



Australian Government

National Archives of Australia

Administrative Functions Disposal Authority (AFDA)

Revised March 2010

A Records Authority for administrative functions linked to *Keyword AAA: A Thesaurus of General Terms* modified for Commonwealth use

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Note about this edition

This edition of the *Administration Functions Disposal Authority*, March 2010 contains revisions to the August 2000 published edition. Information about the revisions is available in the Introduction to this document.

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The terms in the business classification scheme taken from the *Keyword AAA: A Thesaurus of General Terms* (Government of New South Wales, 1998), are produced under a licence agreement between the Office for Government Online, the National Archives of Australia and the State Records Authority of New South Wales.

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INTRODUCTION

The Administrative Functions Disposal Authority was released in 2000. The Authority was revised during 2009 taking into account legislative changes affecting particular functions to meet accountability requirements as well as other enhancements designed to improve the overall usability of the Authority. As a result of this review some classes have been replaced and others remain intact. The authoritative version of AFDA will be maintained on the National Archives website.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS DISPOSAL AUTHORITY

Purpose

The Administrative Functions Disposal Authority (AFDA) identifies minimum retention periods for Commonwealth records and authorises the destruction of Commonwealth records as required by Section 24 of the Archives Act 1983 and is issued for use across the Commonwealth.

It also authorises the amendment and alteration of records more than 25 years old as required by Section 26 of the Archives Act 1983 for master control records and personal case records in the Personnel, Compensation and Occupational Health and Safety functions.

Scope

This Authority covers the records relating to the administrative functions performed by the Commonwealth and its agencies. It applies to central or national offices, State/Territory or branch offices, local offices and overseas posts. It applies to all records created since Federation, regardless of format.

It covers the following 18 common administrative functions. 17 are based on the classification scheme of Keyword AAA: A Thesaurus of General Terms produced by the State Records Authority of New South Wales. One additional common administrative function has been added. (identified by an *):

Function name		
Community Relations	Government Relations	Procurement*
Compensation	Industrial Relations	Property Management
Equipment & Stores	Information Management	Publication
Establishment	Legal Services	Staff Development
Financial Management	Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S)	Strategic Management
Fleet Management	Personnel	Technology & Telecommunications

Exclusions

Pre-Federation records are not covered by this Authority. The National Archives should be contacted if agency holdings include pre 1901 records. This Authority is for common administrative records only and is not to be used to destroy or transfer records created in support of an agency's core business. The National Archives issues separate Records Authorities for an agency's core businesses.

For example, an agency whose core business is the financial management of the Commonwealth must not use the finance function in AFDA to sentence their records. They must instead use their own Records Authority to destroy, retain or transfer these records. However, an agency whose core business is environmental management could use financial management in AFDA for administrative or housekeeping financial records. To see all current Records Authorities issued for agency core business records, please use the following link:

www.naa.gov.au/records-management/keep-destroy-transfer/authorities/list-ra.aspx

This Authority is not to be used for any records which document the Defence military combat function or the management of Defence military personnel. This includes the functions of Compensation, Equipment and Stores, Fleet Management and Personnel.

The legislation for each function covers all Commonwealth agencies (including business enterprises) except for the Personnel and Establishment functions. Agencies which employ staff under their own enabling legislation can use the Authority in limited circumstances and details of strategies that can be employed are mentioned later in this Introduction.

FEATURES OF THE REVISED 2010 EDITION OF AFDA

This Authority contains:

- classes that remain intact from the August 2000 edition of AFDA; and
- new classes which replace selected superseded classes from the August 2000 edition of AFDA. A table of all superseded classes is available from the Archives website: www.naa.gov.au. After the 2010 edition of AFDA is issued, agencies should not use the August 2000 edition of AFDA.

If your agency holds records that have already been sentenced for destruction or transfer using the August 2000 edition of AFDA prior to the issue of this Authority, these records do not require resentencing.

There are some exceptions to this general rule. Where records previously identified as 'Retain as national archives' (RNA) are no longer RNA or where minimum retention periods have increased, affected records need to be retained in accordance with the new period. A table of new and superseded classes provides guidance on when re-sentencing is required for particular classes (please see Amendments to Administrative Functions Disposal Authority - August 2000 Edition available from the Archives website).

Replacement of Authorities for General Use (pre 2000)

This Authority continues to replace a number of authorities for general use such as General Disposal Authorities (GDAs) and General Disposal Schedules (GDSs), as indicated in the following table. Agencies must not use any superseded GDAs when sentencing records.

