



Australian Government

National Archives of Australia

Records Authority
2025/00949648

Births, Deaths, and Marriages
Management

External Territory Administration
Commonwealth of Australia

2026



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INTRODUCTION

The National Archives of Australia have developed this records authority to set out the requirements for keeping or destroying records for the core business of Births, Deaths, and Marriages Management within External Territories that are the administrative responsibility of the Commonwealth of Australia, including Norfolk Island and the Indian Ocean Territories. It represents a significant commitment on behalf of Commonwealth institutions (agencies) such as the Norfolk Island Regional Council (NIRC) to understand, create and manage the records of its activities.

This authority is based on the identification and analysis of the business of agencies that administer and operate within Territories of the Commonwealth of Australia. 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 these agencies permission under the *Archives Act 1983*, for the destruction of the temporary records described after the minimum retention period has expired. Retention periods for these temporary records are based on: an assessment of business needs; broader organisational accountability requirements; and community expectations and are approved by the National Archives on the basis of information provided by the 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.

APPLICATION OF THIS AUTHORITY

1. This authority is to be used to determine how long records must be kept. Records are matched to the relevant core business and records class in the authority.
 - Where the minimum retention period has expired and the records are not needed for agency business they should be destroyed as authorised in this authority.
 - Records that have not reached the minimum retention period must be kept until they do.
 - Records that are identified as 'retain as national archives' are to be transferred to the National Archives for preservation.
2. This authority should be used in conjunction with general records authorities such as:
 - [*Administrative Functions Disposal Authority \(AFDA\) Express Version 2*](#) issued by the National Archives to cover business processes and records common to Australian Government agencies; and
 - [*General Records Authority 31 - Destruction of source or original records after digitisation, conversion or migration*](#) (2015).
3. 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.
4. 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.

5. 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.
6. Where the method of recording information changes (for example from an analogue system to a digital system, or when information is migrated from one system to a new system) this authority can still be applied, providing the records document the same core business. The information must be accessible for the period of time prescribed in this authority. The agency will need to maintain continuing access to the information, including digital information, for the periods prescribed in this records authority or until the information is transferred into the custody of the National Archives.
7. In general, retention requirements indicate a minimum period for retention. The agency may extend minimum retention periods if it considers that there is an administrative need to do so, without further reference to the National Archives. Where the NIRC 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.
8. 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*.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. Advice on how to use this authority is available from the agency information manager. If there are problems with the application of the authority that cannot be resolved, please contact 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 2025/00949648

Notice of authorisation

Person to whom notice of authorisation is given:

Heads of Commonwealth institutions
responsible for births, deaths, marriages
in the administration of an External Territory of
the Commonwealth of Australia
listed in the attached Table of agencies authorised

Scott Hackney
a/g General Manager, Norfolk Island Regional Council
Bicentennial Complex, 39 Taylors Rd
Burnt Pine, Norfolk Island 2899

Purpose

Authorises arrangements for the disposal of records in accordance with section 24(2)(b) of the *Archives Act 1983*.

Determines records classed as 'retain as national archives' in this records authority to be part of the archival resources of the Commonwealth under section 3C of the *Archives Act 1983*.

Application

All records relating to Births, Deaths, and Marriages Management administered by Commonwealth institutions within an External Territory of the Commonwealth of Australia.

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 (R1363262025).

| Authorising Officer | Date of issue |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Josephine Secis Assistant Director-General, Collection Management National Archives of Australia | 30 th January 2026 |

BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND MARRIAGES MANAGEMENT

The core business of creating, managing and maintaining personal information registers that record details of birth, death, marriage, adoption and change of name, sex or gender of persons within an External Territory of the Commonwealth of Australia. Includes processing registrations and applications; altering and amending entries; producing and issuing registration and commemorative certificates; managing historical records; authorising and registering marriage celebrants and civil partnership notaries; and conducting civil marriage and civil partnership ceremonies by authorised agency staff. These records underpin individual identity, civil rights, legal entitlements, and government reporting obligations.

