



25-26 CORPORATE PLAN

REPORTING PERIOD 2025-26 TO 2028-29

NAA

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA



National Archives of Australia acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of Country throughout Australia and acknowledges their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to the people, their cultures and Elders past, present and emerging.

© Commonwealth of Australia (National Archives of Australia) 2025



This product, excluding the National Archives of Australia logo, Commonwealth Coat of Arms and any material owned by a third party or protected by a trademark, has been released under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Licence (CC BY 4.0). Excluded material owned by third parties may include, for example, design, layout and images obtained under licence from third parties and signatures. The National Archives of Australia has made all reasonable efforts to identify and label material owned by third parties.

You may distribute, remix and build on this work. However, you must attribute the National Archives of Australia as the copyright holder of the work in compliance with its attribution policy available at naa.gov.au/copyright. The full terms and conditions of this licence are available at creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0. Inquiries relating to copyright should be emailed to copyright@naa.gov.au.

Published by the National Archives of Australia

(02) 6212 3600 | archives@naa.gov.au | naa.gov.au

Cover page created with records and photographs from the national archival collection.

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Introduction from the Director-General | 4 |
| About National Archives of Australia | 6 |
| Our purpose | 6 |
| Key activities | 7 |
| Our Values | 8 |
| Commitment to National Cultural Policy | |
| Revive: A place for every story, a story for every place | 9 |
| Operating context | 10 |
| Environment | 10 |
| Capability | 13 |
| Risk management | 15 |
| Cooperation | 17 |
| Subsidiaries | 18 |
| Performance measures | 19 |
| Enable | 19 |
| Secure | 21 |
| Connect | 23 |

INTRODUCTION FROM THE **DIRECTOR-GENERAL**



National Archives of Australia (National Archives) ensures that enduringly significant information created by the Australian Government is secured, preserved and made available for current and future generations. As the lead agency for information management policy and practice in the Australian Government, we issue standards and policies and provide advice to guide other agencies. Through our work, we're uniquely positioned to foster accountability and transparency in Commonwealth administration.

The environment in which National Archives operates is a complex one. With almost all government agencies now working digitally by default, we are tasked with managing an ever-growing volume of digital records while keeping pace with rapidly evolving technologies. This presents a steady stream of new challenges for both our archival practices and our information management work.

At the same time, mis- and dis-information are eroding trust in public institutions and weakening social cohesion. In this environment, a robust and accessible national record is more important than ever, as is strong government information management. Complete, authentic and accessible government records can boost public confidence, combat false narratives and support civic literacy. A national record that reflects the diverse voices of all Australians can help build a stronger, more inclusive society.

To ensure we're equipped to navigate these many complexities, we recently launched our new organisational strategy, *Strategy 2025–2030: Evolving National Archives*. It's designed to modernise and transform National Archives into a more open, valued and trusted organisation, and its vision and goals are central to this Corporate Plan.

Guided by the strategic vision of *Evolving National Archives*, we will work to improve our capabilities and enhance our value for stakeholders. We will also continue to safeguard and optimise our evolving collection through digitisation and preservation. Smart information and data management will also play a role. Further, we will work to connect more people with our collection through enhancing our access examination practices and delivering meaningful engagement experiences.

Another priority is strengthening our leadership in Australian Government information management. This will be achieved through actively deepening our engagement with agencies and continuing to provide authoritative advice and guidance. In turn, this work will support the effective implementation of the *Building trust in the public record* policy and help uplift capability in information management across government agencies. We want to ensure this vital practice is not only sustained but fortified.

Our commitment to the Australian Government's National Cultural Policy, *Revive: A place for every story, a story for every place*, is also central to this Corporate Plan. Our strategy-driven transformation will advance all 5 pillars of *Revive*, including through our continued adoption of a 'First Nations first' approach. We know archival records can play a key role in truth telling, redress and reconciliation, and we aim to extend our consultation and engagement work and consciously centre First Nations perspectives.

An identified priority under *Revive*, and one that is deeply aligned to our own transformation, is to pursue amendments to the *Archives Act 1983*. We will seek changes that reflect the complexities of the digital age and enable us to keep pace with technological advancements across government. This will unlock opportunities for greater efficiency, ensuring we are equipped to fulfill our stewardship role for the nation's archival collection.

