

**General
Disposal
Authority**

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**Records Relating to Data
Matching Exercises**

Revoked

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INTRODUCTION

The Disposal Process

The disposal of Commonwealth records is the process of assessing the value of records for future use, identifying those which have enduring value and identifying how soon the remainder can be destroyed or otherwise disposed of. The process can also involve the transfer of ownership or custody of records and the alteration of records. Further, it involves authorising the action arising from the assessment and putting the action into effect by sentencing.

Section 24 of the *Archives Act 1983* provides that records are not to be disposed of without the consent of the Archives unless the action of disposal is positively required by law, or takes place in accordance with a normal administrative practice of which the Archives does not disapprove. Advice on the provisions of the Archives Act is obtainable from any of Australian Archives offices.

Purpose of this Authority

This authority authorises the disposal of Commonwealth records as required by the Archives Act. The provisions of this General Disposal Authority are consistent with the requirements of the *Data Matching Program (Assistance and Tax) Act 1990* and the voluntary guidelines issued by the Privacy Commissioner on the use of data matching in Commonwealth Administration (data matching guidelines). This authority should be used in consultation with the Data Matching Program (Assistance and Tax) Act and the guidelines.

This authority has been prepared as part of the records disposal program of all Commonwealth agencies carrying out Data matching. Two important objectives of this program are to ensure that records are kept for as long as they are of value and to enable the destruction or other disposal of records once they are no longer of value. The authority's provisions take into account the administrative requirements of the agency in discharging its functional responsibilities, the legislative requirements relating to the records and the potential research use of the records by the Government and the public.

Records covered by this Authority

This authority covers records controlled by all agencies (whether as source, data matching or user agency) carrying out data matching exercises regulated by the Data Matching Program (Assistance and Tax) Act or the data matching guidelines. It also covers documentation supporting those exercises. It applies only to the records or classes of records described in the authority.

This authority does not cover records incorporated into 'review' systems, records selected for further investigation or statistical aggregations of data in a non-identifiable form. These records should be sentenced using Records Disposal Authorities which are issued by the Archives to cover records specific to individual Commonwealth agencies.

Using this Authority

This authority is to be used to sentence records. Sentencing involves the examination of records in order to identify the individual disposal class to which they belong. This process enables the sentencing officer to determine the appropriate disposal action for the records. Advice on sentencing can be obtained from your nearest Australian Archives office.

It is recommended that electronic records keeping systems are designed to automatically apply the provisions of this authority to data.

Retention periods

Retention periods for the records created as a result of a data matching exercise carried out in accordance with the data matching guidelines should not be extended without the express approval of the Privacy Commissioner. Retention periods for records relating to data matching exercises carried out in accordance with the *Data Matching Program (Assistance and Tax) Act 1990* may NOT be varied without authorisation from a Secretary to an assistance agency, the Commissioner of Taxation or a Deputy Commissioner of Taxation, in accordance with the provisions of that Act.

Retention periods set down in this authority for supporting documentation are minimum ones and the agency may extend the retention period of a record if it considers that there is an administrative need to do so. Where an agency wishes to retain records for substantially longer than the authorised retention period, the agency should request that the authority be amended to reflect this requirement. In any case, the provisions of this disposal authority will be periodically reviewed by the Australian Archives to ensure that the disposal actions are still valid.

Destruction, storage and transfer of records

Appropriate arrangements should be made when records cease to be required for administrative use. Records required to be retained for longer than 30 years should be stored with the Australian Archives. Dependent on privacy considerations, other records should be held within the agency or with a commercial storage provider. Records deposited with Australian Archives may be withdrawn for official reference purposes through the lending service. Contact the Australian Archives for more information on the transfer of records.

When records are destroyed in accordance with the provisions of this authority, the Australian Archives should be notified within 30 days of the date of destruction. Information on the physical destruction of records can be obtained from the Protective Security Manual.

