Tune Review and funding measure update

ITEM 4

Presenter/Director	Ruth Fenwick, Chief Operating Officer	**Approved by:**	Ruth Fenwick, Chief Operating Officer
Recommendation(s)	That the Advisory Council **note:** 1. The Government Response to the Functional and Efficiency Review of the National Archives of Australia (Tune Review) at **Attachment A.** 2. The Defend the Past, Protect the Future program of work established in response to the Tune Review.		
Key Points	To address the current challenges faced by the National Archives, and in response to the Review, the Government invested $67.7 million in the Defend the Past, Protect the Future Program. The program will enable: • Digitisation and preservation of the National Archives' at-risk collection over an accelerated four-year digitisation program. • Additional staffing and capability to address backlogs for 'access applications' for Commonwealth records and provide improved Digitisation on Demand service. • Investment in cybersecurity and further development of the National Archives' Next Generation Digital Archive to facilitate secure and timely transfer of records to the National Archives' custody, their preservation and digital access. On 19 August 2021, the Government released its response to the Tune Review. The Government agreed or agreed in-principle all 20 recommendations of the Tune Review (**Attachment A**).		
Detail	**Government Response to the Tune Review** Recommendations agreed by the Government are: 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20. These recommendations include those that the National Archives is (has) implementing within existing resources, and those that will be implemented through the new funding provided for in the Defend the Past, Protect the Future Program. Recommendations agreed in-principle are: 4, 5, 6, 9, 10 and 11. Implementation of these recommendations may involve an alternative approach or require careful consideration of funding implications as part of future budget processes. A table summarising the implementation approach for all recommendations is at **Attachment B**. **Defend the Past, Protect the Future Program** The Program, established in response to the Tune Review (2020), has funding of $67.7m across 2021-22 to 2024-25, for the following measures: s 22(1)		

s 22(1)

Measure 3: Information Policy, Agency Engagement and Declassification Capability – includes:

- Creation of 'strike outreach teams' capability, to work on-site with agencies to improve their information management processes, the speed of progressing record applications, understanding and capability of government entities to implement information and data policy obligations, enhanced training, records-authorities development and contemporary archival skills.
- Expansion of the skilled (security classified) capability and capacity to reduce the extensive declassification backlogs for record applications.

The budget is $9.4m over four years.

s 22(1)

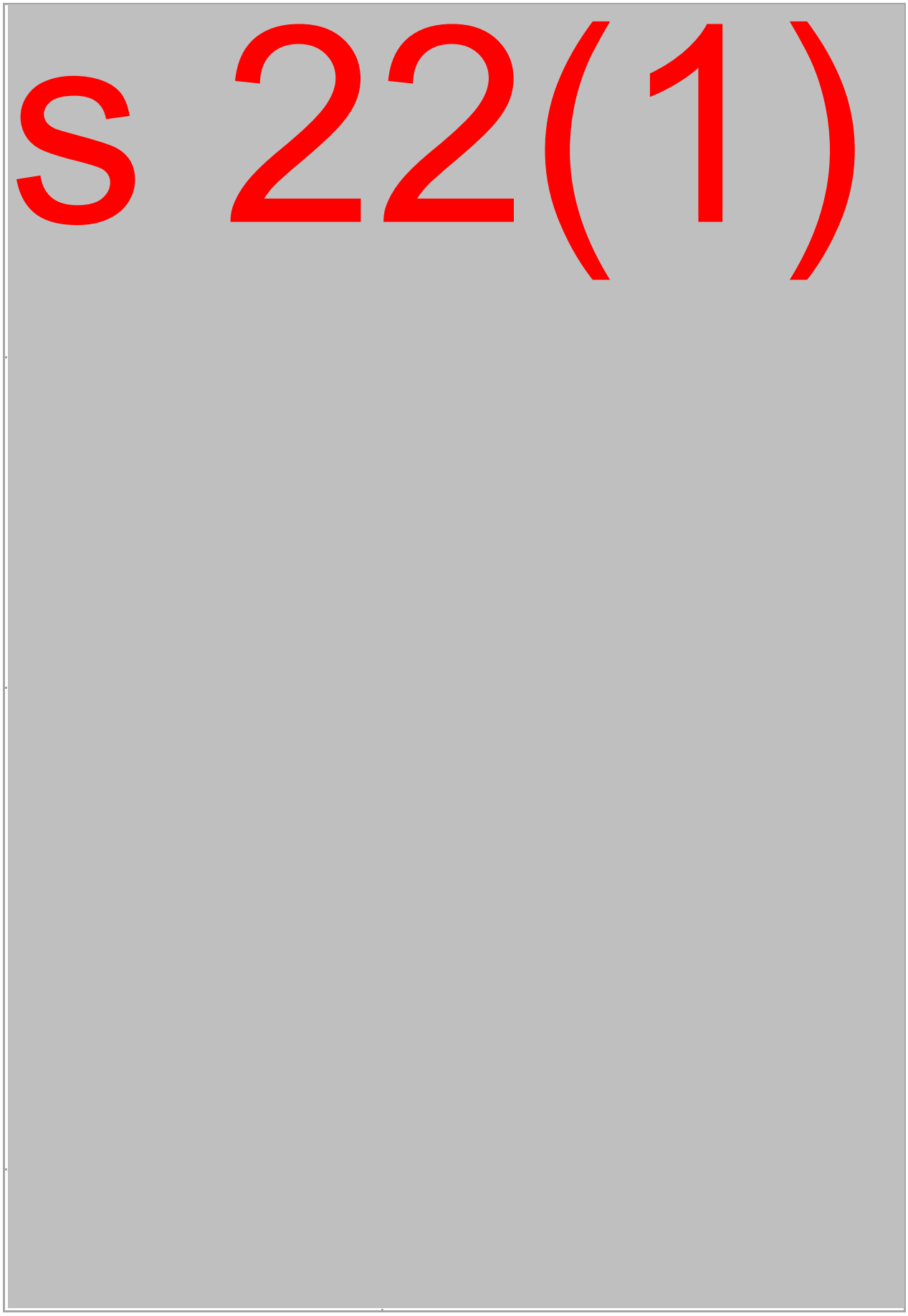
REPORT RATING	Green – No Issues		Orange – Some Issues		Red – Urgent Issues	
Dashboard		☒		☐		☐

