



**NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF AUSTRALIA**

# **Disposal of records in the Archives' custody following digitisation – Policy**

**National Archives of Australia**

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**Australian Government**  
**National Archives of Australia**

## DOCUMENT CONTROL PRINCIPLES

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## 1. POLICY OVERVIEW

This policy outlines the National Archives of Australia's (the Archives) framework for disposing of records of archival value in its custody following digitisation. It specifies the categories of records to which the policy applies and the requirements which must be met in order to ensure the proper care of the archival resources of the Commonwealth.

Records identified as being eligible for disposal after digitisation:

- are in, or are proposed for transfer to, the National Archives' custody;
- are Commonwealth government records;
- are in personal records collections;
- are in any format;
- are generally of continuing value;
- are of any age; and
- have no intrinsic value (see Appendix 2) or legal requirement to keep in their original medium.

There are a number of key factors which indicate the suitability of records for disposal after digitisation including:

- creation post-1980;
- uniformity of format;
- access status and accessibility;
- legibility and machine-readability;
- ability to be extracted as metadata;
- instability of format;
- cost-benefit of keeping records in the original form.

The policy also requires that:

- source records are digitised to a standard which ensures the digital reproduction is functionally equivalent to the archival record as a minimum;
- digital reproductions are stored, preserved and managed under the same governance arrangements and by the same storage, control and description management systems that are used for born-digital or digitised records transferred directly from agencies;
- source records are digitised at a recognised level of aggregation (eg transfer job, series);
- both digital record and access masters are created; and
- digital reproductions are described to support their ongoing management.

This policy may be referred to as the 'Digitise & Dispose Policy', 'Digitise & Dispose' or, within this document as 'this policy'.

## 2. PURPOSE

This policy describes the Archives' approach to the disposal of records of archival value in its custody following digitisation to an agreed standard. The policy is driven by the Archives' role as the lead agency for the Australian Government's Digital Transition Policy, and the application of General Records Authority 31 (GRA 31) by the Archives to the disposal of source records of archival value in its custody after digitisation. The policy also complements the Government's *E-Government and the Digital Economy Policy* by supporting the online provision of goods and services and the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* by ensuring proper use of public resources.

The Digital Transition Policy has a number of requirements including the digitisation of paper records where it provides efficiencies or other benefits, and the replacement of paper-based work processes with digital practices. As the lead agency for this Policy, the Archives, in undertaking a review of its Digitisation Program, considered where physical records could be replaced by digital reproductions. Not all records in the custody of the Archives can or should be replaced by digital reproductions. This policy identifies characteristics of records which render them suitable for disposal after digitisation, as well as those which render them unsuitable. The policy further identifies the benefits and risks of this activity.

General Records Authority 31 ('Destruction of source or original records after digitisation, conversion or migration', GRA 31) which is issued under section 24 of the *Archives Act 1983*, authorises Commonwealth agencies, including the Archives, to destroy source records (including those of archival value) created after 1 January 1980 following digitisation. GRA 31 provides the basis for authorisation of disposal activities covered by this policy. In addition, this policy sets out the conditions under which the destruction of records created before 1980, or disposal via means other than destruction, can be authorised.

Digitisation of records improves public access and supports long-term preservation. In addition, disposal of records after digitisation reduces storage demand and costs, and increases the storage available for other records of archival value which need to be retained in their original medium. This enables the Archives to use space strategically to enable the transfer of at-risk material of continuing value held in agencies which has intrinsic value in the original medium.

## 3. LEGISLATIVE BASIS

Under the *Archives Act 1983*, the Archives' functions are to:

- select, care for, preserve and provide access to the archival resources of the Commonwealth; and
- specify records management requirements for Commonwealth government agencies.

Section 3C of the Act authorises the Director-General of the Archives to determine the 'archival resources of the Commonwealth', that is, those records of continuing value to the Government, the Australian community and individual citizens.

Under section 24 of the Act, the Archives is empowered to authorise the disposal of Commonwealth records. The Archives documents its permission for the disposal including destruction, transfer of custody or ownership, or retention of Commonwealth records by issuing Records Authorities. Records of continuing value are designated as retain as national archives (RNA) and are generally transferred to the Archives once they fall out of regular business use.

