

**AA1984/609, Part 5, The Governor-General's periodic confidential reports to The Queen  
[Sir John Kerr – correspondence with The Queen – Palace letters] Part 5**

Date of letter	From	To	Contents
14 Jul 1977	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zelman Cowen, 'Australia and the Monarchy'</li> <li>• Australian Labor Party conference, Perth considered powers of the Governor-General</li> <li>• Australian Labor Party Constitutional and Legal Committee recommended curbing powers of the Governor-General</li> <li>• Timing of the federal election</li> <li>• Reserve powers</li> <li>• Kerr lecture to Indian Law Institute published in Institute's Law Journal</li> <li>• Discussion of request from The Queen for publication on the Dismissal</li> </ul> <p><b>Attachments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press clippings</li> <li>• Zelman Cowen, 'The Constitutional Aspects' (10 pages)</li> <li>• Zelman Cowen, 'Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia: 1931-1936' from Isaac Isaacs (14 pages)</li> <li>• Governor-General's Press statement of 14 Jul 1977 announcing resignation and congratulating Sir Zelman Cowen on his appointment as Governor-General</li> <li>• Prime Minister's Press Statement of 14 Jul 1977 passing on Buckingham Palace announcement of resignation of the Governor-General with effect from Dec 1977 and appointment of successor, Sir Zelman Cowen</li> <li>• Prime Minister's Press Statement of 14 Jul 1977 on the resignation of the Governor-General</li> <li>• Prime Minister's Press Statement of 14 Jul 1977 re appointment of Zelman Cowen as Governor-General; to be sworn in, in Dec 1977</li> <li>• Professor Sir Zelman Cowen – biographical material</li> </ul>
11 Jul 1977	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letter of 5 Jul 1977:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit of Constitution by Royal Instructions</li> <li>• Debate on the powers of the Governor-General</li> <li>• Arrangements for announcement of resignation of the Governor-General</li> </ul>

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5 Jul 1977	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Australian Labor Party Biennial Conference, Perth to discuss powers of the Governor-General</li> <li>• Royal Instructions and the Constitution</li> <li>• Kerr's address to 19<sup>th</sup> Legal Convention, Law Council of Australia, Sydney</li> <li>• Press cuttings give 'indication of what the people see and read and add colour to direct reporting by me.'</li> <li>• Press speculation about Kerr's resignation</li> <li>• Timing of the federal election</li> <li>• The economy, unemployment, inflation, interest rates</li> </ul> <p><b>Attachments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press clippings</li> </ul>
15 Jun 1977	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin's response to the Governor-General's resignation
15 Jun 1977	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response on behalf of The Queen to letter of 10 Jun 1977:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Queen accepts Kerr's resignation and notes that Kerr will continue in office until arrangements are completed for swearing in of successor</li> </ul>
10 Jun 1977	Sir John Kerr	Her Majesty, The Queen	Handwritten letter of resignation
14 Apr 1977	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	Response to letter of 5 Apr 1977
5 Apr 1977	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BBC documentary on Royal visit</li> </ul> <p><b>Attachments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press clipping</li> </ul>
5 Apr 1977	Sir John Kerr	Her Majesty, The Queen	Handwritten thank you for luncheon on HM Royal Yacht Britannia
2 Mar 1977	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possible demonstrations during The Queen's visit</li> <li>• Mr Whitlam declined invitation to dinner at Yarralumla during visit of The Queen</li> <li>• UK press interview of Mrs Fraser and Mrs Whitlam</li> <li>• Mr Whitlam's leadership</li> <li>• Press coverage of Kerr</li> </ul> <p><b>Attachments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press clippings</li> </ul>
Undated	Sir Martin Charteris, HM Royal Yacht Britannia Apia, Western Samoa	Sir John Kerr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to undated letter about awards in the Royal Victorian Order to staff at Government House</li> <li>• Will Mr Whitlam attend dinner at Yarralumla during the visit of The Queen?</li> </ul> <p>[Note: The undated letter from Sir John is not present on file. It may be in the records of the Governor-General's Office maintained by the Official Secretary.]</p>

