



**Australian Government**

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**National Archives of Australia**

**Records Authority**

2021/00429564

# **Statistical Collections (Amendment)**

Australian Bureau of Statistics

2022



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## **CONTENTS**

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>APPLICATION OF THIS AUTHORITY</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CONTACT INFORMATION</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>AUTHORISATION</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>STATISTICAL COLLECTIONS</b>	<b>7</b>

## INTRODUCTION

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and the National Archives of Australia have developed this records authority to set out the requirements for keeping or destroying records of personal identifiers collected as part of the Census of Population and Housing.

This authority is based on the identification and analysis of the business of the ABS. 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 specifies the minimum length of time that temporary records need to be kept and gives the agency 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 contains amendments to records authority 2001/00000540 for the Australian Bureau of Statistics and should be used in conjunction with it. The amendments consist of the addition of one new class to the function of Statistical Collections.
2. 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 the agency's business they should be destroyed as authorised in this authority.
  - Records that have not reached the minimum retention period must be kept until they do.
3. This authority should be used in conjunction with general records authorities such as:
  - the 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).
4. The normal administrative practice (NAP) provision of the *Archives Act 1983* gives agencies permission to destroy certain records without formal authorisation. This usually occurs where records are duplicated, facilitative or for short-term use only. NAP does not replace arrangements agreed to in this authority but can be used as a tool to assist in identifying records for destruction together with an agency's records authority or authorities, and with AFDA Express Version 2. The National Archives recommends that agencies develop and implement a NAP policy. Advice and guidance on destroying records as a normal administrative practice and on how to develop a NAP policy is available from the National Archives' website at [www.naa.gov.au](http://www.naa.gov.au).
5. Records that are reasonably likely to be needed as evidence in a current or future judicial proceeding or are subject to a request for access under the *Archives Act 1983*, the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* or any other relevant act must not be destroyed until the action has been completed.
6. Records subject to a disposal freeze must not be destroyed until the freeze has been lifted. Further information about disposal freezes and whether they affect the application of this authority is available from the National Archives website at [www.naa.gov.au](http://www.naa.gov.au).
7. Where the method of recording information changes (for example from an analogue system to a digital system, or when information is migrated from one system to a new system) this authority

can still be applied, providing the records document the same core business. The information must be accessible for the period of time prescribed in this authority. The 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.

8. 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 agency believes that its accountability will be substantially compromised because a retention period or periods are not adequate, it should contact the National Archives for review of the retention period.
9. 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. Advice on how to use this authority is available from the agency's information manager. If there are problems with the application of the authority that cannot be resolved, please contact the National Archives.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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

## AUTHORISATION

Records Authority 2021/00429564

### Notice of authorisation

Person to whom notice of authorisation is given:

Dr David Gruen  
Australian Statistician  
Australian Bureau of Statistics  
ABS House  
45 Benjamin Way  
Belconnen ACT 2617

### Purpose

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

### Application

Amendments to Statistical Collections.

### Authority

This authority gives permission for the retention, alteration or destruction 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 (R344342022).

Authorising Officer	Date of issue
Tatiana Antsoupova Assistant Director-General, Data and Digital (a/g) National Archives of Australia	29 March 2022

## STATISTICAL COLLECTIONS

The function of acquiring statistical information in accordance with ABS legislation, on a particular topic or topics. Includes the collection of information directly by the census process, by sample, indirectly from an administrative by-product or from another collection. Includes collection by telephone interview and by mail and electronic means.

### **Data Collecting**

The activities involved in the gathering of data on a particular topic or topics, from respondents, whether directly by census or sample survey, or indirectly as an administrative by-product or from another collection.

Class no	Description of records	Disposal action
62933	<p>Records documenting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• personal identifiers, such as names and addresses, collected or received from respondents or providers under relevant census and statistics legislation (currently section 10 and 11 of the <i>Census and Statistics Act 1905</i>) for the purposes of conducting the Census of Population and Housing. Includes personal identifiers collected for the:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Census test; and</li> <li>○ post Census review survey.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Excludes personal identifiers within completed Census forms, where the respondent has elected to allow the form to be retained by the National Archives of Australia.</p> <p><i>[For records documenting personal identifiers within completed Census forms and selected by respondents for transfer to National Archives, use Records Authority 2001/00000540 – STATISTICAL COLLECTIONS, Class 2356 and Records Authority 2007/00105946 - STATISTICAL COLLECTIONS, Class 14795.</i></p> <p><i>For records documenting personal identifiers for the purpose of Census response non-compliance, use Records Authority 2001/00000540 – STATISTICAL COLLECTIONS, Classes 2370 – 2372.]</i></p>	<p>Destroy as soon as practicable after the conclusion of data processing, but no later than 24 months after collection for names and 36 months after collection for addresses.</p>