Attachments:

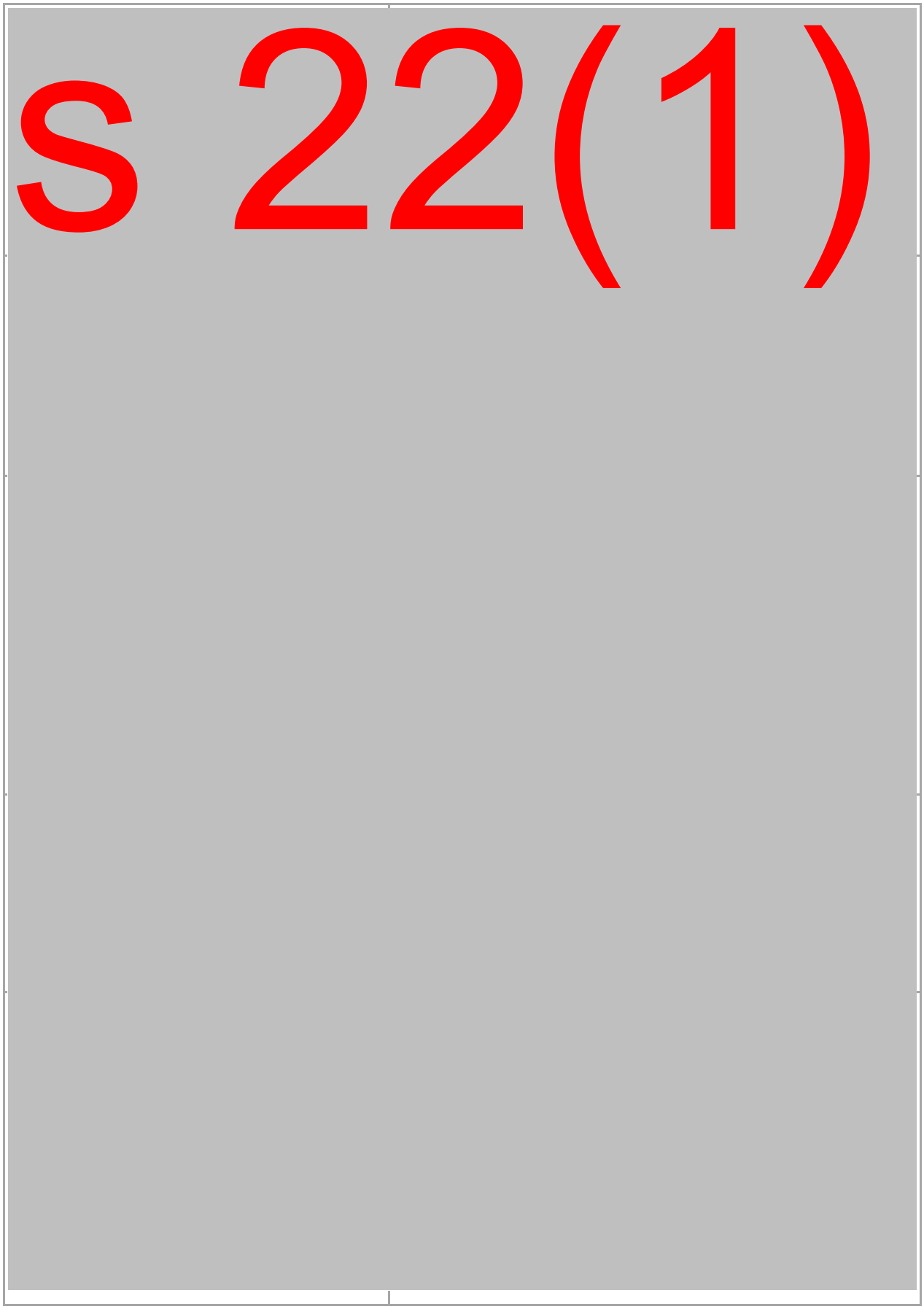
Attachment A: Government Response to the Tune Review.