General Records Authority 31 is issued under section 24 to authorise the disposal of source (including original) records after they have been digitised, converted or migrated, provided the reproductions are functionally equivalent to the source records. This includes records created post-1980 which have been designated as archival resources of the Commonwealth (RNA) where there is no archival value in the original medium or legal requirement to be kept in the original medium.

GRA 31, and this Policy, do not authorise the destruction of the source record of an archival resource of the Commonwealth where there is archival value (referred to as 'intrinsic value') in the source medium. See Appendix 2 for further details on intrinsic value.

#### **4. SCOPE**

The policy covers records which:

- are in, or are proposed for transfer to, the Archives custody;
- are Commonwealth government records;
- are in personal records collections;
- are in any format;
- are generally of continuing value; and
- are of any age.

The policy excludes records which are:

- identified as having intrinsic value in their original medium;
- required to be kept in their original format for legal reasons;
- are subject to a current request under legislation;
- born-digital records managed digitally; or
- not in the Archives' custody and not proposed for imminent transfer.

##### **4.1 Discussion**

The following paragraphs describe the specific consideration of format, age, disposal status, custody and intrinsic value in determining the application of the policy.

These factors do not preclude records from being disposed of after digitisation for other reasons, eg deteriorating physical condition.



#### **4.1.1 Format**

The application of this policy is not restricted by format. It is likely however that the majority of records which are eligible for disposal after digitisation will be in paper formats. Other policy requirements may render records in other formats ineligible for disposal after digitisation, for example where they cannot be digitised to a functionally equivalent standard (eg audio-visual formats) or where the format conveys information that cannot be rendered by a digital reproduction (eg 3D objects). With audio-visual formats in particular, the standards and technology are continually advancing, and there is no evidence that digital versions produced now will be suitable substitutes for the original in future.

Personal collections have also been included in the policy based on the acknowledgement that other factors such as the requirement to seek approval from the depositor (controlling agency or person) will impact on their eligibility for disposal after digitisation. The different relationship with depositors as well as the mixed nature of records in the collections (personal and Commonwealth) will also contribute to the decision.

#### **4.1.2 Age**

The application of the policy is not restricted by the age of the records. While records created from the date authorised for disposal by GRA 31 (currently post-1980) meet the priority indicator for disposal after digitisation, records created prior to this date are not excluded. Where pre-1980 records are identified as suitable and meet the policy requirements, their disposal can be authorised via the issue of a specific records authority. This may be a suitable approach for example where older records occupy a large amount of shelf space, and there is no intrinsic value in the original medium.

#### **4.1.3 Custody**

This policy applies only to archival records in the custody of the National Archives of Australia, ie held in a repository that is managed by the Archives. By extension, it also applies to records which are proposed for transfer to the Archives by the controlling agency. Either party (the controlling agency or the Archives) may propose that the records be digitised and disposed of prior to transfer, with a digital record rather than the original being transferred to the Archives. The implementation guidelines (to be developed) will outline responsibility for the digitisation and disposal of the records, and any associated costs.

This policy does not apply to records of continuing value in the custody of the controlling agency unless proposed for transfer to the Archives. Destruction of these records is however governed by GRA 31 and may be destroyed by the agency following digitisation.

This policy also does not apply to records of continuing value held in the custody of a third party under a section 64 or other agreement. Disposal of such records needs to be discussed and agreed to by all parties (the custodial agency, the controlling agency and the Archives).

#### **4.1.4 Disposal status**

The policy primarily applies to records of continuing value to ensure the maximum benefits are achieved. 'Continuing value' includes records which have been designated

as 'RNA' (retain as national archives) under recent records authorities, 'P' (permanent) records identified under pre-2000 records authorities and records in personal records collections. Records of temporary disposal status may be included, where a cost-benefit analysis and risk assessment support this approach, for example for records which have a long retention period. The disposal status of temporary records may also be reviewed, and the records disposed of after digitisation if their status changes to continuing.

#### **4.1.5 Intrinsic value**

Intrinsic value relates to qualities or characteristics of a record that are linked to the original medium. The intrinsic value of a record may be separate from its information value and may be lost if replaced by a reproduction. Intrinsic value may be either a physical or an intellectual quality, for example age, aesthetic quality, uniqueness, rare or obsolete formats, or connection with a significant event or person. A list of qualities which represent intrinsic value is included at Appendix 2.

As digitisation does not preserve the value of the original medium, records with intrinsic value must not be disposed of after digitisation.

