



Australian Government

National Archives of Australia

Records Authority

2010/00674570

**Department of Innovation, Industry
Science and Research – Australian
Astronomical Observatory**
Astronomical Observatory Management

June 2011

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INTRODUCTION

The Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research and the National Archives of Australia have developed this records authority to set out the requirements for keeping or destroying records for the core business area of Astronomical Observatory Management. It represents a significant commitment on behalf of the Department to understand, create and manage the records of its activities.

This Authority is based on the identification and analysis of the business of the Australian Astronomical Observatory. It takes into account the agency's legal and organisational records management requirements, and the interests of stakeholders, the agency and the National Archives of Australia.

The Authority sets out those records that need to be retained as national archives and specifies the minimum length of time that temporary records need to be kept. This Authority gives the Department permission under the *Archives Act 1983*, for the destruction of the temporary records described after the minimum retention period has expired. Retention periods for these temporary records are based on: an assessment of business needs; broader organisational accountability requirements; and community expectations, and are approved by the National Archives of Australia on the basis of information provided by the agency.

As changes in circumstances may affect future records management requirements, the periodic review of this Authority is recommended. All amendments must be approved by the National Archives.

APPLICATION OF THIS AUTHORITY

1. This Authority replaces RDA 749 (1991). This records authority can no longer be used to sentence the records of the Australian Astronomical Observatory, a division of the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research.
2. RNA records identified in the datasets detailed in Class 21892 will be retained by the Department under a Section 29 agreement to be negotiated separately with the National Archives.
3. This records 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 sentencers to determine how long records need to be kept. Advice on sentencing is available from the National Archives.
4. This Authority should be used in conjunction with general records authorities such as:
 - the Administrative Functions Disposal Authority (AFDA) and/or AFDA Express issued by the National Archives to cover business processes and records common to Australian Government agencies;
 - encrypted records; and
 - source records that have been copied.
5. The Normal Administrative Practice (NAP) provision of the *Archives Act 1983* 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 records authority or authorities, and with AFDA and AFDA Express. The National Archives recommends that agencies develop and implement a Normal Administrative Practice policy. 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

6. Where the method of recording information changes (for example from a manual system to an electronic system, or when information is migrated from one system to a new system) this authority can still be applied, providing the records document the same core business. The information must be accessible for the period of time prescribed in this authority. The Department will need to maintain continuing access to the information, including digital information, for the periods prescribed in this records authority or until the information is transferred into the custody of the National Archives.
7. In general, retention requirements indicate a minimum period for retention. The Department may extend minimum retention periods if it considers that there is an administrative need to do so, without further reference to the National Archives. Where the Department believes that its accountability will be substantially compromised because a retention period or periods are not adequate, it should contact the National Archives for review of the retention period.
8. From time to time the National Archives will place a freeze on some 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 disposal freezes and whether they affect the application of this authority is available from the National Archives website at www.naa.gov.au
9. Records which relate to any current or pending legal action, or are subject to a request for access under the *Archives Act 1983* or any other relevant Act must not be destroyed until the action has been completed.
10. Records in the care of agencies should be appropriately stored, managed and preserved. Agencies need to meet this obligation to ensure that the records remain authentic and accessible over time. Under Section 31 of the *Archives Act 1983*, access arrangements are required for records that become available for public access including those records that remain in agency custody.
11. Appropriate arrangements should be made with the National Archives when records are to be transferred into custody. The National Archives accepts for transfer only those records designated as national archives.
12. Advice on how to use this Authority is available from the Department's records manager. If there are problems with the application of the Authority that cannot be resolved, please contact the National Archives.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For assistance with this authority or for advice on other records management matters, please contact National Archives' Agency Service Centre.

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

RECORDS AUTHORITY 2010/00674570

Person to whom notice of authorisation is given:

Mark Paterson AO
Secretary
Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research
Industry House
10 Binara St
Canberra ACT 2601

Purpose:

Authorises arrangements for the disposal of records in accordance with Section 24(2)(b) of the *Archives Act 1983*

Application:

All core business records relating to:

- Astronomical Observatory Management

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 core business documented in the records.

Authorising Officer

Date of issue:



16/6/11

Margaret Chalker
Assistant Director-General
Government Information Management
National Archives of Australia

ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORY MANAGEMENT

The core business of operating, constructing, developing and maintaining national optical and infrared astronomy instrumentation and facilities; conducting astronomical and instrumentation research programs and activities; and providing access to facilities for astronomers. Includes:

