former Director of Mines, wrote to the Minister complaining about the administration of the Northern Territory, and in particular Gilruth's autocratic manner. The letter contained 43 specific complaints. In response, the Commonwealth established a Royal Commission on 12 July 1916. The Commission's report consisted of a general assessment of Jensen's unsatisfactory behaviour as a witness and refuted all his charges. The Commission found no basis for his complaints and, in turn, the report was never published.

royal commission to inquire into certain charges against the administration and other officials of the administration (ca 7534)

National Archives, Canberra

Royal Commission on Northern Territory Administration – charges by Dr Jensen, 1915–20	A3832, RC19, item 2
Royal Commission on Northern Territory Administration, 1916–17	A3832, RC19, item 1
Royal Commission on Northern Territory Administration – honorarium to secretary, 1916–18	A3832, RC19, item 3
Royal Commission to enquire into charges made by Dr Jensen against the local administration in the Northern Territory, 1916	A5522, M517



Image 4. Citizens gathered in protest outside Government House for Darwin's 'Little Rebellion', 17 December 1918. Courtesy State Library of South Australia, SLSA B22006

There was concern among Darwin residents at the administration of the Territory, some of which was orchestrated by union leader Nelson. Public meetings were held at which resolutions were passed which in effect requested Gilruth to leave the Territory. These issues coalesced in an incident known as the 'Darwin Rebellion' when, on 17 December 1918, a group of several hundred men marched on Government House and called on Gilruth to resign. He refused to do so and was manhandled by the group. There were subsequent calls for him to leave Darwin, and he finally did leave on 20 February 1919.

Gilruth travelled to Melbourne to brief the Minister, leaving his former secretary, Henry Carey, as Director of the Territory. A letter from Carey to Gilruth in July 1919 that proposed he should help Vestey's sell their meatworks to the Government on terms favourable to the company became public and further inflamed the situation. Calls for Carey and several other officials to leave Darwin were met when the administrators departed on 19 October 1919.

Selected records relating to the 'darwin rebellion'

National Archives, Canberra

Official secretary to Governor-General report regarding Darwin disturbance, 1919–20	A3, NT1920/139
Darwin disturbance – deportation of officials, 1919–20	A3, NT1920/916
Reports regarding Darwin disturbance, 1919–21	A3, NT1919/1031
Darwin disturbance – prosecutions for assault, 1919–22	A3, NT1922/1799

The Government did not renew Gilruth's appointment, and instead appointed a Royal Commission on Northern Territory Administration in November 1919. It was presided over by Norman Ewing, a Judge of the Supreme Court of Tasmania. Ewing was asked to inquire into the departure of Gilruth, and the other officers, and grievances expressed by Nelson and other Darwin residents.

The Commission held hearings in Melbourne, Darwin and Thursday Island, commencing on 14 November 1919. Its report, presented in April 1920, criticised the Commonwealth for failing to pursue consistent policies in the Territory. It noted that under the laws and

constitution of South Australia, Northern Territory residents had full rights of citizenship. With administration of the Territory by the Commonwealth these rights had ceased and, while the people of the Northern Territory had no say in their administration, they were called on to obey Commonwealth laws and comply with local Ordinances, in the making of which they had no part. The Territory was being ruled autocratically in that 'Dr Gilruth (the Administrator) had little toleration for any person who disagreed with him, and was temperamentally unsuited for filling the office he occupied'.²⁰

The Commissioner considered that Carey's letter to Gilruth about the meatworks sale 'destroyed any confidence the public might have had in him, and led to the demand by the people of Darwin that he and others should leave the Territory'.²¹

Ewing felt that the burden of responsibility for the extraordinary conditions in the Northern Territory must be divided between the failure of the Commonwealth to realise the position and grant to the people of the Territory citizen rights, the failure of Ministers to form a proper appreciation of what was due to the Territory, and the failure of Gilruth and those closely associated with him 'to exercise their great powers with firmness, common sense, discretion, and justice'.²²

Only minor recommendations in administration were made by the Commissioner, as he maintained that 'whatever local control may be given to the Commonwealth Territories in the future, should provide for a similar government of them all, making provision only for special local conditions'.²³

Gilruth never returned to the Northern Territory. He advanced his career with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation.

royal commiSSion on northern territory adminiStration (ca 2268)	
National Archives, Canberra	
Northern Territory Royal Commission on charges against administration, 1919–20	A432, 1929/4150 part 1
Charges against administration Royal Commission – departure of officials from Darwin on charges against administration, 1919–20	A432, 1929/4150 part 2
Minute book of Royal Commission on Northern Territory, 1919–20	CP210/1, volume 1
Royal Commission Northern Territory – main file, 1919–20	A460, A5/3
Royal Commission on Northern Territory – miscellaneous accounts, 1919–23	A460, B5/3
Exhibits of Northern Territory Royal Commission, 1920	A460, F5/3
Northern Territory – Royal Commission, 1920	A11804, 1920/296
Reports on Northern Territory – Justice Ewing's report, 1920	CP859/6, E
Royal Commission on Northern Territory – Vestey Brothers expenses, 1920–22	A460 C5/3
Royal Commission on Northern Territory – reports and evidence, 1920–33	A460, E5/3
<i>Royal Commission report</i>	
Royal Commission into Northern Territory Administration, 'Report', <i>Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers</i> (1920–21)	volume III, pp. 1653–1669
Royal Commission into Northern Territory Administration, <i>Minutes of Evidence</i> (Melbourne, 1920)	

There was to be further hostility between the Commonwealth and the Northern Territory. In 1920 the Territory's then Minister, Alexander Poynton, told Parliament that the Territory was a wonderful asset. It could be developed, not by closer settlement, but by stocking with cattle and sheep. Railways and extensive water supplies were required. Poynton observed that if the Commonwealth was to make anything from the Northern Territory it had to be prepared to spend money on it.²⁴

In May 1921 Poynton visited the Territory. Despite his earlier statement about the need for large amounts of expenditure, he now embarked on a cost-cutting exercise. He suggested the abolition of all government-funded activities regarded as commercial enterprises, with private industry undertaking them instead. He wrote that staffing in the Lands Office was excessive and inefficient, and he recommended the amalgamation of the Lands and Mines Director's positions. Poynton estimated that his proposed cuts and amalgamations would save the Commonwealth £20,000 per year.²⁵

Horace Trower, who had been appointed Director of Lands in 1917, found his position abolished with effect from August 1921. He later lost a High Court action alleging wrongful dismissal with costs of £541 awarded against him. He was virtually destitute, and the Commonwealth did not pursue the claim.²⁶

Poynton's desire for cost-cutting may actually have been in response to the Royal Commission on Public Expenditure. The Commission was appointed in 1918 and completed its work in November 1920. In the first of several reports it noted that the Commonwealth's expenditure in 1918–19 included over £100 million on war expenses, and £30 million on non-war expenses, and it recommended extreme cost-cutting. As far as the Northern Territory was concerned, it stated that 'the large expenditure taking place yearly in the Northern Territory should not be continued pending the settlement by Parliament of a definite policy in regard to this Territory'.²⁷

Mining in the early Commonwealth years

In 1911 there were 61 gold mining leases in the Territory and 22 mineral leases in effect, while 17 gold mining lease applications were in train, as were 37 mineral lease applications.²⁸ From the beginning, the Commonwealth accepted a policy of encouragement to the mining industry. It established a Department of Mines with Harold Jensen as the first Director. He arrived in Darwin in September 1912. At the same time T G Oliver was appointed as Inspector of Mines.

A Tin Dredging Ordinance was introduced in 1911, which provided for leases of 21 years duration. This was superseded by the Encouragement of Mining Ordinance of 1913, which offered leases of up to 42 years, as well as financial subsidies.

In 1913 tin was discovered at Maranboy, 50 kilometres south-east of Katherine. A battery to crush ore at the site was completed in 1915 at a cost of over £20,000. Crushing charges were kept low in order to provide support for the miners. A second battery was completed at the Hayes Creek tin mine in October 1916 at a cost of almost £3,300.²⁹

In 1916 an outbreak of malaria led to many deaths and severely curtailed operations at the Maranboy site. Nevertheless, mining continued, and by 1918 Maranboy had passed Mount Wells as the Territory's premier tin mining site.

Mining in the early years of Commonwealth administration was for the most part a costly failure, as it had been during much of the South Australian administration. Despite financial assistance from the Government and high metal prices in the early years, by 1918 mining was confined to a few small syndicates. Administrator Gilruth

commented on the waste by some companies, which had completed expensive buildings before ascertaining the full value of their mine sites and ultimately withdrew having lost their investments and leaving a trail of derelict buildings in their wake.³⁰

In his report for 1921, Oliver, by then Director of Mines, referred to the ‘collapse’ of the mining industry which he attributed to a serious fall in metal markets, particularly for tin and wolfram, the exhaustion of easily extracted and richer surface deposits, and the utter failure of all government efforts to introduce outside capital for development and prospecting purposes.³¹

Most records relating to mining in this period are in the custody of the Northern Territory Archives Service.

Selected records relating to mining in the early commonwealth years	
National Archives, Canberra	
Tin Dredging Ordinance, 1907–24	A3, NT1924/1602
H I Jensen appointment as Director of Mines and Geologist, Northern Territory, 1911–15	A3, NT1915/1197
Mining Ordinance – Northern Territory, part 1, 1912–16	A3, NT1917/958
Mining Ordinance – Northern Territory, 1912–38	A432, 1953/1718 part 1
Encouragement of Mining Ordinance and Regulation – Northern Territory, 1913–33	A1, 1932/4084
Dr Jensen’s geological report on the Darwin and McArthur River mining districts, 1913–16	A3, NT1916/733
Mining Ordinance, Northern Territory, 1913–22	A3, NT1921/2329
Geological maps and plans of the Northern Territory, 1915–16	A6131
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Register of applications for protected mining leases Darwin and Alice Springs, 1904–40	F1089
Correspondence files, 1910–15	NTRS2881
Outward letter book, 1911–12	NTRS2727
Correspondence relating to drills, 1911–20	NTRS2753
Register of suspension of leases, 1911–40	NTRS3288
Register of assay results, 1912–17	F1388
Register of free assays for prospectors and others, 1914–17	F1389
Correspondence files, unregistered, 1917–39	NTRS2723
Applications for free assays, 1920	NTRS3138
Applications for coal and mineral oil leases, 1920–26	F146

End of the Commonwealth's first decade

The Commonwealth's early years in the Northern Territory began with a flurry. Officials were despatched to Darwin, a Crown Lands Ordinance and other essential ordinances were put in place, a Land Classification Board was created, and experimental farms were established. Considerable progress was made in the development of rural industries over the first decade.

Yet the period was marked by considerable instability caused by a range of issues at the international, national and local levels. At the international level, there was a world war, and its impact on the Commonwealth's finances lasted well after it ended. At the national level, the Commonwealth was itself unstable: there were five changes in government, a damaging split in one of the major political parties, and eight different Ministers were responsible for the Territory. There was, however, only one Departmental Secretary in Atlee Hunt.

At the local level, there was industrial unrest, two former Directors took legal action against the Commonwealth, Gilruth was recalled in 1919, Vestey's meatworks closed in 1920, and there was the rise of militant unionism. The Administration was unstable, particularly in Darwin, with jealousies and divided control between Melbourne and Darwin. There was uncertainty over the role of the Administrator, disputes between departments, and between officers. All of these factors combined to limit the Commonwealth's ability to effectively administer the Territory.

The best pastoral lands were held under South Australian legislation. Many estates were large and undeveloped, and rents were inadequate, yet the Commonwealth could do little as the leases on those lands did not expire for some years.

Closer settlement in the Territory was the Commonwealth's expressed objective, ostensibly avoiding earlier mistakes made by the colonies, but it appeared to have no practical way of achieving it. There were no stated means of encouraging migrant settlers to the Territory, other than by having them work on proposed railway projects. In 1916 Cabinet approved the appointment of a commission to advise on future development and settlement of the Territory.³² Despite laudable statements from the Minister, Hugh Mahon,³³ the commission never eventuated.

While there were calls for the Commonwealth to finance substantial development of the Territory, particularly through the construction of railways, the reality was that it would have been foolish to build them at this time, particularly as finances were severely hampered by World War I. Railways were costly and would have run at a loss. Yet, the Commonwealth could then have looked to finance a smaller developmental program of improved stock routes and water supplies on those routes. Although the Administrator wrote in 1921 that the Government's policy of providing water by means of bores on the stock routes was progressing, and the time was near when the difficulty of providing water for travelling stock would largely be overcome, later events demonstrated that substantially more bores were needed than those under construction.³⁴ The Commonwealth should also have looked at providing a system of basic communications, such as expanded mail services and telegraph facilities, if it hoped to attract migrant settlers to the Territory.

The Commonwealth's failure during this period was not its unwillingness to expend vast amounts of money on the Territory's development. The real failure was in other directions. There was the lack of understanding that mere encouragement of new settlers to the Territory, through the objective of closer settlement, was not enough. While Ministers and officials regularly highlighted the desirability of attracting such settlers, they did not appreciate that settlers would not move to the Territory in its underdeveloped state without substantial financial assistance. There was inadequate

financial support to assist settlers to acquire and develop their properties, and particularly to provide adequate supplies of water. All of these were necessary if closer settlement was to be a reality, but they did not originate until many years later.

The Commonwealth did implement an 'Advances to Settlers' scheme in 1913, but the maximum amount payable was £800. Given that a single water bore, for example, could cost well in excess of £2,000 to drill and equip, the amount was insufficient. In general the only encouragement the Commonwealth gave was cheap rents and minimal covenants in the form of property improvements and stocking rates. These, however, merely played into the hands of large pastoral companies.

An even more basic failure was the Commonwealth's inability to take adequate administrative control and guidance over rural industries. What was needed was an Administrator with competent support staff in the Darwin Lands Office, supported by agencies in both Melbourne and Darwin. There were none of these things. The Lands function was poorly resourced both in Darwin and Melbourne, and there were issues involving the calibre of the Commonwealth Lands Office staff. Commonwealth land officer William Hicks referred to the mediocrity of some staff following a visit in 1919.³⁵ As early as 1916, Chief Surveyor Theo Day had called for better staff, who he said should be rotated between Melbourne and Darwin. Day also suggested that administrative matters involving the Territory be dealt with in a separate branch of the department directly responsible to the Minister.³⁶ At that time, however, having a branch of the department directly responsible to the Minister would have been unlikely to have resolved issues of staff competency, given the rapid changes in Ministers.

Competent staff in sufficient numbers would have done much to benefit rural industries. Yet the emphasis, particularly in the post-war climate, was on fewer staff and cost savings, and little regard was paid to their suitability. Price later criticised the Commonwealth for lavish staff increases during this period, yet far from there being lavish increases there was actually a paucity of resources.³⁷ Alexander Poynton began reducing land administration staff at a time when they should have been increased.

There were few regulatory controls for the movement of cattle along the stock routes, and in some cases insufficient water on those same routes. There were no pastoral inspectors or stock route inspectors, although local police were from time to time appointed as *ex officio* stock inspectors. There was only one veterinarian, Frank Bishop, who was appointed in 1919, and few veterinary services. There were few inspections of pastoral properties during this period; the only inspections of any note were those undertaken by Horace Trower in 1918,³⁸ and Frank Bishop in 1922.³⁹ The Commonwealth was responsible for thousands of square miles of pastoral lands, yet it had few staff to administer the function. At one point, Horace Trower, Director of Lands from 1917 to 1921, wrote:

a great drawback to the proper administration of the Lands Department is the difficulty in procuring information about country and as to whether conditions of leases are being complied with; some of the leases issued under the South Australian Land Acts are due shortly for reappraisal and in nearly every case there is no official information to guide the Classification Board in reassessing the rent.⁴⁰

Trower was one of the first to recommend the appointment of pastoral inspectors, expressing a desire that 'such appointments will be made in the near future'.⁴¹ Yet the first inspector was not appointed until December 1938, and stock route inspectors were not appointed until after World War II.

There was little appreciation by the Commonwealth that it needed to provide guidance to pastoralists in matters of animal husbandry. Trower reported in 1919 that he was producing a drover's guide to the stock routes.⁴² In January 1922 it was announced that as part of his forthcoming inspection of properties on the Barkly Tableland,

Chief Inspector of Stock Frank Bishop would provide a general list of prescriptions for combating disease written in plain English to be understood by the layman.⁴³ These examples were representative of only a few instances of the Commonwealth taking an active role in pastoral education in the early years of its administration.⁴⁴

Various reasons can be advanced as to why the Commonwealth failed to exercise greater control over rural and other industries. Key factors were instability due to regular changes in governments and Ministers, and of course a world war, but there may have been other reasons. Mettam argued that few, if any, politicians and bureaucrats deciding policy at the time had any detailed knowledge of the Territory.⁴⁵ George Pearce, Minister for the Territory between 1921 and 1926, later told Parliament that the Commonwealth had just taken over the Territory's administration when World War I began, and after the war a number of its departments were staffed by people without administrative experience.⁴⁶

In 1923 Pearce proposed a 'complete change in our method', by sponsoring the creation of an executive commission to administer the Territory. In a draft Cabinet submission he wrote that an 'examination of the records of the past...has convinced me that our methods are fundamentally wrong'. The problem, he said, was that previous governments had only given secondary thought, or 'fag ends', to the Territory's administration when what was needed was full-time administration, together with government 'on the spot'.⁴⁷ Pearce then set out to create his 'on the spot' administration.

Notes

- ¹ Northern Territory Report of the Acting Administrator for the Year 1911, p. 15; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1912), volume III, pp. 595–651.
- ² *ibid*, *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia*, number 6, 1912 (Melbourne, 1913), p. 338.
- ³ *ibid*, p. 3.
- ⁴ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, volume LXV, 1 August 1912, p. 1535.
- ⁵ NTAS: NTRS2500, L3394, Land legislation proposed consolidation.
- ⁶ Rex Alan Patterson, 'The Economics of Transportation Development', PhD thesis, University of Illinois, 1960, p. 168.
- ⁷ NAA: A3, NT1916/2606, Visit of Secretary to the Northern Territory.
- ⁸ *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia*, number 2, 1909 (Melbourne: McCarron, Bird and Co, 1909), p. 157.
- ⁹ NAA: A3, NT1914/3682, Reports by Captain H V Barclay on certain bores on the Barkly Tablelands and on the stock route Victoria River to Newcastle Waters, 3 August 1911.
- ¹⁰ Northern Territory Report of the Administrator for the Year 1912, p. 1; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1913), volume III, pp. 227–385.
- ¹¹ Douglas Lockwood, *Darwin: The Front Door* (Sydney, 1969), p. 139. Douglas R Barrie also recited the pumpkin story; *The Heart of Rum Jungle: The History of Rum Jungle and Batchelor in the Northern Territory of Australia* (Maryborough, 1982), pp. 94–95.
- ¹² Patrick McMahon Glynn, 'Northern Territory. Outlines of Policy', *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers*, (1914), volume II, pp. 659–676.
- ¹³ NLA: MS4653, series 16, folder 1, Correspondence, Minister for External Affairs.

- ¹⁴ Alan Powell, *Far Country: A Short History of the Northern Territory* (Melbourne, 1996), p. 134.
- ¹⁵ NLA: MS1927, series 3, folios 1927/1271 (28 April 1933) and 1927/1270 (1 May 1933).
- ¹⁶ Patrick McMahon Glynn, Memorandum on the Northern Territory, *Parliamentary Papers* (1917), volume VI, pp. 1089–99.
- ¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 11.
- ¹⁸ Alan Powell, *Far Country*, pp. 128–29.
- ¹⁹ NAA: A2, 1917/1753, Northern Territory position of the Administrator.
- ²⁰ Report on Northern Territory Administration, pp. 5, 12, 16; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1920–21), volume III, pp. 1653–69.
- ²¹ *ibid.*
- ²² *ibid.*
- ²³ *ibid.*
- ²⁴ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, volume XCIV, 5 November 1920, pp. 6279–81.
- ²⁵ NAA: A3, NT1922/3709, Reorganisation of Northern Territory administration. Poynton's report was prepared in June 1921.
- ²⁶ NAA: A3, NT1922/2695, H M Trower – termination of appointment.
- ²⁷ Australia. Economies Royal Commission, First Progress Report, recommendation 45, p. 90; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1917–19), volume V, pp. 1525–615.
- ²⁸ Northern Territory Report of the Acting Administrator for the Year 1911, p. 40.
- ²⁹ Northern Territory Report of the Administrator for the Years 1915–16 and 1916–17, pp. 8, 20–21.
- ³⁰ Northern Territory Report of the Administrator for the Years 1915–16 and 1916–17, p. 9.
- ³¹ Northern Territory Report of the Administrator for the Year 1921, p. 12; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1922), volume II, pp. 2927–63.
- ³² NAA: A2, 1916/1785, Northern Territory committee to report on question of settlement.
- ³³ NLA: MS937, series 6, Correspondence and press cuttings regarding Northern Territory, Papua and Norfolk Island, 9 March 1916.
- ³⁴ Report of the Administrator of the Northern Territory, 1921, p. 4; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1922), volume II, pp. 2927–63.
- ³⁵ NAA: F20, 86/1, Lands Office reorganisation, report of H J Aylward. In 1928 another review of the Darwin Lands Office was conducted by H J Aylward, a retired land officer from New South Wales. He too commented on the poor quality of staff in Darwin.
- ³⁶ NAA: A3, NT1917/77, T E Day report on control and administration of Northern Territory, 4 December 1916.
- ³⁷ A Grenfell Price, *The History and Problems of the Northern Territory, Australia* (Adelaide, 1930), p. 32.
- ³⁸ NTAS: NTRS3345, D89, Annual report (Lands).
- ³⁹ NAA: A3, NT1923/3088, F A C Bishop – chief veterinary officer – visit of inspector.
- ⁴⁰ NTAS: NTRS3345, D89, Annual report (Lands).
- ⁴¹ NTAS: NTRS3345, D89, Annual report (Lands).
- ⁴² NTAS: NTRS3345, D89, Annual report (Lands).

⁴³ 'Pastoral industry, combating diseases, opening new stock routes', *Northern Territory Times*, 24 January 1922, p. 3.

⁴⁴ J C Lewis, the first Chief Inspector of Stock, also prepared a report on stock diseases in the Territory; 'Veterinary and Stock Report and Some of the Diseases in Stock', *Bulletin of the Northern Territory*, number 8 (Melbourne, July 1913).

⁴⁵ John Mettam, 'Central Administration and the Northern Territory', PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 1995, p. 122.

⁴⁶ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, volume 103, 18 July 1923, p. 1220.

⁴⁷ NLA: MS1827, series 6, folio 1827/315, 1923.

3 George Pearce and Development of the North, 1921–37

In December 1921 Senator George Foster Pearce was appointed Minister responsible for the Northern Territory. His concerns over the threat of the 'empty north' and his desire to ensure the Territory's development led him to instigate two major innovations over the next decade. The first was to divide the Territory into two administrative regions with an independent commission managing the northern part. The second, and more radical, proposal was that the administration of the northern half of the Territory be handed over to a chartered company.

Pearce's policy and a new Crown Lands Ordinance

In May 1922 Horace Trower, the former Northern Territory Director of Lands, publicly criticised the Commonwealth over its administration of the Territory's rural industries.¹ He said a new lands ordinance was needed to remove the complexities caused by existing legislation, both Commonwealth and South Australian, and leaseholders should be offered generous terms to induce them to convert to the new arrangements. Trower wrote to Pearce in a similar vein.²

Pearce took Trower's criticisms to heart, and they ultimately formed the basis of a new policy. He told the Senate in July 1922 that the principal issues affecting the Territory's rural industries were that lands were held under South Australian and Commonwealth legislation with different terms and conditions, large areas of land had been taken up by companies simply to prevent competitors from using it, and only that land which had permanent water was being used. While acknowledging that taxpayers would be loath to support further expense in the Territory, as considerable funds had already been spent there, Pearce said:

Whilst the obligation is placed upon me to outline to the Government a policy that will lead to some development of the Northern Territory, at the same time there is an obligation to see that the Commonwealth gets a fair deal also.³

In November 1922 Pearce announced his new policy, in which he proposed a new ordinance, one that contained inducements to encourage leaseholders to surrender their existing leases.⁴ He later said, 'I feel that unless this is done there cannot possibly be any advance in the development of the Territory'.⁵ The proposal, however, drew immediate criticism from pastoralists. They lobbied Pearce to meet with them. At the

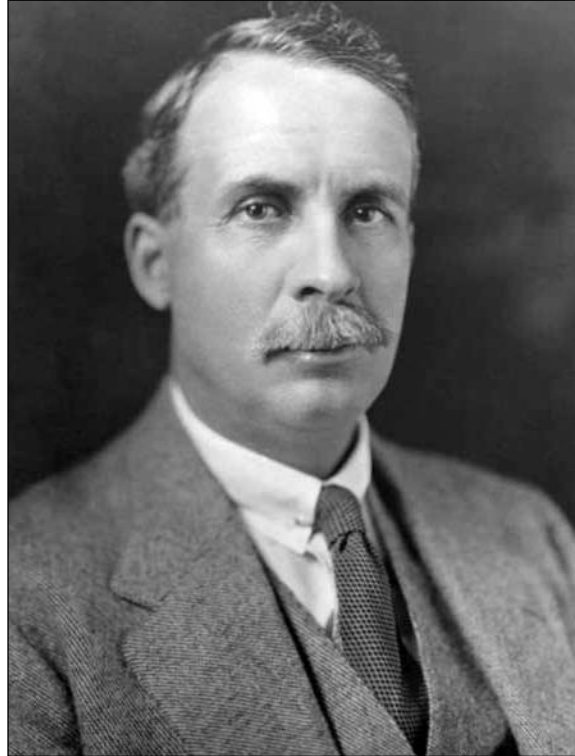


Image 5. Senator George Pearce, Commonwealth Minister for Home and Territories from 1921 to 1926, was responsible for the Northern Territory. NAA: A5954, 1299/2 photo 7

meeting, which took place on 27 February 1923, the pastoralists presented Pearce with proposals that included the elimination of taxes, and the improvement of transport and communications. Pearce told the delegates that railways and communications were costly, and he had to be in a position to give the Government an assurance that the Territory's 'population and revenue will increase considerably' as a result.⁶

Generating revenue to enable extensive development was only one of Pearce's motives. He was also concerned, as a former Minister for Defence, that an unpopulated north represented a risk to the defence of the nation. He believed that Australia needed to attract large-scale immigration in order to achieve closer northern settlement. When promoting his new policy he later argued that the Territory was the 'Achilles Heel of the Australian continent'.⁷

New Crown Lands Ordinance

Cabinet approved Pearce's new policy,⁸ and a new Crown Lands Ordinance was drafted and tabled in the Senate on 13 June 1923. The Territory was to be divided into four districts in recognition of its varying topography – Darwin and the Gulf, Barkly Tableland, Victoria River, and Alice Springs.

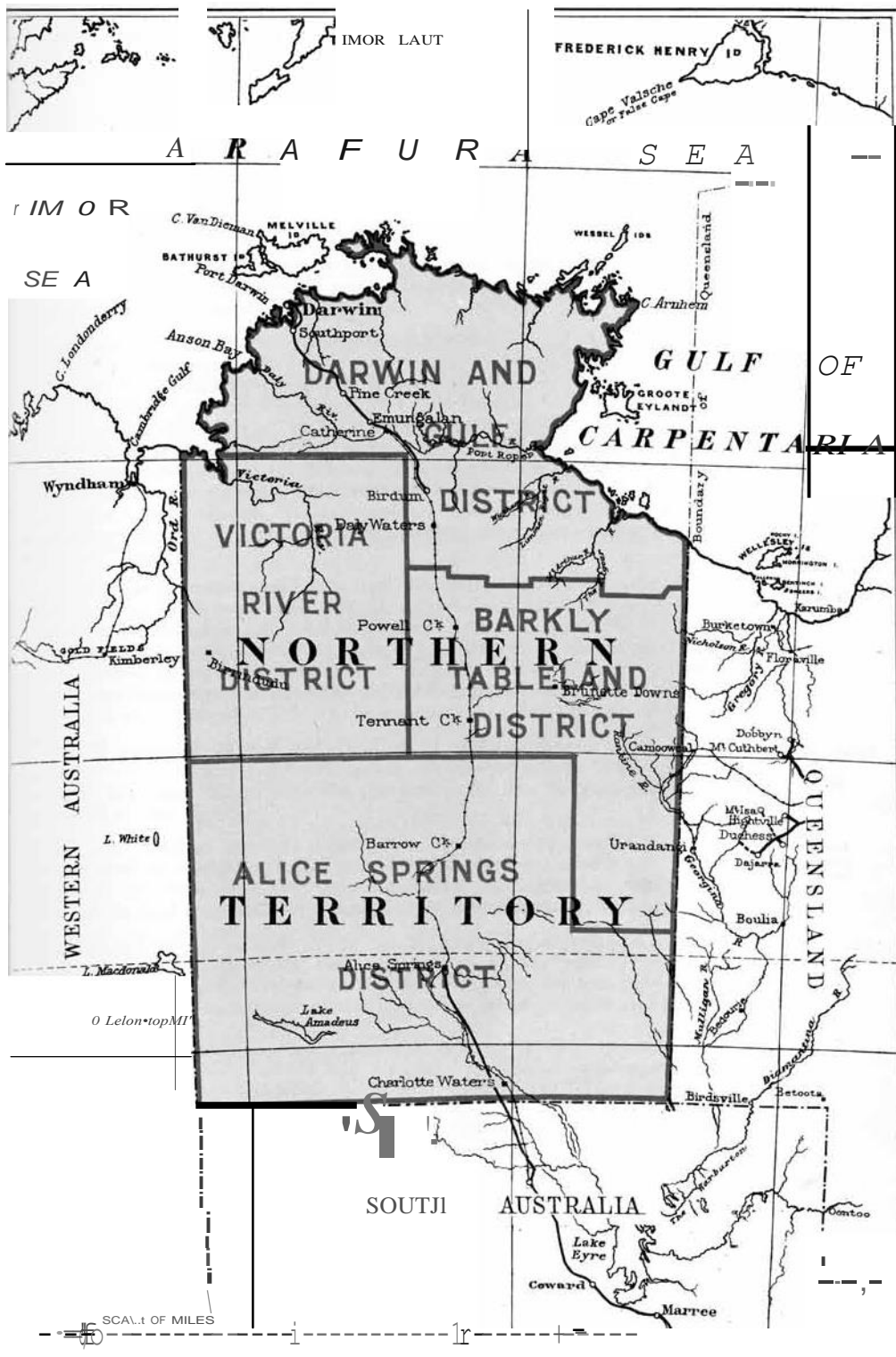
A number of concessions were offered to induce leaseholders to surrender their leases in exchange for new ones. First, they could obtain consolidated leases of all lands held by them at the time of surrender up to 30 June 1965. Second, they would have rights to all extant improvements on their properties at the time of surrender, and they had a right to compensation for all improvements at the end of their leases. Third, rentals were fixed at predetermined levels, there were definite dates for future reappraisals, and there were limitations by which rentals could be raised. Fourth, leaseholders had rights of appeal against reappraisal of rent, stocking conditions, compensation payable for improvements and areas to be resumed. Effectively, they were given absolute tenure over 50 per cent of their land until 30 June 1965 at favourable rentals.⁹

The Ordinance, however, contained a covenant that caused much acrimony in future years: it gave the Commonwealth the option of resuming portions of leases at predetermined intervals; one quarter of land in 1935 and another quarter in 1945. The intention was to allow the Commonwealth to acquire land for closer settlement, thus meeting Pearce's aim of populating the north. He estimated that through the resumption covenant the Commonwealth could acquire 46,000 square miles of land over the next 22 years.¹⁰ His view was that if the Government was to seriously consider railways and other improvement works, it needed to be in a position whereby it could control lands that were likely to benefit by that expenditure. Although leaseholders were aware of the resumption covenant when they accepted their new leases, most of them vehemently resisted the resumptions when the time came.

The Ordinance was to take effect on 1 July 1923; however, on 29 June Harold Nelson, the Northern Territory's Member of Parliament, moved to reject it.¹¹ Nelson objected to the lack of residential conditions and said that even with the inclusion of a resumption covenant rural lands would still be occupied for lengthy periods. While noting the concerns of some parliamentarians, Pearce reminded them of his plans for the future of the Territory, asserting that:

there is nothing inherent in the Northern Territory to prevent its being developed equally with every other part of Australia...The Northern Territory...has been a happy hunting ground for faddists, and numerous fads, all of which have ended disastrously, have been tried there.¹²

LAND DIVISIONS OF NORTHERN TERRITORY



This map shows the four land-divisions into which the Territory is divided for the purpose of Land Administration,

Image 6, Map of the Northern Territory illustrating the four major pastoral districts as they were in 1937, *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1937-40), volume III; map opposite p. 16,

In view of the controversy, Prime Minister Stanley Bruce agreed to withdraw the Ordinance to give parliamentarians more time to consider it. A second Ordinance (number 15 of 1924), came into effect in July 1924, although there was little difference between the two. The new Ordinance created a Land Board to administer the Territory's pastoral lands replacing the former Land Classification Board. This agency differed from its predecessor in that it was under the direct responsibility of the Minister, rather than the Territory Administrator, and included a representative nominated by leaseholders.

The Ordinance gave leaseholders three years by which to surrender their leases in exchange for new ones, and over the next 12 months 74 had done so. Despite the inducements offered, some leaseholders never transferred and their leases continued as before, ultimately expiring over time. A departmental memo written in 1936 noted that although 226 leases were then held under the 1924 Ordinance and subsequent Ordinances, another 56 leases were still held under South Australian legislation, while a further 56 leases were held under early Commonwealth legislation.¹³ In this context, Pearce's new Ordinance failed to achieve its aim of unifying all lands under the one piece of legislation.

Selected records relating to Senator George Pearce's new crown land policy	
National Archives, Canberra	
Crown land bill 1923, and Ordinance – Northern Territory, 1920–24	A431, 1946/860
Proposed land policy, 1922–23	A431, 1946/868
Land Ordinance – Northern Territory, 1923	A6006, 1923/3/21
Crown land Ordinance, part 1, 1924–29	A431, 1946/849
Crown land Ordinance, part 2, 1927–31	A431, 1946/850
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Land policy, 1923–28	NTRS3345, L138

Dividing the Territory, 1926–31

With his new rural land policy in place, Pearce now went much further. In November 1923 he prepared a submission for Cabinet seeking in-principle support for development to be coordinated by an executive commission charged with the management of that portion of northern Australia above the 20th parallel, including Queensland and Western Australia, not just the Territory. Pearce said:

the present methods of development are inadequate...Examination of the records of the past to try and discover the cause of the failures has convinced me that our actions are fundamentally wrong...I believe the time is ripe to make a complete change in our method.¹⁴

He said his proposed commission would be a full-time entity located in Darwin, so that it could administer 'on the spot'. It would develop a series of works and be sanctioned to raise and spend necessary funds. The Commonwealth and the two States would be debited with a proportion of the costs incurred by the commission. While the three Australian governments would have overall control, Pearce made it clear that he looked to the United Kingdom to provide financial support. He argued that it would support his proposal because it needed space for its surplus population, new markets for its goods, and new fields for the production of raw material within the Empire, and 'the Territory ... can supply all three requirements'.

Cabinet approved Pearce's recommendation but suggested that the commission be limited to the Territory, with Western Australia and Queensland joining later. Prime Minister Bruce (then in London) supported the proposal but said that in view of proposed accelerated development of the north, independent advice on matters such as docks and river works was needed. He recommended George Buchanan, who had done similar work in South Africa, undertake a study and report back to the Government. Pearce was opposed to Bruce's suggestion, preferring to establish the commission first and have it prepare developmental proposals, but Bruce's view prevailed and Buchanan was asked to conduct the investigation.¹⁵

Buchanan submitted his report in July 1925. He concluded that the Territory suffered from the effects of isolation, inefficient administration, lack of communications and labour problems.¹⁶ Buchanan criticised the divided administration between Melbourne and Darwin, and the lack of cooperation between government agencies in Darwin. As far as future development was concerned he felt there were two options: the Government should adopt the principle of a Crown colony, whereby the Administrator was supreme head, with a self-contained budget and special development loans raised by the Government, or the Government should develop a board or directorate responsible to the Minister to carry out development programs; in either case, the development of the pastoral industry should be the Administration's first priority. The Government chose the second option.

The North Australia Commission Bill was introduced to Parliament in February 1926. Speaking in support of the legislation, Bruce said that the Commonwealth had not had a continuous policy for the Territory's development even though considerable funds had been spent there. This was partly brought about by frequent changes of Ministers and the lack of a specific Commonwealth department designed to administer and develop a largely uninhabited territory. What was needed, he said, was inside information to enable development to proceed; hence the Commission would be based in the Territory. It would make recommendations but Parliament would still have the opportunity to approve funding.¹⁷

The Northern Australia Act took effect on 1 February 1927, creating the North Australia Commission. The Territory was divided into two regions, North and Central, along the 20th parallel (passing just to the north of Tennant Creek). Each region had its own Government Resident with separate administrations in Darwin and Alice Springs respectively. The Commission's primary role was the preparation of development plans with respect to railways, roads, communications, water boring and conservation, ports and harbours.¹⁸ The Commission presented an initial report in 1927 that dealt with most of these matters; however, its recommendations were uncoded.¹⁹ It stressed the need for additional waters on pastoral properties and recommended that the Commonwealth finance the construction of bores in order to 'arrive at a scheme that would definitely encourage boring for water in these northern areas where it is so essential to real development'.²⁰

Meanwhile the Commonwealth continued the northern railway south from Emungalan to Mataranka in 1928, and on to Birdum in 1929. It was supposed to go another 70 kilometres to Daly Waters, but the Depression put an end to this. The southern railway from Oodnadatta to Alice Springs was also completed in 1929.

In 1929 Bruce's Government was replaced by James Scullin's Labor Government. The onset of the Great Depression, and the lack of funding, spelt the end for the North Australia Commission. Contrary to Pearce's intention, it did not govern 'on the spot', being dependent on the Commonwealth Government for its funding. Baillie argued that the Commission's sole focus on the pastoral industry resulted in a lack of real support from the wider, local community.²¹ Leaseholders criticised the Commission

as an extravagance. The Commission may indeed have been an extravagant entity, costing more than £27,500 per year to function,²² but it had made a number of positive achievements in its short life. It completed a series of extensive surveys of the Territory, recognising that the information gained from those surveys would be of considerable value in fixing the position of roads, bores and other water supplies ‘for proper and economical development’.²³ It also undertook some road maintenance and improved stock routes by providing additional watering facilities.

Selected records of the northern auStralia commiSSion	
National Archives, Canberra	
Minute of meetings – Northern Territory Land Board, 1927–31	A1, 1938/1181
National Archives, Darwin	
Correspondence files, 1927–30	F20
Selected North Australia Commission reports printed as Parliamentary Papers	
North Australia Commission Interim Report, ‘Development of North Australia’ <i>Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers</i> (1926–28)	Volume II, pp. 1971–90
North Australia Commission Second Report, 6 December 1927, <i>Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers</i> (1929–31)	Volume IV, pp. 305–31
North Australia Commission Third Report, <i>Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers</i> (1929–31)	Volume IV, pp. 333–56
North Australia Commission Second Report, <i>Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers</i> (1929–31)	Volume IV, pp. 357–86

Pastoral Leases Investigation Committee, 1932–35

The hardships brought on by the Great Depression reduced the Commonwealth’s ability to undertake any substantial development in the Territory. During this time representatives from the pastoral industry frequently lobbied the Government for reforms and concessions. Archdale Parkhill, who became Minister with responsibility of the Territory in 1932, was concerned that some pastoralists were not making a genuine effort to develop their own industry. Before any concessions were granted he decided to visit the Territory.

On his return he criticised the poor management practices of many properties. Of some properties, he wrote that ‘not a single hoof has been seen for eighteen to twenty years’.²⁴ He concluded that many pastoralists were not making reasonable efforts to successfully create a grazing industry, and their lands were held on speculation rather than an active business enterprise.

Parkhill’s proposal for an investigation into the terms under which leases were held gained Cabinet support, and as a result three departmental officers were appointed to the Pastoral Leases Investigation Committee – Frank Shepherd, the Northern Territory Surveyor-General; James Brackenreg, a Canberra-based stock inspector from the Commonwealth Department of the Interior; and David Smith, the Territory’s Resident Engineer in Alice Springs. Formation of the Committee attracted considerable opposition from pastoralists.

The Committee undertook personal inspections of many pastoral properties across the Territory, the first such program in the Commonwealth era. There were two tours of inspection. The first, commenced in May 1933, involved properties in the Alice Springs and Barkly Tableland Districts. The second, which began in April 1934, covered properties in the Victoria River District, as well as Darwin and the Gulf. Reports, which included photographs, were subsequently prepared on all stations visited.

The Committee presented its report in April 1935 and confirmed that many properties were inadequately developed, particularly those in the western Victoria River District. It recommended an increase in Commonwealth administrative staff to provide advice and support for cattlemen. It called for the appointment of land inspectors who would ensure that cattlemen complied with their lease conditions, and render advice on questions of property management. Before any further leases were enacted, the Committee also recommended the establishment of a five-year program by which 'practical men' would inspect, classify and value all pastoral lands, allowing those lands to then be leased under specific conditions.



Image 7. Frank Shepherd, Chairman of the Pastoral Leases Investigation Committee. Courtesy of Vern O'Brien. With permission of the Surveyor General, Department of Lands and Planning, Northern Territory

Selected records of the pastoral leases investigation committee	
National Archives, Canberra	
Reports of committee investigating Northern Territory leases, 1933–34	A659, 1942/1/7727
National Archives, Darwin	
Original reports, 1933–35	F50
Photograph albums, 1933–35	F1454
Correspondence files of the chairman, 1933–38	F48
David Douglas Smith – photograph albums, 1934	M4435
General (final) report, 1935	F987
Copies of reports, 1935	F49

The Commonwealth effectively ignored the Committee's final report. While Cabinet noted an interim report submitted on 31 January 1934, it deferred any consideration of it 'until some future date'.²⁵ The final report was not submitted to Cabinet, nor was it presented to Parliament, and its recommendations were not implemented. Indeed, the report itself was not made public.

The failure of the Commonwealth to act upon the Committee's report related principally to the 1935 resumptions referred to above. In its interim report, the Committee argued that resumptions should be deferred due to the financial position of leaseholders, the lack of demand by prospective settlers for the land, and the Commonwealth's own lack of knowledge regarding the classification and type of land involved. By the time its final report was presented, the Committee still held to this view, but it now believed that a small number of resumptions, notably Wave Hill and Victoria River Downs, should proceed.

The Commonwealth ignored the recommendation and proceeded with a much larger program of resumptions, a program that was handled poorly. It did not undertake any prior inspections and, for the most part, the land it acquired was of an inferior quality, useless to prospective settlers. Further, it did not ascertain if there were applicants vying for the resumed lands, and when it was realised that there were no applicants, the Commonwealth was forced to lease the land back to the original leaseholders for 10 years until the next round of resumptions was due in 1945. Given these factors, the public release of the Shepherd Committee's report would not have presented the Commonwealth in a positive light.

The search for a chartered company, 1933–35

The Scullin Government had not pursued northern development while it grappled with the effects of the Great Depression. It was defeated in December 1931, and Joseph Lyons' United Australia Party took office. The Government now considered a more radical proposal to address the issue. While previous planning revolved around an executive commission, funded by British capital and administered by the Commonwealth and State Governments, the new proposal was for the northern portion of the Territory and Western Australia, above the 20th parallel of latitude, to be administered by a company under charter.

Chartered companies were associations formed by investors or shareholders for the purpose of trade, development and colonisation. They were introduced by European colonial powers in the 16th century to provide corporate, rather than government, funding to develop colonial territories. The companies undertook a range of activities including administration and the construction of roads and railways, and in return received tax concessions and other benefits. Among the better known companies were the East India Company established in 1600, the British North Borneo Company established in 1881, and the British South Africa Company established in 1889.²⁶

George Pearce was appointed Minister for Defence in Lyons Government. Although the Territory was not part of his portfolio, he was still concerned about the risk that an undeveloped northern region posed to the nation's security. He prepared a Cabinet submission recommending the creation of a chartered company to administer the northern parts of the Territory and Western Australia. Pearce proposed that the company be given a lengthy period of occupancy, free of taxes and tariffs, and in return would develop roads, railways and ports. As with the earlier North Australia Commission, the intention was to secure capital from the United Kingdom. Pearce suggested that there would be a board of seven directors, with the company contributing four, and the governments of the United Kingdom, Australia and Western Australia contributing one each.²⁷ He felt that Australia would sacrifice an empty land, but populated it would make the country safe, and eventually provide a market for its goods.



Image 8. A satirical cartoon opposing the sale of the Northern Territory to a chartered company, 1933. *The Australian Worker*, vol. 42, no. 32, 9 August 1933, p. 1

On 1 May 1933 Cabinet approved the formation of a sub-committee comprising Pearce, Senator Alexander McLachlan (Vice-President of the Executive Council), Walter Massy-Greene (Assistant Treasurer), and John Perkins (Minister responsible for the Northern Territory) to further develop Pearce's proposal.

It was clear at this time that the Commonwealth knew it could not fund the Territory's development alone. Archdale Parkhill's post-visit report on the Territory in 1932 may have been the catalyst for Pearce's actions. Parkhill noted:

It seems obvious that the Government cannot, even if it desired, provide adequate funds to successfully develop the Territory. The capital required must consequently be provided by private enterprise, either within or outside the Commonwealth.²⁸

The sub-committee later recommended the formation of two chartered companies (not one as originally proposed), one on the Barkly Tableland and the other at Victoria River.²⁹ It also suggested that the Commonwealth pass a customs tariff to assist future development (but only for the Territory), and that the proposed companies be exempt from certain taxes. Cabinet approved the recommendations, and they formed the basis of a press release issued by Lyons on 15 July 1933.³⁰ A detailed proposal, in the form of a booklet entitled *Memorandum by the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia on the Development and Settlement of North Australia*, was issued in December 1933.

Once again the Commonwealth wished to involve Western Australia, as it had with the North Australia Commission, and Pearce had already met the Premier, James Mitchell, on 10 October 1932.³¹ Western Australia later reported that while it would cooperate, it would not formally cede territory to any proposed company.³²

The chartered company proposal was not without its critics, as a cartoon in *The Australian Worker* newspaper illustrated.

Barkly Tableland Cooperative

There was only one response to the chartered company proposal, and it originated within Australia, not the United Kingdom. In December 1933, a group of pastoralists formed a cooperative to develop the Barkly Tableland, with the centrepiece of the plan being a railway from the Tableland to a proposed meatworks on Vanderlin Island, one of the Pellew Islands in the Gulf of Carpentaria, together with a deep sea port.³³ Cattle would be processed on the island and the meat shipped to the United Kingdom. The proposal for a deep sea port on Vanderlin Island, with a railway connection with the Barkly Tableland, was not new; it had been mooted as early as 1913.³⁴

It was estimated that the project would cost £1 million, and the cooperative advised that it would raise £125,000, while the Commonwealth was asked to provide the remaining funds in the form of a guaranteed loan. The cooperative, as proposed, would have control of the area for 100 years (although this was soon reduced to 60 years). It would pay no taxes or tariffs, and would have control of all industrial matters, Aboriginal people, mining and immigration.

A submission to Cabinet seeking in-principle support for the proposal was approved on 17 April 1934.³⁵ The *Sydney Morning Herald* later reported that there had been strong criticism in Cabinet of the proposal.³⁶ The Cabinet records for this period contain only the decision, so it is not possible to determine the accuracy of the newspaper's report.

While subsequent reports were favourable, it was noted that the project would be costly. H E Beaven, one of several experts engaged to assess the project's feasibility, wrote:

From a constructional and mechanical view the works are practicable and can be constructed, the question as to whether it would be a business proposition either from a national or economic viewpoint is one for the Department. The capital cost would be high with a limited outturn at the works and probably high labour costs.³⁷

Considerable opposition came from Commonwealth Ministers too. Assistant Treasurer Richard Casey emphasised the Commonwealth's current debts, and said that he had 'grave objections' about the proposal, which he felt would create an undesirable precedent. The Commonwealth should not guarantee a loan on behalf of a private company, he said, but could assist with taxation and other concessions. Casey suggested the cooperative seek British capital.³⁸ Fellow Minister James Hunter was concerned with the notion that the Commonwealth guarantee the project. Even if the Commonwealth had £1 million to spare, he asked, how would the proposal pass through Parliament? Effectively the Government was being asked to supply eight-ninths of the requisite capital and give responsibility for the project to the remaining ninth share. That one-ninth share would have control and power 'such as no company at present in existence in Australia has. In effect, this one-ninth would control and perform all the functions of a State government'.³⁹

The project now rested on issues of finance and governance. In essence the difficulty was that the Commonwealth was being asked to cede a large tract of land to a company, with no control mechanisms, while at the same time it had to provide extensive financial support to that company. Pearce sought direction from Cabinet

concerning Treasury's rejection of the proposed financial arrangements, as well as the United Kingdom's long-term meat policy, as the Vanderlin Island proposal depended on meat being exported there.⁴⁰

Cabinet decided it could not support the proposal, and Thomas Paterson, the Minister then responsible for the Territory, wrote to the cooperative on 6 December 1935 stating that the Commonwealth would not finance the project or guarantee the loan. The search for a chartered company to administer and develop the Territory was over.⁴¹

Aubrey Abbott, who was Minister responsible for the Northern Territory from 1928 to 1929 and later Administrator of the Territory, criticised the Commonwealth's failure to support the project.⁴² He wrote to Lyons seeking the appointment of a Parliamentary Committee to investigate the matter; at least then, he said, the decision would belong to Parliament.⁴³ When Lyons declined, Abbott moved a motion in Parliament that 'this House declares that closer settlement of the good lands of the Northern Territory is of urgent national importance, and requests the Government to open a port in the Gulf of Carpentaria which would be available for all classes of shipping'.⁴⁴

Although Abbott criticised the Commonwealth's actions, the future Payne–Fletcher Board of Inquiry said they were correct. While it acknowledged that the Vanderlin Island project was a bold concept, Payne–Fletcher concluded there were too many difficulties, with 'excessive costs at every angle'.⁴⁵

Both the North Australia Commission and the chartered company proposal were initiatives promoted by George Pearce. Both ended in failure, yet the sincerity of Pearce's intentions to develop the north cannot be doubted. In a memo to Prime Minister Bruce on the subject of northern development he had earlier written that 'you will know how near this question is to my heart'.⁴⁶

Selected records relating to the chartered company proposal for the northern territory

National Archives, Canberra

Northern Territory – opening of pastoral lands and government's developmental policy, 1921–35	A461, H412/1/2 part 1
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National Library of Australia, Canberra

Development of North Australia, 1909–37	MS1827, series 3
Development of North Australia, 1923–36	MS1827, series 6
Development of North Australia, 1923–36	MS1827, series 8
Development of North Australia, 1927–35	MS1927, series 3

Payne–Fletcher Board of Inquiry, 1937

With the failure of the chartered company proposal still fresh, and with the effects of the Great Depression beginning to wane, on 15 May 1936 a delegation of pastoralists met Thomas Paterson, who became the Minister responsible for the Northern Territory in late 1934. They stressed the need for a 'developmental plan for the Territory for the next 25 to 50 years be laid down'. They said that despite numerous inquiries 'there appears to be no such thing as a long term plan of development'.⁴⁷ The delegates suggested the formation of an inquiry that would undertake a general survey of the resources of the Territory, and draw up a scheme of development for the government's consideration. The group recommended William Payne (then a member of Queensland's Land Administration Board), as an ideal candidate to chair the inquiry, and said he should be assisted by a person with practical experience in the pastoral industry.

Paterson agreed to the request and subsequently took a submission to Cabinet in July 1936, seeking its support. He told Cabinet that when land policy for the Territory had been determined earlier it was anticipated that there would be a steady demand for pastoral leases, and it was seen as desirable that provision be made for the gradual break-up of large estates to provide for new settlers. Those expectations, however, were unrealised and it was appropriate that the Government have the advice of an expert in land administration to develop a new land policy.⁴⁸ Payne readily agreed to chair the inquiry and suggested John Fletcher, a pastoralist from Bonus Downs in western Queensland, as the person to assist him.

Paterson advised Parliament of the Government's intentions, saying that 'with regard to conditions of land tenure in the territory, considerable doubt exists at present as to whether our present ordinance is the best that can be devised'. He went on to say that the Government had procured the services of William Payne 'to investigate this matter and to make recommendations as to what might be done by the Commonwealth to improve land tenure conditions in the territory'.⁴⁹ The inquiry would commence work in early 1937, after the end of the wet season.

Payne offered to draft the inquiry's terms of reference for Paterson's consideration. He suggested that the inquiry report on existing land tenures and conditions of settlement, and methods for better utilisation of Territory lands to encourage the investment of capital. He advised that it prepare a development plan for the Territory's land industries over the next 25 years. The terms were endorsed by Cabinet on 9 February 1937.⁵⁰

The Payne–Fletcher Inquiry began its work by compiling a list of questions for pastoralists, much as the Shepherd Pastoral Lands Investigation Committee had done before them. The questionnaire included the length of time lessees had been on their properties, the size of their properties, stock and stock improvements, property improvements, water facilities, and staff located on each property. One noteworthy omission was any reference to absentee landlords; it had been included in the Shepherd Committee's list of matters to be discussed.⁵¹

The Inquiry held hearings in every State except Tasmania, travelled over 10,000 miles, and took evidence from 150 witnesses. Its report was delivered in late November 1937 (although it had already been leaked by several newspapers), and was tabled in Parliament on 8 December 1937.⁵²

The report summarised activities since the Commonwealth's administration of the Northern Territory had commenced in 1911. While expenditure to date had exceeded £15 million, production costs did not pay those responsible for it. Nearly all enterprises – both government and private – railways, pastoral and mining, were not making profits but merely breaking even or more frequently accumulating losses. The result was that 'the Northern Territory as it exists today is a national problem, a national obligation, a challenge to other nations, and a detriment to ourselves'. The report concluded that 'the Territory is a heavy liability to Australia'.⁵³

With respect to the pastoral industry, the Territory's principal industry at that time, the report was critical of both the Commonwealth and pastoralists. While acknowledging the Commonwealth's contributions, for example, the construction of railways, and the provision of water on stock routes, it said that the outlook of land administration was wrong, being steeped in old traditions of Australian land history. The protection of future public interests, through closer settlement and land resumptions, had become an obsession and prevented reasonable business terms being given to pastoralists. In the past, a few lessees had been granted very generous terms in respect of large areas, and this had since brought a reaction by the Commonwealth in the opposite direction.

Encouragement was best given by the elimination of government charges which should not be exacted on a pioneering community. Accordingly Payne–Fletcher recommended the abolition of federal income tax, petrol tax, and the suspension of all tariffs.⁵⁴

Like the Shepherd Committee before them, Payne–Fletcher were critical of pastoralists in the Victoria River District, asserting that most stations were too large for effective handling, insufficiently improved for efficient management, and steeped in methods that would never produce creditable results. The report noted the poor quality stock produced on many properties and put the view that smaller properties would ensure more efficient control and management, and give better financial results.

The report chastised the Commonwealth for its pursuance of closer settlement, alleging that there were four factors against it: lack of regular rainfall, limit of good soil, absence of markets and difficulties in attracting good agriculturalists. It suggested encouragement should be given to settlers already in the Territory, rather than seeking new settlers. The Commonwealth should not resume land from smaller properties, neither should it resume from larger properties if substantial improvements were made.

The authors devoted considerable attention to the Territory's administration. They noted delays and confusion in matters involving pastoral leases and recommended that greater powers be given to the Administrator. They noted that administrative officers, particularly those in Darwin, were unhelpful to pastoralists, and they suggested a series of 12 maxims by which such officers could improve their performance.⁵⁵ The authors recommended the appointment of two field officers to ensure that property improvements were made (there were none at that time). They recommended the creation of a Land Tribunal to hear pastoralists' appeals against decisions made by the Administrator, and recommended the abolition of the Land Board (created in 1931), noting that the Administrator could perform the Board's duties.⁵⁶

The report was a comprehensive document yet not everyone was impressed. The *Northern Standard* newspaper said, 'There should be no tears spilt when the Payne report is buried in the archives'. The newspaper felt that the report failed to address the issue of the empty north, which it too called the 'Achilles heel' of Australia's defence, nor had it considered the completion of the railway from Darwin to Adelaide.⁵⁷ The report was never 'buried' in the Archives; it was published in *Parliamentary Papers*; unlike the report of the Shepherd Committee which was not made public, and was not transferred to the National Archives until 1980.

In November 1937 John McEwen was appointed as the Territory's Minister. Prior to implementing Payne–Fletcher's recommendations, McEwen visited the Territory in August 1938 in order to see conditions for himself. Upon his return he prepared a lengthy Cabinet submission in which he said he was greatly disappointed with rural industries generally and particularly the pastoral industry; many properties were much too large to be efficiently managed. He endorsed Payne–Fletcher's criticisms of pastoralists in the Victoria River District, and elsewhere.

One property which he did not name (although notes kept by his private secretary, Roy Rowe, reveal that it was Alexandria⁵⁸), was prepared to face the loss of large numbers of cattle rather than incur the comparatively small expenditure of providing a regular water supply for its stock. The company's lack of concern over the welfare of its stock would have grieved McEwen, himself a Victorian farmer. He wrote:

I have the most firm conviction that the Northern Territory will never be developed without the provision of substantial sums of money by the Commonwealth for developmental works and advances to settlers. I am equally emphatic that advances to settlers should be confined to advances for permanent improvements only, and almost exclusively for fencing and water, and that these improvements should be erected under supervision and to an approved specification.⁵⁹

While keen to follow the Commonwealth's long-held principle of closer settlement, which involved the break-up of large pastoral estates in favour of smaller resident settlers, McEwen signalled a shift in emphasis from uncontrolled financial subsidies, to support for specific, permanent improvements, where the work would be closely monitored.

McEwen also dealt with the matter of resumptions due to take place in 1945. Mindful of the issues that had occurred with the 1935 resumptions, he said that the Government should determine a course of action, and officers of the Administration should be instructed to commence an immediate survey of all leases with a view to submitting recommendations, so that in 1945 there would be no doubt as to which areas would be resumed.

Cabinet approved McEwen's recommendations on 18 October 1938. In the ensuing weeks it approved other submissions dealing with Payne–Fletcher's recommendations culminating in a policy statement which McEwen presented to Parliament under the banner *Government Policy for the Northern Territory*.⁶⁰ The essential elements of the proposed policy included a five-year plan of road construction, stock route development and the provision of water along those routes; advances to settlers to assist them in the development of their holdings; provision of a coordinated transport system of sea, rail and roads in order to reduce freight costs; the formulation of a definite policy of resumptions, the governing criterion being that the maximum public benefit should accrue from the use to which the land was put; Federal and Territory income taxes would be abolished for 10 years (although Payne–Fletcher had recommended 20 years); as much authority as possible would be vested in the local Administration, and particularly the Administrator, with Canberra's control limited to matters involving policy and major issues of finance; field officers would be appointed; and an independent land tribunal would be constituted.

McEwen's closing words to the launch of his policy in December 1938 included a reference to the Government's commitment to defence, and prophetically indicated that this might limit its ability to fund development in the Territory. With war looming, in August 1939 Treasury sought 'drastic cuts' from all Commonwealth departments, and funding intended for the Territory was withdrawn.⁶¹ The onset of World War II meant that few of Payne–Fletcher's recommendations were put into effect. The Administrator's report of 1939–40 noted that 'the development of the Territory along lines suggested by the Payne Committee and planned by the Government has been checked'.⁶²

records relating to the payne–fletcher board of inquiry

National Archives, Canberra

Appointment of a committee to review land policy – Northern Territory, 1927–39 A659, 1943/1/7032 part 1

Committee to review Land Policy – Northern Territory – W L Payne report, 1938–53 A659, 1943/1/7032 part 2

Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers

Board of Inquiry appointed to Inquire into the Land and Land Industries of the Northern Territory Report, *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1937–40), volume III, pp. 813–925

Conclusion

The events related to the development of the Territory covered in this chapter ended much as they had begun. In 1921 George Pearce had high ambitions to develop the Territory, as did John McEwen in 1938. Both would fail, partly caused by the Depression and the onset of another world war.

The Commonwealth gained a wealth of information from the two inquiries it had established, Shepherd and Payne–Fletcher. The Payne–Fletcher report is well known and regarded by historians, unlike the preceding Shepherd Committee's report. Yet Payne–Fletcher effectively followed Shepherd's path and repeated many recommendations made by his committee, including improved stock routes with additional waters, funding for property improvements, especially fencing and water, under Commonwealth supervision, and the recruitment of additional administrative staff, including pastoral officers, stock route inspectors and surveyors. The value of the Payne–Fletcher Inquiry was that its key recommendations were supported by all Commonwealth governments, and many were implemented after the war.

The Commonwealth remained committed to its principle of closer settlement but seemed unsure how to satisfactorily put it into effect. Ensuring greater development in the Territory had once again thwarted all challenges. Yet events were taking place overseas that would soon change the Government's perspective of the Northern Territory. The onset of war and the fear of invasion would hasten development on a scale never previously imagined.

Notes

- ¹ 'Northern Territory lands, proposals for development, former official's suggestions', *The Age* (Melbourne), 11 May 1922, p. 7.
- ² NAA: A3, NT1922/2695, H M Trower – termination of appointment, 2 June 1922.
- ³ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, volume XCIX, 12 July 1922, p. 310. In 1926 Pearce had spoken in Parliament about the 'battles in Cabinet' that Territory Ministers faced in order to have their development proposals approved and funded. Other Ministers were suspicious because of past failures; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, volume 112, 21 January 1926, p. 233.
- ⁴ 'The Northern Territory, problem of its development, the Federal Government's policy', *Advertiser* (Adelaide), 3 November 1922, p. 11. By 1923 there were 470 pastoral leases, with 121 leases held under the 1890 South Australian Act, ninety leases under the 1899 South Australian Act, and 259 leases under the 1912 Crown Lands Ordinance.
- ⁵ NAA: A2124, 5, Papers relating to the Northern Territory accumulated by the Secretary to Minister for Home and Territories, 3 March 1923.
- ⁶ NAA: A431, 1946/868, Proposed land policy.
- ⁷ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, volume 103, 13 July 1923, p. 1084.
- ⁸ NAA: A6006, 1923/3/21, Land Ordinance Northern Territory, 21 March 1923.
- ⁹ NAA: A659, 1945/1/1088, Northern Territory land resumptions 1945.
- ¹⁰ NAA: A431, 1946/860, Crown Land Ordinance.
- ¹¹ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, volume 103, 29 June 1923, pp. 517–29. The seat of Northern Territory was created in 1922 and Nelson was its first representative.
- ¹² *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, volume 103, 13 July 1923, p. 1083.
- ¹³ NAA: A659, 1943/1/7032 part 1, Appointment of committee to review land policy – Northern Territory (W L Payne report), 7 December 1936.

