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Series notes for series SP446/1

Description of series:

Jacketed and registered files containing correspondence relating to establishment and functions of the Division. Policy matters include Standards of Accommodation; Hospital; Catering; Educational; Recreational and Religious facilities; Admission British and Non-British Migrants. Other matters include Planning Programmes; Conduct of and Complaints by Migrants including Special Investigations; Accounting Procedures; Circulars and Instructions; Reports; Liaison with other Departments; Delegations of Power; and the Staffing, Establishment and Organisation of the Division. File covers are imprinted 'Commonwealth Hostels Ltd.'

History Prior/Subsequent to Transfer:

Prior to transfer: The question of Commonwealth owned Hostels, ie, the Building of Hostels - use of ex-Army and other Service camps for the general housing of Displaced Persons and Migrants seems to have been originally mooted at a conference in Canberra on 17 January 1948, at which the Prime Minister and Minister for Works were present. Following this conference a meeting of Departmental representatives investigated the production of building materials in the South Coast area of New South Wales. A Cabinet Sub-Committee with the Prime Minister, Ministers for Post-War Reconstruction, Labour and National Service, Works and Housing, and Immigration, on 28 April 1948 discussed recommendations of Inter-departmental Committee on Hostel Accommodation for Displaced Persons and Immigrants (the Inter-departmental Committee had met on two or three occasions prior to this date). The Cabinet Sub-Committee approved certain Hostel projects.

On 28 June 1948 the Inter-departmental Committee on Hostel Accommodation for Displaced Persons and Immigrants made further recommendations which were discussed at a meeting of Cabinet Ministers on 29 June 1948, and the policy on Hostel Accommodation provided by the Commonwealth was determined. Cabinet Agendum No. 1498 recommended that provision be made in the 1948/49 Estimates for Pounds 2,500,000 to cover cost of building and equipping 9 new Hostels. This was approved by Cabinet on 3 August 1948. A following Press Statement announced operation of Hostels to be undertaken by Departments of Immigration and Labour and National Service in co-operation. The Migrant Workers Accommodation Division was set up within the Department of Labour and National Service with Central Office in New South Wales and Regional Offices in New South Wales (Eastern Region), Queensland (Northern Region), Victoria (Southern Region), and Adelaide (Western Region). The Division was responsible for the proper functioning of the Hostels, various facilities, and general accommodation of migrants.

A Press Statement issued by the Minister of Labour and National Service on 22 August 1951 announced a Cabinet decision to hand over the administration of Hostels from the Department of Labour and National Service to a private company to be registered and fully owned by the Commonwealth.

Administrative information

The following data was keyed from the paper documentation:

Form number: CA 17
Creating department: , Labour and National Service, Migrant Workers Accommodation Division, Central Office
Transferring department: , Labour and National Service, Administration, Registry
Date of transfer: 04/11/1959
Archives file number: RWS11/1/52