**Digests of Proceedings Source Sheet No. 29**

**What Are They?**

The Digests are a printed record of the proceedings of the City Council. These annual volumes date from the municipal year 1870-71 and are records of the day-to-day business of the Council. They comprise the *Minutes* of Council and Local Board of Health meetings, together with the *Notice Papers* containing reports of the various Committees of Council. Their full title is *Digest of Proceedings of Council and Committee Meetings*.

The Digest is one of the Corporation's longest-running continuous record series, providing a record of each Council meeting and the business it dealt with in bound hardcopy form until 1996-7 after which the format in which this information was issued changed.

The Digests were printed and bound, and from 1891 were indexed by subject and Town Acre number. Indexes for earlier volumes (1871-80) have been prepared by Archives staff, while some original hand-written indexes also exist for some years before 1891, however these are not easy to follow and often difficult to read.

From the late 1880s the Digests included references to Town Clerk’s Dockets, and later to Town Clerk’s Special Files, two of the Corporation’s main record series.

**History of the Series**

The practice was adopted in about 1871 of printing *Notice Papers* for Council meetings. The Notice Papers generally included the following features: Orders of the Day including reports from the various Committees (such as the Public Works Committee, the Health Committee and the Finance Committee); Notices of Motion; and a Return of City and Special Rates Collected to date. These Notice Papers were bound into annual volumes. It also appears that any other items printed during the year were bound with the Notice Papers (for example, copies of Annual Reports, Government Bills and Acts affecting the Corporation, reports of various bodies on which the Council was represented).

At the end of each volume it was the practice to include the *Return of Attendance of Members, Schedules of Arrears of City Rates*, other printed Reports and Notices, and the ‘*List of Citizens’* in Ward order. Minutes and Notice Papers of the Municipal Association of South Australia were also bound into the end of the Digest for a period of years from 1891-92.

In 1873-74 the inclusion of the Minutes of Council Meetings, or *Digest of Proceedings of the City Council* as it was officially called,was seen for the first time, and has continued to be published in much the same form until the late 1990s. These generally comprised a list of Members present at the meeting, confirmation of minutes (of the previous meeting), Lord Mayor and Town Clerk’s Reports, Correspondence, Questions from Members, First Order of the Day which involved consideration of Committee Reports, Second Order of the Day which usually included Council nominations to Boards, etc., followed (from 1881) by Building Applications and later Planning Approvals, and other business.

In 1875-76 the *Roll of the Council* was introduced at the beginning of each volume. This indicates when Members were elected for which Wards and on which Committees and other bodies they served. In 1878-79 the pages of the Digest were first numbered consecutively for the whole year rather than from 1 for each Digest. That year (1878-79) also saw the first attempt at indexing the Digest when indexes were prepared on a monthly basis for the meetings from and including 4 December 1878 to 3 February 1879.

An annual index was first completed in long hand in 1889-90 and was also compiled for the following year. A printed annual index was first bound with the Digest in 1891-92 and has continued to be included since (although this is currently in arrears).

From October 1981 detailed agenda were included as part of the Notice Papers. The Digest today consists of Committee Agenda, Council Notice Papers and Minutes.

The Digest comprised one bound volume per year until 1969-70 when two bound volumes per year were produced for the period 1985-87 four bound volumes were produced, increasing to 11 bound volumes for the period 1991-93.

The Digest was originally produced by the Corporation’s contracted printer until May 1972, after which it was printed within the Corporation by its own offset printing section. Paper size was reduced from foolscap to A4 from July 1974.

The practice of printing the Minutes of the Council and Local Board of Health in red ink was introduced in 1900-01 and lasted until March 1981. Reports from the Committees of Council have always continued to be printed in black ink, although from 1989 to April1998 attachments to Committee Reports were printed on blue paper.

**Using the Digests**

The Digests may be used to research particular subjects which involved the Council or the Corporation. They provide useful summaries of matters dealt with by the various Council Committees and enable issues to be followed through to their adoption at Council meetings.

Importantly, they the Digests provide a key primary finding aid in their own right in that they can be used to identify sources of more detailed information about particular subjects.

From June 1888 references to Town Clerk’s Department Docket numbers were first included for each matter considered by Committees and printed as part of the Notice Papers.

In 1905 this practice was extended to include Town Clerk’s Special Files relating to matters of substance dealt with by the Council. These references continued to appear until 1976 (when these two record systems were discontinued) after which references to the new series of administration files were included.

**Further Information**

**City Archives:** Topham Mall, off Currie and Waymouth Streets, Adelaide 5000

**Counter / telephone enquiries:** 9**.**00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

**Search Room open for public research:**10.00 am to 4.00 pm Tuesday to Thursday

**Telephone:** +618 8203 7439

**Email:** [**cityarchives@cityofadelaide.com.au**](mailto:cityarchives@cityofadelaide.com.au)

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