

## Online Catalogue – Searching for Records Online

There are five ways of searching in [PROV's Online Catalogue](#). These are available under Searching in the main menu of the Access the Collection page. The search options are:

- Simple Search
- Advanced Search
- Find by Number
- Search Within a Series
- Browse the Collection

The following pages provide you with a step-by-step guide on how to use these options. Wherever you go in [PROV's Online Catalogue](#) you can click on the Help icon to view detailed information relating to the page that you are currently using.

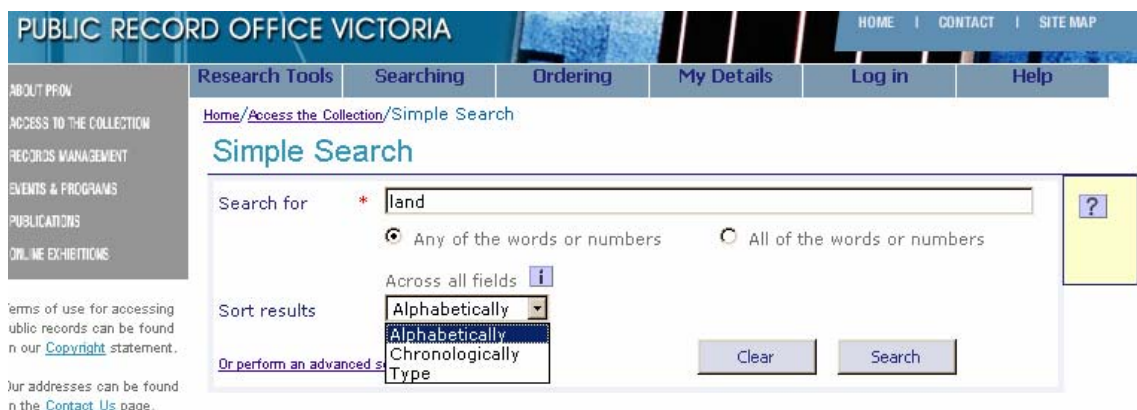
When searching in the online catalogue, you are searching the PROV Archival Control System for contextual information about the archives of the government of Victoria. Contextual information includes what records were created, who created them and why, how they were used, and how they relate to other records. See [PROVguide 66 PROV's Archival Control Model](#) for more information about archival terminology.

For more information about researching at PROV explore the [Getting Started](#) research pathway and the [Finding Records at PROV](#) research pathway.

### How do I Simple Search?

This search allows you to carry out a broad search for records. The search is carried out across all areas of the collection (physical and digital records), and all includes archival types; Agencies, Groups, Functions, Series and Items.

**Step 1** Click on **Simple Search**, under **Searching** in the main menu of the Access the Collection page.



**Step 2** Type in a word, phrase or number into the **Search For** field.

**Step 3** Select the relevant radio button to either include **all** [for example, theatre AND licence] or **any** [for example, theatre OR licence] of the words or numbers you have entered in the **Search For** field.

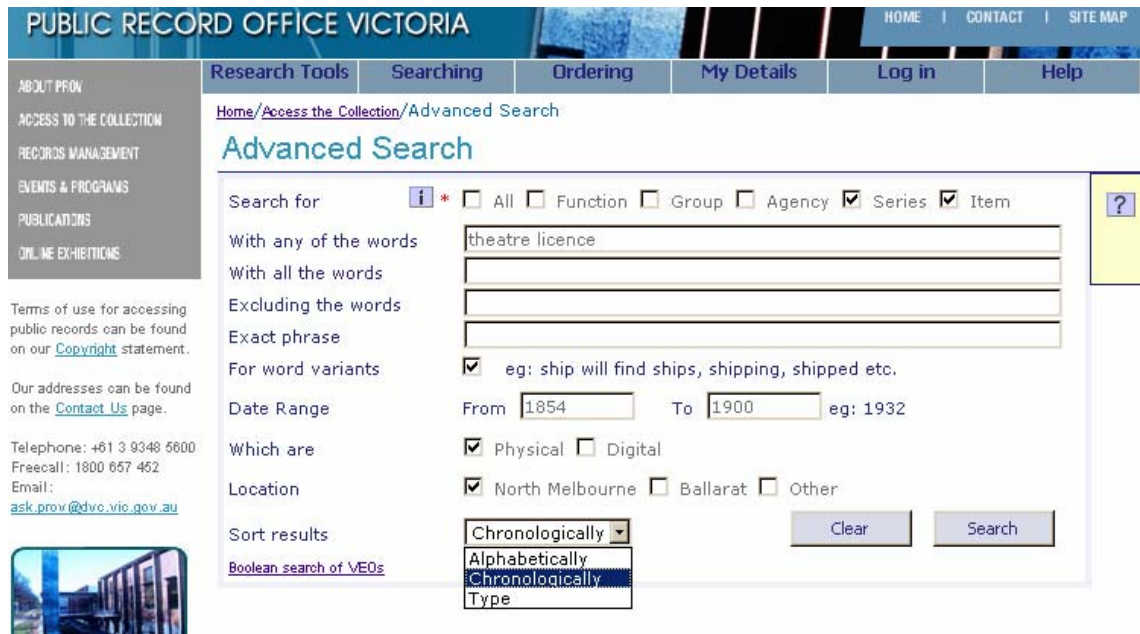
**Step 4** You can choose how you would like the Search Results to be sorted by picking an option from the drop-down box: Alphabetically, Chronologically or by Type of archival entity.

