



Australian Government

National Archives of Australia

Records Authority

Agency Collection Management

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INTRODUCTION

Australian Government agencies that manage agency collections 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 of Agency Collection Management. It represents a significant commitment on behalf of each agency to understand, create and manage the records of its activities.

This authority is based on the identification and analysis of the business of Australian Government agencies that manage agency-based collections of materials, but which do not have a legislated mandate to collect or take care of a national collection in the national interest. It takes into account the relevant agency's legal and organisational information management requirements, and the interests of stakeholders, each agency and the National Archives.

- **Agency collections** are collections of materials held by an Australian Government agency that is not a national collection institution, that document or relate to the history of the agency for the purpose of interpreting and presenting this history to wider audiences. Agency collections are not determined by their size, volume or extent. For example, an agency could manage a large and growing collection, such as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, or manage a discrete historical collection within the agency, such as the network of defence force museums managed or supported by the Department of Defence.
- **National institutions** are agencies whose primary purpose is to develop, maintain and provide access to a National collection in their care or custody. For example, the National Museum of Australia; the National Library of Australia
- **National collections** are legislated collections of materials of national significance. For example, collection mandates as defined by the *National Gallery Act 1975*; the *Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Act 1989*; the *Australian War Memorial Act 1980*.

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 each agency that has opted-in (refer Application Note 3. below) permissions 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 relevant agency.

As changes in circumstances may affect future information management requirements, the periodic review of this authority by each agency authorised to use this records authority is recommended. All amendments must be approved by the National Archives.

APPLICATION OF THIS AUTHORITY

1. This authority supersedes General Records Authority 32 (GRA 32) – Small collection management. Other superseded records authorities or records authority classes replaced and superseded are listed in the attached Table of agencies authorised. The superseded records authority or authorities, or records authority classes replaced and superseded cannot be used by the relevant agency to sentence records after the date of issue of this authority to that agency.
2. This authority covers the management of agency collections and does not cover material within those agency collections. Commonwealth records within agency collections continue to be subject to the *Archives Act 1983*, including other records authorities issued by National Archives.

3. This authority is issuable to Australian Government agencies that manage an agency-based collection of materials, but do not have a legislated mandate to collect or take care of a national collection in the national interest. With each agency agreement, the agency is then listed in the attached Table of agencies authorised. This authority does not apply to National institutions with a legislated mandate and responsibility for managing a National collection in the national interest. Other Australian Government agencies that manage national collections in the national interest may apply to National Archives to use the records authorities for National collection functions instead of this authority.
4. 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 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.
 - Records that are identified as 'retain as national archives' are to be transferred to National Archives for preservation, unless otherwise specified in a Schedule of additional arrangements to this authority.
5. This authority should be used in conjunction with general records authorities such as:
 - [*Administrative Functions Disposal Authority \(AFDA\) Express Version 2*](#) 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).
6. 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 Express Version 2*. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. Where the method of recording information changes (for example from an analogue 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 agency 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 National Archives.
10. In general, retention requirements indicate a minimum period for retention. The agency may extend minimum retention periods if it considers that there is an administrative need to do so, without further reference to National Archives. Where the agency believes that its accountability will be substantially compromised because a retention period or periods are not adequate, it should contact National Archives for review of the retention period.
11. Records identified as 'retain as national archives' class 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 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*, unless otherwise specified in a Schedule of additional arrangements to this authority.

12. 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.
13. Appropriate arrangements should be made with National Archives when records are to be transferred into custody. 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.
14. Advice on how to use this authority is available from the agency information manager. If there are problems with the application of the authority that cannot be resolved, please contact 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 2024/00713942

Notice of authorisation

Person to whom notice of authorisation is given:

Heads of Commonwealth institutions
responsible for agency collections
listed in the attached Table of agencies authorised

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 records relating to Agency Collection Management

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 (R1407712024).

Authorising Officer	Date of issue
Josephine Secis Assistant Director-General, Collection Management National Archives of Australia	11 December 2024

AGENCY COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

The function of developing, managing and preserving a collection of items. Developing and maintaining the collection includes activities related to acquiring and accessioning items, as well as removing items from the collection through repatriation and de-accessioning, temporary loans of items both in and out of the collection, and ongoing management activities include maintaining control records, auditing and stocktaking items, and maintaining security and insurance for the items. Preserving the collection includes activities intended to maintain the integrity and usability of collection items over time.

Note: exclusion – refer Application Note 3

The **core activities** for the **Agency Collection Management** function include:

Activities related to managing the collection:

- developing strategic plans;
- developing, implementing and reviewing collection management policies, procedures, guidelines, strategies, standards, rules, principles, frameworks, programs and projects;
- reviewing, evaluating and reporting on the overall performance of this core business;
- developing and maintaining control mechanisms for managing the collections, e.g. registration, accessioning and cataloguing systems;
- de-accessioning items from the collection, including by transfer, gift, sale or destruction;
- repatriating culturally significant items and ancestral remains, both nationally and internationally;
- arranging, assessing and managing inward and outward loans of items;
- movement of collection items;
- stocktaking, surveying or auditing the collection;
- undertaking research on collection items, including consultation;
- maintaining and updating control records and metadata;
- complying with regulatory requirements, including obtaining permits, licences, approvals and certifications;
- managing and reviewing custodial arrangements.

