

Records Authority 2021/00234491

Charity Regulation

Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission



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INTRODUCTION

The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) 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 Charity Regulation. It represents a significant commitment on behalf of ACNC to understand, create and manage the records of its activities.

This authority is based on the identification and analysis of the business of ACNC. 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 ACNC 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 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 authority.
 - Where the minimum retention period has expired and the records are not needed for ACNC 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.
 - Records that are identified as 'retain as national archives' are to be transferred to the National Archives for preservation.
- 2. This authority should be used in conjunction with general records authorities such as:
 - the <u>Administrative Functions Disposal Authority (AFDA) Express Version 2</u> 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).
- 3. 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 a NAP policy is available from the National Archives' website at www.naa.gov.au.
- 4. 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.
- 5. 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.

- 6. Where the method of recording information changes (for example from a manual system to a digital 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 ACNC 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 ACNC 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 ACNC 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. 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.
- 9. 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.
- 10. 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.
- 11. Advice on how to use this authority is available from the ACNC 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 records authority or for advice on other information management matters, please contact National Archives' Agency Service Centre.

AUTHORISATION

Records Authority 2021/00234491

Notice of authorisation

Person to whom notice of authorisation is given:

Hon Dr Gary Johns Commissioner Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission 747 Collins Street Docklands VIC 3008

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 Charity Regulation.

Authority

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.

This document has been authorised through a digital workflow (R669912021).

Authorising Officer	Date of issue:
Yaso Arumugam Assistant Director-General, Information & Technology National Archives of Australia	13 August 2021

The core business of regulating Australia's charity sector entities and their activities to ensure compliance with obligations under relevant legislation (such as the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (Cth)*) and in accordance with applicable standards, rules and regulations. Involves establishing and maintaining a national regulatory system that promotes good governance, accountability and transparency for charity sector entities in order to maintain, protect and enhance public trust and confidence in the sector. Includes registering charities, monitoring and enforcing compliance of registered charities with codes and standards, and managing and maintaining the Australian charities and not-for-profits register (known as the ACNC Charity Register). Also includes promoting compliance with statutory obligations and improving charity governance through providing guidance and education and monitoring and reporting on sector performance.

The core activities include:

- developing, implementing and reviewing charity sector regulation policies, procedures, strategies, standards, rules, principles, frameworks, programs and projects, including the ACNC Governance Standards and External Conduct Standards;
- receiving and assessing applications for registration, or renewal of registration, of charities.
 Includes assessing applications to withhold information from the ACNC Charity Register, or make changes to the charity subtypes, and processing of bulk registrations;
- creating, maintaining and contributing to the national register containing information about current and former registered charities (known as the ACNC Charity Register). Includes enabling public access to the register;
- collecting and assessing information and data from and about charities, including information on their ongoing operations, such as annual information statements, governing documents and annual financial reports. Includes developing charity reporting instrument forms;
- establishing, managing and maintaining data sharing capabilities with other Australian government agencies, such as the Charity Passport;
- exchanging data with other government agencies and undertaking data matching to support reporting requirements and compliance monitoring of registered charities;
- monitoring and reviewing the operations of registered charities to ensure compliance with legislative requirements, codes and standards, including assessing and reviewing the entitlement of charity sector entities to be registered and giving guidance and directions to charities in relation to compliance with standards;
- receiving and managing complaints against registered charities;
- conducting investigations into charity sector entity non-compliance with legislation, codes and standards. Includes making determinations and providing notifications of decisions;
- imposition of penalties and exercising powers on charity sector entities for compliance breaches, including making compliance agreements, administrative penalties, and issuing enforceable undertakings, warnings, injunctions, suspension or removal of responsible persons, and suspension or revocation of registration;
- managing appeals and reviews of decisions, including appeals against compliance decisions and penalties;
- referring matters to other bodies (eg referrals to the Australian Federal Police and Australian Taxation Office);
- providing and receiving advice and other information;
- managing and participating in internal and external committees, meetings, forums, working groups and other bodies;