We acknowledge the importance of engagement and partnership with all our stakeholders, including other agencies, cultural institutions, researchers, journalists and the public, and this will continue. We will also continue to work collaboratively with our Advisory Council, seeking advice on strategic priorities, risks and our policy framework to help us deliver on our legislated mandate and unique functions.

As the accountable authority of National Archives, I am pleased to present National Archives' Corporate Plan 2025–26, provided in accordance with paragraph 35(1)(b) of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and covering the periods 2025–26 to 2028–29.



Simon Froude
Director-General
National Archives of Australia
25 August 2025

ABOUT NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA

National Archives of Australia (National Archives) is an Australian Government entity established under the *Archives Act 1983* (the Archives Act). It is a non-corporate Commonwealth entity (a listed entity) under the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and an Executive Agency under the *Public Service Act 1999* (Public Service Act).

National Archives' responsibility, as mandated in the Archives Act, is to secure, preserve and make accessible the archival resources of the Commonwealth.

Our purpose

National Archives provides leadership in best practice management of the official record of the Commonwealth and ensures that Australian Government information of enduring significance is secured, preserved and available to government agencies, researchers and the community.

Our work strengthens trust in democracy and improves government transparency and accountability by connecting Australians to government decisions and activities

National Archives embodies the 5 pillars of the National Cultural Policy, *Revive: A place for every story, a story for every place*.

Key activities

National Archives sets 3 key activities to achieve our purpose:



1. **Enable:** provide strategic leadership in best practice information management by Australian Government entities.

We are trusted information management advisers to Australian Government agencies. We work with them to create, retain and ensure accessibility of Commonwealth records to strengthen government integrity and accountability. We:

- lead whole of government information management policy, through implementation of the *Building trust in the public record* policy
- set whole of government information management standards, ensuring information management products, advice and guidance are fit for purpose now and into the future
- assist Australian Government agencies in compliance with the Archives Act and assess information management maturity across the Commonwealth through the annual Check-Up survey.



2. **Secure:** manage an evolving collection of nationally significant Australian Government information.

We are leaders in archival practices to preserve Commonwealth records of enduring significance and authorise disposal of records with no ongoing value to government or community. We:

- work with Australian Government agencies to identify records, both physical and digital, of enduring national significance and facilitate their transfer to National Archives
- identify and prioritise the digitisation of records that are at risk of loss or damage, in particular records of importance to First Nations peoples
- provide stewardship of the nation's evolving archival collection.



3. **Connect:** foster access and engagement between people and the national archival collection.

We make the national archival collection discoverable and accessible to the public, to enrich and inform Australians of who they are today and into the future. We:

- create innovative and audience-centric programs and services to engage the public and create awareness of the national archival collection
- deliver timely and appropriate access to the national archival collection by applying effective description practices, providing research services, and providing timely decisions on applications for access.
- connect First Nations peoples with the national archival collection in a safe and culturally appropriate way.

National Archives also undertakes activities as outlined by the Minister for the Arts' Statement of Expectations, which is published on our website, along with our Statement of Intent.

Our Values

Together with the APS Values and APS Code of Conduct, Our Values guide us in all that we do.



COMMITMENT TO NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY

Revive: A place for every story, a story for every place

The work of National Archives is embodied in the 5 pillars of the National Cultural Policy, *Revive*, and we will continue to align our programs of work to these pillars.

1. First Nations First

We support the telling of First Nations histories and stories, and we recognise that evidence and accounts in archival records play a vital role in redress and truth-telling for First Nations people. We acknowledge at-risk First Nations cultural material must be preserved for future generations.

2. A Place for Every Story

We provide access to the national archival collection for the Australian public, including family researchers, historians, academics and students, to enable conversations and storytelling about our history. We recognise that archival records hold evidence of the impact of government decisions and past events, and we share those stories so that we may better understand who we are as a nation.

3. Centrality of the Artist

We recognise that the national archival collection is an important resource, particularly for biographers and historians, but also for wider artistic practice. Our commitment to ensuring access to Australia's historic, heritage and contemporary records can inspire and inform the development of future creative work.

4. Strong Cultural Infrastructure

We care for and protect the national archival collection, comprising over 54 million items that weave the narrative of the collective journey of the Australian people. We recognise we are part of the infrastructure that enables Australia's cultural and creative sector to flourish. We work to make our collection accessible for the benefit of all Australians.

5. Engaging the Audience

We connect with audiences in diverse ways. With offices located in each state and territory, an online and on-demand collection database, and a range of digital and touring exhibition programs, we support Australians to discover more about their connection to the social, cultural and political changes in their society.

