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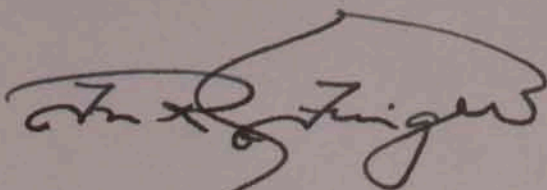
CABINET DECISION

NO. 1519

Submission No.: 1149

Title: The School Year.

Cabinet endorsed the introduction of a two semester school year in the Northern Territory.



(M.R. FINGER),
Secretary to Cabinet.

11 February, 1981

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THE NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

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FOR CABINET

SUBMISSION No:1149.....

Title:	The school year.
Minister	Hon J M Robertson MLA.
Purpose:	The introduction of a two semester school year.
Relation to existing policy:	An amendment to the present division of the school year from three terms to two semesters.
Timing/ legislative priority:	In time to enable semesters to be introduced in 1982, with sufficient advance notice to the community.
Announcement of decision, tabling, etc:	A public announcement should be made no later than October 1980.
Action xxxxxx required before announcement:	A decision by Cabinet.
Staffing implications, numbers and costs, etc:	N/A.
Total cost:	\$29 000.

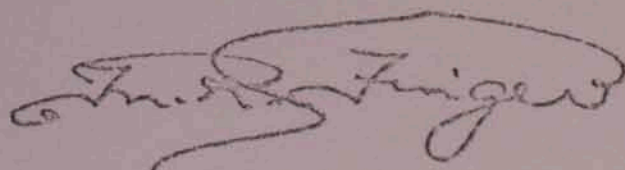
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CONFIDENTIALCABINET DECISIONNC. 1350

Submission No.: 1149

Title: THE SCHOOL YEAR

Cabinet deferred further consideration pending further consultation between interested Departments and Authorities and agreed to the issue of a press release seeking public reaction and comment.



(M.R. FINSER),
Secretary to Cabinet.

8 October, 1980.



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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FROM THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

21 January, 1981

Secretary to Cabinet
Department of Chief Minister

THE SCHOOL YEAR

Your C77/14 of 13 January refers.

You would be aware that the Minister for Education announced on 16 January that a two-semester school year will be introduced in the Northern Territory in 1982.

As requested, a copy of the press release, dated 8 October 1980, inviting final public comment, is enclosed.

Also enclosed is a copy of the press release announcing the introduction of semesters.

S P SAVILLE



MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

DARWIN

NEWS RELEASE

5/69-80

October 8, 1980

The NT Government today called for final comments on the proposal to introduce a two-semester school year in the Territory.

The Minister for Education, Mr. Jim Robertson, announced today that the semester system could be introduced in 1982, depending on community reaction.

The planned school calendar would comprise two semesters of 21 weeks, separated by a four week vacation mid-year and a six-week vacation at the end of the year. As well, there would be a week's holiday in the middle of each semester.

Mr. Robertson said the new calendar would provide a better division of the school year while retaining the amount of time the students spent in the classroom.

It would be more in harmony with Territory seasons and holiday patterns.

The Minister said secondary schools in particular should find the proposed system more advantageous in view of their present practice of dividing the school year into two semesters for unit studies.

Some schools in Aboriginal communities had been operating a form of semester system since 1975.

Mr. Robertson said variations to the present system had long been a topic of discussion by Territory parents and teachers. Moves for a change had gathered momentum during the past two years.

This year, members of the Education Advisory Council and the Council of Government Schools Organisation had canvassed the matter throughout the community and the response from parents and teachers had been greatly in favour of the semester proposal.

The Government was considering introducing the new school calendar in 1982 to allow people time to plan their leave arrangements.

Dates for school attendance during 1982 would be:

First Semester - January 25 to June 18, with
a mid-semester break from
April 5 to April 12.

Second Semester- July 19 to December 10, with
a mid-semester break from
September 27 to October 1.

However, Mr. Robertson said a decision would not be made
until people had been given a final chance to comment
on the proposal.

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MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

DARWIN

5/3-81

NEWS RELEASE

JANUARY 16, 1981

A two-semester school year will be introduced in the Northern Territory next year.

Announcing this today, the Minister for Education, Mr. Jim Robertson, said the great majority of people who had responded to calls for public comment on the proposal were in favour of it.

From 1982 onwards, the school calendar would comprise two semesters of 21 weeks, separated by a four-week vacation mid-year and a six-week vacation at the end of the year. There would also be a week's holiday in the middle of each semester.

Mr. Robertson said the new calendar would provide a better division of the school year and would be more in harmony with Territory seasons and holiday patterns.

Queensland is introducing a semester system in 1981.

Dates for school attendance next year would be:

First Semester: January 25 to June 18, with a mid-semester break from April 5 to April 9

Second Semester: July 19 to December 10, with a mid-semester break from September 27 to October 1

ENDS

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Department/Authority DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

COMMENT ON CABINET SUBMISSION No.

TITLE: THE SCHOOL YEAR

COMMENTS:

Submission supported.

An option not specifically addressed is the use of two semesters each of 20 weeks with two six weeks breaks. Not only would this lend itself to mid-year recreation leave plans by parents but also provide a second extended period for multiple use of school facilities.

SIGNED:

O. ALDER

DESIGNATION:

Asst. Under Treasurer

DATE:

2/9/80

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Department/Authority LAW

COMMENT ON CABINET SUBMISSION No.

TITLE: THE SCHOOL YEAR

COMMENTS:

There are no constitutional barriers
to this proposal.

There are no legislative barriers to
the proposal.

SIGNED:

ASG/Hod L.

