

**AA1984/609, Part 1, The Governor-General's periodic confidential reports to The Queen
[Sir John Kerr – correspondence with The Queen – Palace letters] Part 1**

Date of letter	From	To	Contents
8 Oct 1975	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letter of 30 Sep 1975:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Her Majesty thanks you for keeping her informed • Constitutional crisis
2 Oct 1975	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to two letters of 20 Sep 1975:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Papua New Guinea independence celebrations • The Queen had a full account from Prince Charles of his talks with the you, including the possibility of the Prime Minister asking The Queen to terminate your commission • Political situation in Australia
30 Sep 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversation with the Prime Minister on 29 Sep 1975 on the political and constitutional problems and the Prime Minister's proposed options, including Half Senate Election • Private oral advice from Attorney-General re section 53 of constitution that the Senate has the legal power to reject the Appropriation Bills • Doubt about Sir John and Lady Kerr's visit to Canada and London (due to depart on 5 Nov 1975)
24 Sep 1975	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letter of 12 Sep 1975:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prince of Wales has advised The Queen of problems the Governor-General is facing in Australia • Handwritten postscript re Eugene Forsey's book, 'The Prerogative of the Dissolution' ['The Royal Prerogative of Dissolution of Parliament in the British Commonwealth']
20 Sep 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report of trip to Papua New Guinea • Anticipating Princess Margaret's visit in early Nov 1975

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20 Sep 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional crisis • Prime Minister Whitlam's discussion with the Governor-General in Port Moresby re section 53 of the constitution dealing with the Senate's power to deal with money bills; and on Mr Whitlam's plans if Sir John terminated Mr Whitlam's commission when the public service etc were not being paid • Discussion with Sir Garfield Barwick re section 53 • Press against Mr Fraser • Mr Fraser in Papua New Guinea but the Governor-General did not discuss the issues with him • Is keeping an open mind re the issues but thinking hard • London trip will go ahead on 3 Nov 1975 unless supply is unresolved <p>Attachments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press clippings re constitutional and budget issues
10 Sep 1975	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	Response to letter of 4 Sep 1975 re Bougainville
7 Sep 1975	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letter of 29 Aug 1975:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similarities between economic situation in Australia and Britain • Note that you expect the next election to come towards the first half of 1976 • Sir Martin's meeting with the Canadian Governor-General • Expecting Sir John and Lady Kerr's visit to London and Canada
5 Sep 1975	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letter of 28 Aug 1975:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Queen instructed Charteris to say (in separate correspondence) that she's pleased to become The Queen and Head of State of Papua New Guinea and has approved the appointment of the Governor-General to Papua New Guinea (acting on advice of her Australian ministers)
12 Sep 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political situation • Low popularity of the government in polls • Views and opinions around Australia including the press, and pressure on Mr Fraser to deny supply and reject the budget in the Senate • Important constitutional questions could arise and require careful thought • About to leave for Papua New Guinea for independence day
4 Sep 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Papua New Guinea, Bougainville's 'secession' and position of Catholic Church in political developments • Declaration of the Republic of North Solomons <p>Attachments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press clippings re Bougainville, 1 Sep 1975

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29 Aug 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent political situation, the budget • Heavy inflation in Australia and the tax system • Mr Fraser has announced that although he will criticise the budget, no election will be precipitated this year, unless the situation changes • Prime Minister expected it to be possible that an election would occur on 5 Dec 1975, if supply were denied • Sir John's visit to Canada, London and Europe in November • Enclosing two copies of the Australian Foreign Affairs Record – issue for May has an article re Sir John's visit to South Asia; issue for June includes an article and report on Papua New Guinea (copies not attached to file) • Have sent the official documentation on the Papua New Guinea constitution today
28 Aug 1975	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letter of 19 Aug 1975:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures re The Queen assuming sovereignty of Papua New Guinea satisfactory • Bougainville secession
19 Aug 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Papua New Guinea: adoption of constitution procedural arrangements • Bougainville secession issues • Australian aid to Papua New Guinea cut as part of general budget cuts • Note that budget is to be delivered tonight <p>Attachment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sir Mark Oliphant, <i>The Canberra Times</i>, 1 Aug 1975
31 Jul 1975	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letter of 25 Jul 1975:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal approval for absence from Australia to visit London and European capitals • The Queen looks forward to receiving the Sir John and Lady Kerr
30 Jul 1975	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letters of 3 and 21 Jul 1975:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comments briefly on the Australian political situation and the Executive Council meeting of 14 Dec 1974 • Letters provide valuable background for The Queen • Interesting politics in UK in the last 6 weeks • Personal note in Charteris' hand re test cricket
25 Jul 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks The Queen's approval for a visit by Sir John to London, possibly in November (with the Prime Minister's support) • Possible election if Supply is denied • Progress of the news honours system • The Queen's jubilee year visit • Prime Minister's proposal to seek The Queen's approval for a revision and consolidation of the Royal Instructions to the Governor-General