Activities related to developing the collection:

- identifying and researching items as part of the acquisition process, including the item's condition, provenance, significance and relevance to the collection;
- justifying items for acquisition;
- valuing items for acquisition;
- acquiring items, including by purchase, commission, loan, bequest, donation, gift, deposit, repatriation or inter-agency transfer;
- transferring ownership of items, including intellectual property rights;
- disposal of items not accessioned into the collection, including by return to donator or destruction; and
- accessioning items into the collection, including registering, cataloguing, arranging, describing and storing items.

Activities related to preserving the collection:

- creating and managing preservation copies of collection items;
- digital preservation activities, including format migration and integrity checking;
- preventative conservation activities, including environmental monitoring and pest management;
- identifying and assessing collection items requiring conservation treatment, including condition reporting;
- planning the conservation treatment and carrying out the work;
- reporting on conservation treatment undertaken;
- providing preservation expertise and training services, including on a fee for service basis.

AGENCY COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

The performance of the core business is supported by **general activities** such as:

- establishing, negotiating, maintaining and reviewing agreements;
- undertaking research and analysis;
- preparing and presenting addresses;
- providing and receiving advice;
- managing committees and meetings;
- attending conferences;
- delegating powers and authorising actions;
- planning, reporting, evaluating and reviewing;
- managing risks.

Cross references to other Agency collection functions

For visits to access/view collection items, including management of registers for visitors to reading rooms and collection repositories by appointment, use AGENCY COLLECTION ACCESS [Records Authority 2024/00713944].

For finding aids and similar guides or catalogues, use AGENCY COLLECTION ACCESS [Records Authority 2024/00713944].

For the selection and use of collection items in exhibitions, use AGENCY COLLECTION ENGAGEMENT & COMMERCIAL SERVICES [Records Authority 2024/00713947].

For raising donations or sponsorship to acquire collection items, use AGENCY COLLECTION ENGAGEMENT & COMMERCIAL SERVICES [Records Authority 2024/00713947].

Cross references to AFDA Express Version 2

For meetings of heads of cultural institutions to develop strategic approaches to agency collection activities, and meetings of the Australian Registrars Committee to cooperate on registration and agency collection management practices, use EXTERNAL RELATIONS.

For giving advice to the Portfolio Minister, use EXTERNAL RELATIONS.

For payment of insurances, use FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT.

For legal advice on intellectual property, privacy or copyright law issues, use LEGAL SERVICES.

For the management of contracted services, use PROCUREMENT.

For the design and management of facilities to house collections, use PROPERTY MANAGEMENT.

For the implementation of counter-disaster plans, use PROPERTY MANAGEMENT.

For building security arrangements and incidents, use PROPERTY MANAGEMENT.

For the publication of articles and books using collection material written by agency staff, use PUBLICATION.

For placing digitised collection items on the agency's website, use PUBLICATION.

For security arrangements and incidents involving information technology systems, use TECHNOLOGY & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT.

For the handling of hazardous materials, use WORK HEALTH & SAFETY.

Cross references to all other records authorities

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For advisory councils, use GRA 26 - ADVISORY BODIES.

For Governing Boards and Board authorisation to proceed with an acquisition, use GRA 27 – GOVERNING BODIES.

Class no	Description of records	Disposal action
63179	<p>The following records which guide and direct the overall management of the core business function (including final versions, policy proposals, research reports, major drafts, and results of consultations):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • policies, including acquisition, cataloguing, de-accessioning, digitisation, intellectual control, preservation, registration, storage or subject thesauri policies, and policies relating to First Nations peoples; • standards, both internal and external, such as for storage, preservation, digitisation and collecting practices; • strategic planning documents, including long-term preservation plans and disaster preparedness strategies; • core business evaluations, reviews and reports resulting in changes to policies and strategic planning, or that have been authored independently of the agency. <p>Records documenting the following activities relating to the acquisition, management and control of collection items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acquisition documents, including for acquisitions that don't proceed, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ pre-acquisition research and assessment reports (e.g. site inspections of items before they are formally acquired); ○ proposals and justifications; ○ approvals or acquisition decisions; ○ negotiations, agreements, custody arrangements, transfers of ownership and sale documents; ○ arrangements for packaging and delivery of acquisitions to receiving locations; • descriptive information about collection items (e.g. contextual, provenance, physical details) and associated manuals or guidance (e.g. intellectual or physical control, cultural protocols or requirements for installing a particular artwork); • original research and consultation on, or assessment of collection items, detailing their 	Retain as national archives