Attachment B: Implementation of Tune Review recommendations.

Tune Recommendation	Response to Tune Review Recommendation
s 22(1)	


s 22(1)

s 22(1)	
Recommendation 11: The National Archives allocate extra resources and alter its processes for applications of non-sensitive records and for classified and highly sensitive records to: • reduce the requirement to refer applications for advice • increase capacity to declassify records • introduce charging options for valued-added research requests • implement a new regime of negotiated outcomes for high-volume research requests, with the aim of reducing the burden and the time taken to make decisions on very large requests • complete set up of digital capability for secure connectivity and information exchange with relevant policy agencies.	Implemented as part of **Measure 3: Information Policy, Agency Engagement and Declassification Capability**: • create 'strike outreach teams' capability, to work on-site with agencies to improve their information management processes, the speed of progressing record applications, understanding and capability of government entities to implement information and data policy obligations, enhanced training, records-authorities development and contemporary archival skills • expand the skilled (security classified) capability and capacity to reduce the extensive declassification backlogs for record applications. This recommendation will also be partially addressed through the development of a service catalogue that would support charging options. The set-up of digital capability for secure connectivity and information exchange with relevant policy agencies.is not included in the measures.


s 22(1)


s 22(1)

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA

Program Board

Submission **Defend the Past, Protect the Future – Program Update**

ITEM **3.1**

Presenter s 47F(1) Program Manager

Approved by Brooke Anderson, Assistant Director General, Transformation Office, Senior Responsible Officer

Recommendations	That the Program Board: 1. **Endorse** the closure of the Defend the Past, Protect the Future Program. 2. **Note** the Defend the Past, Protect the Future Program and Project Closure Reports (**Attachments A:H**)
Key Points	Endorsement is sought from the Program Board to formally close the Defend the Past, Protect the Future (DPPF) Program. The program's deliverables and funding ceased on 30 June 2025 in accordance with the approved scope and schedule. All work under the program has either ceased or been successfully transitioned to business-as-usual operations. Program and project teams have met all requirements of the Portfolio Management Framework (PMF) in relation to closure activities, ensuring compliance with governance standards. All documentation has been captured in National Archives record management system with a consolidated program and project artefact register supporting traceability. The attached program and project closure reports (**Attachments A:H**) provide a detailed record of activities undertaken, including deliverables achieved, lessons learned, and benefits realised. A summary of the program's key achievements is also included in the reports and is outlined for the Board's reference. s 22(1) • Actioned 20,795 backlog access applications, development of new policy, guidelines, and training materials. s 22(1)
Background	On 1 July 2021, the Australian Government announced funding of $67.7 million to the National Archives of Australia to provide a boost for its critical functions as the custodian of Australia's history through the preservation of Commonwealth records. This funding was an initial response to the recommendations of the Functional and efficiency review of the National Archives of Australia (Tune Review), which included 20 recommendations to be considered by Government. The funding provided did not cover all recommendations of the Tune Review.