OPERATING CONTEXT

Like many government agencies, National Archives is navigating external challenges, including rapid advances in technology, increased cyber security threats, a tight fiscal environment and increasing demand for services. Eroding social cohesion and reduced public trust in government also present challenges that National Archives can respond to.

We are in a period of transforming the way we work, seeking to harness new opportunities and responding to existing and emerging challenges. This is aimed at achieving a leading and robust archival service that effectively manages government information assets and contributes to Australia's cultural identity.

Environment

A robust national archival collection is a whole-of-government responsibility and builds public trust in government

While Australian Government agencies have obligations under the Archives Act to manage their records appropriately, there is no legal requirement for them to comply with information management standards set by National Archives.

A number of recent Australian National Audit Office reports, royal commissions and whole-of-government inquiries have identified issues with recordkeeping in Australian Government agencies. These inquiries have also acknowledged that poor recordkeeping undermines Australians' ability to understand how government decisions were made.

National Archives' effectiveness in maintaining the national archival collection relies on agency cooperation and proactive investment to improve their information management practices. We will continue to support agencies to improve their practices and capability, most notably through the whole-of-government information management policy, *Building trust in the public record*.

National Archives has been seeking amendments to modernise the Archives Act for many years, and the Australian Government has identified this as a deliverable under the National Cultural Policy, *Revive*.

Information management is a whole-of-government responsibility. Trust in government is linked to democratic participation, social cohesion and collaboration in tackling societal challenges. By working together and investing in information management, all government agencies can help to ensure that more Australians can access evidence of government decisions and improve the transparency and accountability of government.

Community expectations around access and engagement

National Archives is a vital part of the infrastructure that makes cultural memory possible. Our national stories are shaped by our histories, places, identities, languages, cultures, families and communities. National Archives shares these stories by providing access to the national archival collection.

National Archives plays an important role in the wider Australian discourse around the strength of our democracy. We share the diverse stories of the nation by displaying the national archival collection through exhibitions and associated public programs. This allows us to connect with Australians to provide a forum for public engagement, strengthening social connectedness and democracy.

We continue to operate in an environment with high levels of community expectations, including from researchers, around access to the national archival collection, as well as the programs and services we offer that share and celebrate Australian stories. Our responsibility to provide access also supports First Nations truth-telling, and we remain committed to providing access to records, including but not limited to the National Redress Scheme, the Territories Stolen Generations Redress Scheme and the Victorian Stolen Generations Reparations Package.

Meeting community expectations around access is challenging. An accessible National Archives requires a collection that is effectively described and searchable, and accessible nationally. An 'always on' digital service, combined with physical locations where people can engage with our staff, ensures equitable access to the national archival collection.

In an environment where resources are limited, we continue to deliver onsite access to records at research centres in all states and territories. Researchers and members of the public are also provided with reference advice that enables them to undertake self-directed searches and access digital copies of records online, where possible. The process of applying for access requires National Archives to make decisions on whether a record should be open in full, open with exception or closed. National Archives works closely with agencies, particularly those in the defence and intelligence community, to provide timely advice on sensitivities within records in order to meet public expectations.

The ongoing expansion of the national archival collection, growing demand for access to records and increasing operating costs in the long term means that expenses appear likely to exceed available appropriations. We continue to look for efficiencies and reduce our costs. While the situation is partly assisted by the increased base funding, ongoing financial sustainability remains a priority.

Technological change and innovation

With most government agencies working digitally by default, National Archives must manage and archive greater volumes of digital records in an increasing range of digital formats. We are responding by increasing our capacity to store and capability to accept and preserve digital records. National Archives continues to innovate, improve how we operate, and play a leading role in developing the future digital records management practices required across the Commonwealth.

The cyber security threat landscape also continues to evolve as the capability of threat actors grows. National Archives continues to proactively uplift our cyber security capabilities, implementing new controls and practices to strengthen our defences, while taking into consideration whole-of-government Australian Cyber Security Centre guidance, the Information Security Manual and Protective Security Policy Framework controls.

Importance of First Nations engagement

National Archives acknowledges that we hold records that are essential for First Nations history and truth-telling. These records are a source of personal memory that can be used to connect people to their own stories as well as those of their families and earlier generations. National Archives will continue to build its relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, helping to strengthen connections with our services, programs and collections.

