



**Australian Government**



**NATIONAL  
ARCHIVES  
OF AUSTRALIA**

**Records Authority**

**2017/00053585**

**Bureau of Meteorology**

*Hazard Prediction, Warnings and Forecasts*

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2017



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## INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Meteorology 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 Hazard Prediction, Warnings and Forecasts. It represents a significant commitment on behalf of the Bureau of Meteorology to understand, create and manage the records of its activities.

This authority is based on the identification and analysis of the business of the Bureau of Meteorology. It takes into account the agency's legal and organisational information management requirements, and the interests of stakeholders, the agency and the National Archives.

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 Bureau of Meteorology 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 on the basis of information provided by the agency.

As changes in circumstances may affect future information 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 records authority classes 7, 8 and 10 in the previously issued records authority RDA 980 (1993). The classes have been superseded and cannot be used to sentence records after the date of issue of this authority.
2. The record authority is to be used to determine how long records must be kept. Records are matched to the relevant core business and records class in the records authority:
  - where the minimum retention period has expired and the records are not needed for agency business they should be destroyed as authorised in this Authority;
  - records that have not reached the minimum retention period must be kept until they do; and
  - records that are identified as 'retain as national archives' are to be transferred to the National Archives of Australia for preservation.
3. This authority contains many examples of specialist centre locations, products and tools developed and used by the bureau. The names of these locations, products and tools have not changed over time, but it should be noted that these examples are not exhaustive and other similar items relevant to Hazard Prediction, Warnings and Forecasts may be sentenced with this authority.
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; and
  - General Records Authority (31) - Destruction of source or original records after digitisation, conversion or migration (2015).
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 NAP 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](http://www.naa.gov.au)
6. Records that are reasonably likely to be needed as evidence in a current or future judicial proceeding or are subject to a request for access under the *Archives Act 1983*, the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* or any other relevant act must not be destroyed until the action has been completed.
7. Records subject to a disposal freeze must not be destroyed until the freeze has been lifted. 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](http://www.naa.gov.au)

8. 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 Bureau of Meteorology 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.
9. In general, retention requirements indicate a minimum period for retention. The Bureau of Meteorology 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 Bureau of Meteorology 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.
10. Records coming within 'retain as national archives' classes in this authority have been determined to be part of the archival resources of the Commonwealth under section 3C of the *Archives Act 1983*. The determination of Commonwealth records as archival resources of the Commonwealth obliges agencies to transfer the records to the National Archives when they cease to be current and, in any event, within 15 years of the records coming into existence, under section 27 of the *Archives Act 1983*.
11. 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.
12. 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. Records created digitally after 1 January 2016 can be transferred in digital formats only.
13. Advice on how to use this authority is available from the Bureau of Meteorology Information 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 information management matters, please contact National Archives' [Agency Service Centre](#).

# AUTHORISATION

## RECORDS AUTHORITY 2017/00053585

**Person to whom notice of authorisation is given:**

Dr Andrew Johnson FTSE FAICD  
Chief Executive Officer and Director of Meteorology  
Bureau of Meteorology  
700 Collins Street  
Melbourne Vic 3001

**Purpose:**

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

Determines records classed as 'Retain as national archives' in this records authority to be part of the archival resources of the Commonwealth under section 3C of the *Archives Act 1983*.

**Application:**

All core business records relating to Hazard Prediction, Warnings and Forecasts.

This authority gives permission for the destruction, retention or transfer to the National Archives of Australia of the records described. This authority will apply only with the consent of the agency currently responsible for the business documented in the records described.

**Authorising Officer**

Christine Johnston  
Acting Assistant Director-General  
National Archives of Australia

**Date of issue:**

30 June 2017

## HAZARD PREDICTION, WARNINGS AND FORECASTS

The core business of providing forecast, warning and hazard prediction services related to weather, oceans, tides, flood and short-term streamflow, environmental hazards, and space weather.

