



Australian Government

National Archives of Australia

Records Authority

Agency Collection Access

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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 Access. 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 2024/00713944

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 Access

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 (R1407702024).

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

AGENCY COLLECTION ACCESS

The function of facilitating access to a collection of items, including agency collections and collections containing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and heritage. Includes providing a range of services such as handling reference enquiries, copying and digitising collection items for access purposes, providing access services-related advice, access examination and developing physical and digital resources to enable discoverability and access to collection items, e.g. finding aids, collection guides and webpages.

Note: exclusion – refer Application Note 3

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

- developing, implementing and reviewing policies, procedures, guidelines, strategies, standards, rules, principles, frameworks, programs and projects;
- reviewing, evaluating and reporting on the overall performance of this core business function;
- providing access services related advice, including information about opening hours, membership, copyright, restrictions, security and cultural protocols;
- receiving, processing and responding to enquiries;
- developing strategic plans;
- developing and maintaining resources to enable access to collection items, e.g. finding aids, collection guides, online catalogues, publicly available datasets and webpages;
- creating, maintaining, including the upkeep of registers associated with logs of attendance, and documenting individual access to collection material (e.g. reading rooms, research centres etc.);
- digitising collection items for access;
- providing individual access to the collection or collection catalogues;
- creating logs of attendance and system logs of online access to the collection or its catalogues;
- creating, producing and managing access copies of collection items;
- migrating born-digital items to new formats for access;
- managing fees and charges issued for access services;
- arranging and hosting access for specified parties including First Nations people and communities, record depositors, special interest groups, and family members;
- assembling documentation gained during access, such as through audio visual recordings of activities, and received information and feedback on the collection.

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

- providing and receiving advice;
- auditing;
- managing committees and meetings;
- delegating powers and authorising actions;
- undertaking research and analysis;
- planning, reviewing, evaluating and reporting;
- managing risks.

Cross references to other Agency collection functions

For preservation and conservation of collection items, including the reproduction (including digitisation) of collection items for preservation, use AGENCY COLLECTION MANAGEMENT (2024/00713942).

For inwards and outwards loans of material for access (including all conditions for the loan), use AGENCY COLLECTION MANAGEMENT (2024/00713942).

For arranging transportation of collection items, use AGENCY COLLECTION MANAGEMENT (2024/00713942).

AGENCY COLLECTION ACCESS

For managing intellectual property in relation to collection items, use AGENCY COLLECTION MANAGEMENT (2024/00713942).

For final versions of publications, including the reproduction of collection items for digitisation and commercial purposes, use AGENCY COLLECTION ENGAGEMENT & COMMERCIAL SERVICES (2024/00713947).

For the selection and use of collection items in exhibitions, use AGENCY COLLECTION ENGAGEMENT & COMMERCIAL SERVICES (2024/00713947).

For online exhibitions and portals created for publication, use AGENCY COLLECTION ENGAGEMENT & COMMERCIAL SERVICES (2024/00713947).

For organising exhibition openings, publicity, visitor attendance (other than for access purposes, researcher and reading rooms), tours and feedback and education programs relating to exhibitions, use AGENCY COLLECTION ENGAGEMENT & COMMERCIAL SERVICES (2024/00713947).

Cross references to AFDA Express Version 2

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

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

For the handling of collection material considered hazardous, use WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY.

For managing library material held in research libraries of collection institutions, use TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT.

For Freedom of Information requests and relevant material associated with requests, use TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT.

Cross references to all other records authorities

For advisory councils, use General Records Authority 26 - ADVISORY BODIES.

For governing boards, use General Records Authority 27 - GOVERNING BODIES.

Class no	Description of records	Disposal action
63181	Records documenting: <ul style="list-style-type: none">developing, implementing and reviewing national and high-level collection access regulation policies, strategies, plans, standards, principles and frameworks. Includes policies for accessing First Nations peoples' ancestral remains and culturally significant items. Includes final versions, policy statements, proposals, submissions, major drafts, stakeholder consultations and supporting research;records documenting the design, development and establishment of programs, projects and operations of collections service,	Retain as national archives

AGENCY COLLECTION ACCESS

Class no	Description of records	Disposal action
	<p>including records relating to collection access that have far-reaching social, economic, national or international implications or have been the subject of widespread public debate or controversy or represent a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge, or substantially improve access to the collection. Includes background research and information, consultations with stakeholders, submissions from stakeholders, assessment and selections of actions agenda, draft program outlines and objectives, evaluation of program pilots, risk assessments, feedback and comments, final versions of programs and schemes, programs participants' contact details and program reports;</p> <p><i>[For public programs such as exhibitions, use AGENCY COLLECTION ENGAGEMENT & COMMERCIAL SERVICES (2024/00713947).]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • submissions that result in projects to improve access to the collection, such as digitisation or improving preservation of original components for access, including where sponsorship commitment has been given from stakeholders (e.g. Kodak and Atlab/Delux). Includes digitisation of collection items for access by external contractors (e.g. to meet specific cultural protocols in the Ancestry project); • providing and receiving high-level advice. Includes position papers, briefs, opinions, reports and stakeholder submissions; • joint ventures with commercial organisations that result in products, services or changes that improve access to the collection. (e.g. Data and Digitisation sharing services where National Archives records are digitised and/or described by Ancestry, digitised versions are available on both Ancestry and National Archives websites). Includes joint venture agreements, proposals, feasibility analysis reports, discussion papers and supporting documentation; • outcomes of major research and analysis undertaken or commissioned by the agency into collection access, such as access examinations of files assisting First Nations communities to access resources, research undertaken to service requests made under freedom of information legislation. Includes final research reports, research findings, statistical and trend analysis, data models, and supporting research datasets and associated information; • internal and external reports on the performance of collection access programs, services and products. Includes background research and information, consultations with stakeholders, submissions from stakeholders, assessment and selection of action agendas, draft outlines and objectives, risk assessments, feedback and comments, final versions of reports and major drafts; • research requests made by notable community members, historians, researchers or other persons of interest; <p><i>[For standard researcher requests, use Class 63192.]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arranging and hosting access for specified parties, including First Nations people and communities, special interest groups, records depositors and family members; 	

