



Australian Government

National Archives of Australia

Records Authority
2025/00445355

Parliamentary Committee Support

Department of the Senate

2025



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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 Parliamentary Committee 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.
 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.
 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 2025/00445355

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: Parliamentary Committee 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 Director-General National Archives of Australia	16/12/2025

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE SUPPORT

The core business of providing secretariat and advisory support to committees consisting of Senators and for joint committees which are administered by the Senate. Parliamentary committees are those appointed by the Senate or by both Houses and may include select, standing, joint, statutory, domestic or internal committees which are set up to investigate specific matters of policy, government administration, performance, general matters referred to them, or otherwise deal with the internal operations of the Senate.

The **core activities** include:

- providing advice to, and secretariat support for, the administration and proceedings of committees;
- preparing proceedings content for distribution and publication;
- conducting research and analysing evidence and information received by committees;
- responding to internal or external enquiries about the purpose and progress of committee inquiries;
- preparing reports for the Committee chair and other Committee members, including dissenting reports;
- making arrangements to facilitate committee meetings, public hearings, promotion of inquiries, or the tabling of committee reports.

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

- developing and reviewing internal operating procedures;
- briefing new committee members;
- preparing operational reports and statistics;
- conducting routine research.

Function Note: Class A records relating to this core business 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 proceedings of the Senate as well as records relating to the development and review of Senate practices, rules, procedures or principles which direct the establishment and operation of parliamentary committees, use SENATE CHAMBER SUPPORT.

For the preparation and tabling of notices, reports or other documents in the chamber, use SENATE CHAMBER SUPPORT.

For providing services and support for Senators, including new Senator orientation programs, use SENATORS' SERVICES, EDUCATION & CORPORATE SUPPORT.

Cross references to AFDA Express Version 2

For media releases, media interviews or other relationships with media bodies concerning the work of parliamentary committees, use EXTERNAL RELATIONS.

For planning, managing, and monitoring general customer services provided to public and private sector clients and the public, use EXTERNAL RELATIONS.

For managing committee budgets, expenses and financial transactions, use FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT.

For arranging and/or providing staff training in relation to working with committees, use PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE SUPPORT

For the acquisition of services necessary to support the work of committees, including specialist advisers, use PROCUREMENT.

For records relating to the design, production, printing and distribution of publications as well as master versions of publications produced by the Department, use PUBLICATION.

For departmental committees supporting internal operational and administrative matters, refer to the relevant function in AFDA Express Version 2. For example, use STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT for executive management or audit and risk committees, WORK HEALTH & SAFETY for health and safety committees, or PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT for human resource management committees.

For receiving and responding to requests for access to departmental information under privacy or archives legislation, use TECHNOLOGY & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT.

Cross references to other records authorities

For joint parliamentary committees administered by the House of Representatives, use Records Authority 2021/00338006 PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE SUPPORT (HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES).

For the establishment, management and meetings of advisory bodies, such as the Parliamentary Education Office (PEO) Advisory Committee, use General Records Authority 26 – ADVISORY BODIES.

Class no	Description of records	Disposal action
63255	<p>Records documenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proceedings of and arrangements for parliamentary committees that are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ presented to the committee and authorised to be published, such as submissions and transcripts of evidence and individual statements of Senators' registerable interests; or ○ related to the membership of the committee; or ○ prepared by a departmental officer or adviser to the committee that do not minute the proceedings of the committee or relate to a record presented to the committee. For example, terms of reference and any referrals to the committee, background briefings or correspondence that support but do not record or capture the proceedings of any one committee meeting, committee guidelines, opening statements, questions, prepared especially for the inquiry or a hearing, draft reports and associated amendments, the final committee report including any dissenting reports and any significant background briefings, supporting research, significant correspondence; or ○ any other materials which, in the opinion of the Clerk Assistant (Committees) or Committee Secretary, are required to provide a complete and accurate record of the committees' inquiries. For example, advice provided by the Clerk which 	Retain as national archives

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE SUPPORT

Class no	Description of records	Disposal action
	<p>would not otherwise be captured as a committee record.</p> <p><i>[For routine background briefings, including supporting research, correspondence and other related materials, use class 63265.]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> proceedings of inquiries commissioned by the Senate and established by legislation. For example, the Inquiry established by the <i>Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry Act 1986</i>. the development and review of legislation establishing inquiries commissioned by the Senate; and advice, directions or submissions prepared and provided to or by the President, Clerk or Deputy Clerk or a Senior Executive Officer in relation to the practices and procedures of parliamentary committees or provided directly in relation to the issues before and proceedings of committees. <p><i>[Consideration should be given to any committee records that may potentially fall within a Class A category of records.]</i></p>	
63264	<p>Records documenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> routine arrangements for advertising, photographs or the holding of meetings, briefings, hearings, such as programs and schedules, notifications of upcoming events, and bookings and arrangements for venues, facilities, catering and travel; advice and correspondence relating to routine procedural and administrative matters such as meeting notices, invitations and acceptances, submission invitations, notifications and acknowledgements, mailing and contact lists, and routine correspondence with agencies or submitters; briefing packs prepared for incoming committee members to orientate them on the nature and work of specific committees; <p><i>[For all other senator briefings, use SENATORS' SERVICES, EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SUPPORT.]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> receipt and response to internal or external general enquiries about the purpose and progress of committee inquiries; development and review of internal operational procedures, manuals or checklists, including final versions; and routine reports, statistics, final versions and major 	Destroy 3 years after action completed

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Class no	Description of records	Disposal action
	<p>drafts of newsletters, or other records providing an update or summary of the work committees do in the sitting week, such as the Scrutiny News.</p> <p><i>[For cumulative reports and statistics on the work of the Senate and its committees, use class 63251 in SENATE CHAMBER SUPPORT.]</i></p> <p><i>[For reports of parliamentary committee delegation visits, use class 63253 in SENATORS' SERVICES, EDUCATION & CORPORATE SUPPORT.]</i></p>	
63265	<p>Records documenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• routine operational administrative tasks supporting the core business; and• Parliamentary Committee Support activities, other than those covered in classes 63255 and 63264.	Destroy 7 years after action completed