National Archives has committed to embedding cultural competence by implementing *Our way: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols* and responding to the *Tandanya-Adelaide Declaration*. This will enable remodelling of archival practices to recognise and preserve First Nations culture and knowledge methods. In turn, this will improve access to archival resources for people and communities for current and future generations.

National Archives' plan to engage First Nations peoples and communities includes:

- acknowledging First Nations peoples' diverse differences and where possible, providing culturally safe spaces for individuals or groups to visit and view sensitive or culturally secret and sacred records
- protecting the cultural safety of our First Nations staff
- initiating and strengthening engagement with individuals, groups, and communities for ongoing interaction with services and future collaboration
- continuing leadership and involvement with the Healing Foundation Historical Records Taskforce on First Nations matters by hosting records forums for members of the Stolen Generations and their families so they can access records and connect with non-government organisations that hold related record collections.

National Archives' engagement activities have been supported through a dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement team. This team has increased resourcing to meet the growing program and service demands and contributes to enabling longer-term operational planning and delivery of initiatives.

Capability

Our people

National Archives is a medium-sized agency with a national footprint employing around 390 people. National Archives' workforce is highly engaged and draws on unique subject matter knowledge of both traditional and digital archival practices. National Archives is committed to supporting the continuous development of core, management and leadership skills, and expertise in digital preservation, archival practices and access.

To achieve Strategy 2025-2030, National Archives will build people capability in:

- **Effective leadership and management** – We will strengthen leadership and management practices to support strategic alignment, performance, stewardship, and continuous improvement across the organisation including supporting technical leaders to transition to people leaders.
- **Cultural competency and inclusion** – We will deepen understanding and respect for diverse cultures (especially First Nations people) and perspectives, uplift cultural capability and embed inclusive practices.
- **Digital capability** – We will empower our people to leverage best archival practice, confidently use digital tools and build further specialised knowledge relating to born-digital records to apply data-driven insights in digital archiving.
- **User-centred design and service delivery** – We will build capability to understand, anticipate, and respond to the diverse needs of our audiences. This will involve designing inclusive, accessible, and intuitive services that improve how people discover, access, and interact with the national archival collection.
- **Stakeholder engagement and information management leadership** – We will enable our people to engage proactively with agencies, government, and the public to support an uplift in information management maturity.
- **Project management** – We will uplift capability to embed robust project management practices to ensure timely delivery of projects, optimisation of resources, and the successful preservation and accessibility of the national archival collection.

Targets under APS Strategic Commissioning Framework

In 2025–26, in line with the APS Strategic Commissioning Framework, National Archives will continue to ensure core work is performed by APS employees. We expect our targets for 2025–26 to focus on reduced outsourcing of Information and Knowledge Management work.

Infrastructure required to manage the national archival collection

Protecting and caring for the national archival collection requires specialised physical and digital storage. The nature of an archival collection is that it continually increases in size, meaning our storage needs are always expanding. Fit-for-purpose physical and digital storage is crucial to preservation, digitisation and access activities across National Archives.

We have offices in each state and territory, which provide important in-person services for Australians. We will ensure that our state and territory offices are delivering their work effectively and consistently by reviewing the model for service and program delivery.

Our collection is also geographically dispersed, but we will continue to seek opportunities to consolidate repositories, maximise physical storage capacity, and scale digital storage in accordance with our business needs

ICT capability requirements to provide a digital archival service

National Archives is transitioning to a digital-first approach in all aspects of our work. Providing a digital end-to-end service to the public has unique challenges and requires specific capabilities, including:

- Metadata management – the national archival collection is made up of a broad range of physical, digitised and digital-born records including documents, images, and audiovisual media. Managing the collection and making it accessible to the public is contingent on creating and maintaining rich metadata, allowing the collection to be described, categorised, searchable and secure. As our collection grows, we will employ emerging technologies to capture and maintain the metadata required to describe and access it more effectively.
- Enterprise workflow – many of our legacy processes still operate in a largely manual way. Where appropriate and feasible, we are transitioning them to automated processes. Our current focus is integrating our existing systems and creating digital workflows that increase effectiveness and efficiency.
- Effective and efficient digitisation – many of our physical records, whether paper, film or magnetic media, face the risk of deterioration as they age. We will continue to improve our effectiveness and efficiency in digitising these records, especially those most at risk, to ensure their ongoing preservation and accessibility.
- Search and discovery – an effective search capability is integral to our ability to provide the public with access to the national archival collection from anywhere and at any time. We will deliver improvements in our public search, external identity management, payment processing and content delivery to ensure that when a member of the public searches for available content they can find, view and download it with ease.
- Planning for obsolescence – as technologies advance, older file and document formats fall out of common usage and obsolescence. We will manage our collection using the latest digital preservation methods, practices and systems to ensure ongoing viability of our digital records and to preserve the digital collection for future generations.