	To maximise the effectiveness of the funding, National Archives undertook an assessment of which Tune Review recommendations were able to be progressed and created the DPPF Program to deliver these actions. The program included the following strategic objectives: • Measure 1.0 - Digitisation and ingest of at-risk collections • Measure 2.3 - Consolidated collections storage & digitisation • Measure 3.1 - Engagement with agencies to improve their information management • Measure 3.2 - Expansion of capacity and capability to address access examination backlog • Measure 4.0 - Preservation and security of collections • Measure 5.0 - Strategic leadership & change management
Decision Category	The program has reached the conclusion of the delivery stage and is requesting the Program Boards endorsement to move to close the program under the Governance and Decision Framework's stage gate category.

s 22(1)

s 22(1)

s 22(1)

	The DPPF closure is to be presented for noting to the Project Assurance Committee (PAC01, 27 August 2025), Audit and Risk Committee (ARC122, 28 August 2025) and the Executive Board (EB03, 2 September 2025).
Assumptions	N/A
Risk Rating	N/A

Attachments:

s 22(1)

Attachment E: DPPF Program Measure 3.2 Closure Report

s 22(1)

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA

Project Closure Report Defend the Past Protect the Future Measure 3.2

Project Name	**DPPF Measure 3.2**	**Project Reg No.**	
Business Area	Access Examination		
Project Sponsor	A/g ADG of Access and Public Engagement – Danniella McGowen		
Reason for Closure	The project concluded given the closure of the Defend the Past, Protect the Future Program on 30 June 2025.		
Executive Summary	The original objective for DPPF Measure 3.2 was the expansion of the skilled capability and capacity of access examiners and to reduce the extensive access examination backlog for access applications to records. • Examination of access applications (20,331 at 30 June 2021) with the objective to reduce the backlog by June 2025 (R746472021). • Negotiation and establishment of new Section 35 arrangements (with a focus on critical central agencies first such as Defence, Australian Intelligence Community (AIC) Agencies, Australian Federal Police (AFP), Attorney-General's Department (AGD), Department of Home Affairs). • Development of supporting guidelines and policies, for Section 35 arrangements. • Training and development of access examiners. • Upgrade to Integrated Computing Network (ICN) High (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)) to implement digital access examination workflows with DFAT. s 33(a)(ii) • Development of a reporting tool to provide key insightful reports, key metrics, to enable enquiry and analyse data captured in the Reference and Access Module of RecordSearch. Following recalibration the objectives were amended for the final financial year to: • Action the backlog of access applications as at 31 December 2024 (24,010 [baseline]), with all applications having either a National Archives decision recorded or are in a status of 'withheld pending agency advice'.		

	• National Archives access examination capability increase through training and support material. • Key agencies have formal Section 35 agreements, with accompanying guidelines in place. The delivery of the outcomes was largely achieved within planned timeframes, allocated resources and budget. As part of Measure 3.2 Access Examination has: • Actioned 20,795 of backlog access applications. 12,074 applications have a decision recorded and 8,721 have a status of 'withheld pending agency advice'. • Increased National Archives access examination capability through training and access examination guidance through the production of an access examination framework for external audiences and the development of an access examination handbook and access examination guidelines. These documents support the streamlining of business processes along. Monthly reporting was also improved supported by procedures and reports and a new dashboard to provide key data on current access applications. • Commenced the development of Section 35 arrangements with key agencies, including Defence, DFAT, ASIS, ASIO, ONI, PM&C, Home Affairs, ASD, AFP and OSGG, with accompanying guidelines in place. One of the biggest successes of the project was the capability uplift of staff along with access examination policies and procedures. This is an excellent investment for the future of access examination. The project also provided opportunities to understand the access examination backlog and explore new innovative methods for approaching access examination. Through the project the National Archives relationships with agencies have matured and become more collaborative.
Background	On 1 July 2021, the Australian Government announced funding of $67.7 million to the National Archives of Australia to provide a boost for its critical functions as the custodian of Australia's history through the preservation of Commonwealth records. This funding was an initial response to the recommendations of the *Functional and efficiency review of the National Archives of Australia* (Tune Review), which included 20 recommendations to be considered by Government. The funding provided did not cover all recommendations of the Tune Review. To maximise the effectiveness of the funding, National Archives undertook an assessment of which Tune Review recommendations were able to be progressed and created the DPPF Program to deliver these actions. **Measure 3.2** was stood up as a DPPF project to expand the capability and capacity of access examiners and reduce the extensive access examination backlog of access applications.