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21 Jul 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on loans crisis involving Dr Cairns and Mr Connor • Mr Khemlani given an Executive Council Minute • Questioning of senior public servants re loan policy by Senate • State election in South Australia • Weakening of Mr Whitlam's position • Sir John's tour of the Northern Territory interrupted • Executive Council meeting of 14 Dec 1974 held in Sir John's absence and without his prior knowledge <p>Attachment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Australian Financial Review</i> article, 8 Jul 1975 re loans crisis
3 Jul 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political developments and Labor's by-election loss • Dismissal of Dr Cairns as Minister for the Environment by the Governor-General (same issues as with Mr Cameron) • The loan deals and Mr Fraser's call for a judicial inquiry • Budget issues and the possibility of the denial of supply • Energy not to be moved from CSIRO <p>Attachment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Canberra Times</i> editorial re the political situation and the Governor-General's powers, 4 Jul 1975
25 Jun 1975	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letter of 20 Jun 1975:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Papua New Guinea independence and the Prince of Wales' attendance
20 Jun 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re Papua New Guinea independence date set as 16 Sep 1975; Prince of Wales attendance; and Bougainville secession issue <p>Attachment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter from Sir John Kerr to Mr Whitlam re independence celebration in Papua New Guinea and Prince of Wales attendance, 17 Jun 1975
19 Jun 1975	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letters of 11 Jun 1975:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political developments and top public servants; comment on decision re dismissal of Mr Cameron • Political situation and similarity in UK
18 Jun 1975	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letter of 11 Jun 1975:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order of Australia
17 Jun 1975	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letter of 11 Jun 1975:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Papua New Guinea independence ceremony, Prince of Wales attendance and date
11 Jun 1975	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letter of 30 May 1975:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Papua New Guinea independence: The Queen's style and title; date • Governor-General's visits to Fiji and New Zealand • David Smith in London

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11 Jun 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Order of Australia: acceptance/rejection of proposed honours; thoughts on changes to the guidelines for eligibility
11 Jun 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent political developments: Cabinet reshuffle, including , on the advice of the Prime Minister, the Governor-General's dismissal of Mr Cameron (who refused to resign) <p>Attachment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extract from Australian Government Gazette, No S106, 06 Jun 1975
11 Jun 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministerial changes and top public servants: Sir Frederick Wheeler, Sir Lenox Hewitt, Sir Arthur Tange, Dr Price, Mr Rex Connor, Mr Morrison <p>[Refers to a letter from Dr Price re Order of Australia being attached to the letter of 11 Jun 1975 re the Order: it is not present on this file]</p>
11 Jun 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding Papua New Guinea independence: date
3 Jun 1975	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letter of 26 May 1975:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Queen has received an account from Princess Anne of the visit to Australia Papua New Guinea independence Council of the Order of Australia Impending visit of David Smith
30 May 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prince of Wales attendance at independence of Papua New Guinea: discussion of dates <p>Attachment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Papua New Guinea may have early elections, The Australian, 31 May 1975
26 May 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Papua New Guinea independence and Australian advice to The Queen Council of the Order of Australia deliberations <p>Attachment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photocopied notes of the Governor-General on his visit to Fiji and New Zealand, 12–24 May 1975
16 May 1975	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refers to his own letter of 5 May re Prince Charles travelling to Papua New Guinea for independence day: dates
5 May 1975	Sir Martin Charteris, Hong Kong	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letter of 21 Apr 1975:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Papua New Guinea independence and royal representation The Queen has received an approach from the Australian Government, acting on behalf of Michael Somare, offering her the Crown of Papua New Guinea