DESIGNATION: CROWN SOLICITOR

DATE: 1 September 1980

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1. THE ISSUE

- (a) The introduction of a two semester school year to replace the present three term year.
- (b) It is proposed that it be introduced in 1982 and that it apply to all Government schools in the Northern Territory.

2. BACKGROUND

- (a) Variations to the present division of the school year have been topics for discussion amongst teachers and parents in the Northern Territory for a number of years. Some schools in Aboriginal communities have been operating a form of semester system since 1975, for example Maningrida.
- (b) In the last two years the move has gathered momentum. This year the members of the Education Advisory Council and the Northern Territory Council of Government Schools Organisation have circulated and discussed the proposal throughout the community. The response from parents and teachers has been greatly in favour of the proposal.
- (c) On 18 April 1980 the Education Advisory Council recommended to the Minister that a semester system be introduced in 1982. This was supported by a recommendation from the Department of Education in July.

3. CONSIDERATION OF THE ISSUE

(a) The year would be divided as follows;

First Semester, twenty one weeks sub-divided into:

First Half, ten weeks,

Mid Semester break, one week,

Second Half, ten weeks.

School Vacation, four weeks.

Second Semester, twenty one weeks sub-divided into:

First Half, ten weeks,

Mid Semester break, one week,

Second Half, ten weeks.

Christmas Vacation, six weeks.

(b) In addition to the forty weeks of school, teachers would be required to be on duty an additional two days, at a time to be determined by either the Director North or the Director South. In most cases these would be the Thursday and Friday preceding the return of students following the Christmas vacation. In the case of some schools, e.g. very small schools, it may be more beneficial to devote the two days to in-service work at some other time during the year.

(c) Where the prescribed dates for the proposed school year are likely to cause major problems the Principal could request that the Secretary approve slight variations. This would provide for some

3. (c) Cont.

flexibility to cater for special needs and situations but also ensure that variations are controlled and kept to a minimum.

- (d) First Semester - 25 January to 18 June
- Mid semester break - 5 April to 12 April
- Second Semester - 19 July to 10 December
- Mid semester break - 27 September to 1 October

- (e) This would provide 196 working days, compared with 197 in 1981 and 195 in 1980. The number of working days will vary slightly from year to year depending on certain public holidays such as Anzac Day, Easter and Australia Day. In most years it will be possible to schedule the first semester break to coincide with Easter.

4. OPTIONS

- (a) Accept the introduction of a two semester school year.
- (b) Accept the basic proposal but with slight variations to actual dates.
- (c) Reject the proposal and implement a completely new scheme.

5. THE PUBLIC IMPACT OF THE RECOMMENDATION

- (a) Judging by the results of surveys and discussions conducted by the Education Advisory Council, Northern Territory Council of Government Schools

5 (a) Cont.

Organisation and the Northern Territory Department of Education, it is expected that the recommendation would be well accepted by most sectors of the community.

(b) As with any proposal which recommends a departure from long standing tradition, it is likely that a minority may be in opposition to the change.

6 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Northern Territory children from isolated communities who are required to board in either Alice Springs or Darwin, are entitled to three return trips home per year. Acceptance of this proposal would require an additional air fare for each child, including students of the residential colleges of Yirara and Kormilda.

It is estimated that the increase in expenditure would be in the vicinity of \$29 000.

7 EMPLOYMENT CONSIDERATIONS

It is not envisaged that any significant employment effects are likely to result from adoption of the proposal.

8 COMMONWEALTH AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

The proposal does not have any implications for Commonwealth and local government relations.

9 CO-ORDINATION AND CONSULTATION

If the proposal is accepted, and after a public announcement, it may prove beneficial to partake in final consultation with community groups and the Northern Territory Teachers Federation.

10 LEGISLATION

Approval of the recommendation would not involve legislation.

11 PUBLICITY

A substantial campaign to inform the public of the purpose and implications of the proposal would be essential.

A draft news release has been prepared as Attachment A.

12 TIMING

(a) The formal introduction of the proposal should be 1 January 1982.

(b) The announcement of the proposed change in the school year should be made as soon as possible so that all members of the community may have ample time to plan leave arrangements well in advance, e.g. overseas air fares.

13

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet endorses the introduction of a two semester school year.

Jim Robertson
1/10/80

SCHOOLS TO ADOPT SEMESTER SYSTEM IN 1982

Government schools throughout the Northern Territory are to adopt a two-semester school year starting in 1982.

This was announced today by the Minister for Education, Mr Jim Robertson, and follows widespread community acceptance of the proposal.

The new school calendar will comprise two 21-week semesters separated by four weeks' vacation at mid-year and six weeks' vacation at Christmas. There will also be a week's holiday break in the middle of each semester.

Mr Robertson said the new calendar provided a better division of the school year while retaining the amount of time students spent in the classroom.

It was also more in harmony with Northern Territory seasons and holiday patterns.

Secondary schools in particular should find the new system more advantageous, he said, in view of their present practice of dividing the school year into two semesters for unit studies.

Some schools in Aboriginal communities had been operating a form of semester system since 1975.

Mr Robertson said variations to the present system had long been a topic of discussion by Northern Territory parents and teachers. Moves for a change had gathered momentum during the past two years.

This year, members of the Education Advisory Council and the Council of Government Schools Organisation had canvassed the matter throughout the community and the response from parents and teachers had been greatly in favour of the semester proposal.

The Government was introducing the new school calendar in 1982 to allow people time to plan their leave arrangements.

Dates for school attendance during 1982 will be as follows :

- . first semester - 25 January to 18 June, with a mid-semester break from 5 April to 12 April; and
- . second semester - 19 July to 10 December, with a mid-semester break from 27 September to 1 October.