- ¹⁴ NAA: A2718, volume 1, part 1, Bruce–Page Ministry, Cabinet minutes 12 February to 7 December 1923 (Decision: Northern Territory Executive Commission, 20 November 1923).
- ¹⁵ A series of telegrams between Cabinet, Bruce and Pearce record the discussions at that time; NAA: A3934, SC42/25, Executive Commission, 1923.
- ¹⁶ Australia. Report on Northern Territory Development and Administration, 25 July 1925; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1925), volume II, pp. 2509–33.
- ¹⁷ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, volume 112, 10 February 1926, pp. 820–826.
- ¹⁸ The Commission superseded the Land Board created in 1924. Its members were John Horsburgh, George Hobler and William Easton.
- ¹⁹ North Australia Commission Interim Report, Development of North Australia, *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1926–28), volume II, pp. 1971–1990.
- ²⁰ NAA: F20, 93, Water boring and conservation – water supplies on leases – assistance. The Commission's views on water were outlined in a memo dated 25 August 1927.
- ²¹ Jill Baillie, 'Struggling to Achieve the Vision Splendid: The North Australia Commission, 1927–1930', *Northern Perspective*, volume 13, number 2 (1990), p. 31.
- ²² NAA: F20, 1, Northern Australia Act, 1926 proclamation of etc.
- ²³ NAA: F20, 62, Railway survey (trial) to Western Australia border – also road traverses.
- ²⁴ NAA: A1, 1934/3449, Northern Territory Pastoral Lessees Association deputation to Minister 1932 development of Northern Territory, 31 August 1932.
- ²⁵ NAA: A3259, volume 2, part 1, Lyons Ministry – Minutes of Cabinet Meetings, 1934 (Decision 964, *Interim report of Committee of Investigation Northern Territory pastoral leases*).
- ²⁶ Wikipedia; www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chartered_company (accessed 8 May 2009).
- ²⁷ NAA: A2694, volume 7, submission 589, Development of north–west Australia. A copy is held in Pearce's personal papers; NLA Canberra: MS1827, series 8, folios 1827/590–592. The submission was not dated; however, Pearce's papers show that it was sent to Cabinet on 19 April 1933; MS1827, series 8, folio 1827/586.
- ²⁸ NAA: A1, 1934/3449, Northern Territory Pastoral Lessees Association deputation to Minister, 31 August 1932.
- ²⁹ NAA: A2694, volume 9, submission 589, Development of north–west Australia, 13 July 1933. The sub–committee had sent a submission to Cabinet on 17 May 1933 with preliminary recommendations, which were approved on 18 May 1933; A2694, volume 8, submission 589.
- ³⁰ NLA: MS1827, series 8, folios 1827/615–16.
- ³¹ NLA: MS1827, series 3, folio 1827/57 contains a record of the meeting between Pearce and Mitchell.
- ³² 'Developing the north', *West Australian*, 26 August 1933, p. 17.
- ³³ NLA: MS1827, series 8, folios 1827/632–634, 7 December 1933.
- ³⁴ Australia. Royal Commission into Northern Territory Railways and Ports, Report, pp. 7, 22–23.
- ³⁵ NAA: A2694, volume 12, submission 1048, Development of North Australia: proposals for the formation of a chartered company with jurisdiction over the Barkly Tablelands and adjoining areas, 10 April 1934.
- ³⁶ 'Barkly Tableland development plan, proposal by lessees', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 April 1934, p. 15.
- ³⁷ NAA: A431, 1946/622, H E Beaven report on the Vanderlin Island meat works, 14 December 1934.
- ³⁸ NAA: CP290/1, bundle 1, 12, Barkly Tableland Cooperative Cabinet submission, Annexure B, 8 February 1935. Casey replaced Walter Massy–Greene as Assistant Treasurer in October 1933.

- ³⁹ NAA: A659, 1939/1/8371, Report of Development Branch, development of the Northern Territory, 25 February 1935.
- ⁴⁰ North Australia Development: Barkly Tablelands Proposal, 25 February 1935. Copies of this submission are held by NAA: CP290/1, bundle 1, 12, Barkly Tableland Cooperative Cabinet submission, and NLA: MS1827, series 8, folios 1827/676–685. Precisely when Cabinet discussed the matter is unknown, as no record can be found of it actually being listed on the agenda for Cabinet meetings.
- ⁴¹ The Commonwealth's copy of the letter cited here cannot be located. McLaren and Cooper quoted from the original copy of the letter in the records of the Pastoral Lessees Association held by the Northern Territory Archives Service; Glen McLaren and William Cooper, *Distance, Drought and Dispossession, A History of the Northern Territory Pastoral Industry* (Darwin, 2001), p. 128.
- ⁴² C L A Abbott, *The Present Scheme of Development for the Barkly Tableland with a Short History of the Northern Territory* (Canberra, 1936).
- ⁴³ NLA: MS1827, series 8, folios 1827/671–675, 1 March 1936.
- ⁴⁴ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, volume 151, 24 September 1936, pp. 490–91.
- ⁴⁵ Australia. Board of Inquiry appointed to Inquire into the Land and Land Industries of the Northern Territory, p. 36, paragraph 189.
- ⁴⁶ NLA: MS1827, series 8, folio 1827/517, 29 August 1927.
- ⁴⁷ NAA: A659, 1943/1/7032 part 1, Committee to review Land Policy – Northern Territory – W L Payne report, 1938–53.
- ⁴⁸ NAA Canberra: A2694, volume 16, part 1, submission 1828, Land policy in the Northern Territory, 9 July 1936. Cabinet approved Paterson's request on 10 July 1936.
- ⁴⁹ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, volume 151, 24 September 1936, p. 500.
- ⁵⁰ NAA: A2694, volume 17, part 1, submission 1828, Northern Territory land committee.
- ⁵¹ NAA: A659, 1943/1/7032 part 1, *Op cit*.
- ⁵² Australia. Report of the Board of Inquiry appointed to Inquire into the Land and Land Industries of the Northern Territory of Australia; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1937–40), volume III, pp. 813–925.
- ⁵³ *ibid*, p. xi.
- ⁵⁴ Primary producers in the Territory had been exempt from State income tax since 1923.
- ⁵⁵ The maxims were published opposite page 66 of the report.
- ⁵⁶ The Board was established in 1931, after the demise of the North Australia Commission, to classify vacant Crown lands prior to leasing, approve applications for leases, determine lease rents, and monitor leaseholders' compliance with the terms of their leases.
- ⁵⁷ 'The Payne report', *Northern Standard*, 22 February 1938, p. 6.
- ⁵⁸ NAA: A1, 1938/4963, Deputation to Minister by Pastoral Lessees Association re Northern Territory investigation committee report.
- ⁵⁹ NAA: A2694, volume 18, part 5, submission 477, Pastoral industry, October 1938.
- ⁶⁰ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, volume 158, House of Representatives, 8 December 1938, pp. 2979–2987.
- ⁶¹ NAA: A659, 1940/1/424, Boring for water in the Northern Territory, 17 August 1939.
- ⁶² Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory for Year 1939–40, p. 3. This report was not published as part of the consolidated set of Parliamentary Papers due to wartime restrictions. Copies are held by the National Archives of Australia in Darwin and the Northern Territory Archives Service.

4 World War II and Planning for the Future

With the abolition of the North Australia Commission in June 1931, North and Central Australia were combined once more as the Northern Territory. Robert Weddell, the former Government Resident of North Australia, was re-appointed as Administrator. A new Land Board was created to oversee the management of rural lands. Unlike its predecessor, this Board did not have a representative from the pastoral industry.

Despite the crippling effects of the Great Depression, some improvements were made in the Territory. Electricity was provided to Darwin in 1932 and Alice Springs in 1937. The *Electric Light and Power Ordinance 1935* regulated the supply and cost of electricity to residents. A reticulated water system, however, would not be operational in Darwin until 1940.

Joseph Carrodus, who served as Secretary to the Department of the Interior from 1935 to 1949, spent the months from April to October 1934 as the Territory's acting Administrator. In a report prepared following his return to Canberra, Carrodus recommended that the Administrator and other branch heads make periodic visits to the inland during each dry season. He wrote: 'Darwin is not the Territory; it gives no indication of the conditions prevailing inland'.¹ He felt that such visits would facilitate greater contact with local settlers who, he said, liked to 'discuss issues on the spot'. He also encouraged more visits to the Territory by Canberra-based officials, and felt that there should be greater consultation with the Northern Territory Administration with regard to important proposals or schemes relating to the Territory.

Darwin's prime location for the fledgling aviation industry became apparent in the 1930s. Amy Johnson, the first woman to fly from England to Australia, landed in Darwin in 1930. In 1934 an England to Australia air service was established with Darwin as a regular stopover. Qantas constructed a hanger for its aircraft, which was completed in August 1934 and located near the then airstrip (now Ross Smith Avenue in the suburb of Parap).

In 1937 Charles Lydiard Aubrey Abbott – known as Aubrey Abbott – was appointed Administrator of the Territory, replacing Robert Weddell. He had previously served as the Minister with responsibility for the Territory in 1928 and 1929. His appointment was criticised, primarily by large pastoral interests.

As Minister, Abbott had criticised pastoral companies for their poor management practices. In a report completed after a Ministerial visit in 1929 he had written, 'they [the pastoralists] felt they were martyrs and it was the duty of the Federal Government to support them and make their holdings profitable'.² It is likely that the British company Vestey's was orchestrating the opposition to Abbott's appointment, no doubt because of his criticisms of the company's property management practices. Abbott acknowledged as much in a letter to Prime Minister Joseph Lyons.³ Abbott was also a supporter of the Barkly Tableland Cooperative which, had it proceeded, would have benefited pastoralists on the eastern Tableland more than those in the western Victoria River District, where Vestey's properties were located.

Abbott would preside over a tumultuous period in Northern Territory history, one which included war, the bombing of Darwin and Katherine, the perceived threat of invasion, and plans for post-war development. His wife, Hilda, would later write of their experiences in the Territory under the title 'Good Night, All-About'.

Selected records relating to the administration of the northern territory in the 1930s

National Archives, Canberra

Department of External Affairs / Home and Territories / Home Affairs / Interior – correspondence files, 1903–38	A1
C L A Abbott papers – photographs, 1917–64	M10
Minutes of meetings – Northern Territory Land Board, 1931–38	A1, 1938/1181
R Weddell papers – folder containing photographs and newspaper clippings, 1931–36	M2498
Report on administration of the Northern Territory by J A Carrodus, 1934	CP764/2
Prime Minister's Department – correspondence files, 1934–50	A461
H H Abbott papers – transcript of <i>Good Night, All-About</i> , 1951	M65

National Archives, Darwin

Administrator's office – correspondence files, 1915–78	F1
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National Library of Australia, Canberra

C L A Abbott papers – photographs, 1917–64	MS4744, box 11 folders 4 and 5
C L A Abbott papers – visitors book, Government House, Darwin and Alice Springs, 1937–46	MS1674

Preparing for war

By far the greatest impact on Darwin and the Territory during the 1930s was the gradual build-up of defence forces. The Imperial Conference held in 1923 led to the development of the 'Singapore Strategy', which made Singapore the pivot of Empire defence in Asia and Darwin the end of the Singapore–Australia defence line. Darwin was to be a site for naval fuel storage, but not a permanent base for warships.⁴ It was recommended that a series of oil tanks be built. Construction of the first tank began in 1924, and the eleventh and last tank was completed and filled five days before war broke out with Japan. Most tanks were destroyed during the initial bombings. These were replaced by a series of storage tunnels, some of which still remain.

In March 1932 the Chiefs of the General Staff and Naval Staff noted that guns would be needed to protect the oil tanks from enemy attack. The Committee on Imperial Defence had already recommended a number of large guns costing at £400,000 and in the prevailing economic climate these were out of the question. The Defence Chiefs' solution was to install four 6-inch guns taken from scrapped Australian warships. A small garrison was also required to service and operate the guns, and it was recommended that the garrison located on Thursday Island be moved to Darwin. Cabinet approved the recommendations on 11 May 1932, and two guns were installed at East Point and another two nearby at Emery Point.⁵

In November 1938 Prime Minister Lyons spoke of the Government's increased spending on defence, including facilities in Darwin.⁶ Construction of the Darwin air base began in 1938, as did the Larrakeyah Barracks for the Army. The Navy began to build base facilities on shore, and construction of an anti-submarine boom across the harbour began in June 1940. It was ultimately 5.59 kilometres long, the longest boom net in the world.

By the late 1930s most Darwin residents obtained their water from wells and storage tanks. Wells were unreliable due to the seasonal nature of the town's rainfall. The need for a dedicated water supply was recognised, particularly given the steadily increasing numbers of defence personnel based in and around Darwin. The construction of Manton Dam, about 65 kilometres south of Darwin, began in September 1939 and was completed in January 1941. For the first time Darwin residents were provided with a reticulated water system.

The gradual defence build-up placed considerable pressure on Darwin's services and amenities, houses, electricity and water systems. It also brought the first signs of conflict between the civilian administration and military authorities.

Selected records relating to the 1930s defence build-up in Darwin	
National Archives, Canberra	
Darwin fuel oil and petrol storage depots, 1925–40	A284, B2622
National Archives, Melbourne	
Darwin oil tank reserves, 1939–41	MP150/1, 569/222/218
Darwin – grips for boom net, 1942	MP150/1, 449/202/299
Boom defence depot – Darwin – rearrangement of net slab, 1945–49	MP150/1, 569/222/476
National Archives, Darwin	
Darwin oil tank 2, 1924–35	M4435, 75
Darwin oil tank 4, 1924–35	M4435, 76
Oil fuel storage tank, Darwin, 1926	E1008, DC5385
Underground oil storage, Darwin, 1943–45	E117, N336 parts 1 to 3
Underground oil storage, Darwin, 1942–45	E116, N336 parts 1 to 3
Darwin water supply – Manton Dam and Howard Springs, 1940–49	F1, 1944/116
Darwin water supply – construction of Manton Dam, 1940–43	E125, 1956/560 part 7
Darwin water supply – construction of Manton Dam, 1940–43	E125, 1956/560 part 8
Safe Naval oil storage – Darwin – ventilation of tunnels, 1944	E1008, DM206
Darwin oil fuel installation – tunnels 1, 5, 6, 10 and 11, 1979–89	E1551, C1989/157

Evacuation of women and children from Darwin, 1941–42

Following the entry of Japan into the war in December 1941, the War Cabinet determined that women and children should be evacuated from Darwin and surrounding areas.⁷ A preliminary census conducted in 1941 had shown that there were 1,066 women and 969 children. The National Archives Darwin Office holds a list of census returns completed at the time, in the form of handwritten notes, compiled on a street by street basis. The returns, held as series F77, record names, nationality and age.

An evacuation program involving ships and aircraft began soon after. The last vessel left Darwin on 15 February 1942, while the last aircraft left on 18 February 1942. The evacuation experience, described in Dickinson's 1995 study, was harrowing for the evacuated families and the men left behind.⁸ Some returned to Darwin after the war, but others never came back.

Selected records relating to the evacuation of civilians from the northern territory	
National Archives, Canberra	
List of Northern Territory evacuees, 1942	A7029, 1
National Archives, Darwin	
Census for evacuation purposes, 1941	F77, 131/42
Evacuation from Darwin – <i>Zealandia</i> , 1941	F1, 1943/12F
Evacuation from Darwin – <i>President Grant</i> , 1941	F1, 1943/12H
Evacuation of women and children from Darwin – expenditure permits, 1941–46	F1, 1941/438 part 1
Evacuation of women and children from Darwin – expenditure permits, 1941–46	F1, 1941/438 part 2
Darwin gaol – evacuation of prisoners, 1942	F1, 1942/12
Evacuation of civilian personnel from Darwin, Pine Creek, Katherine and Tennant Creek, 1942–44	F1, 1942/346
Evacuation of old age pensioners from Tennant Creek and Mt Isa, 1942	F1, 1942/411
Evacuation of workmen from Darwin, 1942	F1, 1942/419
Evacuation of non-essential civilians from Alice Springs, 1942–44	F1, 1942/362
Evacuation of missions and isolated stations, 1942–43	F1, 1942/367
Air evacuation, 1942	F1, 1943/12A
Evacuation from Darwin – <i>Montoro</i> , 1942	F1, 1943/12C
Evacuation from Pine Creek and Katherine, 1942	F1, 1943/12D
Evacuation of workmen from Darwin, 1942–43	F1, 1943/12

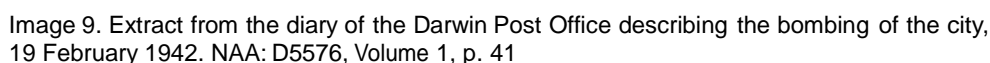
Relocation of the Northern Territory Administration and its records

As the threat of possible attack of Darwin increased, the Administration began evacuating its records to southern towns away from danger. In his annual report for 1942, Administrator Aubrey Abbott described the evacuation of Administration records prior to the first bombing.

The records of the Land Titles Office were taken to Alice Springs on 30 January 1942. Records of the Mines Branch were moved to Tennant Creek on 10–11 February 1942. Native Affairs Branch records were moved to Mataranka on 11 February 1942. Survey Branch records were packed and ready for removal, but the lack of transport meant they were still in Darwin during the first attack. They were later taken to Adelaide River, and then to Alice Springs, arriving on 1 March. The records of the Accounts Branch were being packed at the time of the first raid, and were taken to Alice Springs later.⁹

The morning of Thursday 19 February 1942 dawned bright and sunny in Darwin. Shops and businesses were open as was the post office (now the site of the Northern Territory's Parliament House). Just before 10.00 am 188 Japanese aircraft appeared overhead and bombs soon began to rain down on the town, harbour and airfield. The raid was led by Mitsuo Fuchida, the same man who led the earlier attack on Pearl Harbour.

When the raids were over more than 250 people, both civilian and military, were dead. Among them was Darwin's postmaster Hurtle Bald, his wife Alice and their daughter Iris, and six other post office staff, all killed when the post office building was hit. Wing-Commander Archibald Tindal, after whom the Royal Australian Air Force base south of Katherine is named, was also killed.



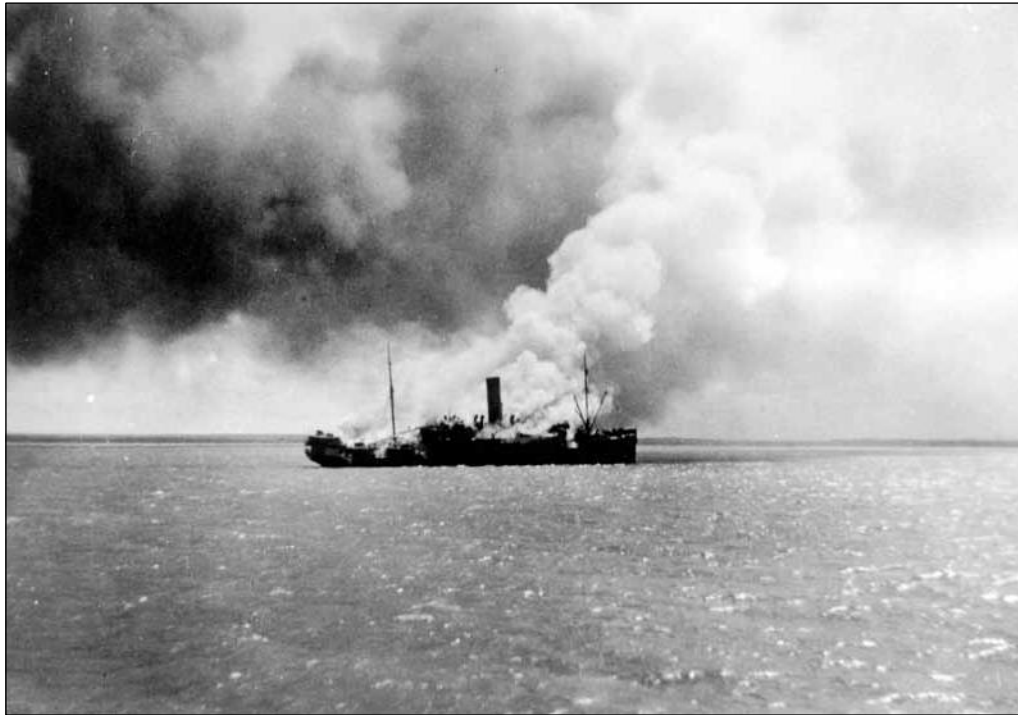


Image 10. The vessel *Zealandia* was blown up in Darwin harbour in the aftermath of the bombing of Darwin, 19 February 1942. Courtesy Northern Territory Library, PH0410/0005



Image 11. Darwin's post office was in ruins after the bombing of the city, 19 February 1942. Courtesy Northern Territory Library, PH0251/0002

The raids were not a precursor to an invasion. At the time Japan was attacking Timor to the north, and Darwin represented the closest base from which the Allies could launch an air or sea counter-attack. For this reason the Japanese believed the airfield and wharves needed to be destroyed. Darwin and the surrounding regions would be bombed 64 times throughout the war, the last time on 12 November 1943, but none of the later attacks was as severe as the first one. While the nation was informed of the first attack, its severity was downplayed due to wartime censorship requirements.

Most of the civilian and military personnel who died in the first attacks were buried in makeshift graves on local beaches. In mid 1942 their bodies were relocated to the newly established Berrimah War Cemetery, on Berrimah Road on the south-eastern outskirts of Darwin. By 1943 the cemetery had more than 70 graves. After the war the bodies were exhumed once again and relocated to the Adelaide River War Cemetery, about 100 kilometres south of Darwin, where they remain today.

The Berrimah Cemetery also included a small section to inter the bodies of Japanese air crews shot down over the Territory. At one point 31 Japanese servicemen were buried there. After the war there were suggestions that the remains might be returned to Japan, but ultimately they were relocated to the Japanese War Cemetery at Cowra, New South Wales.¹⁰ The relocation took place between March and May 1964, and the former Berrimah Cemetery was then closed. The site is now used by light industry.

Following the first attack, and believing an invasion to be imminent, administrative and military control in Darwin broke down. Many civilian and military personnel fled the city, and there was widespread looting. Reports were subsequently prepared by officials, including one by Administrator Abbott, who noted that not even Government House was spared – a German Bechstein piano owned by Mrs Abbott had disappeared. Harry Alderman, an Adelaide barrister, was later appointed to investigate reports of looting, property losses and claims for compensation by former Darwin residents. In a telegram to Abbott advising him of Alderman's appointment, Minister Joseph Collings said he was 'not concerned with persons or blame'.¹¹



Image 12. Graves of civilian personnel killed during a Japanese air raid in Darwin, 1942. Courtesy Australian War Memorial, 012786

records relating to the bombing of darwin on 19 february 1942		
National Archives, Canberra		
Japanese air raid on Darwin – 19th February 1942, 1942		A2684, 872
Press reports of the bombing of Darwin– Advisory War Council agendum 2/1942, 1942		A5954, 327/12
National Archives, Sydney		
Darwin press messages, 1942–43		SP109/18
National Archives, Adelaide		
Darwin air raid memorials, post office staff killed, 1942–61 (<i>copy also held in Darwin</i>)		D958, S1961/50
Darwin Post Office diary, 1942		D5576, volume 1
National Archives, Darwin		
Darwin enemy air raids – damage caused by enemy aircraft and miscellaneous correspondence, 1940–45		E114, 1942/94 parts 1 and 2
Darwin raids – casualty lists and enquiries, 1942–46		F1, 1942/364
War graves Adelaide River stone tablet and lettering, 1949		E1008, DA 730
War graves Adelaide River bronze name plate details, 1949		E1008, DA 731
War graves Adelaide River stone tablet carving details, 1949		E1008, DA 732
Australian War Memorial, Canberra		
Papers of Lieutenant-General Iven Mackay – Defence of Australia (including report on Darwin air raid)		AWM92, 3DRL 6850/134

The Government responded to the calamity on 3 March 1942 by appointing a Commission of Inquiry headed by Charles Lowe, a judge of the Victorian Supreme Court, to assess the attack and its consequences. Lowe was asked to inquire into the preparedness of defence and civil authorities; cooperation between the services; damage and casualties caused by the attack; steps taken to meet the attack or minimise its effects; and whether military or civil authorities had failed to discharge their responsibilities.

The Commission conducted hearings in Darwin 5–10 March 1942, and in Melbourne, 19–25 March 1942, and heard from 100 witnesses. Lowe sent an interim report to the Government on 6 March advising that Darwin in its present state could not be defended against a substantial enemy attack and that reinforcements were urgently required.

In his second report of 27 March 1942 (and subsequent report of 9 April), Lowe attributed the military's unsatisfactory behaviour to the lack of adequate training and leadership given to defence personnel. He also criticised Abbott for his failure to provide adequate leadership. Abbott denied the charges in a lengthy submission to his Minister, Joseph Collings, who defended him in a memo to Prime Minister Curtin, noting that since he had been appointed as the Territory's Minister he had received a steady stream of unsubstantiated criticisms against Abbott from one unnamed section of the community.¹²

Selected records relating to the commission of inquiry on the bombing of Darwin	
National Archives, Canberra	
Bombing of Darwin – report by Justice Lowe, 1942–49	A431, 1949/687
Transcript of evidence – Darwin air raid inquiry, 1942	A816, 37/301/293
Air raid on Darwin – final report of Commission of Inquiry, 1942	A816, 37/301/310
Air raids – Darwin – report by Justice Lowe, 1942–45	A1608, BM39/1/2
National Archives, Melbourne	
Darwin air raid – Inquiry before Lowe J as commissioner – lists of exhibits, transcript and indexes, statutory declarations, statements, exhibits, 1942	MP401/1, CL14687/1
Darwin air raid – Inquiry before Lowe J as commissioner – transcript of evidence taken in Darwin, 1942	MP401/1, CL14687/7
Darwin air raid – Inquiry before Lowe J as commissioner – transcript of evidence taken in Melbourne, 1942	MP401/1, CL14687/8
Darwin air raid – report by Justice Lowe, 1942–45	MP1185/8, 1806/2/31

Administration of the Northern Territory during the war

Following the bombing, and the perceived threat of invasion, and Lowe's report of 6 March that Darwin could not be defended without substantial reinforcements, the Government decided that that portion of the Northern Territory north of Alice Springs would be placed under direct military administration. Alice Springs would remain under civilian administration.

Brigadier Noel Loutit was responsible for military administration in Darwin, while Abbott was responsible for civilian administration from Alice Springs. This would remain the situation until Abbott's return to Darwin in July 1945.

After many years of stringently controlled spending, the Commonwealth now provided substantial funds for the Territory's development and defence.

The Army took control of stock routes and the movement and well-being of cattle on their way to market. The number of bores on stock routes was considerably increased. Meatworks were established in a number of locations, including Manbulloo (12 kilometres west of Katherine), and a piggery in Alice Springs to provide food for defence personnel based in the Territory.

Army farms were established to provide fresh food for defence personnel. Although these farms were evidence that agricultural pursuits could succeed in the Territory after many years of failure, Powell noted that the military used a predominantly Aboriginal labour force and there was little regard to the actual costs of production.¹³

Allied Works Council and the Civil Constructional Corps

The Government established the Allied Works Council in February 1942 (with its head office in Melbourne) to carry out works needed by the military and procure supplies for those works. In the Northern Territory, branches of the Council were established at Adelaide River and Alice Springs. The Civil Constructional Corps was established in 1942, also for the purpose of carrying out works. For the most part it consisted of volunteers. Many members of the Civil Constructional Corps and the Allied Works Council were recruited in southern states and sent to the Northern Territory to assist in major works projects.

During the war, the Stuart Highway, running north–south between Darwin and Port Augusta (South Australia), and Barkly Highway, running east–west through the Barkly Tableland from Tennant Creek to Cloncurry (Queensland) were upgraded to all-weather roads. Numerous airstrips were also built; the remains of some still survive.

The Council operated until 1945, while the Corps continued until 1946. Most of the military's facilities were disbanded after the war, except for an experimental farm at Katherine, which was taken over by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation. Responsibility for the remaining facilities passed to the Administration.

In addition to the records listed below, the National Archives Melbourne Office has significant collections of records created by the Armed Services dealing with the administration of the Northern Territory during the war.

Selected records relating to military control of the northern territory during world war ii		
National Archives, Canberra		
Records concerning the administration of the Northern Territory by the Army, 1943–44,	AA1978/215	
Army farms – Northern Territory – policy, 1945–46	A659, 1945/1/1448	
National Archives, Melbourne		
Personal files for members of the Civil Constructional Corps enlisted in South Australia who served in the Northern Territory, 1942–45	MP14/2	
Allied Works Council lists of various States' personnel in the Northern Territory, 1943	MT7/36	
Personal files maintained in the Northern Territory for members of the Civil Constructional Corps enlisted in Victoria, 1943–45	MT8/12	
National Archives, Perth		
Register of members of the Civil Constructional Corps, 1942–45	K1193	
National Archives, Darwin		
ARMY		
War diaries – 119 Australian General Hospital, Darwin (photocopies), 1940–43	NTAC1983/74	
Military transient register, 1942	E1530	
ALLIED WAR COUNCIL		
Job files – Alice Springs, 1942–45	E116	
Job files – Adelaide River, 1943–44	E117	
Correspondence files – Alice Springs, 1943–51	E159	

Field officers' (personnel) manual – Alice Springs, 1943–44	E371
Free labour employment files – Alice Springs, 1943–50	E651
Administrator, Northern Territory	F1, 1946/191
Darwin – reversion to civil control, 1945–46	

Northern Territory residents serving in the armed forces

Service records for those who served with any of the three arms of Australia's armed forces during World War II are held by the National Archives in Canberra. Included in these are the records of Northern Territory enlistments or those who saw service in the Territory. The National Archives in Darwin holds information about defence personnel who died in the Northern Territory during the war and are buried in Territory cemeteries, including Alice Springs and Adelaide River.

The celebrated photographer Max Dupain served with the Department of Home Security's Camouflage Unit in Darwin and New Guinea in 1943. During his stay in Darwin, he photographed Rapid Creek, located in the northern suburb of Nightcliff. The autographed photo is held by the National Archives.



Image 13. A photograph of Rapid Creek in north Darwin taken by celebrated photographer Max Dupain, 1943. NAA: E1131, 5

Selected records relating to world war ii Service by northern territorians		
National Archives, Canberra		
ARMY		
Second AIF – personnel dossiers, 1939–47		B883
Citizen's Military Force – personnel dossiers, 1939–47		B884
NAVY		
Service cards – Navy officers, 1911–70		A6769
Service cards – petty officers and men, 1911–70		A6770
AIR FORCE		
RAAF officers – personnel files, 1921–48		A9300
RAAF personnel files – non-commissioned officers and other ranks, 1921–48		A9301
National Archives, Sydney		
Register of Army enlistments – South Australia and Northern Territory, 1939–46		D3598
National Archives, Darwin		
Advices of deaths reported by Directorate of War Graves Services, 1939–48		NTAC1970/7

Disposal of wartime property and goods

After the war the Commonwealth Government sought to divest itself of military property that was no longer required, and it appointed a Disposals Commission to oversee the process. Property in the Northern Territory was disposed of accordingly. Unique to the Territory was the removal of wartime wrecks from Darwin harbour. Tenders were called for their removal and, ironically, most of the wrecks were removed by a Japanese company. The Fujita Salvage Company of Japan salvaged them between 1959 and 1961.

Selected records relating to disposal and Salvage of commonwealth property after world war ii		
National Archives, Canberra		
Salvage of wartime vessels – Darwin harbour, 1946–59		A425, 1960/20851
Japanese salvage operations in Darwin harbour, 1956–58		A432, 1956/3380
Nanyo Boeki Kaisha – Japanese salvage team – re-entry into Northern Territory for salvage purposes, 1956–60,		A452, 1956/496 parts 1 and 2
Japanese salvage operations in Darwin harbour, 1956		A816, 40/301/704
Japanese salvage operations – Fujita Salvage Company, 1956–60		A6980, S250368 part 1
National Archives, Darwin		
Darwin area maps and camp sites, 1942–51		E380
Correspondence files, 1945–48		E376
Correspondence files, 'P' (Property), 1946–55		E375
(1) Property file register (2) Register of approvals for sale (3) Register of sales advice notes, 1946–55		E377
Correspondence files, 1946–50,		E378

Correspondence files, 1946–48	E379
Register of tenders and offers, 1947–58	E381
Folder containing index to files and sales advice procedures, 1948	E382
Correspondence files relating to disposal of service property, 1952–60	E383
Japanese salvage operations Darwin Harbour, 1959–62	F1, 1959/2177

Planning for the post-war redevelopment of the north

In the immediate post-war period there was a series of administrative actions to redevelop the town of Darwin, the Northern Territory and even the entire north of Australia. Although none of these actions proceeded as originally intended, collectively they were to have a considerable impact on the development of the north.

Redevelopment of Darwin

Prior to the war there were concerns about the makeshift nature of many of Darwin's dwellings. The lack of adequate electricity, reticulated water and sanitation added to those concerns. While services to Darwin were improved progressively throughout the 1930s and early war years, many Darwin dwellings remained in a rundown state.

On 10 March 1937 a cyclone damaged a number of Darwin's buildings. Press reports in the southern states over-emphasised the damage and called for a major redevelopment of the town. Although these reports were exaggerated, the Minister with responsibility for the Territory, Thomas Paterson, took the opportunity afforded by the cyclone to create a committee to investigate Darwin's redevelopment.

The committee, headed by departmental architect Wilfred Haslam, submitted its report and town plan in late 1937. The plan was oriented towards the centre of Darwin being a military base, rather than a civilian one, with the Navy having a key role. This caused concern among civilian authorities, and in October 1939 Administrator Aubrey Abbott asked the Government to appoint Brisbane town planner Ronald McInnis to prepare a plan for the redevelopment of Darwin. Abbott was aware of McInnis' work because in March 1937 David Davidson, the Town Planning Commissioner in Perth, had written to him praising McInnis, and noting that Macalister Blain, the Territory's Member of Parliament, had done likewise.¹⁴ Abbott's proposal was accepted and McInnis arrived in Darwin in September 1940. He presented his town plan in December 1940, emphasising civilian rather than military priorities.¹⁵

The pressure of war and lack of finances meant that neither the Haslam nor the McInnis reports were put into effect. In 1943 the Commonwealth called for a third report on the redevelopment of Darwin. It was prepared by a team comprising G J Symons (Army), H J Manning (property valuer), and L A Bullen (architect). The report entitled 'Darwin Replanned: A Future Tropical Garden City' recommended the compulsory acquisition of all land within Darwin and its environs to enable the complete redevelopment of the city. This recommendation would soon have a significant impact on Darwin's civilian population.

Meanwhile Administrator Abbott was still keen to ensure the redevelopment of Darwin, but with a focus on civilian administration, not military. In his Annual Report for 1942 he had gleefully noted some positive outcomes of the bombing of Darwin:

[it] may be materially useful in the future planning of the town. Many areas which occasioned sharp criticism through squalor and congestion have now disappeared and the way is open for the planning of a modern typical town. ... I would urge that a very broad view be taken of the future of Darwin and finance be made available accordingly when the time comes'.¹⁶

He lobbied for McInnis to return to Darwin and update his 1940 report. McInnis eventually returned in 1944 and presented a second report in December. Like his first report, the second favoured Darwin as an administrative centre rather than a military one.

By this time it was clear that the Commonwealth favoured the Symons' committee recommendation of compulsory acquisition of Darwin properties. On 30 November 1943, Joseph Carrodus, Secretary of the Department of the Interior, wrote to Abbott informing him that the Government's intention was to abolish freehold land tenure in Darwin.¹⁷

The Commonwealth continued with its plans for development. It ultimately opted for an increased military role in the heart of the town,¹⁸ and proceeded with plans to compulsorily acquire and redevelop all freehold land within a radius of 10 miles. This in turn led to the *Darwin Lands Acquisition Act 1945*. With the passage of the Act on 17 January 1946, the Commonwealth became the owner of all privately owned lands in Darwin and its suburbs. The intention was that the land would be incorporated within a system of leasehold tenure, the ultimate intention being that much of Darwin would be rebuilt along the lines of a garden city, similar to Canberra. An earlier Cabinet submission had noted that 'the erection of temporary shacks and make-shift buildings will not be permitted'.¹⁹

In both of his reports McInnis had recommended the creation of a town management board which would advise the Administrator on matters relating to the control, management, government, and welfare of Darwin. On 18 July 1946 Joseph Carrodus sent a memo to the Administration in Darwin advising that the recommendation would be adopted. Carrodus said that as an act of grace the Board was empowered to offer preference to former Darwin resident owners and absentee owners for new leases on their old sites, or alternative sites. In order to prevent the re-emergence of old Chinatown, Carrodus noted that it was undesirable that persons of one nationality (non-Europeans) be allowed to congregate in a particular area. The Town Management Board was created via the *Darwin Town Management Ordinance 1947*. It comprised a chairman and three other members and held its first meeting on 14 August 1947.²⁰

Despite the good intentions there were delays and conflicts among government agencies, which in turn caused frustration among Darwin residents who were returning to the town after the war and wanted to rebuild their homes, but were unable to obtain security of tenure on their land. Many residents sought compensation for their losses. The National Archives in Darwin holds records relating to their claims.

Delays in undertaking surveys meant that the first sites were not offered for lease until 1949. With the change in Commonwealth Government in 1949, the incoming Menzies Government abandoned the planned redevelopment and town leases were again offered.

Selected records relating to the post-world war ii redevelopment of darwin	
National Archives, Canberra	
Darwin – development of town, 1937–44	A659, 1943/1/7077
Town planning scheme for the town of Darwin – first report by R A McInnis, 1940–46	A431, 1946/1241
Town planning of Darwin – second report by R A McInnis, 1943–46	A659, 1945/1/974
The post war town planning scheme for the town of Darwin, 1944–46	A816, 2/301/407
Planning for the rebuilding and economic development of Darwin, 21 September 1944	A2700, 735
Darwin – plans for the rebuilding and economic development, 28 July 1945	A2700, 735A
Town planning – Darwin, 27 July 1945	A2700, 898
Darwin town plan, 7 January 1946	A2700, 898A
Interdepartmental Committee on Darwin – Interim report on the economic and commercial development of Darwin and the Northern Territory, 7 January 1946	A2700, 1022A
Darwin – replanning and development schedules – register of holdings, 1946–57	A2834
National Archives, Melbourne	
Papers relating to the reconstruction of Darwin, 1943–46	MP1675/1
Replanning of Darwin – post-war works program, 1944–45	MP742/1, 259/8/168
National Archives, Darwin	
Planning of town of Darwin, 1936–44	F1, 1940/230
Report from the Haslam Committee appointed by the Minister for Interior to investigate matters associated with the development of Darwin, 1937	E1131, 1
Suggestions regarding town planning, 1937	F1, 1937/558
Darwin town planning – erection of buildings, 1940–42	F1, 1941/289
Darwin town planning, Citizens' Advisory Committee, 1941	F1, 1941/311
Miscellaneous correspondence, newspaper clippings and photographs regarding the replanning of Darwin, 1941–44	E1131, 2
History of town planning, Darwin, 1942–44	F1, 1966/4452
Replanning of Darwin – a scheme suggested by H J Symons, H J Manning and L A Bullen, 1943–44	E1131, 5
Handwritten draft report – the post-war town planning scheme for the town of Darwin by R A McInnis, A R Miller, and H J Symons, 1944	E1131, 3
The post-war town planning scheme for the town of Darwin (Second McInnis report)	E1131, 4
History of town planning, Darwin, 1945	F1, 1966/4453
History of town planning, Darwin, 1946–47	F1, 1966/4454
Correspondence files (compensation claims), 1946–54	E68
History of town planning, Darwin, 1948–49	F1, 1966/4455

Redevelopment of the Northern Territory

In August 1944 the Department of Post-War Reconstruction appointed an interdepartmental committee to draw up plans for the redevelopment of the Northern Territory as well as its capital. To avoid disputes about control, Cabinet ruled that the Department of Post-War Reconstruction and the Department of the Interior would have joint responsibility for the committee. The committee's role included the preparation of population and employment estimates, and material and labour requirements; the development of wartime facilities, public works, building and housing programs; a program of economic and commercial development; and the administrative machinery necessary to implement these proposals.

Among the first reports produced by the committee was the 'Interim report on the economic and commercial development of Darwin and the Northern Territory'.²¹ It noted that previous reports, such as the one prepared by Payne-Fletcher in 1937, had indicated that the Territory could be substantially developed, provided there was sufficient capital expenditure to overcome its disadvantages, and provided sufficient inducement was offered to settlers in the form of remission of taxes and tariffs.

The report also provides insight into why the Commonwealth was hesitant to allocate higher levels of expenditure. It noted that the Government was highly susceptible to criticism by southern taxpayers over funding allocated to the Territory. Among the documented evidence of concerns by politicians are the comments by George Pearce to the Senate in 1922:

So much money having already been spent upon the Territory the taxpayers are opposed to any further expenditure, especially seeing that the revenue from that country does not anything like meet the interest on the money invested nor meet current expenditure.²²

This concern, coupled with the effects of the Great Depression, partly explains the Commonwealth's reluctance to provide the development funding needed until just before World War II, and why it relied on resident settlers, particularly large pastoral companies, to the extent that it did. The war effectively broke the nexus, and provided evidence that with sufficient capital the Territory could be developed.

The committee's report said that extensive development called for an ingenious and unorthodox approach, on the part of both the Commonwealth and settlers. The Territory could only be developed if there were a true partnership between the Commonwealth and private enterprise.

The committee continued its activities until 1951.

Selected records relating to the redevelopment of the northern territory in the 1930s and 1940s	
National Archives, Canberra	
Development of the Northern Territory – government proposals and policy, 1943–55	A452, 1955/176
Development of the Northern Territory, 1943–46	A9816, 1943/345
Interdepartmental Committee on Darwin – Interim report on the economic and commercial development of Darwin and the Northern Territory, January 1946	A2700, 1022A

Development of northern Australia

While these events were occurring, far wider changes were taking place, involving not only the Northern Territory, but the future development of all northern Australia.

In October 1944 Prime Minister Curtin said that it was essential to the future security of Australia that renewed efforts be made to develop the north. The Premier of Western Australia wrote to Curtin in December suggesting the formation of a committee responsible for the development of north Australia. It would include the Commonwealth, Western Australia, and Queensland. Cabinet approved the creation of the Northern Australia Development Committee, which was established in September 1945.²³ The committee's role was to examine proposals to increase northern Australia's population, improve the welfare and development of native inhabitants, increase the value of production in the area, and ensure the best utilisation of the land and its resources.²⁴

Of particular interest was a report prepared by the committee in February 1947 which highlighted previous failures by the Commonwealth and settlers that had contributed to the lack of development in the Northern Territory. The report referred to the Commonwealth's lack of continuity of development policies, and the inability or unwillingness of previous governments to finance transport and other public services and utilities which were essential if settlement in the Territory were to progress beyond the pioneering stage. It also concluded that many large companies had failed to respond to repeated attempts on the part of governments to stimulate development. Any future development programs would be ineffective unless these same companies and individuals were prepared to do their part.

The committee recommended that the Commonwealth develop a ten-year funding plan that would involve considerable expenditure by governments, private companies and individuals. It acknowledged that it was unrealistic to expect either the Commonwealth or private enterprise to undertake expenditure unless there was an agreed understanding that both parties played their part.²⁵ It recommended funding for local medical services, education, transport and highways, airline subsidies, waters, stock routes, surveys and investigations; a total of £1,235,000 per year. These recommendations were all put into effect in the ensuing years.

Selected records relating the development of northern Australia

National Archives, Canberra

Formation of the Northern Australia Development Committee, 1944–48	A431, 1947/1255
Future of the Northern Territory and North West Australia – proposals by the Commander in Chief, Military Forces, 1944–48	A5954, 607/15
Northern Australia, 25 September 1945	A2700, 940
Northern Australia Development Committee, 1946–60	A1422, 12/1/1 parts 1 to 5
Northern Australia Development Committee – report and recommendations, 3 July 1947	A2700, 1362
Northern Australia Development Committee – Development of Northern Australia (printed report), 1947	AA1972/841, 11
Northern Australia Development Committee, 7 April 1949	A2700, 1362A

National Archives, Darwin

Northern Australia Development Committee reports, 1946–49	F1, 1946/681
Development of Northern Australia, 1948–63	F425, C22 parts 1 to 3

Herbert Johnson, Minister for the Northern Territory, 1945–49



Image 14. Herbert Johnson, Commonwealth Minister for the Interior from 1945 to 1949, was responsible for the Northern Territory, 1946. NAA: A1200, L7676

In July 1945 Herbert Johnson was appointed as the Territory's Minister. He was to preside over many of the developments referred to above, and to set in motion a number of changes that would have a significant impact on the Territory.

As with some of his predecessors, Johnson decided to see conditions in the Territory for himself. On returning from his ministerial tour in late 1945 he prepared a report that was highly critical of the pastoral industry. He felt that many properties were too large to be successfully operated and developed. He was also critical of the non-resident nature of companies that appointed managers for their properties.²⁶

Johnson was fully supportive of the recommendations of the 1937 Payne–Fletcher Inquiry, and in 1946 he took a series of submissions to Cabinet seeking

approval for sweeping changes. He recommended the introduction of new pastoral development leases of 50 years duration, with clearly defined improvement conditions, the formation a Land Court to hear appeals by pastoralists over matters involving rents and resumptions, and the limitation of future pastoral leases to a maximum of 5,000 square miles.²⁷ Recognising the importance of water for long-term development, Johnson said that the Government should provide bores on all new leases, including payment for the cost of 'dud' bores, and bores should be provided on all stock routes at distances no greater than 10 miles, instead of the existing 20 miles.

Johnson told Cabinet that the development of pastoral properties required considerable funding, and pastoral lands should only be allotted to experienced operators, those who were likely to make a success of their undertaking. It was not in the interest of the Commonwealth or settlers for landholdings to be taken up by those who were inexperienced, or who were not suited physically and mentally for the work. Johnson's remarks were probably intended as a rebuff to suggestions then current that returned soldiers might be offered pastoral lands in the Territory. Cabinet approved Johnson's recommendations by early May 1946.

Johnson revamped the Administration and replaced Abbott as Administrator with Arthur Driver. Abbott quickly became a strident critic of the Commonwealth's administration of the Territory, with regular comments in southern newspapers. This was repeated in his 1950 publication, *Australia's Frontier Province*, although as the following extracts indicate some of his conclusions were contradictory – finding that governments or the leaseholders and property managers were variously at fault:

If the various Commonwealth Governments that have controlled the Northern Territory since 1910 were to be arraigned, they would be found guilty of neglect, muddling, vacillation and lack of courage and vision. The failure to develop the Northern Territory lies much more with Governments than with the Territory itself.²⁸

It is clear that all the difficulties experienced in the Northern Territory, and the consequent delays in development and progress, cannot be laid at the doors of the various Governments and Ministers who have controlled it.²⁹

Johnson recreated the office of Director of Lands in May 1946. The position was originally created in 1912, and abolished in August 1921 as a cost-saving measure by the then Minister, Alexander Poynton. Hugh Barclay, a surveyor from Western Australia, was appointed to the post. He arrived in the Territory in July 1947 and remained until his retirement in 1964. The position of Director of Lands continued throughout the Commonwealth's administration of the Territory. Numerous ancillary officers, including pastoral inspectors and stock route inspectors were also appointed. The Land Board, abolished in May 1938, was recreated in May 1949 and also continued throughout the remainder of the Commonwealth's administration of the Territory.

The importance of the cattle industry to the Territory's future development was further recognised with the creation of a separate Animal Industry Branch in 1946, based in Alice Springs under the directorship of Lionel Rose. It took control of stock routes and bores, and it was resourced to provide a range of veterinary and research services. Stock route inspectors were recruited to manage the stock routes and to monitor the activities of drovers. This latter task was especially needed as there are numerous references in Commonwealth documents to damage caused by careless drovers as they took cattle to market, including fires, soil erosion, destruction of fences, and neglect of bores leading to substantial water losses. An annual droving program was also introduced from 1947 to regulate the movement of cattle along the stock routes.

A collection of Johnson's personal records is held by the National Library of Australia.

Conclusion

The administrative changes initiated by the Commonwealth, and by Johnson, together with the activities of the Northern Australia Development Committee, began to coalesce in February 1948 when the first British Food Mission, led by William Turner, visited Australia. This was the first of three British missions to visit the Territory; the other two visits were in March 1949 and June 1953.

Turner explained that the United Kingdom needed larger quantities of beef from Australia than it had imported previously – 400,000 to 500,000 tons of beef, instead of 200,000 tons – due to the loss of its markets in Argentina. The United Kingdom Government was offering to purchase Australian beef at an agreed price for a fixed period. In return, Australia would have to improve facilities in the north of the country, including the Northern Territory, to ensure that those supplies could be delivered.³⁰ A 15-year agreement with the United Kingdom Government was ultimately signed in 1952.

The arrival of the first British Food Mission in 1948 led to the demise of the Northern Australia Development Committee in 1949. In its place the Commonwealth created the Meat Production Development Committee to coordinate all Australian action relating to the production of beef.³¹ By this stage it was clear that the Territory could be successfully developed and that the cattle industry would have a key role to play in this development. Cabinet had already approved funding of £3 million for roads and other methods for the transportation of stock in northern Australia.³² The scene was now set for a period of extensive growth and expansion throughout the Territory.

Notes

- ¹ NAA: CP764/2, Report on the administration of the Northern Territory by J A Carrodus, 1934.
- ² NAA: A1, 1938/4979, Minister's visit to north and central Australia; report by C L A Abbott following his visit to the Northern Territory, June 1929, p. 7.
- ³ NAA: A461, B412/1/2 part 1, Northern Territory administration, 7 November 1936.
- ⁴ NAA: A981, IMP111, Imperial Conference – 1923, summary of proceedings and conclusions.
- ⁵ NAA: A2694, volume 3, submission 171, Emergency defence of Darwin, 11 May 1932.
- ⁶ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, volume 157, 2 November 1938, pp. 1101–10.
- ⁷ NAA: A2763, War Cabinet Minute 1578, Evacuation of women and children from Darwin, New Guinea and Papua, 12 December 1941.
- ⁸ Janet Dickinson, *Refugees in Our Own Country: The Story of Darwin's Wartime Evacuees* (Darwin, 1995).
- ⁹ Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory for the year ended 30th June 1942, 29 January 1943, pp. 1–2.
- ¹⁰ NAA: E72, item DP14873/4, Exhumation, transfer of remains of Japanese servicemen from Berrimah to Japan.
- ¹¹ NAA: F1, 1942/407, War damage and looting, Darwin – enquiries by the War Damage Commission, 28 May 1942.
- ¹² NAA: A816, 37/301/310, Air raid on Darwin – final report of Commission of Inquiry, 1942.
- ¹³ Alan Powell, *Far Country: A Short History of the Northern Territory* (Melbourne, 1988), p. 204.
- ¹⁴ NAA: F1, 1940/230, Planning of town of Darwin.
- ¹⁵ The National Library of Australia in Canberra holds a copy of McInnis' 1940 report.
- ¹⁶ Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory for the year ended 30th June 1942, 29 January 1943, p. 10.
- ¹⁷ NAA: F1, 1946/159 part 1, Darwin Lands Acquisition Act.
- ¹⁸ NAA: A2700, submission 898, Town planning, Darwin, 27 July 1945.
- ¹⁹ NAA: A2700, submission 735, Planning for the rebuilding and economic development of Darwin, 21 September 1944.
- ²⁰ NAA: F1, 1966/4452, History of town planning, Darwin, 1942–44.
- ²¹ NAA: A2700, submission 1022A, Interim report on the economic and commercial development of Darwin and the Northern Territory.
- ²² *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, volume XCIX, 12 July 1922, p. 310.
- ²³ NAA: A2700, submission 940, Northern Australia, 25 September 1945.
- ²⁴ NAA: AA1972/841, 11, Northern Australia Development Committee development of northern Australia, 1947.
- ²⁵ NAA: A431, 1947/1255, Formation of the Northern Australia Development Committee.
- ²⁶ NAA: A431, 1949/1045, Ministerial visit to the Northern Territory, 1943–46.

²⁷ NAA: A2700, submission 1092, Leasing of land for pastoral purposes, Northern Territory, 27 February 1946; submission 1093, Bores on stock routes, 27 February 1946; submission 1092A, Limitation of areas of pastoral leases, Northern Territory, 4 April 1946; submission 1152, Crown Lands Ordinance, Northern Territory, 10 April 1946.

²⁸ C L A Abbott, *Australia's Frontier Province* (Sydney, 1950), pp. 43–44.

²⁹ *ibid*, p. 169.

³⁰ NAA: F1, 1948/142, British Food Mission investigations, 1948.

³¹ NAA: A2700, submission 1585A, Development of the beef industry North Australia, 12 May 1949.

³² NAA: A2700, submission 1585, Development of the beef industry North Australia, 7 April 1949.

5 Post-War Growth and Development

In December 1949 the Menzies Liberal Government was elected, and from 1951 three new Commonwealth principals were involved with the administration of the Northern Territory. A new Minister was appointed to head the new Department of Territories: Paul Hasluck. He would ultimately be the Territory's longest serving Minister. Donovan wrote that under Hasluck's influence 'post-war development took on a sense of sustained purpose which had been absent before'.¹

There was a new Administrator in Frank Wise, the leader of the Western Australian Labor opposition, and a former State premier. At that time rumours were circulating that the current Administrator, Arthur Driver, was to be replaced. Wise passionately wanted the position, and despite the fact that a Liberal government was in office in Canberra, wrote a personal letter to Hasluck in

which he said, 'The ambition of a lifetime has been, and still is, to have the administrative responsibility of the parts of Australia which, though empty, are not destined to remain empty'.² Hasluck recorded in his memoirs that he discussed the issue with Prime Minister Menzies. They both agreed that Wise was a good candidate, and Menzies undertook to support his appointment in Cabinet.³

Cabinet approved Wise's appointment on 19 June 1951, and he held the position until 1956.⁴ When the appointment was announced, the Melbourne *Argus* said that it was a 'sign of grace...it is recognition accorded to the talents and merit of an individual, giving the latter an opportunity to do for the benefit of all something that he has it in him to do well. And Mr Wise is such an individual...he is the right man for this big job'.⁵

There was also a new Secretary in Cecil Lambert appointed to head the Department of Territories. Lambert had previously held appointments in the administration of rural and regional Australia, and had most recently served with the Directorate of Rural Development. He remained as Secretary until 1964.

Hasluck, Wise and Lambert would preside over a period of substantial change and development within the Territory.

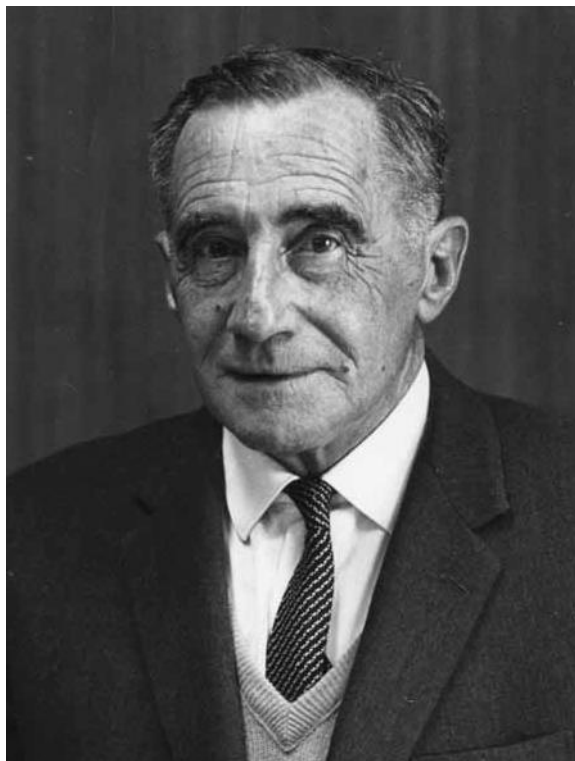


Image 15. Cecil Lambert, Secretary of the Department of Territories from 1951 to 1964, c.1964. NAA: A8947, 41

Transportation – railways, planes and road trains

One of the major handicaps to the Territory's development in the early years was the lack of a reliable means of getting produce to market. Transport was an issue raised many times. Achievements prior to World War II consisted of several extensions to existing railways and a gradual program of stock route expansion.

Railways

When the Commonwealth agreed to take over the administration of the Northern Territory from South Australia it promised to complete the north–south rail line from Darwin to Adelaide; however, it gave no commitment as to when the work might be completed.

For most of the Commonwealth's administration of the Territory there were frequent calls for the construction of railways, with requests usually involving one of three rail lines:

- a direct link from north to south, connecting Darwin with Alice Springs, and then to Adelaide;
- an eastern link extending from the Barkly Tableland to Queensland, usually Dajarra or Camooweal; or
- a western link from a point in the Victoria River District to the Wyndham meatworks.

In 1914 a policy paper issued by Minister Patrick Glynn, as an outcome to the finding of the 1913 Royal Commission (see Chapter 2), included a network of rail lines costing £10 million. Glynn intended that funding would be provided by advances to be repaid in the future, although some costs would be met by landowners, lessees and others who directly benefited from the works.⁶

Roberts referred positively to 'railways of betterment' built in some southern States, meaning that respective State Governments received the increased value of property due to railway construction and made the lines pay for themselves.⁷ In 1928 the North Australia Commission considered imposing a betterment tax on pastoralists whose properties adjoined a proposed Barkly Tableland railway, asserting that they would substantially benefit from the line, so should help pay for its cost.

The Commission noted that such a tax had been used previously in the southern States and had proved unworkable, as some property holders gained more benefit from the rail lines, while others gained no benefit, yet still paid the tax.⁸ The Commission's plan never proceeded, no doubt due to the small number of property holders located on the Tableland.

The 1937 Payne–Fletcher Inquiry recommended two rail routes – one eastern, and one western.⁹ It is noteworthy that Alfred Martin, manager of Victoria River Downs, a property that would have directly benefited from the proposed western railway, said that it would not pay its way.¹⁰ In 1948 the British Food Mission recommended a series of rail lines which George Gahan, the Commonwealth Railways Commissioner, costed at £32.5 million.¹¹

By the early 1950s Queensland's Premier, Vince Gair, was lobbying the Commonwealth to build an eastern line to Dajarra, in inland Queensland,¹² which was later estimated to cost £19.3 million.¹³ Cabinet ultimately deferred any decision on the matter, particularly as doubts were raised whether the development of properties along the proposed line would occur if the railway was actually built.

It was clear that railways were costly, would serve only a small number of pastoralists and the mining industry, and would not recoup their costs. Both the North Australia Railway from Darwin and the Central Australia Railway to Alice Springs usually ran at a loss; indeed Donovan argued that the line from Darwin was a 'financial embarrassment to the government'.¹⁴

The Commonwealth's reluctance to proceed with railways was best summarised by the Treasurer, Arthur Fadden, when commenting on the proposed eastern line to Queensland:

I have set my face against yielding to these pressures because I have come to the very firm conclusion, after much study on the subject, that the time has not yet arrived for costly capital investment and heavy operational subsidies on new railway lines in the north.¹⁵

Selected records relating to proposed construction of railways in the northern territory

National Archives, Canberra

Railways – strategic, 1914–20	A2, 1920/1718
Railways – Broken Hill to Port Darwin, 1919	A2, 1919/3712
Proposed extension of Queensland railway to Barkly Tableland, 1919–46	A431, 1946/1240
McArthur River proposed railway and port, 1924 (Cabinet minute – 31 January 1924)	A2718, volume 1 part 2
Railway – Northern Territory to Bourke, 1929 (submission 388)	A2718, volume 5 part 3
Bourke to Darwin railway proposal, 1933 (submission 611)	A2694, volume 7
Development of the Barkly Tableland railway, 1934–48	A461, H412/1/3
Construction of railways – Payne–Fletcher, 1938 (submission 484)	A2694, volume 19 part 1
Railway from Dajarra to Newcastle Waters, 1952	A4905, 288
Construction of Dajarra railway from Dajarra to Newcastle Waters, 1952	A4940, C642
Construction of Dajarra railway from Dajarra to Birdum, 1952–54	A4940, C672
Railway from Dajarra to Newcastle Waters, 1953	A4905, 416
Railway from Dajarra to Birdum, 1953	A4905, 564
Dajarra railway, 1954	A4909, 1014

National Archives, Darwin

Railway extension – Daly Waters to Queensland border, 1927–30	F20, 18
Railway survey (trial) to Western Australia border, 1927–30	F20, 62

When the Northern Territory achieved self-government in 1978, the much discussed continuous rail line between Adelaide and Darwin remained a pipedream. The narrow gauge northern line between Darwin and Mataranka had been closed in 1976 and abandoned. The southern line to Alice Springs still operated, but was often subject to extensive delays due to flooding.

It was ultimately decided to rebuild the southern line as a standard gauge line, but with its route 150 kilometres west of the existing tracks. The new line was completed in October 1980, and the old narrow gauge line closed down in December 1980.

Completion of the 'missing link' rail line between Alice Springs and Darwin was a contentious issue. Debates centred on the necessity for the line and who would pay for it. It was finally agreed that the line would be built by a private consortium with some financial assistance from the Commonwealth, South Australian and Northern Territory Governments. Work began on the new line in July 2001 and was completed in September 2003.