Authority / Schedule	Records covered	Date Issued
GDS 12/12A	Finance and Accounting records	23 June 1988
GDA 13	Accommodation, Property & Works records	21 December 1989
GDA 14	General administrative records	18 October 1990
GDA 15	Tender and Contract records	18 October 1990
GDA 16	Asbestos related records	18 October 1990
GDA 17	Staff and Establishment records	10 February 1992
GDA 18	State/regional offices and overseas posts of Departments and Authorities	22 December 1993
GDA 20	Records relating to third level agencies: offices controlled by State or regional offices	29 March 1996

This Authority also continues to replace entries in pre 2000 agency Records Authorities (RAs) for administrative records. Please contact the Archives if further advice is needed.

Records already sentenced using replaced GDAs

All records held by the agency which are sentenced for 'Permanent Retention' and records required to be kept for over 30 years (eg Personal history files, compensation case files, etc) must be resentenced using this Authority. Other records need not be resentenced if sentenced for destruction before the issue of this Authority.

Other GRAs

A list of current record authorities for general use that can still be used is available from the Archives website.

Agency core business Records Authorities

This Authority only applies to records created as a result of one of the 18 administrative functions and not to records relating to an agency's core business. The National Archives issues separate Records Authorities for agency's core businesses.

Please contact the National Archives of Australia for advice on how to develop an agency core business Records Authority. The Procurement function is an exception to this general rule. The Procurement function covers procurement activities in support of both administrative functions and agency core business.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE AUTHORITY TO THE KEYWORD AAA THESAURUS

Keyword AAA is based on the approach of Australian Standard AS 4390 Records Management, and is consistent with the approach of International Standard AS ISO 15489: Records Management, which focuses on:

- (a) the goals and strategies of the organisation;
- (b) the broad functions and activities of the organisation which support the pursuit of the goals and strategies;
- (c) the activities of the organisation which contribute to accomplishment of the functions; and
- (d) the groups of recurring transactions which constitute each activity.

This approach recognises that certain common functions may occur across organisations in areas other than those which have prime responsibility for their administration. For example, staff development may be managed at an organisational level by the Human Resource Division of an agency, but it is probable that most business areas would carry out activities to support the planning of staff development requirements for their own employees.

The outcome of the functional analysis is the business classification scheme which is hierarchical and based on the following three levels:

- i. the business function;
- ii. the activities constituting the function; and
- iii. further refinements of the activities or groups of transactions which take place within each activity.

According to the classification model of Keyword AAA:

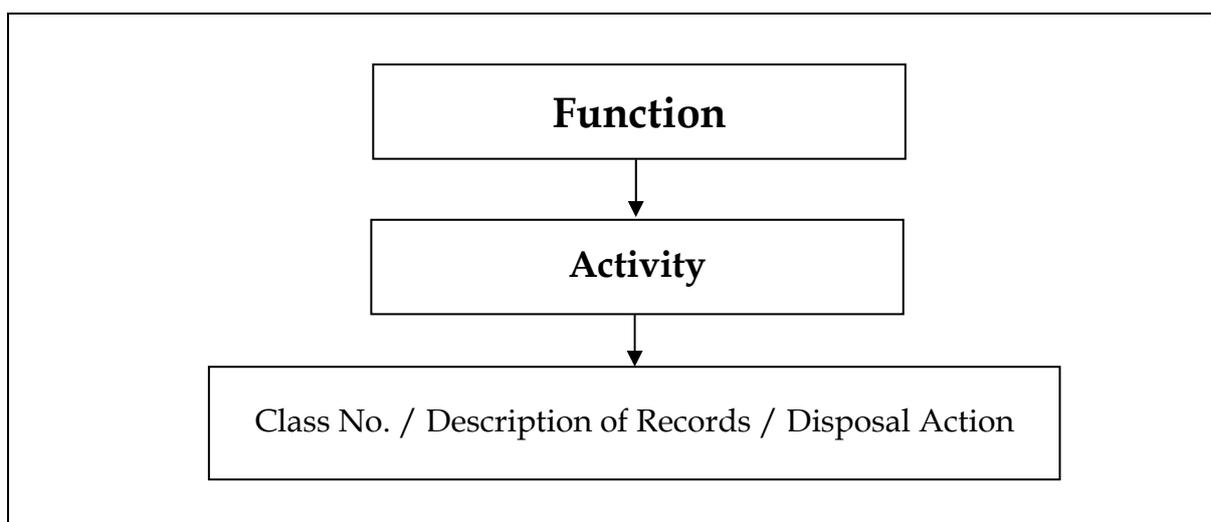
- keywords represent broad business functions of an agency;
- activity descriptors describe the more specific activities taking place within those functions; and
- subject descriptors are added as a means of describing the more specific subjects or topics relating to the matter to be documented within an activity.