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1 Feb 1977	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	Response to letter of 20 Jan 1977: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gift proposal pleasing to The Queen</li> <li>• Arrangements for presenting Sovereign's brooch of the Order of Australia</li> </ul>
25 Jan 1977	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	Response to letter of 20 Jan 1977: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• security arrangements for visit of The Queen</li> </ul>
25 Jan 1977	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	Response to letter of 20 Jan 1977: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Granville rail disaster in Sydney</li> </ul>
25 Jan 1977	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	Response to letter of 20 Jan 1977: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governor-General to attend naval review and Ascot</li> <li>• Referendum</li> </ul>
21 Jan 1977	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	Response to letter of 4 Jan 1977: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mid-term leave approved by The Queen</li> <li>• The Queen to present Royal Humane Society award to Roger John Smith, aged 12 for rescuing his mother and two other women from surf at Fraser Island</li> <li>• Advice about memoirs</li> </ul>
20 Jan 1977	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed gift of a racehorse to The Queen</li> <li>• Protocol for presenting Sovereign with the Order of Australia brooch</li> </ul>
20 Jan 1977	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank you for expressions of Royal sympathy for the Granville rail disaster, Jan 1977</li> <li>• Inquiry headed by Chief Judge Staunton to be conducted into the rail disaster</li> </ul>
20 Jan 1977	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank you for honour of membership of Privy Council</li> <li>• Prime Minister approved mid-term break for the Governor-General</li> <li>• Governor-General would like to attend review of naval ships at Spithead on 28 Jun 1977 and Ascot</li> <li>• Sir Roden Cutler (State Governor of New South Wales) – likely Administrator in the Governor-General's absence</li> <li>• Australian Labor Party leadership problems</li> <li>• Timing of the federal election</li> <li>• Possible referendum</li> <li>• Morgan Gallup Poll</li> <li>• No tax cuts or increase in government spending</li> <li>• Opening of Parliament</li> <li>• Kerr's health</li> <li>• The Queen's visit</li> </ul>

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20 Jan 1977	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Security arrangements for the visit of The Queen</li> </ul> <p><b>Attachments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press clipping</li> <li>• Report of 11 Nov 1976, Assistant Commissioner (Operations), Victoria, 'Inveterate Demonstrators' (2 pages)</li> <li>• Department of Administrative Services minute of 6 Dec 1976 from K Turbayne to A P Fleming headed 'Domestic Violence and Counter Terrorism' (2 pages)</li> <li>• Department of Administrative Services minute of 19 Jan 1977 headed 'Protection of VIPS – Sitrep from WH Anson to Co-ordinator-General (2 pages)</li> <li>• Handwritten note with headings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A. Pro-Violence</li> <li>○ B. Other Subversive Organisations</li> <li>○ C. Dissident Groups</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
4 Jan 1977	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renovations to Admiralty House require move to Kirribilli House (Sydney)</li> <li>• Visit from T K Critchley, High Commissioner, Papua New Guinea and update on politics in Papua New Guinea</li> <li>• Mid-term leave arrangements</li> <li>• Impending visit of The Queen</li> <li>• Request that, during her visit, The Queen consider presenting the Royal Humane Society award to Roger John Smith, aged 12 for rescuing his mother and two other women from surf at Fraser Island</li> <li>• British politics</li> <li>• Approaches from publishing companies to publish memoirs</li> </ul> <p><b>Attachments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citation – Royal Humane Society award to Roger John Smith</li> <li>• Press clipping</li> </ul>
30 Dec 1976	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letter of 19 Dec 1976:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multicultural Australia and the Monarchy</li> <li>• Advised to discuss visits to Thailand, Jordan and Iran during mid-term leave with Prime Minister Fraser</li> <li>• Congratulations on appointment to Privy Council</li> </ul>
23 Dec 1976	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letter of 13 Dec 1976:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• British mini-budget presented; Minister for Overseas Aid and Development resigns</li> <li>• Silver Jubilee Appeal</li> <li>• Papua New Guinea politics</li> </ul>