- negotiating, establishing and implementing agreements and contracts, including memoranda of understanding and joint venture agreements. Includes data sharing and data matching agreements with other agencies to support regulatory compliance;
- undertaking research and analysis, including data collection (such as commissioning surveys) and environmental monitoring of the national and international charity and not-for-profit sector;
- reporting the outcomes of data collection and analysis, including developing national reports on the performance of the Australian charity and not-for-profit sector (such as the Australian Charities Report);
- developing and providing guidance, training and education and other support for the sector, sector advisors, and the general public to support the core business;
- designing, developing and building, establishing, configuring, and decommissioning, highly
 specialised software-based technology solutions that are commissioned, built or significantly
 customised by the agency to specifically meet unique requirements relating to the core business;
- developing and providing products and tools to Australian charity sector entities to support improved internal governance and facilitate data collection and reporting;
- liaising, collaborating and consulting with national and international stakeholders, including other government agencies, researchers, consultative groups and professional industry bodies.
 Includes gathering intelligence and exchanging regulatory information; and
- identifying, reviewing and removing unnecessary regulatory obligations on the Australian charity and not-for-profit sector to improve operational efficiency and streamline reporting requirements. Includes promoting the reduction of unnecessary regulatory obligations.

The performance of the function is supported by general activities such as:

- · receiving and responding to enquiries and feedback;
- planning and reporting;
- evaluating and reviewing;
- arranging trips and visits to support compliance inspections of registered charities;
- delegating powers and authorising actions;
- · identifying, assessing and managing risks; and
- planning, conducting and facilitating audits.

Cross references to AFDA Express Version 2

For advice, briefs and submissions to the portfolio Minister and other government bodies, cabinet submissions and the organisation's participation in formal inquiries, use EXTERNAL RELATIONS.

For development of new legislation and amendments to existing legislation, use EXTERNAL RELATIONS and/or STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT.

For activities relating to external stakeholder engagement to promote compliance with charity sector regulation and legislation, including: speeches and presentations by the Commissioner or senior representatives of the agency; formal international visits by the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner; media releases and interviews; conferences hosted by the agency; establishing and managing the agency's social media presence; and conferring sector awards for excellence, use EXTERNAL RELATIONS.

For the production and distribution of agency publications developed in support of core business, such as published versions of conference proceedings hosted by the agency, newsletters, information sheets, and annual reports, use PUBLICATION.

For the acquisition of goods and services, including leasing, tendering and contracting-out arrangements, use PROCUREMENT.

For management of statutory appointees (other than members of the agency advisory board), including personnel history records, use PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT.

For complaints by members of the public against individual agency personnel or representatives, use PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT.

For records relating to handling child sexual abuse disclosures, allegations or complaints that involve the agency or members of the agency's workforce, including employees and volunteer workers, contractors, visitors and members of the general public, use WORK HEALTH & SAFETY, PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT. and/or COMPENSATION:

For designing, developing and building, implementing, managing, maintaining and decommissioning software based technology solutions to support the core business that are not highly specialised to meet unique requirements relating to the core business, including licensing of relevant solutions and provision of help desk support, use TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT.

For managing legal services, including legal advice and undertaking litigation, use LEGAL SERVICES.

For developing and executing contracts under seal or deeds, including signed joint venture contracts under seal, use CONTRACTS UNDER SEAL/DEEDS.

Cross references to other records authorities

For the establishment and management of the agency's advisory board (currently the ACNC Advisory Board), use General Records Authority 26 – Advisory Bodies.

Class no	Description of records	Disposal action
62868	 developing, implementing and reviewing national and high-level charity sector regulation policies, strategies, plans, standards, principles, and frameworks, including regulatory reporting requirements and regulatory data sharing policies (eg ACNC Governance Standards, External Conduct Standards and the ACNC Regulatory Approach Statement). Includes final versions, policy statements, proposals, submissions, major drafts, stakeholder consultations and supporting research; 	Retain as national archives
	 developing, implementing and reviewing national and high-level charity regulation programs and projects, that: are precedent setting, ground breaking or innovative; are controversial or attract considerable public interest; will potentially have a substantial social, economic, political or environmental impact; have national or international implications; result in changes or have considerable implications for the sector or for Government or agency policies or programs; or, result in changes to legislation. Includes projects undertaken as joint ventures (eg AUSTRAC joint venture to identify financing of terrorism; Registered Charity Tick program, Charity Passport). Includes project plans, progress reports, stakeholder consultation, and project outcomes; 	
	 providing and receiving high-level advice. Includes position papers, briefs, opinions, reports and stakeholder submissions; 	
	 national public register containing information about current and former registered charities (currently the ACNC Charity Register). Includes charity details and status, governing documents, submitted financial reports and annual information statements, public enforcement action 	

information and entity history. Includes datasets and associated information:

- high-level internal and external, including inter-governmental or interagency, committees, working groups, consultative groups and other bodies, where the agency provides the secretariat, is the Australian Government's main representative or plays a prominent or central role (eg ACNC Sector Forum; International Charity Regulators Compliance Teleconference). Includes establishment records, final versions of minutes, agenda, tabled papers, briefings and results of committee meetings such as reports and recommendations;
- final versions of significant agreements and contracts and supporting documents, that: relate to substantial funding agreements or the establishment of major partnerships and cooperative arrangements with other governments, agencies and organisations (eg major data sharing agreements); are controversial, of public interest or groundbreaking in nature; or have substantial implications for the conduct of agency business. Includes memorandums of understanding, bilateral and joint venture agreements;
- outcomes of major research and analysis undertaken or commissioned by the agency into the charity and not-for-profit sector. Includes final research reports, research findings, statistical and trend analysis, data models, and supporting research datasets and associated information;
- developing national and high-level reports (eg Public Trust and Confidence in Australian Charities Report 2017; Cutting Red Tape Report). Includes final versions, major drafts, stakeholder consultation and supporting research;
- investigations into registered charity non-compliance with relevant legislation, codes and standards (ie investigation case records), that:
 - result in revocation of a charity's registration or the removal or disqualification of a responsible person, due to serious or deliberate non-compliance with governance standards, external conduct standards, or relevant legislation (eg conflicts of interest; gross negligence);
 - result in referral to relevant authorities for criminal investigation;
 - are precedent setting;
 - are controversial or of considerable public interest (eg involve charities failing to join the National Redress Scheme); or,
 - result in substantial changes to sector practices or agency or Government policies, programs or procedures, or changes to legislation.

Includes initial complaints or allegations, requests for information, investigation and interview plans, site visit reports, interview recordings or transcripts, risk assessments, copies of evidence collected and supporting monitoring and research, records of legal proceedings, appeals, notifications of decisions, compliance agreements, injunctions, application of penalties, and final reports on determinations and outcomes. Also includes referrals to other agencies (such as law enforcement and the Australian Taxation Office).

[For other investigations into registered charity non-compliance with

relevant legislation, codes and standards (ie investigation case records) that involve the use of the agency's legislated enforcement powers, use class 62870.

For other investigations into registered charity non-compliance with relevant legislation, codes and standards (ie investigation case records) that: do not involve the use of the agency's legislated enforcement powers; or, result in a determination of 'no further action', use class 62872.

For managing preliminary assessments and triaging of potential and alleged registered charity non-compliance issues and concerns, use class 62872.]

- appeals or reviews of decisions made by the agency that: are
 precedent setting, controversial or of public interest; or, result in major
 changes to agency policy or programs. Includes appeals to higher
 authorities such as the Administrative Appeals Tribunal;
- final versions of tools, products, forms and templates developed to
 provide guidance and support charity sector entities to improve their
 internal governance, including education and training material (eg
 Commissioner's Interpretation Statements; ACNC Charity Pack; Small
 Charities Library factsheets, Charity Chat podcasts, webinars,
 templates, checklists and self-evaluation tools);
- high-level formal proposals and submissions developed and submitted to international bodies and forums, foreign governments, and other non-government organisations on Australia's charity and not-for-profit sector regulation policy positions;

[For submissions to the Prime Minister, portfolio Minister, and other government bodies, use EXTERNAL RELATIONS.]