### **5. DISPOSAL OPTIONS**

The term 'disposal' can cover a number of actions under section 24 of the Archives Act (see Appendix 1). Additionally, sections 63 and 64 support alternative custody arrangements and enable material of the Archives to be held outside of the Archives' custody. The specific actions authorised by this policy are:

- Withdraw the records into the custody of the controlling agency
- Transfer custody to a person or institution
- Donate the records to an appropriate institution
- Palletise the records and manage in cost-effective storage
- Destroy the source record

No one disposal action is the 'default' action, although in most cases, destruction will be the most appropriate action. The disposal action for each digitisation project will be determined during the project and a recommendation made for approval by the responsible Assistant Directors-General.

While the policy provides for a number of disposal options, only destruction of the source record is authorised by GRA 31. Other disposal actions must be authorised by the issue of specific records authorities for the identified activity.

The requirements, benefits and risks of each disposal action will be outlined in the implementation guidelines (to be developed).

## **6. POLICY REQUIREMENTS**

In addition to the requirements set out in the Scope, the policy requires that a number of other conditions be met to ensure the Archives is accountable and fulfils requirements under the Act to ensure the proper care and preservation of, and access to, archival resources of the Commonwealth.

### **6.1 Digital archives governance and systems infrastructure**

Under the *Archives Act 1983*, the Archives is entrusted with the care and preservation of, and providing access to, the archival resources of the Commonwealth. If the source record is replaced by a digital reproduction, the Archives will fulfil the same responsibilities for the digital record which has become the archival record in line with the Digital Preservation Policy statement that the Archives 'undertakes to ensure the long-term preservation and accessibility of the archival resources of the Commonwealth which were created or managed in a digital format'. The Archives will store, preserve and manage digitised records under the same governance arrangements and by the same storage, control and description management systems that are used for born-digital or digitised records transferred directly from agencies.

### **6.2 Digitisation standard**

As the original (source) record will be disposed of after digitisation, the digital reproduction must be able to fulfil all functional requirements of the original archival record as a minimum. This will be achieved by digitising to an agreed minimum standard for this purpose ie where the source record no longer exists. The 'Scanning Specifications' developed for GRA 31 define a minimum standard suitable for the digitisation of RNA material by agencies. These reproductions may then be transferred to the Archives as the archival record. This standard is also the minimum standard for digitising records of continuing value in the Archives custody. This standard must however be reviewed at regular intervals for continuing suitability and revised as appropriate (see Section 11 Review).

### **6.3 Quality assurance**

As the original (source) record will be disposed of after digitisation, stringent quality assurance processes must be applied to each digitisation project. This includes development of a quality assurance plan, verification that the technology and processes used will produce a quality outcome and a high level of monitoring of the output and comparison against the originals to ensure the digital reproductions are accurate and reliable. In some cases, an extended retention period may be required while quality assurance is undertaken.

### **6.4 Description**

Records must be fully described to support management of the digital record in the Digital Archive, or the resources made available to do so as part of the digitisation project. This will ensure that the digital record can be connected with its metadata, and be manageable and findable.

### **6.5 Aggregation level**

The policy applies to groups of records at the minimum level of a transfer job (consignment). Where possible, for reasons of consistency, maximum benefit and

efficiency, it should be applied at series-level, that is, whole series should be digitised and disposed of.

The policy does not apply to individual items, except where the items may need to be disposed of for other reasons (eg deteriorating physical condition).

### **6.6 Digital reproductions and access masters**

A digital reproduction must be made of each source record which will become the archival record. An access master will then be made from the digital reproduction and further access derivatives created as required.

The digital reproduction must be stored in the Digital Archive as the Digital Record to which no changes are made, and preserved as the archival value record. The access master (or reference copy) may be updated or deleted as required, for example to reflect changes to the access status.

### **6.7 Digitise once**

Records should be digitised once for all purposes. While in general records digitised under this policy will meet all expected requirements of other digitisation projects, disposal after digitisation should also be considered for records digitised for other purposes, including access or preservation, where they are within the scope of this policy.