Selected records relating to construction of the rail link between Alice Springs and Darwin	
National Archives, Darwin	
Correspondence files, Alice Springs to Darwin railway project, 1974–94	D5314
Survey reports, Alice Springs to Darwin railway project, 1976–97	D5299
Aerial photography index book, Alice Springs to Darwin railway project, 1976–97	D5321
Photograph albums (positives), Alice Springs to Darwin railway project, 1981–94	D5318
Survey books, Alice Springs to Darwin railway project, 1981–97	D5298
Aerial photographs, Alice Springs to Darwin railway project, 1983–97	D5316
Correspondence files, Alice Springs to Darwin railway project, 1984–97	D5315

Commonwealth Air Beef Advisory Panel, 1954–55

A privately operated air beef service known as Glenroy was established in the north of Western Australia in 1949 with financial support from the Commonwealth and Western Australian Governments. It provided rapid transport of processed beef from a series of inland properties to the Wyndham meatworks.¹⁶

Based on the scheme's progress, in September 1954 the Commonwealth approved the appointment of a committee to inquire into the economics of air transport of beef in northern Australia.¹⁷ A departmental briefing note to Prime Minister Menzies acknowledged that the inquiry was a diversionary tactic to deal with Queensland Premier Gair's demands for the eastern railway to Dajarra.¹⁸ The eight-member committee was evenly divided on the matter. Four members, including Hudson Fysh, supported the ongoing government assistance for air beef. The remaining four members, including Vestey's principal, Arthur Bingle, favoured greater attention being directed to improving other forms of transport, including stock routes and roads. It should be noted that Vestey's traditionally moved their stock eastward towards Queensland for fattening and marketing, not westward, the direction favoured by Glenroy.¹⁹

The high cost of railway construction, and the divided nature of the Air Beef Panel's report, led the Commonwealth to eliminate these two forms of transport from future consideration. Menzies wrote to Gair's successor, Queensland Premier Francis Nicklin, advising him:

At this stage we are by no means satisfied that the answer to the transport problem of the Territory (including those of the beef cattle industry) lies in new railway construction... before committing ourselves to a railway we would need to be satisfied that there was no practicable and economic alternative.²⁰

The Glenroy scheme ultimately folded in 1965, by which time the Commonwealth had spent over £100,000 in subsidies.²¹

Selected records relating to air beef transport in the northern territory

National Archives, Canberra

Air beef scheme, 1951–52	M331, 154
Advisory panel on air beef transport – Northern Territory, 1954–57	A452, 1957/481 parts 1 and 2
Advisory Council on air transport of beef and cattle, 1954–57	A463, 1957/2946
Air beef – Commonwealth air beef interim report, 1953–55	A987, E1005 parts 1 to 5
Air beef panel, 1954	A4906, 95
Air beef subsidy, 1955	A4906, 269
Air beef subsidy, 1956	A4926, 85
Air beef subsidy, 1957	A4926, 934
Air beef subsidy, 1958	A4926, 1416

Beef roads program

As part of its commitment to a long-term meat agreement with the United Kingdom (discussed in Chapter 4) the Commonwealth agreed to fund a program of road construction.²² Trials involving road transportation of stock had taken place in northern New South Wales in December 1934 as part of the Barkly Tableland Cooperative proposal discussed in Chapter 3.²³ In 1948 the Australian Meat Board conducted a series of trials from Anthony's Lagoon to Alice Springs, a distance of 542 miles.²⁴ Kurt Johanssen briefly operated a road train service from 1949 to 1951, but closed the business due to high operating costs.²⁵

Arthur Driver, the Territory Administrator, advised that road construction should be considered not only in the context of carrying cattle, but as part of a full developmental communication system.²⁶ Driver's comment proved to be prophetic, as a later Cabinet submission noted that roads, while supporting pastoral, mining and tourist interests, also provided important social benefits.²⁷ Driver's successor, Frank Wise, favoured roads,²⁸ as did Lionel Rose, Director of the Animal Industry Branch.²⁹ Other Commonwealth officers noted that roads had several advantages over other forms of transport: their cheaper cost meant there would be less opposition from Treasury, and costs would be shared. If the Commonwealth provided the roads, private industry would provide the vehicles to use them, whereas with railways the Commonwealth provided both rail lines and rolling stock.³⁰

By the mid 1950s it was clear that roads were the Commonwealth's favoured solution to the Territory's transport problems. Hasluck declared his plan for a 10-year program of road improvements in February 1956, and Lambert told him, 'The policy you have laid down with regard to pushing on with the comprehensive road construction programme is the only sound course of action to take'.³¹ In 1959 a report by the Commonwealth Bureau of Agricultural Economics concluded that cattle could only be transported on roads that were of good quality and well maintained. Commenting on a draft of the report, Hugh Barclay, Director of Lands, said:

There is no doubt in my mind that, with the provision of a suitable road system constructed and maintained to a satisfactory standard, the amount of beef which can be supplied by the Northern Territory will be appreciably increased and that there will be a corresponding increase in the present herds and in the efficiency of station management.³²

In December 1960 the Government appointed a committee of departmental secretaries to examine major development projects that might increase Australia's export income. Hasluck told Lambert that the time was opportune for a Cabinet submission on road development for the Territory, Western Australia and Queensland³³ and asked that he instigate a series of proposals based on a clear economic justification for increasing production of cattle. The following February the Commonwealth announced that it would look sympathetically at a range of projects to develop the north provided those projects contributed to Australia's overall export potential. This effectively marked the formal beginning of the beef roads scheme, which began in the Territory in 1962 with a series of five roads estimated to cost £4.57 million.³⁴

The scheme was expanded throughout the 1960s and 1970s. By 1974 a total of \$32.7 million was spent on beef roads, while another \$24.5 million was spent on developmental roads; the latter intended for mining and tourism purposes.³⁵ The scheme's success was amply demonstrated by the volume of cattle transported by road, which increased from 3.3 per cent in 1956–57 to 99.34 per cent in 1973.³⁶ As the program accelerated, there was less need for the stock routes, and they were progressively closed down. Darrell Lewis cited 1967 as the last year that cattle travelled over the western Murrumbidgee stock route.³⁷ D L Napier, the Superintendent of Stock Routes, wrote in 1974 that 'stock routes are now rarely, if ever, used, due to the almost complete takeover of road transport as the method of travel for stock'.³⁸

Selected records relating to beef roads in the northern territory	
National Archives, Canberra	
Beef roads program Northern Territory, 1961–63	A452, 1961/7542
Beef road development, 1962	A5819, volume 2/agendum 39
Northern Territory beef roads to export meat works, 1964	A5827, volume 3/agendum 86
Northern Territory beef road Katherine Willeroo Top Springs, 1964	A5827, volume 14/agendum 461
Northern Territory beef road Katherine Willeroo Top Springs, 1964	A5827, volume 15/agendum 494
Beef road development, 1965–66	A463, 1965/3493
Northern Territory beef road Katherine Willeroo Top Springs, 1965	A5827, volume 18 /agendum 592
Beef road Willeroo Top Springs, 1965	A5827, volume 26/agendum 838
Beef roads development – North Australia, 1965	A5827, volume 28/agendum 918
Beef road development North Australia interim plan 1966/67, 1965	A5827, volume 38/agendum 1192
Extension of beef roads program Northern Territory, 1966	A452, 1964/4610 attachment
Beef road development in North Australia interim plan 1966/67, 1966	A5841, 26
Beef road development, 1967	A1209, 1967/7662 parts 1 and 2
Future administrative arrangements for beef roads, 1967	A5840, 629
Beef road development, 1967	A5842, 488
Beef road development, 1967	A5842, 498
Beef roads in North Australia, 1970	A5869, 562
Northern Territory development roads program, 1971–73, 1970	A5869, 605

Selected records relating to beef roads in the northern territory	
National Archives, Canberra	
Beef road scheme, 1972	A5908, 894
Beef roads, 1973	A5915, 76
Northern Territory development roads, 1974	A5915, 1111
National Archives, Darwin	
Director of Works – Correspondence files, 1951–83	E125
Files relating to the construction of roads	NTAC1979/6
Beef roads Northern Territory, 1966–68	NTAC 1980/26, 1973/1291
Beef roads Northern Territory, 1969–70	NTAC 1980/26, 1973/1292
Beef roads Northern Territory, 1970–71	NTAC 1980/26, 1973/1293
Beef roads Northern Territory, 1971	NTAC 1980/26, 1973/1294
Beef roads Northern Territory, 1971–72	NTAC 1980/26, 1973/1295
Beef roads Northern Territory, 1972–73	NTAC 1980/26, 1973/1296
Beef roads Northern Territory, 1973–75	NTAC 1980/26, 1973/1297

Post-war pastoral industry

In the late 1940s and early 1950s both the Chifley and Menzies Governments sought to implement the recommendations of the Payne–Fletcher Inquiry and institute pastoral development leases, whereby pastoralists would be offered new 50-year leases, but only in exchange for a mutually agreed program of property improvements. The intention was to prevent pastoralists from occupying properties and failing to develop them.

A new Crown Lands Ordinance drafted in 1950 caused opposition from the pastoral industry which alleged that the legislation would seriously damage the industry. In response the Commonwealth established an interdepartmental committee, comprising officers from the Departments of Territories, and Commerce and Agriculture, to consider the issues. The committee reported that the principal objective of the legislation was to encourage development of Territory lands and to achieve the most efficient use of pastoral resources.³⁹

A revised ordinance came into effect in 1953 and the issuing of new leases began soon after. Contrary to the pastoral industry's claim, the future of beef development in the Territory was not jeopardised, and production increased considerably in the ensuing years. Pastoral development leases proved very successful; cattlemen were given five years (until 31 August 1958) to apply for new leases, and by 1959 more than 95 per cent had done so.⁴⁰ Vestey's was the first company to take out a new lease on its Wave Hill property in May 1954.

With the finalisation of the new Crown Lands Ordinance, the Commonwealth was able to focus on other matters involving rural industries. A series of legislative and administrative changes were made, which had the effect of both improving and strengthening its administration.

Stock Routes and Travelling Stock Ordinance and the Stock Diseases Ordinance, 1954

The first change was the implementation of two ordinances relating to the control of cattle on the way to market. Before the war, the Commonwealth had taken little active interest in stock movement control and, according to Lionel Rose, Director of the Animal Industry Branch, given that there were 200,000 cattle on the move annually,

'lawlessness and disorder were rife'.⁴¹ In January 1946, Administrator Aubrey Abbott cited the need for a Stock Routes Ordinance to enable the appointment of stock route inspectors, permit the licensing of drovers, and impose penalties for the interference of government property, such as bores, which were frequently vandalised. Abbott also suggested that fees be levied to cover the costs of providing water on stock routes.⁴² Abbott had called for a Stock Routes Ordinance in July 1944, following a tour of inspection that revealed damage to bores and associated facilities on some stock routes caused by drovers, as well as a number of obscene drawings on water storage tanks, some of which were of Abbott himself.⁴³ While Rose subsequently acknowledged the need for such an ordinance, staff shortages within the Administration delayed its drafting and implementation.⁴⁴

In November 1954 the Stock Routes and Travelling Stock Ordinance and the Stock Diseases Ordinance were issued, and took effect in early 1955. The former ordinance placed the stock routes on a more controlled basis, and provided for inspectors of stock routes and stock. The legislation provided for the construction and control of stock routes, their maintenance, and the complete control of stock.

The Stock Diseases Ordinance provided for more stringent quarantine measures if cattle were found to be diseased.⁴⁵ It was recognised that existing legislation (the first Stock Diseases Ordinance was issued in 1918) was of little use in controlling the spread of disease under modern conditions, as the Administration lacked the power to regulate the movement of diseased stock. Rose said that the Administration had previously dealt with the issue through bluff and the cooperation of owners, managers and drovers, but those methods were ineffective when it came to protecting one part of the Territory from the introduction of disease from another area. The ordinance was rewritten to bring it into line with similar legislation throughout Australia, and provided for the establishment of protected areas where cattle could be quarantined.

Selected records relating to Stock routes, Stock route ordinances and inspections	
National Archives, Canberra	
Stock Routes Ordinance – Northern Territory, 1946–59	A452, 1957/915 parts 1 and 2
Stock Diseases Ordinance – Northern Territory, 1954–60	A452, 1957/1588
National Archives, Darwin	
Stock Diseases Ordinance, appointments and terminations of stock inspectors, 1929–58	F1, 1954/524
Stock Routes Ordinance, 1946–54	F1, 1952/106
Director of Works – correspondence files, 1951–83	E125
Stock Routes Ordinance, 1954–56	F1, 1955/159
Stock Diseases Ordinance, 1954–59	F1, 1955/166
Stock Routes Ordinance, 1956–58	F1, 1956/333
Stock Routes Ordinance, 1958–61	F1, 1958/1927
Regulations under Stock Routes and Travelling Stock Ordinance, 1962–67	F1, 1968/1180
Action under Stock Diseases Ordinance, 1963–71	F1, 1968/1756
Stock Diseases Ordinance, 1964–76	F1, 1976/2571

Land Court of the Northern Territory, 1954

In their 1937 report, the Payne–Fletcher Inquiry had recommended the appointment of a land tribunal to hear appeals by pastoralists over decisions made by the Administration.⁴⁶ They were not the first to suggest a land court for the Territory: Senator Edward Millen had argued for a Land Appeal Board in 1914.⁴⁷ Cabinet approved the creation of a court in May 1939, but the war delayed its implementation.⁴⁸

In 1946 Abbott supported the need for a court or tribunal, suggesting it would remove allegations of influence or favouritism on the part of Commonwealth officials.⁴⁹ Departmental Secretary Joseph Carrodus considered there was insufficient demand to justify the creation of a separate court. He suggested that the Queensland Government be asked to provide the services of its Land Court. The Queensland Premier declined this offer due to the pressure of that State's own requirements, but the South Australian Government agreed to make the services of its Pastoral Board available.⁵⁰ The Court was ultimately included in the Crown Lands Ordinance of 1953.⁵¹

Carrodus' view that the Court would have insufficient work to justify a full-time body was initially correct. In its first decade the Court dealt with 38 appeals, all involving rent reappraisals, the last of these concluding in 1958.⁵² By 1959, however, the Administrator, James Archer, was lamenting that the Court's proceedings were costing £2,700 per year.⁵³ A lull in the Court's activities was noticed that year, primarily because its basic function was to hear appeals against rent reappraisals, and those appraisals only took place every 10 years.

The lull led to the Court's scope being widened to include appeals involving property valuations, and it was subsequently redesignated as the Land and Valuation Tribunal in February 1964. The new Tribunal was given the task of hearing appeals in relation to all land and valuation matters arising under Territory Ordinances. It continued for the remainder of the Commonwealth era, but was ultimately redesignated as the Pastoral Land Appeal Tribunal in 1992.

Selected records relating to the land court of the northern territory

National Archives, Canberra

Land Court – Northern Territory, 1946–55	A452, 1955/642
Appointment of South Australia Pastoral Board as a Land Court for the Northern Territory, 1949–54	A462, 193/3/1
Appeals to the Land Court, 1958	A432, 1958/410
Northern Territory Land and Valuation Tribunal, 1967–68	A432, 1967/2373

National Archives, Darwin

Establishment of Land Court in Northern Territory, 1941–59	F1, 1958/1712
Valuation of Land Ordinance Northern Territory, 1961–63	F1, 1963/66
Valuation of Land Ordinance Northern Territory, 1963–65	F1, 1963/2263
Valuation of Land Ordinance, 1963–68	E72, D13294/3
Valuation of Land Ordinance, 1963–70	F1, 1967/1229
Regulations under Valuation of Land Ordinance, 1963–76	F1, 1974/4612

Northern Development Division, 1964–72

The beef roads scheme had its origin in the Commonwealth's interest in projects that would benefit the nation's export potential. At the time the Commonwealth was reviewing a range of projects that would assist northern development in not just the Northern Territory, but the northern parts of Queensland and Western Australia as well. The Premiers of Queensland and Western Australia were also lobbying the Commonwealth to create a Northern Australia Development Authority.

Instead, in February 1964 Cabinet approved the establishment of a Northern Development Division within the Department of National Development. Cabinet stated that the Division would provide for 'concentrated study of the problems of northern development and for the formulation of ideas and conclusions concerning northern development for submission to the Government'.⁵⁴

It was noted that the north had considerable resources, including water, cattle and minerals, yet the region had still not developed at a rate commensurate with those resources, despite considerable Commonwealth funding. The north's large water resources could be the foundation for closer settlement and increased population. Cattle production was improving; pastoralists were taking advantage of liberal taxation provisions which encouraged them to turn profits into property development. Mining, however, was considered to represent the best prospect of increasing the north's population.

The Division was to play a coordinating role and an advisory role in relation to ports, roads and railways, pastoral development (including cattle roads and meatworks), mining development, agriculture, power, urban water supplies and resources data. The States would submit projects for Commonwealth consideration and funding.

The Division remained until 1972 when the incoming Whitlam Government replaced it with the Department of Northern Development.

Selected records relating to the northern development division	
National Archives, Canberra	
Establishment of Northern Division of Department of National Development, 1964	A5827, volume 1/ agendum 21
Establishment of Northern Division, 1964–66	A452, 1964/510 Attachment
National Archives, Darwin	
Northern Division of National Development, 1964–68	NTAC1980/26, 1975/178
Briefing notes prepared by Northern Division for Minister, 1968–70	NTAC1980/26, 1973/676
Northern Division of National Development, 1968–75	NTAC1980/26, 1975/179
Briefing notes prepared by Northern Division for Minister, 1970–72	NTAC1980/26, 1973/677

Committee of Investigation into Transport Costs in Northern Australia, 1964–65

A persistent inhibiting factor to development in the north was high freight costs. The Government acknowledged this when it said:

We shall have to face up to the fact that in general the cost of doing things in the north is significantly higher than in the south and that if the momentum of development is to be maintained a large part of these costs must be borne by the general taxpayer.⁵⁵

It was recognised, nevertheless, that reducing freight costs would further promote northern development. In April 1964 the Government appointed a committee to investigate those costs and the means of reducing them. The committee, under the direction of Louis Loder, was asked to consider the development of North Australia and examine ways and means which would encourage an increase in population, growth by private enterprise, and to develop a formula for reducing transport costs.

The Committee reported in September 1965 with a series of recommendations involving additional expenditure on roads, subsidies and income tax deductions.⁵⁶ Cabinet referred the report to an interdepartmental committee which expressed its disappointment with the recommendations. The Commonwealth's main objection to the Loder report was that it did not concentrate sufficiently on searching for ways and means of reducing real transport costs, that is, by more efficient transport systems and facilities. It seemed to give disproportionate attention to identifying ways and means of ameliorating transport cost burdens by subsidies and lower taxes.⁵⁷

The Government delayed releasing the Committee's report until 1967.

Selected records relating to the committee of investigation into transport costs in northern Australia	
National Archives, Canberra	
Committee of Investigation into Transportation Costs in Northern Australia, 1964	A1422, 12/1/13
Committee of Investigation Transportation Costs in Northern Australia (Loder report), 1964–66	A1422, 12/1/18
Establishment of Committee of Investigation Transport Costs North Australia, 1964	A5827, volume 1/agendum 22
Establishment of Committee of Investigation Transport Costs North Australia, 1964	A5827, volume 1/agendum 40
Establishment of Committee of Investigation Transport Costs North Australia, 1964	A5827, volume 3/agendum 79
Report of the Loder Committee, 1965	A5827, volume 38/agendum 1183
Interim report of interdepartmental committee on the Loder Committee report, 1966	A5841, 168
Committee of investigation transport costs North Australia, 1966	A5841, 379
Committee of Investigation into Transportation Costs North Australia, 1967	A5842, 270
National Archives, Darwin	
Committee of Inquiry Transportation Costs, 1964–66	F1, 1966/2142

Rise of the mining industry

From the beginning there were high hopes for a Northern Territory mining industry, particularly following discoveries of gold, tin and wolfram. From the 19th century until the 1950s, however, mining was an intermittent affair (see Chapters 1 and 2), and Administrators often lamented the fact that fields that were initially promising gave little in return. Mineral discoveries were often made in remote locations, and the lack of transport and access to markets meant that only fields where the ore was located near the surface could be mined profitably.

As early as 1912 the Commonwealth accepted a policy of encouragement of the mining industry and established a Department of Mines to administer it. The 1913 Royal Commission inquiring into railways and ports in the Territory (discussed in Chapter 2) recommended mining as offering the best prospect to attract people and therefore provide a local market for agricultural and pastoral products. The only definitive action taken from the report was to approve the extension of the railway from Pine Creek to Emungalan (Katherine). The Commonwealth did, however, establish a Government Assay Laboratory in Darwin to provide free ore assays for miners. The first Government Assayer was O C Witherden who took up his position in April 1917.⁵⁸

The Commonwealth's frustration over the industry's failure to evolve was best expressed by the Administrator, Robert Weddell, who in 1932 wrote, 'Unsuccessful efforts have been made to induce the investment of capital in the Northern Territory, exemptions after exemptions being granted. It is proposed, in future, to grant exemptions only when absolutely necessary'.⁵⁹ In that same year, however, gold was discovered at The Granites near Tanami, west of Alice Springs. Gold had first been discovered there in 1911 but after the murder of a white miner by Aboriginal people, and the lack of water, the site was essentially abandoned.

Of greater significance, however, was the discovery of gold at Tennant Creek, also in 1932. This site proved to be both lucrative and long lasting. Three ore batteries were funded by the Government. Thomas Paterson, the Minister responsible for the Northern Territory, approved £15,500 for the construction of the first battery in October 1936. All three batteries were operating by June 1941.

In response to the increased mining activity in the area, a second Government Assayer's position was established at Alice Springs in April 1934, occupied by Harold Owen from the South Australian Mines Department.⁶⁰

records relating to government batteries at tennant creek	
National Archives, Canberra	
Government battery – Tennant Creek, 1936–49	A431, 1947/2147 main file and parts 1 to 12
National Archives, Darwin	
No. 3 Battery, Tennant Creek, 1939–50	F1, 1948/29
No. 3 Battery, Tennant Creek, 1956–59	F1, 1955/275
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Inwards and outwards correspondence of the Tennant Creek Mining Warden and battery operators, 1935–43	F476
Correspondence files No. 2 Battery, 1939–42	F485
Correspondence files No. 2 Battery, 1939–42	F486
Correspondence files No. 3 Battery, 1940–50	F487
Records and return Government Battery, 1958–63	NTRS1472



Image 16. Gold ore crushing battery at the Tennant Creek gold mine site, 1958.
NAA: A1200, L28480

Aerial, geological and geophysical survey of Northern Australia, 1934–41

At the urging of Herbert Gepp, in 1934 steps were taken to mount an aerial, geological and geophysical survey of northern Australia. Gepp had previously been head of the Migration and Development Commission and, in 1934, was a consultant to government on development issues. The survey involved the Commonwealth as well as Queensland and Western Australia. The work was undertaken by the Royal Australian Air Force, and it continued in the Northern Territory until 1941. Although the survey did not make new mineral discoveries, it did result in a wealth of geological information which proved of value to the mining industry.

Selected records relating to the aerial, geological and geophysical Survey of northern Australia		
National Archives, Canberra		
Aerial, geological and geophysical survey of the Northern Territory, July 1934 (submission 988), 1934	A3259, volume 4 part 1	
Aerial, geological and geophysical survey of the Northern Territory, August 1934, (submission 988), 1934	A3259, volume 4 part 2	
H Gepp suggested economic survey of the Northern Territory, 1935–36	A1, 1936/3126	
Aerial, Geological, and Geophysical Survey – Correspondence files, 1934–42	A2600	
National Archives, Darwin		
Aerial survey reports, 1936–41	NTAC1975/28	
Aerial survey photographs, 1935–40	NTAC1979/126	

In addition to Tennant Creek, some momentum continued at other mining sites, including the Maranboy tin mine and the Pine Creek gold mine. Although at the end of World War II mining was not the complete success for which the Commonwealth hoped, it would not be long before a series of major discoveries would be made that would lead to the industry's dominance in the Territory.

Selected records relating to mining in the northern territory up to the 1950s		
National Archives, Canberra		
Maranboy tin field, 1922–49		A431, 1950/591 part 1
National Archives, Darwin		
Correspondence files, 'M' (Mines), 1941–53		F742
<i>Portion of series also held by Northern Territory Archives Service</i>		
Correspondence files, 1942–51		F320
Northern Territory Archives Service		
Applications for mica leases, 1922–24		F148
Correspondence dockets, reports of mining operations, 1922–23		NTRS2712
Correspondence dockets government assayer, 1922–37		NTRS2721
Applications for mining leases, Central Australia, 1922–25		NTRS2829
Applications for mining leases Darwin, 1924–26		F147
Certificates of free assays, 1924–28		NTRS2714
Folder of half-yearly statements from managers of crushing plants, 1926–31		F182
Correspondence files, 1930–38		F144
Applications for mining claims, 1931–40		F350
Papers of Warden's Court, Alice Springs, 1933–53		F359
Correspondence files, 1934–54		F342
Correspondence files, Alice Springs, 1934–41		F364
Folder of correspondence relating to miners' rights issued at Pine Creek, 1934–39		NTRS2889
Correspondence files, 1935–40		F155
Record of assistance to prospectors, 1935–41		F1391
Correspondence files, Kurrundi goldfields, 1939–49		F381
Ore sales registers, 1939–65		F1084
Correspondence files, 'M' (Mines), 1941–53		F742
<i>Portion of series also held by National Archives Darwin</i>		
Warden's Court registers, 1941–78		F1059
Government Battery, Maranboy – applications for mineral leases, 1949–50		F382
Government Battery, Maranboy – correspondence files, 1952		F383

Mining from the 1950s onwards

From the 1950s onwards, mining exploration received substantial private investment in the Northern Territory, and some spectacular discoveries have been made, including uranium, manganese, bauxite and oil.

By far the most significant discovery was uranium. It was first found at Rum Jungle, 100 kilometres south of Darwin, in 1949. Mining began in the early 1950s following the completion of a dedicated mining town located nearby and given the name Batchelor. Mining continued at the site until 1971. Uranium has since been discovered at other sites in the Northern Territory, mostly within the Alligator Rivers region east of Darwin (see Chapter 14).

Large deposits of manganese were located at Groote Eylandt east of Darwin, and extensive mining began there in 1966. By 1992 this field was the world's third largest producer of manganese.

Bauxite was found on the Gove Peninsula east of Darwin. Mining began in 1971 following the establishment of Nhulunbuy, a dedicated town near the site.

Oil had for a long time been known to exist in the Territory, and licences for exploration were issued from the 1920s onwards following the implementation of the Mineral Oil and Coal Ordinance in 1922. It was not until the 1960s, however, that oil was extracted on a commercial basis. The first fields were at Mereenie and Palm Valley, near Alice Springs. Since then, exploration has continued offshore with major discoveries in the Timor Sea.

From its hesitant beginnings in the 19th century, mining now makes the highest contribution to the Northern Territory's annual economy.

Selected records relating to mining in the northern territory from the 1950s

MINING – GENERAL

National Archives, Darwin

Mineral development project notes, minutes of committees, budget notes, and miscellaneous papers, 1967–75	NTAC1980/340
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Correspondence files, 1967–78	E1035
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Northern Territory Archives Service

Correspondence files of senior geologist, 1966–72	F947
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Correspondence files, 'MA' (Mines Administration), 1969–78	F1024
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URANIUM

National Archives, Darwin

Proposed town site Rum Jungle (Batchelor), 1952–65	F425, C77
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Health hazards of uranium mining, 1954–59	F1, 1955/1090
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Health hazards of uranium mining, 1959–66	F1, 1960/2159
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Northern Territory Archives Service

Territory Enterprises records of mining operations at Rum Jungle, 1953–70	NTAC1979/121
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Territory Enterprises records of mining operations at Rum Jungle, 1953–70	NTAC1979/122
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Selected records relating to mining in the northern territory from the 1950s		
MANGANESE		
National Archives, Darwin		
Manganese mining, Northern Territory, 1952–65		F1, 1975/2512
Manganese deposit, Groote Eylandt, 1962–64		F1, 1962/1713
Welfare aspects of Groote Eylandt manganese mining, 1963–66		F1, 1963/3063
Welfare aspects of Groote Eylandt manganese mining, 1966–69		F1, 1966/1743
Welfare Branch – Welfare aspects of Groote Eylandt manganese mining, 1968–78		E460, 1977/586 parts 1 and 2
Welfare Branch – Groote Eylandt Manganese Mining Company, 1979–90		E460, 1990/269 part 1
BAUXITE		
National Archives, Darwin		
Bauxite deposits, Gove, 1959–67		F425, C133 parts 1 to 7
Gove bauxite deposit, 1964–65		NTAC1980/340, 2
Bauxite deposit, Gove, 1969–70		F1, 1969/4348
Gove bauxite export contracts, 1969–76		F1, 1969/4973
Bauxite deposit, Gove, 1970–72		F1, 1970/6634
OIL		
National Archives, Canberra		
Licences to search for mineral oil and coal in the Northern Territory, 1923–49		A2252
National Archives, Darwin		
Mineral Oil and Coal Ordinance, Petroleum Prospecting and Mining Ordinance, 1956–60		F1, 1956/896
Licences under the Mineral and Coal Ordinance, 1960–62		F1, 1960/437
Administrator's office, Alice Springs – Oil exploration, 1965–79		F706, 1966/12
Northern Territory Archives Service		
Office copies of coal and mineral oil licences, 1923–37		NTRS2759
Register of applications for coal and mineral oil licences, 1922–78		NTRS3041
Correspondence concerning oil permits, 1953–75		F925

Paul Hasluck, Minister for Territories, 1951–63

Paul Hasluck was the longest serving Commonwealth Minister responsible for the Northern Territory, and his impact was considerable. While reference has been made to him in this chapter, and in other chapters, it is appropriate to consider the overall effect he had on the Territory's development. He was appointed Minister in May 1951 and was very supportive of the Territory. Each year he took to Cabinet submissions seeking ever-increasing funding, not just for the pastoral industry, but for the Territory generally. He was usually successful, much to the chagrin of Commonwealth Treasurers. Cabinet documents show the concerns expressed by Arthur Fadden, Harold Holt and William

McMahon at the increasing levels of spending in the Territory. At one point Holt was moved to write:

May I say generally that I think we have done remarkably well over the years by the Northern Territory Administration...I can perfectly well understand the genuine difficulties of administration in the Northern Territory, but...I wonder whether it would be timely for us to take stock of where we are headed.⁶¹

During Hasluck's term as Minister, the Territory's budget increased from £6.12 million in 1951–52 to £25 million in 1963–64.⁶² Despite the large increase, Hasluck himself later argued that the effectual contrast was not the increase in funding, but the removal of waste; the provision of basic services and public utilities more extensively and at a higher standard; improved administrative efficiency; and the creation of conditions in which both private enterprise and public undertakings could be planned and operated effectively.⁶³



Image 17. Paul Hasluck, Minister for Territories from 1951 to 1963, was responsible for the Northern Territory, 1954. NAA: A1200, L16892

Under Hasluck's guidance the Commonwealth introduced the beef roads program in 1962, and provided improved and more extensive veterinary services to pastoralists. Travelling stock were kept under close surveillance by stock inspectors to control disease, and quarantine reserves were established for holding diseased animals. An Animal Research Institute was established at Alice Springs as a central diagnostic and research laboratory. Additional watering places, either bores or catchment dams, were constructed on stock routes as part of a policy to facilitate the marketing of stock from all pastoral areas of the Territory.⁶⁴

Hasluck promoted a new mindset in the way Commonwealth officials viewed the Territory. In a paper prepared in 1954, he said there had been many inquiries on beef cattle in the past and the present government decided to break away from this pattern and 'turn some of the suggestions into action plans and try to produce beef instead of words'.⁶⁵ When officiating at the opening of a power station in Darwin in 1962, Hasluck wished that writers and speakers would drop the cliché 'Neglect of the North' and adopt a more positive slogan, the 'North is on the Move'.⁶⁶

It was at this time that the government too recognised the potential of tourism in the Territory. The Northern Territory Tourist Board was created in September 1962.

Hasluck was keen to establish civic pride on the part of Northern Territorians. He encouraged the formation of societies (such as historical and photographic societies) to encourage participation by Territorians. He also sought £1,000 for his Department to provide prizes for entries by Territorians in essay writing and photographic competitions. Treasury rejected the request, with the explanation that there should be one standard

of amenities for Canberra as the national capital, but a lower standard for more remote territories. Hasluck did not take the rebuff lightly, and he wrote a personal letter to Treasurer Arthur Fadden in which he said:

I would myself have thought that the claims of the people in the Territory, who are more remote from the main centre of population and more deficient in opportunities for recreation, would be rated far higher than the claims of the sheltered, pampered and unproductive inhabitants of the national sanatorium that is called the national capital.⁶⁷

Fadden approved the request.

During a period of extensive drought in Central Australia, pastoralist Doreen Braitling proclaimed, 'We await a leader bold enough and imaginative enough to create and carry out something really worthwhile'.⁶⁸ Hasluck may well have been the bold and imaginative leader Braitling was seeking.

Selected ministerial and personal records of Paul Hasluck	
National Archives, Canberra	
Volumes of instructions issued by the Minister to the Department of Territories, 1951–63	M1776
Ministerial correspondence files relating to Territories, 1951–74	M331
National Library of Australia	
Appointment of F J S Wise, 1951	MS5274, box 33, 17
The Northern Territory 1951–63: Public Addresses and Articles (other than speeches in Parliament)	MS5274, box 38
Notes on the Northern Territory, 1952	MS5274, box 33, 9
Ministerial visits, 1954–55	MS5274, box 33, 13
Notes for Budget debates, 1954–55 – 1962–63	MS5274, box 33, 8
Publication – <i>The Australian Territories: The Record of the Menzies Government 1950–1955</i> , 1955	MS5274, box 33, 2
Notes in answer to inquiries made by a Parliamentary delegation to the Northern Territory, 1955	MS5274, box 33, 10
Development of the Northern Territory, statement made to members of a Parliamentary delegation regarding representations made by the National Farmers Union, 1955	MS5274, box 33, 11
Wise's overseas visit, 1955–56	MS5274, box 33, 5
Information supplied to the High Commissioner of Canada, 1956	MS5274, box 33, 12
Publication – <i>Development of the Northern Territory</i> , 1956	MS5274, box 33, 3
Northern Territory visit June–July 1956	MS5274, box 33, 4
Correspondence with Lionel Rose, 1956–69	MS5274, box 33, 19
Publication – <i>Development in the Northern Territory: Notes on Expenditure, Investment and Achievements during the Ten Years to 30 June 1961</i> , 1961	MS5274, box 33, 1
Territories notes for speeches, 1962–63	MS5274, box 33, 7

Post-war Northern Territory Administration, 1945–72

The post-war administration of the Territory continued with divided control from both Canberra and Darwin. The Administrator remained the Commonwealth's principal representative in the Territory.

Conflicts continued between the Administration in Darwin and departments in Canberra. Officials in Darwin wanted greater autonomy, and less of what they regarded as interference from the Commonwealth. The matter was only partially resolved with self-government in July 1978 (see Chapter 7).

The conflicts that sometimes arose between officials in Darwin and the capital were best exemplified in a series of telexes in 1968. The then Administrator, Roger Dean, complained that Canberra-based officials failed to appreciate that Territory officers, with knowledge and experience of local conditions, were better placed in determining local matters.⁶⁹ Canberra replied that it did not want to interfere with such matters unnecessarily, but it needed to be in a position where it could give Ministers the service they expected. To do that it had to be informed about Territory matters likely to be relevant to policy proposals from the Administration or to matters involving statutory powers exercised by the Minister; had implications for other Commonwealth departments that had responsibilities in relation to the Territory; or might reasonably be expected to be raised in Parliament or be the subject of representations direct to the Minister.

In addition, there were matters in which formal action was undertaken by the Darwin Administration, but which had long-term effect on the development of the Territory. There was a need for consultation, not because Canberra officers thought they were superior in knowledge to officers in Darwin but because those officers sometimes approached matters from different standpoints. Canberra concluded that arrangements ought to be such as to enable officers in both cities to make the most effective and soundly based contributions they could.

In order to assist the Administrator in the performance of his duties the position of Assistant Administrator was created in 1956. The position was actually a renaming of the former position of Government Secretary. There had previously been a position of Deputy Administrator, established in 1931 following the reunification of North Australia and Central Australia into the Northern Territory (discussed in Chapter 3). Victor Carrington, who had occupied the position of Government Resident, Central Australia was designated as Deputy Administrator until the position was redesignated as District Officer in 1937.

The new arrangement was short-lived. In October 1959 two Assistant Administrator positions were created: one for Administration, Services and Finance; the other for Economic and Social Affairs.

The records listed below are the principal series used by the Commonwealth, in both Canberra and Darwin, in its post-war administration of the Northern Territory.

Selected records relating to post-war administration of the northern territory	
CANBERRA ADMINISTRATION	
National Archives, Canberra	
Departments of Interior/Immigration – correspondence files, 1939–50	A659
Departments of Interior/Territories – correspondence files, 1946–ongoing	A431
Department of Territories – correspondence files, 1951–75	A452
Departments of Interior/Northern Territory/Northern Australia – correspondence files, 1968–78	A1734
DARWIN ADMINISTRATION	
National Archives, Canberra	
Higher administrative arrangements, Northern Territory, division of responsibilities between Administrator and Assistant Administrator, 1958–68	A452, 1962/7985
National Archives, Darwin	
Correspondence files, 1915–78	F1
Correspondence files, 'C' (Confidential), 1946–59	F425
Correspondence files, 'S' (Secret), 1951–78	F423
Miscellaneous documents and photographs, 1870–1970	NTAC1970/8
Photographs of Northern Territory and Papua New Guinea scenes, 1950–73	F1079
Photograph albums, 1962–67	NTAC1974/33
His Honour the Administrator's official and personal correspondence files, 1943–56	F520
His Honour the Administrator's official and personal correspondence files, 1953–68	F1414
His Honour the Administrator's official and personal correspondence files, 1964–72	F1415
His Honour the Administrator's official and personal correspondence files, 1970–73	F1417
His Honour the Administrator's official and personal correspondence files, 1974–75	F1076
Assistant Administrator, delegations 1956–61	F1, 1956/1889
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Photographs relating to Administrator Arthur Robert Driver, 1946–51	NTRS292
Photograph of Administrator Frank Wise, 1951	NTRS2586
Letters and articles created by Administrator Frank Wise, 1951–56	NTRS364

Monthly reports of important happenings

In April 1929 the Minister asked the Government Resident, Central Australia in Alice Springs to begin forwarding monthly intelligence reports.⁷⁰ The reports were to contain particulars relating to all important happenings. The first report was sent in May 1929. At first only Alice Springs sent reports, not Darwin. The reports were mostly brief, usually only one or two pages. They usually recorded who visited the Centre that month, stock exports and imports, and average rainfall and temperatures. Darwin began to send monthly reports from May 1946.

In July 1947 Reg Leydin, the Acting Government Secretary in Darwin, asked the Department why the reports were required. He felt the information they contained was inconsequential. The reply advised that the reports were to provide advice in a general way so that the Department would be in possession of information concerning events in the Territory. The reports were to continue but only to record events of an important or historical nature.⁷¹

From July 1947 a single report was sent by the Administrator, based on returns sent to him by the branches within his administration. From questioning their value Leydin soon became the champion of the reports: in December 1948 he wrote to all Branches advising them that the Minister valued the reports; they were of the utmost interest and, in the years to come, they would be of great historical value.⁷²

The reports soon became quite detailed. The return for April 1954, for example, was 16 pages. They provide much information on events taking place in the Northern Territory.

The Administration continued submitting the reports until the early 1970s.

monthly reports of important happenings	
National Archives, Canberra	
Important happenings, Northern Territory – part 1, 1929–47	A431, 1947/147
Important happenings, Northern Territory – parts 2 and 3, 1947–52	A431, 1951/203 parts 1 and 2
National Archives, Darwin	
Important happenings, Alice Springs, 1939–46	F1, 1944/81
Important happenings, 1949–50	F1, 1949/44
Important happenings, 1950–51	F1, 1950/215 parts 1 and 2
Important happenings, 1951–55	F1, 1952/575
Important happenings, 1954–55	F1, 1954/102 parts 1 and 2
Important happenings, 1955–57	F1, 1955/265 parts 1 to 3
Important happenings, 1957–58	F1, 1957/1813 parts 1 and 2
Important happenings, 1959–60	F1, 1959/3038
Important happenings, 1961–62	F1, 1961/117
Important happenings, 1962	F1, 1962/491
Important happenings, 1962–63	F1, 1962/3857
Important happenings, 1963	F1, 1963/239
Important happenings, 1963–64	F1, 1963/2904

monthly reports of important happenings	
Important happenings, 1964	F1, 1964/318
Important happenings, 1965–66	F1, 1965/626
Important happenings, 1966–67	F1, 1966/1070
Important happenings, 1968–69	F1, 1968/422
Important happenings, 1968–70	F1, 1968/6063
Important happenings, 1969–70	F1, 1970/103
Welfare Branch – copies of printed monthly returns of important happenings, 1961–72	NTAC1975/44
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Lands and Survey Branch – Monthly returns of important events, 1947–68	NTRS2500, L18 parts 1 to 7
[Police] Important happening returns, 1948–56	F91
[Animal Industry Branch] Monthly return of important happenings, 1950–63	NTRS3445, 1958/760 parts 1 and 2

Administrator's annual reports

Each year the Administrator of the Northern Territory prepared a detailed report summarising the administration of the Territory over the previous 12 months. Attached to the annual reports were a series of individual reports prepared by Directors of the departments within the Administration. Copies of the reports were included in bound sets of Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers. A reference set of Administrator's Annual reports is held by the National Archives in Darwin.

The Administrator's reports provide a wide range of information about the Territory and matters affecting its administration. They also include statistical information from each department.

Conclusion

The 1950s and 1960s were a period of continued growth and expansion for the Northern Territory. The Commonwealth allocated considerable resources to the Territory knowing that it would ultimately be rewarded in its endeavours. There was a guaranteed market for the Territory's beef, following the agreement signed with the United Kingdom Government in 1952. The beef roads program encouraged expansion and greater efficiencies in the cattle industry. The mining industry began to dominate the Territory's economy as it had never done before.

For the first time in the Commonwealth era, the Northern Territory had only one Minister for a continuous period of 13 years. Paul Hasluck was the Territory's champion and he fought hard to ensure that funding was increased regularly. He was also able to ensure continuity in policy implementation.

By the early 1970s the Territory's population was increasing steadily, as was the funding allocated to its development. The mineral industry was enjoying a period of substantial growth. It seemed that the Commonwealth might finally achieve its long-term goal of closer settlement. There appeared to be no limit to the Territory's expansion but in just one night a catastrophic event would change everything.

Notes

- ¹ P F Donovan, *At the Other End of Australia: The Commonwealth and the Northern Territory, 1911–1978* (Brisbane, 1984), p. 129.
- ² NLA: MS5274, 17, 27 May 1951.
- ³ NLA: MS5274, box 38, 'Speeches – The Northern Territory'.
- ⁴ NAA: A4909, 28, Administrator of Northern Territory, 19 June 1951.
- ⁵ Melbourne *Argus*, 28 June 1951, p. 2.
- ⁶ P M Glynn, Northern Territory. Outlines of Policy, *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1914), volume II, pp. 659–76.
- ⁷ Stephen Roberts, *History of Australian Land Settlement* (New York, 1968) p. 403.
- ⁸ NAA: F20, 88, Betterment tax.
- ⁹ Australia. Board of Inquiry appointed to Inquire into the Land and Land Industries of the Northern Territory, p. 30, paragraph 157, *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1937–40), volume III, pp. 813–925.
- ¹⁰ NBAC Canberra: 119/9, Land resumptions, 7 July 1937. Martin's comments were contained in his company's response to the questionnaire issued by the Payne–Fletcher Inquiry.
- ¹¹ NAA: F1, 1948/142, British Food Mission investigations.
- ¹² NAA: A463, 1957/2946, Advisory Council on air beef transport.
- ¹³ NAA: A4905, volume 12, submission 288, Railway from Dajarra to Newcastle Waters, 17 June 1952; volume 17, submission 416, Railway from Dajarra to Newcastle Waters, 17 March 1953; volume 20, submission 564, Railway from Dajarra to Birdum, 19 October 1953.
- ¹⁴ P F Donovan, pp. 98–99.
- ¹⁵ NAA: A463, 1957/2946, Advisory Council on air beef transport, 31 January 1956.
- ¹⁶ A brief historical overview of the scheme was published by the company's chief executive, Ian H Grabowsky; *The Air Beef Scheme: A Summary* (Sydney, 1952).
- ¹⁷ NAA: A4906, volume 3, submission 95, Expert panel air transport of beef.
- ¹⁸ NAA: A463, 1957/2946, Advisory Council on air beef transport.
- ¹⁹ NAA: A987, E1005 part 5, Air beef Commonwealth air beef interim report.
- ²⁰ NAA: A452, 1957/481 part 2, Advisory panel air beef transport Northern Territory, 11 December 1957.
- ²¹ NAA: A987, E1005 part 5, Air beef Commonwealth air beef interim report.
- ²² NAA: A2700, submission 1585B, Development of meat production, 15 August 1949. The submission was approved by Cabinet on 19 August 1949.
- ²³ NAA: A461, H412/1/3, Barkly Tableland railway.
- ²⁴ NAA: AA1972/841, 12, Road transportation of cattle, trials, 1948.
- ²⁵ NTAS: F1439, 1958/482, Transport of cattle by road K Johanssen. Maddock also noted that the Kittle Brothers briefly operated a cattle trucking service from Banka Banka station (on the Barkly Tableland), from 1946; John Maddock, *The History of Road Trains in the Northern Territory, 1934–1988* (Kenthurst, 1988), pp. 35–36.
- ²⁶ NAA: F425, C22 part 1, Development of Northern Australia, 16 June 1949.
- ²⁷ NAA: A5915, submission 1111, NT development roads, August 1974.

- ²⁸ NAA: A452, 1957/481 part 1, Advisory panel air beef transport Northern Territory.
- ²⁹ NAA F1, 1951/1055 part 2, Beef transport and marketing conference, Adelaide, 1957.
- ³⁰ NAA: A452, 1957/481 part 1, Advisory panel air beef transport Northern Territory. Memo by departmental officer E J Wood, 5 May 1956.
- ³¹ NAA: A452, 1957/481 part 1, Advisory panel air beef transport Northern Territory. Hasluck's views were dated 10 February 1956; Lambert's comments were dated 30 May 1956.
- ³² NAA: F1, 1965/1737, Investigation, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, economics of road transport of beef in the NT, 8 March 1960.
- ³³ NAA: A452, 1961/27, Policy relating to development of roads in north Australia, 13 December 1960.
- ³⁴ NAA: A463, 1965/3493, Beef road development.
- ³⁵ NAA: NTAC1980/26, 1973/1296, Beef roads Northern Territory. This file contains a summary of expenditure on beef roads and developmental roads from 1954–55 to 1973–74.
- ³⁶ The 1956–59 figure is taken from Maddock's *The History of Road Trains in the Northern Territory*, p. 117; the 1973 figure is taken from NAA: NTAC1980/26, 1973/1676, Value of primary production.
- ³⁷ Darrel Lewis, *The Murrumbidgee Track: Ghost Road of the Drovers* (Rockhampton, 2007), p. 94.
- ³⁸ NTAS: NTRS2500, L25 part 2, Stock routes, 15 May 1974.
- ³⁹ NAA: M331, 163, Crown Lands Ordinance Northern Territory, 6 December 1951.
- ⁴⁰ NTAS Darwin: NTRS2500, L657 part 1, Lands Office organisation, 18 March 1959.
- ⁴¹ NAA: F1, 1951/747 part 2, Cattle industry Northern Territory; report prepared by Lionel Rose entitled 'Basic data designed to indicate value of Animal Industry Organisation in Northern Territory beef production', 14 December 1951.
- ⁴² NAA: A659, 1943/1/6124, Bores on stock routes.
- ⁴³ NAA: A659, 1943/1/6124, Bores on stock routes, 4 July 1944.
- ⁴⁴ NAA: F1, 1952/106, Stock Routes Ordinance.
- ⁴⁵ NAA: A452, 1956/1185, Movement of cattle Northern Territory.
- ⁴⁶ Australia. Board of Inquiry appointed to Inquire into the Land and Land Industries of the Northern Territory of Australia, Report, p. 24, paragraph 125.
- ⁴⁷ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, volume LXV, 1 August 1912, p. 1532.
- ⁴⁸ NAA: A431, 1946/924, Northern Territory committee regarding land administration Northern Territory, including Lands and Titles Office Darwin; Cabinet submission 38, Land Policy, Northern Territory, 18 May 1939.
- ⁴⁹ NAA: A452, 1955/642, Land Court Northern Territory, 10 January 1946.
- ⁵⁰ NAA: A452, 1955/642, Land Court Northern Territory. The letter to Queensland was dated 14 April 1949; Queensland's reply was dated 20 May 1949. The letter to South Australia was dated 20 July 1949; South Australia's reply was dated 3 November 1949.
- ⁵¹ Effectively the Pastoral Board of South Australia was designated as the Land Court of the Northern Territory.
- ⁵² NAA: F425, C27 part 3, Land Board, 24 April 1963.
- ⁵³ NAA: F1, 1958/1712, Establishment of Land Court in Northern Territory, 17 June 1959.
- ⁵⁴ NAA: A5827, volume 10/agendum 322, Northern Territory Development, 16 February 1964.

- ⁵⁵ NAA: NTAC1980/26, 1975/178, Northern Division.
- ⁵⁶ Australia. Committee of Investigation into Transport Costs in Northern Australia, Report, 1965, *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1967), volume 7, pp. 1195–388.
- ⁵⁷ NAA: NTAC1980/26, item 1973/676, Briefing notes prepared by Northern Division for Minister.
- ⁵⁸ Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory for the Years 1915–16 and 1916–19, p. 22.
- ⁵⁹ Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory for the Year ended 30th June 1932, p. 5.
- ⁶⁰ Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory for the Year ended 30th June 1934, p. 40.
- ⁶¹ NAA: A4940, C3526, Northern Territory development 1962/63, 20 July 1964.
- ⁶² Australia. *Northern Development: Progress in the Northern Territory*, statement by the Minister for Territories (Canberra, 1962).
- ⁶³ NLA: MS5274, box 38, The Northern Territory 1951–1963; Introduction, p. 77.
- ⁶⁴ NAA: E1531, 2, Development of the Northern Territory – Department of Territories.
- ⁶⁵ NLA: MS5274, box 38, The Northern Territory 1951–1963; paper number 3, 'Government Works for Beef Production' (March 1954), p. 12.
- ⁶⁶ NLA: MS5274, box 38, The Northern Territory 1951–1963; paper number 2, 'At Last She Moves' (March 1954).
- ⁶⁷ NAA: M331, 164, Cultural development Northern Territory, 17 March 1953.
- ⁶⁸ 'Doreen Braitting defends cattlemen', *Centralian Advocate*, 1 October 1964, p. 10.
- ⁶⁹ NAA: F1, 1971/2435, Sub-coastal plains occupation development licences policy, May 1968.
- ⁷⁰ NAA: A431, 1947/147, Important happenings, Northern Territory.
- ⁷¹ NAA: A431, 1951/203 part 1, Important happenings, Northern Territory.
- ⁷² NTAS: NTRS2500, L18 part 1, Monthly returns of important events.

6 Cyclone Tracy, 1974

The cyclone season in the Northern Territory extends from November to April. In that time an average of 13 cyclones may form in the Australian region. Many cause little damage and, when they pass over land, gradually degenerate into rain depressions.

The Bureau of Meteorology maintains tropical warning centres in Darwin, Brisbane and Perth. These centres monitor the development of cyclones and issue warnings as appropriate (usually a 'cyclone watch' or, in more immediate circumstances, a 'cyclone warning').

The naming of cyclones in Australia began in 1964, and for the first 12 years only female names were used. After Cyclone Tracy it was decided to alternate between male and female names.

Since 1956 the Bureau has created a case history for each cyclone containing material such as rainfall, wind and pressure readings, damage reports, press clippings, satellite photographs and copies of warnings issued. In researching a book on Northern Territory cyclones, Bureau of Meteorology staff member Kevin Murphy collected an array of secondary sources, some of which date from as early as 1839.¹ These are now held by the National Archives in Darwin.

Select records relating to the monitoring of cyclones	
National Archives, Darwin	
Bureau of Meteorology – case histories for tropical cyclones (includes notes used for K Murphy <i>Big Blow Up North</i>), 1956–ongoing	E490

The origin of Cyclone Tracy

Darwin has been directly affected by many cyclones throughout its history. Prior to Cyclone Tracy, however, there were only two occasions when cyclones caused substantial damage to the city – in 1897 and again in 1937.

The 1974 cyclone season began with Cyclone Selma in early December. Selma came within 55 kilometres of Darwin before turning away.

On 22 December 1974 the Bureau of Meteorology observed a tropical depression forming in the Arafura Sea, about 700 kilometres north of Darwin. The depression was moving slowly in a south-westerly direction. By late evening the next day it had intensified, and wind speeds had increased to more than 63 kilometres per hour, thus warranting the system's upgrade to the status of a cyclone. The Bureau gave it the name 'Tracy'.

A series of four cyclone watches was issued, commencing on 21 December. In turn, these were followed by a series of warnings between 22 and 24 December.

Tracy continued to move in a south-westerly direction, and while closely monitored it did not appear to pose a major threat as it was assumed that it would pass well to the north of Darwin.²

On the morning of Christmas Eve, however, Tracy passed the western tip of Bathurst Island, north-west of Darwin. As it did so it swung round, gathered speed, and headed directly towards Darwin.

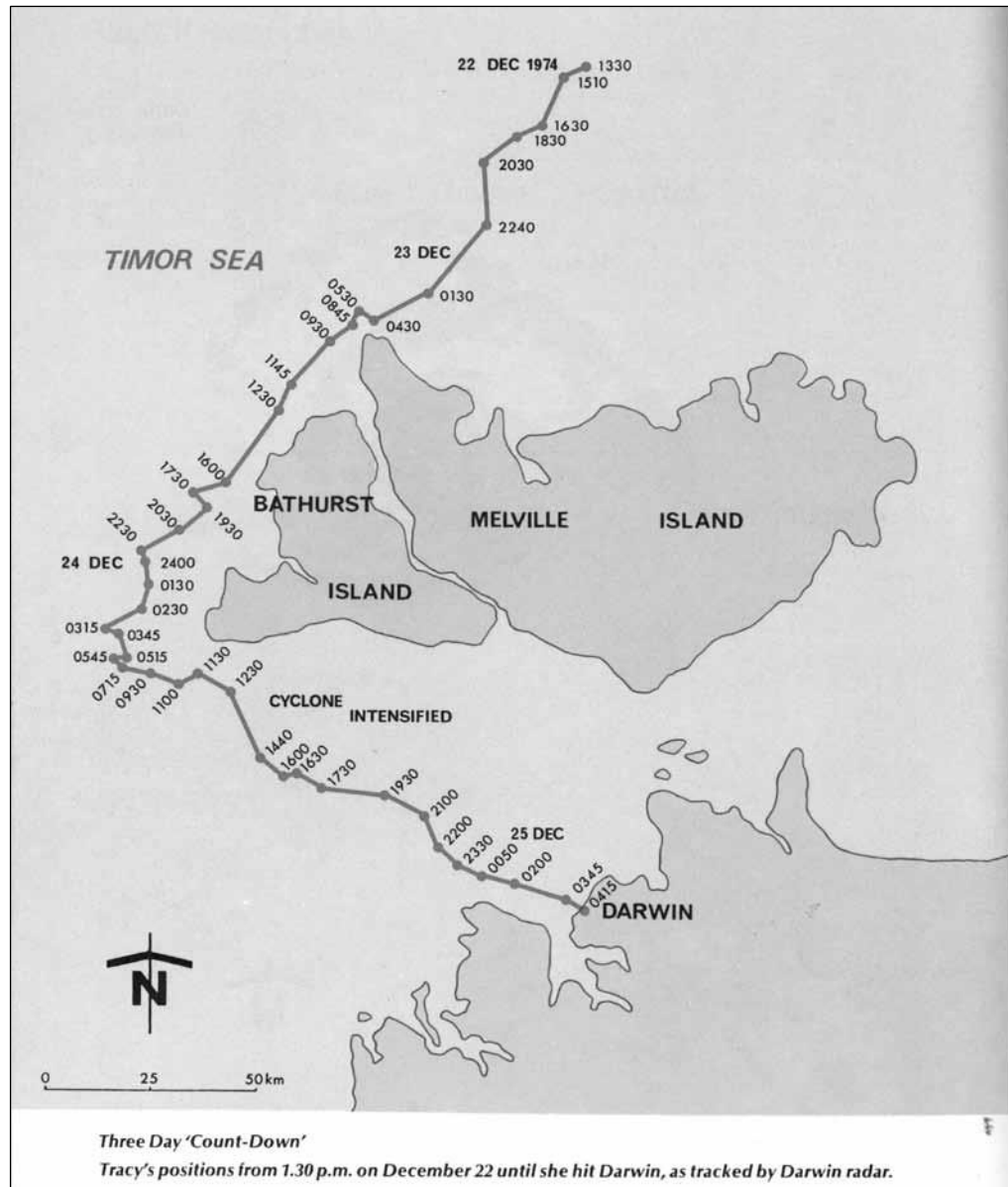


Image 18. A map showing Cyclone Tracy's path to Darwin in late December, 1974.
Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers (1976), vol. 3, paper 4, p. 10

The Bureau of Meteorology then issued a cyclone flash warning, followed by a series of flash warnings through the media, predicting that the cyclone would pass through Darwin early on Christmas morning. It would be accompanied by very strong winds likely to result in property damage. Yet no-one could have foreseen the level of destruction that was soon to occur.

The long night – 24 December 1974

By the evening of 24 December the rain was steady and the winds were strong. At midnight the cyclone was 25 kilometres north-west of Darwin and moving at eight kilometres per hour. Soon the first part of the cyclone reached Darwin's northern suburbs. The winds dramatically increased in strength and the rain was torrential. At 3.05 am the anemometer at Darwin airport registered wind speeds of 217 kilometres per hour before it broke. Unofficial estimates suggest wind speeds may have reached 300 kilometres per hour. At approximately 4.00 am the eye of the cyclone passed directly over the airport and northern suburbs. For a few minutes all was quiet.

The second half of the cyclone then passed. The winds returned from the opposite direction and were stronger than before. Many buildings already weakened disintegrated completely, accompanied by the sounds of flying debris and breaking glass. Families huddled in their homes seeking whatever protection they could find as their homes broke up around them.

By 7.00 am the cyclone had passed. In its wake much of the northern parts of Darwin were destroyed. Forty-nine people died in the city and another 16 were lost at sea. More were reported missing and many more injured. A total of 255 mm of rain had fallen throughout the night. In all, 70 per cent of the city's homes were destroyed or suffered severe structural damage. All services – communications, power, water and sewerage were severed.³ There was the added fear, which persisted for several days, that Tracy might return and cause further destruction.

Selected records relating to cyclone Tracy's impact on Darwin		
National Archives, Canberra		
Natural Disasters Organisation – telephone logs kept by the Darwin unit following Cyclone Tracy, 1974–75		AA1980/148
National Archives, Sydney		
Films of the Darwin cyclone disaster, 1974–75		C1968
Colour slides of Darwin in the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy, 1974–75		C1990
Tape recordings of ABC news reports, emergency warnings and programs relating to Darwin cyclone disaster, 1974–75 (<i>copy held in Darwin</i>)		C3213
Photographs of Darwin following Cyclone Tracy, 1974–75		SP1378/2
Magazine and newspaper issues relating to the Darwin cyclone disaster, 1974–75		SP1378/4
Department press releases relating to the Darwin cyclone disaster, 1974–75		SP1378/5
Transcripts of ABC radio reports relating to Darwin and Cyclone Tracy, 1974–75 (<i>copy held in Darwin</i>)		SP1378/7
Telexes from the ABC, Navy, and Army relating to the Darwin and Cyclone Tracy, 1974–75		SP1378/8
Report of Department of Foreign Affairs detailing contact with the Thai, Chinese and Indian Governments following Cyclone Tracy, 1974–75		SP1378/9
Bundle of reports, circulars and radio announcements from the Department of Education relating to Darwin and Cyclone Tracy, 1974–75		SP1378/10
Press clippings relating to the Cyclone Tracy disaster in Darwin, 1974–75		SP1378/11
National Archives, Darwin		
Tropical cyclone flash warning 18, 24 December 1974		E490, CTM1/163
Office of Administrator – Cyclone Tracy messages of condolence, 1974–75		F1076, 1975/1
Office of Administrator – Cyclone Tracy general, 1974–75		F1076, 1975/5
Northern Territory Archives Service		
Files relating to the identification of deceased persons after Cyclone Tracy, 1974–75		NTRS3001
Police administration files relating to Cyclone Tracy, 1974–75		NTRS3002



Image 19. Parer Drive in the Darwin suburb of Moil was devastated by Cyclone Tracy, 1974.
NAA: E1609, 119

Evacuation and access to the city

The failure of communications meant that it was several hours before word of the disaster reached southern cities. Major-General Alan Stretton, Director-General of the recently created Natural Disasters Organisation, was placed in charge of rescue operations. He arrived in Darwin late on Christmas Night, accompanied by Rex Patterson, Minister for the Northern Territory, and remained until 31 December.

At the time of the disaster, Darwin's population was approximately 48,000. With essential services severed, the possibility of the spread of disease, and shortages of food and shelter, it was quickly decided that a sizeable part of the population would have to be evacuated. A priority system was established based on the principle 'women and children first'.

While approximately 10,000 people left by road, others were evacuated by aircraft. The airlift began on Boxing Day, and over the next six days more than 25,000 people were evacuated. The Department of Social Security had primary responsibility for coordinating reception and accommodation arrangements for evacuees once they had arrived in southern cities.



Image 20. Most of the population was evacuated from Darwin in the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy, 1974. NAA: A6180, 7/1/75/54

All persons evacuated from the city received a two-week special benefits allowance of \$31 per week, plus \$5.50 per child to meet immediate urgent financial needs for daily living. The benefits were administered by the Department of Social Security.

In just a few days Darwin's population was reduced to little more than 10,000. Once the evacuation had been completed, access into and out of the city was regulated through a permit system which remained in place for the next six months.

Selected records relating to the evacuation of residents from Darwin and permit System

National Archives, Melbourne

Department of Social Security – Ledger cards for Darwin Cyclone Tracy evacuees, 1975–77 B3410

Department of Social Security – Register of identification cards issued by the Darwin Assistance Centre to persons evacuated from Darwin to Victoria, 1975 B3411

Department of Social Security – Special benefit case files for Darwin Cyclone Tracy evacuees, 1975–77 B3413

Department of Social Security – Basic data sheets on Darwin Cyclone Tracy evacuees arriving in Melbourne, 1975 B3414

National Archives, Darwin

Department of Social Security – correspondence files relating to Cyclone Tracy, 1974–75 E507

Department of Social Security – Lists relating to Darwin evacuees post-Cyclone Tracy, 1974–75 (*microfiche copy held as E1095*) E1487

Applications for travel warrants and re-entry permits as a result of Cyclone Tracy, 1975 E1597

Selected records relating to the evacuation of residents from Darwin and permit system		
National Archives, Darwin		
Entry permits and <i>Northern Territory News</i> lists, 1975–78		E1613
Record of entry to and departure from Darwin and permits to re-enter controlled areas, 1975		NTAC1980/73
Darwin entry permits – policy and procedure, 1975		F1, 1975/821
Cyclone Tracy re-entry permits, 1975		F1076, 1975/34
Cyclone Tracy missing persons, 1975–76		F1076, 1975/44
Northern Territory Archives Service		
Lists of evacuees after Cyclone Tracy, 1974–75		NTRS2977
Lists of persons departing Darwin by road after Cyclone Tracy, 1974–75		NTRS2980
Telex messages regarding entry permits to Darwin, 1974–75		NTRS2988

Rescue operations and clean-up

To assist with the clean-up of the city the Defence forces were mobilised. Naval personnel were recalled late on Christmas Day (most vessels being docked at Garden Island in Sydney at the time). The first vessel, HMAS *Brisbane*, arrived in Darwin on New Year's Eve. Naval staff quickly set about clearing streets of debris and repairing damaged houses. They were later assisted by Army personnel.

Army officers from the Northern Territory Special Projects Branch undertook surveys of the extent of building damage. They determined which facilities were still usable and which needed to be destroyed.

The Government hired the vessel *Patris* from the Chandris line and moored it in Darwin Harbour until 14 November 1975. In the ensuing months 5,500 people were provided with accommodation on the ship.

