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## Songs and honours

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In 1973 the Whitlam Government asked the Australia Council to organise a contest to select a new national anthem to replace 'God Save the Queen'. The Council was unable to find an anthem that it preferred to the existing 'Advance Australia Fair', 'Waltzing Matilda' and 'Song of Australia'. After a poll by the Australian Bureau of Statistics 'Advance Australia Fair' was adopted as the national anthem in 1974. The Fraser Government decided on 14 January 1976 that 'God Save the Queen' should be played on regal and vice-regal occasions, but that popular consultation should be undertaken to select an anthem for occasions when it was necessary to denote a separate Australian identity. Until then organisers of civilian functions could play either 'God Save the Queen' or one of the three Australian songs (Decision 56). On 4 May Cabinet expressed a strong preference for 'Waltzing Matilda' to be played at the Montreal Olympics (Decision 546). However a plebiscite conducted in conjunction with the referenda on 21 May 1977 found that 'Advance Australia Fair' was the preferred national anthem (43% of votes, compared with 28% for its closest rival 'Waltzing Matilda') and it was formally adopted by the Hawke Government in 1984.

At the suggestion of the Whitlam Government the Queen established the Order of Australia in 1975 'for the purpose of according recognition to Australian citizens and other persons for achievement or for meritorious service'. The Order included the categories of Companion, Officer and Member. The Fraser Government decided on 14 January 1976 that the British honours system should be reintroduced to operate concurrently with the Order of Australia (Decision 57). On 24 May 1976 the Queen approved the addition of the categories of Knight and Dame to the Order of Australia and also the introduction of a Medal of the Order of Australia. The Knight and Dame categories were revoked in 1986.

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## CONFIDENTIAL

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C A B I N E T M I N U T E

Canberra, 14 January 1976

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Decision No. 56

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Without Submission - Musical Salutes

The Cabinet agreed that it would be appropriate for Defence Force bands to play musical salutes on the following basis:

- (a) on regal and vice-regal occasions,  
"God Save the Queen" only;
- (b) at civilian functions, at the request of the organisers of such functions, one of the following -
  - "God Save the Queen"
  - "Advance Australia Fair"
  - "Waltzing Matilda"
  - "Song of Australia"

2. Cabinet:

- (a) noted that the Governor-General had indicated he was prepared to reinstate "God Save the Queen" as the Vice-Regal Salute and would be taking the matter up with the Queen;

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## CONFIDENTIAL

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2.

Decision No.56 (Cont'd)

(b) agreed that an announcement of the new arrangements should be made in advance of Australia Day this month.

3. The Cabinet also agreed that there was a need for a National Anthem that could be played on ceremonial occasions when it was necessary to denote a separate Australian identity. The selection of such an Anthem should be determined after some form of popular consultation which would be limited to the four songs mentioned in paragraph 1(b) above.

4. The Cabinet further agreed that this Decision should be communicated to State Premiers.



Secretary to Cabinet

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C A B I N E T M I N U T E

Canberra, 14 January 1976

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Decision No. 57


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### Without Submission - Honours and Awards

The Cabinet agreed :-

- (a) that awards under the British Honours System should be reinstated;
- (b) that such awards should be conferred concurrently with awards under the Order of Australia; and
- (c) that it was necessary to establish criteria to ensure that awards under the two systems were appropriate and compatible.

2. Cabinet noted that, in respect of sub-paragraph (a) of paragraph 1, the Governor-General would be having discussions with the Queen during his current visit.

  
Secretary to Cabinet

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### C A B I N E T M I N U T E

Canberra, 4 May 1976

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Decision No. 546

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Without Submission - Australian National Song for the Olympic Games, Montreal, 1976

The Cabinet noted that :-

- (a) the Australian Olympic Federation had not yet taken a decision concerning the choice of the tune, song or anthem to be played at Montreal;
- (b) the preferred national song as indicated by the State Premiers was :-

Victoria	Waltzing Matilda
Queensland	Advance Australia Fair
South Australia	Song of Australia
Western Australia	Advance Australia Fair
Tasmania	Advance Australia Fair

(New South Wales had not yet indicated its preference); ar

- (c) the Prime Minister had requested the Government Whip to secure reactions from Party Members concerning their views on Waltzing Matilda being indicated as the national song.

2. The Cabinet agreed that :-

- (a) the Government should give a lead to the

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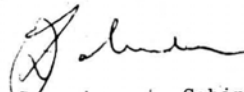
## CONFIDENTIAL

2.

Decision No. 546 (tcnt.)

Australian Olympic Federation to assist it in determining this matter;

- (b) subject to the outcome of sub-paragraph (c) above, the Prime Minister should indicate in answer to any question on the matter that it was the strong view of himself and his Cabinet colleagues that Waltzing Matilda should be played as Australia's national song; and
- (c) following the Olympic Games the matter of an Australian national song could be considered further to determine whether a consensus had developed (Cabinet Decision No. 56 of 14 January 1976 is relevant).

  
Secretary to Cabinet

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