



RESERVE BANK OF AUSTRALIA

# Archives Access Policy

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## 1. Key Requirements

Records created by, or in the custody of the Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) are considered to be Commonwealth records. Under section 31 of the *Archives Act 1983* (the Act), the public has right of access to Commonwealth records 20 years after their creation.

Commonwealth agencies must undertake to provide public access to the records of an agency which meet the criteria for open access records. This policy supports this aim.

Records are considered to be in the Open Access Period unless they contain information included in the exemption categories detailed in section 33 of the Act.

While the RBA has an obligation to enable public access to records, it also needs to ensure that information that needs continuing protection, for example, personal and sensitive information, is not inadvertently released.

## 2. Objectives

The objective of this policy is to:

- Support public access to records in the open access period under the *Archives Act 1983*. The open access period commences 20 years from the date of creation of a record.
- Ensure open access records meet the requirements of the Act, ensuring that Commonwealth exemptions are adhered to and that personal and sensitive information is not inadvertently released.

## 3. Application

This policy applies to all records held by the Reserve Bank as a Commonwealth government institution that are in the open access period, subject to the exemptions under the Act.

## 4. Compliance

The Reserve Bank is required to comply with the provisions of the *Archives Act 1983* and makes records open to the public 20 years from the date of their creation. However, in most instances the Bank goes further to make records available to the public 15 years from their creation date, with this early release at the discretion of the Deputy Governor.

Depending on your topic of interest, you may find additional information is released via [Freedom of Information Disclosure Log](#).

## 5. Access to records

### 5.1 When does the open access period start?

Records enter the open access period 20 years after they are created. This is applied as at the date of the last document placed on a file before it is closed.

For example, the table below shows how to calculate the open access timeframes.

Table 1: Calculating open access timeframes

Year Commonwealth record created:	Open access period begins:
1999 and previous (includes documents placed on a file dated up until 31/12/1999)	1 January 2020
2000 (includes documents placed on a file dated up until 31/12/2000)	1 January 2021
2001 (includes documents placed on a file dated up until 31/12/2001)	1 January 2022

## 5.2 Does the Archives Act apply to all records in the open access period?

The Act applies to most records except:

- court records
- some records of Parliament
- some records of governors-general
- some records held by other national collecting institutions, such as the Australian War Memorial and the National Library of Australia
- Records which are exempt under section 33 of the *Archives Act 1983*.

You have a right of access to most other records in the open access period.

## 5.3 How can I access the open access records?

To facilitate access to the open access records, you can:

- Email the Reserve Bank with your detailed research enquiry
- Visit the Reserve Bank Research Room, by appointment, to view and research original records, free of charge.
- If you are unable to visit the Research Room, order digital copies of selected original records.
- Records in the open access period are also available via Unreserved, the online Archives platform. Records are released on a bi-annual basis.

## 5.4 Why is information withheld?

The Act requires the release of as much information as possible. The information exempt from public access falls into two broad areas:

- Personal information
- Information about the security of the Commonwealth and its residents

Some personal information may require exemption for at least the lifetime of the individual. This can include medical histories, or details of personal relationships.

A record may be withheld if its disclosure could adversely affect:

- stability of the financial markets and systems
- stability of payments systems
- security of banknotes
- security of Bank premises
- business in confidence information

Access to records will be refused if the records are not in the open access period.

The preferred format for access is digital and this generally, meets most requests.

If you request access in a certain format, for example as an original record or a video tape, we must generally give you access in that format.

In some cases we may offer you access in a different format. For example, if a paper record is fragile we may be able offer you access to a digital copy instead.

If we refuse access in the format you request, we must explain why and you can appeal. You cannot appeal if access was refused because the record is not in the open access period.

## 5.5 What to do if you are refused access to a record in the open access period?

If you are refused access to a record in the open access period under the [Archives Act 1983](#), we will provide you with the reason(s) for the access decision in writing. When information is withheld, we will tell you which part of the Act is applicable to the decision to withhold the information.

If it is practical, you may have access to any part of the record that is not exempt. For example, if you have a specific research enquiry, every effort will be made to provide you with the relevant information. While you may be denied access to the digital record, an Archivist can peruse the digital record on your behalf and extract the digital information you can access.

You may appeal the access decision by applying for an:

- Internal review for reconsideration by the Senior Archivist, Reserve Bank of Australia, followed by:
- Review by the National Archives of Australia.

### 5.5.1 Apply for internal reconsideration

The Reserve Bank of Australia can reconsider the access decision. This review will be conducted by the Senior Archivist, RBA.

You may apply for an internal reconsideration if:

- The record you want to access is in the open access period and information has been withheld
- Access to the record is refused (or is granted subject to certain conditions) for the records safety and preservation

- The record has been made available to you in a different format from what you requested, (for example, digital rather than analogue), or
- The record cannot be located

You cannot apply for an internal reconsideration if you submitted an application for access and we have not advised you of the access decision:

- Within 90 business days, or
- Within a notified extension period

To apply for an internal reconsideration, please email [archives@rba.gov.au](mailto:archives@rba.gov.au). There is no application fee.

When you apply:

- Clearly identify the record, including the record number, title, series number or control number, as applicable.
- Lodge the application within 28 days of you being notified of the access decision to refuse or restrict access.

You will be notified of the outcome of the internal reconsideration, in writing, within 30 business days. If we still refuse access you may then appeal to the National Archives of Australia.

### 5.5.2 Apply for reconsideration by the National Archives of Australia

The National Archives of Australia (NAA) can reconsider our decision to refuse you access. A senior officer will do the review.

You may apply for NAA reconsideration if:

- The record you want to access is in the open access period and information has been withheld
- Access to the record is refused (or is granted subject to certain conditions) for the records safety and preservation
- The record has been made available to you in a different format from what you requested, (for example, digital rather than analogue), or
- The record cannot be located

You cannot apply for NAA reconsideration if you submitted an application for access and we have not advised you of the access decision:

- Within 90 business days, or
- Within a notified extension period

To apply for NAA reconsideration, please email [publicrelease@naa.gov.au](mailto:publicrelease@naa.gov.au)

There is no application fee.

When you apply:

- Clearly identify the record, including the record number, title, series number or control number, as applicable.
- Lodge the application within 28 days of you being notified of the access decision to refuse or restrict access.

You will be notified of the outcome of the internal reconsideration, in writing, within 30 business days. If the National Archives still refuse access you may then appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

### 5.5.3 Concerns about information that has been released

The Reserve Bank has an Access Examination Guide that explains how we manage the release of personal, professional and business information about individuals.

Under the Archives Act we must release as much information as possible. If you have concerns about information that has been released, please email us at [archives@rba.gov.au](mailto:archives@rba.gov.au).

## 6. Policy Management

### 6.1 Administration

This Policy is administered by Information Department.

### 6.2 Implementation

The Senior Archivist, Information Department is responsible for the implementation of this Policy.

### 6.3 Monitoring and review

This Policy is reviewed by Information Department at least every two years or more frequently if there is a major change. All changes to the Policy must be approved by Head of Information Department.

### 6.4 Communication

This Policy is published on the Bank's internet site and also on Unreserved, the Bank's online Archives site.

## 7. Resources

### 7.1 Related information

[About the Archives](#)

[Guide for Researchers](#)

## 7.2 Related legislation

[Archives Act 1983](#)

[Freedom of Information Act 1982](#)

[Privacy Act 1988](#)

[Reserve Bank Act 1959](#)

## 7.3 Enquiries

**Email** [archives@rba.gov.au](mailto:archives@rba.gov.au)

**Telephone** +61 2 9551 8111

**Fax** +61 2 9551 8000