**Step 5** Your search will produce a list of entries relating to your selection, called a Search Results page. Each entry is hyperlinked to a Details page containing relevant information.

## How do I Advanced Search?

Advanced Search can look in the same fields and categories as Simple Search but allows you to narrow and broaden your search by a range of parameters, as you require.

**Step 1:** Click on **Simple Search**, under **Searching** in the main menu of the Access the Collection page.



The screenshot shows the 'Advanced Search' page of the Public Record Office Victoria website. The page has a blue header with the logo and navigation links (HOME, CONTACT, SITE MAP). Below the header is a menu with 'Research Tools', 'Searching', 'Ordering', 'My Details', 'Log in', and 'Help'. The main content area is titled 'Advanced Search' and contains a search form. The form includes a search bar with the text 'theatre licence', a date range from 1854 to 1900, and several checkboxes for search criteria: 'All', 'Function', 'Group', 'Agency', 'Series', and 'Item'. There are also checkboxes for 'With any of the words', 'With all the words', 'Excluding the words', 'Exact phrase', 'For word variants', 'Physical', 'Digital', and 'Location'. A dropdown menu for 'Sort results' is open, showing options: 'Chronologically', 'Alphabetically', 'Chronologically', and 'Type'. There are 'Clear' and 'Search' buttons at the bottom right of the form.

**Step 2:** Select the archival Type or Types that you wish to search for from the following options: Function, Group, Agency, Series, Item.

**Step 3:** Enter a word, phrase or number relating to records or information you are looking for, into the text fields. Depending on the fields you enter information into, entries will be found for Details pages that:

- **include All** of the words or numbers you have entered for example, theatre AND licence
- **include Any** of the words or numbers you have entered, for example, theatre OR licence
- **exclude** the words or numbers you have entered
- have an **exact phrase**, for example entries that have the phrase “**theatre licensing**” in them

**Step 4:** If you wish, you can define your search further by selecting from a range of check boxes:

- broaden your search by looking for **word variants** of the words you have entered. For example if the word ship has been entered, the search will find entries containing the words shipping and ships.
- Narrow your search by entering a date range, using years.
- Select either **Physical** (orderable) or **Digital** (viewable online) records to be searched for.
- Search according to **Location**: Ballarat, North Melbourne or Other. Digital records do not have a location as they are accessed online.

**Step 5:** You can choose from the following **Sort** options for the display of your search results from the drop-down box: Alphabetically, Chronologically or by Type of archival entity.

**Step 6:** Your search will produce a list of entries relating to your selection, called a Search Results page. Each entry is hyperlinked to a Details page containing relevant information. See [PROV guide 21](#) for information on how to order from a Search Result page.

## How do I Find by Number?

Find by Number takes you directly to the Details page of a Function, Group, Agency or Series if you know its number. For example if you were looking for the Public Works Committee ([VA 4091](#)) you could use the following steps to locate the Details pages on PROV's Online Catalogue:

**Step 1:** Select **Find by Number** from the Searching menu. The Find by Number page will be displayed.

The screenshot shows the Public Record Office Victoria website. The header includes the logo and navigation links: HOME, CONTACT, SITE MAP. Below the header is a menu with Research Tools, Searching, Ordering, My Details, Log in, and Help. The main content area is titled 'Find by Number' and includes a breadcrumb trail: Home/Access the Collection/Find By Number. The search interface has a 'Search for' field with a dropdown menu showing 'Function', 'Group', 'Agency', and 'Series'. The 'Agency' option is selected. The search term 'VA' is entered in the first field, and '4091' is entered in the second field. There are 'Clear' and 'Search' buttons. A yellow box with a question mark is on the right side of the search area. On the left side, there is a sidebar with navigation links: ABOUT PPOV, ACCESS TO THE COLLECTION, RECORDS MANAGEMENT, EVENTS & PROGRAMS, PUBLICATIONS, and ONLINE EXHIBITIONS. Below the sidebar, there is contact information: Telephone: +61 3 9348 5600, Freecall: 1800 657 462, Email: ask\_prov@dvo.vic.gov.au.