## **7. PRIORITY INDICATORS**

Some records will be more suited to disposal after digitisation than others. This will be determined by a number of factors including the age of the record, the technology used to produce it, the format of the original medium, the sensitivity of the content, the ease of storage post-digitisation compared to pre-digitisation, and the ability to re-use the content of the record. These factors are likely to be different from the factors which drive digitisation for access as the focus is on efficient use of digitisation resources and achieving storage efficiencies, in addition to increasing access. A number of priority indicators which identify records as being suitable for disposal after digitisation are listed at Appendix 3.

## **8. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND GOVERNANCE**

Implementation of this policy consists of development of a forward plan, and management of individual projects included on the plan. Implementation guidelines and an implementation checklist (the Checklist) support the management of each project. Authorisation for the plan and each project is at the level of Assistant Director-General (Senior Executive Service).

### **8.1 Forward plan**

A five-year forward plan will be developed for the policy. The Plan will identify groups of records (at transfer job or series level) which are currently in custody and within the policy scope. The Plan will complement other business priorities such as the National Digitisation Strategy and be approved by the Digitisation Project Working Group. All relevant areas of the Archives will be consulted in development of the Plan, and public consultation undertaken as appropriate (via the state-based Consultative forums).

The forward Plan will provide for inclusion of records which are not yet in custody but which may be proposed for transfer during the period of the Plan.

The Plan will identify the storage space (in shelf metres) occupied by the target source records to enable cost-savings and the potential impact on the collection value to be calculated.

## **8.2 Implementation guidelines and checklist**

Implementation guidelines (to be developed) provide detailed guidance for the management of each project. These are based on the guidelines for 'Digitising accumulated physical records'.

The Checklist supports the guidelines and includes all requirements that must be met for a Digitise & Dispose project to be authorised. The Checklist requires authorisation by Archives' senior executives (Assistant Director-General level) and consultation with the controlling agency before disposal can proceed. A draft Checklist is provided at Appendix 4.

## **8.3 Project management**

The digitisation and disposal of each group of records identified in the forward plan will be managed as a project. Each project will consist of four phases.

### **8.3.1 Initiation**

A project from the Plan is identified, and a Project Manager is appointed. The Project Manager undertakes a preliminary assessment to confirm that the records in the target group meet the criteria in the implementation checklist prior to commencing the project. Consultation with relevant areas of the Archives, external stakeholders and the controlling agency should also occur in this phase.

### **8.3.2 Digitisation**

The digitisation phase will cover digitisation of the source records to the approved standard, as well as description, quality assurance and ingest into the Digital Archive.

### **8.3.3 Approval**

To ensure probity, each project must meet all criteria outlined in the Checklist. Where individual criteria are not met, sufficient justification must be provided to proceed. The Checklist provides for recommendation of a suitable disposal option from the options in Section 5 of this policy.

The Checklist requires validation from several areas of the Archives, as well as consultation with the controlling agency, during project implementation. Final sign-off is required from the Assistant Director-Generals of the three operational branches - Collection Management, Access & Communication, and Government Information Assurance and Policy (section 24 delegate).

### **8.3.4 Disposal**

Once all requirements of the policy have been met and approval has been received for disposal, the records may be de-accessioned and disposed of.

Metadata for the source record will be retained on the Archives' finding aid, with additional metadata to indicate that the source record has been replaced by a digital reproduction and disposed of under this policy.

## 9. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following roles and responsibilities have been identified for this policy. The sections and branches listed have primary responsibility for the roles indicated, but action should be undertaken in consultation with relevant stakeholders, both internally and externally (eg state -based Consultative Forums).

Role	Responsibility
Approval of policy	Executive Board
Development of forward Plan	Collection Management (Collection Operations)
Project management for disposal	Collection Management (Collection Operations)
Project management for digitisation	Collection Management (Preservation & Digitisation)
Disposal of source records	Collection Management (Collection Operations)
Ongoing management of digital records	Executive & Information Services (Business Systems and Online Services)
Project authorisation and sign-off	ADG Collection Management (Project Sponsor), ADG Government Information Assurance & Policy, ADG Access & Communication
Policy review	Collection Management Branch, Government Information Assurance and Policy.

## 10. BENEFITS AND RISKS

The following section outlines the benefits, risks and other considerations of this policy.

### 10.1 Benefits

The expected benefits of this policy are:

- Greater proportion of collection available online.
- More efficient and timely access for agencies and the community.
- Reduced physical preservation costs.
- Reduced physical storage.