The core activities include:

- analysis of meteorological, hydrological and other environmental conditions, including through synoptic analysis, numerical weather and ocean prediction and other modelling activities;
- development and issuing of forecasts, warnings, hazard predictions and other information products;
- liaison with national, state and local agencies on disaster mitigation planning, preparation, response and recovery;
- provision of specialised services and information products on a cost-recovery and commercial basis to stakeholders and users such as the aviation and maritime industries and the Australian Defence Force;
- post-event and post-season analysis, case studies and reporting;
- development of internal standards, policies and directives supporting core activities;
- performance verification statistics and indicators relating to the core business, including 'Headlines' publications;
- coordination, oversight and collaboration on project work related to the improvement of operational numerical modelling in the Bureau;
- providing and receiving advice, including providing briefings to the Government and Bureau Executive; and
- responding to requests for information or evidence from external inquiries such as Royal Commissions, air transport safety investigations and coronial inquiries.

The performance of the core business is also supported by general activities including:

- operation of regional, national and international forecasting centres, including local procedures and rostering of forecasters;
- stakeholder engagement, including managing consultative committees;
- participating in internal and external conferences, symposia and workshops;
- programme planning and reporting;
- risk management;
- compliance activities;
- reviewing and evaluating services, systems, processes and techniques; and
- quality management accreditation.

*Cross references to AFDA Express Records Authority*

*For routine public comment and feedback on core business see COMMUNITY RELATIONS.*

*Cross references to other records authorities*

*For Ionospheric / Space Weather Prediction use SPACE WEATHER PREDICTION in RA 2007/00307997.*

<b>Class no</b>	<b>Description of records</b>	<b>Disposal action</b>
62285	Significant records documenting: the state of the atmosphere and oceans including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• synoptic analyses of the atmosphere at Mean Sea Level Pressure (MSLP) and upper levels at 850hPa, 700hPa, 500hPa and 200hPa covering the Australian region, the southern hemisphere and the Darwin Specialized Regional Meteorological Centre (RSMC) area of responsibility;</li> </ul>	Retain as national archives

## HAZARD PREDICTION, WARNINGS AND FORECASTS

Class no	Description of records	Disposal action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• post analysed tropical cyclone best track data;</li> <li>• monthly and weekly sea surface temperature analyses and anomalies produced in Head Office covering the southern hemisphere and the Darwin RSMC areas of responsibility;</li> <li>• global sea surface temperatures and anomaly analyses produced from the ocean models in Head Office; and</li> <li>• regional MSLP synoptic analysis charts produced by regional offices prior to 1957 (until 31 December 1963 for South Australia).</li> </ul> <p>operations of the Joint Australian Tsunami Warning Centre including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• all earthquake messages received from Geoscience Australia and other relevant records of tsunamigenic events;</li> <li>• all tsunami warnings and watches, both threat and non-threat, issued for the Australian coastline; and</li> <li>• all advisory information sent to international organisations and National Tsunami Warning Centres (NTWCs) responsible for formulating their own tsunami warnings.</li> </ul> <p>critical events including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• briefings, presentations, media talking points, forecasts, warnings (including tsunami warnings) and other advice provided to government, emergency management, industry, other stakeholders and the general public in relation to critical weather, flood and environmental hazard events including dispersion forecasts for a nuclear accident;</li> <li>• community comment and response to critical weather events including via social media;</li> <li>• regional synoptic analyses relating to critical weather, flood and environmental hazard events;</li> <li>• final versions of Bureau generated post-event reports and case-studies; and</li> <li>• evidence, submissions and formal responses submitted to major external inquiries, investigations and reviews examining matters related to the core business, including Commissions of Inquiry, major coronial inquiries, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission investigations, and Munro Review.</li> </ul> <p>the provision of hazard prediction, warnings and forecasts (HWF) services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advice to and from the agency, which sets precedents, is contentious or controversial, or of high interest to government, Parliament, stakeholders or the public;</li> <li>• final versions of presentations made by the Minister, agency head and senior officers;</li> <li>• final versions of agency-wide strategic and operational plans;</li> <li>• final versions of unpublished proceedings and conference papers of major internal and external conferences hosted or organised by the Bureau;</li> </ul>	