**Step 2:** Select an Archival Type; either a Function, Group, Agency or Series, and enter its number. In the example above you would select **Agency** and enter the number 4091 for the Public Works Department.

**Step 3:** Click on the 'Search' button. The Details page will be displayed.

If a result could not be found, a Search Results page with some searching hints and tips will be displayed.

## How Do I Search Within a Series?

This search allows you to search for keywords or numbers within a particular Series, where the Series number is known. This method is useful to locate an individual file or object within a Series, such as a school building file, as explained below.

**Step 1:** Select **Search within a Series** from the Searching menu. The Search within a Series page will be displayed.

The screenshot shows the Public Record Office Victoria website. The header includes the logo and navigation links: HOME, CONTACT, SITE MAP. Below the header is a menu with Research Tools, Searching, Ordering, My Details, Log in, and Help. The main content area is titled 'Search within a Series' and includes a breadcrumb trail: Home/Access the Collection/Search Within Series. The search interface has a 'Search for items within Series' field with a dropdown menu showing 'VPRS'. The search term '795' is entered in the field. There is a 'Display title' button. Below the search field, there is a 'With any of the words or numbers' field with the search term '1045'. There are checkboxes for 'Physical' and 'Digital', both of which are checked. There is a 'Sort results' dropdown menu with 'Chronologically' selected. There are 'Clear' and 'Search' buttons. A yellow box with a question mark is on the right side of the search area. On the left side, there is a sidebar with navigation links: ABOUT PPOV, ACCESS TO THE COLLECTION, RECORDS MANAGEMENT, EVENTS & PROGRAMS, PUBLICATIONS, and ONLINE EXHIBITIONS. Below the sidebar, there is contact information: Telephone: +61 3 9348 5600, Freecall: 1800 657 462, Email: ask\_prov@dvo.vic.gov.au.

**Step 2:** Enter the search details, as in the example above.

**Step 3:** Click on the **Search** button. The Search Results page will be displayed.

## How do I Browse the Collection?

The Browse option allows you to scan an alphabetical list of Series, Agencies, Groups or Functions. This method could be useful for first-time users as a way of finding their way into the PROV collection. If you are not sure what area you are interested in, you might find it useful to scan a list of Functions or Agencies to locate the entries relevant to your area of research.

**Step 1** Click on **Browse**, under **Searching** in the main menu of the Access the Collection page.



**PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE VICTORIA** HOME | CONTACT | SITE MAP

Research Tools Searching Ordering My Details Log in Help

ABOUT PROV  
ACCESS TO THE COLLECTION  
RECORDS MANAGEMENT  
EVENTS & PROGRAMS  
PUBLICATIONS  
ONLINE EXHIBITIONS

Home/Access the Collection/Browse The Collection

### Browse the Collection

Step 1 - Select one of the following archival entity types to determine which part of the collection to browse

- Series (VPRS)
- Agency (VA)
- Group (VRG)
- Function (VF)

Step 2 - Click on a letter below to view a list of the selected category beginning with the letter

A B C D E F G H I J K L M  
N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

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Telephone: +61 3 9348 5800  
Freecall: 1800 657 452  
Email: [ask\\_prov@dvc.vic.gov.au](mailto:ask_prov@dvc.vic.gov.au)

**Step 2** Select a category to search, from the four options: Series, Agency, Group and Function.

**Step 3** Select a letter of the alphabet to view a list of the selected category beginning with that letter. For example if you were searching for records about the Hamilton Courts, as in the example above, you would select the radio button next to **Agency** and click on the letter **H**.

**Step 4** Your search will produce a list of entries relating to your selection, called a Search Results page. Each entry is hyperlinked to a Details page containing relevant information.

## Can I Use Wildcards in My Online Searching?

Wildcard searching allows you to search for truncated words, using an asterisk (\*) as a wildcard. For example:

- ship will find entries containing the whole word 'ship'.
- ship\* will find entries containing words that start with the word 'ship'. For example, ship, ships, shipping or shipped.
- \*ship will find entries containing words that end with the word 'hip'. For example, wardship or guardianship.
- s\*p will find entries beginning with 's' and ending with 'p'. For example, ship, sip or shop.
- \*ship\* will find entries that contain 'ship'. For example, friendships, township, shipping.
- Multiple wildcards (\*\*) will be treated as a single wildcard. For example: s\*\*p will return the same entries as s\*p.

See [PROV guide 21](#) for information about Ordering records.

## For help with searching for records online contact PROV's Help Desk

Tel: 1800 657 452 (toll free in Australia)  
Email: [ask\\_prov@dvc.vic.gov.au](mailto:ask_prov@dvc.vic.gov.au)