Risk management

National Archives recognises there is potential for risk in most aspects of its operations. Effective risk management enables us to work in a complex and challenging environment and ensures the delivery of strategic goals and business priorities.

Revised in 2024–25, National Archives Risk Management Framework:

- supports risk control and management
- maintains a line of sight from high-level enterprise and strategic risks
- informs staff of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for managing risk
- establishes expectations and guidance on how risk should be identified, assessed, documented and managed
- allows innovation through balanced risk management.

National Archives key strategic risks are:

| Key risk | Management approach |
|---|---|
| <p>Australian Government agencies do not meet their information management obligations</p> <p>Australian Government agencies do not meet their obligations under the <i>Archives Act 1983</i> and in the <i>Building trust in the public record</i> policy to manage the official record for the Commonwealth, reducing public trust in our democratic system.</p> | <p>The <i>Building trust in the public record</i> policy aims to improve how agencies create, collect, manage and use information assets.</p> <p>This is a shared risk with all Australian Government agencies. National Archives will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop targeted agency engagement and support to uplift information management maturity and integrity across Australian Government agencies • embrace the opportunity to ensure effective records management across the Commonwealth improves confidence and trust in democracy and government integrity and builds the archival collection for the future. |
| <p>Digital archiving systems and practice do not keep pace with rapid technological change</p> <p>The accelerating transition to born-digital records requires fundamental changes to archival practice, for records created in numerous digital formats to be ingested, preserved and stored in a way that makes them accessible and secure.</p> | <p>National Archives is responding to this risk through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accelerated development of a digital-first archive to bring at-risk records into the digital collection as soon as possible, in formats optimised for archival storage • streamlining ingestion processes to ensure Australian Government agencies can efficiently transfer born-digital records to National Archives • using emerging technologies and automation to increase our efficiency at ingesting those records that are held on at-risk digital media, so they become part of the digital collection • applying metadata analysis to identify records stored in at-risk formats and employ automated workflows to update those formats as required. |

| Key risk | Management approach |
|---|---|
| <p>Archival material is lost or destroyed</p> <p>Archival material is lost through failure to identify, secure and preserve, or due to resource limitations, obsolescence, neglect or hostile action.</p> | <p>National Archives continues to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> invest in contemporary fit-for-purpose archival storage facilities, cyber secure technology, business systems and staff capabilities to secure and safeguard the collection ensure effective implementation of strategies for preservation, transfer and storage of retain as national archives (RNA) records issue records authorities to identify RNA records, for transfer to National Archives set archival standards and policy for National Archives and Australian Government agencies. |
| <p>Delayed public access to the national archival collection</p> <p>With growing demand for access to the national archival collection, in an environment where resources are limited, requests for access may not be met within legislated timeframes.</p> | <p>National Archives will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> transition legacy manual processes to automated processes where appropriate and feasible ensure our employees have appropriate training and security clearances for access examination continue to progress legislative reform to ensure that the Archives Act is effective in a digital world and to resolve any areas of ambiguity continuously review and improve the way we engage with government agencies to support timely advice on sensitivities within records, consistent with our statutory obligations under the Archives Act. |
| <p>National Archives does not connect with audiences</p> <p>Australians' ability to access and engage with the national archival collection is impeded. In particular National Archives fails to connect with First Nations and other diverse communities.</p> | <p>National Archives continues to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve infrastructure and systems and increase the quantity and breadth of records available for access provide access through contemporary fit-for-purpose secure digital engagement platforms develop and deliver public engagement programs and services through onsite, offsite and online arrangements embrace the opportunity to improve social cohesion through engagement with diverse and marginalised communities and by intertwining their stories in our curated content. |

| Key risk | Management approach |
|--|---|
| <p>Agency capability (people, processes, technology) does not meet operational requirements</p> <p>National Archives is unable to develop and maintain the capability required to meet workforce demands, most significantly a workforce that can deliver a digital-first archive with modern ways of working and use of contemporary technology.</p> | <p>National Archives will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> strengthen leadership and management practices to support strategic alignment to <i>Evolving National Archives</i> ensure our people have access to contemporary tools and modern ways of working to support continuous improvement across the organisation utilise technology as an enabler of business led outcomes access contemporary industry accredited digital archiving talent through our continued participation in the digital archiving graduate certificate qualification with Charles Sturt University empower our people to lead digital archival practice. |

Cooperation

Setting information standards across the Australian Government

National Archives is responsible for setting information management standards to guide Australian Government agencies' best practice to secure, preserve and provide access to Commonwealth records.