The **core activities** include:

- establishing, developing and reviewing policies and procedures on adoption, birth, death and marriage registration, change of name and life events detail certificates;
- receiving and processing notifications of birth (including surrogacy or adoption-related birth notifications), death, and marriage;
- processing applications for registration certificates, including applications and cancellations for certified and commemorative certificates for birth, death, and marriage;
- producing and issuing registration certificates and commemorative certificates, including birth, death and marriage certificates;
- creating and maintaining registers, including a change of name register;
- verifying identity documents for certificate requests, and validating statutory declarations;
- amending and correcting registered information, including change of name, gender marker changes, and birth record corrections (Vital Records Processing applications);
- collecting and maintaining information related to registerable events, including documentation of court orders, such as those related to adoption and surrogacy, statutory declarations, and legal evidence supporting amendments;
- providing public access to historical data;
- authorising and registering marriage celebrants and civil partnership notaries;
- performing marriage and civil partnership ceremonies, and providing marriage and civil partnership celebrant services, including record-keeping of marriage bookings, applications, and ceremony details;
- completing registry data management activities, including exchanging encrypted data with external agencies. Includes the secure management, maintenance and use of data sets provided to the agency by other Australian registries and central agencies, such as Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS); and
- sharing data with government agencies, including data related to social services, electoral matters and passports.

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

- providing and receiving advice;
- planning and reporting;
- evaluating and reviewing;
- delegating powers and authorising actions;

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- identifying, assessing and managing risks;
- planning, conducting and facilitating audits; and
- receiving and responding to general enquiries.

Cross references to AFDA Express Version 2

For staff training records, use PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

For user access logs or system security reports, use TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

For invoices and procurement documentation, use FINANCIAL MANAGMENT

For marketing or promotional material for commemorative certificates, use PUBLICATION

Media releases (e.g. promoting commemorative certificates or changes to service), use PUBLICATION

| Class no | Description of records | Disposal action |
|----------|--|-----------------------------|
| 63300 | <p>Records documenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the establishment, development and review of policies and procedures related to adoption, birth, death and marriage registration, change of name, and life detail certificates; • registrations, applications and certifications, including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ birth registration forms submitted by parents and hospitals; ○ marriage and civil partnership registration documents from celebrants or religious institutions; ○ death registration notices and informant forms from funeral directors, coroners, hospitals and others; ○ registers of birth, death, marriage, adoption, and surrogacy, including change of name, gender or sex changes, and other legislated registers; ○ register indexes; ○ amendments and corrections to official records, including birth, death and marriage certificates. Includes evidence of amendments and corrections; ○ application forms for corrections to birth, death, or marriage certificates; ○ court orders for change of name, gender changes, or adoption; ○ statutory declarations and supporting medical reports for identity updates; ○ marriages and marriage celebrant services; ○ appointment records; | Retain as national archives |

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| Class no | Description of records | Disposal action |
|----------|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ consent forms for underage marriages; and ○ birth, death, and marriage notifications. | |
| 63301 | <p>Records documenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • registry data management (e.g. ongoing management of systems and databases); • Australian Coordinating Registry (ACR) data sets; • client files (e.g. records relating to the authorised applicants that have been approved to receive data files from the registers); and • data set cleansing. | Destroy 85 years after action completed or after date of creation whichever is later |
| 63302 | <p>Records documenting certificate applications, not covered in 63300, including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completed application forms requesting certificates and information requests for standard or commemorative certificates; <p><i>[For initial applications for the issue of certification after registration, use 63300].</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • correspondence with applicants regarding certificate requests or errors; • proof of identity documents (e.g. passport, driver's licence) submitted with applications; and • notifications of requests for data-sharing agreements with other government agencies for verification purposes (e.g. social services, electoral matters and passports). | Destroy 10 years after action completed |
| 63303 | <p>Records documenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • routine operational administrative tasks supporting the core business function; and • core activities, other than those covered in classes 63300 to 63302. | Destroy 7 years after action completed |