

Online Catalogue – Ordering Inquest Records

This *PROVguide* outlines how to order inquest records for viewing in Public Record Office Victoria's reading room at the Victorian Archives Centre. Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) holds records of inquests and other kinds of coronial investigations held in Victoria from 1840 - 1998. For information about accessing Coroner's records created after 1998 contact the State Coroner's Office of Victoria: www.coronerscourt.vic.gov.au.

This *PROVguide* gives detailed information about accessing [VPRS 24 Inquest Deposition Files](#). PROV also holds [VPRS 10010 Body Cards](#), which are records of coronial investigations, many of which have not resulted in an inquest.

Viewing records at PROV

Once ordered on PROV's online catalogue at www.access.prov.vic.gov.au, records are delivered to the VAC reading room on weekdays and on [Saturday openings](#). Records are held for up to 10 working days before being returned to the repository. Please see [PROVguide 21 Ordering Records](#) for information about our delivery times.

Separate areas in the VAC reading room are available for researchers who wish to view the records in privacy – just ask our reference staff. Coroner's records can contain photographs you may not wish to view. Reference staff can cover photographs on request.

Accessing inquest records 1840-1985

Step 1: Consult the database Inquest Index, Victoria 1840-1985. This database can be found on computers in PROV's reading rooms, the State Library of Victoria, and some genealogical centres and public libraries around Australia.

Step 2: Note the following information:

- Full name of the deceased
- Reference number of the inquest
- The year in which the inquest was held

Step 3: Log in to PROV's online catalogue at www.access.prov.vic.gov.au. See [PROVguide 19 Registering and Maintaining a Public User Account](#) for information on registering a public user account if you do not already have one.

Step 4: Select **Inquests** from the Ordering menu. The **Ordering Inquests** page will be displayed. Enter the year and inquest number from the index, as in the example below. Up to 4 inquest records can be searched for at a time. Click on the **Search** button.

Ordering Inquests

Year	Inquest Number
* <input type="text" value="1853"/> eg. 1893	* <input type="text" value="109"/> eg. 124
<input type="text" value="1886"/>	<input type="text" value="1216"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Step 5: Your search results will be displayed, as in the example below.

Search Results

You have searched for In the Series VPRS: 24
AND Any of: 1853/109 OR 1886/1216 Redefine search

Number of results 3

Order selected entries

Display 20 entries per page

<input type="checkbox"/>	Title	Date Range	Type	Access	Location
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1853/109 Female Inquest Deposition Files VPRS 24/P0000/17	1853 -	Item	Open	North Melbourne
<input type="checkbox"/>	1853/109 Male Inquest Deposition Files VPRS 24/P0000/13	1853 -	Item	Open	North Melbourne
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1886/1216 Inquest Deposition Files VPRS 24/P0000/504	1886 -	Item	Open	North Melbourne

Display 20 entries per page

Step 6: To order a record for viewing at the Victorian Archives Centre place a tick in the check box next to the entry for each of the records you wish to order, as shown above. Click on the **Order selected entries** button to place the order. If the records are on open access and not on order to another researcher the selected records will be ordered. Entries confirming each of the records ordered will appear in your **My Orders: Current** page.

Hint: For the period 1840 to 1880 there are two sequences of files, one for males and the other for females, as in the 1853/109 example above.

Hint: Inquest records that formed part of the documentation in a criminal trial will not be found in this series before 1951. See the series pages on PROV's online catalogue for [VPRS 24 Inquest Deposition Files](#) and [VPRS 30 Criminal Trial Briefs](#) for information about locating these records in VPRS 30.

Accessing inquest records 1885 – 1994

Step 1: Consult indexes to inquests, arranged alphabetically by the surname of the deceased. These are available in hard copy at the collection desk in the Victorian Archives Centre reading room or the Ballarat Archives Centre reading room.

Step 2: Locate the person of interest in the index. Note the following information:

- Full name of the deceased
- The file number of the inquest. This might be written next to a name (eg SMITH, John 376), or be combined with the year of the inquest (eg SMITH, John 930376). The file number of the inquest, as distinct from the year, will have a maximum of 4 digits.

Step 3: Use the year and the file number to order the record on PROV's online catalogue. Follow steps 3 to 6 in the **Accessing inquest records 1840-1985** section in this *PROVguide*, but note the following:

- In the year text box, enter the year in full. In the John Smith example above, the year would be entered as "1993", not "93". Do not enter zeros that may be at the start of the file number. For example, the file number would be entered as "376", not "0376". For example:

Year		Inquest Number
1993	eg. 1893 *	376
		eg. 124

- For inquests registered in 1988 file numbers need to be entered as 3 digits: "053", not "53", and entered into the text boxes as follows:

Year	1988	eg. 1893	*	Inquest Number	053	eg. 124
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Accessing inquest records 1994 - 1998

If you know all or part of the name of the person whose inquest records you are looking for, no index is required.