- Increased ability to accept incoming records for transfer which have intrinsic value in their original medium.
- Enhanced reputation for the Archives in modelling digital transition.
- Both the Archives and agencies are able to gain efficiencies from the destruction of source records after digitisation under GRA 31.

## 10.2 Risks

The following major risks and associated mitigating strategies have been identified.

Major Risks	Mitigating Strategies
<p><b>Loss of archival records</b></p> <p>Due to: Lack of overt provision under the <i>Archives Act 1983</i> for replacement of the source medium with a digital reproduction; loss of digital reproductions through Digital Archive malfunction; inadequate digitisation standards; failure to identify records with intrinsic value or a legal requirement to keep.</p>	<p>Consider if there is a need for inclusion in legislation of a clear statement supporting replacement of original medium with a digital reproduction where the medium itself does not have any intrinsic value.</p> <p>Commit to continuous improvement of the Archives' digital storage, preservation, control and access management systems and processes in line with national and international best practice.</p> <p>Develop a clear definition of records which have no intrinsic value (with examples) to support the definition of intrinsic value.</p> <p>Identify and regularly review the digitisation standard to ensure functional equivalence of reproductions.</p> <p>Undertake stringent quality assurance of all digitisation projects which include disposal of the source record.</p> <p>Develop clear guidelines for identifying intrinsic value and legal requirements to keep.</p> <p>Approval of all Digitise &amp; Dispose projects at Assistant Director-General level.</p>
<p><b>Damage to role and reputation</b> (adverse public reaction or unfavourable media attention)</p> <p>Due to: Poor communication of the intent of the policy to stakeholders; lack of a sound and defensible policy base; perception that there is no role for the Archives if original archival resources of the</p>	<p>Ensure policy base is sound and addresses all risks.</p> <p>Develop communication plan and a clear message for the purpose and benefits of the policy.</p> <p>Undertake internal and external consultation prior to implementing the policy, and when identifying projects.</p> <p>Approval of the policy at Director-General and Assistant Director-General level.</p> <p>Approval of individual projects at the Assistant</p>

Commonwealth are disposed of and replaced with digital reproductions; loss of archival resources (see Risk 1)	Director-General level.
<p><b>Costs outweigh the benefits.</b></p> <p>Due to: Physical storage costs are not sufficiently reduced; digital storage costs increase; costs of digitisation and maintenance of the digital reproductions exceed the costs of maintaining the record in its original medium; additional resources (technology, funding, people) are necessary to undertake digitisation projects.</p>	<p>Undertake a cost-benefit analysis at the start of each project.</p> <p>Monitor and report on costs and benefits of the policy to Senior Executive at regular intervals.</p> <p>Authorisation at Assistant-Director-General level of all digitise &amp; dispose projects.</p> <p>Ensure Digitise and Dispose projects complement other Archives priorities.</p>

## 11. REVIEW

Collection Management Branch and Government Information Assurance and Policy Branch will review this policy every 3 years in consultation with Access and Communication Branch and other relevant internal and external stakeholders. Supporting documents will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum or as required.

The policy will also be evaluated at the time of review to assess whether objectives have been met.

## 12. RELATED DOCUMENTS

This policy also includes:

- Terms & definitions (Appendix 1)
- Intrinsic value criteria (Appendix 2)
- Priority indicators (Appendix 3)
- Implementation checklist (Appendix 4)
- Implementation guidelines (To be developed)

Other related documents include:

- [General Records Authority 31 'Destruction of source or original records after digitisation, conversion or migration'](#)
- [Digitising accumulated physical records](#)
- [Scanning specifications](#)



### **13. AUTHORISATION**

This policy has been approved by:

David Fricker

Director-General

National Archives of Australia

September 2015

## **APPENDIX 1 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

Terms which are used frequently in, or which have specific significance for, this policy are defined here.

### **Archival value**

Has value beyond its original business use and has been identified as an archival resource of the Commonwealth under section 3C of the Archives Act. The terms retain as national archives (RNA), permanent (P), enduring value and continuing value may also be used.

### **Collection material**

Material in the custody of the Archives (as opposed to 'in the care of' which includes material of archival value not held by the Archives). The term 'Archives' collection' or 'in the custody of the Archives' may also be used.

### **Digital Transition Policy**

In July 2011, the Australian Government released a Digital Transition Policy which requires all agencies to move to digital information and records management. The Archives is leading implementation of the policy.