Project Appraisal

<table>
<tr><th>Type</th><th>Detail</th></tr>
<tr><td>Achievements of Project Objectives</td><td>
Reducing the backlog 2021 to 2024
At commencement of DPPF on 30 June 2021, there were 20,331 applications in the access examination backlog, which included applications submitted from 1 January 2003 to 30 June 2021. 7,678 applications (38%) were completed and 2,825 had been referred to agencies for advice by 30 June 2024.

The progress of the remaining deliverables at 30 June 2024 are summarised in the following table.

<table>
<tr><th>Deliverables</th><th>Progress (%)</th></tr>
<tr><td>M3.2.1 Recruitment and on-boarding of ASL</td><td>100%</td></tr>
<tr><td>M3.2.2 Backlog reduced by 1500 applications</td><td>100%</td></tr>
<tr><td>M3.2.3 Backlog reduced by a further 7000 applications</td><td>37%</td></tr>
<tr><td>M3.2.4 Backlog reduced by a further 7500 applications</td><td>0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>M3.2.5 Reduce backlog by remaining 4331</td><td>0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>M3.2.6 Training for NAA and agency examiners undertaken</td><td>100%</td></tr>
<tr><td>M3.2.7 Training for NAA and agency examiners undertaken</td><td>100%</td></tr>
<tr><td>M3.2.8 Training for NAA and agency examiners undertaken</td><td>100%</td></tr>
<tr><td>M3.2.9 Training for NAA and agency examiners undertaken</td><td>75%</td></tr>
<tr><td>M3.2.10 Training for NAA and agency examiners undertaken</td><td>25%</td></tr>
<tr><td>M3.2.11 Training for NAA and agency examiners undertaken</td><td>10%</td></tr>
<tr><td>M3.2.12 Training for NAA and agency examiners undertaken</td><td>0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>M3.2.13 Training for NAA and agency examiners undertaken</td><td>0%</td></tr>
<tr><td>M3.2.14 Three s35 arrangements with ONI, Defence, and ASIO revised and/or implemented</td><td>80%</td></tr>
<tr><td>M3.2.15 Six s35 arrangements with ASIS, Home Affairs, AGD, OOSGG, PM&C, ASD revised and/or implemented</td><td>50%</td></tr>
<tr><td>M3.2.16 Six s35 arrangements with key agencies revised and/or implemented</td><td>0%</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
</table>

M3.2.17 Six s35 arrangements with key agencies revised and/or implemented	0%
M3.2.18 Improved secure connectivity with DFAT	85%
s 33(a)(ii)	s 33(a)(ii)
M3.2.20 Improved business processes developed and implemented	72%
M3.2.21 Assessment of performance and productivity levels to identify and map key metrics to improve reporting	66%
M3.2.22 Project closure and evaluation	0%

Post recalibration

The project was recalibrated for the 2024-25 financial year. As a result of this recalibration, the original outcomes were revised, and the original outcome of secure connectivity was removed as a deliverable (R880502024 and R259632025).

The revised outcomes for 2024-25 were as follows:

M3.2.1 Clear National Archives backlog

- This performance measure was defined as applications having either a decision recorded or are in a status of 'withheld pending agency advice'.
- The outcome was partially achieved. The backlog was not cleared but substantially reduced. As at 24 June 2025, 4,396 applications were completed, 8,721 applications have been assessed and require referral to agencies for advice and 10,893 remain outstanding.

M3.2.2 Deliver access examination eLearning course

- Achieved. After a procurement process Custom Learning Design were engaged to develop an eLearning module. The final version will be live in July 2025.
- In relation to the milestones baseline training and the Access provisions of the Archives Act 1983 – public access, why access is refused, review of decisions are covered in the e-learning course.
- Security training not developed as this is covered by annual refresher training and the Security Advisory Unit can provide any additional advice. Once the handbook and the framework are completed training sessions on how to use the documents will be delivered.

M3.2.3 Access examination in location training to Sydney office

- This outcome was achieved.
- Senior examination staff from Canberra have visited the Sydney office twice to provide more detailed in-house training on complex examination matters

M3.2.4 Access examination in location training for state and territory office examiners in Canberra

- This outcome was achieved.
- Staff from every STO visited Canberra for face-to-face training.

M3.2.5 Access Examination Policy

<table>
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This outcome was achieved.
An external contractor was engaged to review and develop an Access Examination Framework.