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2 May 1975	Sir Martin Charteris, Honolulu, Hawaii	Sir John Kerr	Response to letter of 23 Apr 1975: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State/Commonwealth tensions regarding Orders of Australia • The Queen pleased to hear about Kerr's marriage
23 Apr 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background to establishment of the Council for the Order of Australia: State/Commonwealth tensions • <i>The Bulletin</i> article re Office of the Governor General • Princess Anne and Captain Phillips in Canberra <p>Attachments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biographies for Sir John's nominees for the Council of the Order of Australia • Press clippings • Draft 'Honours in Confidence' cover sheet to be used in despatching documents to Council members • The unroyal order, <i>The Bulletin</i>, 26 Apr 1975
21 Apr 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talks with Somare in Papua New Guinea re independence and the likelihood that The Queen will be asked to remain as Queen of Papua New Guinea; wish for member of the Royal family to attend Independence Day <p>Attachment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extract from diary notes on Papua New Guinea visit by the Governor-General, 10-17 Apr 1975
2 Apr 1975	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	Response to letter of 24 Mar 1975: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Fraser leader of the opposition • The Queen's delight in successful overseas visits • Order of Australia • Independence of Papua New Guinea • Proposed visit to Fiji by Governor-General • British Honours awarded by the Australian states • Visit to London of Sir Mark Oliphant
24 Mar 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political situation in Australia; Mr Fraser has replaced Mr Snedden as leader of opposition • Overseas visit to Nepal, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran • Darwin visit • Order of Australia: establishing administrative arrangements • Papua New Guinea independence • Possible visit to Fiji • Awards of British Honours by the Australian states
5 Mar 1975	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	Response to letter of 19 Feb 1975: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Queen's approval of visit to New Zealand • Order of Australia: have received David Smith's copies of press response • Prince of Wales back from Nepal

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25 Feb 1975	William (Bill) Heseltine	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letter of 19 Feb 1975:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coronation in Nepal • Darwin cyclone and accident on Derwent River, Hobart • Press reception of the Order of Australia • Senate casual vacancy • Royal Commonwealth Society incident • <i>The Bulletin</i> article • Health of Sir John • Vice-regal salute • Commonwealth/State relations • Proposed visit to New Zealand • The Queen's staff in Mexico and Caribbean
19 Feb 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit to Nepal, India, Afghanistan and Iran • Sir Roden Cutler to act in Sir John's absence • Darwin disaster; The Queen's gift to nurses in Darwin; Sir John's planned stopover in Darwin (mentions enclosure: not present on file) • Collision with Tasman Bridge on the Derwent River, Hobart • Order of Australia and possible reactions; staff will be established in Government House to handle the honours • Political position in Australia including appointment of Senator Murphy to the High Court and filling of the casual vacancy; Labor party conference • The Royal Commonwealth Society incident • Article in the magazine <i>The Bulletin</i> re Sir John following Sir Paul Hasluck's policy (mentions enclosure: article not present on file) • Sir John's health • Vice-regal salute (national anthem) • Commonwealth/State tensions • Appointment of Senator Murphy to the High Court • Sir John's travel in coming months to Papua New Guinea, Northern Territory and New Zealand • Potential request for attendance of a member of the Royal Family in Papua New Guinea
10 Feb 1975	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letters of 4 Feb 1975:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters re Australian honours have been placed before The Queen and she has been pleased to give them her approval • The Queen's views on honours, including the Order of Australia • Vice-regal salute
3 Feb 1975	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letter of 4 Jan 1975:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Queen has read your letter with close interest regarding your visit to Darwin • Difficulties over table of precedence and UK arrangements re consultation between the UK government and The Queen • The Queen's view on vice-regal salute (national anthem) • The Queen's interest in Mr Fraser's attempt to supplant Mr Snedden

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4 Feb 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian honours and awards (and Table of Precedence), including State objections and Canadian precedents; effect of Darwin disaster • Possibility of a political or constitutional crisis occurring before The Queen's birthday discussed with the Prime Minister in relation to political consequences of decisions • Vice-regal salute
3 Feb 1975	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cable with The Queen's approval for Sir John's attendance at the coronation in Nepal and related visits
4 Jan 1975	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Darwin disaster (Cyclone Tracy): thanks The Queen for sympathetic message; issued Order of the Day to the Armed Services; Sir John's visit to Darwin; no special legal powers; Commonwealth/Northern Territory tensions • Order of precedence and the Prime Minister's views • National anthem • Australian politics: supply and appropriation; Mr Fraser may try to unseat Snedden; Sir John's visit to Sir Robert Menzies • Program for HRH Princess Anne and Captain Phillips' visit • Plans for visit to Nepal, India, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan <p>Attachment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Order of the Day to the Defence Force by the Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief (undated)
17 Dec 1974	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letter of 10 Dec 1974:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian Honours • Mr Whitlam's visit to London • Miss Morosi in press in UK
19 Dec 1974	Official Secretary to the Governor-General	London	Cablegram re Table of Precedence, quoting from a document to Prime Minister Whitlam from the Governor-General
19 Dec 1974	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	Telegram re Australian Honours, Table of Precedence – background information
19 Dec 1974	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	Telegram re Australian Honours, Table of Precedence – formal advice