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Class no	Description of records	Disposal action
	<p>significance, context, history and use. Includes cultural and intellectual property rights, and background information on creators of collection items;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> control systems, digital platforms and infrastructure for managing collection items (e.g. accessioning or physical control systems, catalogues, acquisition registers), including supporting information (e.g. technical specifications, data models, user manuals); security breaches or incidents that result in damage to or theft of collection items. Including evidence, witness reports, photos, investigation notes and reports, and incident reports; managing and reviewing custodial arrangements; de-accessioning records, including assessments, consultations, approvals, donor notifications and disposal or destruction arrangements; repatriation of items, including repatriation of copies of items, such as to First Nations peoples or foreign countries; valuation records for items in the collection, or the entire collection, including valuation certificates, reports and photographs. <p>Records documenting the following activities relating to the preservation of collection items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> conservation treatment on individual collection items. Includes requests, condition and treatment reports, log books, photographs and drawings; implementation of preventative conservation activities applied to the collection. Includes rehousing of items, summaries of environmental monitoring, and reports and recommendations; supporting information that informs the preservation of particular collection items, such as technical documentation and artist interviews; <p><i>[For records of daily monitoring of environmental conditions, use class 63188].</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> implementation of digital preservation activities applied to the collection. Includes format migration, summaries of environmental monitoring and integrity checking, and reports and recommendations; protocols and advice on handling collection items that may be hazardous; rehousing collection items; 	

AGENCY COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

Class no	Description of records	Disposal action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> condition assessment of inward and outward loans; <p><i>[For other records documenting the loans process, use 63184].</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> scientific and technical research reports and investigations on preservation issues, including experimental development into conservation techniques, treatments or processes that affect collection items. <p>Records documenting the administration of archival legislation, such as the <i>Archives Act 1983</i>, that relates to Agency collection management including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> transfer of records into National Archives of Australia custody, including temporary transfer to facilitate public access; permanent withdrawal of records from National Archives of Australia custody. <p>Records documenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> advice on agency collection management issues post-acquisition; master set of manuals, guidelines, directives, and protocols detailing operational procedures. surveying, stocktaking or auditing collection items, including for preservation purposes. Includes methodologies, schedules, forms, reports and recommendations; designing, developing and implementing collection development, management and preservation programs and projects that: are prominent, controversial or of considerable public or professional interest; involve the use of new or innovative techniques; represent a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge; or impact substantially upon the collection. Includes projects undertaken as joint ventures. Includes project plans, research findings, progress reports and project outcomes; strategic joint ventures, partnership and sponsorship agreements, including Memorandums of Understanding, and the exchange of innovative expertise; speeches and addresses presented by the portfolio Minister, members of the governing body or advisory body and senior agency staff in regard 	

AGENCY COLLECTION MANAGEMENT

Class no	Description of records	Disposal action
	<p>to development, management or preservation of the collection, including addresses presented at conferences;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> final versions of unpublished proceedings, reports, speeches and papers relating to collection development, management and preservation from forums, seminars, lectures, conferences, symposiums and workshops hosted by the agency; external and high-level internal committees, forums and other bodies relating to collection development and management, where the agency provides secretariat support, is the Australian Government's main representative, or plays a prominent or central role; master versions of agency publications produced to support collection management. 	
63184	<p>Records documenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> inward and outward loans of items, including loan agreements and handling instructions; <p><i>[For condition assessment of inward and outward loans, use class 63179]</i></p> <p><i>For temporary transfer of records to the National Archives of Australia to facilitate public access, use 63179].</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> proposals, meeting agendas, briefs and information advice from liaison activities with artists, donors, other national and international cultural institutions, authorities and the private sector, other than those covered in class 63179. Includes collaboration on projects that are not joint ventures; final versions of reports on joint venture projects supporting Agency Collection Management, other than those covered in class 63179. 	Destroy 75 years after action completed
63231	<p>Records documenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> internal and external reports on the performance of agency collection management programs and services, other than those covered in class 63179; development and review of policies and procedures, other than those covered in class 63179; internal and external committees and bodies relating to agency collection management, other than those covered in class 63179. 	Destroy 20 years after action completed

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Class no	Description of records	Disposal action
63185	<p>Records documenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> requests from the public for general information about the agency's collection management and development programs and services; routine movement of collection items for internal purposes (e.g. relocation to a different digital or physical storage location). 	Destroy 3 years after action completed
63186	<p>Copies of collection items for preservation purposes. Excludes copies that replace the original collection item (e.g. where the original was subsequently lost or destroyed).</p> <p>NOTE: Preservation copies can be superseded, e.g. if the original copy is corrupted or an improved copy is made. The new copy must, however, be functionally equivalent to the original copy.</p> <p><i>See General Records Authority 31 - Destruction of source or original records after digitisation, conversion or migration.</i></p> <p><i>[For copying collection items to provide access, use AGENCY COLLECTION ACCESS (2024/00713944).</i></p> <p><i>For reproducing collection items for exhibitions or commercial purposes, use AGENCY COLLECTION ENGAGEMENT & COMMERCIAL SERVICES (2024/00713947)].</i></p>	Retain for the life of the item or until superseded
63187	Records documenting intellectual property rights over collection items.	Destroy 7 years after rights lapse
63188	<p>Records documenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> routine operational administrative tasks supporting the core business core activities, other than those covered in classes 63179 and 63184 to 63187 and 63231. 	Destroy 7 years after action completed