



**Australian Government**

**National Archives of Australia**

**Records Authority**

**2025/00445349**

**Senate Chamber Support**

*Department of the Senate*

**2025**



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## **CONTENTS**

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>                   | <b>4</b> |
| <b>APPLICATION OF THIS AUTHORITY .....</b> | <b>6</b> |
| <b>CONTACT INFORMATION .....</b>           | <b>7</b> |
| <b>AUTHORISATION .....</b>                 | <b>8</b> |
| <b>SENATE CHAMBER SUPPORT .....</b>        | <b>9</b> |

## INTRODUCTION

The Department of the Senate (the Department) and the National Archives of Australia (National Archives) have developed this records authority to set out the requirements for keeping or destroying records for the core business of Senate Chamber Support. It represents a significant commitment on behalf of the Department to understand, create and manage the records of its activities.

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

The authority sets out those records that need to be retained as national archives and specifies the minimum length of time that temporary records need to be kept. This authority gives the Department permission under the *Archives Act 1983* as modified by the *Archives (Records of the Parliament) Regulations 2019* (Regulations), for the destruction of the temporary records described after the minimum retention period has expired. Retention periods for these temporary records are based on: an assessment of business needs; broader organisational accountability requirements; and community expectations; and are approved by the National Archives on the basis of information provided by the agency.

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

## Records of the Parliament and the Archives Act

The Regulations modify and apply the provisions of Divisions 2 and 3 of Part V of the *Archives Act 1983* to records in the possession of the Senate, the House of Representatives and the Parliamentary Departments, to provide a basis for the sound and professional management of the records of the Parliament. They balance the need for the Parliament and Parliamentary institutions to retain control of their records with the role of the National Archives to identify and care for the archival resources of the Commonwealth in perpetuity and make them publicly accessible. The object of the Regulations is to provide for the preservation, management and use of the records of the Parliament in a manner that reflects:

- i. the position of the Parliament within the Commonwealth;
- ii. the special recognition and treatment that should be given to particular records of the Parliament; and
- iii. the different powers and functions of the Parliament and the Executive Government of the Commonwealth.

The Regulations provide for records of the Department to be divided into three categories – Class A, Class B and Class C.

Class A records are those which relate directly to the Parliament's performance of its functions and are therefore to remain within the exclusive control of the Parliament. Class C records are records that either contain information that is protected by section 64V of the *Parliamentary Service Act 1999* (Parliamentary Service Act) or are determined by legislative instrument, by the Presiding Officer(s) (with the Director-General National Archives), as relating to the provision of advice to a Senator or a Member of the House of Representatives and required to remain under the control of the Parliament because of a duty of confidentiality under the Parliamentary Service Act. Class B records are all other records that are neither Class A nor Class C records or excluded records for the purposes of the Regulations.

## Definitions

**Class A record** means any of the following records except a record that is an excluded record:

- (a) the *Journals of the Senate* in the possession of the Senate;
- (b) the *Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives* in the possession of the House of Representatives;
- (c) a record that is:
  - (i) laid before, or tabled in; and
  - (ii) in the possession of; the Senate or the House of Representatives;
- (d) a record:
  - (i) that is presented to a committee; and
  - (ii) that is in the possession of the committee, the Senate or the House of Representatives; and
  - (iii) that the committee, the Senate or the House of Representatives respectively has not authorised to be published;
- (e) a record that:
  - (i) was prepared by an officer of a Parliamentary Department or a person employed in, or performing duties for, a Parliamentary Department; and
  - (ii) either minutes the proceedings of a committee or relates to a record that was presented to a committee; and
  - (iii) is in the possession of the committee, the Senate, the House of Representatives or a Parliamentary Department.

**Class A records include:**

Records documenting Chamber Support business and proceedings, including:

- Notice Papers;
- Journals;
- responses to questions on notice; and
- documents and artefacts presented (tabled) during proceedings, including associated lists, indexes and registers.

Records documenting the proceedings of and arrangements for parliamentary committees which are:

- not authorised to be published, such as submissions, exhibits and transcripts of evidence presented in camera or on a confidential or restricted basis; or
- confidential declarations of Senators' pecuniary or other interests and registers of Senators' interests, provided to the Senators' Interests committee;
- records prepared by a departmental officer or adviser to the committee that minute the proceedings of the committee or relate to a record presented to the committee. This may include for example, meeting minutes and papers, Chair's notes, summaries of submissions, submission acknowledgements, briefing papers, draft reports and associated amendments and correspondence.