## HAZARD PREDICTION, WARNINGS AND FORECASTS

Class no	Description of records	Disposal action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• agendas, minutes, reports, discussion papers and other records documenting the Bureau's participation in external, high level committees, where the Bureau provides the secretariat, is the Commonwealth's main representative, or plays a significant role;</li> <li>• the establishment and maintenance of major agreements, including memoranda of understanding, which are of regional, national or international significance;</li> <li>• major changes to the provision of HWF services over time. Includes establishment of new services includes tsunami warnings, new flood warning services, new tidal services, and significant modification to existing services etc.;</li> <li>• the provision of forecast, warning and hazard prediction services for special events of national and international significance. Includes services provided to support Olympic Games, major royal visits, major defence exercises and operations, and major international search and rescue missions;</li> <li>• the provision of meteorological advice and services relating to atomic testing;</li> <li>• final versions of evaluations and investigations into forecasting techniques, methodologies, and the application of new technologies and systems conducted in support of the core business; and</li> <li>• final versions of annual and seasonal reports supporting the core business including annual severe weather reports, annual fire weather reports.</li> </ul>	
62286	<p>Records documenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• published <i>Headline</i> verification statistics which measure the Bureau's performance, including time-line trends of accuracy of temperature, rainfall, tsunamis, storms, storm tracks and floods. Also other verification performance indicators of the models, ensembles and official forecasts used for research and development;</li> <li>• official weather, ocean, tidal, flood, volcanic ash and other environmental forecasts, warnings, watches and advisories in text format, including warnings and watches in graphical formats which have been published by the Bureau. Includes warnings published in Common Alerting Protocol (CAP), and Terminal Area Forecasts for aviation and defence;</li> <li>• harmonic analyses of sea level height and other associated files that support tidal prediction activities and services;</li> <li>• master versions of directives, handbooks and manuals used in the delivery of HWF services. Includes manuals used in the prediction of floods and tides; and</li> <li>• regional climatologies developed to support regional forecasters.</li> </ul>	Destroy 30 years after action completed
62287	<p>Records documenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• final versions of terms of reference, agendas, minutes, reports and</li> </ul>	Destroy 15 years after action

## HAZARD PREDICTION, WARNINGS AND FORECASTS

Class no	Description of records	Disposal action
	<p>key supporting material documenting stakeholder and industry consultative committees established by the Bureau;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• operations bulletins and service circulars issued to internal and external users;</li> <li>• formal standards accreditation processes, for example ISO9001 certification;</li> <li>• final versions of documentation and code for operational weather, flood, tidal and ocean forecasting as well as the prediction models used by the Bureau;</li> <li>• technical memos, notes and reports which support the weather, flood and tidal forecast process. Includes regional forecast guidance notes which capture forecaster local knowledge;</li> <li>• Aviation Safety Incident Reports (ASIRs) prepared for civil aviation and transport safety authorities. Includes all relevant key supporting material;</li> <li>• Aviation Meteorological Incident Reports (AMIRs) triggered when there has been a perceived deficiency in service; and</li> <li>• the Observations Data Base (ODB). Real time observations which are packaged for easy access by the Numerical Weather Prediction (NWP) systems.</li> </ul>	completed
62288	<p>Operational numerical model output not covered by RNA class 62285 or class 62292 (analyses), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• full resolution Numerical Weather Prediction (NWP) output covering the Australian region at all native model levels and all parameters including the analysis step and all prediction time steps;</li> <li>• complete Ocean Modelling, Analysis, and Prediction System (OceanMAPS) predictions including all model level and time steps;</li> <li>• all model forecasts and scenarios of tsunamis generated by undersea earthquakes including the Method Of Splitting Tsunami forecast model (MOST) scenarios data sets used in the preparation of tsunami warnings and watches; and</li> <li>• flood forecasting model development which includes models, calibration events, model reports and URBS models height relationships.</li> </ul>	Destroy 7 years after generation
62289	<p>Records documenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• final versions of routine data and other information sharing agreements with government agencies in support of forecast and warning services. Includes data sharing agreements which support the Bureau's National Tidal Unit and flood warning services;</li> <li>• final version of MOUs and service level agreements not covered in Class 62285. Includes agreements with external stakeholders such as state and local government agencies for the provision of weather and flood warning services, agreements for flood warning services for specific catchments, services for fire agencies, state emergency services etc.; and</li> <li>• all commercial weather services agreements (for example with airlines). Includes agreements with the National Tidal Centre and</li> </ul>	Destroy 7 years after agreement superseded, or after action completed

