

Getting Started

[What Types of Records Are Held by Public Record Office Victoria?](#)

[How Do I Start My Research?](#)

[How Do I Find Records?](#)

[Can Someone Research at PROV on my Behalf?](#)

[Can PROV Provide Copies of Public Records?](#)

[Can I Make Copies of Public Records?](#)

[Can I View Records Online?](#)

[How Do I Order Records?](#)

[Visit one of PROV's Reading Rooms](#)

[Citing Public Records](#)

[Why are Some Records Closed?](#)

[Publications](#)

[Useful Links](#)

What Types of Records Are Held by Public Record Office Victoria?

As the State's archival authority Public Record Office Victoria holds records created by Victorian government departments and authorities, the State's courts, municipalities, schools, public hospitals and other public offices. The records date from the establishment of the Port Phillip District in the mid 1830s and include information relating to areas of activity managed or regulated by government such as the administration of justice, immigration, health and welfare, land, education, Indigenous communities, planning, transport, and resource management.

[PROVguide 66 PROV's Archival Control Model](#)

[PROVguide 1 Reading Room Services](#)

[PROVguide 22 Records Access Services Charter](#)

How Do I Start My Research?

Browse our [PROVguides](#) to find out more about some of the records held by PROV, and resources and services available at PROV for your research. You can read or download them and all PROVguides are available in our Reading Rooms.

Read the publication [Private Lives, Public Records](#) for an introduction to records available through PROV for family history research.

Visit one of our [Reading Rooms](#) and discuss your research with our Reference staff.

Explore these Research Pathways for more ideas about research at PROV.

[Finding Records at PROV](#)

[Koorie People and Places](#)

[Family and Local History](#)

[Exhibitions and Online Learning](#)

When thinking about locating records held by PROV it can be useful to ask yourself...

"What involvement would Victorian government departments have had in the subject I am researching?"

"What kind of records might they have created about that subject?"

How Do I Find Records?

PROV provides a range of resources and services to members of the public wishing to access public records, but PROV staff do not carry out research on behalf of members of the public. To identify and access records held by PROV you can:

[Search](#) or [Browse](#) our online catalogue.

Read this: [PROVguide 20 Searching for Records Online](#)

Identify records you are interested in by reading our [PROVguides](#).

Visit one of our [Reading Rooms](#) and discuss your research with our Reference staff.

Learn about searching, ordering and downloading online at a free seminar available at one of our Reading Rooms. Contact [Reference Services](#) to find out about times and dates.

Attend one of PROV's [Research Seminars](#) to learn more about understanding and using archives in your research.

Can Someone Research at PROV on my Behalf?

You can engage a [Professional Search Agent](#) to carry out research on your behalf.

You can arrange for records you have ordered to be looked at by someone other than yourself by providing PROV with written authorisation. Your written permission can be emailed or posted to PROV, or presented by the authorised person when they are requesting to see the records. PROV Reading Room staff do not enable access to records without permission from the person who has ordered them.

PROV staff do not provide a research service, but will provide assistance to those who are researching on behalf of others. If you have asked a friend to research for you, you can be confident that they will receive all the support of PROV's [Reference Services](#).

Can PROV Provide Copies of Public Records?

Public Record Office Victoria provides a copying service through our Reading Rooms. To request copies of a public record a researcher or their representative views and marks up the record they wish to be copied, fills out a copy order form and pays for the order. Copies can be posted (for a small fee) or picked up from a Reading Room. Reading Room staff can assist researchers to place a copy order.

Please note: PROV may not be able to copy some material due to preservation, copyright or other permission restrictions.

[PROVguide 2 Copying Services](#)

[PROVguide 3 Copying Services - Government Access](#)

[PROVguide 25 Copyright for Researchers](#)

Can I Make Copies of Public Records?

Digital cameras can be used in PROV's Reading Rooms to make copies of most records on Open Access. Use of digital cameras for making copies of public records depends on the copyright conditions of the records, and is assessed promptly on a case-by-case basis.

[PROVguide 24 Use of Digital Cameras in PROV Reading Rooms](#)

[PROVguide 25 Copyright for Researchers](#)

Can I View Records Online?

PROV has two types of records that can be viewed online; digitised records and electronic records. Digitised records are digital copies PROV has made of records in its collection.