**Class B record** means a record in the possession of the Senate, the House of Representatives or a Parliamentary Department that is not any of the following:

- (a) a Class A record;
- (b) a Class C record;

- (c) an excluded record.

**Class C record** means any of the following records in the possession of the Senate, the House of Representatives or a Parliamentary Department except a record that is an excluded record:

- (a) a record containing information that section 64V of the Parliamentary Service Act prohibits an entrusted person from disclosing (except for purposes described in subsection 64V(3) or (4B));
- (b) a record determined by the Presiding Officer by legislative instrument to be a Class C record if the Presiding Officer is satisfied that:
  - i. the record relates to the provision of advice to a Senator or a Member of the House of Representatives; and
  - ii. the record should remain under the control of the Parliament because of a duty of confidentiality under the Parliamentary Service Act; andthe Director-General of the National Archives agrees with the proposed determination.

**Excluded record** means a record in:

- a) the library collection for which the Parliamentary Librarian has responsibility; or
- b) the art collection of the Parliament.

Class A and Class C records are not subject to the disposal, transfer and access provisions of the Archives Act in the same way as Class B records. In accordance with Parliamentary practice (as defined in the Regulations), Class A and Class C records are managed and retained as records of national significance with archival value by Parliament. The disposal of Class A and Class C records is not authorised by this records authority.

In accordance with the Regulations:

- the Presiding Officer may make a written agreement with the Director-General of the National Archives for the transfer of Class A records and Class C records to the care of the National Archives (sections 27 and 29 of the Archives Act as modified by the Regulations); and
- Class A and Class C records may be made publicly available with permission or in accordance with a parliamentary practice (section 31A of the Archives Act as modified by the Regulations).

## APPLICATION OF THIS AUTHORITY

1. This authority supersedes records disposal authorities RDA 1184 and RDA 1185. The superseded authorities cannot be used by the Department of the Senate to sentence records after the date of issue of this records authority.
2. This authority is to be used to determine how long **Class B** 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 the Department's business they should be destroyed as authorised in this authority.
  - Records that have not reached the minimum retention period must be kept until they do.
  - Records that are identified as 'retain as national archives' are to be transferred to the National Archives for preservation.
3. This authority is permitted to be used for Class B records 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);
  - supporting sentencing guidance produced by the Department; and
  - the Department's authorised normal administrative practice policy.
4. 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*. The National Archives recommends that agencies develop and implement a NAP policy. Advice and guidance on destroying records as a normal administrative practice and on how to develop a NAP policy is available from the National Archives' website at [www.naa.gov.au](http://www.naa.gov.au).
  5. 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.
  6. Records subject to a disposal freeze must not be destroyed until the freeze has been lifted. Further information about disposal freezes and whether they affect the application of this authority is available from the National Archives website at [www.naa.gov.au](http://www.naa.gov.au).
  7. 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 Department will need to maintain continuing access to the information, including digital information, for the periods prescribed in this records authority or until the information is transferred into the custody of the National Archives.
  8. In general, retention requirements indicate a minimum period for retention. The Department may extend minimum retention periods if it considers that there is an administrative need to do so, without further reference to the National Archives. Where The Department believes that its accountability will be substantially compromised because a retention period or periods are not adequate, it should contact the National Archives for review of the retention period.
  9. Class B 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 the National Archives when they cease to be current and, in any event, within 15 years of the records coming into existence, under section 27 of the *Archives Act 1983*.
  10. 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.
  11. Appropriate arrangements should be made with the National Archives when records are to be transferred into custody. The National Archives accepts for transfer only those records designated as national archives. Records created digitally after 1 January 2016 can be transferred in digital formats only.
  12. Advice on how to use this authority is available from the Department's information manager. If there are problems with the application of the authority that cannot be resolved, please contact the National Archives.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

For assistance with this authority or for advice on other information management matters, please contact National Archives' [Agency Service Centre](#).

## AUTHORISATION

Records Authority 2025/00445349

### Notice of authorisation

Person to whom notice of authorisation is given:

Richard Pye  
Clerk of the Senate  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

### Purpose

Authorises arrangements for the disposal of records in accordance with section 24(2)(b)(iii) of the *Archives Act 1983* as modified by the *Archives (Records of the Parliament) Regulations 2019*.

Determines Class B 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 **Class B** core business function records of the Department of the Senate: Senate Chamber Support.

