



Australian Government

National Archives of Australia

Records Authority

2024/00626638

Cabinet Proceedings

Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet

2024



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INTRODUCTION

The Department of the Prime Minister & Cabinet (PM&C) and 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 Cabinet Proceedings. It represents a significant commitment on behalf of PM&C to understand, create and manage the records of its activities.

This authority is based on the identification and analysis of the business of PM&C. 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 PM&C 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 provides retention and destruction permissions for records relating to Cabinet Proceedings. This authority covers the records of bodies subject to Cabinet operating principles. Where the records of such a body are no longer subject to Cabinet operating principles, new or amended records created by that body are to be sentenced using PM&C core business records authorities.
2. *CABINET PROCEEDINGS* (this authority) and *CABINET SUPPORT, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION COORDINATION* (2024/00626736) replace records authority RDS 492. RDS 492 cannot be used by PM&C to sentence records after the date of issue of this authority. Records relating to Cabinet Proceedings in PM&C custody must be sentenced with this authority whether or not they have been previously sentenced by RDS 492.
3. 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 PM&C 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.
4. This authority should be used in conjunction with general records authorities such as:
 - [General Records Authority 38 – Ministers of State \(GRA 38\)](#), including those situations where the Cabinet Secretary is a Minister or employed under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act*.
 - [Administrative Functions Disposal Authority \(AFDA\) Express Version 2](#) issued by the National Archives to cover business processes and records common to Australian Government agencies with the exception of External Relations class 62658; and
 - [General Records Authority 31 - Destruction of source or original records after digitisation, conversion or migration](#) (2015).

5. The employment circumstances of the Cabinet Secretary – a pivotal position for the management of Cabinet processes - has varied over time. This authority is designed to cover records generated by the Cabinet Secretary whenever they have been employed under the *Public Service Act* (for example, before March 1996). Where the Cabinet Secretary has been a Minister or has been employed under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act*, the records generated by this position are covered by General Records Authority 38 – Ministers of State (GRA 38).
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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. PM&C 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.
10. In general, retention requirements indicate a minimum period for retention. PM&C 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 PM&C 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.
11. 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*.
12. 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.
13. 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, subject to arrangements made with the National Archives that include the identification of relevant data elements and datasets.
14. Advice on how to use this authority is available from the PM&C 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 2024/00626638

Notice of authorisation

Person to whom notice of authorisation is given:

Professor Glyn Davies
Secretary
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Andrew Fisher Building
1 National Circuit
Barton ACT 2600

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 Cabinet Proceedings.

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 (R10084322024).

| Authorising Officer | Date of issue |
|---|------------------|
|  Simon Froude Director-General National Archives of Australia | 19 December 2024 |

CABINET PROCEEDINGS

The function of managing and the impartial recording of decisions of Executive Government made by a select group of Ministers led by the Prime Minister through Cabinet and its committees, enabled by a secretariat. This includes identifying priorities, directing policy and legislative development, considering and endorsing the Federal Budget, allocating resources to achieve the aims of government, establishing committees, and making appointments.

Note: 'Cabinet' in this records authority refers to Cabinet, its committees and subsidiary bodies

The **core activities** include:

- convening meetings of Cabinet;
- making appointments intended to come before Cabinet, including Board appointments, appointments of Government and other appointments;
- briefing the Prime Minister, and managing the production of briefs relating to matters intended to come before Cabinet;
- managing material intended for submission to Cabinet;
- supporting the management of Cabinet meetings, including recording minutes and the production and finalisation of the official record of Cabinet proceedings.

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

- delegating powers and authorising actions;
- planning, reporting and reviewing;
- making administrative arrangements to support meetings, including venue and travel arrangements;
- identifying, assessing and managing risks.

Cross references to other PM&C records authorities

For records documenting Cabinet support, development and implementation coordination other than those covered by class 63159, use Cabinet Support, Development and Implementation Coordination.

For National Cabinet, its committees and subsidiaries (2020 -), use Cabinet Support, Development and Implementation Coordination.