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19 Dec 1976	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of Monarchy in Australia</li> <li>• Multicultural makeup of Australia</li> <li>• Royal visits to Australia</li> <li>• Proposed visits to Europe, Thailand, Jordan and Iran during mid-term leave</li> </ul> <p><b>Attachments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press clippings</li> <li>• Embargoed transcript of Australia Day message broadcast by the Governor-General, 26 Jan 1977 (5 pages)</li> </ul>
9 Dec 1976	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letter of 1 Dec 1976:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• British economy</li> <li>• Leaks from British Cabinet</li> <li>• Question about Sir John Guise's future</li> </ul>
13 Dec 1976	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tasmanian election result</li> <li>• Republicanism/Monarchy polls</li> <li>• The economy</li> <li>• Discussion with Sir Peter Lawler, Secretary, Department of Administrative Services re VIP security and strengthening sentiments for the Monarchy</li> <li>• Discussion with the Prime Minister about 'Jubilee year strategy of delicacy and discretion', and possible Jubilee Appeal</li> <li>• Effect of changes in Papua New Guinea, Japan, China and America on Australia</li> </ul> <p><b>Attachments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press clippings</li> </ul>

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1 Dec 1976	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The economy, inflation</li> <li>• Unemployment, wage indexation, industrial relations</li> <li>• Standing of the Prime Minister</li> <li>• Splitting Treasury into two Departments – Department of the Treasury and the Department of Finance</li> <li>• No demonstrations since 11 Nov 1976</li> <li>• Dinner, Melbourne Scots presided over by Sir Robert Menzies</li> <li>• Luncheon at Sydney Club presided over by Sir Percy Spender</li> <li>• Timing of election</li> <li>• Exercising Reserve powers once in a life time is 'more than enough for me'</li> <li>• New book – Reid, <i>The Whitlam Venture</i></li> <li>• Papua New Guinea</li> </ul> <p><b>Attachments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press clippings</li> <li>• Letter from Sir Stanley Burbury, Governor of Tasmania to the Governor-General regarding a State Governors' uniform, 22 Nov 1976</li> <li>• Letter from Sir Stanley Burbury, Governor of Tasmania to Sir Eric Penn, Lord Chamberlain's Office regarding a State Governors' uniform, 22 Nov 1976</li> <li>• Letter from Sir Stanley Burbury, Governor of Tasmania to Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs regarding a State Governors' uniform, 22 Nov 1976</li> </ul>
18 Nov 1976	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letters of 26 Oct, 3 and 11 Nov 1976:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Queen's visit to Luxembourg</li> <li>• Letters not responded to until The Queen has read them</li> <li>• Timing of the federal election</li> <li>• Use of Reserve powers</li> <li>• Prosecution of Mr Whitlam and three Cabinet Ministers (Cairns, Connor, Murphy) who signed Executive Council Minute of 13 Dec 1974, for criminal conspiracy in Queenbeyan Magistrates Court</li> </ul>
11 Nov 1976	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The economy, inflation, balance of payments</li> <li>• Establishment of new Department and Ministry of Productivity (Ian Macphee)</li> <li>• Papua New Guinea</li> <li>• Investiture and honours</li> <li>• New books – Odgers, <i>Senate practice</i>; Solomon, <i>Elect the Governor-General</i>; Reid, <i>The Whitlam Years</i></li> <li>• First anniversary of the Dismissal</li> <li>• SECRET Security report</li> <li>• Remembrance Day commemoration, Australian War Memorial – no demonstration</li> </ul> <p><b>Attachments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press clippings</li> <li>• Security Report to David Smith from A P Fleming : 11 November Protest Groups – Background Information (4 pages)</li> </ul>