### **Disposal**

Covers all activities authorised under section 24 of the *Archives Act 1983* including destruction, transfer of custody or ownership (including sale or donation), damage or alteration.

### **General Records Authority 31 (GRA 31)**

*Destruction of source or original records after digitisation, conversion or migration.*

This instrument authorises destruction of source (including original) records after they have been digitised, converted or migrated (with exclusions). It is issued under section 24 of the *Archives Act 1983*.

### **Intrinsic value**

Intrinsic value relates to qualities or characteristics of a record that are linked to its original medium. The intrinsic value of a record may be separate from its information value and may be lost if replaced by a reproduction. For more information see Appendix 2.

### **Original record**

See Source record.

### **Retain as National Archives (RNA)**

The disposal action for Commonwealth records appraised as having archival value. Records of archival value are often referred to as 'RNA records'. See also Archival value.

### **Source record**

The originating document or record that has been copied, converted or migrated or which will be the input for such a process. A source record may be an original record or it may be a reproduction that was generated by an earlier copying, conversion or migration process. (For example, with a record that was created in a digital application, then printed, then digitised, the record that was created using the digital application is the original record, while the print version is the source record).

## **APPENDIX 2 IDENTIFYING INTRINSIC VALUE**

### **Background**

The conversion of a record from a physical format to a digital format will not preserve all the qualities and characteristics of the original format. Intrinsic value refers to the qualities and characteristics of the original medium inherent in that medium and which contribute to its archival value. These qualities and characteristics may be lost or diminished if the record is converted to another medium, thereby compromising its archival value. Intrinsic value may be physical or intellectual as defined below.

### **Physical qualities**

- Records on rare obsolete formats. This may include particular types of paper, vellum, objects, volumes with unique form or binding, magnetic storage devices, punch cards, wax cylinders, glass negatives gramophone discs, etc.
- Rare or original objects (mint issue stamps or coins, rare books, seals) – monetary value may be a factor.
- Unique or curious physical features, such as wax seals, watermarks, cross-written correspondence, scrapbooks with rare and unique content (eg Victorian Post Office Curiosities MP311/103).
- Records where the original medium conveys meaning (eg overlay drawings). This includes records where the information cannot be accurately reflected in digital format.
- Records of artistic or cultural significance, or with aesthetic quality (eg art, cultural artefacts, photographs, architectural drawings, illuminated manuscripts, copyright exhibits, eg original designs of the 1911 Federal Capital City Design Competition).
- Questionable authenticity, date, author, or other characteristic that is significant and ascertainable by physical examination, or where controversy around the subject may warrant the original to be retained for later proof.
- Value for use in exhibits, where the record itself imparts a sense of historical significance or of the significance of person or event to which it relates.

### **Intellectual qualities**

- Original documents of general and substantial public interest due to a direct association with famous or historically significant people, places, things, issues, or events (eg the Prime Minister or Governor General, constitution, treaties).
- Primary establishment documents with significance as documentation of the establishment or continuing legal basis of an agency or institution, the functions or powers of government, or the formulation of the highest levels of legislation.
- Policy documents with significance as documentation of the formulation of the highest levels of policy.
- Documents with an individual as the subject which have significance or value to that individual or others as an artefact or evidence of their ancestry or heritage and which may contain original photographs, handwriting etc (eg immigration records, service dossiers).

### **APPENDIX 3 PRIORITY INDICATORS**

This appendix lists characteristics which identify records as being suitable for disposal after digitisation. All identified groups must be identified as having no intrinsic value in their original medium. Record groups must have a high degree of compliance with at least one priority indicator to be considered for disposal after digitisation. Records which meet a number of indicators are most suited for disposal after digitisation.

The indicators include the age of the record, the technology used to produce it, the format of the original medium, the ease of storage post-digitisation compared to pre-digitisation and the ability to re-use the content of the record.