M3.2.6 Access Examination Handbook

This outcome was achieved.
An external contractor was engaged to review the 2014 Access Examination Manual and revise and update.

M3.2.7 Section 35 arrangements with specific agencies

This outcome was partially achieved.
An approved template for section 35 arrangements has been developed.
Engagement with some agencies slowed though consultation with line areas as well as seeking independent legal advice. Some agencies did not have sufficient resources to support the development of a new arrangement.
This delay has not impacted the National Archives. In practice regards are referred to agencies as needed without a formal arrangement in place.

</td></tr>
<tr><td>Business Requirements</td><td>
Several business requirements supported the delivery of project objectives.
M3.2.1 - Access application backlog

applications were examined by theme to streamline examination and referral
agency collaboration was fostered though facilitating onsite visits and agency training for examiners on key sensitivities.
assessed backlog applications for validity

M3.2.2 – eLearning course

external provider contracted
foundational access examination training content created for online delivery
final eLearning module will be delivered by 30 June 2025 ready for upload to Learnhub

M3.2.3 – in location training for Sydney office staff

extra training for Sydney access examiners based on identification of complex records
Senior Canberra Access Examiner staff travelled to Sydney and trained staff
Sydney staff travelled to Canberra for training with an agency to support them to identify sensitive records in personal records collections that require referral

M3.2.4 – in location training for state and territory office examiners in Canberra

All State and Territory offices were visited by senior Canberra based staff who delivered foundation access examination training.
Staff from every state and territory office had the opportunity to come to Canberra for face-to-face training and immersion in the Access Examination section. In total 26 staff travelled to Canberra with the breakdown by office as follows:

<table>
<tr><th>STO</th><th>No. of staff</th></tr>
<tr><td>Queensland</td><td>5</td></tr>
<tr><td>New South Wales</td><td>4</td></tr>
</table>
</td></tr>
</table>

Victoria	5
Tasmania	3
South Australia	2
Western Australia	2
Northern Territory	1

- Larger state offices such as NSW and VIC received more than one visit from senior Canberra based staff which allowed deeper engagement with the access examination process.
- Capability of all access examiners has been enhanced.
- More robust and defensible decisions are now being made.
- All access examination staff now have a greater appreciation of the many different types of records across the collection.
- There has been a significant uplift in collaboration across National Archives with monthly forums for access examiners and regular engagement between staff.
- Having staff physically immersed in the Canberra access examination team provided staff with greater exposure to a variety of records and a broader range of sensitivities that may need to be considered for exemption
- STO staff now have increased confidence the process of decision making and are able to better articulate access examination queries.

M3.2.5 - Access Examination policy

- A new Access Examination Framework has been developed to replace the personal and business affairs policy.
- It is undergoing Director review and approval ahead of ADG authorisation.

M3.2.6 - Access Examination Handbook

- A contractor was engaged to complete a review of the existing manual and update the content
- The final draft is out for consultation before being socialised across the organisation.

M3.2.7 - Section 35 arrangements

Status of section 35 arrangements with key agencies are as follows:

- Defence – draft section 35 arrangement still awaiting internal consultation
- Australian Signals Directorate – draft provided for consideration
- Official Secretary of the Governor-General – section 35 arrangement has been drafted, awaiting authorisation from Prime Minister to consult with Director-General of National Archives
- Prime Minister and Cabinet, Department of Home Affairs and the Office of National Assessments – initial meetings held in January 2025

The following objectives are not included in the business requirements as they were removed as part of the recalibration.

- Improved connectivity with DFAT via ICN high including the addition of a high-speed scanner

s 33(a)(ii)

Quality

The planned acceptance criteria were not clearly articulated in the original objectives and needed to be revisited over the span of the project. This included the following:

1. Allowing for greater lead time for access examiners to be cleared and briefed has been identified as one of the lessons learnt from this project.
2. Regular setbacks with a key agency throughout the lifetime of the project led to major disruptions in access examination workflows. This issue was outside the scope of the project and required senior executive intervention.
3. Key deliverables on Section 35 arrangements with key agencies were not met. BAU workflows including Cabinet examination, response Section 40 requests and DPPF project examination placed extra time restraints and pressure on agencies. These external factors were not considered at the beginning of the project.
4. A contractor was engaged in July 2024 to complete the Access Examination Handbook and framework. The contractor's initial lack of Access Examination knowledge slowed progress and was resource heavy. The editing process was also time consuming, but having an independent author ensured that contextual information was appropriately pitched for new and experienced staff.