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1 Nov 1976	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letter of 19 Oct 1976:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning for The Queen's Silver Jubilee, 1977</li> <li>• The Queen restored to health after short illness</li> <li>• Source of information about Papua New Guinea</li> <li>• Invitations to Mr Whitlam to protocol events</li> </ul>
3 Nov 1976	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Melbourne Cup, 1976</li> <li>• Governor-General Sir John Guise and Sir Maori Kiki, Papua New Guinea</li> <li>• Criminal conspiracy case; Executive Council Secretary subpoenaed; possible subpoena of David Smith</li> <li>• Constitutional Convention, Hobart recommends referenda in 1977</li> <li>• Governor-General's address to 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Luncheon, Melbourne</li> <li>• Killen/Guilfloyle allegations – discussion with the Prime Minister</li> <li>• Proposed mid-term leave after The Queen's visit</li> </ul> <p><b>Attachments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press clippings</li> <li>• Extract from Zelman Cowen essay, 'The Constitution and the Monarchy'</li> </ul>
26 Oct 1976	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kangaroo II exercise, Queensland, involving US, New Zealand, Canada and Australian Defence Forces</li> <li>• Status of Kerr as Governor-General if Mr Whitlam wins the next federal election</li> <li>• Timing of the federal election</li> <li>• Political revival of Mr Whitlam</li> <li>• Constitutional Convention, Hobart</li> <li>• Prosecution of Mr Whitlam and three Cabinet Ministers (Cairns, Connor, Murphy) who signed Executive Council Minute of 13 December 1974, for criminal conspiracy in Queanbeyan Magistrates Court</li> <li>• Visit of Bill Heseltine, and Governor of Western Australia, Sir Wallace and Lady Kyle to Government House</li> </ul> <p><b>Attachments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press clippings</li> <li>• 'The Discretionary Authority of Dominions Governors', The Canadian Bar Review, Jan 1940, Vol XVIII</li> <li>• Extract: details of particulars sought by defendants in Prosecution of Mr Whitlam and three Cabinet Ministers (Cairns, Connor, Murphy) who signed Executive Council Minute of 13 Dec 1974, for criminal conspiracy in Queanbeyan Magistrates Court</li> </ul>

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19 Oct 1976	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Papua New Guinea political situation</li> <li>• Invitations to Mr Whitlam for protocol dinners at Government House</li> <li>• Governor-General's visit to Brisbane and Barossa Valley</li> <li>• Forthcoming events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 11 November: Remembrance Day commemorations, Australian War Memorial (and anniversary of Dismissal) – possible protests</li> <li>○ Melbourne Cup</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Lance Barnard refusal of KCMG</li> <li>• Sir Stanley Burbury, Governor, Tasmania about a State Governors' uniform</li> <li>• Governor-General to attend Kangaroo II exercises, Queensland</li> </ul>
8 Oct 1976	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to letter of 22 Sep 1976:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrangements for Kerr's Governor-General papers, including 'Palace letters': deposit with the National Library suggested (Lord Stonehaven's papers held by NLA); with period of embargo to be confirmed. The convention is 60 years from the end of term</li> <li>• Letters originating from The Palace to be preserved in the Royal Archives under complete confidentiality</li> <li>• Forthcoming events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 11 November Remembrance Day commemorations, Australian War Memorial (and anniversary of Dismissal) – possible protests</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
29 Sep 1976	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	<p>Response to two letters of 21 Sep 1976 (one to The Queen and the second to Sir Martin):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retirement of Sir John Bunting as High Commissioner, UK</li> <li>• Proposal that Mr Whitlam attend dinner at Government House during The Queen's tour of Australia</li> <li>• Papua New Guinea Governor-General</li> <li>• Society for Asserting the Constitution over Kerr (SACK) – Ms Swift – disagreeable person</li> </ul>
5 Oct 1976	Sir John Kerr	Sir Martin Charteris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Papua New Guinea, political and electoral matters, border with Indonesia, next Australian High Commissioner, Papua New Guinea Governor-General</li> <li>• Prime Minister Fraser visit to Indonesia</li> <li>• Governor-General's tour of Barossa Valley, South Australia</li> <li>• Sydney Town Hall rally for Constitutional change</li> </ul> <p><b>Attachments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press clippings</li> <li>• Letter of 12 Sep 1976 from Chris Diprose to the Papua New Guinea Governor-General, protesting at the cancellation of the visit to Australia and refusal to stay with the Australian Governor-General</li> <li>• Letter of 21 Sep 1976 from the Governor-General, Papua New Guinea to Chris Diprose</li> </ul>



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18 Sep 1976	Sir Martin Charteris	Sir John Kerr	Response to letter of 9 Sep 1976: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Papua New Guinea Governor-General, Sir John Guise</li> <li>• Palace interest in establishing source of information about Papua New Guinea</li> <li>• Australian economy</li> <li>• No serious demonstrations against Sir John Kerr</li> <li>• Solicitor-General's opinion on the Governor-General's Instructions</li> <li>• Order of Precedence</li> </ul>