A major challenge for National Archives in achieving its purpose is that some agencies do not identify their archival records or transfer those records into the national archival collection. The Archives Act currently lacks an ability for National Archives to enforce compliance to ensure records are appropriately managed. As a result, we rely on the cooperation of Australian Government agencies to ensure that evidence of Australian Government decisions and activities is preserved for future generations.

The annual Check-up survey measures how agencies are managing their information and records and assists agencies in improving their information management maturity.

National and international archival and records management communities

National Archives works closely with regional, national and international archival communities to address common archival issues and to evolve the role and capability of archives.

In Australia, our work with the archival and information management community includes:

- Australian Digital Recordkeeping Initiative (ADRI)
- Australian Institute for Conservation of Cultural Materials (AICCM)
- Australian Society of Archivists (ASA)
- Australasian Sound Recordings Association (ASRA)
- Council of Australasian Archives and Records Authorities (CAARA)
- Data Management Association of Australia (DAMA)
- GLAM Peak.

We also run Government Agencies Information Network (GAIN) Australia as a national network supporting agency information and records managers in the Australian Government.

Internationally, we support and participate in skills development, collaborative projects and conferences, through bilateral and multilateral relationships, including working with:

- Association of Moving Image Archivists (AMIA)
- Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC)
- International Association of Sound Archives (IASA)
- International Council on Archives (ICA) including the Pacific Regional Branch (PARBICA)
- International Federation of Film Archives (FIAP)
- International Federation of Television Archives (IFTA)
- Records and Information Management Practitioners Alliance (RIMPA)
- SouthEast Asia-Pacific AudioVisual Archives Association (SEAPAVAA).

Subsidiaries

National Archives does not have any subsidiaries.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

These performance measures articulate National Archives' expected progress towards its outcome to promote the creation, management and preservation of authentic, reliable and useable Australian Government records, and to facilitate Australians' access to the archival resources of the Australian Government.

Note performance measure S2: *Managing an evolving archival collection* in the previous Corporate Plan 2024–25 has been removed as this measure was delivered in December 2024, with the release of the *Strategy 2025–2030: Evolving National Archives*.



Key activity

Provide strategic leadership in best practice information management by Australian Government entities

Performance measure E1: Australian Government agencies actively apply best practice in the creation, collection and use of Australian Government information assets

National Archives developed the *Building Trust in the public record* policy to help Australian Government agencies improve how they create, collect, manage and use information assets. The policy outlines actions agencies can take to implement best practice information management. Making and keeping evidence of government actions and decisions is vital for transparent and accountable government. National Archives uses the annual Check-up survey results to measure implementation of the *Building trust in the public record* policy across government. The survey results also assist agencies to measure their information management maturity. National Archives will continue to analyse and use the results from the Check-up survey to build information management capability across the Commonwealth.