- providing and receiving advice;
- negotiating, establishing and maintaining agreements;
- undertaking technological research and development;
- gathering astronomical observational data;
- carrying out astronomical and instrumentation research;
- managing committees and working groups established to identify and address the needs of the astronomical community;
- organising, coordinating and participating in conferences, seminars, workshops and colloquia in order to keep abreast of astronomical science and promote science conducted by the department;
- designing and developing new astronomical instrumentation and facilities, including the design and development of instrumentation for external clients;
- maintaining, refurbishing, operating and decommissioning existing instrumentation;
- developing strategic plans for the future planning and direction of astronomy in Australia;
- reporting on astronomical and instrumentation activities and programs;
- preparing and delivering speeches and presentations, including outreach presentations delivered to educational institutions;
- managing the allocation of time and facilitating access for astronomical observation, including the processing of applications and proposals, and associated technical instrumentation support and assistance;
- liaising with domestic and overseas observatories and partner countries on scientific, technical and operational matters;
- developing and maintaining procedures, user guides and technical manuals;
- managing the lending and borrowing of instrumentation and associated equipment;
- managing visitor schemes for distinguished scientists and astronomers;
- maintaining the employment history of directors, pre-eminent scientists and non-research staff who are eminent or notable in public or scientific life.

For the handling of general requests for information about the organisation and its services by the general public or another organisation, complaints and compliments received from the public and visitors, and media releases produced by the organisation and press clippings related to the organisation's operations use AFDA/AFDA EXPRESS - COMMUNITY RELATIONS.

For the employment records of agency staff other than the consolidated employment history records of staff who are eminent or notable in public or scientific life, and the engagement of volunteers and students undertaking work experience and community placements within the organisation, use AFDA/AFDA EXPRESS - PERSONNEL.

For the administration of studentships, fellowships and other study schemes, use AFDA/AFDA EXPRESS - STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

For the procurement and commissioning of external service providers such as researchers, event coordinators and caterers, use AFDA/AFDA EXPRESS - PROCUREMENT.

For the production and dissemination of published documents such as reports, brochures, directories and newsletters, use AFDA/AFDA EXPRESS - PUBLICATION.

For organisational funding arrangements, use AFDA/AFDA EXPRESS - FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT.

For records of the Anglo-Australian Telescope (AAT) Board, use GRA - GOVERNING BODIES.

For records of the Australian Astronomical Observatory Advisory Committee, use GRA - ADVISORY BODIES.

For the management of observatory buildings, use AFDA / AFDA Express - Property Management.

ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORY MANAGEMENT

Class No	Description of records	Disposal action
21892	<p>Records documenting astronomical and instrumentation research programs and the design and development of astronomical instrumentation that have continuing value to Australia. Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• high level plans which establish the future direction and management of astronomy in Australia;• final reports and findings from astronomical and instrumentation research produced by the agency;• astronomical observational datasets, including data stored in databases, on magnetic media, and original photographic plates;• design and development of new astronomical instrumentation and facilities and associated new technologies, including plans, design reviews, project and change management documents;• major maintenance and refurbishment works, and/or upgrades to major telescope systems, such as the dome, telescope axis encoders, primary mirror elevators etc;• high level advice and reports to or from government agencies, or other bodies including non government organisations such as <i>Astronomy Australia Limited</i> and the <i>National Committee for Astronomy</i>, which is controversial, or subject to government-level scrutiny, or relating to matters which have far reaching implications for future astronomical research and research capabilities;• advice and reports to or from the portfolio Minister and/or the <i>Anglo-Australian Telescope (AAT) Board</i>;• consolidated employment history of directors, pre-eminent scientists and non-research staff who are eminent or notable in public or scientific life;• intergovernmental and other high level agreements such as bilateral agreements with states, territories, universities and science and research bodies, memorandum of understanding, and cooperative arrangements with international agencies and stakeholders;• high level committees and working groups where the department is the lead agency or provides secretariat support or is the Commonwealth's main representative for optical astronomy matters. Includes committees and working groups that are integral to the governance of the agency or where more than one government is represented; and• final versions of speeches and presentations made by the portfolio Minister or senior departmental officers at major functions, conferences or other public occasions which promote or announce significant astronomical research or instrumentation programs and activities, or which may be regarded as contentious or are subject to media scrutiny.	Retain as national archives

ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORY MANAGEMENT

Class No	Description of records	Disposal action
21893	<p>Records documenting low level tasks that are routine in nature and that are not of major significance to the department and/or the community at large. Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• routine administrative arrangements for conferences, seminars, workshops, colloquia or other meetings, such as timetables and schedules, venue and facility bookings, announcements and notifications, invitations, catering arrangements, and routine liaison with venue organisers;• unsuccessful applications and proposals for observing time;• unsuccessful applications for visitor programs and schemes;• routine/standard advice;• low-level data sets supporting technical design work, working documents and routine laboratory notes; and• requests and responses relating to the lending and borrowing of instrumentation and equipment. <p><i>[For astronomical observational data and datasets, use class 21892]</i></p>	Destroy 2 years after action completed
21894	<p>Records documenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• routine operational administrative tasks supporting the core business; and• routine core business activities, other than those covered in classes 21892 and 21893.	Destroy 10 years after action completed