### 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 (R692972025).

| Authorising Officer  | Date of issue |
|--|---------------|
| Simon Froude<br>Director-General<br>National Archives of Australia | 15/12/2025    |

## SENATE CHAMBER SUPPORT

The core business of providing advice and support services to enable the Senate to meet and address business as scheduled.

The **core activities** include:

- providing advice to the President and Senators;
- programming and coordinating business for the Senate;
- processing and drafting bills and amendments to bills;
- preparing and publishing the record of proceedings of the Senate;
- processing and maintaining documents tabled in Senate proceedings;
- developing and reviewing rules, practices and procedures to govern the conduct and operations of the Senate;
- conducting research on the practices, procedures and work of Parliament, the Senate and its committees;
- preparing reports and collecting, analysing, producing and maintaining procedural and statistical information on the work of the Senate.

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

- providing and receiving advice;
- liaising with stakeholders;
- planning and reporting;
- evaluating and reviewing;
- identifying, assessing and managing risks;
- delegating powers and authorising actions;
- developing and reviewing internal operating policies and procedures;
- making administrative arrangements to support Chamber business.

*Function Note: Class A records relating to this core business function are excluded from this Records Authority and are the responsibility of the President and the Senate. For further information, refer to the 'Introduction – Records of the Parliament and the Archives Act' of this Records Authority.*

### **Cross references to other Senate records authorities**

*For Senators' speeches, presentations and papers presented at conferences, seminars or other events; and records of managing visits and bookings or other arrangements for events at Parliament House, use SENATORS' SERVICES, EDUCATION & CORPORATE SUPPORT.*

*For records relating to inter-parliamentary committees, conferences, memberships and parliamentary delegations, use SENATORS' SERVICES, EDUCATION & CORPORATE SUPPORT.*

*For providing other services and support for Senators, including providing security advice to Senators, use SENATORS' SERVICES, EDUCATION & CORPORATE SUPPORT.*

*For developing and delivering education resources for schools, teachers, students and the wider community, to promote awareness and understanding of the work of the Senate and Australia's parliamentary democracy, use SENATORS' SERVICES, EDUCATION & CORPORATE SUPPORT.*

*For records relating to advisory and secretariat support provided to parliamentary committees, use PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE SUPPORT.*

## SENATE CHAMBER SUPPORT

### Cross references to AFDA Express Version 2

For responses to general enquiries, complaints or requests for information from the public, use EXTERNAL RELATIONS.

For legal advice received in support of the Senate Chamber Support core business, use LEGAL SERVICES.

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

For records documenting physical security related matters for nationally significant properties, including Parliament House, use PROPERTY MANAGEMENT.

For records relating to the design, production, printing and distribution of Department-related publications, including general information on the Department's website, other than those covered in Class 63257, use PUBLICATION.

For records relating to the safe storage and management of the Clerk's and Deputy Clerk's books/notes (minutes) documents, use TECHNOLOGY & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT.

For responding to requests from stakeholders for information under freedom of information, privacy, archives or other legislation, use TECHNOLOGY & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT.

For developing and executing contracts under seal or deeds, including tendering and contracting-out arrangements, use CONTRACTS UNDER SEAL/DEEDS.

### Cross references to other records authorities

For the administration of the Senate historical art and items collection, including background information and the history of collection items presented to audiences, use AGENCY COLLECTION MANAGEMENT, AGENCY COLLECTION ACCESS and AGENCY COLLECTION ENGAGEMENT AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES.

For records relating to the establishment, design and construction of specialised spaces such as the Treasure Room, use the relevant function of the DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES records authority.

For records relating to the management of security arrangements for Senators, and departmental staff at Parliament House, use the relevant function of the DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES records authority.

| Class no | Description of records   | Disposal action             |
|----------|--|-----------------------------|
| 63251    | Records documenting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>proposals for Matters of Public Importance debates or urgency motions (both successful and unsuccessful);</li> <li>petitions;</li> <li>messages recording formal communications between the Senate and the House of Representatives, including message books recording the formal transmission details of all messages;</li> <li>the development and review of rules, procedures and practices governing the conduct of business in the Senate. For example, Senate Standing Orders, Odgers' Australian Senate Practice, and Guides to Senate</li> </ul> | Retain as national archives |