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AUTHORISATION

GENERAL DISPOSAL AUTHORITY 24

Person to whom notice of authorisation is given:

The Secretary/Agency head
All Commonwealth agencies
performing Data matching activities

Purpose:

This authority authorises the destruction or other disposal of Commonwealth records in accordance with section 24(2)(b) of the *Archives Act 1983*

Application:

Records used and created as a result of any data matching exercise

This authorisation applies to only the disposal of the records described on the authority in accordance with the disposal action specified on the authority. The authority will apply only if disposal takes place with the consent of the agency that is responsible at the time of disposal for the functions documented in the records concerned.

[Michael Piggott]
Authorising Officer, Australian Archives

13 January 1997
Date of Issue

Michael Piggott
National Director
Agency Services

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Date of Amendment

GENERAL DISPOSAL AUTHORITY 24

Records relating to Data Matching exercises

Entry	Description of Records	Disposal Action
1	Development of policy and procedures for the management of data matching activities within an agency including consultation with Privacy Commissioner on interpretation and review of policies	Retain permanently
2	Development of protocols and procedures for individual matching exercises (Includes Program protocol, Cost benefit analysis, Technical Standards report, Sampling procedures)	
2.1	originating within agency (master copy)	Retain permanently
2.2	received from other agencies or another element of agency	Destroy when reference ceases
3	Consultation with the public	
3.1	publicity - external notices, public notices, comments received, etc	Retain permanently
3.2	complaints and enquiries (either direct to agency or Privacy Commissioner) involving substantial investigation	Retain permanently
3.3	Routine or minor complaints and enquiries involving little investigation; or provision of printed material or a standard reply (including distribution of program protocols, etc)	Destroy 3 years after action completed
4	Extracts from source agency databases provided to Data Matching Agency for data matching (raw data)	Destroy when no longer required for data matching cycle
5	Databases created solely for the purpose of excluding individuals from being selected for investigation in successive cycles of the same data matching program (eg reselection registers)	Destroy when reference ceases

GENERAL DISPOSAL AUTHORITY 24

Records relating to Data Matching exercises

Entry	Description of Records	Disposal Action
6	Matched records	
6.1	NOT selected for investigation or where a decision is made NOT to proceed with investigation	Destroy, where practicable, within 14 days but at least within 90 days of completion of data matching process unless extension of time is approved by the Privacy Commissioner
6.2	information incorporated into review database	Destroy when reference ceases, but, in any case, within 12 months after matching process
6.3	where information is added to an existing client database or case record system or where existing information is changed	Treat in accordance with the Records disposal authority applicable to the client case record system
6.4	printouts of matched records NOT incorporated into client case record system (eg printouts relating to more than one individual, match sheets)	Destroy when reference ceases
6.5	consolidated Databases returned to source agency by Data Matching Agency detailing matched individuals (ie matched records returned from the Data Matching Agency)	Destroy on final completion of any action

GENERAL DISPOSAL AUTHORITY 24

Records relating to Data Matching exercises

Entry	Description of Records	Disposal Action
7	Unmatched records	<p>Destroy as soon as practicable after data matching process is completed</p> <p>In all cases, data should be destroyed within 90 days of completion of data matching process unless extension of time is approved by the Privacy Commissioner</p>
8	<p>Transfer of records to non Commonwealth bodies for data matching purposes</p> <p>Note: The transfer of records to non Commonwealth bodies under the provisions of this entry is expected to be only used in exceptional circumstances.</p>	<p>Transfer to non Commonwealth body provided that Privacy Commissioner's guidelines are adhered to and relevant program protocols are followed</p>
9	<p>Reports on data matching programs</p> <p>(Including reports on and evaluation of matching exercises carried out in accordance with the <i>Data Matching Program (Assistance and Tax) Act 1990</i>; the voluntary guidelines issued by the Privacy Commissioner and exercises exempt from those guidelines)</p>	Retain permanently
10	Details of data matching programs which are excluded from the operation of the voluntary data matching guidelines	Destroy 5 years after action completed

GENERAL DISPOSAL AUTHORITY 24

Records relating to Data Matching exercises

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| 11 | Records related to the transmission of data between agencies
including: requests for raw data, reminders to destroy data, requests for extensions of time | Destroy 5 years after action completed |
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