Selected records relating to the clean-up of Darwin after cyclone Tracy		
National Archives, Sydney		
Australia Post – records relating to Cyclone Tracy, 1974–76		D5103
Summary of the role of the Australian Post Office in Darwin following Cyclone Tracy, 1975		SP1378/6
National Archives, Brisbane		
Public Service Board, Northern Territory – Correspondence files, 1969–87 (<i>Portion of series also held in Darwin</i>)		E359
National Archives, Darwin		
Public Service Board, Northern Territory – Correspondence files, 1969–87 (<i>Portion of series also held in Brisbane</i>)		E359
Relief Trust Fund – correspondence – MV <i>Patris</i> , 1975		E1399
Correspondence accumulated by Ray McHenry, Director of Emergency Services, during the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy, 1974–75		E1593
Army records relating to activity following Cyclone Tracy, 1974–75		E1607
Surveys of storage accommodation and warehouses drawn up after Cyclone Tracy, 1975		E1592

Financial relief and compensation

The destruction caused by Cyclone Tracy and the consequential dislocation of families resulted in financial hardship for many people. A number of people who had lost their homes were under-insured or not insured at all. The Government introduced a number of supportive measures while assuring the people of Darwin that compensation would also be paid for deaths, injury and loss of property.

The Department of Repatriation and Compensation was given the responsibility for conducting a survey of the extent of the Darwin community's losses in terms of property and personal injury. Survey forms were distributed in January 1975 covering damage to dwellings and business premises; damage to household goods and other personal possessions, including motor vehicles, caravans and boats; damage to equipment, livestock, crops and other items; insurance coverage; and details of non-fatal injuries. Questionnaires were completed by 10,419 persons and 1,830 businesses. It was estimated that total losses amounted to \$187 million, and of this amount \$89 million was uninsured.

The Government introduced a series of financial assistance measures through the *Darwin Cyclone Damage Compensation Act 1975*. The Act was designed to compensate people for loss and damage on insured property up to 50 per cent of its value at the time of the cyclone.

Upper limits were set as follows:

- \$25,000 for dwellings;
- \$5,000 for household and personal effects;
- \$25,000 for business premises; and
- \$25,000 for other business items.

Various items of furniture were given a set value for payment of compensation as well.

Applicants were encouraged to lodge their claims by 30 September 1975. More than 12,000 household claims and almost 1,600 business claims were processed, and just under \$26 million was paid in compensation. Most claims were settled by June 1976.⁴

Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund

Following the disaster there were nationwide appeals encouraging Australians to donate money and goods to assist the people of Darwin. Cabinet decided that donations and offers of overseas assistance would be channelled through arrangements developed by the Minister for the Northern Territory.⁵

The Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund was established by trust deed in January 1975 with Minister Rex Patterson as Chairman. Other members of the Fund included various Territory identities: Jock Nelson, Harold Brennan, Paul Everingham, Ella Stack, John O'Loughlin, Graham Bence, John McDonnell, Frank Trainer, Ted Robertson, Alan Walker, Alec Lim, and Bernard Valadian.

The Commonwealth covered the Fund's administrative costs, but it received no other financial support. The Fund used donations from private sources to provide immediate financial assistance to the people of Darwin.

Benefits were distributed as follows:

- \$10,000 to women who had lost their husbands, plus \$1,000 per child under sixteen;
- \$5,000 to men who had lost their wives;
- \$2,500 to parents who lost a child; and
- special grants of \$200 for each person who was receiving the old-age pension.

The Fund was also involved in an advisory capacity with the sponsoring of projects for the benefit of Darwin groups affected by the cyclone. For example, it gave advice on provision of facilities for aged persons, development of out-of-school activities for children, rehabilitation of holiday camps, provision of educational and recreational equipment, and assistance to handicapped persons.

The Fund received and distributed more than \$8 million before being formally wound up in October 1976.

Darwin Disaster Welfare Council

On 4 January 1975 a group of Darwin residents voted to form the Interim Darwin Disaster Welfare Committee to provide an ongoing coordination point for voluntary agencies during the recovery period. Its terms of reference were to examine the welfare needs of cyclone affected families, and to give an indication of where those needs existed to relevant authorities; support and supplement existing government and voluntary agencies meeting these needs; and provide a final report on the operation of the Committee for use in other national disasters. A similar committee had operated in Brisbane following floods in January 1974.

The Committee anticipated that it would exist for 12 months and sought funding from the Commonwealth for administrative support, which was approved and funding of \$62,000 was provided shortly after. From 11 February 1975 the Committee was known as the Darwin Disaster Welfare Council.

The Council was incorporated with a constitution, General Council and Management Committee, a Welfare Rights Committee, and a Report Committee. The Welfare Rights Committee acted as a sounding board for the Welfare Rights Officer. The sole condition imposed by the Minister for Social Security, Bill Hayden, when approving funding for the Council, was that a Welfare Rights Officer be appointed. The role of the Welfare Rights Officer was to receive complaints, queries and requests for information relating to Darwin residents entitlements. The Report Committee had responsibility for developing an evaluative report analysing the actions of the Council with a view to welfare coordination in future disasters in the context of the National Disaster Plan.

The Council's final meeting was held on 31 March 1976 and it ceased to function with effect from 30 April 1976. Its report was presented in March 1976. There were a number of recommendations concerning funding for future disasters and studies of the effects of disasters on communities. Most important, the report recommended that large-scale evacuation of people only proceed in the most extreme of cases and encouragement be given to the movement of families as a social unit.⁶

Selected records relating to compensation and welfare following cyclone Tracy		
National Archives, Canberra		
Darwin disaster 1974 insurance implications, 1974–76		A571, 1975/351 parts 1 to 3
National Archives, Melbourne		
Department of Social Security – correspondence files regarding Darwin Cyclone Tracy relief, 1975–77		B3404
Department of Social Security – special benefit case files for Darwin Cyclone Tracy evacuees, 1975–77		B3413
Department of Social Security – working papers relating to Darwin Cyclone Tracy relief, 1975–77		B3415
Department of Social Security – (1) Register for correspondence files relating to Darwin Cyclone Tracy relief – (2) List of community and social welfare files relating to Cyclone Tracy disaster, 1975		B3416
National Archives, Perth		
Department of Social Security – special benefits claim forms – Darwin evacuation – Cyclone Tracy, 1974–75		PT1702/1
National Archives, Darwin		
Relief Trust Fund – Correspondence files, 1975–76		E1604
Darwin Disaster Welfare Council, 1975–77		F1, 1975/787
Cyclone Tracy Darwin Relief Trust Fund, 1975–76		F1076, 1975/45
Darwin Disaster Welfare Council correspondence, constitution, rules and regulations, 1975–76		NTAC1982/34, 174
Darwin Disaster Welfare Council minutes of meetings, 1975–76		NTAC1982/34, 176

Rebuilding the city

In the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy there were arguments on whether Darwin should be rebuilt at all, or rebuilt further inland, or just abandoned. The decision was quickly made to rebuild the city in the same location.

Darwin Reconstruction Commission

On 30 December 1974 Cabinet approved the establishment of a statutory authority to be known as the Darwin Reconstruction Commission with a five-year life to plan, coordinate and undertake the task of rebuilding the city. Legislation would be drafted and introduced into Parliament in the following autumn session.⁷ Pending passage of the legislation, an interim commission was appointed under the chairmanship of industrialist Leslie Thiess.

The Interim Commission first met on 6 January 1975 and agreed to the preparation of a new planning scheme to be used as the basis for rebuilding Darwin.

The Darwin Reconstruction Commission was formally established on 28 February 1975 when the Darwin Reconstruction Act received Royal Assent. The Commission comprised eight members: Anthony Powell (Chairman), Alan O'Brien (Deputy Chairman), Goff Letts, Ella Stack, Carl Allridge, Alan Reiher, P L Till, and Martyn Finger.

The functions of the Commission were to:

- help the government determine the desirable extent, nature and purpose of the use and development of the Darwin area;
- plan for the development, construction and land use in Darwin, and recommend to the Minister general planning and development schemes for the Darwin area;
- carry out and supervise development and construction in the Darwin area;
- advise the government on public and private expenditure and coordination of expenditure relating to development and construction in Darwin; and
- provide, arrange, coordinate and control the provision of works, services, facilities and public utilities in the Darwin area.

In the early stages the Commission worked in conjunction with the Cities Commission, a small Commonwealth agency established in 1973 to coordinate the establishment and redevelopment of new cities. The Cities Commission produced a revised town plan for Darwin in papers entitled 'Planning Options for Future Darwin' and the 'Darwin Planning Guidelines'.⁸ The Commission recommended a balance between conflicting views of rebuilding in the same manner before the cyclone, compared with a redesigned new city better than the old. The plan caused consternation among some Darwin residents, who felt that the planners overlooked the emotional investment of people in their own blocks of land.⁹

Selected records of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission		
National Archives, Canberra		
Department of Northern Australia – Correspondence files and reports relating to Darwin Cyclone Tracy, 1975–79		A8100
National Archives, Sydney		
Publications of Department of Housing and Construction for the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, 1974–75		SP1378/3
National Archives, Darwin		
Correspondence files, 1975–77		E171
Job files relating to work carried out on behalf of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, 1975–77		E329
Photographs of lots of Darwin taken after Cyclone Tracy, 1975–77		E610
Darwin post Cyclone Tracy building condition survey, 1975–76		E953
Structural report on hotels, motels, and boarding houses in Darwin compiled after Cyclone Tracy, 1975		E1590
Miscellaneous photographs of Darwin after Cyclone Tracy, 1975–77		E1609
Historical records relating to the rebuild of Darwin after Cyclone Tracy, 1975–77		E1614
Correspondence with Darwin Reconstruction Committee, 1975–77		F1076, 1975/31
Minutes of meetings, agenda, decisions and correspondence, 1975–78		NTAC1980/420
Miscellaneous records accumulated by Mr F Dwyer in his capacity as Deputy Chairman of the Commission, 1975–77		NTAC1984/271

Over the next three years, the Commission let contracts worth more than \$150 million and coordinated the construction and repair of more than 2,500 homes as well as other construction projects. The Commission wound up on 12 April 1978, by which time it had built 1,812 new houses, restored 425 houses, built 141 new flats, and restored 128 flats. It had also built 360 home units for the Department of Defence.¹⁰

Darwin Citizens' Council

In accordance with section 45 of the Darwin Reconstruction Act, the Commission was obliged to establish a Darwin Citizens' Council, the primary function of which was to liaise with the Darwin community and advise the Commission on community views and attitudes. This was consistent with the Government's policy in establishing development corporations in new growth centres. The Council was to consist of more than 20 residents.

The Council held its first meeting, under chair Lyn Reid, on 20 May 1975. The final meeting was held on 31 December 1977.

recordS relating to the darwin citizenS' council

National Archives, Darwin

Minutes of meetings, agenda, decisions and correspondence, 1975–78 NTAC1980/420

Darwin Citizens' Council, 1975–77 NTAC1980/420, 145

After Tracy

In the aftermath of Tracy many valuable lessons were learned. There was the need for better preparation and organisation in the event of a cyclone warning, the need for better quality buildings to lessen the impact of a cyclone, and better communications with southern cities. All of these have improved substantially over the past 35 years.

In September 1975 the Administrator established the Northern Territory Disaster Council to advise on policy matters in any future emergency or natural disaster. The Council comprised representatives from the Legislative Assembly and various government and civic agencies, and held its first meeting on 19 September 1975. One of its initial functions was to select shelters for the population in the event of a future cyclone. The National Archives' facility at Nightcliff, which had only recently been completed, was designated as one of these shelters.¹¹

In the years following Tracy there have been a number of destructive cyclones including Max in March 1981, Gretel in April 1985, Ingrid in March 2005, and Monica in April 2006. Max and Gretel hit Darwin directly but were not of sufficient force to cause much damage; Ingrid and Monica were much more intense and more destructive, but they did not have a direct impact on Darwin.

Except in the area of rainfall, no cyclone has since had the impact of Cyclone Tracy. The daily total of 255 mm of rain recorded with Tracy was exceeded by Tropical Cyclone Rachel on 3 January 1997 (290.4 mm), and again by Tropical Cyclone Carlos on 15 February 2011 (367.6 mm). Tracy's rainfall, however, was mainly horizontal and may not have been fully recorded.

Notes

- ¹ Published in 1984 under the title *Big Blow Up North*.
- ² ABC radio broadcasts on 22 and 23 December reported Tracy in this way. NAA: SP1378/7, Transcripts of ABC radio reports regarding Darwin and Cyclone.
- ³ Report by the Director-General Natural Disasters Organisation on the Darwin Relief Operations, 25 December 1974 – 3 January 1975; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1975), volume 1, paper 21.
- ⁴ *Darwin Cyclone Damage Compensation Act 1975*, Report for Period 31 May to 30 June 1975, pp. 2–3; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1975), volume 1, paper 20; Report for the Year ended 30 June 1976, pp. 1–2; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1976), volume 3, paper 1.
- ⁵ NAA: A5925, Cabinet decision 3089, Cyclone Tracy overseas offers of assistance, 30 December 1974.
- ⁶ Darwin Disaster Welfare Council Final Report, 1976, p. v, recommendation 4(a); *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1976), volume 3, paper 3.
- ⁷ NAA: A5915, submission 1519, Reconstruction of the city of Darwin; decision 3092, 1974.
- ⁸ Planning Options for Future Darwin, 17 January 1975; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1975), volume 10, paper 15; Darwin Planning Guidelines, 4 March 1975; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1975), volume 10, paper 14.
- ⁹ Darwin Disaster Welfare Council Final Report, March 1976, p. 19; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1976), volume 3, paper 3.
- ¹⁰ Darwin Reconstruction Commission Final Report, 1979, p. 15; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1976), volume 18, paper 354.
- ¹¹ NAA: F1076, 1975/101, Northern Territory Disaster Council, 1975–78.

7 The Road to Self-Government

The Commonwealth's administration of the Northern Territory was often marked by frustration and resentment on both sides. Territory residents were resentful that they lost their right to electoral franchise in 1911, had little involvement in decision making in Territory affairs, and had no control over its finances. The Commonwealth was concerned that the Territory's small population, when compared with the States, would give their parliamentary representatives disproportionate advantages over representatives from the States. The Commonwealth was also concerned that it was making significant contributions to the Territory's finances and therefore should, by right, have a key voice in how that money was being spent.

Electoral franchise and Territorians

From 1863 until 1911 Northern Territory residents had the same voting rights for representatives in the South Australian Parliament as did South Australian residents. The South Australian *Northern Territory Representation Act 1888* determined that the Territory was a separate electorate entitled to two members in the colony's House of Assembly. This status enabled Territory residents to qualify as South Australian voters in elections for Commonwealth Parliaments after Federation in 1901. Territorians voted for the six Senators returned from South Australia, and from 1903 the Territory was included in the House of Representatives division of Grey.

The transfer of the Northern Territory to the Commonwealth in 1911, however, altered the voting rights of Territory residents and, for a time, deprived them of parliamentary representation. The Commonwealth Constitution did not allow for Federal electorates to cross State borders, and national governments shied away from the circumstance of a very small number of Territory electors (total non-Aboriginal population of 3,271 in 1911) who, hypothetically, could hold the balance of power in the House of Representatives. The Senate was elected on a state-wide basis and the Constitution contained no provision for the return of Senators from territories.

The North Australian Workers' Union and its leader Harold Nelson would soon use the loss of franchise as a tool in its agitation against the Commonwealth and the Administrator, John Gilruth. The cry of 'no taxation without representation' was part of their campaign of civil unrest ultimately leading to the 'Darwin Rebellion' in December 1918, and Gilruth's departure from Darwin the following February, and the forced exit of three leading officials eight months later (see Chapter 2).

In his 1920 report on the administration of the Northern Territory, Royal Commissioner Ewing wrote that the Territory's citizens had to obey laws that affected them, but they had no part in the making of those laws.¹

Continuing unrest eventually forced the Commonwealth to address the issue of the Territory's electoral representation in the Parliament. In the first decade of Commonwealth administration, the Territory's population had increased to only 3,572, so full representation was essentially not an issue. The *Northern Territory Representation Act 1922* created a seat for the Territory in the House of Representatives, but the member had only a limited role. There was provision for the member to speak for or against matters discussed in the House, but the legislation made it clear that he or she was not entitled to a vote in the chamber. The Territory's first member was union leader Harold Nelson, who was elected in late 1922.

Possession of a 'parliamentary eunuch' failed to satisfy Territory residents, but change came slowly. In 1936 there was a slight improvement when the Territory's Member of the House of Representatives was given the right to vote on motions for the disallowance of Northern Territory Ordinances, but not on other matters. In 1959, following the acceptance by Cabinet of a proposal from Minister Paul Hasluck, this was extended to permit the member to vote on any proposed law which related to the Territory.² A similar extension was given to the elected member from the Australian Capital Territory. Nine years later, in 1968, the elected representatives for the two Territories were awarded the full voting rights available to all members of the House of Representatives.

Further change was to occur. In 1974 Parliament amended the electoral law to allow the territories two seats each in the Senate. Bernie Kilgariff and Ted Robertson, the Northern Territory's first two Senators, took their places in the Senate after the 1975 double dissolution election. An amendment to the Constitution approved in 1977 gave the territories the entitlement to vote in Commonwealth referendums. Then in 2000 the population of the Northern Territory reached the level where a second seat in the House of Representatives was warranted. The redistribution saw the creation of the new electorates of Lingiari, named after Vincent Lingiari, who led the 1966 Wave Hill 'walk-off', and Solomon, named for Vaiben Louis Solomon, a Territory representative in the South Australian Parliament between 1890 and 1908 and South Australia's Minister for the Northern Territory in 1899.

Creation of the Legislative Council, 1947

While the introduction of electoral representation in the Commonwealth Parliament from 1922 addressed some concerns, others remained. There was resentment over the Territory's control from the national capital, and for many years Territory residents expressed their desire for greater autonomy. There were calls for the creation of a Legislative Council, similar to that which existed in the Commonwealth's territory of Papua.

In 1915 Atlee Hunt, Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, which then administered the Territory, sent a submission to his Minister Hugh Mahon which gave three options: an advisory board, a Legislative Council, or representation in the Federal Parliament. Mahon told Hunt there was no hurry to arrive at a final decision, and with the distraction of World War I, the matter simply lapsed.³

On 19 March 1930 Government Resident for Northern Australia Robert Weddell (later Administrator until 1937) recommended the creation of an Executive Council and a Legislative Council for the Territory.⁴ Weddell's proposal called for an Executive Council of nine officials, who would be appointed by recommendation of the Administrator and approved by the Governor-General. The Legislative Council would have 16 elected members who would have the power to issue ordinances and regulations on what were effectively 'State' matters, with the Governor-General retaining the power of veto. The Department of Home Affairs, which administered the Territory at the time, rejected the proposal.

In November 1930 Parliament debated the legislation to abolish the North Australia Commission and re-create the Northern Territory as a single territory. Harold Nelson, the Territory's Parliamentary representative, again called for the establishment of a Legislative Council.⁵ The legislation was amended by the House of Representatives to allow for such a Council, but it was rejected in the Senate, due to lobbying by pastoral interests in the Territory.

In his Annual Report for 1943–44, the Administrator, Aubrey Abbott, felt that Territory residents should have some representation in Territory affairs. He too recommended the establishment of a Legislative Council with nine elected members and nine official members. Under Abbott's proposal, the Administrator (rather than the Governor-General) would have the power to veto ordinances.⁶ The matter was deferred pending the withdrawal of the military from the Territory after the war.

Herbert Johnson, the Minister for the Interior, took a submission to Cabinet seeking its support for the creation of a Council comprising the Administrator, seven official members nominated by the Administrator and appointed by the Governor-General, and six elected members, two from Darwin, and the remainder from outside Darwin. The Council would have the power to make ordinances for the peace, order and good government of the Territory. Much to Johnson's chagrin, Cabinet approved the creation of an Advisory Council instead, the implication being that it would have no legislative powers.⁷

Johnson prepared a second submission on the matter, arguing that the basis for his earlier proposal was the establishment of a body with legislative powers, similar to bodies in Papua and New Guinea. He noted that Territory residents had been agitating for some years for some form of local government. Cabinet amended its earlier decision and gave its approval for the creation of a Legislative Council in October 1946.⁸

Legislation to create the Legislative Council, the *Northern Territory (Administration) Act 1947*, came into effect on 12 June 1947. The Council comprised the Administrator, seven official (or government) members, and six elected members. It held its first meeting on 16–17 February 1948.

Selected records relating to establishment of the northern territory legislative council

National Archives, Canberra

Legislative Council for the Northern Territory, 2 August 1946	A2700, 1224
Legislative Council for the Northern Territory, 23 October 1946	A2700, 1224A
Legislative Council Northern Territory – election, 1947–48	A406, E1947/1162
Administration of Northern Territory Legislative Council, 1947–63	A1658, 756/2/7 part 1

National Archives, Darwin

Proposed establishment of a Legislative Council in the Northern Territory, 1946–49	F1, 1946/609
Legislative Council sittings, 1948	F1, 1948/125
Northern Territory Legislative Council, 1948–50	F1, 1948/188 parts 1 and 2
History of the Northern Territory Legislative Council, 1967	F1, 1973/7417

Road to self-government

The creation of the Legislative Council did not stem the call for greater autonomy. Some Council members were aggrieved that they could pass ordinances, which were endorsed by the Administrator, but which could still be rejected by the Governor-General without any consultation. Council membership was also dominated by Commonwealth officials who would, on most occasions, vote in support of government policy. This caused friction with elected members who often voted against government policies.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Council members frequently lobbied the Commonwealth for change. From their perspective there were essentially three key issues: greater electoral representation in the Commonwealth Parliament, greater autonomy for the Legislative Council, and greater control over the Territory's finances. The Commonwealth had two principal objections to the proposed changes. First there was the fact that the Northern Territory's electorate was quite small when compared with electorates in the States, and second, the Commonwealth was providing the majority of the Territory's finances, and was reluctant to surrender control over them.

On 3 April 1957 the Legislative Council created a committee to assess means of achieving greater measures of self-government. The committee reported to the Legislative Council in October 1957, arguing that the Territory's Member of Parliament should be given full voting rights and that the Northern Territory should be represented in the Senate. The report also called for the creation of an Executive Council comprising the Administrator, three official members, and three unofficial members⁹ which would have some measure of control over the Territory's affairs and its finances.

A meeting between Government members and Council members to discuss the proposals took place on 24–25 July 1958. The Commonwealth's principal difficulty with the Committee's proposals was the smallness of the Territory's population and its inability to meet the expenditure necessary to maintain public services. The proposal for full voting rights for the Territory's member was rejected, but the compromise was to allow the Territory's Member a vote on matters relating solely or principally to the Territory. The suggestion regarding Senate representation was rejected.

As the responsible Minister, Paul Hasluck referred the matter to Cabinet in January 1959.¹⁰ Rather than create an Executive Council, however, Cabinet agreed to create an Administrator's Council which would advise on any matter referred to it by the Administrator. The Council comprised the Administrator, the Assistant Administrator, one official member and three non-official members from the Legislative Council. It held its first meeting on 11 May 1960.

The revised composition of the Legislative Council was also approved, meaning that official members were now in a minority. Cabinet noted that 'although the Administrator could be defeated in the Legislative Council, the Commonwealth Parliament has an undoubted reserve power available to it at all times'.¹¹

As noted previously, the House of Representatives member gained the power to vote on laws relating to the Northern Territory.

Selected records relating to the administrator's council, from 1977 executive council

National Archives, Darwin

Volumes of agenda and rules of procedure, 1960–76	F1412
Correspondence files, 1974–78	F1451
Deferred agenda items now considered 'dead' issues, 1975–77	F1453

Council members were not satisfied and pressed for further changes. In 1961 they called for another conference which took place on 9 October. The meeting discussed a range of issues, including identification of a set of 'local' matters whereby ordinances assented to by the Administrator would not be disallowed; dedicated funding for Territory purposes; creation of an Executive Council which would have executive authority in 'local' functions; increased voting rights for the Territory's Member of

Parliament; and representation in the Senate. Hasluck was willing to discuss the issues further and prepared a submission for Cabinet, but the matter lapsed when the 1961 general election intervened.¹²

In February 1963 the Legislative Council appointed another committee, which in turn produced another report arguing for political change. The 'Report from the Select Committee on Political Rights' was presented on 1 June 1963. Its recommendations were similar to those made previously.¹³ Hasluck again referred the matter to Cabinet which in turn appointed an Interdepartmental Committee to consider the issues further.

The Interdepartmental Committee felt that if the Territory was to be granted local autonomy the process should begin with the transfer of municipal functions to local government bodies in townships of sufficient size, so that there would be similar arrangements to those then existing in Darwin. Charles Barnes, who replaced Hasluck as the Minister responsible for the Territory in 1963, suggested that the Government would be prepared to consider requests for the transfer of functions undertaken by the Commonwealth to local governments or to specially constituted boards or commissions. He noted that there were difficulties in meeting some of the Legislative Council's demands, based on the concerns expressed previously – the Territory's small population and the amount of current expenditure provided by the Commonwealth when compared with locally raised revenue. Barnes felt that the Commonwealth should ensure greater public awareness that it was these matters, and not just unwillingness on its part, that prevented further constitutional progress in the Territory.¹⁴

From 1964 the Commonwealth began to relax its stance. It decided that Territorial involvement in executive decision making should be encouraged through the expansion of local government and through the establishment of statutory authorities, including the Housing Commission, Port Authority, Reserves Board, Tourist Board, and the Museums and Art Galleries Board.

On 11 May 1965 the Government agreed to the withdrawal of the Administrator from the Legislative Council, both as President and member, and thereafter the President would be elected by Council members. In 1968 the composition of the Council was amended so that it would consist of 19 members; six official and 11 elected.

Territory Day, 1 July 1978

As the 1970s opened, Territorians pressed on towards the goal of self-government. In 1970 Cabinet agreed to a joint study on Northern Territory political and administrative arrangements. It did, however, caution that 'so long as the Commonwealth is providing the bulk of the funds involved it must retain control of decisions as to how and where this money is to be spent'.¹⁵

In October 1972 Ralph Hunt, the Minister with responsibility for the Territory, submitted a report to Parliament entitled 'Outline of Proposals for the Transfer of a Range of Functions to the Northern Territory Legislature and Executive'.¹⁶ The document proposed that a range of 'State' type functions be handed over to the Territory. This lapsed with the change of government in December 1972.

The new Labor Government was committed to self-government in the Territory, and in February 1973 Keppel Enderby, the incoming Minister for the Northern Territory, sought Cabinet's support for the appointment of a Joint Committee which would examine a range of issues including self-government and constitutional development. Enderby was particularly keen on 'developing new policy initiatives to meet the unique problems involved with administering a vast, underdeveloped, underpopulated, but rapidly changing region'.¹⁷

Cabinet approved Enderby's recommendation. In November 1974, the Committee presented a 'Report on the Constitutional Development in the Northern Territory', recommending the creation of a Legislative Assembly comprising 19 members, all of whom would be elected.¹⁸ The Assembly would have the power to legislate with respect to 'State' type functions such as health, education, land, mining and local government, but the Governor-General would still have overriding power. The Government accepted the recommendations, and in October 1974 the Legislative Council was re-created as the Legislative Assembly with 19 members, all of whom were elected.

As part of its 1975 election campaign, the Liberal–National Country Party pledged that if elected to government the Northern Territory would achieve statehood within five years, but before that it would be given self-government. The immediate aim was the transfer of executive responsibility for the Northern Territory Public Service and a number of Territory statutory authorities. The Northern Territory would then have control over land use, planning and development, public works and utilities. Responsibility for Aboriginal rights, uranium mining and national parks would remain the Commonwealth's responsibility.

In accordance with the *Northern Territory (Administration) Act 1976*, the former Administrator's Council was recreated as the Executive Council of the Northern Territory. Its role was to advise the Administrator on matters relating to the administration of the government of the Territory.¹⁹

Over the coming years negotiations took place on the limits of self-government and what functions would be transferred. As part of this process, on 1 January 1977, the first functions of government were transferred from the Commonwealth Public Service to the Northern Territory. Five new Departments were created within the new Northern Territory Administration, being the Departments of Chief Secretary, Finance and Local Government, Law, Transport and Industry, and Community Services.

Self-government for the Northern Territory was achieved on 1 July 1978. That day has since been commemorated as Territory Day. The Territory's first Chief Minister was Paul Everingham.

There are many records in the National Archives' custody that deal with the evolution of self-government in the Northern Territory. Cabinet records for the 1970s contain frequent references to the subject. A select group of key records is listed below.

Selected records relating to the evolution of Self-government in the northern territory	
National Archives, Canberra	
Northern Territory Self-Government Act Commonwealth policy aspects, part 3, 1964–88	A431, 1978/2386
Personal Papers of Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser – Notes relating to handling of constituent correspondence, environmental impact of sand mining on Fraser Island, Northern Territory self-government, post-graduate research awards, 1965–78	M1272, 1
Self-Government in the Northern Territory, 1974–76	A1209, 1975/1520
Self-Government in the Northern Territory, 1976–81	A1209, 1976/580 parts 1 to 25
Self-Government of the Northern Territory – custody and ownership of records, 1976–84	A750, 1983/581
Northern Territory self-government, 1977–80	A10139, 1977/489

Selected records relating to the evolution of Self-government in the northern territory	
National Archives, Canberra	
Northern Territory self-government – Aboriginal communities, 1977–81	A1209, 1978/1017 parts 1 to 4
Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978 – an Act to provide for the Government of the Northern Territory of Australia, and for related purposes, 1978	A1559, 1978/58
National Archives, Darwin	
Northern Territory Legislative Council – Inquiry into the Northern Territory (Administration) Act and constitutional reform, 1959–63	F425, C135 parts 1 and 2
Interdepartmental committee on constitutional development, Northern Territory, 1977–82	E359, 1978/454 parts 1 to 5
Transfer of functions to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, 1976–77	F1, 1976/3740
Transfer of functions to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, 1977	F1, 1977/801
Regulations under the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act, 1978–90	E1153, 1978/7
Self-Government in the Northern Territory, 1979–82	E341, S302/1/4/ part 1 to part 2

Local government in the Northern Territory

The first instance of local government in the Territory was the Palmerston District Council established in 1874. In October 1915 this Council was replaced by the Darwin Town Council in accordance with the *Darwin Town Council Ordinance 1915*. No records of either Council survive.²⁰

The 1915 Council initially comprised seven members: four elected on adult suffrage, two appointed by the Administrator, while the seventh member was the Government Secretary. From 1921 the Council was wholly elected.

After numerous amendments to the principal Ordinance, in 1930 the Government decided to consolidate these amendments into a re-issued Ordinance. It also took the opportunity to provide for the election of councillors on an adult suffrage basis. The Council disagreed, and when the Government refused to change its stance all councillors resigned in protest. The Minister appointed members in their place.

The Administrator later requested that suffrage be on the basis of householders, owners and tenants. He wanted to open the franchise to householders even though they were not ratepayers, and to public servants occupying Government-owned residences. The then Minister, Archdale Parkhill, took the matter to Cabinet in 1932. He told Cabinet that the number of ratepayers in Darwin was 165, compared with 1,129 adults living in Darwin and recommended that adult suffrage be on the basis of owners and occupiers as suggested by the Administrator, not as was set out in the Ordinance. Cabinet approved his recommendation on 25 May 1932.²¹

The Council, however, faced an unsurmountable obstacle when it came to carrying out its work. It was unable to raise sufficient revenue to fund its activities. Absentee landlords paid no rates, military personnel paid minimal rates, and the North Australian Workers' Union threatened action should any of its members be served with a rates notice. The Council acknowledged that it was in an impossible situation, and on 1 April 1937 it was abolished at its own request. The Administration then assumed responsibility for municipal activities.

The Payne–Fletcher Inquiry of 1937 (see Chapter 3) criticised the lack of municipal services in Darwin and recommended the appointment of a Town Clerk or Town Board. The Darwin Administration Ordinance was amended in 1939 to provide for the appointment of a Town Clerk; however, no appointment was made.

In his reports on the redevelopment of Darwin (see Chapter 4) Ronald McInnis recommended the appointment of a Town Management Board. In his 1940 report McInnis commented on the lack of administrative machinery in Darwin dealing with municipal matters, and the apparent lack of civic pride the people of Darwin showed in their town. He also suggested the formation of a citizens' advisory committee, stressing that the willing cooperation of Darwin's citizens was vital for establishing and maintaining an attractive town.

The Town Management Board was appointed and held its first and only meeting on 1 August 1941. Its chairman was Reginald Leydin who had joined the Administration in 1926 and was Town Clerk from 1928 to 1937. Other members were the Chief Surveyor Arthur Miller and Works Director H W Phillips. The war and subsequent military administration of Darwin ended the Board's activities. The citizens' advisory committee never eventuated.

When McInnis returned to Darwin to prepare his second report in 1944, he again recommended the creation of a Town Management Board. There was, however, one crucial difference between the two Boards. In the 1940 report the control of Darwin was in the hands of the Administrator, with advice from the Board. In the 1944 report McInnis recommended that the management of the town be with the Board itself.

The new Board was created in 1947 via the Darwin Town Management Board Ordinance. There was a chairman, four other members and a secretary. Members were appointed, not elected. Four officers were government officials, and the fifth was nominated from the townsfolk by the Administrator. The Board's principal function was the concentration of municipal government and administration of Darwin under a single authority. It held its first meeting on 22 October 1947, although it had already held several unofficial meetings from June onwards, dealing with preferential leases in Darwin.

In his Annual Report for 1947–48, the Administrator, Arthur Driver, wrote that the Board was formed with the intention of taking over municipal control of Darwin, including the allocation of preferential leases for town sites, effectively making it the Town Council of Darwin.²² Leydin, however, felt that because of the Board's low status, and the inexperience of its members, it was not achieving this goal. He suggested to Driver that the Board's composition be amended – a matter Driver indicated would be kept under review.²³ In 1950 the Board was reconstituted by providing for official members to be senior officers from the Administration and the Department of Works and Housing.

As a result of a civic campaign initiated by the Board in 1950, the townspeople of Darwin formed six District Associations, together with a Central Council comprising two delegates from each District Associations. The Central Council liaised with the Board, submitting proposals to it on behalf of the District Associations.²⁴

At the same time Leydin was instructed to report on municipal matters within the Territory. His report, completed in 1951, noted the divided responsibilities between Commonwealth departments and the local Administration which he said had led to duplication and lack of responsibility. The Commonwealth's expenditure on municipal works and services, both in Darwin and Alice Springs, was remarkably high and Leydin felt that it was difficult to avoid the conclusion that it was not only generous but extravagant having regard to the population of the two towns. In Darwin the benefits of such expenditure were not obvious, he said. He recommended the drafting of a Local

Government Ordinance, based on the provisions of State Local Government Acts, and the establishment of local self-governing authorities in Darwin and Alice Springs no later than 1 July 1953.²⁵

Although there was further debate over Leydin's recommendations, a Darwin Municipal Council was finally created in 1957, comprising a Mayor and 12 elected councillors. It became the Darwin City Council in 1981.

Town Management Boards were established in Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs between 1960 and 1961.

Selected records relating to municipal government in the northern territory		
National Archives, Canberra		
Darwin District Council, 1914–16		A3, NT1916/1729
Darwin Town Council Ordinances, 1922–35		A1, 1935/1971
Darwin Town Council – submission of plans for erection of government buildings, 1929–31		A1, 1931/1504
Termination of appointment of members of Darwin Town Council, 1931		A432, 1931/538
Darwin Town Council by-laws, 1932–35		A1, 1934/2680
National Archives, Darwin		
Darwin Town Council miscellaneous, 1928–45		E72, DL296
Photo of Darwin Town Council members, 1930		NTAC1970/8, 606
Darwin Town Council suggested restoration of, 1941		F1, 1941/237
Town Management Board meetings – minutes, and general correspondence, 1941–49		F1, 1947/337 parts 1 and 2
Leydin report, the history of Darwin Town Council, 1937–50		NTAC1980/55, 1
Town Management Board, 1949–53		F425, C32
Northern Territory Archives Service		
Darwin Municipal Council – general and special meeting minutes, 1957–78		NTRS476
Darwin Municipal Council – minutes of council meetings, 1960–69		NTRS16
Darwin Municipal Council – reports to committees, 1960–78		NTRS478
Darwin Municipal Council – committee minutes, 1960–81		NTRS475
Darwin Municipal Council – Darwin Town Planning Board – minutes and agendas, 1964–83		NTRS469
Darwin Municipal Council – Mayoral records of Dr Ella Stack, 1975–80		NTRS33

Conclusion – beyond 1978

Although the Northern Territory was granted self-government in 1978, this did not spell the end of the Commonwealth era. The Commonwealth has maintained a strong presence in the Territory to this day. It has retained responsibility for Aboriginal people, uranium mining and the management of national parks (all of which are discussed in later chapters).

The journey to statehood

From time to time there have been calls for the Northern Territory to become Australia's seventh state. The Federal Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Northern Territory examined the issue in 1974 and found that the question of statehood 'was not considered to be an important issue'. It noted that Territory residents were generally apathetic towards the matter.²⁶

Although the Commonwealth granted the Territory self-government it can still overturn the Territory government's legislation, and indeed did so in 1997. Two years earlier the Northern Territory Parliament passed the Rights of the Terminally Ill Act allowing persons to legally end their lives. The Commonwealth Parliament overturned this legislation. The Commonwealth's action led to a push by the Northern Territory Government for the Territory to become a State, which would have ensured that the Commonwealth would be unable to override Territory legislation. The lobbying culminated in a referendum held on 3 October 1998. It was defeated, with 51.3 per cent of Northern Territory residents voting against statehood.

Northern Territorians were not deterred, and lobbying for statehood continues today.

Notes

- ¹ Australia. Royal Commission into Northern Territory Administration, Report, p. 4; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1920–21), volume III, pp. 1653–69.
- ² NAA: A5818, volume 1/agendum 22, Northern Territory constitutional reform, 23 January 1959.
- ³ NAA: A3, NT1915/3868, Appointment of Board of Advice to Administrator, 1915.
- ⁴ NAA: E68, DP371, Executive and Legislation Council.
- ⁵ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, volume 127, 7 November 1930, p. 164.
- ⁶ Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory for Year 1943–44, 11 July 1944, p. 9; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1945–46), volume IV, pp. 1227–38.
- ⁷ NAA: A2700, 1224, Legislative Council, Northern Territory, 2 August 1946.
- ⁸ NAA: A2700, 1224A, Legislative Council, Northern Territory, 23 October 1946.
- ⁹ Northern Territory. Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council appointed to Inquire into the Necessity or Otherwise for Constitutional Reform in the Northern Territory (Darwin, 1957).
- ¹⁰ NAA: A5818, volume 1/agendum 22, Northern Territory constitutional reform, 23 January 1959.
- ¹¹ NAA: A5818, volume 1/agendum 22, Cabinet decision 35, Northern Territory constitutional reform, 9 February 1959.
- ¹² NAA: A5818, volume 34/agendum 1407, Northern Territory constitutional reform, 24 October 1961.

- ¹³ The report was attached to agendum 745 which Hasluck sent to Cabinet on 1 July 1953 with the title Northern Territory Constitutional Reform; NAA Canberra, A5819, volume 19/agendum 745.
- ¹⁴ NAA: A5827, volume 5, 159, Northern Territory – form of government, 30 April 1964. This submission contains a copy of the Interdepartmental Committee's report.
- ¹⁵ NAA: A5873, 658, Northern Territory – political and administrative arrangements, 3 September 1970.
- ¹⁶ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, volume 81, 25 October 1972, pp. 3150–59.
- ¹⁷ NAA: A5915, 146, Joint Committee on the Northern Territory, 28 February 1973.
- ¹⁸ The Committee presented an interim report in April 1974, *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1974), volume 13, paper 8, and a final report in November 1974, *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1974), volume 13, paper 9.
- ¹⁹ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, volume 99, 19 May 1976, pp. 2215–17.
- ²⁰ Helen J Wilson, 'The Quality of Life or A Study on Municipal Functions in the Town of Darwin 1930–1946 and the Effect of the Military Build-up Therein', MA qualifying thesis, University of Queensland (1986).
- ²¹ NAA: A2694, volume 3, submission 179, Darwin Town Council Ordinance, 18 May 1932.
- ²² Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory for Year 1947–48, p. 5; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1948–49), volume VI, pp. 1215–40.
- ²³ NAA: F1, 1947/337 part 2, Town Management Board meetings, minutes and general correspondence; memo dated 14 February 1949.
- ²⁴ The Northern Territory Report for the Period 1st July 1949 to 30th June 1953 (Commonwealth Government Printer: Canberra, 1955), p. 11. Unlike other Northern Territory reports, this report was not published as part of the consolidated set of Parliamentary Papers.
- ²⁵ NAA: NTAC1980/55, 3, Request for reports, 1951.
- ²⁶ Australia. Joint Committee on the Northern Territory, Report on Constitutional Development, p. 8, *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1974), volume 13, paper 9.



Part 2 Specific Issues



8 Aboriginal People of the Northern Territory

When the Commonwealth assumed responsibility for the Northern Territory in 1911, there was a belief that Aboriginal people were an inferior and doomed race. Some held the view that full blood Aboriginal people would die out within a few generations, and the best thing that government policy makers could do for them was to provide a comfortable existence until that happened. Children with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage (often referred to as half-caste) were another matter.¹ Policies were developed in the early years of the Commonwealth era that would have a traumatic effect on many Aboriginal people and, for many, the legacy of those policies continues.

Chief Protector of Aboriginals and the policy of protection

The Commonwealth created the position of Chief Protector of Aboriginals following the practice adopted by the States. The Chief Protector was empowered to assume the care, custody or control of any Aboriginal or half-caste if, in his opinion, it was necessary or desirable in the interests of that person for this to be done. These powers derived from the *Aboriginals Ordinance 1911*, the Commonwealth's first legislation dealing with Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, which remained in place until 1957.

Herbert Basedow was appointed as the first Chief Protector. He arrived in Darwin in 1911, but left after a few months, after quarrelling with the Administrator, John Gilruth. His replacement was Baldwin Spencer who agreed to a one-year term as Chief Protector and Special Commissioner. Spencer was asked to prepare a report and make policy recommendations on the 'difficult problem of control, utilization and advancement' of the Territory's Aboriginal population.

At the time of the Commonwealth's acquisition of the Northern Territory, many Aboriginal people lived in camps on the fringes of towns, just outside white settlements, or they worked in rural areas on cattle stations. Spencer devised a policy of protection, encouraging Aboriginal people to live on reserves, controlling their employment by the licensing of employers, the fixing of minimum wages, and by embodying conditions of employment within written agreements. He felt that town Aboriginal people should be confined. They could be released to do agricultural work and similar tasks, providing a cheap source of labour to white residents. Spencer's recommendations remained the Government's official policy until the mid 1920s.²

Spencer felt that half-caste children should be removed from the camps and placed within a series of dedicated institutions. If necessary, they should be separated from their mothers. Two government institutions were established to house and educate the children; the first was Kahlin Compound on the outskirts of Darwin, which opened in 1913, located in an area now known as Myilly Point. The second was The Bungalow located in Alice Springs, which opened in June 1914 under the direction of Ida Standley. The school at the Bungalow taught white children in the morning and half-caste children in the afternoon.

Due to overcrowding, The Bungalow was replaced with a new site at Jay Creek in 1928, about 40 kilometres south-west of Alice Springs. Jay Creek proved to only be a temporary measure and after investigating other sites (including one 12 kilometres from Alice Springs at Temple Bar Creek) the Old Telegraph Station five kilometres north of Alice Springs was occupied in 1932 and also became known as The Bungalow. During World War II all children at The Bungalow were relocated to Balaklava in South Australia.

The practice of taking children from their families and from perceived neglect had begun early in the Commonwealth era. This was the genesis of the policy that would affect many Aboriginal families both then and in later years, and create a group of people known today as the 'Stolen Generations'.

In 1918 the Aboriginals Ordinance was amended to extend the authority of the Chief Protector still further. From birth to death Aboriginal women were under his direct control, unless they were married to or living with a husband substantially of European origin. All police officers were appointed as Protectors in order to assist the Chief Protector.



Image 21. Two Aboriginal men with dingoes, Northern Territory Administration Report Lake Mackay Expedition, June/July 1957. NAA: E1683, 1

Cecil Cook and the policy of absorption

By the late 1920s the Government's policy of removal had become stricter. As the number of Aboriginal people was rising rather than falling, there were concerns that they would eventually outnumber the non-Aboriginal population of the Territory. In 1927 Cecil Cook was appointed as Chief Protector of Aboriginals and Chief Medical Officer. He was initially appointed to investigate incidents of Hansen's Disease (leprosy) in the Territory, hence he held dual posts. Cook sought to convert Aboriginal people from being unproductive nomads to productive peasants, and helped lay the basis of assimilation which became official government policy 10 years later.

Cook believed that Aboriginal people should be absorbed into the wider population. Concerned that the number of half-castes was rising, while the white population was declining, Cook developed a philosophy to 'breed the colour out'. He too favoured continued removal of children but he was opposed to involvement by church missions. His favoured method was the placement of children in institutions.

Bleakley Report

In May 1928 John William Bleakley, Queensland's Chief Protector of Aboriginals, was appointed to investigate the condition of Aboriginal and half-caste people in the Territory. There were concerns in the southern States over their care and wellbeing.

At the time Bleakley estimated that the Aboriginal population in the Northern Territory was about 21,000 including 800 half-castes. He found that despite Baldwin Spencer's early recommendations many were not being paid wages, living conditions were poor, there was no schooling, and institutions were badly situated, inadequately financed, and insufficiently supervised. Unlike Cecil Cook, Bleakley was impressed with the work of the church missions. By 1930s there were seven missions, most located along the northern coast of the Territory. He recommended that all illegitimate half-caste children under 16 be placed in government subsidised mission homes for the purposes of education and vocational training.

Bleakley recommended the appointment of a Deputy Chief Protector in North Australia to assist the Chief Protector, and an additional Chief Protector for Central Australia. He wanted the establishment of a series of clinics which would provide regular health inspections.

He suggested that Aboriginal people working on cattle stations should be paid a definite scale of wages for their work, preferably in goods, not money. He felt that they should be provided with better living conditions, both in the camps and on the cattle stations.³



Image 22. Native congregation at Oenpelli mission in Arnhem Land, 1928.
NAA: A263, photo album

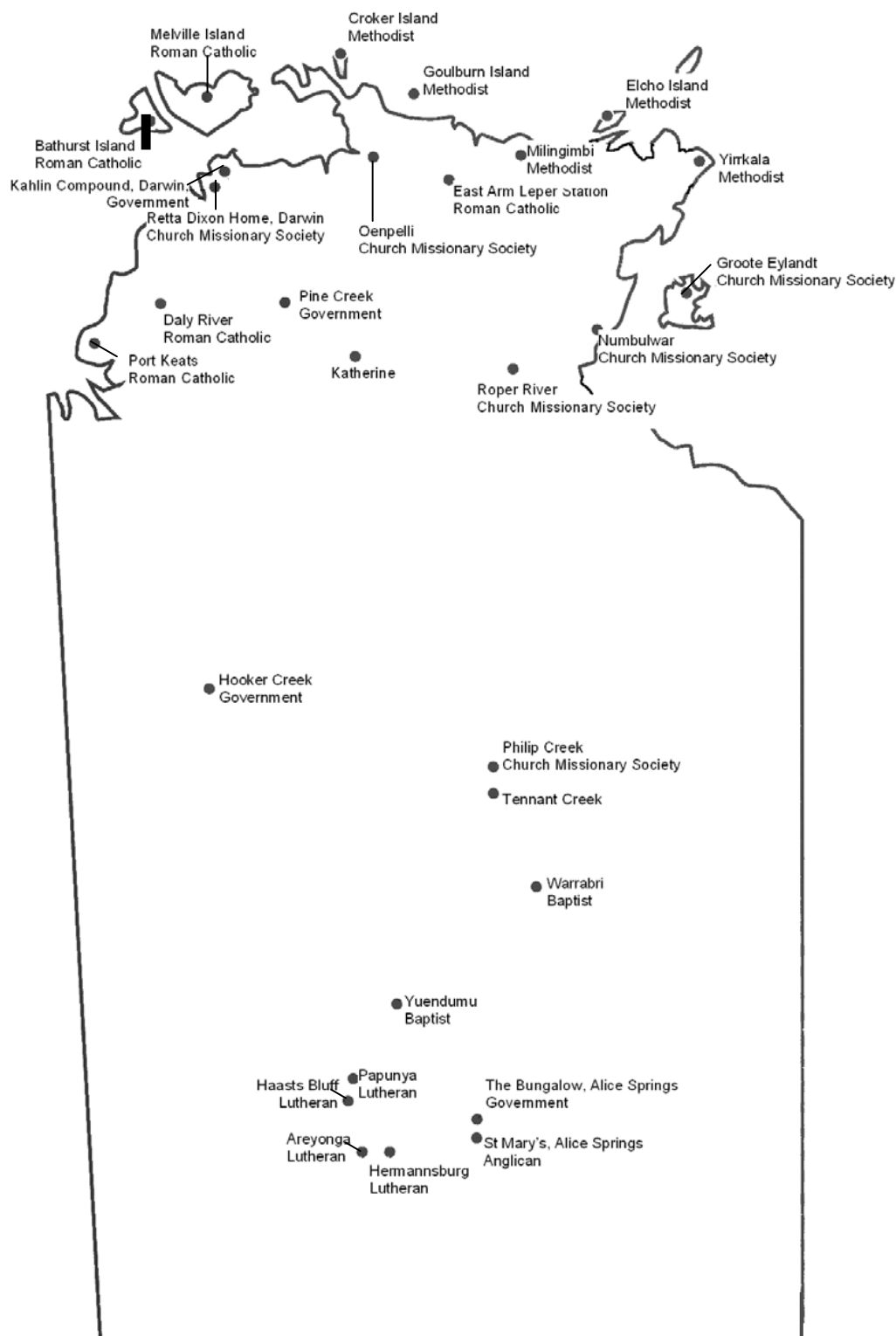


Image 23. Map of the Northern Territory showing the various missions that accommodated Aboriginal people. From *Tracking Families*, National Archives of Australia, p. 23

John McEwen's New Deal, 1939

The 1930s saw the emergence of the Northern Territory Half-Caste Association. This group lobbied for an exemption system to the 1918 Ordinance whereby a person who was designated as half-caste could be declared exempt from the provisions of the Ordinance.

By the late 1930s the Commonwealth's policy with respect to Aboriginal people was changing again. First there had been Spencer's policy of protection, followed in turn by Cook's policy of biological absorption. In 1939 John McEwen, the Minister responsible for the Northern Territory, proposed what he called a new deal for Aboriginal people based on economic and social assimilation. In practical terms assimilation meant that in the course of time all persons of Aboriginal birth or mixed blood would live like white Australians. Under McEwen's new deal there would be greater government control over people of mixed descent, with the exception of those sufficiently versed in non-Aboriginal ways to apply for exemptions. Mixed descent children were to be removed to government institutions or transferred to church missions, which would promote moral values, thus further aiding assimilation.

The aim of McEwen's policy was to raise the status of Aboriginal people so that they could qualify for the privileges and responsibilities of full citizenship. In addition, he wanted to meet their immediate physical needs and deal with health issues; to supply education and training for useful community services; and to promote civic and religious instruction. The church missions would play an integral role in the policy of assimilation.⁴

In April 1939 a new Native Affairs Branch was created, under the charge of a Director. The former position of Chief Protector of Aboriginals was abolished. The first Director was Ernest Chinnery, who replaced Cook.

The policy of removing Aboriginal children from their families continued, but Chinnery recommended that their care and control should be handed over to church missions. Although John Bleakley had made the same suggestion in his 1928 report, his recommendation was not pursued due to Cecil Cook's antipathy towards the missions.

By 1941 the Government had decided that the care of half-caste children should be handed over to the missions. Catholic children were sent to Garden Point on Melville Island, Methodist children to Croker Island, and Church of England children to other locations. Other children were adopted out to white families in southern States. Several new institutions were also established, including the Bagot Reserve, on Bagot Road in Darwin, which was opened in 1938, and Retta Dixon (run by the Aborigines Inland Mission), which was opened in 1947. The Kahlin home was closed in 1939 and The Bungalow was closed in 1942.

There are many records in the National Archives collection that deal with the early years of the Commonwealth's administration of Aboriginal people. The following list is a selection of some of these records.

Selected records relating to the early commonwealth administration of aboriginal people
National Archives, Canberra

Foelsch collection – photograph albums of Northern Territory views, 1887–1900	A66
Northern Territory Aborigines – establishment of institution for adequate housing, 1910–11	A1, 1911/18824
Northern Territory Professor Spencer's report on Aboriginal people, 1911–12	A1, 1912/2991
Appointment of Baldwin Spencer as Chief Protector of Aborigines, 1911–12	A1, 1912/10504
Alice Springs Bungalow, 1914–29	A1, 1927/2982
Northern Territory – visit of Baldwin Spencer regarding the natives at Alice Springs, 1921–24	A1, 1930/1542
Half-caste home – Darwin, 1923–40	A659, 1939/1/15580
Bleakley report – Aborigines of North and Central Australia, 1927–31	A461, D300/1
Bleakley report – album of anthropological photographs in connection with Aboriginal enquiry – Central and North Australia, 1928 <i>(copy also held in Darwin)</i>	A263
Half-caste home – Alice Springs, 1928–39	A659, 1939/1/996
Bleakley report on Aborigines in North and Central Australia, 1929–30	A659, 1943/1/1451 part 1
A P Elkin – suggested policy regarding Aboriginal affairs, 1934–39	A1, 1938/31785
Government policy regarding Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, 1938–53	A452, 1952/541
Copies of Chinnery reports – Northern Territory, 1939–40	A431, 1948/1780

National Archives, Darwin

Police Station Tarcoola/Arltunga – names of aged and infirm Aboriginal people receiving rations, 1900–41	F259
Police Station Arltunga – register of Aboriginal people employed – particulars of Aboriginal offenders – register of Aboriginal people in the Arltunga District – minute book for Courts of Summary Jurisdiction held at Arltunga, 1911–39	F246
Works – Alice Springs institution for half-caste children – school building, 1925	E1008, DA10060
Works – Alice Springs institution for half-caste children – dormitories, 1925	E1008, DA10061
Works – Alice Springs institute for half-caste children – store and layout plan, 1925	E1008, DA10065
Papers of Chief Protector of Aborigines – Central Australia, 1927–31	F129

Selected records relating to the early commonwealth administration of aboriginal people		
National Archives, Darwin		
Works – Temple Bar Central Australia – institute for half-caste children, 1929	E1008, DA10047	
Works – proposed institute for half-caste children at Temple Bar, 1930	E1008, DA10048	
Works – Temple Bar Central Australia – institution for half-caste children, 1930	E1008, DA10044	
Police Station Alice Springs – correspondence – Protector of Aborigines, 1931–32	F396	
Works – Alice Springs half-caste institute – general layout, 1932	E1008, DA10056	
Works – Alice Springs half-caste plan, 1932	E1008, DA10066	
Half-caste home – Alice Springs, 1932–37	F1, 1937/30	
Correspondence of the Native Affairs Branch, 1933–49	F3	
Establish settlements instead of compounds, and employ Aborigines, 1935–37	F1, 1937/159	
Half-caste Aboriginal protection policy, 1935–41	F1, 1938/46	
Copies of proclamations of Aboriginal reserves, 1936–43	F93	
Correspondence files, 1937–63	F132	
Half-caste institution – Alice Springs, 1938	F1, 1942/70A	
Half-caste institution Alice Springs, 1938–42	F1, 1942/70B	
Police Station Arltunga – Record of medicines issued, 1938–41	F263	
Aboriginal and half-caste matters, 1940	F1, 1940/478	
Welfare of female half-castes, 1940	F1, 1940/763	
Half-caste institution – Alice Springs and Balaklava – register of admissions, 1942–44	F135	
Proclamation of Aboriginal missions and reserves, 1946–55	E1067	

Establishment of patrol officers

A series of murders in the late 1920s and early 1930s ultimately led to the creation of a patrol officer service in the Northern Territory, similar to that which was already in existence in New Guinea.

First, in August 1928 a white dingo trapper, Fred Brooks, was murdered by a group of Aboriginal people at Coniston, 225 kilometres north-east of Alice Springs. Two Aboriginal men were arrested for the murder, stood trial in Darwin and were acquitted. Brooks' death was followed by a series of reprisal raids between August and October involving the deaths of many Aboriginal people. These raids became known as the Coniston Massacre. No charges were laid against the reprisal parties. A Board of Inquiry, appointed in December 1928 to examine 'the killing of natives in Central Australia by police parties and others', was presided over by police magistrate, A H O'Kelly, and found that 31 Aboriginal people had been killed and that in each case the death was justified on the grounds of self-defence.

Selected records relating to the Coniston massacre and inquiry		
National Archives, Canberra		
Attacks on white men by natives – killing of natives – Central Australia (includes attachment titled 'papers returned by Mr O'Kelly'), 1928		A431, 1950/2768 part 1
Attacks on white men by natives – killing of natives – Central Australia includes attachment titled 'finding of Board of Enquiry with exhibits 1–13', 1928–50		A431, 1950/2768 part 2
Aboriginal people – government tribunal, 1928–29		A461, I300/1

Second, in September 1932 a group of Japanese fishermen working at Caledon Bay, in present day Arnhem Land east of Darwin, allegedly attacked and raped several Aboriginal women. The group was in turn attacked by Aboriginal men and five fishermen were killed. At nearby Woodah Island another incident involved the death of a white police constable, Albert McColl.

At first it was feared that these incidents might lead to reprisal raids by both sides. In the end, several Aboriginal men were persuaded to come to Darwin and stand trial for the murder of Constable McColl. The trials took place in August 1934 and several men were given 20 year jail sentences. One of the accused was Dhakiyarr Wirrpanda, who was sentenced to death.

The Coniston and Caledon Bay killings led the Government to accept an offer by anthropologist Donald Thomson to make a conciliatory visit to Arnhem Land. He ultimately persuaded the Government to free the men who had been sentenced to gaol. Wirrpanda, on the other hand, appealed against his sentence to the High Court, and in November 1934 he won his case.

Selected records relating to the trial and appeal of Dhakiyarr Wirrpanda		
National Archives, Canberra		
Aboriginal – arrest and trial for murder of Constable McColl – appeal to High Court, 1934–36		A1, 1936/4022 parts 1 to 3
Caledon Bay – natives apprehension and trial for murder, 1934		A432, 1934/929
Murder of Constable McColl at Woodah, 1934		A432, 1934/1437
Dhakiyarr Wirrpanda – appeal to High Court against sentence of death, 1934–35		A5520, A9178
Dhakiyarr Wirrpanda versus The King, 1934		A10074, 1934/47
National Archives, Melbourne		
The King versus Dhakiyarr Wirrpanda, 1934–38		MP401/1, CL10336

The murders at Coniston and Caledon Bay ultimately led the Government to initiate a patrol officer service in the Northern Territory. The first patrol officer was Theodore (Ted) Strehlow, who took up his position in October 1936 and remained until 1942 when he joined the Army.

After World War II the Northern Territory was divided into six patrol areas and four additional patrol officers were appointed: Les Penhall, Syd Lyle-Kittle, Fred Gubbins and Ted Evans. They were all given anthropological training at the University of Sydney. Some officers later attended courses run by the Australian School of Pacific Administration in Sydney.

Travel to the more remote areas of the Territory was not without its difficulties. In a report following his visit to Maningrida (east of Arnhem Land) in 1957 patrol officer Ted Egan wrote that he had travelled 365 miles, of which 280 was on foot and the remaining 85 were by canoe.⁵

Patrol officers prepared reports after each tour of inspection. These reports were forwarded to the Administrator, and are now held by the National Archives in Darwin under each officer's name.⁶

Selected reports prepared by patrol officers	
National Archives, Darwin	
Papers of patrol officer Theodore (Ted) Strehlow, 1934–36	F128
Patrol officer Theodore (Ted) Strehlow, 1936–39	F1, 1939/300
Patrol officer – Alice Springs and Jay Creek – correspondence files – unregistered, 1936–42	F127
Patrol officer – Alice Springs and Jay Creek – correspondence files, 1941–42	F126
Patrol officer Gordon Sweeney, 1943–46	F1, 1943/65
Patrol officer William (Bill) Harney, 1943–45	F1, 1944/275
Instructions issued to patrol officers, 1947–63	F132, F17
Patrol officer E J (Ted) Egan, 1957–59	F1, 1957/367

Welfare Ordinance of 1953 and the Register of Wards

Ernest Chinnery retired as the Director of the Native Affairs Branch in 1946 and was replaced by Francis Moy. In turn Moy resigned in May 1953 just as the Commonwealth's policy towards Aboriginal people was changing again. There was a move away from protectionism, and henceforth all Aboriginal people would be subject to the same welfare legislation as everyone else. The Native Affairs Branch of the Northern Territory Administration was replaced by the Welfare Branch, and the Director of Native Affairs was redesignated as the Director of Welfare. The new Branch was primarily concerned with health, housing and education of Aboriginal people. The first Director was Harry Giese, appointed in July 1954, who held the position until his retirement in 1972.

A new Welfare Ordinance was implemented in 1953. It reversed the criteria established under the former Aboriginals Ordinance. Rather than requiring exemption from its provisions, the legislation presumed that all people were exempt except those who, because of special needs, came under its jurisdiction. There was to be no mention of race; instead reference would be made to wards. A ward was someone who, 'by reason of his manner of living, his inability to manage his own affairs, his standard of social habit and behaviour, his personal associations...stands in need of special care'. The Director of Welfare became the guardian of all wards. Under the new policy, Aboriginal people would be committed to the care of the State solely because they were in need of special care and assistance.

The new Welfare Ordinance provided for the proclamation of individuals who fitted the definition of 'ward'. The names of all wards were then to be published in the *Northern Territory Gazette*. This meant that a census had to be carried out by patrol officers, which was completed in June 1956. The information collected resulted in the creation of the Register of Wards which was first published in May 1957. The register, often disparagingly referred to as the 'Stud Book', recorded district, European name, tribal or personal name, group, tribe, sex, year of birth, and sub-district.⁷



Image 24. A group of Aboriginal people gathered to meet the train, date unknown.
NAA: M1705, photo 852

By the 1950s the policy of removing children from their parents was again being questioned. Patrol officers, who had endured heart-rending removal scenes, often refused to take the children. The 1953 Welfare Ordinance provided that children would only be removed if they were judged to be destitute or neglected. Finally the Government accepted that separation from families did not help children gain a place in white society, and the policy was abandoned in the 1960s, although it was not until 1980 that the last of the Darwin homes were closed.⁸

The principal of wardship only lasted for a few years. In 1964 the Welfare Ordinance was replaced by the *Social Welfare Ordinance 1964*. The new Ordinance provided for the welfare of Aboriginal people in the same manner as other members of the community, and the Register of Wards was abandoned.