AGENCY COLLECTION ACCESS

Class no	Description of records	Disposal action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • final versions of unpublished proceedings, reports, speeches and papers from collection access services-related conferences, seminars and workshops hosted by the agency; • establishment and review of agreements (including Memoranda of Understanding) with First Nations people and community representatives for facilitating access to and use of collection items such as audio-visual materials and objects. Includes final signed agreements, consultations with communities for access rights clearances and supporting documentation. • high-level reviews of access services, such as national or sector-wide strategic reviews or major internal reviews. Includes final review reports, major drafts, recommendations, terms of reference, sector-wide collection access compliance risk assessments, stakeholder consultations, submissions and supporting research; • master versions (final approved pre-publication version) of agency publications produced to support collection access services. Includes finding aids, online catalogues, websites and information sheets; • information about and associated with collection items generated from the provision of access; • high-level external and internal committees and other bodies relating to collection access services where the agency plays a major role. Includes agendas, proceedings, minutes, and tabled papers; • signed versions of agreements and contracts (including contracts under seal) and supporting documents, where the contracts and agreements are with other agencies and state-based access centres; • master sets of manual, guidelines, directives and protocols detailing operational procedures; • principal access registers and supporting records; • speeches and addresses presented by the portfolio Minister, members of the governing body or advisory body, and senior agency staff at occasions in support of collection access services, including addresses presented at conferences; • establishing and maintaining registries within collection access. Includes datasets/records contained within those systems, consolidated records of updates and amendments to content. <p>Records documenting the administration of archival legislation such as the <i>Archives Act 1983</i> including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • records that relate to setting access conditions; • the development of major procedures supporting the provision of access to Commonwealth records such as access and reference manuals/handbooks; • recovery of stray Commonwealth records. Includes cases where the records were not successfully recovered; and 	

AGENCY COLLECTION ACCESS

Class no	Description of records	Disposal action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> processes for ministerial certificates for certain exempt records. <p><i>[For survey of records in Commonwealth agencies, use AGENCY COLLECTION MANAGEMENT (2024/00713942).]</i></p> <p><i>[For transfer of records into custody, including temporary transfer of records from agencies to facilitate access after which the material is returned back to the original agency, use AGENCY COLLECTION MANAGEMENT (2024/00713942).]</i></p>	
63189	<p>Records documenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> signed agreements or contracts executed under seal with individuals or organisations relating to the Agency Collection Access function and supporting records. Excludes agreements and contracts under seal covered in class 63181; routine periodic internal reports supporting collection access services other than those covered in class 63181; internal and external committees, forums and bodies relating to Agency Collection Access, other than those covered in class 63181; master set of operational policy statements, procedures, guidelines, and protocols for research access, other than those covered in class 63181; and proposals, minutes of meetings, briefing notes and contact details for liaison between the agency and cultural institutions, commercial and community organisations, other than those covered in class 63181. Includes collaboration on projects that are not joint ventures. the administration of archival legislation such as the <i>Archives Act 1983</i>. 	Destroy 20 years after last action
63190	<p>Records documenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> routine speeches and addresses presented by agency staff in the promotion of agency access services and programs not covered in 63181; the provision of accelerated or special access (e.g. Official access, access for former office holders and official biographers, personal records depositors or researchers preparing work of national significance); approved requests to reproduce collection items for access purposes. Includes supporting documentation; and <p><i>[For reproducing collection items for preservation purposes, use AGENCY COLLECTION MANAGEMENT (2024/00713942).]</i></p> <p><i>[For reproducing collection items for commercial and exhibiting purposes, use AGENCY COLLECTION ENGAGEMENT & COMMERCIAL SERVICES (2024/00713947).]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> handling general enquiries for information about the agency's facilities. 	Destroy 10 years after last action

AGENCY COLLECTION ACCESS

Class no	Description of records	Disposal action
63191	<p>Copies of collection items for access purposes.</p> <p>NOTE: Access copies can be superseded, e.g. if the original copy is corrupted or an improved copy is made, or an updated access decision that changes the content that can be accessed is made. Where the information content does not change, the new copy must 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 for preservation purposes, use AGENCY COLLECTION MANAGEMENT (2024/00713942).]</i></p> <p><i>[For reproducing collection items for commercial and exhibiting purposes, use AGENCY COLLECTION ENGAGEMENT & COMMERCIAL SERVICES (2024/00713947).]</i></p>	Destroy when the original record is destroyed or superseded or when the copy no longer meets access purposes
63192	<p>Records documenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• routine operational administrative tasks supporting the core business function; and• Agency Collection Access services activities, other than those covered in class 63181 and 63189 to 63191.	Destroy 7 years after last action