

# Public Record Office Victoria

1973 –

**Other Names:** • PROV

**URL:** <http://www.prov.vic.gov.au/>

## Details

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The Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) was established under the Public Records Act 1973, as the archives of the State Government of Victoria. PROV holds records relating to the government's involvement in child welfare and protection, charitable institutions, adoption, and juvenile justice. It also holds records relating to Aboriginal people. PROV is also home to the Victorian Archives Centre, which is the National Archives of Australia's Victorian access point for Commonwealth Government records held at PROV.

The objectives of PROV as set out in the Public Records Act are, through the Keeper of Public Records, to:

- issue standards regulating the creation, maintenance and security of public records including the selection and disposal of public records not worthy of preservation;
- advise and assist agencies in achieving compliance with issued standards;
- preserve public records of permanent value as the state archives;
- ensure that the archives are accessible to the government and the people of Victoria.

PROV's collection dates back to the first European settlement in Port Phillip in the 1830s. The public records in PROV's collection document the activities of government from the earliest days of colonial administration to the present.

In terms of the history of 'care' in Victoria, PROV holds records relating to the government's involvement in child welfare and protection, charitable institutions, adoption, and juvenile justice.

Records transferred to PROV's custody from government agencies are open for the general public to access them, unless the records contain personal or private information. Such records are closed under section 9 of the Public Records Act 1973, to protect the privacy of individuals and families.

Section 9 provides that records that contain matters 'of such a private or personal nature that they should not be open for public inspection' are not to be made available to the public for a period of 75 years (records relating to adults) or 99 years (records relating to children).

This means that many of the records in PROV's custody relating to children and young people who have been in state 'care' are closed. These records can still be accessed by people with a right to see these records (eg, the person concerned, or members of their family). However, requests for access to 'closed' records are not made to PROV, but to the government agency responsible for the records.

In this website, we have provided brief descriptions of government records which may be of interest to 'care' leavers (see Victorian Government Records relating to Wardship and Adoption below) .

For the majority of 'care' leavers, former residents and members of the Stolen Generations seeking access to government records about them or members of their family, it is best to start by contacting the Care Leavers Record Service, Department of Health & Human Services. Some of these records have been transferred to PROV, some are still in the custody of the Department.

## Koorie Records Unit

The Koorie Records Unit, within Public Record Office Victoria (PROV), promotes awareness, accessibility, and use of Aboriginal records within PROV's collection. It aims to provide supported and culturally sensitive access to records for Aboriginal people through the Koorie Reference Service, and has a particular focus on improving access to records for members and descendants of the Stolen Generations.

## Current recordkeeping practice in Victoria

PROV provides tools and advice to Victorian government agencies to ensure that agencies can comply with PROV's standards for the management of public records.

One such tool is the Retention and Disposal Authority. This document sets out how public records created by government agencies are to be managed. Records that are classed as 'permanent' in an RDA are transferred to PROV.

The management of records created by government agencies in relation to the 'care' of children and young people is governed by PROS 08/12 Retention & Disposal Authority for Records of Child Protection & Family Services Functions.

## More info

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### Related Entries

#### Related Organisations

- [Department of Human Services, State Government of Victoria \(1995 - December 2014\)](#)
- [Koorie Records Unit, Public Record Office Victoria \(c. 2001 - current\)](#)  
PROV established the Koorie Records Unit in 2001 to improve access to records relating to Indigenous people within PROV's collection.  
Date: 2001 -
- [Department of Health & Human Services, State Government of Victoria \(January 2015 - 2021\)](#)

#### Holds

- [Departmental Children's Homes Files \(1955 - 1987\)](#)
- [Victorian Naval Logs \(1865 - 1876\)](#)
- [Labour Ward Case Books and Registers \[The Haven\] \(1916 - 1967\)](#)
- [Admission and Discharge Day Books \[The Haven\] \(1907 - 1975\)](#)
- [Ward Index Cards \(1960 - 1986\)](#)
- [Children's Overseas Reception Board Files \(1940 - 1946\)](#)
- [Children's Court of Victoria records \(1933 - 1964\)](#)
- [Admission Register, Alexandra Babies' Home \(1941 - 1973\)](#)
- [Victorian Government Wardship and/or Out of Home Care Records \(1864 - current\)](#)
- [General Correspondence Files \(c. 1920 - c. 1981\)](#)
- [School Records \(1951 - 1992\)](#)
- [Children's Registry, Bendigo Industrial School \(1868 - 1885\)](#)

#### Related Legislation

- [Public Records Act 1973, Victoria \(1973 - current\)](#)

## Resources

- Public Record Office Victoria, [Retention and Disposal Authority for Records of Child Protection and Family Services Functions, Version 2020 \(PROS 08/12 VAR 5\)](#), 2020
  - Flagg, Simon and Sebastian Gurciullo, *Footprints: the journey of Lucy and Percy Pepper*, 2008
  - Russell, E.W. (Bill), *A matter of record: a history of Public Record Office Victoria*, 2003
  - Public Record Office Victoria, [Private lives, public records: family history resources at Public Record Office Victoria](#), 2003
  - Deverall, Myrna; McFarlane, Ian, ['My heart is breaking': a joint guide to records about Aboriginal people in the Public Record Office of Victoria and the Australian Archives Victorian Regional Office](#), 1993
  - Public Record Office Victoria, [Public Record Office Victoria's Photostream](#), 2012
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