Selected records relating to postwar period administration of northern territory aboriginal people	
National Archives, Darwin	
Native affairs policy, 1945–49	F1413, 2
Correspondence files – Delissaville (now Belyuen) community, 1947–64	E1415
Berrimah Aboriginal reserve, 1947–52	A452, 1952/226
Correspondence files – ‘D’ (Drover), 1949–52	E737
Correspondence files, 1949–52	F315
Correspondence files – unregistered series, 1950–68	E1555
Native Welfare Ordinance, 1952–54	F1, 1952/1160 parts 1 and 2
Correspondence files – general enquiries from settlements, 1954–62	E738

Selected records relating to postwar period administration of northern territory aboriginal people	
National Archives, Darwin	
Correspondence files – ‘O’ (Office), 1954–62	E739
Correspondence files – ‘P’ (Pastoral), 1954–62	E740
Correspondence files – ‘U’ (Under the Ordinance), 1954–62	E743
Unregistered correspondence and historical notes, 1954–74	NTAC1976/23
Miscellaneous records (files, folders of newspaper cuttings, reports and tape recordings relating to functions of employing agency and memberships of committees and associations), 1954–77	NTAC1982/34
Correspondence files, 1955–57	E745
Welfare Ordinance, 1955–57	F1, 1955/154
Correspondence files – ‘M’ (Missions), 1956–62	E746
Correspondence files – ‘W’ (Welfare), 1956–63	E747
Correspondence files – ‘ED’ (Education), 1956–62	E748
Welfare Ordinance, 1957–58	F1, 1957/748
Correspondence files – Alice Springs, 1949–ongoing	F133
Plans/drawings of building projects proposed by various religious groups, 1960–77	E811
Plans/drawings of Aboriginal housing designs, 1961–76	E810
Welfare Branch case files, 1963–72	D4082
Social Welfare Ordinance, 1964–70	F1, 1968/1209
Social Welfare Ordinance, 1964	F133, 1964/17
Correspondence files – ‘AW’ (Aboriginal Welfare), 1966–73	E765
Correspondence files of Bagot Aboriginal Settlement, Darwin, 1968–74	NTAC1977/281
Plans/drawings of building projects initiated by Aboriginal community associations, 1969–76	E808
Plans/drawings of building projects initiated by the Port Keats, Bathurst Island and Daly River Catholic Missions, 1972–77	E809

Child welfare – the State Children’s Council

Child welfare services were implemented through the Northern Territory State Children’s Council established in 1930 under the South Australian *State Children’s Act 1895*. It had responsibility for the care, management and control of State children and their property, including their apprenticeship, placement and attendance at school until 13 years.

A ‘state child’ included a destitute child, neglected child, convicted child, or any child received into an institution to be apprenticed or placed out. (Various pieces of South Australian legislation continued to apply in the Northern Territory until they were repealed or superseded.)

The first members were appointed to the Council by the Governor-General in March 1930. The Council went into recess in 1942 with the evacuation of the Northern Territory Administration and was then reconvened in 1950 in response to the number of children in distressed circumstances in the Darwin area. The Northern Territory Administration provided administrative support to the Council.

The *Northern Territory Child Welfare Ordinance 1958* replaced the previous South Australian legislation, and full responsibility for child welfare was transferred to the Welfare Branch in February 1959 when the Ordinance came into force. The State Children's Council was replaced by the Child Welfare Advisory Council.

The State Children's Council dealt with a range of sensitive family issues. As such, access to the records relating to the Council's activities is strictly regulated.

Selected records relating to the State children's council	
National Archives, Canberra	
State Children's Council – appointments of members and secretary, Northern Territory, 1930–53	A452, 1951/1793
National Archives, Darwin	
State Children's Council, 1936–53	F1, 1950/402 parts 1 and 2
State Children's Council, 1947–62	E743, U51
State Children's Council – minutes of meetings, 1950–54	F1, 1952/1037
State Children's Council – annual reports, 1951–56	F1, 1952/1038
State Children's Council – appointments and terminations, 1952–56	F1, 1952/644
State Children's Council – minutes of meetings, 1954–58	F1, 1955/626
State Children's Council – annual reports, 1955–59	F1, 1956/2168
State Children's Council – minutes of meetings, 1956–58	E744, 2
State Children's Council – appointments and terminations, 1957–59	F1, 1957/494
State Children's Council – minutes of meetings, 1958	F1, 1958/85
Child Welfare and State Children's Council, 1961–73	E242, K40/6/1 parts 1 and 2

Aboriginal births, marriages and deaths in the Northern Territory

During the course of its administration of Aboriginal welfare in the Northern Territory, the Commonwealth gathered information about Aboriginal births, deaths and marriages and about the location of Aboriginal people. Some records were kept from the 1920s, but more detailed records were maintained from the 1950s. An Aboriginal Population Register section was established within the Welfare Branch to gather this information. A number of the detailed records maintained are listed below. Unless otherwise stated, the records were maintained by the Native Affairs Branch to 1955, then the Welfare Branch to 1970, then the Welfare Division to 1972, then the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

Note that a series of approximately 60,000 cards maintained by the Aboriginal Population Register section is now located with the Northern Territory Registrar-General's Office. The information contained varies but can include a person's name, year and place of birth, parents and siblings.

Selected records of aboriginal birthS, marriageS, deathS and population		
GENERAL		
National Archives, Darwin		
Register of Aboriginal deaths and births, 1901–70		E1573
Cards containing personal information on the Aboriginal population of the Northern Territory, 1957–93		E1579
BIRTHS		
National Archives, Darwin		
Register of Aboriginal births, 1953–74		E889
Department of Health – register of births – Aboriginal people, 1954–57		E880
Births journal, 1971–73		E890
Chronological register of Aboriginal births, 1974–79		E891
Northern Territory Archives Service		
Reference digitised copy of register of births and deaths relating to Aboriginal people in Mililingimbi, 1934–83		NTRS3404
District Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Central Australia – Folders of forms of information of births (natives) and related papers, 1950–63		F825
MARRIAGES		
National Archives, Darwin		
Department of Health – register of Aboriginal marriages, 1944–78		E1353
DEATHS		
National Archives, Darwin		
Deaths register, 1953–70		E885
Department of Health Register of deaths, Aboriginal people, 1953–57		E888
Register of Aboriginal deceased estate files, 1963–76		E943
Aboriginal deceased estate files, 1963–ongoing		E917
Deaths register, 1969–70		E883
Deaths book, 1969–77		E887
Weekly deaths register, 1973–74		E886
Certificate of burial books, 1974–77		E1414
Northern Territory Archives Service		
Reference digitised copy of register of births and deaths relating to Aboriginal people in Mililingimbi, 1934–83		NTRS3404
District Registrar of Births Deaths and Marriages, Central Australia Folders of forms of information of deaths (natives) and related papers, 1950–63		F827
POPULATION		
National Archives, Darwin		
Welfare branch – Aboriginal half-caste population records – alphabetical series, 1925–56		F984

Selected records of aboriginal births, marriages, deaths and population		
National Archives, Darwin		
Police branch – Aboriginal population census – alphabetical by location series, 1931–35		E1493
Welfare branch – Alphabetical census register, 1955		E935
Welfare branch – census register – by location, 1955		E936
Administrator – register of wards – <i>Northern Territory of Australia Gazette</i> , number 19B, 13 May 1957		E1543
Welfare branch – census files – by location, 1960–ongoing		E944

Department of Aboriginal Affairs and beyond

In November 1967 the Government created an Office and Council for Aboriginal Affairs with H C (Herbert) Coombs as its Chairman. The office was located within an existing department of state, and in 1971 was moved to the Department of Education, Aborigines and the Arts – the first time a Commonwealth department featured the word 'Aborigines' in its name. It was in December 1972 with the creation of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs under the new Whitlam Government that Aboriginal affairs came into a department solely dedicated to that cause.

In the Northern Territory, departmental offices were established in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine, Tennant Creek, Nhulunbuy and Arnhem Land. The National Archives holds records created by a number of these offices. Some of the records created by the department's Darwin Office are listed below.

Selected records created by the department of aboriginal affairs, State office, northern territory		
National Archives, Darwin		
Miscellaneous records relating to studies, reviews, submissions and analyses, 1973–ongoing		E1381
Correspondence files, 1974–ongoing		E460
Grants in aid files, 1974–ongoing		E1155
Correspondence files, 1976–ongoing		E1421
Correspondence files, 1976–ongoing		E1429
Correspondence files, 1979–ongoing		E1412

Aboriginal Hostels Limited, from 1973

The Aboriginal Hostels Limited was established in June 1973 to provide accommodation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Accommodation is used largely by young people living away from home, studying, or taking advantage of training or employment opportunities. Accommodation is also provided for aged persons, single parents, transient and homeless people, as well as for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people undergoing medical treatment and rehabilitation. Offices in Darwin and Alice Springs were opened in June 1973.

The National Archives holds no records for either office.

Aboriginal Development Commission, 1980–90

The Aboriginal Development Commission was established in July 1980 to further the 'economic and social development of Aboriginals'. Its role was to assist Aboriginal communities and groups to acquire land; to engage in business enterprises; to obtain finance for housing and other personal needs, and to provide such finance. It maintained a Northern Territory Northern Region office in Darwin with area offices in Darwin, Katherine and Nhulunbuy and a Central Region office in Alice Springs with area offices in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek.

Selected records created by the aboriginal development commiSSion, northern territory, northern region

National Archives, Darwin

Project control cards for housing program, 1981–ongoing	E1411
Correspondence files, 1984–ongoing	E1025
Correspondence files – first system, 1985–86	E1024
Correspondence files – multiple number series, 1986–ongoing	E1380

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, 1990–2005

In 1990 the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Aboriginal Development Commission amalgamated to form the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC). The Northern Territory State Office of ATSIC was based in Darwin with regional offices in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Nhulunbuy.

The Commission's role was to ensure maximum participation by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the formulation and implementation of government policies that affected them; to promote the development of self management and self-sufficiency, and to further their economic, social and cultural development.

The Commission operated until 2005 when its functions were dispersed to Commonwealth government departments and an Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination was established. In the Northern Territory a state office of the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination was established with Indigenous Coordination Centres in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine, Nhulunbuy and Tennant Creek.

Aboriginal rights

In the 1960s change was in the wind. There was a series of events which would have a dramatic effect on Aboriginal people involving their right to vote, their inclusion in the census, and their right to ownership of their land.

At that time electoral regulations provided that Aboriginal people could not enrol or vote if they were declared as wards as defined by the Welfare Ordinance referred to earlier in this chapter. Nearly all Aboriginal people were declared wards before they attained voting age. In April 1961 a Select Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament was appointed to examine the voting rights of Aboriginal people. It reported that some 17,000 Aboriginal people had been declared wards in the Northern Territory, and it recommended that the Commonwealth Electoral Act be amended to provide that the right to vote at Federal elections be given to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults.⁹ The recommendation was accepted and in 1962 all adult Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were granted the right to vote in Commonwealth elections.

In August 1966 Vincent Lingiari led a walk off from the Wave Hill pastoral station, located in the western part of the Territory. The walk off was a result of long-standing grievances over the payment of wages and treatment of workers by the pastoral companies. It was soon apparent, however, that the group was also seeking ownership of their land.

On 27 May 1967 Australians were asked in a referendum to agree that the Commonwealth should be able to make laws for Aboriginal people in all States and Territories, and that all Aboriginal people should be included in the census. Previously, the Commonwealth was only able to make laws for Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, while State governments made laws for Aboriginal people in their own States. The referendum was an overwhelming success, with 90.77 per cent of Australian voters approving the proposal.

As part of its manifesto for the 1972 election, the Labor Party, apart from promising to create a portfolio department for the administration of Aboriginal people, also pledged to address the issue of land rights. In February 1973 the Government appointed the Commission on Aboriginal Land Rights to inquire into means whereby Aboriginal people might be given freehold title to their traditional lands. In the Commission's second and final report, it recommended the creation of an Aboriginal Land Commission for the Northern Territory which would prepare a register of traditional claims to pastoral lease lands, and investigate and make recommendations concerning Aboriginal claims to pastoral lands and Crown lands.¹⁰

An Aboriginal Land Rights Bill was drafted but not put into effect before the Whitlam Government lost office in 1975. The Government of Malcolm Fraser supported the issue and in May 1976 Ian Viner, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, sent a submission to Cabinet recommending the implementation of land rights legislation.¹¹ Cabinet approved the recommendation on 25 May 1976, and the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Bill was introduced into Parliament. Although there was strong opposition from the pastoral lobby, the legislation passed in 1976. It provided for Aboriginal land trusts to have inalienable freehold title to traditional land on Northern Territory Aboriginal reserves, and other vacant Crown land. It also provided for a series of Councils to administer the land, and for the payment of royalties for the privilege to mine on Aboriginal lands.

Selected records relating to aboriginal land rights policy and legislation	
National Archives, Canberra	
Aboriginal land rights policy, 1968–72	A5882, CO1179 parts 1 to 3
Aboriginal Land Rights Commission – folders of correspondence, 1973–74	A4251
Aboriginal Land Rights Commission – major submissions, 1973–74	A4252
Aboriginal Land Rights Commission – exhibits, 1973	A4254
Aboriginal Land Rights Commission – transcripts of public hearings, 1974	A4258
Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Bill 1976, 1976–83	A1209, 1976/1902 parts 1 to 6
Inquiry into Aboriginal Land Rights by Mr David Hay – draft final report, 1976	A1209, 1977/459
Inquiry into Aboriginal Land Rights by Mr David Hay – submissions, 1976	A1209, 1977/464 parts 1 to 3 and attachment
Implementation of party policy on Aboriginal land rights	A12909, 314

Selected records relating to aboriginal land rights policy and legislation	
National Archives, Darwin	
Aboriginal land rights conference, 1974	F1, 1974/721
Aboriginal land rights Bill, 1974–75	F1, 1976/3243
Aboriginal land rights policy, 1975–82	E460, 1983/386 parts 1 to 4
Cabinet submission – implementation of policy on Aboriginal land rights, 1976	F133, 1976/121
Woodward Commission, 1976–77	F1, 1976/2828
Aboriginal land claims general Aboriginal land rights, 1979–83	E517, 32.1.7 parts 1 and 2

Aboriginal Land Commissioner

The *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1976* created the position of the Aboriginal Land Commissioner who was empowered to investigate and report on Aboriginal claims to unalienated Crown Land in the Northern Territory, and to recommend the granting of legal title to Aboriginal Land Trusts for the benefit of traditional owners.

In the ensuing years a number of land claims have been heard and land titles awarded to traditional owners.

Selected records of the aboriginal land commissioner	
National Archives, Darwin	
Correspondence relating to Aboriginal land claims and administration of the office of the Aboriginal Land Commissioner, 1973–ongoing	E530
Department of Aboriginal Affairs – records of the Interim Land Commissioner, 1973–77	E1132
Folders relating to Aboriginal communities and outstations, 1977–ongoing	E531
Federal and High Court decisions and appeals, 1977–ongoing	E1475
Aboriginal land claims reference material, 1977–ongoing	E1476
Records of Aboriginal land claim hearings, 1977–ongoing	E1477
Miscellaneous material relating to hearings of various Aboriginal land claims, 1980–ongoing	E1133

Land Councils

The Aboriginal Land Rights Act also created a series of land councils. Their role is to ascertain and express the wishes and opinions of Aboriginal people concerning the management of Aboriginal land; protect the interests of traditional Aboriginal owners of land; and to consult with traditional owners of land concerning proposed uses of that land.

Initially there were three Councils: Northern, Central and Tiwi (the last including the Tiwi Islands – Bathurst and Melville). In 1991 a fourth Council: Anindilyakwa, recognising the interests of traditional owners in Groote Eylandt and Bickerton Island, was created.

records of northern territory land councils held by the national archives	
National Archives, Darwin	
NORTHERN LAND COUNCIL	
Correspondence – relating to lands, 1978–ongoing	E1508
Correspondence files, 1985–ongoing	E1509
Correspondence files – Gove Office, 1985–ongoing	E1510
TIWI LAND COUNCIL	
Correspondence files, 1977–96	E1569
Minutes of meetings, 1977–ongoing	E1615

Joint Select Committee on Aboriginal Land Rights in the Northern Territory

The Joint Parliamentary Select Committee on Aboriginal Land Rights in the Northern Territory was appointed by Federal Parliament in December 1976, specifically to examine and report on the provisions of land rights legislation relating to the identification of traditional owners of Aboriginal land and establishing their views; and the adequacy of the legislation with respect to entry to Aboriginal land, protection of significant sites, and wildlife conservation. The Committee held hearings over 11 days in 1977 and heard from 65 witnesses.

In its final report, presented in August 1977, the Committee concluded that the methods adopted by the Northern and Central Land Councils were appropriate to identify traditional owners of Aboriginal land.

Earlier, when approving the drafting of land rights legislation in May 1976, Cabinet had also recommended that complementary legislation dealing with entry to Aboriginal lands and the protection of sacred sites might be drafted by the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly. In March 1977 the Aboriginal Lands and Sacred Sites Bill was tabled in the Assembly. It dealt with the protection of sacred sites, entry to Aboriginal land, and the entry to seas adjoining Aboriginal land. The Joint Committee found that some of the provisions of the Bill were inadequate and recommended a series of amendments after more consultation with relevant groups.

In concluding its report the Committee stated that the Land Rights Act was the most significant piece of legislation affecting Aboriginal society in the Northern Territory, and that it had been a catalyst for a number of dynamic changes to Aboriginal life style. It recommended that Parliament maintain a continuing oversight of the legislation, particularly in view of the tensions that might arise from conflicting uses of Aboriginal land, mainly mining and tourism.

Note that records of the Parliament (such as Series A12818 listed below) are not subject to the standard public access arrangements for Commonwealth records, and are only available following specific approval of the appropriate Parliamentary presiding officer.

records relating to the Joint Select committee on aboriginal land rights in the northern territory	
National Archives, Canberra	
Aboriginal land rights in the Northern Territory and Inquiry into Ranger Uranium Environment, 1976–77	A12818
National Archives, Darwin	
Joint Select Committee hearings on Aboriginal land rights, transcript of evidence, 1977	F1, 1977/1741

Aboriginal Benefits Trust Fund

The Aboriginal Benefits Trust Fund was established in 1952 in order to ensure collection of royalties from mining undertaken on Aboriginal reserves. Following the passage of land rights legislation the Fund changed its name to the Aboriginal Benefit Trust Account in 1978. It is this agency's responsibility to act as a clearing house for mining royalty payments, and to use some of these payments for the benefit of Aboriginal people.

Selected records of aboriginal benefits trust fund	
National Archives, Canberra	
Legislation for the establishment of a trust fund for royalties on minerals won from Aboriginal reserves in the Northern Territory, 1952	A6006, 1952/12/31
Aborigines Benefit Trust Fund policy, 1967–72	A1734, NT1971/966
National Archives, Darwin	
Aboriginal Trust Fund, 1944–52	F1, 1948/67
Aboriginal Trust Fund, 1953–58	F1, 1957/773
Minutes and agenda papers, 1969–ongoing	E1346
Miscellaneous functional records, 1970	E1348
Correspondence and loan application files, 1971–78	E1009
Correspondence files, 1978–ongoing	E1010
Grant applications, 1979–ongoing	E1097

After self-government in 1978

Although the Commonwealth granted the Northern Territory self-government from 1978, it retained responsibility for a number of matters, including Aboriginal people.

The Commonwealth has in this time been involved in a significant number of events involving Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory.

Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, 1987–91

In 1987 there was growing public concern that Aboriginal deaths in police custody or prison were too common and poorly explained. In September 1987 the Prime Minister announced that all states and the Northern Territory had given their support to establish a joint Federal and State Royal Commission to investigate Aboriginal deaths in custody, and announced the appointment of the Hon Mr Justice Muirhead as Royal Commissioner. The Commissioner was to investigate deaths in Australia since 1 January 1980 of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders while in police custody, prison or

other place of detention, and any subsequent action taken in respect of those deaths. In 1988 the number of commissioners was increased and terms of reference were broadened to take account of social, cultural and legal factors that might have had a bearing on the deaths.

The Commission presented an interim report in December 1988 and a five-volume final report in April 1991.¹² It made 399 recommendations, largely concentrating on the areas of procedures in custody, liaison with Aboriginal groups, police education, and improved accessibility to information.

Agreement was reached in May 1993 for the Royal Commission's records to be placed in the custody of National Archives in the capital city of the State or Territory in which they were created or drawn together, but records not clearly related to a State or Territory were to be held in Canberra. The National Archives has prepared *Aboriginal Deaths in Custody: The Royal Commission and its records, 1987–91* which lists the records and outlines the access arrangements agreed to by the Federal, State and Northern Territory governments.

Selected records of the royal commission into aboriginal deaths in custody held in darwin		
National Archives, Darwin		
Transcript folders – individual case hearings, 1987–91		A8570
Individual case hearings, 1987–91		A8574
General submission files, 1987–91		A8575
Research cases of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, 1987–90		A8582
Transcript folders – special hearings, 1987–90		A8568
General correspondence of G Barbaro, Instructing Solicitor, Northern Territory, 1987–90		D4089
Press clippings, 1987–90		D4090
General correspondence records – Northern Territory Office, 1988–90		D4086
General correspondence records of M Dodson, Counsel Assisting, Northern Territory, 1988–90		D4087
Case files, 1988–90		D4091
Exhibit records, 1988–90		D4096
General correspondence of C Caruana, Instructing Solicitor, Northern Territory, 1988–90		D4114
Miscellaneous underlying issues records, 1988–90		D4106
General correspondence of D Allen, Instructing Solicitor, Northern Territory, 1988–90		D4148
Administration files, 1988–90		D4179
Register – list of cases in the Northern Territory, 1988–90		E1167
Transcript folders underlying issues hearings, 1989–90		A8569
General correspondence records – Aboriginal Issues Unit Alice Springs, 1989–90		D4088
Miscellaneous underlying issues – records of the Aboriginal Issues Unit, Alice Springs, 1989–90		D4094
General correspondence records of Commissioner P L Dodson, 1989–90		D4131
List of indexable headings, 1989–90		E1165

National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families, 1995–97

In August 1979 a conference of Australia's social welfare Ministers – Federal and State and Territory – was held in Darwin. The meeting recommended that an Aboriginal child care agency be established. This agency would help to reunite parents and children who were affected by previous policies of forced removal of Aboriginal children. This in turn led to the creation of the KARU (child) independent community controlled child care agency.

To commemorate the International Year of the World's Indigenous People in 1993, the National Archives developed the *Between Two Worlds* exhibition in which a number of former children told their stories. The exhibition toured the country over the next few years.

In October 1994 the *Going Home* conference was held in Darwin, with representatives from every State and Territory meeting to share experiences and to devise strategies to meet the needs of those children and their families affected by government removal policies.

In May 1995 the Federal Attorney-General referred the issue of past and ongoing practices of separation of Indigenous children from their families to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC). The Inquiry was asked to trace past laws, practices and policies involving the removal of children and make recommendations concerning the current adequacy of laws, services and procedures for dealing with people who were affected by those former policies and practices. The HREOC President, Sir Ronald Wilson, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Mick Dodson, took primary responsibility for conducting the hearings of the Inquiry. They were assisted by other HREOC Commissioners and by the Queensland Discrimination Commissioner.

As the records of the inquiry are less than 30 years old and cannot be accessed yet under the Archives Act, any requests for access are referred by the Archives to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, the agency controlling the records.

The Inquiry's report, *Bringing Them Home*, was published in April 1997.¹³ It made a number of wide-ranging recommendations covering reparation, including an acknowledgement and apology, guarantees against repetition, measures of restitution and rehabilitation, and monetary compensation. There were also specific recommendations including a number relating to records held by government and non-government agencies relevant to people wanting to link up with family and community. These recommendations covered freezing the destruction of relevant records, and indexing and arrangements for access.

As part of its response to the Inquiry's recommendations, the Australian Government provided funding to the National Archives to index records, to the National Library for an oral history project, to agencies to develop Indigenous family support and parenting programs, to boost culture and language maintenance programs, to establish a national network of family linkup services, for 50 new counselors, and to expand the network of regional centres for emotional and social wellbeing.¹⁴

With the funding provided, the National Archives developed its *Bringing Them Home* name index, in consultation with Aboriginal people affected by former government removal policies. The index includes over 420,000 entries that were extracted from the most important files relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people held in the Darwin, Melbourne and Canberra offices. Those wishing to have searches of the index undertaken should contact the National Archives' reference service.¹⁵

In response to the recommendations on assisting access to records of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody and HREOC's National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families, the National Archives developed Memoranda of Understanding covering access to records by people affected by former government removal policies. Memoranda were developed between 1997 and 2002 with the Northern Territory, Victorian and South Australian Aboriginal communities.¹⁶

In 1997 the Northern Territory Archives Service signed a similar agreement with the Northern Territory Aboriginal community, known as the *Protocol for Access to Northern Territory Government Records by Aboriginal People Researching Their Families*.

As a result of two record forums held in the Northern Territory that brought together government and non-government organisations that hold records and family history information which may be useful to Aboriginal researchers, the National Archives published *Tracking Families: A Guide to Aboriginal Records Relating to the Northern Territory* in 2006. It covers at a general level relevant records held by government agencies, church groups and various libraries and research centres in the Territory, access arrangements and contact details.¹⁷

National Emergency Response ('the Intervention'), 2007

In August 2006 the Northern Territory Government created the Board of Inquiry into the Protection of Aboriginal Children from Sexual Abuse, which was asked to investigate claims that Aboriginal children, particularly those in remote communities, were being subjected to physical and sexual abuse. The Board's report, *Little Children Are Sacred*, was presented in June 2007. It concluded that the sexual abuse of children in Indigenous communities had reached crisis levels, and demanded that it be designated as an issue of urgent national significance by both the Australian and Territory governments.

The Commonwealth Government response was contained in the *Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and Other Legislation Amendment (Northern Territory National Emergency Response and Other Measures) Act 2007*, passed in August 2007, which provided a package of changes to welfare provisions, law enforcement, land tenure, and other measures to counter claims of abuse and neglect of Aboriginal children throughout the Territory. The measures adopted by the Australian Government are known collectively as 'the Intervention'.

The National Archives currently holds no records relating to the Intervention.

Conclusion

Initial Commonwealth policies involving the administration of Aboriginal people were based on the notion that Aboriginal Australians were a doomed race. Consequently, early policies revolved around protection, and the separation of half-caste children. As the years passed the policies underwent several key changes. It was not until the 1960s, and in response to widespread support from outside of the Northern Territory, that Aboriginal people were given the same rights as everyone else when it came to voting, having title to land, and to being included in the census.

Notes

- ¹ The terms 'half-caste', and sometimes 'quadroon' and 'octoroon' were used at the time to describe a person of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage. These terms appear regularly in item titles and in correspondence. They have been retained where they appear in the original item titles in accordance with the usual archival practice and because, in themselves, they give information about the attitudes of the time and the context in which the records were created.
- ² Preliminary Report on the Aborigines of the Northern Territory, *Bulletin of the Northern Territory*, number 7 (Melbourne, July 1913).
- ³ Australia. Report on the Aborigines and Half-Castes of Central Australia and North Australia, 1928; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1929), volume II, pp. 1159–1225.
- ⁴ Australia. *Commonwealth Government's Policy with respect to Aborigines* (Canberra, 1939).
- ⁵ NAA: F1,1957/367. Patrol officer E J (Ted) Egan, 27 September 1957.
- ⁶ The work of patrol officers has been described by Jeremy Long, *The Go-Betweens: Patrol Officers in Aboriginal Affairs in the Northern Territory, 1936–74* (Darwin, 1992).
- ⁷ Register of Wards, *Northern Territory Gazette*, 19B, 13 May 1957.
- ⁸ Rowena McDonald, *Between Two Worlds: The Commonwealth Government and the Removal of Aboriginal Children of Part Descent in the Northern Territory* (Alice Springs, 1995), p. 53.
- ⁹ Australia. Report from the Select Committee on Voting Rights of Aborigines, October 1961; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1961), volume II, pp. 1391–406.
- ¹⁰ Australia. Aboriginal Land Rights Commission, Second Report, April 1974; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1974), volume 1, paper 1, pp. 131–2.
- ¹¹ NAA: A12909, submission 314, Implementation of party policy on Aboriginal land rights, May 1976.
- ¹² Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody: Interim Report, *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1989), volume 2, paper 20; National Report, volumes 1–4, *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1991), volume 12; National Report, volume 5; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1991), volume 13.
- ¹³ Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families* (Sydney, 1997).
- ¹⁴ 'Bringing Them Home': *Government Initiatives*: Statement tabled in Commonwealth Parliament out of session on 16 December 1997.
- ¹⁵ See Fact Sheet 175 – Bringing Them Home name index on the National Archives' website: www.naa.gov.au.
- ¹⁶ See Fact Sheet 114 – Memorandum of Understanding with Northern Territory Aboriginal people; Fact Sheet 205 – Memorandum of Understanding with the Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency; and Fact Sheet 209 – Memorandum of Understanding with SA Indigenous people on the National Archives' website: www.naa.gov.au
- ¹⁷ National Archives of Australia, *Tracking Families* (Canberra, 2006).

9 Primary Industries

From the beginning of the Commonwealth era in 1911 primary industries were regarded as the key to development, growth and closer settlement in the Northern Territory. The plan was for the pastoral industry to, firstly, occupy and develop rural lands, and at a later stage the Commonwealth would resume some of those lands for more intensive development and occupation by increased numbers of settlers. The resumed land would be used for mixed farming or agricultural purposes.

Agriculture was seen as being a major component in the path to closer settlement. Yet many initiatives in the ensuing years designed to promote agriculture ended disastrously. The distinctly seasonal nature of the Top End's weather, poor quality soils, profusion of white ants, and distance to major markets all conspired to retard the development of agriculture and other primary industries.

Lands and Survey Branches

In 1912 the Commonwealth established the Lands Branch under the direction of George Ryland. It had responsibility for administering Northern Territory lands, both town and rural. A Survey Branch, with Theo Day as Chief Surveyor, was also established. It was anticipated that Territory lands would be surveyed and then classified by the newly created Land Classification Board before being made available for leasing.¹

The vast size of the Territory meant that surveys were limited and it was generally the case that for some time the Commonwealth remained ignorant of much of the Territory's lands and their value.

Wells' survey of the Territory, 1907

Some survey activity, however, had been carried out by South Australia. Following the occupation of pastoral lands in the north-west of the Territory during the early 1880s, much uncertainty existed among property managers about where their boundaries commenced and ended. This was known to cause friction and feuds, as the locations of waterholes, yards, out-stations, and favourable fattening portions of leases on large holdings were often disputed by contiguous leaseholders.

The South Australian Government appointed Lawrence Wells to undertake a trigonometrical survey to define the position of that portion of the Territory between Pine Creek on the Overland Telegraph Line, and the Western Australian border. Wells' survey expedition left Adelaide in September 1905 for Port Darwin, and from there by coastal steamer to the Victoria River landing some 100 kilometres from the mouth of the estuary. A depot was formed on the Wickham River close to Victoria River Downs station homestead. From here the work commenced, taking in the Victoria River Downs, Delamere and Willeroo properties to the confluence of the Fergusson and Edith Rivers, and the Katherine and Daly Rivers.

Wells returned to Adelaide early in 1908 to compile plans of the work done over the previous two years, before returning to the Territory later that year to complete the task of charting north-western pastoral leases. His expedition erected 71 trigonometrical beacons (trigs) and an area of about 32,000 square miles was mapped in three years.

Selected records relating to wells' Survey of the northern territory

National Archives, Darwin

Book of correspondence compiled by L A Wells during his survey of the Northern Territory, 1905–08 E1649, Volume 1

Correspondence and data relating to L A Wells expedition to the Northern Territory, 1905–08 E1650

World War I and the Great Depression meant that the Commonwealth undertook little survey work in the Territory. At the urging of Herbert Gepp, in 1934 steps were taken to mount an aerial, geological and geophysical survey of northern Australia. This involved the Commonwealth as well as Queensland and Western Australia. The work was undertaken by the Royal Australian Air Force, and continued in the Northern Territory until 1941. The survey resulted in a wealth of geological information, which proved of value to the mining industry.

At the end of World War II formal surveys of pastoral properties were needed prior to new leases being issued to meet the increased demand for rural land. Surveyors were in short supply, not just in the Territory but across the country. Therefore a class of cadet surveyor was created, with the idea that local administration staff would be apprenticed to a qualified surveyor, and trained by them. The first four cadet surveyors, appointed in 1949, included Vern O'Brien, who later became Director of Lands, and Peter Wells, who later became Northern Territory Surveyor-General.

Selected records relating to the lands and Survey functions
LANDS

National Archives, Darwin

Correspondence files – 'L' (Lands) prefix, 1975–79 E236

Northern Territory Archives Service

Correspondence files relating to land sales, reservations and townships, 1887–1949 NTRS3345

Correspondence files – 'L' (Lands) prefix, 1924–90 NTRS2500

SURVEY

National Archives, Darwin

Maps, plans, and charts regarding the survey function 1945–97 E1594

Field/level/survey books, 1960–97 E1552

Northern Territory Archives Service

Correspondence relating to surveys, 1884–1934 NTRS2660

Register of plans, reports and field books, 1912–15 NTRS2682

Correspondence files – 'S' (Survey) prefix, 1942–72 F649

LAND BOARDS

National Archives, Canberra

Minutes of meetings – Northern Territory Land Board, 1925–38 A1, 1938/1181

Northern Territory Archives Service

Land Classification Board – Minute book, 1912–24 NTRS2821

Land Board [I] Minute book, 1924–27 NTRS2668

Pastoral industry

When the Commonwealth acquired the Northern Territory in 1911 the pastoral industry was the only industry of any note. All pastoral lands were leased under various South Australian Acts, the terms of which the Commonwealth was obliged to honour.² The *Crown Lands Ordinance 1912*, introduced by the Commonwealth had different terms and conditions from those applying under South Australian legislation. All leases were of a fixed term, the maximum being 42 years. In addition, in 1912 the Commonwealth introduced annual grazing licences as an interim measure pending detailed surveys and classification of the land. Individual files were created for every lease or licence.

By 1923 there were 470 pastoral leases, with 121 leases held under the 1890 South Australian Act, 90 leases under the 1899 South Australian Act, and 259 leases under the 1912 Crown Lands Ordinance.³ There were also 107 grazing licences.⁴

In an effort to end the confusion and bring all leases under the one piece of legislation the then Minister, Senator George Pearce, introduced a new Ordinance in 1924 with conditions intended to encourage pastoralists to give up their existing leases and transfer to new ones. Some pastoralists transferred to the new leases, but not all.

While the new ordinance contained a number of provisions favourable to cattlemen, it also contained a provision that the Commonwealth had the right to resume 25 per cent of pastoral lands in 1935 and another 25 per cent in 1945. The Commonwealth's intention was to break up some of the large under-utilised estates and encourage their occupancy by smaller, resident settlers, thus meeting its cherished goal of closer settlement.

Although the resumption clause was clearly known when new leases were issued, when the time came for the resumptions in 1935 and 1945 they were strongly resisted.

A Board of Inquiry led by William Payne and John Fletcher was appointed in 1937. It recommended the introduction of pastoral development leases by which pastoralists would be offered long-term leases in return for an agreed program of property improvements. World War II delayed the introduction of the new leases, which were supported by the Government, although there was opposition from cattlemen. Vestey's took out the first pastoral development lease for its Wave Hill property in 1954.

Although pastoral development leases led to improvements on many properties, there was, nevertheless, the recognition that in the final years of a lease, even a long-term lease, cattlemen would be reluctant to spend money on their properties. To resolve the dilemma in 1967 the Government introduced rolling leases. These were of 50 years duration, but had a provision for renegotiation during the 20–30 year period. Effectively, the new leases were indefinite. Rolling leases were in effect at the end of the Commonwealth era in 1978.

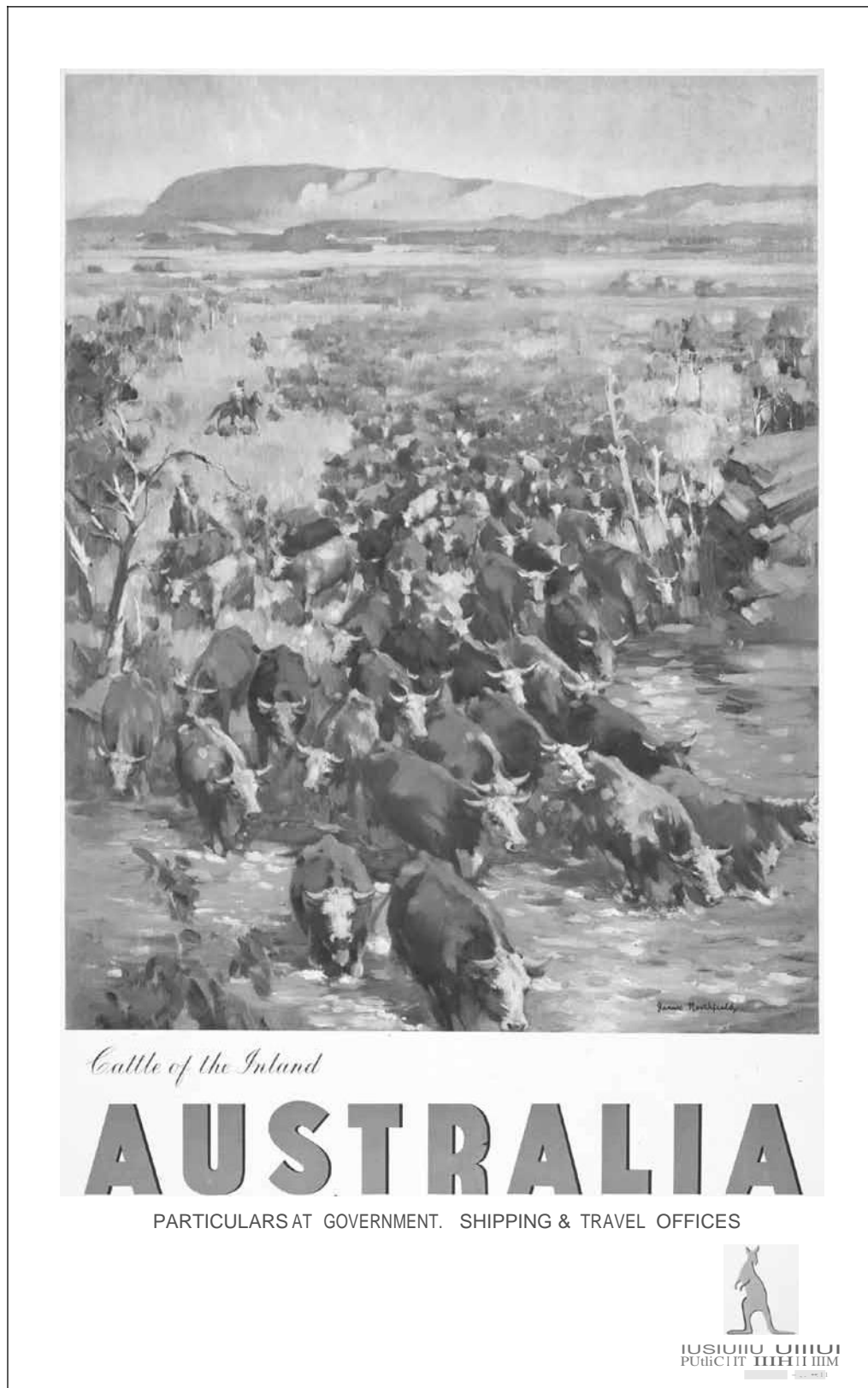


Image 25. A promotional poster of the Australian National Travel Association showing cattle droving through the inland of Australia near Alice Springs, 1932.
 NM: M948, 46. Courtesy James Northfield Heritage Art Trust

Selected records relating to the pastoral industry in the commonwealth era		
National Archives, Canberra		
Grazing licence files, 1914–55		A89
National Archives, Darwin		
Records relating to stock and stock routes in the Northern Territory, 1911–47		E1152
Papers relating to pastoral acquisitions and resumptions, 1933–44		F59
Northern Territory Archives Service		
Pastoral lease files, 1897–1965		NTRS2667
Pastoral lease files, 1913–77		NTRS3346
Pastoral lease files, 1915–94		NTRS246
Pastoral lease files, Central Australia, 1915–67		NTRS3349
Grazing licence files, 1912–80		NTRS3347
Grazing licence files, Alice Springs, 1948–99		NTRS608
Grazing licence files, 1952–85		NTRS472

Animal Industry Branch

Prior to World War II, there were few Lands and Survey staff in the Northern Territory. There were also insufficient veterinary officers, apart from the position of a Chief Inspector of Stock, first occupied by J C Lewis in 1912. Attention was usually only given to the interstate movement of cattle, and little regard was paid to matters involving the control of disease, animal husbandry and educative matters.⁵

When the Army took over veterinary functions from the civil administration in 1942, it assembled a team comprising a Chief Veterinary Officer and six veterinary officers. After the war the Commonwealth recognised the need for a designated veterinary branch within the Administration, and in July 1946 created the Animal Industry Branch with Lionel Rose as its Director.⁶ It took control of stock routes and bores, and was equipped to provide a range of veterinary and research services. Stock route inspectors were recruited to manage the stock routes, and to monitor the activities of drovers. This latter task was especially needed as there are numerous references in Commonwealth documents to the damage caused by careless drovers as they took cattle to market, including fires, soil erosion, destruction of fences, and maltreatment of bores leading to substantial water loss. An annual droving program was also introduced from 1947 to regulate the movement of cattle along the stock routes.⁷

Selected records of the animal industry branch		
Northern Territory Archives Service		
Correspondence files – 'R' (Reports) prefix, 1913–43		NTRS3364
Correspondence files, 1924–90		NTRS2500
Correspondence files – 'S' (Stock) prefix, 1927–44		NTRS3365
Correspondence files, 1939–73		NTRS3445

Leasehold versus freehold

Throughout its tenure of the Northern Territory the Commonwealth consistently held to fixed-term leases, particularly when it came to pastoral lands. When its administration of the Territory ceased in 1978 all pastoral lands were held on leasehold; there was neither freehold nor perpetual leases. The advantage of maintaining leasehold meant that it provided the Commonwealth with the opportunity of reviewing development policies from time to time, implementing changes if needed. It was Administrator James Archer who expressed this view succinctly when he said:

the original framers of the legislation...appreciated the fact that future development in all matters associated with the pastoral industry could result in the necessity for a fresh approach from time to time possibly involving altered lease conditions and a reduction on areas, they provided a shorter term for pastoral than either for town or agricultural leases, to enable a periodic review to be made.⁸

The Commonwealth's opposition to corporate freehold or perpetual leases was due to its concern that aggregation would follow, with the result that properties would be accumulated under one ownership to the exclusion of individual owners, development would be stifled, and land monopolies created whose primary aim was the retention of land until rising values enabled substantial profits to be made on subdivision and resale. The best means of preventing this was through fixed-term leasehold tenure.

After self-government in 1978 pastoralists lobbied the new Northern Territory Government for freehold tenure. The Government appointed a committee of review under the chairmanship of Brian Martin in 1980, which reported later that year.⁹ It rejected freehold, but recommended that perpetual leases be made available. The Government accepted the recommendation and the first perpetual leases were granted in 1983.

Most pastoral lands in the Northern Territory today are held under perpetual lease.

Agricultural industry

From the beginning of the Commonwealth era agriculture was deemed to be part of the Territory's settlement and growth.¹⁰ It was a key plank in the Commonwealth's policy of closer settlement. Yet the Commonwealth would ultimately repeat mistakes made during the South Australian era when it failed to recognise some of the Territory's disadvantages, including the distinct seasonal nature of the Top End, the quality of its soil, and insect pests.

Walter Campbell visited Darwin between May and September 1911 to advise the administration on suitable sites for experimental areas on which to test the Territory's agricultural possibilities. He selected sites for three experimental farms, although only two (at Batchelor and Daly River) became operational. Both farms began in 1912, and by 1920 both were expensive failures.

In 1912 an Agricultural Department was established in Darwin under the direction of William Clarke. The Department was short-lived, merging with the Lands and Survey Branch in 1914. It investigated the growing of crops such as peanuts, coffee and bananas. Yet by 1920 it was noted that there were multiple threats to agriculture: the periodicity of rainfall, the fact that Territory soils were not conducive to intense cultivation, and the profusion of white ants. Despite these problems, it was still felt that excellent opportunities existed for a small number of agriculturists to meet the needs of the local Darwin market by producing fruits, vegetables, and fodder. There was also potential for producing fodder crops for livestock.¹¹

Agriculture was given separate status as a branch in 1931 under the control of an Inspector of Agriculture. This branch was also responsible for the operation of the Botanic Gardens, an herbarium, library and plant quarantine. It was abolished in 1947, before being recreated as the Agriculture Branch in 1955.

In 1966 the Agriculture Branch and Animal Industry Branches were amalgamated.

Advances to Settlers Board

In order to encourage settlers to the Northern Territory the Commonwealth established the Advances to Settlers Board in 1913. Under the *Advance to Settlers Ordinance 1913* the Board could advance money for making improvements to properties, for purchasing implements, plant or machinery approved for use on settlers holdings, for stocking their holdings and, for paying off mortgages or charges on their holdings. It could advance funding up to a maximum of £800 for property improvements such as clearing, felling, logging, fencing, draining, development of reservoirs, and the construction of permanent buildings.

Although well intentioned, the Board made a number of poor choices when it came to advancing money, and considerable funding was wasted with little to show for it.

Primary Producers Board

In 1923 the Board was replaced by the Primary Producers Board. The new Board was established following Minister George Pearce's visit to the Territory. The intention was to relieve the number of destitute people living in Darwin and its surrounds by advancing them small loans to enable them to be self-supporting and productive members of the community.

The functions of the Board were to give financial assistance to producers in matters of machinery, fencing and like materials and also to provide rations for limited periods, as well as seeds, fishing nets and boats, as required, and, for the timber industry and other purposes the Board made advances. In its first year of operation the Board was able to provide loans totalling £5,000; £4,000 for agricultural purposes and £1,000 for mining.¹²

Selected records of the Settlers board and primary producers board

National Archives, Canberra

Advances to Settlers Ordinance, Northern Territory, 1913–15	A3, NT1916/22
Regulations under Advances to Settlers Ordinance, 1913–15	A3, NT1916/1441
Granting of assistance to settlers under Advances to Settlers Ordinance, 1919	A3, NT1919/530

Northern Territory Archives Service

Register of leases, payments, correspondence, and files, 1912–50	NTRS2869
Mortgage contracts, 1914–28	NTRS2662
Mortgages, 1914–15	NTRS2663
Bills of sale registered, 1914	NTRS2664
Bills of sale unregistered, 1915	NTRS2665
Correspondence files, 1922–76	F114
Minutes of meetings, 1931–76	F123
Policy files relating to the Encouragement of Primary Production Ordinance, 1955–76	NTRS418

World War II had a dramatic impact on the Northern Territory's primary industries. More than 70,000 defence personnel were stationed there, and this demonstrated that both the pastoral and agricultural industries could be successfully maintained if given sufficient support and encouragement.

Recognising the value of research and development that might assist the Territory's agricultural industry, the Commonwealth embarked on establishing a number of post-war experimental and research stations, located at Katherine in 1952, Berrimah (on the outskirts of Darwin) in 1956, and Beatrice Hill (east of Darwin on the road to Kakadu) in 1959.

Humpty Doo rice project

In 1955, after experimentation by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, a joint Australian-American company called Territory Rice Limited was formed with a plan to produce rice on an irrigated area near the Adelaide River at Humpty Doo. The plan was a complete failure due to several factors, including an invasion of magpie geese and soil salinity levels. The project was abandoned in 1962.

There was, however, one positive outcome: Fogg Dam was established to provide water for the project. It survives today as a thriving wildlife sanctuary, and is also home to one of the largest colony of snakes anywhere in Australia.

Selected records relating to the humpty doo rice project	
National Archives, Canberra	
Allan Chase proposal for development of rice industry Northern Territory, 1953–56	A452, 1953/530 parts 1 to 7
Rice development Northern Territory policy, 1953–65	A4940, C857 parts 1 and 2
National Archives, Darwin	
Agriculture rice Northern Territory, 1953–54	F1, 1953/862
Agriculture rice Northern Territory, 1954–55	F1, 1954/824 parts 1 and 2
Rice growing Northern Territory Chase syndicate, 1954–55	F425, C98 parts 1 and 2
Agriculture rice Northern Territory, 1955–57	F1, 1955/550 parts 1 and 2
Geese control in rice areas Northern Territory, 1955–57	F1, 1955/1272
Rice growing Northern Territory Chase syndicate, 1955–60	F425, C106 parts 1 and 2
Territory Rice Limited general correspondence, 1956–58	F1, 1956/1350
Geese control in rice areas Northern Territory, 1957–58	F1, 1957/553
Territory Rice Limited general correspondence, 1959–63	F1, 1964/884

Committee to Enquire into the Prospects of Agriculture in the Northern Territory

Paul Hasluck, the Minister responsible for the Northern Territory, was undeterred, and in 1959 he announced the formation of a committee to enquire into the prospects of agriculture in the Territory. The committee was under the direction of Howard Forster, and had the task of surveying the state of agriculture in the Territory and reporting on the prospects of promoting agricultural settlement on an economic basis. Essentially the committee was appointed to provide answers for the government on the scope for future closer settlement in the Northern Territory.

The committee presented its report in November 1960. It argued that there was cautious optimism for agricultural prospects for mixed farming and grazing, with the main activity being fattening of cattle on improved pastures and grown fodder crops, and rice growing. It recommended the allocation of agricultural land on a freehold basis, rather than the leasing system then in place. As far as pastoral lands were concerned the committee said that 'the controls made feasible by leasehold should remain an essential arm of government policy for a while yet'.¹³ The committee suggested the establishment of a series of pilot farms to determine the economics of farm-scale rice production and, if successful, settlement schemes could then follow.

The government accepted the recommendations and in 1963 the Freehold Titles Ordinance was introduced to provide for town lands and some agricultural lands to be made available on a freehold basis.

Selected records relating to the committee to enquire into the prospects of agriculture in the northern territory	
National Archives, Canberra	
Committee to enquire into the prospects of agriculture in the Northern Territory, 1959–60	A1422, 12/1/26 parts 1 and 2
Development of land clearing in the Northern Territory as recommended by the Forster Committee, 1959–61	A452, 1962/8187
National Archives, Darwin	
Committee constituted by the Minister to report on the promotion of agriculture in the Northern Territory, 1960–62	F1, 1965/493
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Copies of the report of the Committee to enquire into the prospects of agriculture in the Northern Territory, 1960	NTRS2878

Marrakai pilot farms

In the aftermath of the Forster report a policy of more intensive investigations of crops, improved pastures, and land potential was promoted in two areas of the Territory: the coastal plains between Adelaide River and the East Alligator River (east of Darwin), and the Katherine/Daly Rivers basin (south-west of Darwin).

The government also accepted the Forster Committee's recommendation for the establishment of pilot farms to assess the suitability of cattle fattening and rice production. Initially it was intended that there would be three farms – two rice/cattle properties each of approximately 10,000 acres, and one cattle property of approximately 15,000 acres. The farms would be located in an area known as Marrakai near the Adelaide River. Cabinet approved the establishment of the farms in April 1964.¹⁴

The properties were operated on a leased basis with the Commonwealth advancing funding through the Primary Producers Board. In the first two years of operation it was shown that rice growing was an uncertain proposition. The success of the plan also depended on the availability of suitable store cattle at reasonable prices for fattening on the farms. With export abattoirs operating in the Territory cattle prices increased considerably. Pilot farmers would have to change from rice production and the fattening of purchased store cattle to cattle enterprises based on breeding and fattening.

The operating costs of the farms began to increase dramatically. In 1966 Cabinet accepted an interdepartmental committee report to surrender one farm that had been working on rice production, and continue the project for another five years with the remaining two farms concentrating on cattle breeding and fattening. The government agreed to provide \$385,000 (additional to the \$437,000 provided to 30 June 1966) over the next five years. The project would be reviewed in 1969.¹⁵

The farms continued until November 1972. High capital costs and low levels of productivity meant that the farms could not pay their way. Farm debts continued to rise. Appeals from the farmers concerned delayed the closure. In 1976 an interdepartmental committee established to review the scheme described it as a 'dismal failure'. In February 1977 the Territory's Minister, Evan Adermann, recommended to Cabinet that the scheme be abandoned and the farmers' debts waived. Cabinet approved the recommendation on 22 March 1977.¹⁶

Selected records relating to the marrakai pilot farms		
National Archives, Canberra		
Monthly progress reports – Marrakai pilot farms, 1965–66		A452, NT1965/6390
Monthly progress reports – Marrakai pilot farms, 1966		A452, NT1966/2096
National Archives, Darwin		
Establishment of pilot farms – Northern Territory, 1961–63		F1, 1961/2510
Establishment of pilot farms – Northern Territory, 1963–64		F1, 1963/619
Pilot farms advisory committee, 1964–65		F1, 1964/2256
Reports on Marrakai pilot farms, 1964–66		F1, 1964/637
Marrakai pilot farms – policy, 1964–66		F1, 1964/2498
Marrakai pilot farms – policy, 1967–76		F1, 1972/3184
Report on Marrakai pilot farms, 1969		F1, 1970/1747
Northern Territory Archives Service		
Marrakai pilot farms, 1963–65		F817, J1964/66 part 1
Pilot farms – Marrakai, 1964–69		F817, J1964/88 part 2

Agriculture in the Northern Territory was never as prolific or financially viable as the Commonwealth hoped it would be, nor did it prove to be a key component for closer settlement. Nevertheless, after a string of failures in the Top End, it is ironic that Darwin is now home to thriving fruit and flower growing industries.

Selected records of the agricultural branch	
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Correspondence files, 1910–41	NTRS896
Correspondence concerning agricultural leases, 1913–81	NTRS3340
Agricultural lease files, 1922–89,	NTRS253
Correspondence files, unregistered, 1970–78	NTRS1590

Establishment of the Water Use Branch, 1955

The period following the World War II saw a marked upsurge in the size and structure of the Territory's administration. Apart from the creation of the Animal Industry Branch in 1946 and the Agriculture Branch in 1955, a Water Use Branch was also created in 1955. Phelts argued that underdeveloped water supplies were one reason settlement and primary industries took so long to develop in the Territory.¹⁷ In the early years while the Commonwealth provided some funding for bores on stock routes, it generally did not assist pastoralists undertake boring on their properties.

The Commonwealth assumed responsibility for the provision and maintenance of all bores on stock routes in May 1924.¹⁸ The number of bores increased, albeit slowly, from 63 in 1911 to 87 in 1939.¹⁹ The number further increased during the war and afterwards, and by April 1959 there were 174 bores, extending over a series of 19 stock routes.²⁰

In pre-war years most pastoralists relied on surface waters as there was little support by the Commonwealth for the provision of bores on individual properties. After his visit to the Territory in 1935, Minister Thomas Paterson introduced a series of concessions to encourage the construction of additional bores, which included 50 per cent rebate of the cost of bore materials and their freight to the Territory. The 1937 Payne–Fletcher Board of Inquiry described the concessions as 'exceptionally generous', and they were abolished in 1939.²¹

Following his visit to the Territory in late 1945, Minister Herbert Johnson acknowledged the importance of water to future pastoral expansion, and the role that the Commonwealth had to play in providing it, and he introduced a developmental bore scheme in 1946, by which the Commonwealth provided two bores on all new leases, with pastoralists repaying the cost over 20 years.²² A drought relief bore scheme was also introduced in 1952, whereby the Commonwealth provided bores on drought affected properties on a similar financial arrangement.²³

Ultimately it was recognised that the significance of water to the Territory's expansion was such that a separate administrative branch was required, and the Water Use Branch was established in 1955 under Director Robert Eden. The Branch was responsible for surveying, planning, development, regulation, control and general administration of water resources, and continued for the remainder of the Commonwealth era.²⁴

The two bore schemes referred to above were eventually amalgamated from April 1961 when the *Water Supplies Development Ordinance 1960*, came into effect. Under the new Ordinance the Administration provided pastoralists with technical advice and construction facilities relating to water development, and met the cost of both successful and 'dud' bores. Between 1961 and 1972, a total of 555 successful bores were established, and the Commonwealth also funded 569 unsuccessful bores; the latter costing \$1.2 million.²⁵

The Water Use Branch continued throughout the remainder of the Commonwealth era.

Selected records relating to the water use branch and water legislation	
National Archives, Canberra	
Water Ordinance – Northern Territory, 1935–44	A432, 1938/153
Water Supplies Development Ordinance – Northern Territory, 1958–60	A452, 1958/3191
National Archives, Darwin	
Department of Works – job files, 1946–90	E121
Department of Works – correspondence files, 1951–ongoing	E125
Control of Water Ordinance, water resources, administration legislation and Ordinances, 1956–76	E1035, WA/24/4
Correspondence files, 1958–80	E1035
Water Supplies Assistance Ordinance, proposed policy, 1958–62	F1, 1959/1406
Water Supplies Development Ordinance, 1960–68	F1, 1965/2038

Other rural industries

Fishing and pearling

The coastal waters of Darwin and the north of Western Australia have long been home to a prized fishing and pearling industry. From 1911 these industries were regulated by the *Fisheries Ordinance 1911* initially under the supervision of Darwin harbour master, but from 1923 under the Inspector of Fisheries.

Pearlers from south-east Asia had been harvesting pearls and pearl shells in Australian territorial waters from the late 19th century. After them came pearlers from Japan and a thriving industry developed. With the advent of the Commonwealth era, foreign nationals working in Australian coastal waters were cause for concern, given the introduction of the 'White Australia Policy' from 1901. In 1930 a Pearling Ordinance was implemented which placed the industry under the control of the Chief Pearling Inspector. The Ordinance provided for the licensing of pearlers and their vessels. Pearling captains had to pay a bond of £250 for every ten foreign nationals they employed which would only be refunded once the foreign nationals had returned to their home countries at the end of their contracts.

Each year the Inspector of Fisheries and the Chief Pearling Inspector would prepare a report summarising activities for inclusion in the Administrator's annual report on the Northern Territory.

Selected records relating to the fishing and pearling industries		
National Archives, Canberra		
Sub-Collector of Customs Darwin – instructions regarding pearling, 1925–30		A1, 1930/880
Broome Pearlers Committee – recruiting by Darwin pearlers, 1928–29		A1, 1928/11303
Pearling Ordinance, Northern Territory, 1930–37		A659, 1941/1/2494
Local labour – employment in pearling industry at Darwin, 1933		A1, 1933/2419
Pearling Ordinance – Northern Territory, 1938–56		A452, 1954/547 part 1
Appointment of the Chief Pearling Inspector, Northern Territory, 1953–55		A452, 1955/37
Pearling Ordinance – Northern Territory, 1956–61		A452, 1957/871
National Archives, Darwin		
Pearling Ordinance, circa 1900–circa 66		E68, DP341 parts 1 and 2
Customs register of (3) boats working in the pearling industry (4) arrivals and departures of indentured pearlers (5) indentured pearlers, 1902–27		E239
Customs register of boats pearling/trepanging/fishing, 1912–49		E1033
Pearling Ordinance and regulations, 1936–52		F1, 1949/122
Pearling Ordinance control of indentured labour Commonwealth proposals, 1951		F425, C63
Pearling Ordinance and regulations, 1954–56		F1, 1955/118
Pearling Ordinance and regulations, 1960–65		F1, 1965/3523
Regulations under the Pearling and Pearl Culture Ordinance, 1964–67		F1, 1974/4499
Northern Territory Archives Service		
Unregistered correspondence files of the Chief Pearling Inspector, 1946–57		F1429
Unregistered correspondence regarding pearling and fisheries, 1958–70		F1430

Timber

In order to safeguard the Territory's timber resources the Commonwealth introduced a licensing system requiring the registration of those wishing to harvest timber or remove it from Crown lands. The licensing system applied even to lands that had been leased for pastoral purposes. The system was administered by the Lands Branch.

In 1959 a separate Forestry and Timber Bureau was established as a dedicated branch within the Administration to manage the Territory's timber and forest resources. The *Forestry Ordinance 1959* was implemented. This provided a dedicated system for regulating the harvesting of forest products and the payments that were to be made.

Selected records relating to the timber industry	
National Archives, Canberra	
Forestry Ordinance – Northern Territory, 1958–60	A452, 1958/2980
National Archives, Darwin	
Correspondence files, 1954–67	E1385
Forestry Ordinance, 1955–58	F1, 1956/1866
Forestry Ordinance, 1958–61	F1, 1958/1906
Forestry Ordinance, 1961–64	F1, 1962/904
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Register of timber and other miscellaneous licences, 1889–1930	NTRS2673
Timber licence files, Borroloola, 1919–21	NTRS2670
Timber licence files, 1920–22	NTRS2671
Timber and miscellaneous licence files, 1922–78	NTRS2672
Timber licence files, 1924–25	NTRS2674

Conclusion

As part of its management of the Northern Territory's rural industries the Commonwealth relied on the pastoral industry more than it should have. It hoped the industry would pave the way to closer settlement, but the hope was never fully realised. Initially insufficient attention was paid to the Territory's disadvantages of climate and distance, but following a period of extensive research in the 1950s and afterwards and, following a period of increasing financial commitment, the Territory's rural industries gradually began to expand and develop.

Notes

- ¹ The history of the Lands and Survey Branches in the Northern Territory has been researched by Geoffrey Helyar, *They Led the Way: A Short Account of the Lands and Survey Department of the Northern Territory, 1869–1978* (Darwin, 1990).
- ² The history of the pastoral industry in the Commonwealth era has been researched by the author in his PhD thesis, Edward Ling, 'Blame and Martyrs: The Commonwealth Government's Administration of the Northern Territory's Pastoral Industry, 1911–1978', Charles Darwin University (2010).
- ³ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, volume 103, Senate, 13 July 1923, pp. 1089–90.
- ⁴ Northern Territory Report of the Administrator for the Year ended 30th June 1923, p. 16; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1923–24), volume IV, pp. 1909–35.
- ⁵ NAA: A2700, volume 14, submission 792, NT medical and veterinary services, 14 February 1945.
- ⁶ NTAS: F1439, 1950/143, Organisation and establishment Animal Industry Section.
- ⁷ In December 1951 Rose prepared a document that summarised veterinary services in the Territory both before and after the establishment of the Animal Industry Branch; NAA Darwin: F1, 1951/747 part 2, Cattle industry Northern Territory.
- ⁸ NAA: A452, 1956/149, Crown Lands Ordinances Northern Territory, 20 January 1960.
- ⁹ Northern Territory. *Inquiry into Pastoral Land Tenure in the Northern Territory* (Darwin, October 1980).