Step 1: Log in to PROV's online catalogue at www.access.prov.vic.gov.au. See [PROV guide 19 Registering and Maintaining a Public User Account](#) for information on registering a public user account if you do not already have one.

Step 2: Select [Search within a Series](#) from the **Searching** menu at www.access.prov.vic.gov.au. The Search within a Series page will be displayed:

Search within a Series

Search for items within Series VPRS * Display title

With any of the words or numbers *

Which are Physical Digital

Sort results

Clear
Search

Step 2: Enter the number 24 into the VPRS text field, and the name of the deceased in the second text field. Click on the **Search** button, and the Search Results page will be displayed (see the previous section for an example of a search result).

Hint: There is no need to change the default Physical / Digital selections by unticking these boxes.

Using Advanced Search to narrow your search

If you return a large number of results you can narrow your search by using an Advanced Search (from the Searching menu). In Advanced Search select Item, and enter the surname and the first name of the deceased in the Exact Phrase text field.

Hint: Selecting **Item** will automatically place a tick in the Physical records box and Location boxes. There is no need to change these selections by ticking or unticking these boxes.

Hint: Try swapping the names around, eg. Jane Smith or Smith Jane, as the format can vary.

Step 3: In a Search Result, tick the box next to the entries relating to the inquest records you wish to order, and click on the **Order Selected Entries** button to place your order.

Step 4: You will be prompted to log in if you are not already logged in. If the records are on open access and not on order to another researcher the selected records will be ordered. Entries confirming each of the records ordered will appear in your **My Orders: Current** page.

Accessing records of other kinds of coronial investigations

PROV holds the series [VPRS 10010 Body Cards](#) 1959 - 1998, which contain the documentation created in the course of a coronial investigation, many of which did not result in an inquest. Between 1959 and May 1986 these files document investigations conducted by the Melbourne Coroner.

Since June 1986, these files document investigations throughout Victoria conducted by the State Coroner's Office. As well as the findings of the Coroner, files can include documentation such as the Victoria Police report of the death, autopsy and other medical reports, photographs and correspondence.

Melbourne metropolitan area 1959 - 1990, and 1993 - 1994 and

Beyond the Melbourne metropolitan area June 1986 - 1988

Step 1: Consult hard copy indexes available from the collection desk at the Victorian Archives Centre reading room to obtain the file reference number.

Step 2: Search for a file on PROV's online catalogue using a Search in a Series. Enter the series number 10010 into the first (VPRS) field, and the file reference number you obtained from the index into the second field. See the example in the previous Search in a Series section for details.

Hint: You may need to try different formats for the reference number such as 1971/130, 1971/0130 or 19710130.

VPRS *

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Beyond the Melbourne metropolitan area June 1989 - 1990 and 1993 - 1996

Contact the State Coroner's Office for the reference numbers for records. When you have the reference numbers you can search for a file using a Search in a Series, as shown above.

Melbourne metropolitan area 1991 - 1992, and 1995 - 1998 and

Beyond the Melbourne metropolitan area June 1991 - 1992 and 1997 - 1998

If you know all or part of the name of the person whose records you are looking for, no index is required. You can use a Search in a Series by entering the series number 10010 into the first (VPRS) field, and the person's name in the second field.

VPRS *

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How do I get a copy of a record?

PROV does not offer a research or copying service in response to phone or written requests. We can assist you to place your copy order when you visit the reading room at the Victorian Archives Centre to view the records you have ordered online. See [PROVguide 2 Copying Services](#) for information about PROV's copying services.

Digital Cameras

You can use your own digital camera free of charge to make copies, provided that conditions of use are observed. [PROVguide 24 Use of Digital Cameras in PROV Reading Rooms](#) for details.

Search Agents

If you are not able to [visit the Victorian Archives Centre](#) to view records and place your copy order, you may wish to hire a search agent to undertake this on your behalf. See [PROVguide 15 Search Agents](#) for contact details.

Further information

See [PROVguide 71 Inquest Records](#) for more information about Coroner's records held by PROV. See [PROVguide 20 Searching for Records Online](#), and [PROVguide 21 Ordering Records](#) for more information about ordering records on PROV's online catalogue.