## SENATE CHAMBER SUPPORT

| Class no | Description of records  | Disposal action |
|----------|---|-----------------|
|          | <p>Procedure. Includes major drafts issued for comment, results of consultations and final versions;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>advice, briefings, directions, determinations, rulings or submissions prepared and provided to or by the President, Deputy President (or Senators acting in these roles) Clerk, Deputy Clerk, or other senior executive officers. Includes requests received and associated advice, directions, rulings or submissions prepared and provided in relation to legislation, Senate practice and procedure, parliamentary privilege, or the administration of the Department;</li> <li>final versions of the President's Newsletter;</li> <li>cumulative statistical reports and data on the work of the Senate and/or its committees, such as those recorded in StatsNet, Business of the Senate and Statistical Summary;</li> <li>final versions of reports which provide a consolidated summary of the work of the Senate or report on selected major legislative highlights, committee reports or major procedural matters arising in the Chamber such as Procedural Information Bulletins;</li> </ul> <p><i>[For routine reports and interim updates (e.g. daily, weekly or fortnightly), use 63257.]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>final outcomes of research developed or commissioned by the Department, such as reports, articles, papers or other research outputs. Includes project proposals, approvals and other supporting documents for special or unique research projects, such as those completed to mark anniversaries, special occasions or specific to the history of the Senate or Senators;</li> </ul> <p><i>[For the development of all other research, use 63259.]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>key stages of drafting and processing bills (both government bills and private Senators' bills) and amendments and requests for amendments to such bills (proposed by both government and non-government Senators), from introduction to assent. Includes drafting requests, instructions and advice for bills or amendments, and versions as considered by the Senate (as introduced and as amended), versions as passed by the Senate, and signed assent copies;</li> </ul> <p><i>[For second reading amendments, approvals from Senators to circulate bills, routine drafting, liaison and correspondence, schedules of amendments, use 63259.]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>motions and amendments to motions circulated in the chamber not relating to the stages of legislation, including notices of motion and Clerk's mark-ups;</li> </ul> |                 |

## SENATE CHAMBER SUPPORT

| Class no | Description of records  | Disposal action                        |
|----------|---|--|
|          | <p><i>[For records documenting motions and amendments to motions relating to the consideration of legislation that do not affect the text of bills, use 63259.]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>delegations of authority or authorisations and appointments of authorised officers considered to be high-level, such as those made by the Clerk regarding legislation or functions administered by the Department;</li> <li>Senate seating plans;</li> <li>Clerk's and Deputy Clerk's notes or book (minutes).</li> </ul>  |  |
| 63256    | <p>Records documenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the Order of Business (the 'Red') listing expected business to be dealt with by the Senate; and</li> <li>Dynamic red listing the results of proceedings 'live' in the Chamber as they occur.</li> </ul>  | Destroy 5 years after action completed |
| 63257    | <p>Records documenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>development and review of internal operating procedures and manuals, including final versions;</li> <li>Senate Journals (proof versions);</li> <li>final versions of routine reports, returns, videos or similar interim updates (e.g. daily, weekly or fortnightly) providing a forecast or summary of the work and business of the Senate. For example, The Week Ahead, Senate Daily Summary and Senate Discovery;</li> <li>running sheets listing the ordering of amendments to be considered; and</li> <li>liaison and correspondence with Senators, departments or other external bodies regarding routine programming, procedural or other administrative matters to support business in the Senate. Includes:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>correspondence arising from tabling and programming requirements, motions or Journal and Notice Paper entries;</li> <li>notifications of changes to the Order of Business</li> <li>requests for and preparation of scripts;</li> <li>requests for the tabling of documents and lists of documents to be tabled;</li> <li>correspondence relating to the drafting and processing of bills and amendments;</li> <li>correspondence regarding Questions on Notice, including transfers to relevant Ministers;</li> <li>referrals of petitions or other matters presented to the chairpersons of committees, party leaders or Senators;</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | Destroy 3 years after action completed |

## SENATE CHAMBER SUPPORT

| Class no | Description of records   | Disposal action                                       |
|----------|--|---|
|          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ administrative forms such as authority to meet forms, postponement forms, and extension of time to report forms;</li><li>○ requests for copies of bills.</li></ul>   |   |
| 63258    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• voting papers of secret ballots held in the Chamber, such as those used to elect the President, Deputy President and members of committees.<br/><i>[For administrative arrangements related to the membership of committees, use PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE SUPPORT.]</i></li></ul> | Dispose in accordance with the President's directions |
| 63259    | Records documenting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• routine operational administrative tasks supporting the core business; and</li><li>• Senate Chamber Support activities, other than those covered in classes 63251 and 63256 to 63258.</li></ul>   | Destroy 7 years after action completed                |