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Class no	Description of records	Disposal action
	its predecessors.	
62290	Routine products generated by the core business including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Australian Digital Forecast Database (ADFD);</li> <li>• radar based rainfields forecasts; and</li> <li>• short term streamflow forecasts.</li> </ul>	Destroy 7 years after research, verification and evidentiary needs have ceased
62291	Numerical Weather and Ocean Prediction output and gridded aviation forecast products including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• full resolution operational model output produced in the Bureau;</li> <li>• NWP 'start' files; and</li> <li>• gridded forecasts for aviation and defence including Grid Point Winds and Temperatures and World Area Forecast System products.</li> </ul>	Destroy 4 years after action completed
62292	Records of Numerical Analyses grids including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MSLP and upper air analysis grids which cover the Australian region produced in Head Office. These include upper levels projected onto WMO standard levels 1000, 925, 850, 700, 600, 500, 400, 300, 250, 200, 150, 100, 70, 50, 30, 20 and 10 hPa from the NWP models; and</li> <li>• all ocean analysis created in the Bureau.</li> </ul>	Destroy 2 years after suitable reanalysis dataset has been created
62294	Records documenting routine operational administrative tasks supporting the core business and core business activities other than those covered in classes 62285 to 62292 including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• specialised manually drawn derived products produced in Head Office and used primarily as guidance in the forecasting process;</li> <li>• non-current business continuity plans;</li> <li>• definition, development and implementation of operational competency training programs;</li> <li>• routine high level briefings to government;</li> <li>• routine operational interaction and liaison with the aviation sector and the Department of Defence, including familiarisation flights;</li> <li>• routine recordings of teleconferences between the Bureau and Emergency Management agencies and telephone conversations to and from operational centres not required for evidentiary purposes;</li> <li>• records documenting routine Bureau interaction with community groups;</li> <li>• public feedback and responses and information about the Bureau's performance;</li> <li>• routine administration of Bureau chaired high level committees with key stakeholders;</li> <li>• supporting records of external committees relating to the HWF function;</li> </ul>	Destroy 7 years after action completed

## HAZARD PREDICTION, WARNINGS AND FORECASTS

Class no	Description of records	Disposal action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• completed forecasting competency trainee assessments;</li><li>• the routine provision of information to low level and coronial inquiries;</li><li>• routine operational engagement with WMO International Specialized Centres;</li><li>• tailored products delivered to emergency management agencies other than those covered in class 62285;</li><li>• the assessment and treatment of risks;</li><li>• records documenting low level details of implementation of systems;</li><li>• records documenting the time of publication of official forecasts and warnings on the Bureau's website, social media and other channels;</li><li>• flood forecaster aids and calibration reports;</li><li>• flood forecasting model instances;</li><li>• records of synoptic discussions; and</li><li>• fault logs recorded as part of the Bureau's critical operational systems which support the core business.</li></ul>	