- ¹⁰ The history of agriculture in the Northern Territory has been researched by Ian Hillock, 'Rethinking Colonial Endeavour in relation to Agricultural Settlement in the Northern Territory, 1863–1945: A Critical Perspective', PhD thesis, Charles Darwin University (2005).
- ¹¹ Northern Territory Annual Report of the Acting Administrator for the Year ended 30th June 1920, pp. 14–15; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1920–21), volume III, pp. 1689–768.
- ¹² Northern Territory Report of Administrator for the Year ended 30th June 1924, pp. 24–5; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1925), volume II, pp. 2535–62.
- ¹³ Australia. *Prospects of Agriculture in the Northern Territory, Report of the Forster Committee* (Canberra, 1960), p. 17.
- ¹⁴ NAA: A5827, volume 4/agendum119, Northern Territory establishment of farms on leases held by Adelaide River Limited, 6 April 1964. Cabinet approved the submission on 23 April 1964.
- ¹⁵ NAA: A5841, 173, Northern Territory pilot farms Marrakai, 2 May 1966. Cabinet approved the submission on 12 May 1966.
- ¹⁶ NAA: A12909, 1073, Northern Territory Marrakai pilot farms, 28 February 1977.
- ¹⁷ Beverley Margaret Sydney James Phelts, 'Water and the Economic Development of the Northern Territory, 1824–2000', PhD thesis, Charles Darwin University (2005).
- ¹⁸ NAA: A659, 1942/1/7640, Northern Territory – water bores on stock routes.
- ¹⁹ The 1911 figure was provided by George Pearce in a speech to Parliament; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, volume XCIX, 12 July 1922, p. 308. The 1939 figure was provided by Phelts, 'Water and the Economic Development of the Northern Territory', p. 85.
- ²⁰ NAA: E125, 1976/1251, Boring and stock routes Northern Territory history.
- ²¹ Australia. Board of Inquiry appointed to Inquire into the Land and Land Industries of the Northern Territory of Australia, Report, p. 18, paragraph 92; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1937–40), volume III, pp. 813–925.
- ²² NAA: A2700, volume 24, submission 1093, Bores on stock routes, 27 February 1946.
- ²³ NAA: A4905, 267, Drought relief – Northern Territory pastoral industry, 1 May 1952.
- ²⁴ A brief history of this branch will be found in Northern Territory. Water Resources History Committee. *Water Resources Forty Years On, A History of the Northern Territory Water Resources Division* (Darwin, 1998).
- ²⁵ NTAS: NTRS2500, L506 part 3, Pastoral leases general, 1973.

10 Customs, Immigration and Population

The Northern Territory has a small and widely scattered population occupying a large land mass. It was sometimes a transitory population: in the Commonwealth era public servants would often be posted to the Territory for a term of not more than two or three years. Other people would come, stay for a few years, and then either remain permanently or return 'down south'.

The Northern Territory was never a destination for British convicts nor did it have to cope with the large numbers of overseas migrants that the southern States experienced. Yet there had been a consistent flow of migrants even before European settlement.

Macassans from the Indonesian island of Sulawesi seeking trepang travelled to the Northern Territory from the 15th century onwards and traded with local Aboriginal people. Chinese immigrants in search of gold came from the 1870s onwards. Later Japanese pearlers began to arrive.

Most early white arrivals were prospective settlers who came to Darwin from South Australia or other colonies. Their numbers increased considerably with the discovery of gold in the 1870s. Others came to work on the overland telegraph line (completed in 1872) or the railway line from Darwin to Pine Creek (completed in 1889).

In 1911 the Territory's non-Aboriginal population was 3,271, a figure which included 2,185 Europeans and 1,302 Asiatics. It was estimated that there were approximately 50,000 Aboriginal people.¹ The population in 2011 is estimated at 220,000.²

Sub-Collector of Customs

After South Australia assumed control of the Northern Territory in 1863 it passed legislation to suspend the levying and collection of customs duties. These were reimposed in 1882 – the year Alfred Searcy, a Sub-Collector of Customs for South Australia, took up his post in Darwin.

Prior to Federation a number of centres were established for the collection of import duties into the Territory, but Port Darwin remained the principal collection point, with 97 per cent of duties collected there. Customs became a federal responsibility after Federation in 1901, but, the Sub-Collector in Darwin remained under the jurisdiction of the Collector of Customs in Adelaide until 28 June 1916. This was when customs control of the Northern Territory was transferred to the Collector of Customs, Brisbane. Control of excise of that part of the Northern Territory south of the 20th parallel of latitude, however, remained vested in the South Australian branch of whichever Commonwealth department had responsibility for the customs function.

The first Commonwealth Sub-Collector of Customs based in Darwin was William George Stretton who held the position until his retirement in 1913.

In 1967 the office of Sub-Collector of Customs, Darwin was reclassified to Collector and in March 1968 the Northern Territory was formally proclaimed as a full customs collectorate, which reported directly to Canberra.

Records created by the Sub-Collector dealt with the collection of customs duties, payment of fines and prosecutions for avoidance of duties, seizing of prohibited goods, and the registration of vessels using Northern Territory ports.

Selected records involving the customs function in the northern territory		
National Archives, Darwin		
Miscellaneous books and correspondence, 1886–1971		E1066
Registers of seizures, detentions and informations, 1887–1965		E232
Darwin seizure registers, deed book, index and deed book register, port of Darwin, 1887		E1351
Register of (1) bonds accepted and approved (2) applications for employment permits (3) boats working in the pearling industry (4) arrivals and departures of indentured pearlers (5) indentured pearlers, 1912–49		E1033
Register of refunds and remissions, 1918–68		E233
Instruments of delegation and related correspondence, 1927–46		E156
Correspondence files, 'SC' (Sub-Collector), 1948–69		E142
Miscellaneous registers and files, 1948–74		NTAC1975/38
Powers of the Police Force under the Customs Act, 1956–60		F447, 63/S1838/503
Statements of customs and excise revenue for the Northern Territory, 1957–60		E241
Correspondence files – Darwin Policy, 1957–68		E146
Customs (prohibited imports) regulations, 1961		F447, 61/636
Customs, 1961		F447, 61/1552
Correspondence files – Mercantile Marine, 1963		E145
Register of prosecutions, 1964–ongoing		E1140
Coastal surveillance, 1964		F447, 64/2901
Correspondence files – Darwin Policy, 1965–72		E854
Correspondence files, 1966–ongoing		E855
Correspondence files, 1967–71		E147
Correspondence files – 'NT' (Northern Territory) prefix, 1984–88		E1610
Northern Territory Archives Office		
Portion of general instructions to Customs officers – issued to W G Stretton, 1887–1908		NTRS2844

Passenger arrivals and departures, Darwin

Until the creation of a separate department in 1945, the Sub-Collector of Customs also had responsibility for all matters involving immigration in the Northern Territory.

In the South Australian period and the early Commonwealth era, few vessels operating between England and Australia stopped at Darwin. Consequently the number of passenger arrivals and departures was small when compared with Sydney or Melbourne. Many merchant vessels operating between Asia and Australia, however, regularly stopped at Darwin.

From the 1930s air travel emerged as a major means of transportation, particularly to and from England. Darwin became a regular stopover on the route. From then the number of passenger arrivals and departures steadily increased.

South Australia maintained data for persons arriving in Darwin by sea from southern ports. It also recorded details of persons travelling overland to the Territory. Later the Commonwealth collected data for all persons arriving in Darwin from international departure points, or departing from Darwin to travel overseas. These records include name, point of origin or destination, dates, and the names of ships or aircraft registration numbers.

Selected records relating to passenger arrivals and departures in the northern territory		
National Archives, Canberra		
Ships passenger lists – inwards – Darwin, 1962–63		A7302
National Archives, Darwin		
Passengers who arrived at Port Darwin – 5 September 1872, 1872	F108, Volume 1	
Passengers who left Port Darwin, 1873–74	F108, Volume 1	
Register of overlanders who travelled overland to the Northern Territory, 1879–83	F108, Volume 1	
Index to passenger lists, 1889–1934	E754, 1	
Inwards and outwards passenger lists – Darwin, 1898–1949	E1019	
Files of incoming passenger lists and manifests, ships and aircraft, 1949–68	E38	
Files of outgoing passenger lists and manifests, ships and aircraft, 1949–68	E39	

Arrival of Evdokia Petrov in Darwin, 1954

Perhaps one of the most controversial arrivals in Darwin was Evdokia Petrov in April 1954.

On 3 April 1954, Vladimir Mikhailovich Petrov, who had been Third Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Canberra since 1951, defected in Sydney. Two weeks later his wife Evdokia, who also worked at the embassy, was returning to the Soviet Union, under escort by armed Soviet officials. Her plane arrived in Darwin just before 5.00 am on 20 April 1954. Upon leaving the plane Mrs Petrov and the two escorts were surrounded by officials and police. The escorts were disarmed and Mrs Petrov was taken into the airport terminal, and then later to Government House. Mrs Petrov subsequently defected, and the Soviet officials continued their journey to Moscow. Mrs Petrov later travelled to Sydney.

On 4 May 1954 Prime Minister Menzies wrote to Mr and Mrs Petrov granting them asylum in Australia. The Petrovs lived the remainder of their lives in Australia.

1 Address:
Admin."
Darwin.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA Int 131 Sch., u 1 ...
Northern Territory Administration,
DARWIN.

In reply
pleo.se quote
No.--5.UilQ2

17th May, 1954.

The Secretary,
Department of Territories,
CANBERRA, A.O.T.

16. 1293 45
rv.

Territories
File No. 54/200.
Date 24-5-54.

IMPORTANT HAPPENINGS.

I append hereunder return of Important Happenings
in the Northern Territory for the month of April, 1954:-

.AIMil\ 'ISTRATOR' S OFFICE.

Visit to Alice Springs.-

His Honour, the Administrator, accompanied by Mrs.
Wise, left Darwin on 12th April, 1954, by car to visit
Alice Springs and pastoral districts south of Alice
Springs. A visit was made to Ayers Rock during en
inspection of the pastoral country and several pastoral
homesteads were visited.

20th April-

During the night of 19th April, 1954, the Govern-
ment Secretary, Mr. Leydin, in the absence of His Honour
the Administrator, who was engaged in an inspection of
the country south of Alice Springs, received instructions
from the Prime Minister thro the Head of the Security
Service (Colonel Spry), that on the arrival on Tuesday
morning, 20th April, of the Qantas Constellation from
Sydney, an opportunity was to be created for Mrs. Petrov
of the Russian Embassy Staff to be asked whether she
desired to remain in Australia. This was done and Mrs.
Petrov stated she wished to stay and she was accommodated
at Government House, Darwin, until she left for a southern
destination by aircraft on 22nd April, 1954.

During discussion With Mrs. Petrov at Darwin Airport,
two Russian couriers who accompanied her, tried to inter-
vene and were disarmed by Darwin Police.

23rd April. -

His Honour the Administrator, accompanied by the
Government Secretary visited the Police Station and per-
sonally congratulated all members of the Police Force on
duty when Mrs. Petrov was given asylum.

Visit of units of Australian Fleet.-

His Honour the Administrator received Rear Admiral
R.R. Dowling, Flag Officer Commanding the Australian Fleet.
His Honour later repaid the call when a salute of 15 guns
was fired. The calls in each case were made by a
helicopter aircraft from H.M.A.S. "Vengeance". The fleet,
consisting of the Flagship H.M.A.S. "Vengeance, and
Destroyers "Anzac" and "Bataan", remained until 14th April,
1954.

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RECEIVED
24 MAY 1954
DEPT. OF TERRITORIES
CANBERRA

Image 26. Extract from 'Important Happenings' prepared by the Northern Territory Administrator describing Mrs Evdokia Petrovs arrival in Darwin on the evening of 20 April 1954. NM: A452, 1954/288

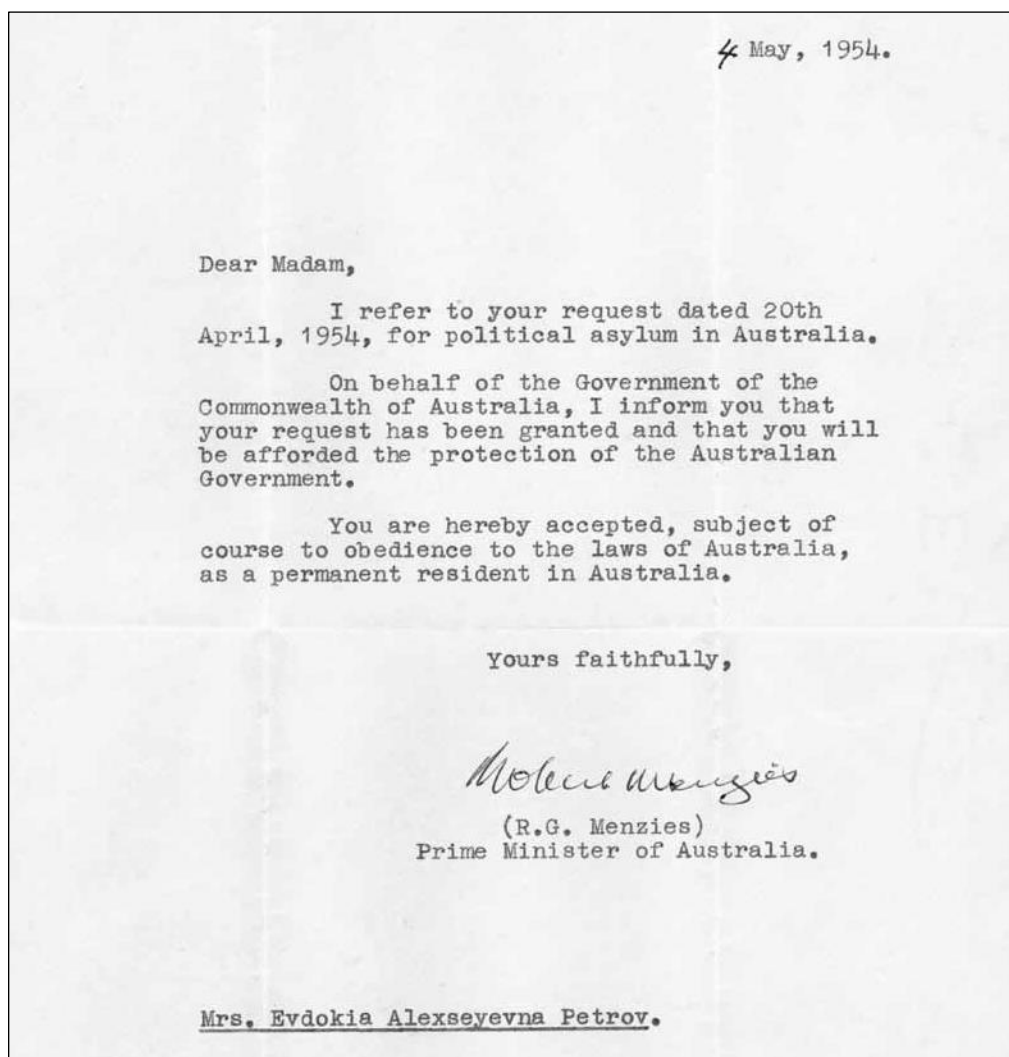


Image 27. Letter sent by Prime Minister Robert Menzies to Mrs Evdokia Petrov granting her asylum in Australia, 1954. NAA: A12994, 2

Selected records relating to the petrov incident in darwin	
National Archives, Canberra	
USSR Embassy Canberra – defection of Evdokia Petrova – arrival at Darwin and grant of asylum, 1954	A6122, 11
National Archives, Darwin	
Mrs Petrov, 1954	F423, S33

Crew lists

The Commonwealth required foreign vessels entering Australian ports to provide lists of all crews. The lists were prepared by the masters of vessels in accordance with the regulations of the time. They show details of each ship, its master, and the names, nationalities and race of crew members.

Selected records relating to crew lists for vessels using northern territory ports	
National Archives, Darwin	
Record of imported crews, 1910–78	E1030

Shipping registers

Vessels trading in Australian ports were required to be registered. For many years they were registered under the British system, known as the Register of British Shipping, in accordance with various Merchant Shipping Acts, by which details were recorded for each vessel including its name, owner, port of registration and year of construction.

The National Archives in Darwin has registers for ships registered in the Northern Territory.

Selected records relating to registers of British Shipping in Darwin	
National Archives, Darwin	
Register of British ships – port of Darwin, 1886–1982	A7548
Register of British ships – appropriation book for official numbers – port of Darwin, 1968–82	A7547

Immigrants to the Northern Territory

Although the Northern Territory has never had immigrants arrive in large numbers, there has nevertheless been a steady flow of prospective settlers, particularly from Asia.

The Territory's immigration function was administered by the Sub-Collector of Customs until 1948 when a Department of Immigration branch office was established in Darwin.

The National Archives' Darwin Office has a large collection of individual case files dealing with a range of immigration matters including applications for visas, applications for residency, and applications for passports. There is also a small collection of photographs, which include both immigration officials and some immigrant arrivals.

The National Archives' Canberra Office also has a collection of forms that were removed from individual case files relating to Northern Territory immigration matters prior to the destruction of those files. The items consist of: Application for admission of relatives or friends to Australia (Form 40); Application for permit to enter Australia (Forms 47 and 47A; and Personal nomination – assisted passage (Form EM2).

Selected records relating to the immigration function in the northern territory	
National Archives, Canberra	
Immigration forms 40, 47 and EM2, 1949–54	CP579/2
Basic documents removed from files – forms 40, 47, 47A, and EM2, 1954–60	AA1969/391
National Archives, Darwin	
Correspondence files, 1928–ongoing	E141
Correspondence files relating to immigration, 1933–41	E756
Correspondence files relating to Chinese immigration to Australia, 1941–42	E757
Correspondence files, 1947–75,	E601
Passports registers, 1948–63	E1117
Correspondence files, 1949–ongoing	E37
Miscellaneous immigration registers, 1954–84	E1114
Correspondence files, 1956–64	A516
Classified correspondence files, 1956–ongoing	E110
Miscellaneous photographs, 1960–77	E1113
Various applications and correspondence relating to the Immigration Office in Dili, Timor, 1966–71	E1116
Correspondence files, 1988–ongoing	E1536

Registration of aliens

Aliens are described as persons born in or belonging to another country who have not acquired citizenship by naturalisation and are not entitled to the privileges of a citizen. For much of its history Australia has vigorously recorded and monitored the arrival of aliens and their movements within the country.

Darwin and the Northern Territory have always had a strong immigrant presence, which accelerated with the arrival of Chinese migrants in response to the gold rushes of the 1870s. While few became rich as a result of prospecting, many stayed on as market gardeners. Their movements were restricted following the passage of the South Australian Chinese Migration Act in 1885. The adoption of the White Australia Policy in 1901, achieved through the Immigration Restriction Act, virtually ended Chinese migration to Australia for many decades.

The presence of a thriving Chinese population was both cause for celebration and concern to the Administration. Celebration because they were able to provide fresh fruit and vegetables to Darwin's white population, and concern because they were successful when many non-Chinese agriculturalists were not.

After Federation the movement of aliens of all nationalities was restricted with the introduction of the dictation test in 1901. The test consisted of a 50-word passage of dictation in any European language which was administered to people who were ineligible to apply for permanent residence. Certificates of exemption from the test were issued to non-naturalised, non-Europeans, who had lived in Australia for more than five years and who wished to leave Australia temporarily. They were the equivalent of a re-entry permit and allowed persons to avoid the dictation test upon their return. The dictation test was abolished in 1958 and the issue of certificates of exemption ceased the same year.

Alien registration records and applications for the certificate of exemption from the dictation test provide a rich resource of information about the people concerned, and often include a small photograph.

Selected records relating to aliens in the northern territory	
National Archives, Darwin	
Journal and index to naturalised aliens, 1858–65	A732
Register of aliens, 1916–21	F113
Correspondence files regarding aliens, 1939–40	E759
Correspondence files regarding the registration of aliens, 1939–46	E760
Miscellaneous documents relating to aliens, 1949–81	E1115
Aliens' registration files, 1949–ongoing	E40
Index list to aliens' files, 1950	E761
Aliens' returns, 1952–54	F87
Aliens' registration cards, 1958–71	E1129
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Deaths index, aliens, 1911–22	F1054
Births index, aliens, 1911–22	F1055
ADMINISTRATION OF THE DICTATION TEST	
National Archives, Darwin	
Certificates exempting from dictation test, 1905–41	E752
Portion of register of certificates exemption from dictation test, 1907–15	E753
Index to certificates exempting from dictation test, 1915–41	E754, 1
List of certificates exempting from dictation test, 1916–37	E812
Correspondence files relating to certificates of exemption, 1936–40	E755

Refugees

Darwin and the Top End generally have often been the destination for many people fleeing persecution in other countries. Refugees began arriving from Vietnam after the fall of Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) in 1975, and East Timor following the Indonesian invasion of that country, also in 1975.

Selected records relating to refugee arrivals in the northern territory	
National Archives, Sydney	
Flight lists of Timorese refugees, 1975	SP1598/1
National Archives, Darwin	
Assistance to Timorese evacuees, 1975	E203, 336/1/D5
Vietnamese orphans and refugees, 1975–78	F1076, 1975/71
Portuguese Timor evacuations, 1975	F1076, 1975/100
Bureau of Customs advice regarding title to Vietnamese refugee vessels, 1977–78	E108, CL1978/187
Disposal of Vietnamese refugee vessels, 1977–80	E37, 1977/10494
Immigration – Vietnamese vessels bound for Broome, 1977–81	E1246, B113
Vietnamese refugee boat VNSG 10128, 1978	E108, CL1978/367
Vietnamese refugees settling in the Northern Territory, 1978–79	E37, 1978/10014 part 1
Records relating to Vietnamese refugees, 1978–80	E1001

Citizenship records

The concept of Australian citizenship was introduced only in 1948. Prior to then all Australians were British subjects and, if they travelled overseas, they travelled on British passports.

Since 1948 persons seeking Australian citizenship are required to lodge an application with the relevant government agency and, if successful, will later be awarded their certificate of citizenship after swearing an oath of allegiance. Citizenship ceremonies are held in various towns and communities throughout the Northern Territory.

Selected records relating to citizenship records in the northern territory	
National Archives, Darwin	
Miscellaneous citizenship registers, including applications and the granting of citizenship, 1951–81	E1118
Applications for Australian citizenship, 1986–90	E1101

Population censuses in the Northern Territory

In the pre-Commonwealth period a census of the Northern Territory's white population (Aboriginal people were usually not included) was undertaken on at least three occasions. The first, held in 1881, recorded 407 persons. For each person the details included: name, age, occupation, where born, religion and remarks. A second census was held in 1891 (872 persons) and a third in 1901 (864 persons).

The first Commonwealth census was held in 1911. Later that year the Acting Administrator reported that the Territory had a non-Aboriginal population of 3,271, comprising 2,673 males and 598 females. This figure included all Europeans as well as people from China, Japan, Philippines, Malaya and Java.³

After 1911 the census was held intermittently, being interrupted by wars and the Great Depression until 1961, following which they have been held every five years. Aboriginal people were first included in the 1971 census and every census thereafter.

The National Archives in Darwin holds records from each census conducted in the South Australian period, as well as administrative records from the early Commonwealth period. Individual census returns from 1911 to 1996 have been destroyed in accordance with Commonwealth census legislation.

records relating to citizenship in the northern territory	
National Archives, Darwin	
Registers of census returns, 1881–1901	F108, Volume 1
Area census maps, 1976	E1280

1881.				
Name	age	Occupation	Where Born	Remarks
Anstlin William	32	Laborer	England	
Aikinson Richard	30	Engine Driver	Scotland	
Ayre Henry	20	Carpenter	South Australia	
Ayre Walter	17	Do	Do	
Andrew John	50	Miner	England	
Armstrong Mitchell	31	Butcher	Wales	
Albright Henry	47	Publican	Victoria	
Arbin William	45	Miner	England	
Andison Ramus	35	Do	Denmark	
Anderson Peter	24	Deannaler	Do	
Atkins William	34	Do		
Aikins John	36	Miner		alias Rango.
Allen J R		Amold Charles		

Image 28. Extract from the Northern Territory's first population census, 1881.
NAA: F108, Volume 1

Conclusion

During its administration of the Northern Territory the Commonwealth collected a great deal of information from people when they arrived in the Territory or left it, and when they applied for residency or citizenship. Much of that information is now available for research.

Notes

¹ NAA: A1, 1911/16191, Northern Territory taking of the census, 1911.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics website; www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS (accessed 3 January 2011).

³ Northern Territory Report of the Acting Administrator for the Year 1911, p. 15; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1912), volume III, pp. 595–652.

11 Works and Housing

In an area as large as the Northern Territory construction activities were always difficult. The vast distances meant that transportation costs for materials were high, the wet season in the Top End meant that activity in that region could only take place in certain months of the year, and disputes between government agencies, particularly those involving the Department of Works, regularly led to delays and cost overruns.

Department of Works

The Department of Works was the Commonwealth Government's principal construction agency. Its head office was in Melbourne and it had branch offices in most state capitals. The Department was responsible for the design, construction, alteration and maintenance of public buildings, and other engineering works

A Public Works Department office was established in the Northern Territory from the beginning of the Commonwealth era. William Kellaway, who arrived in Darwin in June 1911, was the Director. Some of its earliest projects included the Cape Don lighthouse and the battery for the tin mine at Maranboy. The Department was ultimately responsible for building railways, aerodromes, roads, telegraph stations, slipways, harbour dredging, stock routes, and beef roads. It built large installations, such as Manton Dam, and was also responsible for smaller works, such as residential housing.

In carrying out its activities the Department created a considerable quantity of records, much of which are held by the National Archives in Darwin. These records include files, plans and drawings, specifications, contract documentation, assessments of tenders, and photographs.

Selected records relating to the works function in the northern territory		
National Archives, Canberra		
Correspondence files, Northern Territory works, 1912–26		A175
National Archives, Brisbane		
Structural calculations, 1965–77		E1391
National Archives, Darwin		
Minutes of meetings of tender boards, 1928–42		E43
Precedent book, 1939–70		E130
Original copies of drawings, 1939–91		E1008
Job files, 1946–90		E121
Correspondence files regarding Commonwealth assets in the Northern Territory, 1949–90		E856
Correspondence files, 1951–93		E125
Job files, 1958–ongoing		E1505
Miscellaneous files and registers relating to the construction of roads and bridges, 1959–69		NTAC1979/7
Files relating to the construction of roads, 1960–82		NTAC1979/6
Job files – Katherine, 1961–76		E660
Folder of magazines of the Northern Territory branch of the Department of Works, 1962		E372
Copies of specifications, 1962–90		E140

Selected records relating to the works function in the northern territory		
National Archives, Darwin		
Structural calculations, 1965–77 <i>portion of series held in Brisbane</i>		E1391
Miscellaneous plans, specifications and photographs relating to projects at Aboriginal communities, 1966–82		E977
Photographs of projects undertaken in the Northern Territory, 1968–70		E976
Official copies of contracts, 1969–79		E686
Tender boards minute books, 1969–80		E687
Notices of acceptance, 1970–72		E688
Miscellaneous records relating to the construction of Royal Darwin Hospital, 1970–78		E1036
Project files, 1970–81		E1502
Miscellaneous photographs, slides and negatives, 1970–94		E1558
Files and plans relating to Palmerston arterial road, 1970–74		NTAC1979/8
Register of contracts, 1971–90		E913
Correspondence files, 1972–90		E504
Job files on behalf of the Darwin Reconstruction Commission, 1975–78		E329
Job files, classified Darwin, 1979–90		E909
Job files, classified Darwin, 1979–97		E910
Northern Territory Archives Service		
Plans and drawings of government buildings, circa 1879–circa 1979		NTRS73

Northern Territory housing

For many years Northern Territory residential housing was a vexed issue. Continuing shortages of materials, the lack of finance, and reluctance by the Commonwealth to seriously address the issue caused many people to live in accommodation that could only be described as sub-standard and of a kind generally not experienced or understood by people in southern cities. The housing issue led to considerable animosity between the Government and the people.¹

From the beginning the Commonwealth provided some form of housing for most of its public servants. Accommodation ranged from shelters or cottages to modest 'residences'. The influx of staff at various times invariably led to housing shortages.

Other workers, for example those who were temporarily employed on building projects, had limited accommodation if any at all. They lived in shacks, humpies or tents. Some, if they were very fortunate, lived in boarding houses or hotels.

The Northern Territory Administration's attempts to improve housing in Darwin in the early years included the construction of hotels and boarding houses, providing building materials at low rates, developing town lands, and making recently built staff houses available to those outside government employment.

The construction of Vestey's meatworks during World War I highlighted the difficulties Darwin residents faced when it came to housing. Many people who worked on the construction lived in tents nearby.

As a result of continued lobbying by the Administration, funding for new dwellings was approved in 1916 and agreement was reached for the drafting of a Workmen's Dwelling Ordinance by which non-government officers would be loaned money towards the construction of new houses. Treasury approved an allocation of £20,000 for the purpose.

It would be another three years, however, before the Workmen's Dwelling Ordinance came into effect. By that time the Darwin rebellion of December 1918, and the failure of the meatworks (see chapter 2), resulted in the Commonwealth actually paying workers to leave Darwin, not for them to build houses. The pressure for additional housing was diminished and the Ordinance was never used.

Over the next 25 years few houses were built in the Territory, other than those constructed for government employees. A number of Darwin homes from this period were designed by Commonwealth architect, Beni Burnett. Some of these homes, located at Myilly Point, still exist. After the war the situation deteriorated still further. In Darwin many pre-war homes had been destroyed by bombing, looting, white ants or general neglect. While some people returned to Darwin, most found it difficult to acquire adequate accommodation. They either did not have the funds to build a house, or the Commonwealth's compulsory acquisition of all residential land in 1945 (see chapter 4) meant that they were unable to obtain freehold title even if they did have the money to build. Shortages of building materials made the situation worse, so that many people lived in abandoned defence facilities, shacks, tents or wherever they could. Most homes had little or no electricity, water or sewerage.

In April 1943 the Commonwealth appointed a national Housing Commission to investigate and report on actions necessary to overcome arrears in home building across the country; means of providing adequate housing, especially in areas where acute shortages existed; and to ensure inexpensive housing for persons of limited means. Although the Commission ended with its final report in 1944 its activities ultimately led the Commonwealth to develop the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement in 1945. By this agreement the Commonwealth allocated funding for the construction of new dwellings. Housing was to be for rental purposes only, and the Commonwealth provided financial assistance while the States were responsible for service delivery. Much of the housing constructed via the first agreement was on large estates on the outskirts of major cities and was partly responsible for the urban sprawl that characterised the postwar years. While the agreement helped to address housing shortages in the States, the Northern Territory was excluded from the agreement, and housing there continued to decline.

In 1951 Administrator Frank Wise wrote to the Department of Territories stating:

It is imperative...that early action should be taken to enable residents of the Northern Territory, other than officers and employees of the Government to obtain homes of an adequate standard... Many residents of Darwin and other centres of the Territory are living under conditions which can only be described as dreadful, and I think the making of arrangements in the Territory similar to those which are found in the States should be regarded as a matter of highest priority.²

As one way of addressing the issue the Commonwealth implemented the Housing Loans Ordinance in 1953 by which loans up to £2,750 were made available to assist people to purchase their own homes. While this measure helped some people, others of more limited means still struggled to acquire suitable housing.

On 6 May 1958 Minister Paul Hasluck sent a submission to Cabinet seeking the formation of a Territory Housing Commission which would provide rental accommodation at below cost, primarily to residents on low and moderate incomes. The Commission would operate in a manner similar to commissions in the States, and the Commonwealth would supply funds for the building of homes at concessional rates of interest.³ Cabinet approved the submission on 21 May 1958, but urged further discussions with Treasury. The Northern Territory Housing Commission which came into existence in May 1959 had the power to purchase or acquire property, prepare sites, erect and equip dwellings, and rent them at economic rates. It also had power to borrow money to discharge its function. Under the Commission's guidance construction of new homes began to steadily improve, and by 1964 the Commission had constructed 378 houses and 24 flats.⁴ From 1963 people who occupied Housing Commission homes were also given the opportunity to purchase them.

In July 1978, the Northern Territory Housing Commission inherited staff and responsibilities for government housing design, construction and maintenance from the Department of Construction (successor to the Department of Works).

The Commission changed its name to Territory Housing in 1998.

The records listed below deal with the evolution of Northern Territory Housing and its administration. Included in the list is a series of photographs taken after Cyclone Tracy in 1974 (series E1609). This series not only shows the devastation caused by Tracy, it also shows the construction of new homes and how housing styles in Darwin changed after Tracy.

Selected records relating to northern territory housing		
National Archives, Canberra		
Workmen's Dwelling Ordinance – Northern Territory, 1915–59	A1, 1935/12311	
Staffing Housing Commission Northern Territory, 1959–62	A452, 1959/1687	
Northern Territory Housing Commission allocation of land for erection of dwellings, 1959–69	A452, 1964/5598	
Finance for the erection of dwellings under Housing Commission Ordinance Northern Territory, 1960	A452, 1959/2638	
National Archives, Darwin		
Plan of residences for Commonwealth officers, Darwin residence type 'B', 1935	E802	
Demountable housing project records, 1935	NTAC1976/138	
Job files, 1946–90	E121	
Correspondence files regarding Commonwealth assets in the Northern Territory, 1949–90	E856	
Correspondence files, 1951–93	E125	
Northern Territory Housing Commission organisation, 1959–61	F1, 1959/1926	
Housing Commission annual reports, 1961–69	F1, 1966/3607	
Northern Territory Housing Commission autonomy, 1968–70	F1, 1968/3112	
Housing Commission, 1971–77	E155, 1971/15	
Miscellaneous photographs of Darwin after Cyclone Tracy, 1975–77	E1609	
Housing program, Housing Commission, 1976–78	F133, 1977/51	

Selected records relating to northern territory housing	
National Archives, Darwin	
Transfer of Commonwealth assets to the Northern Territory Housing Commission following self-government, 1978–82	E517, 180.3.1 parts 1 and 2
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Northern Territory Housing Commission minute books, 1959–87	NTRS2521
Housing and miscellaneous contracts, 1959–78	NTRS1602
Register of properties and tenants, 1960–82	NTRS2260

Disputes involving the Department of Works

A study of the Northern Territory's administrative history during the Commonwealth era frequently demonstrates the lack of cooperation between Commonwealth Government agencies. The lack of cooperation and poor service provided by some officials were recognised by the Payne–Fletcher Board of Inquiry in their 1937 report (discussed in Chapter 3). They proposed a series of maxims designed to encourage greater cooperation among officials and with the public. It seems that the maxims had no effect.

The lack of cooperation between agencies was never more apparent than disputes that frequently arose between the Northern Territory Administration and the Department of Works. While both were answerable to Ministers in Canberra, Works was first and foremost responsible to its parent department and believed that it owed its allegiance to that department, rather than to the Administration in Darwin.

There were many disputes between the two over areas of responsibility. Dewar cites delays and cost overruns in the construction of houses in Darwin in the 1950s.⁵ Whitehead too refers to a number of delays and cost rises as a result of the disputes between the two agencies.⁶

There were disputes involving Works and other branches of the Administration. In 1951 Lionel Rose, Director of the Animal Industry Branch, suggested that responsibility for maintenance of stock routes and water bores be placed with his Branch, rather than the Department of Works. For the next three years the battle raged. It was clear that there was animosity between Rose and Frank G Vigden, the Director of Works. At one point Rose sought detailed costings concerning stock route maintenance from Works, who refused to provide them.⁷

In his annual report of 1948–49 the Administrator, Arthur Driver, recognised the conflict that arose over what he termed 'divided control' between Canberra and Darwin and suggested a series of interdepartmental conferences at the highest level.⁸

Property valuations

Property valuations in the Northern Territory were originally undertaken by the Valuation Section of the Lands and Survey Branch. In 1969, however, the office of Valuer-General of the Northern Territory was established, which was in its turn superseded by the Australian Valuation Office in 1987.

The duties of the Valuer-General are prescribed by legislation and include the valuation of the unimproved capital value of all prescribed land in the Northern Territory.

Following self-government in 1978, valuations for the Northern Territory have been performed by the Commonwealth's Valuer-General on behalf of the Northern Territory Department of Lands and Housing.

The National Archives in Darwin holds records relating to property valuations and sales for all major urban centres in the Northern Territory.

Selected records relating to the property valuation function	
National Archives, Darwin	
Sales cards miscellaneous minor towns, 1931–71	E624
Sales cards town of Darwin, 1950–71	E620
Sales cards town of Katherine, 1931–71	E621
Valuation field books, 1952–75	E522
Correspondence files regarding valuations, 1956–69	F1072
Correspondence files – 'L' (Lands) series, 1969–87	E615
Sales records, Darwin, 1969–82	E927
Sales cards Darwin, 1975–84	E929

Conclusion

Works and housing were two issues that in the Northern Territory during the Commonwealth era assumed far greater prominence, and were generally more contentious, than similar issues in the southern States. The Commonwealth's plans for the redevelopment of Darwin after the war, which ultimately failed to materialise, and the shortage of building materials, saw many people living in sub-standard accommodation, which was only alleviated after the establishment of the Housing Commission in 1959.

The disputes between Works and other Commonwealth agencies highlighted the lack of cooperation amongst Northern Territory public servants that had evolved over many years, and was commented on by the Payne–Fletcher Board of Inquiry in 1937. Those disputes merely helped to make the Commonwealth's administration of the Territory far more difficult than it otherwise might have been.

Notes

¹ Northern Territory housing has been researched by Whitehead and Dewar: Jan Whitehead, 'Settling Down: The Role of Housing in the Commonwealth's Northern Territory', PhD thesis, Charles Darwin University (2007); Mickey Dewar, *Darwin – No Place like Home: A History of Australia's Northern Capital in the 1950s through a Study of Housing* (Darwin, 2010).

² NAA: F1, 1951/1012, Proposed housing schemes Northern Territory, 6 November 1951.

³ NAA: A4926, 1156, Northern Territory–housing for persons other than government employees.

⁴ Jan Whitehead, 'Settling Down', p. 260.

⁵ Mickey Dewar, *Darwin – No Place Like Home*.

⁶ Jan Whitehead, 'Settling Down'.

⁷ NAA: F1, 1950/591, Stock routes and bores, general.

⁸ Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory for Year 1948–49, p. 3, *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1950–51), volume II, pp. 835–58.

12 Law and Order

Law and order in the Northern Territory were sometimes seen as a contentious issue, particularly by observers in the southern States. The Territory's remoteness and vast size helped to foster the image of the rugged, wild frontier, where common rules of law and order did not apply. This might also have been in response to skirmishes between white settlers and Aboriginal people.

Yet from the beginning both South Australia and the Commonwealth established a police force and a judicial system to ensure that some semblance of law and order were maintained across the Territory.

Northern Territory police

The Northern Territory's first police officer was Paul Foelsche who was appointed as Police Inspector by the South Australian Government in 1869.¹

In the ensuing years more than 20 police stations were established throughout the Territory at centres including Alice Springs, Borroloola, Katherine, Maranboy and Wave Hill. The tasks of police officers at these stations often included duties other than normal police duties. They were required to act as clerks of courts; bailiffs and assistant bailiffs; clerks of the licencing bench; registrars of births, deaths and marriages; registrars of dogs; commissioners for affidavits; labour bureau agents; and issuers of miners' rights. Police undertook duties as fisheries inspectors; issuers of Aboriginal rations; inspectors of stock brands; stock inspectors; slaughterhouse inspectors; inspectors of public houses; and customs and excise officers.

The first gaol in Darwin, located at Fannie Bay, was built in 1882. The first purpose built gaol in Alice Springs was completed 1909.

The Commonwealth continued the administrative arrangements initiated by South Australia until 1924 when the Police Inspector was redesignated as Police Commissioner. The first Commonwealth Inspector of Police was Nicholas Waters.

Police officers were often responsible for the collection of census data, particularly in the more remote areas of the Territory, and some were involved in taking Aboriginal children into custody as part of the Commonwealth's policy of removing half-caste children and placing them in institutions (see Chapter 8).

Each year the Commissioner of Police would prepare a report summarising criminal activities which would be included as part of the Administrator's annual report on the Northern Territory.

With the granting of self-government in 1978 most police duties passed from the Commonwealth to the Northern Territory Government. Most records relating to the activities of police in the Territory are now in the custody of the Northern Territory Archives Service.

Selected records relating to northern territory policing	
CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION	
National Archives, Canberra	
Foelsche collection – photograph album of Northern Territory views, 1887–1900	A66
National Archives, Darwin	
Correspondence files, 1959–72 (portion held by Northern Territory Archives Service)	F447
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Inquest book, 1904–35	NTRS2705
Register of prisoners, 1917–24	NTRS2702
List of police trackers, 1926–46	NTRS2704
Correspondence files, 1944–2003	NTRS2892
Administration files relating to police stations, 1951–59	NTRS3096
Correspondence files, 1959–72 (portion held by National Archives, Darwin)	F447
DARWIN	
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Day journals, 1933–99	NTRS2091
Charge books, 1941–99	NTRS2048
Enquiries into deaths files, 1954–64	F498
ALICE SPRINGS	
National Archives, Darwin	
Correspondence files, 1930–58 (portion held by Northern Territory Archives Service)	F77
Correspondence files, 1942–50 (portion held by Northern Territory Archives Service)	F69
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Police journals Officer-in-Charge, 1886–1956	F255
Register of prisoners, 1905–48	F110
Prisoners' property book, 1908–47	F1039
Visiting Justice minute book, 1913–47	F1111
Correspondence files, 1928–45	F68
Correspondence files, 1930–58 (portion held by National Archives, Darwin)	F77
Correspondence files, 1930–55	F84
Police journals, 1938–74	F256
Correspondence files, 1945–49 (portion held by National Archives, Darwin)	F69
Correspondence files, 1950–55	F70

Selected records relating to northern territory policing	
KATHERINE	
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Inquest book, 1887–1941	NTRS2734
Police journals, 1915–73	F297
TENNANT CREEK	
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Charge books, 1936–57	F304
Day journals, 1938–93	NTRS2120
Police journals, 1943–69	F303
Charge books, 1962–92	NTRS2066

Courts and registrars-general

The first resident judge in the Northern Territory was appointed in 1884. In 1892 the positions of Government Resident and Judge were combined for reasons of economy.²

After taking responsibility for the Northern Territory the Commonwealth implemented the Supreme Court Ordinance which came into effect in May 1911. The Ordinance established the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory and stated that the Court:

. . . shall have in the Northern Territory all the jurisdiction and powers of the Supreme Court of the State of South Australia, and of the Court of Insolvency of that State, immediately prior to the acceptance by the Commonwealth of the Northern Territory.³

David Bevan was appointed as the Commonwealth's first judge of the Northern Territory. Bevan, however, was forced to leave the Territory in October 1919 after being implicated in the alleged sale of Vestey's meatworks to the Commonwealth at a favourable price to Vestey's (see Chapter 2).

In the early years of its administration the Commonwealth created a series of registrar positions, including the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths and Marriages which was established under the *Northern Territory Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths Ordinance 1911*.

From 1924 the records of the Supreme Court were maintained by the Clerk of Courts. The Clerk was also over the years responsible for a number of other matters including the clerical work of the Local Court, the Licensing Court, the Magistrates (or Police) Court, the Insolvency Court and the Supreme Court in its Civil, Criminal and Probate jurisdiction. He also held the offices of Sheriff; Public Trustee; Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages; Registrar, Court of Marine Inquiry; Registrar of Companies; Deputy Registrar, Bills of Sale; Returning Officer for the Northern Territory; Registrar in Bankruptcy; and Officer assisting (in the Northern Territory) the Marshall of the High Court.

In 1941 the Crown Law Office was to be transferred from the Northern Territory Administration to the Attorney-General's Department and the question was raised as to whether the remainder of the Law Section of the Northern Territory Administration (which included the Clerk of Courts) should also be transferred. The statutory positions held by the Clerk of Courts were raised because the problem was how many of these should be transferred to Attorney-General's Department. Before these issues were resolved, civil activities in the Darwin area ceased due to the war, and the Administration moved to Alice Springs. The Clerk of Courts and Assistant Clerk of Courts arrived in Alice Springs in May 1942, and returned to Darwin in 1946.

After the war, the question of the transfer of the Clerk of Courts to the Attorney-General's Department was again raised. In 1947 positions were created within the new Courts Office of the Northern Territory under the Attorney-General's Department. The transfer did not, however, immediately take place because of the discussions concerning the statutory positions held by the Clerk. The Clerk, Joseph Nichols was formally transferred to the Attorney-General's Department in 1950. He continued to carry out the duties of statutory positions apart from the Court duties, including Registrar General of Births, Deaths and Marriages and Public Trustee.⁴

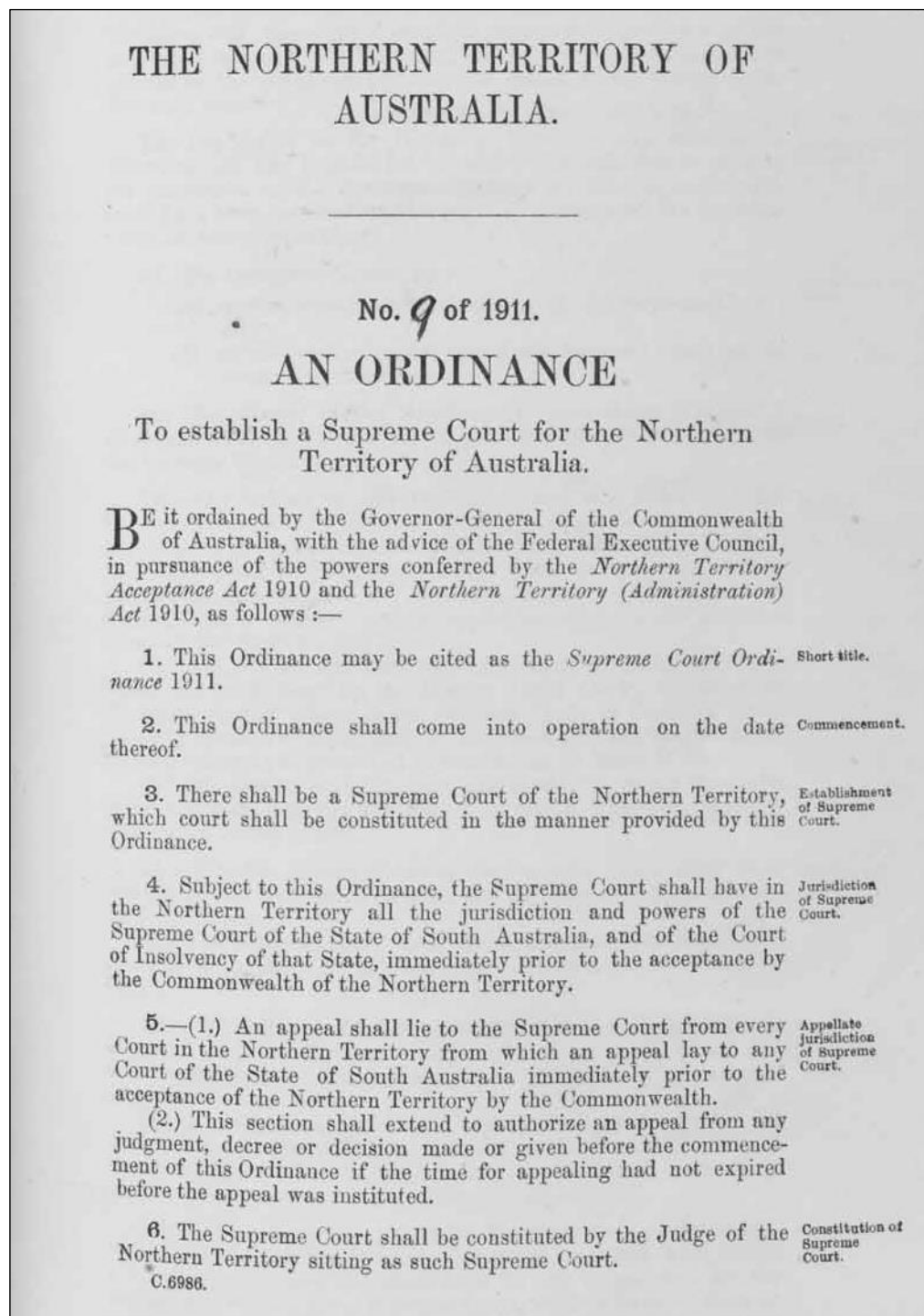


Image 29. Extract from the *Supreme Court Ordinance 1911*. NAA: A1573, 1911/6

Selected records relating to northern territory courts and registrars	
THE COURTS	
National Archives, Canberra	
Opinion books, Northern Territory, 1911–54	A79
National Archives, Darwin	
Local Court, Palmerston – register of insolvencies, 1891–1903	NTAC1976/79
Roll of practitioners of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory, 1912–28	E330
Papers of the Judge of the Northern Territory, 1912–46	E475
Roll of (1) Justices of the Peace (2) Special Magistrates (3) Public Notaries, 1920–65	E332
Supreme Court Northern Territory, history, 1952–59	E472, 470
Transcripts of evidence, 1937–38	E470
Judges notebooks for the Northern Territory, 1942–73	NTAC1976/81
Organisation – Attorney-General's Department, Courts and Registration Offices, 1969–73	E588, 1972/802
National Archives, Perth	
Folders of judgements delivered by Justice John Toohey – Supreme Court of the Northern Territory, 1977–82	K1321
Judges notebooks – Justice John Toohey – Federal Court of Australia and Supreme Court of the Northern Territory, 1977–87	K1324
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Grants of probate and administration in the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory and other Courts of Jurisdiction, 1911–41	E96
Record books of grants of probates and letters of administration, 1911–76	NTRS3121
Cause books/(circa 1951) – record books of the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory, 1915–75	E113
Public Trustee journals, 1923–74	F963
Civil dockets, 1927–77	E101
Testamentary causes jurisdiction dockets 'probate files', 1928–54	E103
Australian registers of judgement, 1929–61	NTRS3326
Local Court record books, 1940–70	F874
Criminal dockets, 1942–54	E99
Case dockets, 1947–74	F855
Case dockets, Courts of Summary Jurisdiction, 1949–78	F856
Correspondence files relating to legal practitioners, 1950–74	NTRS3132
Inquests held files, 1956–71	F864
Inquests deemed unnecessary files, 1962–75	NTRS3105
Criminal record book (1) Supreme Court of the Northern Territory (2) Police Court, Darwin, 1965–74	NTRS2783
Chambers record books, 1966–75	NTRS3308

Selected records relating to northern territory courts and registrars

NORTHERN TERRITORY REGISTRARS

Northern Territory Archives Service

Duplicate birth certificates – Alice Springs, 1927–49	F821
Duplicate death certificates and related papers, 1927–49	F822
Duplicate marriage certificates and related papers, 1928–49	F823
Forms of information of birth (European) and related papers, 1949–63	F824

Bankruptcy

Commonwealth powers in respect of bankruptcy and insolvency derive from the Constitution (section 51, xvii) although federal jurisdiction in the field dated from 1 August 1928 when the *Bankruptcy Act 1924–27* came into effect.

Initially State judges exercised jurisdiction in bankruptcy and insolvency on behalf of the Commonwealth. A Bankruptcy Branch within the Attorney-General's Department was established in 1928. At that time, all previous State bankruptcy and insolvency laws were superseded by the new Commonwealth legislation. The Federal Court of Bankruptcy continued to operate partly by appointment of federal Judges and partly through the investing of relative jurisdiction in some State Supreme Court judges. It sat alternatively in Sydney and Melbourne. Cases were also heard in the Supreme Court in each State and in the Northern Territory, which had been declared as bankruptcy branches.

In 1977 the Federal Court assumed responsibility for all bankruptcy matters in accordance with the *Federal Court of Australia Act 1976*.

Selected records relating to bankruptcy in the northern territory

National Archives, Darwin

Register of sequestration orders, 1928–67	E476
Bankruptcy District of North Australia case files, 1936–69	NTAC1977/228
Bankruptcy dockets/files, 1936–ongoing	E859
Register of trustees, Northern Territory, 1957–76	NTAC1976/105

National Archives, Perth

Northern Territory bankrupts' estate files, 1936–ongoing	D1011
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Federal and Family Courts

The Federal Court of Australia was established in 1977. It is an Australian superior court of record which has jurisdiction to deal with most civil disputes governed by federal law (with the exception of family law matters). The Court assumed the responsibilities of the former Australian Industrial Court and the Bankruptcy Court. It also deals with appeals involving administrative law.

The Family Court of Australia was established in 1976. It is an Australian superior court of record which has jurisdiction to deal with issues involving family law matters, including divorce, adoption and guardianship.

Both the Federal Court and the Family Court maintain offices in Darwin.

Select records relating to federal and family court matters		
National Archives, Darwin		
Matrimonial causes jurisdiction dockets, 1961–75		E102
(1) Divorce proceedings books (2) Register of matrimonial decrees, 1961–75		F1044
Miscellaneous records of the Family Law Court, 1977–ongoing		E1231
Northern Territory Archives Service		
Family law files, 1948–84		NTRS2024

Crown Law Office

The Commonwealth Crown Solicitor's Office was established in 1903. Its role was to provide legal services to Commonwealth agencies. The work was of a similar nature to that performed by solicitors engaged in private practice on behalf of their clients, and included the following matters:

- the conduct in Federal, State and Territory courts of civil litigation in which the Commonwealth or a Commonwealth authority was a party;
- the conduct of prosecutions for offences against the laws of the Commonwealth;
- the conduct of proceedings before administrative tribunals in which the Commonwealth or a Commonwealth authority was concerned;
- the conduct of appeals in revenue cases;
- employees' compensation cases;
- the drafting of contracts and agreements including agreements between the Commonwealth and the States;
- conveyancing and property work involving the Commonwealth or an authority of the Commonwealth including the draft of transfer and mortgages, leases, licences and tenancy agreements;
- the furnishing of legal advice, written and oral, to departments and authorities to assist them in the discharge of their functions;
- bankruptcy and company liquidation matters involving the Commonwealth or a Commonwealth authority;
- the furnishing of legal assistance in the conduct of Royal Commissions;
- industrial matters; and
- debt recovery on behalf of departments and authorities.

A Crown Law Office was established in the Northern Territory in 1928. The first Crown Law Officer was Eric Thomas Asche. In mid 1941, the Crown Law Officer was temporarily transferred from the Northern Territory Administration to the Attorney-General's Department and it was intended that a permanent position of Crown Law Officer, Northern Territory be created within the Department. However, the position was not created and in May 1942 it was proposed that the Law Officer be seconded to the Attorney-General's Department for a further period. The function of Crown Law Officer was eventually formally transferred from the Administration to the Attorney-General's Department in 1951.

Extant records indicate that from 1942 the Crown Law Office was commonly known as the Deputy Crown Solicitor's Office. When Darwin was bombed in 1942 the office was transferred to Alice Springs. From 1942 to 1948 the Acting Crown Law Officer remained in Alice Springs, travelling to Darwin for criminal trials when necessary. In 1974 the name of the Crown Law Office, Northern Territory was changed to the Attorney-General's Department, Northern Territory Office.⁵

Selected records relating to the crown law office and attorney-general's department

National Archives, Darwin

Correspondence files – 'DP' (Darwin policy) prefix , 1925–55	E68
Correspondence files – 'DL' or 'D' prefix, 1946–64	E72
Correspondence files – Alice Springs district office, 1949–57	F136
Correspondence files, 1964–73	E80
Correspondence files relating to recoveries, 1964–ongoing	E82
Correspondence files, administration, 1967–78	E84
Correspondence files, common law matters, 1973–78	E90
Correspondence files, prosecutions, 1973–78	E92
Legal files, 1976–ongoing	E1273
Correspondence files, 1978–ongoing	E108
Correspondence files, 'E' (Executive) prefix, 1978–ongoing	E1247

Death of Azaria Chamberlain

Possibly the most widely known criminal case in the Northern Territory involved the death of Azaria Chamberlain in 1980.

In August 1980 Michael and Alice Lynne (Lindy) Chamberlain were staying in a camping ground adjacent to Uluru (Ayers Rock). During the evening of 17 August their two-month old daughter Azaria was allegedly taken by a dingo and killed. The body has never been recovered.

An inquest into the death of the baby concluded in February 1981 that a dingo was responsible. By late 1981 that inquest's finding was being questioned and ultimately overturned. A second inquest in February 1982 found that there were grounds for charges to be laid against the Chamberlains. Lindy Chamberlain was charged with murder and Michael Chamberlain with being an accessory after the fact. Both were convicted on 29 October 1982. Lindy Chamberlain was sentenced to life detention and was transferred to Darwin's Berrimah jail. An appeal to the High Court was dismissed.

Doubts about some of the evidence used in the trial began to emerge and were sufficient for the Commonwealth and Northern Territory Governments to appoint a joint Royal Commission of Inquiry in April 1986. The Commission reported in May 1987 that there were 'serious doubts and questions' concerning the convictions of the Chamberlains.⁶ The Northern Territory Court of Appeals later quashed the convictions against the Chamberlains.

A third coronial inquest in 1995 returned an open finding, however, in June 2012 a fourth coronal inquest found that a dingo was responsible for Azaria Chamberlain's death and issued an apology to the Chamberlain family.

The National Archives holds few records relating to the legal proceedings following the death of Azaria Chamberlain. Records of the various inquests and the trial of Lindy and Michael Chamberlain, and the Royal Commission are held by the Northern Territory Government. Records relating to the High Court appeal are held by the Court.

Selected records relating to the death of azaria chamberlain	
National Archives, Sydney	
Azaria Chamberlain – Coroner's findings – audio visual media coverage, 1981	C100, 81/10/113 M

Notes

- ¹ The history of the Northern Territory Police has been researched by Bill Wilson, 'A Force Apart', PhD thesis, Northern Territory University (Darwin, 2000).
- ² NAA: A238, Draft handbook of the Northern Territory compiled by Staniforth Smith, Acting Administrator, 1921, p. 39.
- ³ *Supreme Court Ordinance 1911*, s4.
- ⁴ See agency description for CA 1304, Clerk of Courts, 1924-1950 on RecordSearch for further details.
- ⁵ See agency description for CA 885, Crown Law Office, 1928-1974 on RecordSearch for further details.
- ⁶ Australia. Royal Commission of Inquiry into Chamberlain Convictions, Report, p. 342; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1987), volume 15, paper 192.

13 Social Services – Health, Education and Welfare

The Commonwealth Government was involved in the provision of social services within Australia from an early stage. Old age pension payments began in 1908, and the Department of Health was established in 1921. School education remained a responsibility of the States, and an Education Department of the Northern Territory was established in 1913.

Health

Early in its administration of the Northern Territory, the South Australian Government created the position of Medical Officer, Palmerston, which was filled by John Stokes Millner. In 1874 the position was redesignated as Colonial Surgeon for the Northern Territory.¹

Darwin's first hospital opened in June 1874, financed partly through public subscriptions, under the charge of Palmerston's Medical Officer. The nursing staff originally comprised one matron who attended to domestic as well as nursing matters. A Board of Advice of prominent citizens assisted in the hospital's management.

The gold rushes of the 1870s and later brought many people into a territory which had few facilities. This led to the emergence of diseases, including malaria, dysentery, smallpox and leprosy.

Soon after its acquisition of the Northern Territory, the Commonwealth implemented a Health Ordinance in July 1912. It conferred upon the Administrator the powers and functions of a central Board of Health. The Commonwealth's first medical officer was Mervyn Holmes, who took up his position in July 1912.



Image 30. Dr Clyde Fenton with his aircraft, Darwin, 1937. NAA: M119, 104

In the Commonwealth era government hospitals were built at Tennant Creek in 1934, Katherine in 1935, and Alice Springs in 1939. The Australian Inland Mission maintained hospitals at Maranboy (east of Katherine) from 1918 to 1931, Victoria River Downs (in the western part of the Territory) from 1922 to 1940, and at Alice Springs from 1926 to 1939.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service began operations at Alice Springs in 1939. Before that – from 1934 – Clyde Fenton, a medical officer based at Katherine, was operating an aerial medical service using his own aircraft. By 1935, he had flown over 20,000 miles.²

In 1939 the Commonwealth established an office of the Department of Health in the Territory. Prior to that time, the administration of health services and Aboriginal people were combined. After 1939 they were administered by two distinct agencies.

The Northern Territory Division of the Department of Health undertook Commonwealth health functions common to all the Department's state offices: quarantine, medical inspections, vaccinations, health laboratories and health education. It also provided community health services such as rural health, hospitals, health centres, and dental clinics, which in southern states were administered by State health departments. In addition, the Department cooperated with the Royal Flying Doctor Service at Alice Springs in providing an aerial medical service to remote areas of the Northern Territory and with missions in providing health services to Aboriginal people.

Construction of a new Darwin hospital located at Myilly Point began in 1941 and was completed in early 1942. The hospital was taken over by the Army in March 1942 and was not handed back to the Department of Health for civilian use until May 1946. During World War II, the Army also built military hospitals at Adelaide River and Katherine. Both were operational by late 1942.

Rural health services gradually improved after the war, and by 1968 there were 59 trained nurses working in 31 health centres, with another 23 nurses based on cattle stations.³

On 1 January 1979 responsibility for State-type health functions (including all hospitals) passed from the Commonwealth to the Northern Territory Government.

The current Royal Darwin Hospital, located in the northern suburb of Tiwi, was completed in 1980.

Selected records relating to health Services in the northern territory		
National Archives, Darwin		
Correspondence files, 1933–49		F3
Correspondence files, 1945–53		E47
Correspondence files, 1950–58		E48
Correspondence files, 1959–93		E51
Correspondence files – 'AS' (Alice Springs) prefix, 1960–ongoing		E1409
Correspondence files, 1962–67		E464
Report on the eradication of malaria in the Northern Territory, 1967		E1679
Records relating to the mosquito eradication program, 1984		E1072
Northern Territory Archives Service		
Staff file of Dr Clyde Cornwall Fenton, 1936–71		NTRS760
Alice Springs Hospital – record of admissions and discharges, 1945–72		NTRS1541
Correspondence files – 'H' (Health) prefix, 1947–52		E463
Files relating to the history of the Northern Territory Medical Service, 1948–88		NTRS1068
Darwin Hospital Advisory Board – correspondence and minutes, 1961–80		NTRS1599
Aerial Medical Services – record of medical flights, 1963–79		NTRS1597
Photographs and negatives of Northern Territory health facilities, 1970–84		NTRS1064

Education

The first school in the Northern Territory was established in Palmerston (Darwin) in January 1877 with 34 pupils. By 1911 there were also schools at Pine Creek and Brock's Creek. In addition, a school for Aboriginal children was established at the Kahlin camp (Darwin).

After the Commonwealth acquired responsibility for the Northern Territory an Education Department was established in 1913 (renamed the Education Branch in 1928) headed by an Inspector of Schools. Leonard Rossiter was appointed as the first Inspector to take charge of the Department, inspect primary schools, and make provision for later secondary education. He arrived in Darwin in April 1913.

In June 1914 a school was opened at Alice Springs under the direction of Ida Standley.

By 1921 six government schools were operating in the Northern Territory, located at Darwin, Parap, Pine Creek, Alice Springs, Emungalan (Katherine) and Kahlin. Over ensuing years, schools were opened at Tennant Creek (1935), Katherine (1945), Adelaide River (1953), and Batchelor (1953). The first Catholic school in the Northern Territory was opened in Darwin in 1906.

In his report for 1914–15, the Administrator noted that there were 130 students attending school.⁴ By 1920 the number had increased to 229.⁵

In accordance with the *Education Ordinance 1917* every child between six and nine years old had to attend a public or certified efficient school if the school was no more than two miles from the child's residence. If the child was between nine and 14 years old, attendance was compulsory if the school was not more than three miles from the child's residence.⁶

For many years Territory teachers were provided from Queensland or, in the case of Alice Springs, South Australian teachers were used. During World War II the Tennant Creek and Alice Springs schools were the only government schools to remain open, and teachers for these schools were obtained by advertisement in South Australia.

From 1 January 1945 the South Australian Government, by agreement with the Commonwealth Government, accepted responsibility for the staffing of all Northern Territory schools and the South Australian curriculum was taught throughout the Territory.