In this Authority the first two levels of the Keyword AAA structure have been used: the function and activity levels. The records description covers the third level transactions if they have been identified in the analysis of the function. The class description comprises four components:

- the function and the activity with their scope notes;
- the description of the record;
- class number; and
- the disposal action.

The following diagram illustrates the class composition and the relationship of the components.

Class composition



Sometimes one class description can look the same as another but have a different retention period. This is because a record's value depends on the context of the functions and activity. For example, records created for the activity 'Policy' under the Strategic Management function are retained longer than 'Policy' under the Fleet Management function.

LAYOUT OF THE AUTHORITY

This Authority is divided into following three sections:

- Introduction;
- Separate chapters for each of the 18 administrative functions which contain the function description; function note; the activity; corresponding class number and disposal action;
- Index.

Each chapter containing the records classes comprises the following parts:

Function	<p>This is the broad level business function and is displayed in bold capital letters at the top of each page. It is the highest level in the business classification scheme.</p> <p>It is followed by the scope note, which provides definitions of the function and a collective view of the business activities that make that function unique.</p> <p>Specific directions relating to Commonwealth use of a function have occasionally been added to the Keyword AAA scope note.</p>
Activity	<p>Activities are the processes or operations that make up the business function. They are set in bold and italics below the function statement. This is the second level of the business classification scheme.</p> <p>The scope of the activity encompasses all of the transactions that take place in relation to this activity.</p> <p>Activities can relate to many functions with the scope notes covering all of these relationships (eg the activity descriptor 'Distribution' is linked to the functions Equipment & Stores, Information Management and Publication). However, each function and activity set represents a unique unit.</p>
Class No.	<p>This is the unique number allocated automatically by the National Archives 'RecordSearch' System. This is the number that agencies must quote on records control systems and on National Archives' transfer documentation. A barcode representing the Class No. is available and may be used in records management systems.</p>
Description of records	<p>This is the description of the records documenting the business function, activity and transactions. The descriptions can relate to one record such as a register or a group of records documenting a particular set of transactions.</p>

Disposal action	States the minimum retention period for the records. It notes the event from which the destruction, retention or transfer date is calculated.
'For' statements	'For' statements provide guidance on the inter-related links to other function and activity sets. 'For' statements positioned under the activity scope note are shown in italics and belong to the particular function/activity set and all the records descriptions. The 'For' statements underneath a particular description relate to that record description alone.

APPLYING THE AUTHORITY TO RECORDS

This Authority is to be used to determine whether administrative records should be kept, destroyed or transferred to the National Archives. The disposal action set out in the Authority is the minimum period a record should be retained before destruction. A record can be kept for longer, but it cannot be destroyed before that date. Records designated as national archives (RNA) should be transferred to the National Archives when the agency's regular business need for the records ceases. Arrangements should be made with the National Archives when records are to be transferred. The technical term describing the activity undertaken to determine the fate of a record is called sentencing and advice on how to apply an authority is available from the National Archives website at www.naa.gov.au/records-management/keep-destroy-transfer/sentencing

Disposal Freezes

Prior to records destruction, it is important to note any relevant disposal freezes. The National Archives places a disposal freeze on some groups of records to prevent their destruction. These generally relate to groups of records relating to a particular topic or event which has gained prominence or provokes controversy. While the freeze is in place, no records relating to the topic or event may be destroyed. Further information about current disposal freezes and whether they affect the application of this Authority is available from the National Archives website at www.naa.gov.au/records-management/keep-destroy-transfer/freezes

Records which relate to any current or pending legal action, or are subject to a request for access under the Archives Act 1983, Freedom of Information Act (FOI) or any other relevant Act must not be destroyed until the action has been completed.