1. Records created post-1980 (GRA 31 authorised date)  
These records are robust and suitable for high speed digitisation processes. They are more likely to have been computer-generated and then printed so processes to make the information machine-readable (eg optical character recognition) are more successful.
2. Uniformity of format  
The more robust the original, the quicker it can be digitised, thus creating the digital version at a lower cost. Uniform cards or pages (eg A4 paper files) are more suited to high-speed digitisation processes than collections of papers from varied sources or of varied size.
3. Information accessibility and description  
Open government information, or series that can be globally opened once they enter the open period, are best placed for digitisation as the information can be made more readily available to the public.
4. Legibility of digital copy and ability to extract text (machine-readability)  
The clearer or better defined the information in the original form, the more suitable it will be for digitisation as the digital copy will be more legible. Typewritten or computer printed original records can more successfully be read by a machine, making the content searchable.
5. Classification level  
Records of lower classification levels will be more suited to digitisation than those of a higher classification level for reasons of security and storage capability.
6. Metadata  
Some records that are only capturing metadata, such as cards (ie passenger cards), registers (control records) and standard forms (such as certificates of naturalisation), which are now captured electronically by the agency in databases/business systems could be digitised and the digital information extracted to enable it to be managed, accessed and used as a dataset.
7. Unstable or damaged formats  
Records on unstable, fragile or damaged media are more suitable to digitise to preserve the information before it is lost. Such material may have a higher cost to store in a manner that would conserve its condition, hence the potential ongoing operational cost savings are higher.

8. Cost-benefit

While cost-benefit analysis will play a role in all digitisation projects it will be of particular relevance where the physical records are sensitive to the storage environment and hence incur greater storage costs, or where the records in paper format occupy a large amount of storage space.

Other factors which may impact on the suitability of a group of records for digitisation overlap with digitisation for access purposes eg user demand (high vs low, community vs individual).

## APPENDIX 4 IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

This checklist supports the implementation guidelines for projects conducted under this policy. Successful completion of the checklist requires a response in each right-hand column. Where a left-hand column is checked, adequate justification must be provided. Approval at the final Authorisation stage is required before records can be disposed of.

**Project name:**

Questions	Guidelines	
<b>Project initiation</b>		
1. Is this project included on the forward plan?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, seek approval from the Project Sponsor prior to proceeding.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do the records have intrinsic value in their original medium?	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If so, these records are not authorised for disposal.	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Is disposal of the source record covered by this policy?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, these records cannot be disposed of.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do the records meet at least one of the priority indicators for disposal after digitisation? (Appendix 3 of the policy)	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, seek approval from the Project Sponsor prior to proceeding.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Are the records covered by this project (the source records) Commonwealth records or in a personal records collection?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, these records are not covered by the policy.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
6. Are the source records currently in the custody of the Archives, or proposed for transfer to the Archives?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, these records are not covered by the policy.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
7. Are the source records all designated as RNA or P?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, seek approval from the Project Sponsor prior to proceeding.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
8. Are the source records at the minimum aggregation level of a transfer job (consignment)?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, these records are not covered by the policy.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
9. Are the source records listed at item-level on the Archives' finding aid?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, seek approval from Project Sponsor to commit resources to listing them at item-level either in house or as part of outsourced project.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

10. Do legal requirements, relevant legislation or applicable records authorities (including disposal freezes) require the records to be retained in their original or a specific format?	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If so, these records are not authorised for disposal.	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
11. Is there a government policy or directive requiring retention of the records?	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If so, these records are not authorised for disposal.	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
12. Do the records relate to a current or future judicial proceeding or are they subject to a current application for access under FOI, Archives or other legislation and are they reasonably likely to be required as evidence?	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If so, these records are not authorised for disposal.	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
13. Has a risk assessment been undertaken of the impact of disposal of the source records?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, this should be undertaken prior to commencing.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
14. Has the suitability of the physical condition of the records for digitisation been assessed?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, this should be undertaken or planned for.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
15. Have you consulted with Access Examination to determine if there are any potential sensitivities or access conditions associated with these records, and received in-principle agreement that they can be opened once they reach the open period?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, consult with Access Examination prior to proceeding.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
16. Has consultation been undertaken with all other relevant areas of the Archives, (including Reference Services, Public Programs, Business Systems and Online Services, Preservation & Digitisation and the Digital Archives) and all concerns addressed?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, liaise with all relevant areas prior to proceeding.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
17. Has consultation been undertaken with the controlling agency to ensure they are aware of this project?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, this should be undertaken prior to commencing.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
18. Has a Quality Assurance Plan been developed? See also checklist number 30.	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, this should be undertaken or planned for.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Digitisation</b>		
19. Were digitisation systems and processes verified prior to commencing the project to ensure the required outcomes would be met?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, this should be undertaken or planned for.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
20. Have both Digital Record and access copies been created, or provision made for access copies to be created in future?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, these records are not authorised for disposal.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
21. Have the source records been digitised to the Archives' agreed standard for records which will be disposed of after digitisation? (See <a href="#">Scanning specifications</a> )	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, these records are not authorised for disposal.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
22. Do the digital reproductions have the required functional equivalence necessary to substitute for the source records for business, legal and archival purposes?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, these records are not authorised for disposal.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
23. Are the digital reproductions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete</li> <li>• Accessible</li> <li>• Useable</li> </ul>	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no to any of these criteria, these records are not authorised for disposal.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
24. Are controls in place to maintain the integrity and authenticity of the digital reproductions as archival resources of the Commonwealth (ie RNA)?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, this must be implemented prior to proceeding.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
25. Are appropriate procedures and strategies in place to ensure that the digital reproductions remain accessible in perpetuity?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, these must be implemented prior to proceeding.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
26. Has appropriate metadata for each digital reproduction been captured? (See <a href="#">Digitising accumulated physical records</a> )	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, this must be captured.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
27. Has the start date of the copy of the digital reproduction been recorded as the same as the date the original record came into existence?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, this should be undertaken or planned for.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
28. Have details of the source records been retained on the Archives' finding aid, and updated to indicate replacement of the source records by a digital reproduction?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, this should be undertaken or planned for.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
29. Can access be provided to the digital reproduction?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, this must be implemented prior to proceeding.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>