Between 1945 and 1961, the Superintendent of Primary Schools in South Australia was also Supervisor of Education for Northern Territory schools. He was represented in the Territory by an Assistant Supervisor. The Assistant Supervisor, as well as being responsible for the inspection of schools in the Northern Territory, was also responsible for planning and equipping schools.

Northern Territory high schools

The Territory's first high school was established in Darwin in 1921 with 25 students. It closed in 1925 due to the lack of students, and a scholarship system was introduced in its place. Scholarships were usually tenable in Queensland schools.

Secondary level education was reintroduced in Darwin from 1948, Alice Springs from 1954, and Tennant Creek from 1960. These schools were known as higher primary schools and provided education up to the former Intermediate level (equivalent to year 9).

The Darwin higher primary school became the Northern Territory's first permanent high school in January 1956.⁷ The school was constructed on the site of the former Vestey's meatworks. A second Darwin high school was established in the northern suburb of Nightcliff in 1970.

Committee to Enquire into the Educational Needs of the People of the Northern Territory

In 1960 Paul Hasluck, the Minister responsible for the Northern Territory, appointed the Committee to Enquire into the Educational Needs of the People of the Northern Territory. The Committee comprised Reg Marsh, Assistant Administrator; J J Pratt, Deputy Director Commonwealth Office of Education; and C M Griggs, South Australian Deputy Director of Education. It was asked to inquire into the educational needs of the people of the Northern Territory, including Aboriginal people, and to advise what further measures were necessary to ensure adequate buildings and equipment, organisational arrangements, and staff to effectively meet those needs. The Committee was also asked, having regard to the growing demands for education in the Northern Territory, if it was appropriate for the Commonwealth to relieve South Australia of current arrangements and for the Northern Territory to assume full responsibility for these matters.

The committee held public meetings in Darwin, Alice Springs, Katherine and Tennant Creek before presenting its report in April 1961. The report contained 121 recommendations, of which the most significant were that the Territory sever its links with South Australia's Education Department over an eight- to 10-year period and assume responsibility for education matters, and the establishment of an Education Branch to take over responsibility for general education, adult education and vocational training, and pre-schools.

As a result, the Government established an Education Board in September 1961. The Board comprised the Assistant Administrator, Economic and Social Affairs; Director of Aboriginal Welfare; Superintendent of Education; and the Superintendent of Special Schools. Its task was to advise the Administrator on matters of education policy and planning and to coordinate the operations of the Education Branch and the Welfare Branch.⁸

In 1968 the responsibility for general education in the Northern Territory was transferred from the Education Branch to the newly created Department of Education and Science. The Administration's Welfare Branch, however, retained responsibility for special schools for Aboriginal people and for pre-school centres operated primarily for Aboriginal people. These schools were mainly conducted on government settlements, church missions and on some pastoral properties.

All links with the South Australian Education Department were severed in 1971, and the Northern Territory Administration became responsible for education in the Northern Territory.

Tertiary education

The Darwin Community College, first opened in March 1974, became the Darwin Institute of Technology in 1984. The University College of the Northern Territory established in 1985, amalgamated with the Darwin Institute of Technology to become the Northern Territory University, in 1989.

In turn, the Northern Territory University amalgamated with the Centralian College (founded in 1993) and entered into an agreement with the Menzies School of Health Research to be redesignated as the Charles Darwin University in 2004.

Selected records relating to education in the northern territory	
National Archives, Canberra	
Committee to investigate the educational needs of the Northern Territory, 1958–61	A452, 1961/7938
National Archives, Darwin	
Education school committees, 1924–43	F1, 1944/198
Education Ordinance 1917–31 – compulsory attendance at schools, 1930–57	F1, 1949/131
Education – Alice Springs, 1932–38	F1, 1938/61
Education of Aboriginal people, 1936–37	F1, 1938/521
Secondary education – Northern Territory, 1938–39	F1, 1939/391
Education – Alice Springs, 1939–41	F1, 1940/61
Secondary education – Northern Territory, 1941–47	F1, 1947/363
Education classification of Northern Territory schools, 1947–62	F1, 1962/2852
Bagot native school – education, 1950–54	F1, 1952/495
The Bungalow native school, 1950–60	F1, 1956/566
Maranga pre-school association – minute book, 1951–72	NTAC1976/120
Education committee enquiry – statements and enquiries received, 1959–61	F1, 1960/2005
Committee to enquire into education in the Northern Territory, 1960–61	F1, 1961/2200
Education Board, 1961–62	F1, 1965/2663
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Records of Pine Creek primary school, 1945–71	NTRS1575
Bagot school – enrolment lists, 1950–59	NTRS1841
Mataranka school journals, 1960–79	NTRS1843
Correspondence files, 'EB' (Education Branch), 1960–70	NTRS2820
General history files on higher education, 1985–89	NTRS1261

Welfare

Welfare functions were normally provided and administered by State Government departments. In the Territory, child, social, family and Aboriginal welfare were provided through the Native Affairs Branch of the Northern Territory Administration and the State Children's Council and then the Welfare Branch (see chapter 8).

A Welfare Ordinance was approved in 1953 which made the Director of Welfare guardian of all wards, whether Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal. This was replaced in 1964 by the Social Welfare Ordinance which abandoned the Register of Wards.

The Welfare Branch was responsible, under the direction of the Administrator, for providing Aboriginal, child and community welfare services (including preschool education) throughout the Northern Territory⁹. The Branch worked through District Welfare Offices and field staff based in Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs.

An office of the Welfare Branch of the Northern Territory Administration was also located in Adelaide from about the late 1950s. The office was responsible for assisting Northern Territory residents who traveled interstate for education, medical attention, fostering and for investigating and reporting on institutions where State wards and State children were being held in South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales.¹⁰

The Welfare Branch was upgraded to become the Welfare Division in 1970. Then, in December 1972, the functions of the Welfare Division moved from the Northern Territory Administration to Commonwealth departments. The functions were divided between the newly created Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Departments of Health and Education.¹¹

The records relating to welfare are listed in Chapter 8 as the bulk of the records remaining in the National Archives relate to Aboriginal welfare. Some records relating to welfare were passed by the National Archives to the Northern Territory Archive Service. Other records would have passed from the Departments with health and education responsibilities to the Northern Territory Public Service on the establishment of self-government in 1978.

Social security

Social services in Australia were introduced on a progressive basis. Old age pensions began in July 1908, invalid pensions in December 1910, and maternity allowances in October 1912.

Social services for residents of the Northern Territory were provided by the Adelaide Office of the Deputy Commissioner of Pensions and Maternity Allowances and then later the Director of Social Services.

It was not until July 1966 that a fully decentralised regional office of the Department of Social Services was opened in Darwin. It was responsible to the Director of Social Services for South Australia. The office was redesignated as the Department of Social Security in 1972, and then Centrelink in 1997.

In 1975 the Commonwealth established a series of Social Security Appeals Tribunals in each State and Territory, including Darwin, to consider appeals against departmental determinations for pensions, benefits and allowances and a range of other matters arising out of the Social Security Act. Having no statutory power, the Tribunals could not substitute their decisions for those of the Department. Their role was essentially to make recommendations.

In 1988 the Tribunals were recreated as statutory authorities which gave them power to review decisions made by the Department and overturn those decisions if considered necessary.

The National Archives Darwin Office holds no records of the Social Security Appeals Tribunal.

Selected records relating to Social Services	
National Archives, Darwin	
Children services program case files, 1960–84	E674
Miscellaneous records relating to welfare associations in the Northern Territory, 1966–80	E1221
Correspondence files – ‘G’ (General) prefix, 1982–84	E671
Correspondence files, 1982–ongoing	E668

Notes

- ¹ Ellen Kettle, 'History of Northern Territory Health Services', 1985, (www.ntl.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/25194/Kettle_HistoryNTHealthServ.pdf (accessed 9 January 2011)).
- ² Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory for the Year ended 30th June 1935, p. 5.
- ³ Ellen Kettle, *Op cit*, p. 11.
- ⁴ Northern Territory Report of the Administrator for the Year 1914–15, p. 76; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1914–17), volume II, pp. 1411–501.
- ⁵ Northern Territory Annual Report of the Acting Administrator for the Year ended 30th June 1920, p. 66; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1920), volume III, pp. 1689–768.
- ⁶ Education Ordinance 5 of 1917, ss 3–4.
- ⁷ A brief history of education in the Northern Territory is provided in 'The Northern Territory Report for 1959–60', pp. 40–41; *Parliamentary Papers* (1961), volume IV, pp. 617–746.
- ⁸ NAA: F1, 1965/2663, Education Board.
- ⁹ See agency description for CA 1076, NT Welfare Branch, by 1955–70 on RecordSearch for further details.
- ¹⁰ See agency description for CA 6571, Welfare Branch, Northern Territory Administration, Adelaide, by 1963–72 on RecordSearch for further details.
- ¹¹ See agency description for CA 2835, NT Welfare Division, 1970–72 on RecordSearch for further details.

14 Environment

While the Australian Government takes pride in its dedication to the protection of the Australian environment, and indeed has fought vigorously for the protection of parts of the Northern Territory, this was not always the case. In the early years of Commonwealth administration there was virtually no consideration given to the Territory's environment. The change in approach dates from the 1950s.

Meteorology

The South Australian Government established a meteorological observatory in Darwin in 1869 and a second meteorological station in Alice Springs in 1887. Early observations included rainfall, wind speeds and the number of sunshine days each month. Field books completed for both Darwin and Alice Springs contain entries for one calendar month with two pages per day. Readings were taken every three hours from midnight each day. Details recorded were barometer and thermometer readings, wind, lower clouds and extent of cloud. Also recorded were maximum and minimum temperatures.

In 1967 the Darwin Office of the Bureau of Meteorology was established as a Regional Meteorological Centre, which was redesignated as a Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre in July 1988. The Darwin Centre is part of a world-wide network and focuses on tropical analysis, prognosis and diagnostics. The Centre also specialises in climate information, tropical cyclone advisory services for north Australian and volcanic ash advisory services for the region.¹

Selected records relating to meteorological readings in the northern territory		
National Archives, Sydney		
Rainfall and river height observations, 1869–ongoing		E1680
National Archives, Darwin		
Rainfall record book – Northern Territory and South Australia, 1857–1920		NTAC1976/110
Meteorological register for Fort Point, Palmerston (Adams Bay), and Powells Creek, 1869–1907		NTAC1976/106
Rainfall records – Northern Territory recording stations, 1869–1976		NTAC1980/351
Field books – Port Darwin, 1884–1907		NTAC1976/108
Field books – Alice Springs, 1887–1907		E1682
Meteorological observations – Darwin Department of Health, 1914–18		E1367
Meteorological observations – Government House, 1915–18		E1366
Meteorological journal – Darwin, 1935–42		NTAC1976/107
Wind record books – Darwin, 1935–42		NTAC1976/111
Book of daily meteorological observations – Darwin, 1938–42		E767
Correspondence files, 1959–69		E188
Correspondence files, 1959–75		E189
International surface synoptic weather charts, 1964–ongoing		E245
Sea surface temperature analysis charts, 1973–ongoing		E1341
Rainfall and river height observations, 1982–ongoing		E1350
International isobaric analysis charts, circa 1989–ongoing		E1340

(Copy)

Port Darwin Camp
Port Darwin
1/5/69

for,

I have the honor to enclose herewith the Meteorological observations for the months of March and April.

As I am frequently away on other duties I am unable to take the observations regularly myself and I have to thank you for allowing Mr Bennett to take the observations while he resided in the Camp. My assistant Mr. Moore now takes the observations.

The rainy season I think is now over. The heat during the day is not so great and the nights are pleasantly cool.

I have the honor to be
Sir,
Your Obedt Servt
R. H. S. J. G. G.
Surgeon

The Surveyor General }
Port Darwin }

Per

Image 31. Extract from Darwin's earliest meteorological register, 1869. NAA: NTAC1976/106

Uranium mining – Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry, 1975–77

Extensive uranium mining in the Northern Territory began at the Rum Jungle site in 1949. By the 1960s, mining at Rum Jungle began to wind down, and the mine closed in 1971. Major discoveries, however, were soon made at Narbarlek, and then later at Ranger, Jabiluka and Koongarra in the Alligator Rivers Region, east of Darwin.

The discovery of large quantities of uranium in an area which had both historical and cultural significance led the Whitlam Government to appoint a committee of inquiry to examine the environmental impacts of any proposed mining in the area. The Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry, under the direction of Russell Fox, was appointed in July 1975. Its brief was to inquire into the environmental aspects of a proposal, by the Australian Atomic Energy Commission in association with Ranger Uranium Mines, to develop Northern Territory uranium deposits.

The Inquiry held public hearings in Sydney, Darwin, Mudginberri (near the proposed Ranger mine site), Gove, Brisbane, Adelaide and Melbourne, between 9 September 1975 and 12 August 1976. A total of 281 persons gave evidence to the Inquiry.

The Inquiry issued two reports. The first, on 2 November 1976, dealt solely with the grounds of objection to uranium mining in the Alligator Rivers Region. The second report, issued on 17 May 1977, dealt with other issues, such as Aboriginal land rights, the establishment of a national park in the region, and other environmental matters.²

The Inquiry found that if uranium mining was properly regulated and controlled, its hazards were not sufficient to prevent the development of the mines. The Inquiry recommended the establishment of a comprehensive system of environmental monitoring and research, overseen by a coordinating committee representing all the agencies involved, and chaired by a supervising scientist. It also recommended the granting of Aboriginal title to a substantial part of the region and the creation of a national park.

The Inquiry's records, which consist of 12,575 pages of transcript of evidence and 354 documentary exhibits, as well as general files, maps, photographs and press clippings, are held by the National Archives in Canberra.

Mining began at the Ranger site in 1981.

Selected records relating to preliminary studies of uranium mining in the alligator rivers region

PRE-ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

National Archives, Darwin

Arnhem Land uranium province pre-environmental studies, 1971–74	F1, 1971/6618
Arnhem Land uranium province pre-environmental studies, exchange of information, 1971–73	F1, 1971/7268
Arnhem Land uranium province pre-environmental studies, exchange of information, 1974–76	F1, 1974/1798
Arnhem Land uranium province pre-environmental studies, exchange of information, 1976–77	F1, 1976/728
Arnhem Land uranium province pre-environmental studies, exchange of information, 1977–79	F1, 1977/4295

RANGER URANIUM ENVIRONMENTAL INQUIRY	
National Archives, Canberra	
Transcripts of the Inquiry's hearings, 1975–77	A4153
Written submissions/statements of the Inquiry, 1975–77	A4156
Inquiry exhibits, 1975–77	A4157
Submissions files, 1975–77	A4159
Administration files, 1975–77	A4160
Alligator Rivers region environmental fact finding studies, 1975	A4298
Maps and plans, 1975–77	A4299
Press cuttings (alphabetical series), 1975–76	A4300
Press cuttings (chronological series), 1975	A4301
Statements and submissions, 1975–76	A4407
Aerial photographs of the Jabiluka mine site and surrounds, 1975	A4409
Copy of sketches of Aboriginal paintings, 1975	A4410
Alphabetical list of witnesses, 1975–76	A4411
Submissions to the Inquiry, 1975–77	A10394
National Archives, Darwin	
Copy of Alligator Rivers region environmental fact finding study, 1975	E1394

Establishment of Northern Territory national parks

There are 16 national parks in the Northern Territory and nearby islands. Initially the parks were managed by Northern Territory Reserves Board first established in 1956, and then by the Territory Government's National Parks and Wildlife Service.

Despite the granting of self-government to the Territory in 1978, two parks remain the responsibility of the Commonwealth Government: Uluru–Kata Tjuta and Kakadu.

Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park

Ayers Rock and the Olgas (now known as Uluru and Kata Tjuta, respectively) are approximately 440 kilometres west of Alice Springs.

Tourist numbers to these areas began to steadily increase in the 1940s and early 1950s. In 1958, in response to pressures to support tourism enterprises, the area that is now the park was excised from the Petermann Aboriginal Reserve to be managed by the Northern Territory Reserves Board and known as the Ayers Rock Mount Olga National Park. The first ranger was former patrol officer William (Bill) Harney.

In the 1970s the park underwent extensive redevelopment. Existing camping and accommodation facilities were demolished and rebuilt at Yulara, 18 kilometres from Uluru. The park was renamed the Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park on 24 May 1977 under the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act.

The site is traditional Aboriginal land which is leased to the park's management.

Selected records relating to Uluru–Kata Tjuta National Park	
National Archives, Canberra	
Ayers Rock Mount Olga National Park, 1952–60	A452, 1958/892
Correspondence files, 1953–94 (portion also held by National Archives, Darwin)	A8661
Development of the Ayers Rock Mount Olga National Park, 1972	A5882, CO1535
Development of the Ayers Rock Mount Olga National Park, 1974–78	A1209, 1974/6073
Rock art deterioration and protection, 1980–87	A8661, 580/5/5
Ayers Rock – Mount Olga National Park – Protection of Aboriginal sites, 1980–87	A8661, 580/5/12
National Archives, Darwin	
Correspondence files, 1953–94 (portion also held by National Archives, Canberra)	A8661
Northern Territory Reserves Board – Northern Area National Park, 1970–71	F1, 1971/333
Northern Territory Reserves Board – Northern Area National Park, 1971–73	F1, 1971/6384
Northern Territory Reserves Board – proposed master plan Ayers Rock Mount Olga National Park, 1973	E86, 1974/4515
Cabinet submissions – development of Ayers Rock Mount Olga National Park, 1973–77	F1, 1973/6133
Acquisition of Ayers Rock Hotel, 1974–75	E92, 1975/3/3012
Acquisition of Uluru Lodge, 1974–75	E92, 1975/3/3102
Cabinet submissions – development of Ayers Rock Mount Olga National Park, 1974–77	F1, 1974/7486
Conveyancing acquisition of Ayers Rock tourist chalet, 1976	E92, 1976/3/3076
Cabinet submissions – development of Ayers Rock Mount Olga National Park, 1977	F1, 1977/1059
Ayers Rock Park gets a new name, 1977	E532, D1977/33
Photographs of motels at the base of Ayers Rock taken prior to the creation of Uluru National Park, 1981	E1616

Kakadu National Park

Kakadu National Park is 120 kilometres east of Darwin and encompasses an area of almost 20,000 square kilometres. It extends west from Wildman River, east to the border of Arnhem Land, and south to Mary River. The name Kakadu comes from the mispronunciation of 'Gagadju', the name of an Aboriginal language spoken in the northern part of the park.

The region is famous world-wide as a tourist attraction. It is home to an extensive array of wildlife, houses a prized collection of Aboriginal rock art, and is also the location of one of the largest uranium sites in the world. As early as 1964, part of the region was recognised as having biological significance. The Woolonga Aboriginal Reserve, located in the Nourlangie Creek catchment, was proclaimed as a wildlife sanctuary.

During the late 1960s proposals for a national park were made, and in 1972 the Alligator Rivers Wildlife Sanctuary was declared. In 1973 Prime Minister Gough Whitlam announced the establishment of Kakadu National Park, subject to the findings of the pending Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry.

The national park was declared in three stages. Stage 1 was proclaimed on 5 April 1979 (6,144 square kilometres), Stage 2 was proclaimed on 28 February 1984 (6,929 square kilometres) and Stage 3 was proclaimed on 12 June 1987 (4,479 square kilometres). The final stage included two former pastoral properties, Goodparla and Gimbat, which were resumed by the Commonwealth. In addition to the three stages, a Conservation Zone of 2,252 square kilometres was contained within the boundaries of Stage 3.

Selected records relating to kakadu national park	
National Archives, Canberra	
Kakadu National Park, 1973–83	A12912, 10
Alligator Rivers region – Kakadu National Park, 1977–81	A10756, LC1878 parts 1 to 4
Kakadu National Park – conservation zone, 1977–82	A1209, 1978/335 parts 1 to 5
Kakadu National Park – conservation zone, 1978–79	A1209, 1978/685 parts 1 and 2
Kakadu National Park – plan of management, 1979–82	A1209, 1978/1139 parts 1 and 2
National Archives, Darwin	
Northern Territory Reserves Board Northern Area [Kakadu] National Park, 1970–71	F1, 1970/4770
Kakadu National Park land area, 1977–83	E1508, 4/800 parts 1 to 5
Transfer of property of statutory authorities, 1978	E108, LA1978/1337
Northern Territory (Self–Government) Act 1978 – lodging with Registrar–General certificate relating to 162,090 hectares of national park, 1978–79	E108, PA1979/3326
Northern Territory (Self–Government) Act 1978 – lodging with Registrar–General certificate relating to 19,857 square kilometres of national park, 1978–79	E108, PA1979/3327
Kakadu National Park proclamation and management, 1978–87	E460, 1983/293 parts 1 and 2
Kakadu National Park land settlement scheme, 1978–84	E460, 1983/465 parts 1 and 2
Kakadu National Park plan of management, 1979–85	E1509, 1985/250
Buffalo surveys, 1978–80	E1527, KNP3/1 and KNP3/1 part 2
Kakadu National Park rock art conservation, 1979–82	E1527, KNP9
Tour survey sheets, 1987–ongoing	E1312
Mustering contracts, 1989–ongoing	E1301
Animal removal, mustering statistics, 1990	E1300

The Jabiru township is in the centre of the National Park. Most of the national park is now recognised as traditional Aboriginal land under the terms of the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act, and leased back to the park's management.

Part of the park's management includes the control of feral pests, including Asian buffalo, pigs and horses. By the 1970s it was estimated that there were over 20,000 buffalo in the park, which were causing substantial damage. An eradication program was begun in 1979, and by 2011 only several hundred buffalo remain. In the 1960s crocodile numbers were declining, and they were considered to be an endangered species. Since 1971 they have been fully protected.

Parks Australia North

To effectively manage the two national parks the Commonwealth Government established Parks Australia North in 1975. The agency advises on and implements nature conservation policies, including wildlife and nature protection. It also provides specialist advice and assistance to relevant State and Territory authorities and the governments of overseas countries on national and international training and education programs in nature conservation.

Selected records created by parks auStralia north	
National Archives, Darwin	
Correspondence files, 1979–ongoing	E1527
Correspondence files, 1980–ongoing	E1526
Correspondence files – unregistered, 1980–ongoing	E1528
Correspondence files, 1983–ongoing	E1525
Correspondence files relating to works and services at national parks, 1991–ongoing	E1596

Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist

The position of Supervising Scientist for the Alligator Rivers Region was created on 9 June 1978, with passage of the Environment Protection (Alligator Rivers Region) Act. The establishment of this agency was a recommendation of the Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry.

The primary objective of the Supervising Scientist is to ensure, through research, assessment and the provision of technical advice, that the environment of the Alligator Rivers Region is protected from the effects of uranium mining to the standard required by the Commonwealth Government and the Australian people.

The Supervising Scientist was also responsible for managing the Alligator Rivers Region Research Institute established at Jabiru adjacent to the Ranger mine site. It conducted research and collected and assessed information on the effects of mining operations until its closure in 1994, following which its functions were taken over by the Supervising Scientist.

Following an amendment to its legislation in 1993, the Supervising Scientist now provides technical advice to the Minister on a range of mining related environmental issues of national importance and on radiological matters. The Scientist also conducts more broadly based environmental research on issues of national significance.

In 1997 the agency was renamed the Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist, and its role expanded to undertake research relevant to its expertise, principally into wetlands management.

Selected records created by the environmental research institute of the Supervising Scientist

National Archives, Darwin

Correspondence files, 1981–ongoing E1574

Correspondence files, 1984–95 E1575

Damming of Katherine Gorge

Katherine Gorge, located 30 kilometres east of the town of Katherine, is today a world renowned heritage area and tourist location. It is also a sacred Aboriginal site known as Nitmuluk. Yet in the 1940s the Commonwealth Government actively considered damming the Gorge to provide hydroelectric power to Darwin.

In his annual report for 1943–44, Administrator Aubrey Abbott recommended that an investigation be carried out into the possibility of damming the Gorge. Abbott noted that he was not the first person to make such a recommendation.³

In September 1944 a group of Army engineers carried out a preliminary survey of the Gorge and reported that the site was geologically stable and would ‘form a very satisfactory base for a dam’. They costed the project at £2,330,000.

The Interdepartmental Committee on the Planning of Darwin (see Chapter 4) recommended further investigations be carried out before a final decision could be made. In 1946 Cabinet approved a recommendation from Herbert Johnson, Minister responsible for the Northern Territory, that the matter be referred to the Northern Australia Development Committee for further consideration.

The Committee in turn referred the matter to the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation for further advice. After that the matter simply disappeared from the record, most likely because of the estimated high cost of the project.

Katherine Gorge (Nitmuluk) was established as a national park in 1989.

Selected records relating to the proposed damming of Katherine gorge

National Archives, Canberra

Interdepartmental Committee on Darwin – Report A – Katherine Gorge, 13 November 1945 A2700, submission 1022A

National Archives, Melbourne

Subcommittee reports for Interdepartmental Committee on Darwin – (a) Katherine Gorge (b) Replanning and Economic Development Resources Survey, 1945 MP1675/1, 7

Australian War Memorial, Canberra

Irrigation – Katherine – report on possibility of using Katherine Gorge as a site for a water storage reservoir, 1944 AWM54, 625/4/3

Notes

¹ Bureau of Meteorology website: www.bom.gov.au/nt/rsmc (accessed 8 January 2011).

² Australia. Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry, Second Report, May 1977; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1977), volume 6, paper 117.

³ Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory for Year 1943–44, pp. 6 and 9; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1945–46), volume IV, pp. 1227–38.

15 Other Administrative Functions

During its administration of the Northern Territory, the Commonwealth Government performed a range of functions, some of which were of a national nature and some would be comparable to those performed by a State government. While some of the more substantial and widely known functions have been described in earlier chapters, other functions are listed here.

Audit

The Auditor-General's Office was established in accordance with the *Audit Act 1901* to undertake audits of Commonwealth departments, territories, authorities, companies and other instrumentalities.

An office of the Auditor-General was established in Darwin in 1922. John Davis was appointed as the first Audit Inspector.¹ The Office provides services to the Commonwealth and to the Northern Territory Government.

Selected records relating to audit matters	
National Archives, Darwin	
Correspondence files, 1960–78	E67
Correspondence files, 1978–92	E496

Civil aviation

Darwin's aviation history began with the arrival of an aircraft piloted by Ross and Keith Smith in 1919 as part of the England to Australia air race. Staniforth Smith, the acting Administrator, who met the Smiths on their arrival on 10 December 1919, later described the incident as 'the most important event in the history of Darwin since 1872, when Australia was first connected with Asia and Europe by a submarine cable'.² Two days earlier – on 8 December 1919 – Captain Wrigley made the first recorded aircraft landing in the Territory when he landed his plane at Alexandria station.

In time two airports were built in Darwin: a civilian airport in the suburb of Parap, and a military airport, which is essentially the site of the present-day airport in the suburb of Marrara. The civilian airport's principal runway was located on what is now Ross Smith Avenue.

By the 1930s aviation was emerging as a popular form of transport, and Darwin's location meant that it was an ideal stopover on the Sydney to London route. Services began on a regular basis in 1934. That same year Qantas established a hangar in Parap which may still be seen.

The emerging aviation industry led to the establishment of the Department of Civil Aviation in 1938 on an Australia-wide basis to ensure the safety of civil flying, licensing of pilots, and the safe carriage of passengers and mail. At the same time an office was established in Darwin.

Darwin's two airports – civilian and military – were bombed during World War II. The civilian air base was closed in 1946, and all operations moved to the military location at Marrara.

Selected records relating to civil aviation matters		
National Archives, Adelaide		
General policy – aerodrome development records, 1939–59		E1404
Northern Territory correspondence files, 1940–50		AP445/2
National Archives, Darwin		
Photo of aircraft at Alexandria cattle station, 1919		NTAC1970/8, 614
Correspondence files, 1949–58		NTAC1980/459
Records relating to the operation of Darwin Airport, 1954–98		E1585
Correspondence files relating to Commonwealth assets in the Northern Territory, 1956–90		E856
Correspondence files, 1957–78		E338
Civil aviation property functions, 1958–59		F425, C134
Maps and plans relating to Northern Territory aerodromes and authorised landing areas, 1961–ongoing		E1288
Correspondence files relating to aerodromes and authorised landing areas within the Northern Territory, 1964–ongoing		E1289
Photographs relating to aerodromes and authorised landing areas within the Northern Territory, 1964–88		E1315
Aerodrome and authorised landing area – field (survey) books, 1968–ongoing		E1286

Defence

Fears over the 'empty north' were a hallmark over much of the Commonwealth's administration of the Northern Territory. A program of expansion of Darwin's defence facilities was begun in the 1930s (see Chapter 4) and continued after the war.

A command structure was established centred on Darwin. Naval and Air Force facilities were also developed. In the 1990s the program of expansion was accelerated even further when major defence components were relocated to the Territory from southern States, including the Army's Robertson Barracks located on the outskirts of Darwin.

A joint American–Australian satellite tracking facility was opened at Pine Gap (near Alice Springs) in 1966. The National Archives holds no records for this facility.

Selected records relating to defence in the northern territory		
DEFENCE COMMAND		
National Archives, Darwin		
Correspondence files, 'NL' (Northern Lines), 1945–50		E325
Northern Territory Command standing orders for administration, 1961–62		E327
Folder of amendments to Northern Territory Command standing orders for administration, medical instructions, circulars and medical newsletters, 1962–63		NTAC1980/398
Correspondence files, units and formation systems, 1962–66		E202
Correspondence files – 'D' (Darwin), 1966–ongoing		E203
Correspondence files, 1975–ongoing		E1161
Company roll books, 1977–ongoing		E1203
Routine orders, 1986–ongoing		E1204

DEFENCE ADMINISTRATION		
National Archives, Darwin		
Correspondence files – 'D' (Darwin), 1977–ongoing		E791
Correspondence files – regional branch audit, 1977–81		E844
Correspondence files – 'CAC' (controller of audit correspondence), 1977–81		E845
ARMY		
National Archives, Darwin		
Company roll books, 1973–ongoing		E1460
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY		
National Archives, Darwin		
Classified correspondence files, 1942–76		E1568
Correspondence files, 1960–79		E477
Correspondence files, 1969–ongoing		E499
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE		
National Archives, Canberra		
Correspondence files, 'HQ' (Headquarters) prefix, 1939–93 (<i>portion held by National Archives, Darwin</i>)		A1561
Correspondence files, 1942–55		A1564
Correspondence files, 'BS' (Base Squadron), 1952–93		A5797
National Archives, Darwin		
Correspondence files, 'HQ' (Headquarters) prefix, 1939–93 (<i>portion held by National Archives, Canberra</i>)		A1561

Electoral matters

Between 1901 and 1911, Northern Territory residents were represented in the Commonwealth Parliament by members and senators returned from South Australia. This ceased with the Commonwealth takeover in 1911.

Representation of Territorians in the House of Representatives was restored in 1922 and the Senate in 1975 (see Chapter 7).

A position of Returning Officer for the Northern Territory within the Commonwealth Electoral Office was created in 1964. The Returning Officer was responsible for the administration of the Territory's electoral district, conducting elections, enforcing compulsory enrolment and voting provisions of the law, and, when acting as the Electoral Registrar, maintaining the electoral roll and exercising financial delegations.

When the Electoral Office was replaced by the Australian Electoral Commission in 1984, the Returning Officer for the Northern Territory was renamed the Australian Electoral Officer for the Northern Territory.

Selected records relating to electoral matters in the northern territory		
National Archives, Canberra		
Northern Territory electoral maps, 1965–ongoing		A1434
National Archives, Brisbane		
Electoral rolls arranged by district, 1947–ongoing		E964
Maps of electoral districts, Northern Territory, 1956–84		E1354
Correspondence files, 1986–ongoing		E1335
National Archives, Darwin		
Electoral claim cards, 1964–79 (available on microfiche as E633)		E593
Electoral claim cards, 1979–84 (available on microfiche as E632)		E592

Industrial relations

The *Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904* established the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration for the purpose of settling industrial disputes extending beyond the limits of any one state and to prescribe a minimum wage. The Principal Industrial Registry was also established to register all organisations covered by the legislation and to provide administrative services to the Court.

Claims before the Court were transferred to the Public Service Arbitrator in 1920, and then passed to the jurisdiction of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission from 1983. The Commission was replaced by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission in 1988.

An Arbitration Inspectorate was created in Darwin in 1969. It was responsible for securing the observance of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act, and subsequent regulations and awards. In 1991 the functions of the Inspectorate were merged with the branch office of the Department of Industrial Relations.

Selected records relating to industrial relations		
National Archives, Darwin		
Correspondence files, 1969–87		E537
Correspondence folders, 1970–78		NTAC1980/400
Correspondence files, 1976–ongoing		E721
Correspondence case files, 1976–ongoing		E1085
Correspondence files, 1978–84		E1087
Correspondence files, 1981–84		E538
Correspondence files, 1984–89		E1086

Lighthouses

The construction and maintenance of lighthouses was originally a State function which passed to the Commonwealth in July 1915. Four Lighthouse Districts were established to administer Australia's lighthouses: District Number 1 covered the Western Australian and Northern Territory coasts.

In time there were five lighthouses in the Northern Territory: at Point Charles, Emery Point, and Cape Hotham on the mainland; Cape Don on the Cobourg Peninsula; and Cape Fourcroy on the western side of Bathurst Island.

The oldest lighthouse, at Point Charles, was completed in 1889. The most prominent facility was Cape Don which consisted of the lighthouse, three residences and ancillary buildings. It began operating on 15 September 1917.

Records relating to lighthouses include the selection of the sites, plans for their design and construction, staffing, maintenance, and, as they became more widely recognised as tourist attractions, visitor's books.

Selected records relating to northern territory lighthouses		
GENERAL RECORDS		
National Archives, Brisbane		
Light station drawings, 1890–1990		J3013
CAPE DON LIGHTHOUSE		
National Archives, Canberra		
Lighthouse for Cape Don – Northern Territory, 1912		A3, NT1912/497
Reservation of area for use of Cape Don lighthouse, 1918–19		A659, 1941/1/3589
Australian Meteorological Observer's Handbook – Cape Don, 1925		D2034
Outgoing correspondence – Cape Don lighthouse, 1968–83		D2035
Visitors books – Cape Don, 1970–83		D2020
National Archives, Brisbane		
Cape Don – light station logs, 1974–77		J2530
National Archives, Adelaide		
Incoming correspondence – Cape Don lighthouse, 1956–83		D2036
Light station log book and monthly weather returns – Cape Don, 1968–71		D2024
CAPE HOTHAM LIGHTHOUSE		
National Archives, Canberra		
Reserve for Cape Hotham lighthouse, 1930–31		A1, 1930/4351
POINT CHARLES LIGHTHOUSE		
National Archives, Canberra		
Plan showing proposed sites for lighthouses at Point Emery and Point Charles, 1889		A9568, 2/1/1
Northern Territory views – photographs of Point Charles lighthouse, 1910		A66
Plan showing site of Point Charles lighthouse, 1911		A9568, 2/1/3
Point Emery and Point Charles lighthouses, 1913–15		A3, NT1915/3919
Point Charles lighthouse reserve, 1919		A3, NT1919/4016
National Archives, Melbourne		
Point Charles lighthouse, 1914–15		MP341/1, 1915/10597

National Archives, Brisbane	
Point Charles site plan, 1914	A10182, CN 13 067
National Archives, Perth	
Point Charles apparatus, 1917–38	K1150, A405
Point Charles equipment, 1919–34	K1150, A407
Lighthouse Point Charles, 1930–33	K1184, 91/7/1
POINT EMERY LIGHTHOUSE	
National Archives, Canberra	
Point Emery light, 1907–12	A3, NT1912/5904

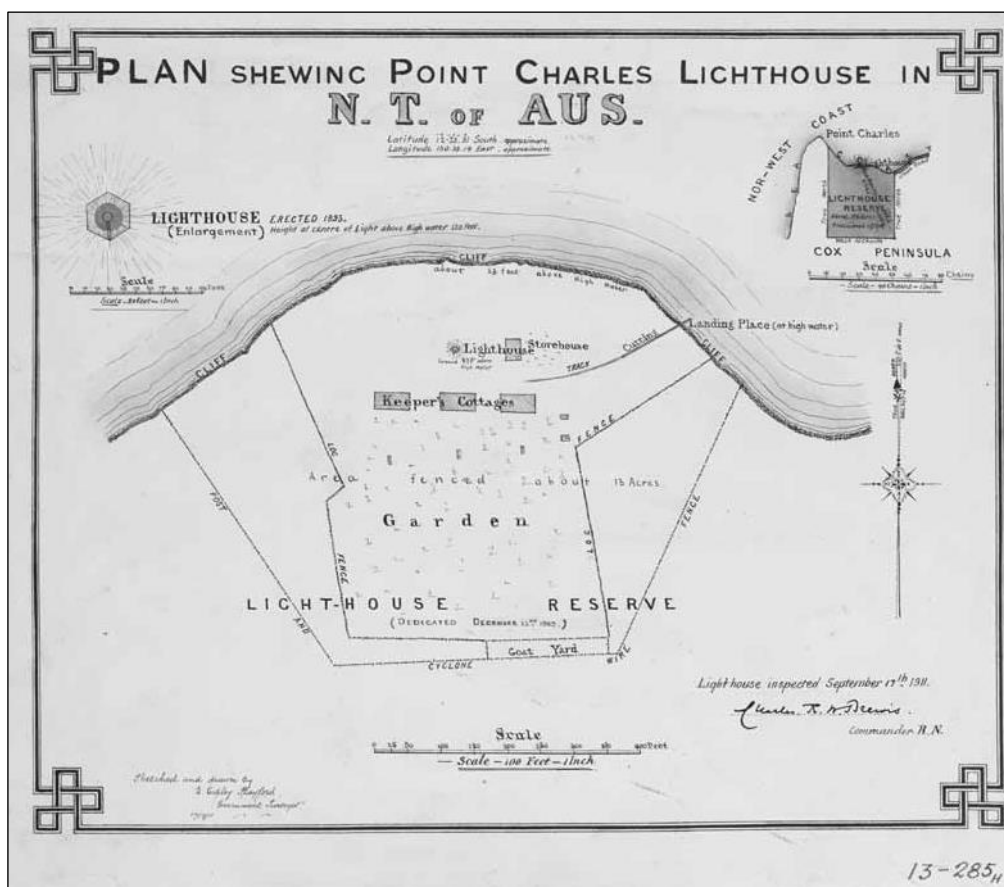


Image 32. Plan showing the site for the proposed Point Charles lighthouse, 1911.
NAA: A9568, 2/1/3

Media

Australian Broadcasting Commission / Corporation

The Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC) launched radio station 5DR (Darwin) in 1946. Radio station 5AL (Alice Springs) began broadcasting in November 1948.

Selected records created by the abc in the northern territory	
National Archives, Sydney	
News departments – Darwin and Alice Springs – correspondence files, 1963–87	D3134
ABC radio programs – Northern Territory regional stations, 1970–73	AP919/4
Video cassette recordings from ABC South Australian and Northern Territory television broadcasts, 1975–ongoing	D1102
National Archives, Brisbane	
Northern Territory radio – news bulletins, 1972–ongoing	E794
Darwin television – news bulletins, 1973–ongoing	E795
Broadcast video tapes of television program 'Territory Tracks' and other local productions, 1980–84	E1567
National Archives, Darwin	
Correspondence files, 1981–ongoing	E961

Australian News and Information Bureau

The Australian News and Information Bureau was created in 1950 out of the former Department of Information. A permanent presence was established in the Northern Territory in 1969. The Bureau's function was to produce and publish promotional material on behalf of the Commonwealth.

The Bureau was renamed the Australian Information Service in 1973, and underwent a number of further name changes over the next 20 years. As the Australian Overseas Information Service in 1994 it was abolished and its functions absorbed into the International Public Affairs Branch of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Selected records created by auStralian newS and information bureau and itS SucceSSorS	
National Archives, Canberra	
Photographic reference prints, 1950–73	A7973
National Archives, Darwin	
File copies of pictorial material, 1969	E591
File copies of editorial material 'D' (Darwin), 1969–77	E532
Press releases and other material relating to the media, 1985–ongoing	E1119

Northern Territory Bicentennial Council

The Australian Bicentennial Authority was established in 1980 to plan, recommend and arrange celebrations for Australia's bicentennial in 1988. Bicentennial councils were established in each State and Territory. The Northern Territory Bicentennial Council was established in 1981 and held its first meeting on 12 June 1981. The Council ceased to function in 1989.

Selected records created by the northern territory bicentennial council

National Archives, Darwin

Miscellaneous records, 1981–89

E1123

Public Service Inspector/Board

The Public Service Inspector's position was established in Darwin in 1969, with the appointment of Stanley Haupt as the first Inspector. The Inspector's role included inspection and control of departmental establishments, recruitment and appointment of staff, maintenance of conditions of service, and training.

Prior to 1969 these functions were undertaken by officers in Canberra – and this practice resumed after 1987.

**Selected records created by the public Service Inspector/
public Service board**

National Archives, Brisbane

Correspondence files, 1969–87

E359

(portion held by National Archives, Darwin)

National Archives, Darwin

Correspondence files, 1969–87

E359

(portion held by National Archives, Brisbane)

Correspondence files, 'O' (Organisation), 1971–81

E588

Tourism

The Northern Territory Tourist Board was established in September 1962 in accordance with the *Tourist Board Ordinance 1962*.

The role of the Board was to develop and foster tourism in the Territory, establish and operate tourist bureaux throughout Australia, and in the case of land bequeathed to the Board, control, manage and develop the land accordingly.

Selected records created by the northern territory tourist board

National Archives, Darwin

Northern Territory Tourist Board Ordinance, 1959–63

F1, 1959/2346

Northern Territory Tourist Board – financial arrangements,
1962–65

F1, 1966/3156

Northern Territory Tourist Board Ordinance, 1963–74

F1, 1972/2453

Northern Territory Tourist Board annual reports, 1963–74

F1, 1975/2980

Northern Territory Tourist Board, 1965–72

F1, 1970/767

Northern Territory Archives Service

Tourism development files, 1977–78

F1081

Notes

¹ *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*, number 110, 28 December 1922, p. 2802.

² Northern Territory, Annual Report of the Acting Administrator for the Year ended 30th June 1920, p. 3.

16 Territory Personalities

The Northern Territory has always been renowned for its share of personalities. Among them it could be claimed were the famous, the infamous and the eccentric.

Frederick Askins (1886–1973)

Born in Britain in 1886, Frederick Thomas Askins migrated to South Australia and served with the Northern Territory Administration from 1908 to 1918. The remainder of his career was spent in service with the South Australian and New South Wales Governments.

Askins wrote three books about his Northern Territory experiences: 'Retrospection', an autobiography of his time in the Northern Territory; 'Dark Night – What of the Dawn', dealing with Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory; and 'Footprints in the Sands of Time', a history of the Northern Territory.

None of the books were published, but the manuscripts of all three are held by the National Archives in Darwin.

Selected records relating to frederick aSkins	
National Archives, Canberra	
F T Askins – appointment as typist and shorthand writer – Northern Territory, 1911–12	A1, 1912/7332
National Archives, Darwin	
Miscellaneous photographs, postcards and cuttings of aspects of life in the Northern Territory, 1908–63	M1705
Draft notes and research notes for 'Footprints in the Sands of Time', 1965–69	M1697
Manuscript of book 'Footprints in the Sands of Time', 1965–69	M1698
Manuscript of book 'Retrospection', 1965–69	M1699
Copies of selected statistics and information about the Northern Territory, 1965–69	M1704
Manuscript of book 'Dark Night – What of the Dawn', 1965–69	M1706
Photo of F T Askins, undated	NTAC1970/8, 598

Edward John (Eddie) Connellan (1912–83)

Born in Melbourne in 1912, Eddie Connellan began his working life as a teacher, but his real interests were aviation and the pastoral industry in the Northern Territory.

Having obtained his pilot's licence in 1936 and with the financial backing of friends, Connellan was able to undertake two aerial surveys of the Territory in 1938 to assess the potential for aviation in the Territory's development. The results urged him to establish a service based in Alice Springs that in time became known as Connellan Airways. In 1939 Connellan persuaded the Commonwealth to grant him a subsidy (of one halfpenny per mile) to operate a mail service between Alice Springs and Wyndham, Western Australia.

Connellan's company flew routes throughout the Territory and the north of Western Australia and provided support for the Royal Flying Doctor Service. It later fell into financial difficulty and was bought out by East-West Airlines in 1980, but went into liquidation shortly after.

From the 1940s, Connellan and his family lived in Alice Springs. They established a home called Araluen west of the town, and also developed a cattle station on the property, Narwietooma, northeast of the town.

Connellan died on 26 December 1983 and is buried in the Alice Springs Memorial Cemetery. Adjacent to the cemetery is a museum devoted to Connellan and Connellan Airways.

Selected records relating to Edward John Connellan		
National Archives, Canberra		
E J Connellan – application to assist Northern Territory aerial survey, 1937–49		A431, 1949/1113
Connellan's air service, Alice Springs–Wyndham, 1938–44		A659, 1944/1/549
E J Connellan, application for agricultural lease, Northern Territory, 1942–45		A659, 1944/1/551
National Archives, Melbourne		
Agreement between the Commonwealth and E J Connellan – Alice Springs to Wyndham air services, 1939		MP183/1, 112
Alice Springs to Wyndham air service – E J Connellan, 1940–41		MP347/1, 192/115/36
E J Connellan – aerial survey work Northern Territory – notes on method of aerial survey, 1940–42		MP508/1, 307/701/30
National Archives, Adelaide		
Northern Territory airmail – Barkly Tableland to Alice Springs – Camooweal to Borroloola, 1944–53		D961, C1952/447
National Archives, Darwin		
Inland aerial mail service contract with E J Connellan – Alice Springs to Wyndham, 1938–40		F1, 1939/697
Inland aerial mail service contract with E J Connellan – Alice Springs to Wyndham – pedal radio sets at Tanami Desert, 1941		F1, 1941/69
Inland aerial mail service – contract with E J Connellan, 1944–47		F1, 1945/42
Narwietooma station – E J Connellan, 1954–62		E740, P86
Proposed purchase of privately owned residence 'Araluen', E J Connellan, 1955		F1, 1955/374

Edward Joseph (Ted) Egan (1932–)

Ted Egan was born in Melbourne on 6 July 1932. He arrived in the Northern Territory in 1949 for employment as a patrol officer with the Native Welfare Branch, and later served with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

Well-known as an author, singer and songwriter Egan served as Administrator of the Northern Territory between 2003 and 2007.

Ted Egan now lives in Alice Springs and is currently researching a PhD on the career of John Anderson Gilruth, the first Commonwealth Administrator of the Northern Territory.

Selected records relating to ted egan**National Archives, Canberra**

Personal history file – E J Egan, 1951–63	A2065, E J Egan
Photographs – Personalities – Ted Egan, Department of Aboriginal Affairs – seated at desk, 1974 (3 photos)	A8739, A12/8/74/24, A12/8/74/25 and A12/8/74/26

National Archives, Darwin

Patrol officer E J (Ted) Egan, 1957–59	F1, 1957/367
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Paul Anthony Edward Everingham (1943–)

Paul Everingham was born in Brisbane on 4 February 1943, and developed a career as a barrister and solicitor.

Everingham served as an alderman on Alice Springs Town Council (1972–74) before being elected to the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly for the Darwin seat of Jingili in 1974.

A prominent advocate for the Territory, Everingham was majority leader in the Assembly, and from 1978 became the Territory's first Chief Minister.

He retired as Chief Minister in 1984 to contest the Northern Territory seat in the federal House of Representatives. After serving a single term (for part of which he was an Opposition frontbencher) he left Parliament and returned to Queensland.

Selected records relating to paul everingham**National Archives, Darwin**

Alice Springs Office – correspondence, 1984–87	M2151
Miscellaneous Darwin Office records, 1984–87	M2152
Northern Territory Archives Service	
General correspondence and administration files of the Chief Minister, 1978–84	NTRS782

John Flynn (1880–1951)

John Flynn was born in Victoria on 25 November 1880 and educated in Melbourne. Ordained as a Presbyterian minister in 1911 he was commissioned by his church to visit the Northern Territory in 1912 and report on its missionary needs. His report, *Northern Territory and Central Australia – A Call to the Church*, was accepted by the Presbyterian General Assembly, and as a result he was appointed field superintendent of the Australian Inland Mission (AIM), a position he held for the next 39 years.

The vast distances of the Territory and the lack of adequate medical facilities concerned Flynn, and from 1917 onwards he founded a series of nursing services in remote locations. Taking advantage of the rapid development of aviation in the 1920s, Flynn was instrumental in the formation of the AIM Aerial Medical Service in May 1928. A base in Alice Springs was opened in 1939.

The effectiveness of the service was assisted by the invention of the pedal radio in 1929 (developed by Alfred Traeger). With several name changes, the AIM Aerial Medical Service became the Royal Flying Doctor Service in 1954.

Flynn was also concerned with providing shelter for the older population of Central Australia, and in 1949 he designed the first cottage to be built at the Old Timers' Settlement in Alice Springs.

He was awarded an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in 1933, and served as Moderator-General of the Presbyterian Church from 1939 until 1942. He died in July 1951, and his ashes were placed in a commemorative grave on Larapinta Drive, a few kilometres west of Alice Springs facing the McDonnell Ranges. A church dedicated to Flynn's memory was completed in Alice Springs in 1956.

Selected records relating to John Flynn	
National Archives, Canberra	
Northern Territory – Flying Doctor Service of Australia Federal Council – commemorative structure to Reverend Dr John Flynn, 1944–51	A431, 1951/1271
Very Reverend John Flynn – honour, 1950	A463, 1959/3703
National Archives, Sydney	
Very Reverend Dr John Flynn – founder, Australian Inland Mission (audio tape), 1947	C102, REL6
John Flynn Memorial Church, Alice Springs – laying foundation stone by Prime Minister (audio tape), 1954	C102, REL30
National Archives, Darwin	
Flying doctor – Northern Territory medical service, 1934–38	F1, 1936/651
Flying doctor – Barkly Tableland, 1937	F1, 1937/375
Flying doctor – Northern Territory medical service, 1937–39	F1, 1939/6
Government aircraft – flying doctor, 1937–39	F1, 1940/360
Commemorative structure – Reverend Dr John Flynn, 1943–49	F1, 1952/1065
Australian Inland Mission requests – reference John Flynn's Grave and Old Timers Home, Alice Springs, 1955	F1, 1955/1263

John Anderson Gilruth (1871–1937)

John Gilruth was born in Scotland in 1871. In 1892 he became a qualified veterinarian and was later appointed as a government veterinary surgeon in New Zealand.

In 1911 he was invited to join a scientific mission to investigate the potential of the Northern Territory (see Chapter 2), and in February 1912 he was appointed the first Commonwealth Administrator of the Northern Territory. One of his initial tasks was to complete a tour of the Territory in one of the few cars in the Northern Territory at the time. In a report to the Minister, in November 1912, Gilruth wrote that he travelled 1,200 miles south to Katherine and across the eastern Barkly Tableland.¹

His term as Administrator was marked by economic decline and the aftermath of World War I. A period of civil unrest culminated in an incident known as the 'Darwin Rebellion' when on 17 December 1918 public discontent peaked in a confrontation between Gilruth and townspeople. An angry mob converged on Government House demanding that Gilruth leave Darwin, which he did in February 1919.

Gilruth did not return to Darwin, and later served with distinction with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation.

Gilruth died on 4 March 1937.

Selected records relating to John Gilruth	
National Archives, Canberra	
John Gilruth – appointment as Administrator, Northern Territory, 1916–30	A1, 1930/6111
John Gilruth – criticism of Northern Territory, 1934	A1, 1934/7068
Adolph Basser Library, Australian Academy of Science, Canberra	
Personal papers, 1890–1954	MS007

Francis Xavier Gsell (1872–1960)

Francis Gsell was born in Alsace, France on 30 October 1872. He trained for the Catholic priesthood with the congregation of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC), and was ordained in 1896.

He arrived in Australia soon afterwards and began working in Sydney and later in Papua. In 1906 he was appointed as Administrator for the Catholic Church in Darwin. Almost from the outset he was determined to establish a mission for Aboriginal people, and he felt that Bathurst Island would be the ideal place.

He gained approval for the establishment of this mission in 1911 and then lived on Bathurst Island until 1938. His attempts to introduce Christianity to the Aboriginal people was only moderately successful, but he did influence a change to the local culture by ending the practice of young teenage girls being sold into marriage with older men of the community. He would buy the girls himself and then free them to receive schooling at the mission. Gsell was also influential in establishing missions at Port Keats (now known as Wadeye) and Arltunga (east of Alice Springs).

In recognition of his services to Aboriginal people and the Northern Territory, Gsell was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 1935.

Gsell left Bathurst Island in 1938 on his appointment as Bishop of Darwin, an office he held until 1949. He retired in 1949 and returned to Sydney where he wrote his memoirs, *The Bishop with 150 Wives*, published in 1955.

Gsell died at Kensington, Sydney on 12 July 1960. In 1982 his remains were reburied in the crypt of St Mary's Cathedral in Darwin.

Selected records relating to Francis Xavier Gsell	
National Archives, Canberra	
Bathurst Island to be reserved for Aboriginal purposes, 1894–1910	A1640, 1910/570
Bathurst Island – reserve for Aboriginal people, 1904–39	A1, 1938/33126
Francis Xavier Gsell – naturalisation, 1909–20	A1, 1920/21513
Bathurst Island – mission reports, 1910–52	A431, 1951/1294
F X Gsell – town lands lease number 346, 1930	A1, 1930/7309
Port Keats Catholic mission, 1934–55	A452, 1955/98
Birthday honours – publication of, 1935	A2924, 1935/1
Little Flower mission – Arltunga, 1942–52	A431, 1951/418
Photographs of Northern Territory – Reverend Frank Flynn and Bishop F X Gsell, 1944	M119, 119
Monsignor Francis Xavier Gsell – honours, 1951	A463, 1960/3088

William Edward (Bill) Harney (1895–1962)

Bill Harney was born in Charters Towers, Queensland in April 1895. After service with the First AIF in World War I, he and a business partner, J Keighran, took a lease on land by the Macarthur River near Borroloola.

After selling his share of the lease, he bought a fishing vessel to hunt for trepang, and in 1940 joined the Commonwealth's Native Affairs Branch as a patrol officer. Some of his reports detail the enormous distances he was required to travel. Between May 1942 and May 1943, he undertook 105 patrols throughout the Top End, including Pine Creek, Katherine, Mataranka, Maranboy, Larrimah, Adelaide River, Elliott, Bathurst Island and Darwin. In that year alone he travelled over 17,000 kilometres.

In March 1957 he was appointed as the first ranger for Ayers Rock and the Olgas (now Uluru and Kata Tjuta) as they were then known. His responsibilities included the protection of wildlife and Aboriginal rock art.

Harney became widely read in his field and was highly sought after for his comments and views on the Northern Territory.

In retirement Bill Harney returned to Queensland where he died in December 1962.

Selected records relating to bill harney		
National Archives, Canberra		
Harney William Edward (WW I service file), 1914–20		B2455, Harney W E
J Keighran and W Harney – blocks 5 and 6 – Macarthur River, 1922–23		A3, NT1923/3933
W E Harney – Commonwealth Literary Fund, 1942–61		A463, 1967/674
National Archives, Sydney		
Bill Harney remembers – 'Blackmans life' and 'Bushway with Bill Harney' (audio tape), 1954		C102, FD20
Bill Harney – keeper of Ayres Rock – ABC publicity photos, 1962		SP1011/1, 2322
National Archives, Darwin		
Patrol Officer W E Harney patrols and reports, 1943–45		F1, 1944/275

Bernard Francis (Bernie) Kilgariff (1923–2010)

Born in Adelaide on 30 September 1923, and following service with the Second AIF in New Guinea during World War II, Bernie Kilgariff developed his career as a Northern Territory businessman. He served on the Northern Territory Legislative Council (1960–68) and the Legislative Assembly (1968–75), including as the Assembly's Speaker in 1974–75.

When the Territory gained representation in the Senate following changes to electoral legislation in 1974, Kilgariff was elected to one of the two seats representing the National Country Party (the other seat was won by Ted Robertson for the Australian Labor Party). He changed his allegiance to the Liberal Party in 1979. Kilgariff served in the Senate from 1975 to 1987.

Bernie Kilgariff died in Alice Springs on 13 April 2010.

Selected records relating to Bernie Kilgariff

National Archives, Darwin

Correspondence and subject files from the Liberal Party Senate Whip's Office, 1973–87	M1938
Personal papers created and maintained by Bernard Kilgariff, 1975–87	M2154

John Kilgour (1872–1958)

John Kilgour was born in Scotland on 29 September 1880.

During the early years of the Commonwealth administration of the Northern Territory, Kilgour was employed with the railways, and then as an audit officer. He also served on the Darwin Town Council. He left the Northern Territory for Sydney in 1917, where he was employed by the Department of Defence.

While living and working in the Northern Territory, Kilgour took a series of photographs which are now in the custody of the Northern Territory Archives Service in Darwin.

John Kilgour died on 31 December 1958.

Selected records relating to John Kilgour

Northern Territory Archives Service

Photographs, 1887–1959	NTRS3158
Miscellaneous photographs, 1901–59	NTRS3143
Notice for election to Darwin Town Council, 1916	NTRS3168

Jerry Koci and John Novotny

Jerry Koci and John Novotny were young Czechoslovakian men who came to Australia as post-war immigrants from Europe. Novotny arrived in Australia 1949 and Koci in 1950.

On the evening of 17 April 1952 they murdered Darwin taxi driver George Grantham, stole his car and fled to Queensland. Following their capture, they were returned to Darwin, tried, convicted of murder and sentenced to death by hanging.

They were hanged at Fannie Bay gaol (Darwin) on the morning of 7 August 1952. Koci and Novotny were the first men executed in the Territory since 1913. There have been no executions since. They were buried in the gaol grounds.

Selected records relating to Jerry Koci and John Novotny

National Archives, Canberra

John Novotny and Jerry Koci sentenced to death – Supreme Court, Darwin – on conviction of murder, 1952	A432, 1952/1490 part 1
J Novotny and J Koci – conviction of murder Northern Territory – miscellaneous papers, 1952	A432, 1952/1490 part 2
Criminal – individual cases – John Novotny and Jerry Koci – execution, 1952	A462, 226/2/21

National Archives, Darwin

Koci and Novotny murder, 1952–82	E72, DL1868 parts 1 and 2
Regina versus John Novotny and Jerry Koci, 1952	F423, S7

Lewis Hubert (Harold Bell) Lasseter (1880–1931)

Harold Lasseter was born in September 1880 at Bamganie, Victoria, and served briefly in the First AIF during World War I.

Lasseter's place in Territory history arises from his claim that as a young man he had discovered a fabulous gold reef in Central Australia, although precisely when he made the discovery is uncertain as the date changed a number of times.

In 1930 his claim led to the formation of an expedition to locate the lost reef. Lasseter accompanied the expedition which departed from Alice Springs in July, but returned unsuccessfully in September. Lasseter mounted a second expedition shortly after. He became separated from the expedition and was later found by a group of Aboriginal people in a delirious state, suffering from thirst and malnourishment. He lived with the group for some time but ultimately died of starvation in early 1931. His body was located in March 1931 and buried on the site but was later moved to Alice Springs Memorial Cemetery.

Lasseter's lost gold reef, if indeed it does exist, has never been found.

Selected records relating to Lewis Hubert (Harold Bell) Lasseter	
National Archives, Canberra	
Lasseter Lewis Hubert (WW I service file), 1914–20	B2455, Lasseter L H
National Archives, Darwin	
Neville Harding expedition – Lasseter's reef, 1950–51	F1, 1951/651
Lasseter's lost reef – press clippings – <i>Centralian Advocate</i> , 1950–56	F742, 1950/588M
Burial – L H B Lasseter, 1958–76	F706, 1960/39
Neville Harding – Lasseter reef expeditions, 1967–70	F1, 1971/2147

Jessie Sinclair Litchfield (1883–1956)

Jessie Litchfield (nee Phillips) was born in Sydney on 18 February 1883. She married Valentine Litchfield, an engineer, and moved to the Northern Territory in 1908, working in mining camps and later residing in Darwin. She lived her entire adult life in the Territory except for the years of World War II when most civilians were compulsorily evacuated from Darwin. Litchfield spent the years 1942–45 in Sydney.

Litchfield was a writer, poet and journalist. She published five books, most of which drew on her experiences in the Territory and her knowledge of Aboriginal life. She worked as a journalist for many years, both in editorial positions on Darwin newspapers and as the Northern Territory press representative for major Australian or overseas newspapers.

She took an active interest in politics, standing, unsuccessfully, as an independent for the House of Representatives seat of the Northern Territory at the 1951 Federal election. She had earlier been unsuccessful in an attempt to win a seat on the Darwin Town Council in 1927.

In 1953 Jessie Litchfield was awarded the Coronation Medal for her services to the Northern Territory. She died during a visit to Melbourne on 12 March 1956, and her ashes were later scattered over Darwin.

Selected records relating to JeSSie Litchfield	
National Archives, Darwin	
J S Litchfield – assistance for settlement, 1908–28	A1, 1927/7242
J S Litchfield – complaint regarding the Northern Territory's administration, 1927–38	A1, 1938/23077
Complete list of recipients of coronation medal, 1953	A463, 1957/3125
National Archives, Sydney	
Darwin radio station 5DR and Mrs Litchfield, 1947–48	SP286/7, box 3
National Archives, Darwin	
J S Litchfield – suggestions regarding the future of Darwin, 1950–55	F1, 1954/388

Albert Namatjira (1902–59)

Albert Namatjira was one Australia's most notable artists. His work, watercolour landscapes of Central Australia, is represented in all Australian State art galleries.

Namatjira was born into the Arrernte community at the Hermannsburg Lutheran Mission, near Alice Springs, Northern Territory in 1902. He was first named Elea but then christened as Albert when his parents adopted Christianity. At 13 years of age he was initiated into the Arrernte community and taught traditional laws and customs.

Namatjira met Australian artist Rex Battarbee when the latter visited Hermannsburg in 1934. Battarbee tutored Namatjira in the western tradition of painting and helped him to organise his first exhibition in Melbourne in 1936. The exhibition was a success, and Namatjira was encouraged to exhibit his work in Adelaide and Sydney. Other exhibitions followed, particularly during the 1950s.

Success brought Namatjira money, which he used to lease a cattle station. Granted in 1949, the lease was cancelled in 1950 when it was realised that cattle grazing in the area would not be viable. Namatjira was granted full citizenship rights in 1957. Unlike many other Northern Territory Aboriginal people, Namatjira was then entitled to vote, to live where he wished and to purchase alcohol.

In 1958 Namatjira was charged with supplying alcohol to Aboriginal people. He denied the charge and fought the sentence he received in both the Supreme Court and the High Court. His appeals were unsuccessful and he was sentenced to two months in prison. Namatjira died on 8 August 1959 and was buried in Alice Springs Memorial Cemetery.