Cross references to AFDA Express Version 2

For managing the agency's financial resources in the performance of its functions, including financial audits, use FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT.

For master control records (in any format) that manage information and records which are required to facilitate access and give meaning and context to the information and records of Cabinet Proceedings over time, other than those covered in Class 63159, use TECHNOLOGY & INFORMATION MANAGEMENT.

For the production and distribution of agency publications developed in support of Cabinet Proceedings, other than those covered in Class 63159, use PUBLICATION.

For designing, developing and building, establishing, implementing, configuring, managing, maintaining and decommissioning software-based technology solutions that support but are not commissioned, built or significantly customised by the agency to specifically meet unique

CABINET PROCEEDINGS

requirements relating to Cabinet Proceedings, including licensing of relevant solutions and provision of help desk support, use *TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT*.

For the development of Cabinet submissions drafted outside the authorised whole of government business system hosted by PM&C that manages Cabinet Proceedings (CabNet and its successors), excluding records covered by Cabinet Support, Development and Implementation Coordination, use *EXTERNAL RELATIONS* class 62657.

For records documenting PM&C Cabinet Division interactions with Ministers that are not retained and managed within the authorised whole of government business system hosted by PM&C that manages Cabinet Proceedings (CabNet and its successors), use *EXTERNAL RELATIONS* class 62657.

Cross references to all other records authorities

For records documenting interactions between Ministers, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Secretary (where they are not employed under the Public Service Act) that have not been received by the Cabinet Secretariat nor incorporated into the records of the Department of PM&C, use *General Records Authority 38 – Ministers of State – Ministerial Office and Portfolio Management*.

For records relating to delegations and authorisations of the Cabinet Secretary:

- other than those covered in Class 63159 and where the Cabinet Secretary is a public servant, use *Government Coordination (2002/05022293)*, or
- where the Cabinet Secretary is a Minister or staffer of a Minister, use *General Records Authority 38 – Ministers of State – Ministerial Office and Portfolio Management*.

For advice and reports to Cabinet by a Minister on progress of the implementation of Cabinet decisions that are not a Cabinet Document, use *General Records Authority 38 – Ministers of State – Ministerial Office and Portfolio Management*.

For Cabinet documents that have been substantially annotated by a Minister or Ministerial Office, use *General Records Authority 38 – Ministers of State – Ministerial Office and Portfolio Management*).

| Class no | Description of records | Disposal action |
|----------|---|-----------------------------|
| 63159 | <p>Records documenting Cabinet meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • final agendas, including published agendas and associated amendments; • attendance lists of Ministers and the attendance and co-option of others, including expected and actual attendance; • note taker lists noting responsibility for each meeting item; • declarations of private interest; • final submissions and their attachments; • briefs received or provided for Cabinet meetings, including for the Prime Minister, and from the Departments of Finance and Treasury; • meeting documents e.g. Cabinet memoranda, short notice and short-form Cabinet papers, legislative proposal forms, Parliamentary Counsel's memoranda, draft bills and explanatory memoranda as part of | Retain as national archives |

CABINET PROCEEDINGS

| Class no | Description of records | Disposal action |
|----------|---|-----------------|
| | <p>Cabinet memoranda or proposed by a Minister and supporting documents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • other papers circulated in meetings that relate to matters under discussion by Cabinet; • presentations such as text, graphics and audio and visual presentations and associated datasets; • appointment minutes and briefs, including details of the selection process, selection criteria, final decisions of appointment, background information, candidate evaluations and recommendations; • notebooks of meeting proceedings made by officials to facilitate the production of final minutes and decisions; • minutes of discussions, deliberations and decisions; • registers of Cabinet Proceedings documentation, including submissions, memoranda, decisions, minutes, agenda, attendance, correspondence and other materials that enable Cabinet meetings. <p><i>[For registers that only track the distribution or movement of Cabinet Proceedings documentation, use TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • master sets of submissions, memoranda, decisions, minutes, and other Cabinet Proceedings documentation maintained for control, access or reference purposes. <p><i>Note: 'Cabinet' is defined in the Cabinet Proceedings function scope note</i></p> | |