| Targets | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| No | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027–28 | 2028–29 |
| E1.1 | <p>Percentage of agencies that have implemented the mandatory actions in the <i>Building trust in the public record</i> policy:</p> <p>Action 1: Assess information management capability annually by completing the National Archives annual Check-up survey – at least 97%</p> <p>Action 9: Manage all digital information assets created since 1 January 2016, digitally – at least 95%</p> <p>Action 14: Transfer ‘retain as national archives’ information assets as soon as practicable, or within 15 years of creation, to the care of National Archives – at least 20%</p> | <p>Action 1 – ≥ 99% of agencies;</p> <p>Action 9 – ≥ 99%;</p> <p>Action 14 – ≥ 22%</p> | <p>Action 1 – ≥ 99% of agencies;</p> <p>Action 9 – ≥ 99%;</p> <p>Action 14 – ≥ 24%</p> | <p>Action 1 – ≥ 99% of agencies;</p> <p>Action 9 – ≥ 99%;</p> <p>Action 14 – ≥ 26%</p> |
| E1.2 | Annual Check-up survey national average index shows an improvement in Australian Government agencies’ information management maturity on the previous year. | Same as 2025–26 | Same as 2025–26 | Same as 2025–26 |
| <p>Methodology: The data used to report against this performance measure is from National Archives’ annual Check-up surveys. The Check-up survey is an online self-assessment tool that all Australian Government agencies must complete. The survey seeks to measure maturity and performance in information management, mapped against the requirements of the <i>Information Management Standard for Australian Government</i> and actions of the <i>Building trust in the public record</i> policy.</p> <p>In relation to targets E1.1, Action 9 or Action 14 is implemented if the agency responds in the Check-up survey that the action is performed ‘usually / most of the time or almost always / always’.</p> <p>Target E1.2 is achieved if the annual Check-up survey national index average shows an increase on the previous year benchmark. For 2025–26 the maturity will be assessed against the 2024 benchmark of 3.70.</p> | | | | |
| <p>Explanation of changes since 2024–25 Corporate Plan: The 2024–25 Corporate Plan listed a target of 25% of agencies that had implemented Action 14. This has now been revised down to 20% to reflect the work the National Archives is doing to target priority at-risk records for transfer and alignment of staff resources to support the redevelopment of Agency Engagement and Digital Archiving Service models as identified in target S1.1.</p> | | | | |

**Key activity****Manage an evolving collection of nationally significant Australian Government information**

Performance measure S1: Nationally significant archival records (meaning those identified as ‘retain as national archives’ (RNA)) are appropriately transferred to National Archives

Australian Government agencies must transfer select information and records to National Archives for preservation and access. These are records that have been identified as ‘retain as national archives’ (RNA) in a records authority and are no longer used on a regular basis. Agencies that have not transferred records to National Archives in the last 10 years may have records that are at risk of being lost or damaged. National Archives engages with these agencies as a matter of priority to ensure they are aware of their recordkeeping obligations under the Archives Act.

Targets

| No | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027–28 | 2028–29 |
|------|--|---|---|---|
| S1.1 | Engagements with at least 60% of agencies that have not transferred archival records identified as RNA to National Archives in 10 years or more ¹ | Engagements with at least 60% of agencies that have not transferred archival records identified as RNA to National Archives in 10 years or more | Engagements with at least 60% of agencies that have not transferred archival records identified as RNA to National Archives in 10 years or more | Engagements with at least 60% of agencies that have not transferred archival records identified as RNA to National Archives in 10 years or more |

Methodology: National Archives uses annual Check-up survey results to inform transfer forecasting and targeted transfer of at-risk records. RecordSearch is used to identify agencies which have not transferred records identified as RNA in 10 or more years.

Explanation of changes since 2024–25 Corporate Plan: The 2024–25 Corporate Plan listed engagements with agencies at 90% for 2025–26. As signalled in the Portfolio Budget Statement for 2025–26, this target has been reduced to 60% to focus on priority at-risk records for transfer and alignment of staff resources to support the redevelopment of Agency Engagement and Digital Archiving Service models.

¹ PBS 2025–26, p312

Performance measure S2: At-risk collections are preserved

National Archives prioritises preserving and digitising as many at-risk records as possible, for the benefit of future generations. Records that are 'at-risk' are those that are in danger of being lost, damaged or destroyed. Examples of records considered at-risk are those that are chemically unstable, in poor condition or stored in obsolete physical and digital formats. Preserving the records that evidence government decision-making and actions is important for future generations, including for First Nations peoples.

Targets

| No | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027–28 | 2028–29 |
|------|---|--|--|--|
| S2.1 | Digitisation targets are delivered ² | As per 2025–26 | As per 2025–26 | As per 2025–26 |
| S2.2 | 20% or more of at-risk physical collection items are digitised ³ | ≥ 20% of at-risk physical collection items are digitised | ≥ 20% of at-risk physical collection items are digitised | ≥ 20 of at-risk physical collection items are digitised |
| S2.3 | 95% or more of digital collection items confirmed to be in low-risk stable formats ⁴ | ≥ 95% of digital collection items confirmed to be in low-risk stable formats | ≥ 95% of digital collection items confirmed to be in low-risk stable formats | ≥ 95% of digital collection items confirmed to be in low-risk stable formats |

Methodology: Each year, digitisation targets are established by reviewing historical digitisation metrics and projecting them onto projects for the current period. These targets reflect the output of digitisation activities and incorporate milestones from major individual projects. Specific targets for at-risk items are informed by data from the previous year, with considerations given to the collection's size and overarching preservation priorities. Progress against all targets is systematically monitored through data captured in the National Archives' systems, as well as updates provided in major project reports.