Cost

The 2024/25 actual expenses listed in this report are current as of 8 July 2025 and are subject to change as the National Archives Finance Team finalise the 2024/25 Financial Statements. Any material changes will be reported through the Program Board.

Operational Expenses

	2021/22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
Budget	2,037,661.00	3,465,509.00	860,170.00	1,230,000.00	7,593,340.00
Actuals	289,729	989,318.04	504,372.53	1,058,448.07	2,841,867.64
Variance	**-1,747,932.00**	**-2,476,190.96**	**- 355,797.47**	**-171,551.93**	**-4,751,472.36**

Capital Expenses

	2021/22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
Budget	150,392.00	265,392.00	100,000.00	60,000.00	575,784.00
Actuals		143,505.49		18,000.00	161,505.49
Variance	**-150,392.00**	**-121,886.51**	**-100,000.00**	**- 42,000.00**	**-414,278.51**

The revised project plan (R259632025) for Measure 3.2 following recalibration (R502132024) included an additional $145,247 operational funding and $10,000 capital funding than was originally allocated for 2024-25 financial year to facilitate the creation and rollout of staff learning tools, resources and training events.

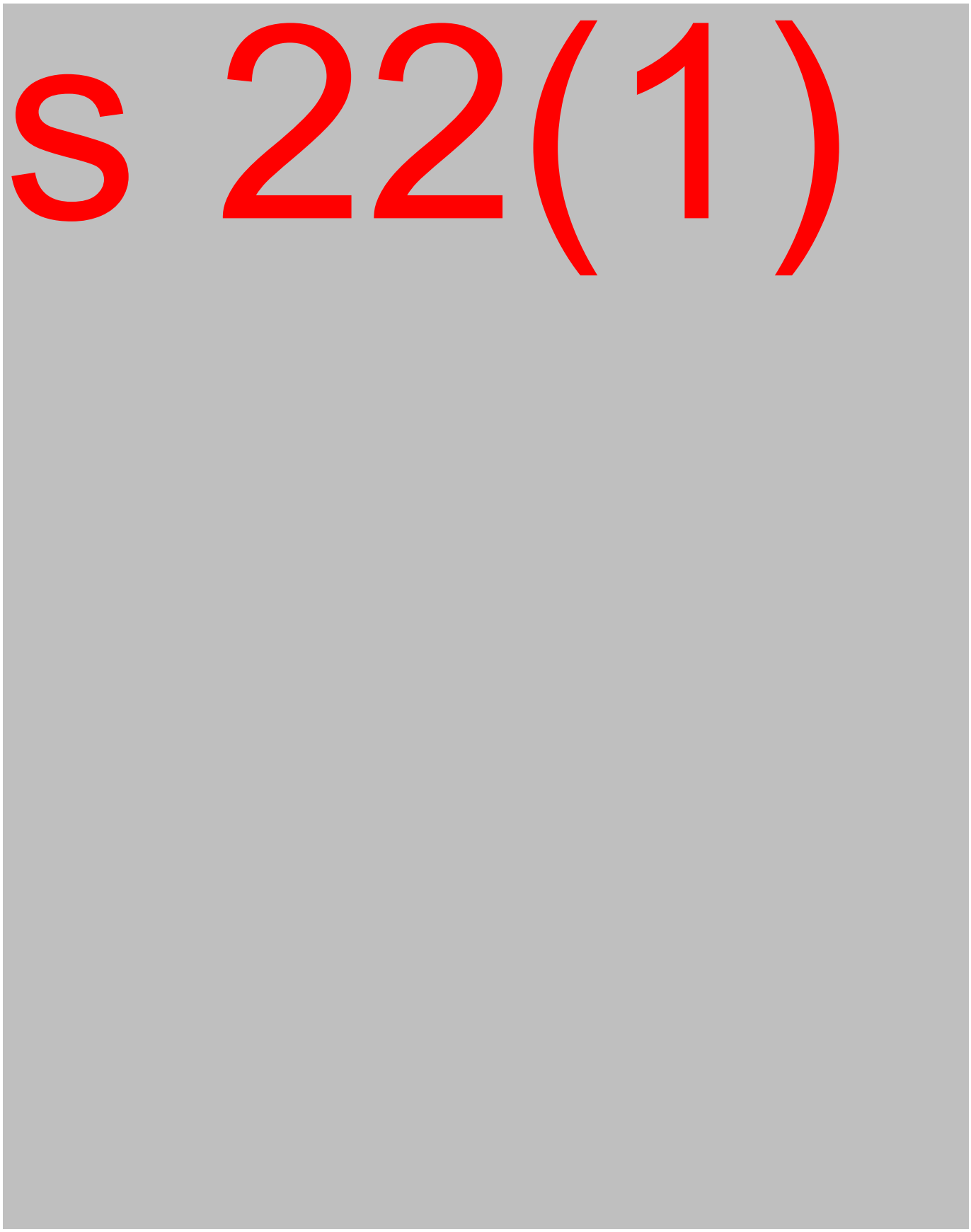
Time	Planned start date: 1 July 2021 Original planned end date: 30 June 2025 Actual start date: 1 August 2021 Actual end date: 30 June 2025 The planned start date for Measure 3.2 was 1 August 2021 however, it was noted on the 6 January 2022 that full commencement of the project was delayed by approximately six months. The delay was primarily caused by the ACT COVID lockdown which impacted recruitment processes and people working from home were unable to examine records.
Benefits Achieved to Date	• Completion of 12,074 applications, and 8,721 applications have been assessed and require referral to agencies • Delivery of Access Examination framework and handbook to provide guidance to decision makers • An e-learning package that introduces the Archives Act and access examination that can be used by the National Archives and other agencies. • Training and development of access examiners decision making skills was achieved. • Creation of a new Section 35 template, and engagement with agencies to progress the development of new arrangements. • Development of a capability frameworks for access examination positions and a learning pathway for new examiners. • Increased agency engagement, particularly with the National Intelligence Community, that has increased trust and knowledge of sensitivities in records. • Working with agencies collaboratively to discuss options for managing access • examination within resourcing constraints. • Documented workflows to support onsite agency visits and record referrals.