<p>30. Quality assurance. Is there sufficient documentation available to demonstrate that the digitisation methods used have produced accurate and reliable reproductions? This should include documenting the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• who was authorised to do the reproduction?</li> <li>• when did the reproduction process occur?</li> <li>• what equipment and processes were used?</li> <li>• what policies and procedures were followed?</li> <li>• what quality control measures were in place?</li> <li>• what quality assurance took place?</li> <li>• was the person who did the quality assurance different to the person who did the digitising?</li> <li>• what was the extent and frequency of sampling?</li> <li>• what elements were checked?</li> <li>• were the results of the testing process satisfactory?</li> </ul>	<p><b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, these records are not authorised for disposal.</p>	<p><b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>31. Have the following authorities and guidelines been consulted and complied with as appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">GRA 31</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Digitising accumulated physical records</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Scanning specifications</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p>

<b>Authorisation</b>		
32. Have responses been recorded in every, and only, the right-hand column for each question? If not, has adequate justification been provided?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, these records are not authorised for disposal.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
33. Has the controlling agency been consulted?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, these records are not authorised for disposal.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
34. The Disposal action recommended is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Destroy the source record.</li> <li>• Palletise the records and manage in cost-effective (remote) storage.</li> <li>• Withdraw the records into the custody of the controlling agency.</li> <li>• Custody arrangements with a person or institution.</li> <li>• Donate the records to an appropriate institution.</li> </ul>		
	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide name:	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide name:	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide name:	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
35. Where the disposal action recommended is other than destruction, has a specific records authority been issued?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, these records are not authorised for disposal.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
36. Does the ADG Collection Management (Project Sponsor) certify that all requirements of the checklist have been met and that the source records can be disposed of as recommended above? Certified:.....	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, these records are not authorised for disposal.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
37. Does the ADG Government Information Assurance and Policy certify that all requirements of the checklist have been met and that the source records can be disposed of as recommended above? Certified: .....	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, these records are not authorised for disposal.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
38. Does the ADG Access & Communications certify that all requirements of the checklist have been met and that the source records can be disposed of as recommended above? Certified: .....	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, these records are not authorised for disposal.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Disposal</b> (records can only be disposed of after approvals have been received)		
39. Have all approvals been obtained? (see above)	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, disposal cannot proceed.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
40. Has the required retention and quality assurance period passed?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, disposal cannot proceed.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
41. Have the source records been de-accessioned on the Archives' finding aid?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, this should be undertaken or planned for.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
42. Have the records been withdrawn?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, this should be undertaken or planned for.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
43. Has an approved provider been contracted to provide the disposal services?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, this should be undertaken or planned for.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
44. Have steps been taken to document the disposal of source records?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, this should be undertaken or planned for.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
45. Has the Advisory Council been advised of the planned disposal under s.25 of the Act?	<b>No</b> <input type="checkbox"/> If no, this should be undertaken or planned for.	<b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/>