- national and high-level reviews, including sector-wide strategic and major internal reviews. Includes final review reports, major drafts, recommendations, terms of reference, sector-wide charity compliance risk assessments, stakeholder consultations, submissions and supporting research;
- work diaries and appointment books of the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner containing information about significant issues, decisions, actions or events of public interest or where the individual is subject to intense public scrutiny (eg appointments for meetings that are highly controversial or of public interest; important decisions and actions not recorded elsewhere; evidence of movements that may be subject to investigation). Includes electronic diaries and calendars. Excludes private appointments not related to the performance of official duties;

[For personnel records relating to the Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner, use PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT.]

designing, developing, establishing, configuring, and decommissioning, specialised software based technology solutions that are commissioned, built or significantly customised by the agency to specifically meet unique requirements relating to the core business and: are ground breaking or innovative in nature (such as employing complex machine learning algorithms to make business decisions); are controversial or of significant public interest; or, otherwise represent a significant change in the delivery or performance of the agency's core business (eg smartphone apps). Includes project proposals, system

specifications, testing and acceptance reports, developing source code and algorithms, data dictionaries, change requests, and system documentation and technical manuals;

[For designing, developing, establishing, configuring, maintaining and decommissioning all other software based technology solutions, use TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT.]

 disclosures, allegations or complaints of incidents of child sexual abuse received by the agency that relate to specific registered or unregistered charities or not-for-profit entities, or individuals connected with those entities. Includes agency responses and referrals to appropriate authorities;

[For developing and reviewing policies, operational procedures and other guidance material relating to managing disclosures, allegations and complaints concerning incidents of child sexual abuse received by the agency that relate to specific registered or unregistered charities or not-forprofit entities, or individuals connected with those entities, use class 62869.

For records relating to handling child sexual abuse disclosures, allegations or complaints that involve the agency or members of the agency's workforce, including employees and volunteer workers, contractors, visitors and members of the general public, use WORK HEALTH & SAFETY, PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT, and/or COMPENSATION.]

62869 Records documenting:

 developing and reviewing policies, operational procedures and other guidance material relating to managing disclosures, allegations and complaints concerning incidents of child sexual abuse received by the agency that relate to specific registered or unregistered charities or notfor-profit entities, or individuals connected with those entities. Includes final versions, major drafts, and stakeholder consultation.

[For disclosures, allegations and complaints concerning incidents of child sexual abuse received by the agency that relate to specific registered or unregistered charities or not-for-profit entities, or individuals connected with those entities, use class 62868.

For records relating to handling child sexual abuse disclosures, allegations or complaints that involve the agency or members of the agency's workforce, including employees and volunteer workers, contractors, visitors and members of the general public, use WORK HEALTH & SAFETY, PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT, and/or COMPENSATION.]

Destroy 100 years after action completed

62870 Records documenting:

- individual registered charities (ie charity registration case records).
 Includes:
 - receiving, assessing and determining applications for registration, including making requests for additional supporting information;
 - assessing and determining applications to withhold information from the public-facing register;
 - assessing and determining applications for registered charities to change size or reporting period, or to change the subtype

Destroy 10 years after charity registration ceases

assigned to the registered charity;

- assessing and determining applications to add or remove an individual as a responsible person for a registered charity, or for a disqualified person to be added as a responsible person for a registered charity;
- receiving and assessing regulatory reporting submitted by registered charities, including submitted annual information statements and annual financial reports;
- undertaking risk assessments of registered charities to determine the need for monitoring or the initiation of noncompliance investigations;
- monitoring and reviewing the operations of registered charities to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements, including collecting and analysing information and data;
- o assessing and reviewing the entitlement to registration;
- providing compliance guidance or direction to registered charities;
- handling enquiries and complaints received that specifically relate to the registered charity; and
- processing revocations of registered charity status, including processing applications to voluntarily revoke registration.

Includes applications, preliminary assessment reports, assessment plans, site visit reports, notifications, risk assessments, correspondence, final decisions and determinations, annual information statements, annual financial reports, objections and responses, appeals and reviews of decisions, and supporting research and documentation. Excludes disclosures, allegations or complaints of incidents of child sexual abuse received by the agency in relation to specific charities or not-for-profit entities.

[For applications for charity registration that do not proceed beyond the preliminary assessment stage, use class 62871.