You can also view electronic records, which are records that PROV has received from government departments in a digital format, such as word processing documents and emails.

Find out about PROV's digitised records, including online indexes and databases:

[PROV guide 23 PROV's Digitised Records and Online Indexes](#)

Discover more records online and the stories they can tell by exploring PROV's [Online Exhibitions](#).

Learn about searching, ordering and downloading online at a free seminar available at one of our Reading Rooms. Contact [Reference Services](#) to find out about times and dates.

How Do I Order Records?

To order records held by PROV you will firstly need to set up a user account which you can do by [Registering a User Account](#).

For step-by-step advice you can read these:

[PROV guide 21 Ordering Records](#)

[PROV guide 71 Ordering Inquest Records](#)

[PROV guide 68 Ordering Wills and Probate Records](#)

Learn about searching and ordering online at a free seminar available at one of our Reading Rooms. Contact [Reference Services](#) to find out about times and dates.

If you need assistance with ordering records you can contact PROV's Helpdesk:

Tel: 1800 657 452 (toll free in Australia)

Email: ask.prov@dvc.vic.gov.au

Visit one of PROV's Reading Rooms

Find out more about resources and services available through our [Reading Rooms](#) at the Ballarat Archives Centre and the Victorian Archives Centre, North Melbourne:

[PROV guide 1 Reading Room Services](#)

[PROV guide 26 Using Births, Deaths and Marriages Indexes at PROV](#)

[PROV guide 2 Copying Services](#)

[PROV guide 3 Copying Services - Government Access](#)

[PROV guide 9 Ballarat Archives Centre](#)

[PROV guide 21 Records Access Services Charter](#)

The Reading Room at the Victorian Archives Building, North Melbourne, is shared by [Public Record Office Victoria](#) and [National Archives of Australia](#), which makes research easier if Victorian and Commonwealth governments have both created records relevant to your research.

If you are travelling to Ballarat or Melbourne you may be interested in information about [visiting Victoria](#).

You are welcome to contact [Reference Services](#) if you have a disability or special needs and would like to discuss how we can assist you to access records through Public Record Office Victoria.

Citing Public Records

PROV has developed a citation guide for people wishing to publish, exhibit or provide references to public records. The guide sets out a range of formats for researchers to ensure accurate citations of public records.

[PROV guide 13 How to Cite Public Records](#)

Why are Some Records Closed?

Some of the records held by PROV are closed under various sections of the [Public Records Act 1973](#). These sections of the Act are displayed in a Search Result and on Details Pages on PROV's online catalogue.

S9 refers to Section 9 of the *Public Records Act*, and closes records that contain personal and private information about persons that may still be living. These records are generally closed for up to 99 years for children, and 75 years for adults.

S10 refers to section 10 of the *Public Records Act*, which says that records may be closed to public access at the discretion of a Minister, countersigned by the Minister responsible for Public Record Office Victoria.

If you are seeking access to records closed under Section 9 or Section 10 you will need to contact the [Freedom of Information](#) officer of the government department that is responsible for the particular records and inquire about making a Freedom of Information request.

In some circumstances researchers can seek special access through PROV to records closed under section 9. See [PROV guide 14 Special Access](#) for more information.

S11 refers to Section 11 of the *Public Records Act*, under which records are closed that are too fragile for public inspection. Records closed under s11 of the Act may have been microfilmed or digitised and may be available through PROV Reading Rooms.

Publications

[Private Lives Public Records: Family History Resources at Public Record Office Victoria.](#)

Cost: \$25.00

[My Heart Is Breaking: A joint guide to records about Aboriginal people in the Public Record Office and the National Archives, Victorian Regional Office.](#)

Cost: \$15.35

[Coming South: Victorian Archives of Immigration 1839-1923. A Guide](#)

Cost \$9.85

These publications are available for use in PROV's Reading Rooms, at no charge. Find out more about [Publications](#) available through PROV.

Useful Links

[Adoption and Family Records Service](#) (Department of Human Services)

Births, Deaths and Marriages

<http://www.dvc.vic.gov.au/bdm.htm>

State Library Victoria

<http://www.slv.vic.gov.au>

National Archives of Australia

<http://www.naa.gov.au/>

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

<http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/>

National Library of Australia

<http://www.nla.gov.au/>