Explanation of changes since 2024–25 Corporate Plan: S2.3 target for 2025–26 has increased by 5% to reflect the digital preservation goals of the National Archives.

² Source: PBS 2025–26, p312

³ Source: PBS 2025–26, p312, noting that the target has been increased from 18% to 20%

⁴ Source: PBS 2025–26, p312



Key activity

Foster access and engagement between people and the national archival collection

Performance measure C1: The way audiences engage with and use the collection meets their expectations within a digital first approach

A key aim for National Archives is for Australians to be able to meaningfully connect with the national archival collection. We create innovative and audience-centric programs and services to enable access to, and engagement, with the collection onsite, offsite and online.

Targets

| No | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027–28 | 2028–29 |
|------|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| C1.1 | 70% or more online visits/ sessions are engaged ⁵ | Same as 2025–26 | Same as 2025–26 | Same as 2025–26 |
| C1.2 | Case studies of programs show that more than 80% of audience expectations were met ⁶ | Same as 2025–26 | Same as 2025–26 | Same as 2025–26 |

Methodology: Reporting on online engagement focuses on the assessment and analysis of online visitor data and engagement metrics. Quantitative data is collected to demonstrate effective engagement with the collection within a digital-first approach. Case studies for 2025–26 are selected at the beginning of the 2025–26 reporting period and represent activities across each quarter to include onsite, offsite and online visitor data that reach a variety of demographics and aim to connect people with the national archival collection.

⁵ Source: PBS 2025–26, p312

⁶ Source: PBS 2025–26, p312

Performance measure C2: National archival collection is discoverable and accessible

For records to be of use to the public, they must be discoverable and accessible. For records to be discoverable through our database, RecordSearch, they need to be described accurately using agreed standards. The digitisation of records is also essential to accessibility, as it enables more records to be accessed digitally by more people while preserving the original record.

National Archives must also ensure that access applications made by the public are assessed within legislated timetables. Our reference services team are on hand to help navigate the national archival collection for members of the public.

Targets

| No | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027–28 | 2028–29 |
|------|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| C2.1 | At least 85% of reference enquiries are actioned within service standards | As per 2025–26 | As per 2025–26 | As per 2025–26 |
| C2.2 | At least 90% of digitisation on demand requests are actioned within service standards | As per 2025–26 | As per 2025–26 | As per 2025–26 |
| C2.3 | At least 80% of access applications examined within legislated timeframes | As per 2025–26 | As per 2025–26 | As per 2025–26 |

Methodology: Reference inquiries and public digitisation-on-demand requests completed nationally within published service standards; and decisions on access applications made nationally within the legislative timeframe⁷ under the Archives Act.

Explanation of changes since 2024–25 Corporate Plan: A target relating to 800,000 new item descriptions in RecordSearch has been removed to reflect the current work of the agency to consider new approaches and technology to support discoverability and access to the collection. National Archives does however continue to describe materials as part of ongoing business as usual practices.

⁷ <https://www.naa.gov.au/about-us/our-services/our-service-standards>

Performance measure C3: Engagement with First Nations people enables two-way collaboration and connection with services and collections

National Archives is committed to embedding a First Nations first approach to all our work. This is supported by the *Our way: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols*, which guide our engagement with First Nations communities and peoples, and the Tandanya Declaration, the first international archives declaration on Indigenous people and matters.

Targets

| No | 2025–26 | 2026–27 | 2027–28 | 2028–29 |
|------|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| C3.1 | Case study demonstrates improvement in culturally appropriate record descriptions for First Nations related collections | As per 2025–26 | As per 2025–26 | As per 2025–26 |

Methodology: Assessment of reparative description practices implemented at National Archives, which involves suggesting improvements to record descriptions to be culturally appropriate. The case study is selected at the beginning of the 2025–26 reporting period.

Explanation of changes since 2024–25 Corporate Plan: The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Implementation plan is set to lapse in 2025. This work is now being guided by National Archives' Strategy 2025–2030. An uplift in First Nations collection practices was a key focus for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strategy and Implementation plan, including improvements to record descriptions to be culturally appropriate. This continues to be key to Strategy 2025–2030, so the performance measure and target have been updated to reflect this work.



Australian Government

National Archives of Australia