For applications for charity registration that proceed beyond the preliminary assessment stage but are ultimately unsuccessful/refused or are withdrawn by the applicant, use class 62872.

For sector-wide charity compliance risk assessments, such as those involving multiple agencies to determine trends in compliance, use classes 62868 and 62872.

For appeals or reviews of decisions made by the agency that are precedent setting, controversial or of public interest, or result in major changes to agency policy or programs, use 62868.

For disclosures, allegations or complaints of incidents of child sexual abuse received by the agency that relate to specific registered or unregistered charities or not-for-profit entities, or individuals connected with those entities, use class 62868.]

 investigations into registered charity non-compliance with relevant legislation, codes and standards (ie investigation case records) that involve the use of the agency's legislated enforcement powers, other than those covered under class 62868. Includes initial complaints or allegations, requests for information, investigation and interview plans,

site visit reports, interview recordings or transcripts, risk assessments, copies of evidence collected and supporting monitoring and research, guidance and advice provided, records of legal proceedings, appeals, notifications of decisions, compliance agreements, injunctions, application of penalties, and final reports of determinations and outcomes. Also includes referrals to other agencies (such as law enforcement and the Australian Taxation Office).

[For significant investigations into registered charity non-compliance with relevant legislation, codes and standards (ie investigation case records), including those that result in revocation of charity status or criminal investigations, are present setting, controversial or of public interest, or result in substantial changes to sector, agency or government policies and practices, use class 62868.

For investigations into registered charity non-compliance with relevant legislation, codes and standards (ie investigation case records) that: do not involve the use of the agency's legislated enforcement powers; or, result in a determination of 'no further action', use class 62872.

For triaging and preliminary assessments of potential and alleged registered charity non-compliance issues and concerns, use class 62872.

For appeals or reviews of decisions made by the agency that are precedent setting, controversial or of public interest, or result in major changes to agency policy or programs, use 62868.

For disclosures, allegations or complaints of incidents of child sexual abuse received by the agency that relate to specific registered or unregistered charities or not-for-profit entities, or individuals connected with those entities, use class 62868.]

Records documenting:

 applications for charity registration that do not proceed beyond initial assessment stage, such as those that are incomplete or outside the agency's jurisdiction;

[For charity registration applications that proceed beyond initial assessment and are ultimately successful, use class 62870.

For charity registration applications that proceed beyond initial assessment stage but are ultimately unsuccessful or withdrawn, use class 62872.]

 complaints, issues and concerns received that fall outside the agency's jurisdiction, including managing responses and referrals to relevant organisations. Excludes disclosures, allegations or complaints received relating to child sexual abuse;

[For disclosures, allegations or complaints of incidents of child sexual abuse received by the agency that relate to specific registered or unregistered charities or not-for-profit entities, or individuals connected with those entities, use class 62868.

For records relating to handling child sexual abuse disclosures, allegations or complaints that involve the agency or members of the agency's workforce, including employees and volunteer workers, contractors, visitors and members of the general public, use WORK HEALTH & SAFETY, PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT, and/or COMPENSATION.

For charity related complaints, issues and concerns that fall within the agency's jurisdiction and result in a non-compliance investigation, use

Destroy 3 years after action completed

classes 62868, 62870 and 62872.]

 receiving and responding to low-level general enquiries relating to charity regulation business processes, which require a routine or standard response;

[For specific enquiries relating to a registered charity, use class 62870.

For disclosures, allegations or complaints of incidents of child sexual abuse received by the agency that relate to specific registered or unregistered charities or not-for-profit entities, or individuals connected with those entities, use class 62868.]

 administrative arrangements (including travel and accommodation arrangements) for agency personnel and representatives undertaking visits to charity sector entities for regulatory compliance purposes; and

[For travel and accommodation arrangements for agency personnel and representatives undertaking other work-related activities, use PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT.]

 working papers documenting the development of agency tools, products, forms and templates, supporting the charity regulation function. Includes drafts and stakeholder feedback.

[For final versions of tools, products, forms and templates supporting the charity regulation function, use class 62868.]

62872 Records documenting:

- routine operational administrative tasks supporting the function; and
- charity regulation activities, other than those covered in classes 62868 to 62871.

Destroy 10 years after action completed