For sentencing training and advice, refer to the Archives website at www.naa.gov.au

SPECIAL NOTES TO THE AUTHORITY

Addition of one new function - 2010 edition

By covering the following records within AFDA, agencies will no longer be required to include these records within their own agency core business Records Authorities, except where unique agency circumstances and/or highly specialised recordkeeping requirements exist that are not adequately addressed in AFDA.

Where agencies have a Records Authority that covers these unique records, they may choose to continue to use it on the basis that it was developed for their agencies' specific requirements. It is likely that AFDA will provide the same minimum retention requirements. If this is not the case, the agency should revert to their own Records Authority. The following new function has been added:

Procurement

This function has been added to AFDA in recognition that all agencies undertake procurement activities in support of their unique core business and general administrative functions. The Procurement function replaces procurement activities previously covered by other AFDA functions, with the exception of Property Management.

Meeting requirements of a host country by overseas posts

The disposal action noted against various classes in the Authority relates to Australian statutory requirements. Australian overseas posts may have to increase the retention period to meet any statute of limitation periods in their host country.

Establishment and Personnel records

A number of agencies manage their establishment structures and employ staff under their own enabling legislation rather than the Public Service Act 1999. Such agencies may use the sections of the Authority relating to the Establishment and Personnel functions, but before doing so should check their own enabling legislation and other regulatory directives for major variations in scope and requirements.

In cases where the variations are great this Authority is not applicable. The agency's own Records Authority must cover these records.

Addition to and alteration of records over 25 years old

In accordance with Section 26(2)(b) of the Archives Act 1983, this Authority permits the addition of such registry annotations as file markings, re-classification stamps, additions of disposal classes used to sentence an item and similar markings to records over 25 years old located with the agency.

Records over 25 years old which are required for the ongoing management of employees, such as case records in the Compensation, Occupational Health and Safety, and Personnel functions may be added to or amended, providing that alterations do not involve erasures or deletions.

Transfer of custody and ownership of Commonwealth records

Under some functions the transfer of custody and ownership of Commonwealth records is directed in the disposal action. This Authority permits the transfer of records under Section 24(2)(b) of the Archives Act 1983 subject to them no longer being needed as evidence for further Commonwealth liability (eg for compensation issues). If there are any doubts in relation to this requirement, copies should be made of the records before they are transferred.

NORMAL ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE

The Normal Administrative Practice (NAP) provision of the Archives Act gives agencies permission to destroy certain records without formal authorisation. This usually occurs where records are duplicated, facilitative or for short-term use only. NAP does not replace arrangements agreed to in this Authority but can be used as a tool to assist in identifying records for destruction together with an agency's Record Authority or Authorities, and with AFDA. The National Archives recommends that agencies develop and implement a Normal Administrative Practice policy to assist in planning and implementing activities to determine whether records should be kept or destroyed. Advice and guidance on destroying records as a normal administrative practice and on how to develop an agency NAP policy is available from the National Archives' website at www.naa.gov.au

AMENDMENTS AND VARIATIONS

This Authority will occasionally require amendment by the addition of new classes or a variation to the class descriptions or disposal action. The Archives will notify agencies of any changes and the information will also be published on the Archives website.

Officers using the Authority should advise the Archives of any significant changes they consider desirable or classes of records not covered by the Authority.

Comments on this Authority can be directed to the:

Queen Victoria Terrace

Parkes ACT 2600

PO Box 7425

Canberra Mail Centre ACT 2610

Tel: (02) 6212 3610

Fax: (02) 6212 3989

Email: recordkeeping@naa.gov.au

Website: www.naa.gov.au

AUTHORISATION

ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS DISPOSAL AUTHORITY

Person to whom notice of authorisation is given:

Heads of Commonwealth institutions under the Archives Act 1983, as listed in National Archives file RkS Ref: 2009/3158

Purpose:

Authorises arrangements for the destruction, retention or transfer to the National Archives of Australia of records in accordance with Section 24(2)(b) of the *Archives Act 1983*

Authorises arrangements for the addition to, or alteration of records over 25 years old, in accordance with Section 26(2)(b) of the *Archives Act 1983* as described in the special notes to this Authority.

Application:

Records relating to administrative business areas held by all Commonwealth agencies

This authorisation gives permission for the destruction, retention or transfer to the National Archives of Australia of the records described. The authority will apply only if these actions take place with the consent of the agency responsible for the administrative business areas documented in the records.

Authorising officer

Date of issue:



18 March 2010.

Ross Gibbs
Director-General
National Archives of Australia