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4 Dec 1974	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letters of 8 and 22 Nov 1974:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shah's visit • The Queen interested in mechanics of announcement of change in Treasurer prior to becoming effective • Prince of Wales was grateful for advice re New South Wales property • Petition from Queensland to Privy Council has not arrived • Governor-General's Australian and Papua New Guinea visits • Australian Honours; The Queen would support • The Queen has no objection to Kerr becoming patron of Law Association for Asia and the Western Pacific
10 Dec 1974	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Result of Queensland election (Labor losses) • Leader of the Opposition (Mr Snedden) survived a challenge from Mr Fraser • Budget passed • Scandal affecting Treasurer and Attorney-General: appointment of Miss Morosi to Treasurer's staff and her husband by Attorney-General to the Film Board • Possibility of denial of supply towards end first half of 1975 • Australian Honours system discussions • Controversial appointment of Menadue (Private Secretary to Mr Whitlam as Deputy Leader of Opposition) to head the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet • Controversial appointment of Dr Wilenski (former Principal Private Secretary to Prime Minister Whitlam) to head the Department of Labor and Immigration
22 Nov 1974	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press speculation over Treasurer's position (Dr Cairns replaced Mr Crean) and political situation • Proposed Australian Honours system • Proposed trip to Nepal and neighbouring countries • Law Association for Asia and the Western Pacific – Kerr was foundation president; the association would now like him to be patron
8 Nov 1974	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit by Imperial majesties of Iran; Indian Ocean diplomacy; cultural and trade relations • Visit by Japanese Prime Minister; trade matters • Visit by Prince of Wales including details of ownership of New South Wales property • Invitation to coronation of King of Nepal • Problems with the economy, possible election mid-next year, possible denial of supply and press speculation re Treasurer Crean's replacement by Dr Cairns • Plan to travel around Australia • Proposes a pre-independence trip to Papua New Guinea • Review of Order of Precedence • Tasmanian petition on rights to the seabed <p>Attachment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcript of Prince of Wales interview with Richard Carleton and Mike Willesee, et al, 29 Oct 1974

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9 Oct 1974	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	Response to letter of 15 Aug 1974: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prince of Wales purchasing property in New South Wales – action deferred
14 Sep 1974	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	Response to letter of 9 Sep 1974: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charteris' recent visit to Canada and ceremonial arrangements • National anthem
9 Sep 1974	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ceremonial arrangements; dress to be worn at swearing in ceremony • Postponed visit to Canada • Royal salute to the Governor-General • National anthem <p>[Mentions press notice attached, but not present on file]</p>
14 Sep 1974	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	Response to letter of 6 Sep 1974: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charteris' expression of sympathy on death of Lady Kerr and also on behalf of The Queen • Sir John Bunting's appointment as Australian High Commissioner, London • Commonwealth/State relations • Government use of personal advisors (Australia and Whitehall) • Comment re length of reports
6 Sep 1974	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lady Kerr's health deteriorating • Sir John Bunting's appointment as Australian High Commissioner, London; concerns of the senior ranks of the public service; Royal Commission into the Australian Public Service; procedure under which Kerr provided background briefings by Ministers. • Symbols of the Monarchy • Requests indication of level of detail required in reports to Sir Martin
2 Sep 1974	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	Response to letter of 15 Aug 1974: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lady Kerr's health • Prince Charles' purchase of property • Labor caucus • Queensland petition and advice to The Queen from more than one quarter • Death of Norman Kirk, New Zealand

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15 Aug 1974	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Lady Kerr's health • Opening of the new Parliament after the double dissolution and resulting political consequences of the election, including the opposition's control of the Senate, internal government politics • Proposal that Prince Charles purchase land in New South Wales • Petition from the Tasmanian government to The Queen re off-shore question and Commonwealth/State relations • Handling of the six bills allegedly twice rejected by the Senate which led to the double dissolution; the interpretation of Section 57 of the constitution; and the High Court's view of Sir John's proclamation • State of Queensland's proposal to refer issues to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council <p>Attachments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proclamation under section 57 of the constitution by Sir Paul Hasluck, Special Gazette, No 31B, 11 Apr 1974 • Proclamation by Sir John Kerr (referring to Sir Paul Hasluck's proclamation of 11 Apr), Special Gazette, No 62B, 30 Jul 1974 • Section 57 of the constitution