Transition to Business AsUsual Operations

Follow-on Actions	**Training:** • The Capability Frameworks can be used to highlight key skills, knowledge and behaviours required to uplift examination capability nationally. They also service as a useful tool during IWP discussions to identify individual capability gaps. • Once the future Access Examination structure and funding model are determined post-June 2025, the development of a Professional Development Program would ensure ongoing capability development for all staff. • The learning pathway will provide a consistent and structured introductory training regime, but to remain current will require an annual review. • The eLearning package will enhance baseline training and may be used as a proof of concept to develop further modules. **Enhanced business processes and procedures:** • A clear approval process and up to date templates will simplify and speed up the review process for procedures. **Access Examination Framework and handbook:**

	• Delivery of the handbook on SharePoint will allow access examiners to easily find relevant information relating to the examination process. • The framework will provide guidance on the access examination process more broadly to relevant stakeholders. **Section 35 arrangements:** • An approved and updated template will allow support engagement with agencies.
Handover Activities	The Access Examination Framework and Access Examination handbook, and the e-learning have been allocated to ongoing in the Access Examination Section for completion.
Risks and Issues	The Access Examination backlog was not completed, which relates to the following risks: • Agencies expectations impacting ability and willingness to provide advice on applications in the access examination backlog, impeding workflows and delaying program delivery • Delay in securing appropriate clearances Access examination resources outside DPPF, has not been able to keep up tithe the incoming applications. One other identified risk was Section 35 arrangements unable to be signed and finalised. In a practical sense this has not impacted the referral of records under this project.
System Owner	Not applicable
Business Owner	Not applicable




s 22(1)

s 22(1)

Sign Off

Project Manager	Project Sponsor
Name: s 47F(1)	Name: Danniella McGowen
Title: Director, Access Examination	Title: Acting ADG Access & Public Engagement
Signature: s 47F(1) Digitally signed by s 47F(1) Date: 2025.07.09 11:59:53 +10'00'	Signature: Danni McGowen Digitally signed by Danni McGowen Date: 2025.07.11 11:00:42 +10'00'


s 22(1)

National Archives of Australia - Access Examination
Average Staffing Levels (ASL) over the years 2021-22 to 2025-26, inclusive:

Access Examination

FY	**ASL**
2025-26	19.1
2024-25	20.1
2023-24	18.4
2022-23	22.7
2021-22	16.7

And

Access Examination – DPPF measure 3.2

FY	**ASL**
2024-25	8
2023-24	8
2022-23	12
2021-22	17

s 22(1)

s 22(1)

s 22(1)

Defend the Past, Protect the Future - ASL planning

s 22(1)

s 22(1)