Selected records relating to albert namatJira	
National Archives, Darwin	
Albert Namatjira – grazing licence, 1949–53	F1, 1952/496
Albert Namatjira – grazing licence, 1953–59	F1, 1955/651
Welfare Branch – Namatjira Albert – financial matters, 1956–60	F1, 1956/2691
Police proposed prosecutions – Namatjira – for supplying liquor to wards – several wards for drinking liquor, 1958	E72, D6842/2
Complaints – appeals – Namatjira, Albert, 1958–1959	E72, D6995/1
Proposed memorials to Albert Namatjira, 1959–70	F1, 1973/4835
Albert Namatjira, 1959–73	F1, 1971/6757
Copyright – Namatjira A, 1961	E72, D10139/2

Selected records relating to albert namatjira

Northern Territory Archives Service

Welfare files of Albert Namatjira, 1949–71

NTRS2277

Harold George Nelson (1881–1947)

Harold Nelson was born in Sydney in December 1881. He moved to the Northern Territory in 1913 where he became actively involved with the North Australian Workers' Union. In 1917 he was elected to the Darwin Town Council.

Nelson was a dominant figure in industrial campaigns against Vestey's meatworks, and in the period of civil unrest that led to the 'Darwin Rebellion' in December 1918.

He was elected as the Northern Territory's first Member of the House of Representatives, in December 1922. He spoke frequently in the Parliament about the need for greater development of the Territory during his term which ended in 1934.

Nelson died in Alice Springs on 26 April 1947. His son John Norman Nelson, also served in the House of Representatives (1947–68) and subsequently as Administrator of the Northern Territory (1973–76).

Selected records relating to harold george nelson

National Archives, Darwin

Miscellaneous papers and photographs, 1930–47

M4070

Nemarluk (circa 1911–40)

Nemarluk was born about 1911 in the central Daly River region of the Northern Territory, west of Darwin.

In July 1931 he and several followers killed several Japanese fishermen who had anchored their boat near Port Keats. It was alleged that the fishermen had attacked a group of Aboriginal women.

Nemarluk was captured and tried in Darwin in April 1934. The group was sentenced to death, but all sentences were ultimately commuted to life imprisonment.

Nemarluk died in Darwin in August 1940.

Selected records relating to nemarluk

National Archives, Canberra

Nemarluk – (1) escape from Darwin gaol – (2) death sentence
commuted to imprisonment for life, 1933–34

A1, 1933/8560

National Archives, Darwin

Fanny Bay gaol – escape of prisoners – improvements to gaol,
1933–36 (includes escape of Nemarluk)

F1, 1936/548

Darwin criminal trials – The King versus Nungaburra and Charlie
– murder; The King versus Oo-Mu-Tell and Lollylegs – murder;
The King versus Nemarluk – murder; The King versus Natchelina
and others – murder, 1934

E72, DL847

Charles (Charlie) Nelson Perkins (1936–2000)

Charles Perkins was born at the Alice Springs Telegraph Station Aboriginal Reserve in the Northern Territory on 16 July 1936. His parents were Arrernte and Kalkadoon people. Removed from the Reserve at the age of 10 he was sent to a home for boys in Adelaide where he completed his schooling. He qualified as a fitter and turner in 1952. A talented soccer player, Perkins played as a professional with English club Everton, and on his return to Australia with Adelaide Croatian and the Sydney club, Pan-Hellenic.

While studying at Sydney University, Perkins became increasingly active in Aboriginal rights issues. In 1965 he gained notoriety by leading a group of fellow students on the 'Freedom Ride', a tour of rural New South Wales centres to highlight the discrimination that existed for Aboriginal people in many country towns.

Perkins joined the Commonwealth Office of Aboriginal Affairs in 1969. His career grew with the Commonwealth's increasing role in Aboriginal issues. By 1984 he was Secretary of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs.

A well-known national figure who often attracted controversy, Perkins resigned his post in 1988 after a clash with his Minister over alleged financial mismanagement (the allegations were later dismissed).

In later years Perkins returned to live in Alice Springs. He was elected to the Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander Commission in 1993 and served as Deputy Chairman in 1994–95. He also served as a mentor to several of Australia's Aboriginal athletes.

Perkins died on 19 October 2000.

Selected records relating to charlie perkins

National Archives, Canberra

Enquiry by Charles Perkins regarding a position with the Department of Territories, 1961–62	A452, 1961/761
Familiarisation visit to the Northern Territory by Charles Perkins prior to his visit overseas, 1967	A452, 1967/2371
Special Overseas Visits Fund – visits abroad – Charles Perkins, 1967–68	A1838, 574/3/91
Charles Perkins – representations on policy and administration in Aboriginal Affairs, 1971	A463, 1971/1328
United Nations human rights – Australian Aboriginals and other minorities (including Charles Perkins), 1971–77	A1838, 929/5/3 part 4

National Archives, Darwin

Charles (Charlie) Perkins, 1961–62	D4082, WB86
Enquiry by C Perkins – assistance in native welfare, 1961–73	F1, 1973/461
Report on Aboriginal freedom ride – Sydney University students, 1968	F1, 1968/2833
Request for Kormilda College (Darwin) teaching assistants – for public discussion with Charles Perkins, 1968	F1, 1968/4700

& Copper with me, more -
 Mr. Riese - for whom I have (at
 present!!!) ^{real} admiration (of his sincerity)
 Sat on gal iron balanced on cement block
 for 2 hours in my Hut "Ruins" (on Murch &
 go) to talk "welfare" (of aborigines) IN
 PEACE (from telephone + Post officials' calling
 on him. So he knows what ^{Hut} it is like.
 (I don't think, for a moment, it is
 he holding up the re-erection.
 It is some pally-minded official
 - like Stahl & Co. with unimpaired mind
 & conscience!!! And vindictive.
 So Please let me know "what" is "what"
 next week (Yes & No) kindest regards.
 Yours sincerely
 Olive Pink

P.S.
 As proof of what he does (time) camouflaged
 P.S. on may remember to Caffer concealing his
 treachery by "arranging alternative accommoda-
 tion" at foot of Billy Goat Hill.
 (Mr. Hathnace "looked at" that "accom-
 modation"!!!)
~~and~~ I had refused it - at once.
 And how justifiably! - has been proved.
 The man (wife Stahl), who took it (as
 "temporary housing") told me "2 1/2 inches of

had accepted that barter + wooden shelter!!!

Image 33. An example of the type of letters Olive Pink wrote to the Northern Territory Administrator, 1959. NAA: F1, 1955/318

Olive Muriel Pink (1884–1975)

Olive Pink was born in Hobart on 17 March 1874. She first visited Central Australia in 1930, and lived and worked with the Arrernte people of Central Australia, and the Walpiri people of the western Tanami district.

She fought long and hard for Aboriginal rights, and was a persistent writer of letters to officials arguing their cause. She was also an activist for native flora and fauna. Her letters were well known for their terse tone and for the use of every millimetre of the page; often on both sides of the page.

Pink was widely regarded as an eccentric. She was also renowned for naming plants after public officials. Should any official earn her displeasure, for whatever reason, she ceased to water their plant and allowed it to die. In his memoirs Paul Hasluck, the Minister responsible for the Northern Territory from 1951 to 1963, noted that whenever he visited Alice Springs he would look out for his plant. He was pleased to see that 'Mr Hasluck' was generally doing well.

Pink died in Alice Springs on 6 July 1975 and was buried in the Alice Springs Memorial Cemetery. The Olive Pink Flora Reserve in Alice Springs, named in her honour, was opened in 1985.

Selected records relating to olive pink	
National Archives, Darwin	
Olive Pink – secular sanctuary – Granites, Tanami District, 1935–45	F3, 8/30/0
Olive Pink – application for permit to enter Aboriginal reserves – general correspondence, 1940–41	F1, 1941/53
Miss O M Pink, 1940–46	F132, P29
Miss O M Pink – correspondence files, 1949–70	E1031, I.86
Deputy Commonwealth Crown Solicitor, Pink Olive, miscellaneous correspondence, 1953–56	E72, DL2571
Olive Pink – applications and general correspondence, 1954–58	F1, 1955/318
Miss O M Pink – building, 1956–57	E1031, I.86A
Flora and fauna reserve – Olive Pink – general correspondence, 1958–61	F1, 1959/328
Alice Springs native flora reserve – Olive Pink, 1958–70	F706, 1958/204
Flora and fauna reserve – Alice Springs– Olive Pink – general correspondence, 1962–63	F1, 1961/1983
Flora and fauna reserve – Alice Springs – Olive Pink – general correspondence, 1965–78	F1, 1969/1967
Native flora reserve – Olive Pink, 1970–78	F706, 1971/139
Flora and fauna reserve, Alice Springs, Olive Pink, general correspondence, 1972–78	F1, 1977/893
Northern Territory Archives Service	
Miss Pink – correspondence from, 1943–44	F77, 77/44
Miss O M Pink – correspondence, 1954–60	F77, 57/20

Edward Albert (Ted) Robertson (1929–91)

Born in Albany, Western Australia, in 1929, Ted Robertson trained as a teacher and educator. As a Northern Territory resident he served on a number of community councils.

When the Territory gained representation in the Senate following changes to electoral legislation in 1974, Robertson was elected to one of the two seats representing the Australian Labor Party (the other seat was won by Bernie Kilgariff for the National Country Party).

During his term, which ended in 1987, Robertson served on a number Senate and joint parliamentary committees.

Robertson died on 5 January 1991.

Selected records relating to ted robertson

National Archives, Darwin

Correspondence files, 1976–84	M1696
Correspondence files, alphabetical by portfolio, 1978–84	M1708

George Ryland (1855–1920)

George Ryland was born in Ireland in 1855 and emigrated to Australia in 1866. He became involved with the labour movement in Queensland in the 1880s and entered the Queensland Parliament as Member for Gympie in 1899, serving until 1912.

Ryland then moved to Darwin to take up duty with the Northern Territory's Director of Lands. His first official task as Director and as a Chairman of the Land Classification Board was to complete a survey of the Top End. The Board left Darwin by train in July 1912, and for the next 89 days they travelled by train, buggy and horseback through Pine Creek, Katherine, Roper Bar, and Borroloola before returning to Darwin in October.

Ryland carried a small notebook with him to record his daily experiences. It formed the basis of his report to the Administrator, John Gilruth, in December 1912 in which he discussed the Territory's landscape, soil, water and vegetation. He identified areas that might be suitable for livestock and other forms of farming.

Ryland's stay in the Northern Territory was brief. Financial restraints and rumoured personal clashes with Gilruth forced the termination of appointment in 1914. He left Darwin and returned to Queensland where he died in 1920.

Selected records relating to george ryland

National Archives, Darwin

Photographs and invitations relating to George Ryland's activities as Member for Gympie, 1901–09	M1406
Press cuttings and articles relating to activities and interests of George Ryland, 1906–66	M1408
Report of journey from Darwin to Roper River by George Ryland, 1912	F1, 1969/240
Records (reports, diary and map) relating to George Ryland's activities as Director of Lands, Northern Territory, 1912	M1407

John William Stokes (1910–95)

Born in Melbourne in 1910, John Stokes joined the Northern Territory Police in December 1936, and over the next 20 years rose to be Administrative Inspector and Acting Superintendent. Much of his career was spent in outback police stations. A collection of photographs taken by him during this period are held by the National Archives in Canberra.

After leaving the Territory's Police Force in 1958, Stokes held a number of administrative positions in the Cocos Islands, Christmas Island, and the Department of Territories in Canberra until his retirement in 1970.

John Stokes died on 3 August 1995.

Selected records relating to John Stokes

National Archives, Canberra

Photographs of the Northern Territory, 1930–61	M438
Postcards and photographs of the Northern Territory, 1936–58	M105

Theodore (Ted) George Henry Strehlow (1908–78)

Ted Strehlow was born at Hermannsburg, Northern Territory on 6 June 1908. He was to become one of Australia's most prominent experts on Aboriginal languages and cultures of Central Australia.

Following periods of research in Central Australia for the Australian National Research Council in the early 1930s, Strehlow became a patrol officer (1936–42) and Deputy Director of Native Affairs (1939–42) in the Northern Territory. During World War II, he served in the Australian Army.

Post-war Strehlow became associated with the University of Adelaide. In the last years of his life, Central Aboriginal elders allowed him the rare privilege of witnessing and filming sacred Aboriginal ceremonies. These materials are now housed (on restricted access conditions) in the Strehlow Research Centre in Alice Springs, which was opened in 1991.

Strehlow died on 3 October 1978

Selected records relating to ted Strehlow

National Archives, Canberra

T G H Strehlow, 1936–47	A220, S1939/1100
Reports on patrol of Petermann Ranges – by patrol officer Strehlow, 1939	A659, 1939/1/15262
T G H Strehlow – assistance for research amongst Aboriginal people, 1952–56	A452, 1953/43
T G H Strehlow – Commonwealth Literary Fund, 1957–72	A463, 1969/1453
Inquiry into 'The Environmental Conditions of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders and the Preservation of their Sacred Sites' – correspondence – T G H Strehlow, 1972	A13154, ATS 47

National Archives, Darwin

Papers of patrol officer Theodore Strehlow, 1936	F128
Patrol officer Strehlow – correspondence regarding duties, accommodation, and transport, 1936–39	F1, 1939/300
Patrol officer Strehlow – monthly reports, 1938–42	F3, 32/3
University of Adelaide expedition to Central Australia T G H Strehlow, 1954–60	F1 1955/325
University of Adelaide expeditions to Central Australia – Strehlow TGH, 1961–69	F1, 1971/2067

William George Stretton (1847–1920)

William Stretton was born on 1 February 1847. It is believed that he was living in Australia by 1865, apparently serving in the South Australian Mounted Police from 1865 to 1869. After apparently acting as Chief Storekeeper during the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line during 1871 and 1872, he returned to the Mounted Police in 1872.

On 6 March 1879 Stretton joined the South Australian State Public Service. By 1 August 1888 he was serving as the Customs Officer, Harbourmaster and Postmaster at Borroloola in the Northern Territory. On 13 November 1894 he exchanged positions with Charles William Nash and became Chief Warden of the Northern Territory Gold Fields. From 1 June 1896, he was Health Officer at Port Darwin and the Darwin Harbourmaster and Superintendent of Mercantile Marine.

In 1901, following Federation, Stretton became Sub-Collector of Customs, Darwin and Inspector of Distilleries at Port Darwin, responsible to the Commonwealth Department of Trade and Customs. At the same time, Stretton was apparently employed by the South Australian Government as Health Officer at Port Darwin, retaining his positions as Harbourmaster, Superintendent of Mercantile Marine and Registrar of Shipping. In February 1902, he was gazetted as the Authorising Officer and Receiver of Public Moneys in the Northern Territory for the Department of Trade and Customs. Stretton was appointed as a member of the Revision Court at Palmerston on 29 May 1905.

Stretton retired from the Public Service in February 1913. He was presented with a large cloth banner by the Wah On Society (now the Chung Wah Society) on behalf of the Chinese community of Darwin. The banner was given as a token of esteem, respect and admiration for the way Stretton had conducted his duties in respect of the local Chinese community. The banner is held by the National Archives in Canberra, and a copy is held in the Archives' Darwin Office.

Selected records relating to William Stretton		
National Archives, Canberra		
Chinese banner, 1913		E1244
National Archives, Darwin		
Correspondence relating to Chinese banner, 1912–13		E1352
Photo of W G Stretton, undated		NTAC1970/8, 616

Notes

¹ Report of his First Overland Tour in a Motor Car, *Bulletin of the Northern Territory*, number 5 (Melbourne, January 1913).

17 Evaluation of the Commonwealth Era

The Commonwealth's administration of the Northern Territory began with high hopes and much anticipation. By pursuing the goal of closer settlement it was expected that progress would quickly be made. But these hopes were soon dashed, and it was not until after World War II, and then only following considerable expenditure, that the Territory began to move forward.

Criticisms against the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth's administration was, on occasion, characterised by conflicts between officials in Darwin and the national capital, and disputes among administrative branches in Darwin. In this context there were two issues closely entwined. The first was that the Territory's administration was principally conducted from the national capital, and there was an unwillingness to give Darwin-based administration greater control. It has been alleged that this made it difficult for officers to actually manage Territory affairs; indeed Hillock has argued that the agricultural industry's stilted development was because the Commonwealth adopted a practice of 'distance management'.¹ In his annual report for 1948–49 the Administrator, Arthur Driver, referred to the same practice which he called 'remoteness'.²

The second issue was multiplicity of control in Darwin itself, where there was the Administrator, supposedly the Commonwealth's principal representative, together with other departments (such as Works), which were directly responsible to Ministers in the national capital. The Administrator and these departments were sometimes in conflict, as one Administrator, John Gilruth, noted in his annual report for 1914–15.³ Darwin agencies jealously guarded their areas of responsibility and often gave little support to other agencies. After acting as the Territory's Administrator for six months in 1934, Departmental Secretary Joseph Carrodus noted, 'There is no trace of that spirit of co-operation which is so essential for successful administration'. He said that the Territory was isolated, and there was a need for the exchange of ideas; without it 'the general administration cannot be expected to be as efficient as that in other parts of Australia'.⁴

The lack of cooperation and poor service provided by some officials were recognised by the report of the 1937 Payne–Fletcher Board of Inquiry. It proposed a series of maxims designed to encourage greater cooperation among officials and with the public.⁵

In dealing with these matters a strong Administrator was needed, with greater support from the national capital, to encourage cooperation when desired, and to enforce it when necessary. This was not always the case.

When recommending the creation of the North Australia Commission in 1923, Minister George Pearce spoke of the need for government 'on the spot', arguing that previous governments had only given minor attention to the Territory, and had failed to recognise that administering the Northern Territory was a full-time task.⁶ Created to improve administration and development, the Commission never had sufficient funding to achieve its goals, and was predominantly controlled by Canberra.

A third issue was clarity of responsibility between the national capital and Darwin, which was clearly lacking as services were often duplicated. This raises the question of why the Commonwealth did not give Darwin officials greater latitude, while not handing over complete authority. Riddett has argued that the Territory was never important enough to the Commonwealth to demand its constant and single minded commitment.⁷ This may be oversimplifying the issue, as two world wars and the Great Depression certainly diverted the Commonwealth's attention away from the Territory.

Administration Maxims

(FOR ALL PUBLIC OFFICERS ASSOCIATED WITH NORTHERN TERRITORY
ADMINISTRATION.)

1. Nature has been ungenerous to the Territory in many ways. Do what you can, by administration, to counter-balance natural shortcomings.

2. Strive to give persons interested in the Territory such administration as will place them in a position, for carrying on their business, comparable with persons in the more-favoured parts of Australia.

3. Put yourself in the other person's shoes and view administrative matters from that angle.

4. Good administration is "service". Service always helps, and never obstructs.

5. Do whatever is administratively possible to help all persons interested in the Territory to make a success of their enterprises. If profits are made in enterprises already established, more development will proceed and more population will be maintained. Never put hurdles in the way of energetic enterprise, but co-operate to the utmost.

6. Do not be technical in outlook but follow dictates of broad commonsense.

7. Do your best to guide Head-quarters in formulating correct policies. The man on the spot should always be in the position to make clear-cut and definite recommendations for the guidance of Head-quarters. Never shirk responsibility in this regard.

8. Difficulties are meant to stimulate endeavour, not to discourage it and produce inertia.

9. In a pioneering community, Acts of Parliament, Ordinances and Regulations need frequent modification and adjustment. They should not be slavishly followed by officials to the exclusion of commonsense considerations. If the carrying out of an Act, Ordinance or Regulation would have undesirable consequences, representations accordingly should be made to Head-quarters so that an amendment may be considered.

10. When necessary, exercise authority firmly and fearlessly, but never harshly or unreasonably.

11. Co-operative administration produces the best results. Endeavour to co-operate with the people because mutual assistance is the king-pin of our social structure.

12. Generally, strive to do your official work in such a manner that Australia will be the better for your service.

17.100

Image 34. The Payne-Fletcher Board of Inquiry suggested a set of administrative maxims for public servants, 1937. *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1937-40), volume III, opposite p. 66

Reference has also been made to the poor calibre of administrative staff in Darwin. In 1923 Senator Pearce also highlighted the inexperienced nature of many staff members recruited after World War I, not just in the Territory but elsewhere.⁸ The Commonwealth had difficulty in attracting quality staff to the Territory and keeping them there. Perhaps the presence of inexperienced or unsuitable administrative officials in Darwin promoted uncertainty and lack of trust among officials in the national capital. Events such as the 'Darwin rebellion' of 1918, and the emergence of militant unionism, may have added to these concerns. Above all this, there was consistent pressure for cost-cutting from pressing issues such as world wars and depressions.

When speaking in support of the North Australia Commission, Prime Minister Bruce told Parliament in 1928 that the department then responsible for the Northern Territory was not designed to administer and develop a large uninhabited territory.⁹ It was clear that the Commonwealth had initially not fully grasped the size of the task of administering a vast and remote territory, which contributed to it being wary of giving local officials more authority.

In his annual report for 1948–49, Arthur Driver said that remoteness and divided control were two factors militating against progress and harmony in the Territory. He felt that remoteness could be relieved by the delegation of more authority, while divided control could be assisted by interdepartmental conferences at the highest level. Driver said that the removal of divided control was imperative, and he recommended the creation of a portfolio department that would control activities in the Territory, and the delegation of full authority to the responsible chief executive officer resident in the Territory.¹⁰

The dedicated department that Driver called for did eventuate in 1972 with the creation of the Department of the Northern Territory, but it lasted for only three years before being subsumed within the larger Department of Northern Australia.

Why did the Commonwealth not create a separate Ministry for the Territory sooner? An emphasis on cost efficiency would have certainly been one reason. The failure of the North Australia Commission, despite its administration 'on the spot', would also have had a lasting effect. Governments of all persuasions appear not to have given the proposal serious consideration prior to World War II, and were still reluctant to commit to it after the war. A separate portfolio to administer one territory, albeit a large and remote one, was probably not warranted, but a dedicated branch for Northern Territory matters was certainly needed in Canberra, combined with an expanded administration in the Territory, and with competent officials located in both.

There is, however, one final point to be made regarding 'distance management'. While Hillock has argued that the Territory's development was retarded due to the lack of local autonomy, this point is debatable. If Darwin had received greater autonomy it is likely that local officials and their decisions would still have been subject to criticism, particularly by Territory residents outside Darwin. There were frequent criticisms by Alice Springs residents over the standard of service they received from Darwin. In November 1950 the *Centralian Advocate* complained of remote control saying, 'We are sick of dancing to Darwin's tune and paying the piper ourselves'.¹¹ Such intra-Territory criticisms still continue, more than 30 years after self-government.

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Alice declares 'war' on Darwin

Darwin Lord Mayor Graeme Sawyer

'If we ignore them all the time, then I suppose nobody will notice if they don't take our calls'

Alice Springs Deputy Mayor Murray Stewart

'Darwin is but a pimple on the entire Northern Territory map'

Boycott call as Berrimah Line drawn in the sand

By NICK CALACOURAS

BATTLES are being drawn as Alice Springs prepares to stage a "Hate Darwin Day" protest.

Territory and local government workers ... being urged to ignore phone calls on Monday from the Top End on July 2 - otherwise known as "turn your back on Darwin" day.

Alice Springs Deputy Mayor Murray Stewart said the protest was an act of civil disobedience.

"Darwin is but a pimple on the entire Northern Territory map but that's where all the money goes."

"I don't think the people of Darwin

Pap2

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LUCK (1...2.E) R

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Image 35. Front page of the 4 June 2008 *Northern Territory News* depicting administrative conflicts between Darwin and Alice Springs. Courtesy *Northern Territory News*

Pursuit of closer settlement

It has been stated a number of times that the Commonwealth's principal goal for the Northern Territory was always closer settlement, and that it zealously pursued this goal. This raises the question of whether closer settlement was a flawed objective. Elder, for example, described closer settlement in the Northern Territory as an 'oxymoron',¹² and pastoralist Paul Cullen described the Commonwealth's pursuance of it as a 'fetish'.¹³

It is true that in the early years the Commonwealth's adherence to the objective was a response to what had taken place in the Australian colonies through the 19th century. It was not realistic in the period prior to World War II. Indeed, as early as 1913, the Land Classification Board resolved that offering further land for closer settlement was inadvisable until it was known what provision would be made for transportation and marketing facilities, and whether an increased focus would be given to continuing surveys, boring for water, and the resumption of large holdings.¹⁴

It became evident that there needed to be a greater understanding of the land, its topography and climate, together with the means of encouraging smaller settlers to the Territory. Once this knowledge was acquired, and with greater Commonwealth financial support in the post-World War II period, closer settlement, but still on a limited scale, became a more realistic objective.

Notes

- ¹ Ian Hillock, 'Rethinking Colonial Endeavour in relation to Agricultural Settlement in the Northern Territory, 1863–1945: A Critical Perspective', PhD thesis, Charles Darwin University (2005), pp. x, xvii.
- ² Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory for Year 1948–49, p. 3; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1950–51), volume II, pp. 835–58.
- ³ Northern Territory Report of the Administrator for the Year 1914–15, p. 5; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1914–17), volume II, pp. 1411–501.
- ⁴ NAA: CP764/2, Report on the administration of the Northern Territory by J A Carrodus, 1934, pp. 8–9.
- ⁵ Australia. Board of Inquiry appointed to Inquire into the Land and Land Industries of the Northern Territory of Australia, Report, *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1937–40), volume III, pp. 813–925; the maxims were printed opposite page 66.
- ⁶ NAA: A3934, item SC42/25, Executive Commission, 1923.
- ⁷ L A Riddett, *Kine, Kin and Country: The Victoria River District of the Northern Territory, 1911–1966* (Darwin, 1990), p. 32.
- ⁸ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, Senate, volume 103, 18 July 1923, p. 1220.
- ⁹ *Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, volume 112, 10 February 1926, p. 821.
- ¹⁰ Report on the Administration of the Northern Territory for Year 1948–49, p. 3; *Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers* (1950–51), volume II, pp. 835–58.
- ¹¹ 'The case for separation – cross section of opinions', *Centralian Advocate*, 10 November 1950, p. 3.
- ¹² Peter John Elder, 'Charles Lydiard Aubrey Abbott: Countryman or Colonial Governor', PhD thesis, Northern Territory University (1998), p. 200.
- ¹³ NAA: F1, 1962/2061, Pastoral leases policy [part 2], 24 September 1964.
- ¹⁴ NTAS: NTRS2821, Land Classification Board] Minute book, 16 December 1913.



Appendixes



Appendix 1

Timeline of the Northern Territory

1824–38	Forts Dundas, Wellington and Essington established; all abandoned by 1849
1862	John McDouall Stuart's successful overland expedition reached the Arafura Sea
1863	Letters Patent were issued giving South Australia administrative responsibility for the Northern Territory
1863	South Australian Northern Territory Act passed
1864	First land sales in the Northern Territory
1864	Boyle Travers Finniss' expedition to Escape Cliffs, east of present day Darwin
1868	Second land sales in the Northern Territory
1869	George Goyder's expedition to Palmerston (Darwin)
1872	Gold was discovered at Pine Creek
1872	Overland telegraph line from Adelaide to Palmerston (present day Darwin) was completed
1872	South Australian Northern Territory Lands Act passed
1872	First pastoral leases issued in the Northern Territory
1874	Palmerston District Council established
1874	First Chinese migrants arrived in the gold rush
1881	First population census in the Northern Territory
1889	Railway line from Palmerston to Pine Creek was completed
1890	South Australian Northern Territory Crown Lands Act passed
1891	Second population census in the Northern Territory
1895	South Australian Northern Territory Commission appointed
1897	Cyclone damaged Palmerston
1899	New South Australian Northern Territory Crown Lands Act
1901	On 1 January the Commonwealth of Australia was established, when the six colonies federated
1901	Third population census in the Northern Territory
1902	Pastoral permits issued in lieu of pastoral leases
1908	South Australian Northern Territory Surrender Act passed
1910	Commonwealth Northern Territory Acceptance Act passed
1910	Commonwealth Northern Territory Administration Act passed
1911	Commonwealth assumed administrative responsibility for the Territory on 1 January
1911	Palmerston renamed Darwin

1911 Northern Territory Ordinances issued including the Supreme Court Ordinance

1932 Gold discovered at Tennant Creek

1912	Aboriginals Ordinance 1911 came into effect
1912	John Gilruth appointed Administrator of the Northern Territory
1912	Crown Lands Ordinance came into effect
1912	Land Classification Board established
1912	Grazing licences issued in lieu of pastoral permits
1913	Royal Commission into Northern Territory Railways and Ports appointed
1913	Tin discovered at Maranboy
1914–18	World War I
1915	Darwin Town Council replaced Darwin District Council
1916	Royal Commission to Inquire into Certain Charges against the Administrator and Other Officials of the Administration appointed
1917	Completion of Vestey's meatworks at Darwin
1917	Railway line extended from Pine Creek to Emungalan (Katherine)
1918	Darwin rebellion occurred on 17 December
1919	Former NT Administrator John Gilruth leaves Darwin
1920	Vestey's meatworks closed down
1920	Royal Commission into Northern Territory Administration appointed
1921	Senator George Pearce appointed Minister for Home and Territories
1922	Northern Territory granted a non-voting seat in the House of Representatives
1924	New Crown Lands Ordinance came into effect
1924	Land Board [I] replaced former Land Classification Board
1925	Report by George Buchanan on Northern Territory Development and Administration submitted
1925	Vestey's meatworks reopened briefly, then closed permanently
1926	North Australia Act passed; Territory divided into regions of Northern Australia and Central Australia
1927	North Australia Commission established, replacing the Land Board
1927	Robert Weddell appointed Administrator of the Territory
1928	Massacre at Conniston
1929	Northern railway line from Emungalan to Birdum completed
1929	Southern railway line from Oodnadatta to Alice Springs completed
1931	Darwin Town Council members resign and are replaced by appointed members
1931	North Australia Commission abolished and Territory reunited; new (second) Land Board created
1932	Pastoral Leases Investigation Committee established, which completes its report in 1935
1932	Killing of Japanese fishermen at Caledon Bay, leading to the arrest and sentence of death on Dhakiyarr Wirrapanda
1932	Electricity supplied to Darwin

1933	Proposal for a chartered company to administer the Territory
1934	Joseph Carrodus appointed Acting Administrator of the Territory
1934	Dhakiyarr Wirrapanda's case is heard by the High Court
1935	Joseph Carrodus appointed Secretary of the Department of the Interior
1937	Board of Inquiry appointed to Inquire into the Land and Land Industries of the Northern Territory
1937	Cyclone damaged Darwin on 10 March
1937	Charles (Aubrey) Abbott appointed Administrator of the Territory
1937	Darwin Town Council voluntarily dissolved
1937	Haslam report on the redevelopment of Darwin
1938	John McEwen appointed Minister for the Territory
1938	Second Land Board abolished
1939	John McEwen announced a 'New Deal' for Aboriginal people
1939–45	World War II
1940	Reticulated water supply to Darwin from Manton Dam
1940	First McInnis report on the redevelopment of Darwin
1941	First Darwin Town Management Board established
1942	On 19 February the Japanese bomb Darwin for the first time
1942	Commission of Inquiry on the Bombing of Darwin appointed
1943	Symons report on the redevelopment of Darwin released
1944	Interdepartmental Committee on the Development of Darwin and the Northern Territory established
1944	Second McInnis report on the redevelopment of Darwin
1945	South Australia assumed responsibility for school education in the Northern Territory
1945	Darwin Lands Acquisition Act passed
1945	Herbert Johnson appointed Minister for the Interior
1945	Northern Australia Development Committee established
1946	Arthur Driver appointed Administrator of the Territory
1946	Animal Industry Branch established, with Lionel Rose appointed Director
1947	Second Darwin Town Management Board established
1947	Northern Territory Legislative Council established
1948	First British Food Mission visited Australia
1949	Meat Production Development Committee replaced the Northern Australia Development Committee
1949	Third Land Board created
1949	Uranium discovered at Rum Jungle near Batchelor
1951	Paul Hasluck appointed Minister for Territories
1951	Frank Wise appointed Administrator of the Territory
1951	Cecil Lambert appointed Secretary of the Department of Territories
1932	Gold discovered at Tennant Creek

1953	Welfare Ordinance issued
1953	New Crown Lands Ordinance issued
1953	Housing Loans Ordinance issued
1954	Commonwealth Air Beef Advisory Panel established
1954	Land Court of the Northern Territory established
1955	Water Use Branch established, with Robert Eden as Director
1955	Agriculture Branch established
1956	James Archer appointed Administrator of the Territory
1957	Municipality of Darwin created, with Mayor and 12 elected councillors
1959	Committee of Inquiry into the Prospects of Agriculture in the Northern Territory appointed
1959	Legislative Council reconstituted with eight of 17 members to be elected
1959	Northern Territory Housing Commission established
1959	Darwin designated as a city
1960	Administrator's Council established
1960	Committee to Enquire into the Educational Needs of the People of the Northern Territory appointed
1960–61	Town Management Boards established at Katherine, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek
1961	Roger Nott appointed Administrator of the Territory
1961	Education Board established
1962	Beef roads program commences
1962	Electoral franchise extended to Aboriginal people
1964	Committee of Investigation into Transport Costs in Northern Australia appointed
1964	Land Court renamed the Land and Valuation Tribunal
1964	Northern Development Division created
1966	Manganese mining began at Groote Eylandt
1966	Agriculture and Animal Industry Branches amalgamated
1966	Vincent Lingiari led a walk-off of Gurindji Indigenous employees from Wave Hill Station in protest against the work and pay conditions
1967	Referendum approving Commonwealth powers to make laws in relation to Aboriginal people carried
1968	Elected members became the majority in the Legislative Council
1968	Northern Territory Member of Parliament allowed full voting rights
1971	Northern Territory severed links with South Australia's Education Department
1972	Department of the Northern Territory established
1974	Aboriginal Land Rights Commission established
1974	Legislative Assembly replaced the Legislative Council
1974	On early morning of 25 December, Cyclone Tracy devastated Darwin

1975	Darwin Reconstruction Commission created
1975	Wattie Creek pastoral lease granted to the Gurindji tribe by Prime Minister Gough Whitlam
1975	Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry established
1975	Northern Territory elected its first senators, Bernard Kilgariff and Ted Robertson
1976	Executive Council of the Northern Territory replaced the Administrator's Council
1976	Commonwealth Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act passed
1976	Existing Territory railway lines closed down
1978	Darwin Reconstruction Commission abolished
1978	Self-government was granted to the Northern Territory on 1 July
1980	Completion of standard gauge railway line from Adelaide to Alice Springs
1980	Baby Azaria Chamberlain was taken from a tent in a camping ground at Uluru (Ayers Rock) on 17 August
1986	Chamberlain Royal Commission appointed
1987	Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody appointed
1990	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission replaced the Department of Aboriginal Affairs
1990s	Defence build-up in the north, including the establishment of Tindal RAAF base (March 1989), Robertson Barracks (May 1995)
1995	National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families appointed
1998	Referendum on Northern Territory statehood, held on 3 October, was defeated
2003	Completion of standard gauge railway line from Alice Springs to Darwin linked the capital by rail to southern capitals
2005	Indigenous Coordination Centre replaced the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
2007	Northern Territory Emergency Response (The Intervention) introduced

Appendix 2

Commonwealth Agencies and People

Commonwealth Departments (and Secretaries) responsible for administering the Northern Territory, 1911–78

years	reSponSible department	departmental Secretary
1911–16	Department of External Affairs [I] (CA 7)	Atlee Hunt (CP 716): 1911–16
1916–28	Department of Home and Territories (CA 15)	Atlee Hunt (CP 716): 1916–21 John McLaren (CP 174): 1921–28 William Clemens (CP 178): 1928
1928–32	Department of Home Affairs [II] (CA 24)	William Clemens (CP 178): 1928 Percival Deane (CP 78): 1929–32
1932–39	Department of the Interior [I] (CA 27)	Herbert Brown: 1932–35 Joseph Carrodus (CP 42): 1935–39
1939–51	Department of the Interior [II] (CA 31)	Joseph Carrodus (CP 42): 1939–49 William McLaren (CP 226): 1949–51
1951–68	Department of Territories [I] (CA 60)	Cecil Lambert (CP 687): 1951–64 George Warwick Smith (CP 319): 1964–68
1968–72	Department of the Interior [II] (CA 31)	Richard Kingsland: 1968–70 George Warwick Smith (CP 319): 1970–72
1972–75	Department of the Northern Territory [I] (CA 1484)	George Warwick Smith (CP 319): 1972–73 Thomas O'Brien: 1973–75
1975	Department of Northern Australia (CA1889)	Thomas O'Brien: 1975
1975–78	Department of the Northern Territory [II] (CA 1958)	R S Livingston: 1975–78

Commonwealth Government Ministers responsible for the Northern Territory, 1911–78

yearS	miniSter	party affiliation
Minister for External Affairs		
1911	Egerton Lee Batchelor	Australian Labor Party
1911–13	Josiah Thomas	Australian Labor Party
1913–14	Patrick McMahon Glynn (CP 3)	Liberal
1914	John Andrew Arthur	Australian Labor Party
1914–16	Hugh Mahon	Australian Labor Party
Minister for Home and Territories		
1916–17	Frederick William Bamford	National Labour
1917–20	Patrick McMahon Glynn (CP 3)	Nationalist
1920–21	Alexander Poynton	Nationalist
1921–26	Senator George Foster Pearce (CP 151)	Nationalist
1926–27	Senator Thomas William Glasgow	Nationalist
1927–28	Charles William Clanan Marr	Nationalist
1928	Neville Reginald Howse	Nationalist
1928	Charles Lydiard Aubrey Abbott (CP 30)	Nationalist
Minister for Home Affairs		
1928–29	Charles Lydiard Aubrey Abbott (CP 30)	Nationalist
1929–32	Arthur Blakeley	Australian Labor Party
1932	Robert Archdale Parkhill	United Australia Party
Minister for the Interior		
1932	Robert Archdale Parkhill	United Australia Party
1932–34	John Arthur Perkins	United Australia Party
1934	Eric John Harrison	United Australia Party
1934–37	Thomas Paterson	Country Party
1937–39	John McEwen (CP 47)	Country Party
1939–41	Senator Hattil Spencer Foll	United Australia Party
1941–45	Senator Joseph Silver Collings (CP 166)	Australian Labor Party
1945–49	Herbert Victor Johnson	Australian Labor Party
1949–50	Philip Albert Martin McBride	Liberal Party
1950–51	Eric John Harrison (CP 648)	Liberal Party
Minister for Territories		
1951–63	Paul Meernaa Caedwalla Hasluck (CP 115)	Liberal Party
1963–68	Charles Edward Barnes (CP 64)	Country Party
Minister for the Interior		
1968–71	Peter James Nixon (CP 83)	Country Party
1971–72	Ralph James Dunnet Hunt (CP 311)	Country Party
1972	Lance Herbert Barnard (CP 94)	Australian Labor Party

Minister for the Northern Territory		
1972–73	Keppel Earl Enderby	Australian Labor Party
1973–75	Rex Alan Patterson	Australian Labor Party
Minister for Northern Australia		
1975	Rex Alan Patterson	Australian Labor Party
1975	Paul John Keating (CP 665)	Australian Labor Party
1975	Ian McCahon Sinclair (CP 426)	National Country Party
Minister for the Northern Territory		
1975–78	Albert Evan Adermann (CP 183)	National Country Party

Administrators of the Northern Territory, 1911–78

Years	Administrator	
1911–12	Samuel Mitchell (Acting) (CP 73)	
1912–19	John Gilruth	
1919	Henry Carey (Director)	
1919–21	Staniforth Smith	
1921–26	Frederic Urquhart	
1926–27	Ernest Playford	
1927–31	Government Resident, North Australia Robert Weddell (CP 192)	Government Resident, Central Australia John Charles Cawood, 1927–29 Victor George Carrington (Acting), 1929–31
1931–37	Robert Weddell (CP 192)	
1937–46	Charles Lydiard Aubrey Abbott (CP 30)	
1946–51	Arthur Driver	
1951–56	Frank Wise	
1956–61	James Archer	
1961–64	Roger Nott	
1964–70	Roger Dean	
1970–73	Frederick Chaney (CP 242)	
1973–76	John Nelson	
1976–78	John England	

Commonwealth agencies arranged by administrative function

The list that follows includes the Commonwealth Government agencies within the functions/activities shown based in the Northern Territory or whose role was primarily centred on the Territory.

Agencies such as Cabinet Office, the central offices of Departments of State, the head office of Commonwealth authorities (such as the Commonwealth Electoral Office), or branch offices of agencies located in cities like Adelaide that had responsibility for delivering services to the Northern Territory have not been included.

Territory Administration

Territory Administration – Office of Administrator	
1911–27	Office of the Administrator [I] (CA 1072)
1927–31	Government Resident, North Australia (CA 1071)
1927–31	Government Resident, Central Australia (CA 1107)
1931–ongoing	Office of the Administrator [II] (CA 1070)
1931–37	Deputy Administrator, Alice Springs (CA 2681)
1937–77	District Office, Alice Springs (CA 1118)
Territory Administration – North Australia Commission	
1927–31	North Australia Commission (CA 1086)
Territory Administration – Council of Advice	
1912–19	Council of Advice [I] (CA 1141)
1919–59	Council of Advice [II] (CA 3565)
Territory Administration – Committee	
1944–51	Interdepartmental Committee on the Planning of Darwin (CA 451)
Territory Administration – Legislature	
1947–74	Legislative Council of the Northern Territory (CA 1171)
1974–78	Legislative Assembly of the Northern Territory (CA 2594)
Territory Administration – Councils	
1960–76	Administrator's Council (CA 1243)
1976–78	Executive Council of the Northern Territory (agency unregistered)
Territory Administration – Bicentennial	
1981–89	Northern Territory Bicentennial Council (CA 4121)
Territory Administration – Royal Commissions	
1913–14	Royal Commission on Northern Territory Railways and Ports (CA 2130)
1916	Royal Commission to Inquire into Certain Charges against the Administrator and Other Officials of the Administration (CA 7534)
1919–20	Royal Commission on Northern Territory Administration (CA 2268)

Aboriginal people

Aboriginal people – Core agency	
1911–28	Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Northern Territory (agency unregistered)
1928–30	Health and Aboriginals Branch (CA 2512)
1930–31	Medical Service and Health Branch (CA 2511)
1931–39	Medical Services, Health and Aboriginals Branch (CA 1077)
1939–55	Native Welfare Branch/Section (CA 1078)
1955–70	Welfare Branch (CA 1076)
1970–72	Welfare Division (CA 2835)
1972–90	Department of Aboriginal Affairs, State Office, Darwin (CA 2836)
1990–2005	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, Northern Territory, State Office (CA 7112)
2005–ongoing	Indigenous Coordination Centre, Darwin Office, Northern Territory (CA 9062)
Aboriginal people – Child Welfare	
1930–58	State Children's Council, Northern Territory (agency unregistered)
1958–ongoing	Child Welfare Advisory Council, Northern Territory (agency unregistered)
Aboriginal people – Aboriginal Development Commission	
1980–90	Aboriginal Development Commission, Northern Region (CA 3938)
1983–90	Aboriginal Development Commission, Darwin (CA 3941)
1981–90	Aboriginal Development Commission, Alice/Western Area (CA 4957)
Aboriginal people – Trust Funds	
1952–78	Aboriginal Benefits Trust Fund (CA 6775)
1978–ongoing	Aboriginals Benefit Trust Account (from 1998) Aboriginals Benefit Reserve (from 1999) Aboriginals Benefit Account (CA 4951)
Aboriginal people – Aboriginal Hostels	
1973–ongoing	Aboriginal Hostels Limited, Darwin (CA 4956)
1973–ongoing	Aboriginal Hostels Limited, Alice Springs (CA 4975)
Aboriginal people – Land Rights	
1973–74	Aboriginal Land Rights Commission (CA 2417)
1977–ongoing	Office of the Aboriginal Land Rights Commissioner (CA 3105)
Aboriginal people – Land Councils	
1977–ongoing	Northern Land Council, Darwin (CA 4976)
1977–ongoing	Central Land Council, Alice Springs (CA 4973)
1977–ongoing	Tiwi Land Council (CA 4953)
1991–ongoing	Anindilyakwa Land Council (CA 8512)
Aboriginal people – Royal Commission	
1987–91	Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody (CA 6841)

Agriculture

Between 1947 and 1955 the Agriculture function was included in Land and Survey

Agriculture – Core agency	
1912–18	Agricultural Department (CA 2484)
1931–47	Agriculture Branch [I] (CA 2485)
1955–66	Agriculture Branch [II] (CA 1187)
1966–78	Animal Industry and Agriculture Branch (CA 1186)
Agriculture– Boards	
1913–24	Advances to Settlers Board (CA 1085)
1923–78	Primary Producer's Board (CA 1074)
Agriculture – Inquiry	
1959–60	Committee of Inquiry into the Prospects of Agriculture in the Northern Territory (agency unregistered)

Audit

1922–84	Auditor-General's Office, Darwin (CA 568)
1984–92	Australian Audit Office, Darwin (CA 5207)

Bankruptcy

1928–89	Bankruptcy Branch, Northern Territory (CA 923)
1928–50	Clerk of Courts – Registrar in Bankruptcy (CA 1304)
1950–62	Courts Office, Darwin – Registrar in Bankruptcy (CA 573)
1962–64	Northern Territory – Courts and Titles Office, Darwin – Registrar in Bankruptcy (CA 2652)
1964–67	Northern Territory – Courts and Registration Offices, Darwin – Registrar in Bankruptcy (CA 2653)

Civil Aviation

1938–73	Department of Civil Aviation, Northern Territory Regional Office (CA 7910)
1973–79	District Airport Engineering Office, Darwin (CA 3093)
1979–82	Department of Transport [III], South Australia/Northern Territory Region, Northern Territory Office (CA 3094)
1982–88	District Airport Inspector's Office, Department of Aviation, South Australia/Northern Territory Region, Darwin Office (CA 3751)
1988–95	Civil Aviation Authority, South Australia/Northern Territory Region, Northern Territory Office, Darwin (CA 7026)
1995–ongoing	Civil Aviation Safety Authority, Darwin District Office (CA 8402)
1995–ongoing	Airservices Australia, Darwin District Office (CA 8403)

Courts

Courts – Supreme Court and Registrar-General	
1911–24	Supreme Court of the Northern Territory (CA 2480)
1924–50	Clerk of Courts (CA 1304)
1950–62	Courts Office, Darwin (CA 573)
1962–64	Northern Territory Courts and Titles Office, Darwin (CA 2652)
1964–73	Northern Territory Courts and Registration Offices, Darwin (CA 2653)
1973–89	Northern Territory Supreme Court Branch (CA 2682)
Courts – Federal Court of Australia	
1989–ongoing	Federal Court of Australia, Northern Territory District Registry (CA 7747)
Courts – Family Court of Australia	
1989–ongoing	Family Court of Australia, Northern Territory Registry (CA 6996)
Courts – Magistrates Court	
1970–77	Northern Territory Magistrates Courts Branch (CA 2683)

Customs

1882–1967	Sub-Collector of Customs, Darwin, Northern Territory (CA 820)
1967–2009	Collector of Customs, Northern Territory/(from 1985, Australian Customs Service, Northern Territory (CA 2109)
2009–ongoing	Australian Customs and Border Protection Service, Regional Head Office, Darwin (CA 9329)

Cyclone Tracy

Cyclone Tracy – Darwin Reconstruction	
1975	Interim Darwin Reconstruction Commission (CA 2275)
1975–78	Darwin Reconstruction Commission (CA 2276)
Cyclone Tracy – Trust Fund	
1975–76	Cyclone Tracy Relief Trust Fund (CA 7909)

Defence

Defence – Command	
1940–43	District Headquarters, 7 Military District [I], Australian Military Forces (CA 7911)
1943–46	Northern Territory Force, Headquarters, Australian Military Forces (CA 3059)
1946–50	District Headquarters, 7 Military District [II], Australian Military Forces (CA 2934)
1950–73	Northern Territory Command, Darwin Headquarters, Australian Military Forces (CA 2935)
1973–ongoing	Headquarters, Northern Command (NORCOM) Darwin (CA 2936)
Defence – Administration	
1977–85	Defence Sub–Regional Office, Northern Territory (CA 2940)
1985–93	Department of Defence [III], Regional Office, Northern Territory (CA 5210)
1993–96	Department of Defence, Northern Region Administrative Support Centre, Darwin (CA 8071)
1996–97	Department of Defence, Regional Support Office, Northern Territory/Kimberley, Darwin (CA 8456)
1997–ongoing	Defence Corporate Support, Northern Territory/Kimberley, Darwin (CA 8457)
Defence – Army	
1973–95	District Support Unit, Darwin/(from 1994) Army Support Unit, Australian Army, Darwin (CA 7419)
1995–ongoing	Darwin Logistics Battalion, Australian Army, Northern Territory (CA 8375)
Defence – Royal Australian Navy	
1940–92	Naval Staff Office, Darwin (CA 3512)
1940–75	HMAS Melville [I], Northern Territory (CA 3609)
1970–ongoing	Naval Base, HMAS Coonawarra (CA 3607)
1982–ongoing	Darwin Naval Base (CA 3608)
Defence – Royal Australian Air Force	
1940–94	Headquarters, RAAF Station, Darwin/(from 1956) Headquarters, RAAF Base, Darwin (CA 1209)
1942–55	RAAF Headquarters North Western Area, Darwin (CA 1213)
1952–94	RAAF Base Squadron, Darwin (CA 997)
1994–ongoing	RAAF No 321 Combat Support Wing, Darwin (CA 8130)
1988–94	Headquarters RAAF Base, Tindal, Katherine (CA 7361)
1994–ongoing	RAAF No 322 Combat Support Wing, Tindal, Katherine (CA 8131)

Education

Education – Core administration	
1913–28	Education Department (CA 1238)
1928–68	Education Branch (CA 1301)
1968–71	Education and Science, Northern Territory Office (CA 1302)
1971–73	Northern Territory Education Branch (Darwin) (a) Department of Education and Science, Central Office (until 1972) (b) Department of Education, Central Office (CA 2592)
1973–79	Northern Territory Education Division, Department of Education [I] Central Office (Darwin) (CA 2593)
Education – Commonwealth Office of Education	
1945–67	Commonwealth Office of Education, Branch Office, Northern Territory (CA 7915)
Education – Inquiry	
1960–61	Committee to Enquire into the Educational Needs of the People of the Northern Territory (agency unregistered)

Electoral

1964–84	Returning Officer for the Northern Territory (CA 2686)
1984–ongoing	Australian Electoral Commission, Regional Office, Northern Territory (CA 5242)

Environment

Environment – Reserves	
1956–76	Northern Territory Reserves Board (CA 1461)
Environment – Parks Australia	
1975–ongoing	Parks Australia North, Darwin (CA 3617)
1977–ongoing	Parks Australia North, Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park (CA 4954)
1979–ongoing	Parks Australia North, Kakadu National Park (CA 4955)
Environment – Ranger Inquiry	
1975–77	Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry (CA 2443)
Environment – Alligator Rivers	
1978–ongoing	Supervising Scientist for the Alligator Rivers Region/(from 1997) Office of the Supervising Scientist (CA 3591)
1979–ongoing	Supervising Scientist for the Alligator Rivers Region, Darwin Office (CA 3618)
1994–ongoing	Environmental Research Institute of the Supervising Scientist (CA 8422)
1981–94	Alligator Rivers Region Research Institute, Field Station, Jabiru (CA 3619)

Forestry, Fisheries and Timber

1959–75	Forestry and Timber Bureau, Northern Territory Section (CA 2937)
1967–70	Forestry Branch (CA 2502)
1970–73	Forestry, Fisheries, Wildlife and National Parks Branch (CA 2513)
1973–77	Forestry, Fisheries, Wildlife, Environment and National Parks Branch (CA 2514)
1977–78	Forestry, Fisheries and Land Conservation Branch (CA 2938)

Health

1928–30	Health and Aboriginals Branch (CA 2512)
1930–31	Medical Service and Health Branch (CA 2511)
1931–39	Medical Service, Health and Aboriginals Branch (CA 1077)
1939–87	Department of Health, Northern Territory Divisional Office (CA 1042)

Housing

1959–98	Northern Territory Housing Commission (CA 2509)
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Immigration

1948–74	Department of Immigration, Northern Territory Branch (CA 759)
1974–75	Immigration Group, Department of Labour and Immigration, Regional Administration, Northern Territory (CA 2110)
1975–87	Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs [I], Northern Territory Branch (CA 2111)
1987–93	Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, Regional Office, Northern Territory Office (CA 6735)
1993–96	Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs [II], Regional Office, Northern Territory (CA 7687)
1996–2001	Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Northern Territory Office (CA 8258)
2001–07	Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs, Northern Territory Office (CA 8933)
2007–ongoing	Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Northern Territory Office (CA 9300)

Industrial Relations

Industrial Relations – Core administration	
1975–78	Department of Employment and Industrial Relations [I], Regional Administration, Northern Territory (CA 2326)
1978–82	Department of Industrial Relations [I], Regional Office, Northern Territory (CA 3581)
1982–87	Department of Employment and Industrial Relations [II], Regional Administration, Northern Territory (CA 3578)
1987–97	Department of Industrial Relations [II], Northern Territory Office [Darwin] (CA 6750)
1997–98	Department of Workplace Relations and Small Business, Northern Region, Darwin Office (CA 8463)
1998–2001	Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business, Northern Territory Regional Office (CA 8657)
2001–07	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Northern Territory Office (CA 8932)
2007–ongoing	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Northern Territory Office (CA 9336)
Industrial Relations – Arbitration	
1969–78	Arbitration Inspectorate [I], Northern Territory (CA 3579)
1978–83	Industrial Relations Bureau, Regional Office, Northern Territory (CA 3580)
1983–87	Arbitration Inspectorate [II], Northern Territory (CA 3582)
1987–87	Arbitration Inspectorate and Industrial Relations Division, Northern Territory (CA 5219)
1987–91	Arbitration Inspectorate [III], Northern Territory (CA 6749)

Lands

The Lands and Mines functions were amalgamated briefly between 1921 and 1925.

Lands – Core administration	
1869–12	Lands Office (CA 1079)
1912–14	Lands Department (CA 1080)
1914–21	Lands and Survey Department [I] (CA 1081)
1921–25	Lands and Mines Department (CA 1082)
1925–31	Lands and Survey Department [II] (CA 1083)
1931–72	Lands and Survey Branch (CA 1073)
1972–78	Northern Territory Lands Branch (CA 1528)
Lands – Land Board	
1912–24	Land Classification Board (CA 1087)
1924–27	Land Board [I] (CA 1088)
1931–38	Land Board [II] (CA 1090)
1949–92	Land Board [III] (agency unregistered)

Land – Courts and tribunals	
1954–64	Land Court of the Northern Territory (agency unregistered)
1964–92	Land and Valuation Tribunal (agency unregistered)
Land – Inquiries	
1933–35	Pastoral Leases Investigation Committee (CA 1098)
1937	Board of Inquiry appointed to Inquire into the Land and Land Industries of the Northern Territory (agency unregistered)

Legal

1928–74	Crown Law Office, North Australia/(from 1931) Northern Territory (CA 885)
1974–78	Attorney-General's Department, Northern Territory Office (CA 2632)
1978–84	Deputy Crown Solicitor, Darwin (CA 2633)
1984–ongoing	Australian Government Solicitor, Darwin (CA 4019)

Lighthouses

1917–83	Navigational Aid Station, Cape Don Northern Territory (CA 4717)
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Local Government

Local Government – Darwin Council	
1874–1915	Palmerston District Council (agency unregistered)
1915–37	Darwin District Council (agency unregistered)
1957–ongoing	Darwin Municipal Council/(from 1981) Darwin City Council (agency unregistered)
Local Government – Darwin Town Management Board	
1941	Darwin Town Management Board [I] (agency unregistered)
1947–57	Darwin Town Management Board [II] (agency unregistered)

Media

Media – Australian Broadcasting Corporation	
1946–83	Australian Broadcasting Commission, Regional Office, Northern Territory (CA 1863)
1983–ongoing	Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Darwin Branch (CA 3583)
Media – Publicity and promotion	
1969–73	Australian News and Information Bureau, Northern Territory (CA 1860)
1973–85	Australian Information Service, Editorial Office, Northern Territory (CA 1861)
1985–ongoing	National Media Liaison Service, Darwin (CA 5201)

Meteorology

1869–1910	Fort Point Observatory, Port Darwin, Northern Territory (CA 7903)
1887–1910	Alice Springs Meteorological Station, Northern Territory (CA 7905)
1910–55	Meteorological Branch/Bureau, Northern Territory (CA 5955)
1955–ongoing	Commonwealth Bureau of Meteorology Regional Office, Northern Territory/(by 1973) Bureau of Meteorology (CA 2351)

Mines

The Mines and Lands functions were amalgamated briefly between 1921 and 1925.

Mines – Core administration	
1912–21	Northern Territory Department of Mines [I] (CA 1120)
1921–25	Lands and Mines Department (CA 1082)
1925–28	Northern Territory Department of Mines [II] (CA 1121)
1928–68	Mines Branch [I], Head Office (CA 1119)
1968–70	Mines and Water Resources Branch, Darwin (CA 1303)
1970–78	Mines Branch [II], Head Office, Darwin (CA 1942)
Mines – Mining operations	
1873–1921	Chief Warden's Office (CA 1122)
1898–1920	Government Cyanide Plant and Battery, McDonnell Ranges (CA 1944)
1916–52	Government Battery, Maranboy (CA 1176)
1937–48	No. 1 Government Battery, Tennant Creek (agency unregistered)
1937–42	No. 2 Government Battery, Tennant Creek (CA 1190)
1941	No. 3 Government Battery, Tennant Creek/(by 1950) Central Government Battery, Tennant Creek (CA 1191)
Mines – Survey	
1934–42	Aerial, Geological and Geophysical Survey of Northern Australia (CA 1369)

Police

1869–1924	Police Inspector's Office (CA 1112)
1924–27	Office of the Commissioner of Police, [I] (CA 1136)
1927–28	Office of Commissioner of Police, Central Australia (CA 1113)
1928–31	Office of the Commissioner of Police, [II] (CA 1137)
1931–60	Police Branch, Office of the Superintendent of Police (CA 1138)
1960–64	Deputy Commissioner of Police (CA 1179)
1964–78	Commissioner of Police [II] (CA 1099)

Public Service

1969–78	Public Service Inspector, Northern Territory (CA 2108)
1978–87	Office of the Public Service Board, Northern Territory (CA 2647)

Social Security

Social Security – Core administration	
1912–47	Deputy Commissioner of Pensions and Maternity Allowances, South Australia (CA 4760)
1947–72	Director of Social Services, South Australia (CA 845)
1966–72	Department of Social Services, Regional Office, Darwin (CA 1255)
1972–79	Department of Social Security, Regional Office, Darwin (CA 2831)
1979–97	Department of Social Security, Headquarters, Northern Territory (CA 3082)
1997–ongoing	Centrelink, Area Support Office, North Australia (CA 8446)
Social Security – Tribunal	
1975–ongoing	Social Security Appeals Tribunal, Northern Territory (CA 5239)

Survey

1869–1912	Land Office (CA 1079)
1912–14	Survey Department (CA 1084)
1914–21	Lands and Survey Department [I] (CA 1081)
1921–25	Lands and Mines Department (CA 1082)
1925–31	Lands and Survey Department [II] (CA 1083)
1931–72	Lands and Survey Branch (CA 1073)
1972–75	Department of Services and Property, Northern Territory (CA 1527)
1975–87	Australian Survey Office, Darwin, Northern Territory (CA 3612)

Tourism

1962–ongoing	Northern Territory Tourist Board (CA 1864)
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Valuation

1952–69	Land and Survey Branch, Valuation Section (CA 1073)
1969–87	Valuer-General for the Northern Territory (CA 3530)
1987–ongoing	Australian Valuation Office, Darwin (CA 7071)

Water

1955–59	Water Use Branch (CA 2598)
1959–68	Water Resources Branch [I], Darwin (CA 2599)
1968–70	Mines and Water Resources Branch, Darwin (CA 1303)
1970–78	Water Resources Branch [II], Darwin (CA 2600)

Works

1911–22	Northern Territory Public Works Department (agency unregistered)
1922–32	Works Branch, Northern Territory (CA 1395)
1932–46	Works and Services Branch, Northern Territory (CA 966)
1946–74	Director of Works, Northern Territory (CA 1394)
1974–75	Director of Housing and Construction [I], Northern Territory (CA 2389)
1975–78	Director of Construction, Northern Territory (CA 2387)
1978–82	Director of Housing and Construction [I], Area Office, Darwin, Northern Territory (CA 2778)
1982–83	Department of Transport and Construction (CA 3572)
1983–87	Department of Housing and Construction [III] (CA 3575)
1987–90	Construction Group, Australian Construction Services (CA 6739)
1990–96	Australian Construction Services, State Office, Northern Territory (CA 7323)
1996–97	Works Australia, State Office, Northern Territory (CA 8312)

World War II

World War II – Bombing of Darwin	
1942	Commission of Inquiry into the Bombing of Darwin (agency unregistered)
World War II – Allied Works Council	
1943–44	Allied Works Council, Adelaide River (CA 2685)
1943–45	Allied Works Council, Alice Springs (CA 2684)

Appendix 3

Addresses of Archives and Libraries

National Archives of Australia

National Archives of Australia

National Reference Service

National Reference Service

All reference inquiries

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(Overseas callers: + 61 2 6212 3999)

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Website: www.naa.gov.au

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Other institutions holding material relevant to the Northern Territory

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25 Cavenagh Street
DARWIN NT 0800
GPO Box 874
DARWIN NT 0801
Tel: (08) 8924 7677
Fax: (08) 8924 7660
Email: nt.archives@nt.gov.au,
Website: www.nt.gov.au/nreta/ntas/
The NTAS also has an office
in Alice Springs

Australian War Memorial
Anzac Parade
CAMPBELL ACT 2612
GPO Box 345,
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Tel: (02) 6243 4315
Fax: (02) 6243 4545
Email: info@awm.gov.au
Website: www.awm.gov.au

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South Australian Archives Centre
26–28 Leigh Street
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Gepps Cross Research Centre
115 Cavan Road
GEPPS CROSS SA 5094
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ADELAIDE SA 5001
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About the book

This book was produced by the National Archives of Australia to commemorate the centenary of the acquisition of the Northern Territory by the Commonwealth Government in 1911. The Territory was administered by the Commonwealth until 1978, when it was granted self-government.

Ted Ling highlights the unique and rich history of the Territory and explores it through Commonwealth Government records. He makes extensive references to the records held by the National Archives in Canberra and Darwin, and to those in the Northern Territory Archives Service.

Commonwealth Government Records about the Northern Territory is an essential reference for anyone interested in the administrative history of the Northern Territory during the Commonwealth era.

About the author

Ted Ling worked at the National Archives for 31 years in a variety of positions, both in Canberra and a number of State Offices. He worked in reference and access services, as well as managing archives buildings. He was Director of the Archives' Darwin Office for three years. Following his retirement in 2006, he completed a PhD on the Northern Territory's pastoral industry during the Commonwealth era at Charles Darwin University. Ted's other interests include reading and learning to play the harp.



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