

Victorian Local History Database

Recognising the costs involved in publishing databases on the Internet, Arts Victoria provided funding for the RHSV to operate a server to publish a variety of databases including a regional database containing records from societies in the state.

Advantages of involvement in Victorian Local History Database:

- Societies not involved in existing regional database projects can now have their records included in a state-wide local history database
- Regional Internet databases promote the organisations contributing records to the database
- Collections in historical societies form part of the Distributed National Collection. Participation in regional databases promotes the important and often unique items in collections held by societies
- Regional Internet databases allow researchers from anywhere in the world to locate material in collections
- Using regional databases can allow researchers to follow new threads of research in collections they may not have originally considered researching

The Victorian local History Database is a regional database containing cataloguing records from participating societies affiliated with the RHSV. A selection of fields describing each item will be used. The records in the Victorian Local History Database are stored on the server at the RHSV. Societies involved in the project export their records with the required fields and send them to me to be imported into the regional database on the server. Societies do not need to be connected to the Internet to be involved.

Although the database used in this project is DB/TextWorks, records from other databases and catalogues such as File Maker Pro, Access and Excel can be included provided that the records can be exported as comma delimited files. Field names of exported records must be identical to the field names in the Victorian Local History Database.

Field names in the Victorian Local History Database:

* **Registration Number** – a unique number for each item in the database eg B125

* **Museum Code** – can be a National Union Catalogue Code (if the organisation has one) eg VFHS - if not, contact me to organise a code for your organisation.

* **Object Name** - As this is a database of information items, Object Name refers to the physical item catalogued - Book, Article, Photograph, Document, Map, Videotape, Audiotape, Ephemera, Microform, Pamphlet, Periodical, Newsletter, CD, CD-ROM, DVD, Slide, Movie film, Illustration, Correspondence

* **Title** – If an item such as a photograph does not have a title, create one – a main subject heading can be useful

Author – surname first, then given name

Photographer – surname first, then given name (In books, only use this field if one (or two) photographers took all the photos in the book)

Illustrator – surname first, then given name (In books, only use this field if one (or two) artists illustrated the book)

Classification – Classification field in this database is not the same as the Classification field in the Museums Data Structure - there is no need for primary and secondary headings in this database. Classification may be a number such as a Dewey number used in libraries or another

number devised to represent subject groupings eg 13.C.1 or a subject heading in a vertical file eg Churches

* **Subjects** – Names of people, places, organisations, buildings and objects. For consistency in the use of subject terms use a thesaurus such as the Victorian Local History Thesaurus or Australian Pictorial Thesaurus and Authority Files (lists of names of people, places etc used in the database)

* **Brief Description** – A brief description describing the content of the item. It is also useful to a note if a book has photographs, index, bibliography, list of mayors etc

Date Made – Date an item was published or a photograph taken eg 1972

Place – Place where an item was published or a photograph taken eg Melbourne

Publisher – name of the publisher of a book or other publication eg Rigby

Size – Size will be number of pages for books eg 122p or cm for photographs 12 cm x 8 cm. For tapes, size may be number of minutes of playing time, if known

Restrictions – Restrictions field is only used if the copyright for a photograph for example belongs to another organisation or person or there is a restriction placed by the donor on access to an item (For example: This photograph is not available for copying without permission of Yarra Press)

Address – (Address is useful when the full address of a building in a photograph or real estate leaflet for example is known, then it can be entered in this field in the following format - suburb or town, street, number for example: Bentleigh, Smythe Street, 22)

Source – (Source is used when cataloguing articles from books or newspapers for entering information about the original item - for example: Moe News, 22 January 1952, p1. When using the Source field do not use fields such as Date Made, Publisher, Place etc.)

(Most of the above fields (except for Address and Source) are included in the Museums Data-structure though the field labels in the report forms in the database in some cases will be different from the field names in the structure.)

Societies will also find it useful to include a field 'Date entry altered' with an automatic date (for DB/TextWorks users) as it will help keeping track of altered records and new records to be sent in the next batch of records to be uploaded.

*Compulsory fields in the database are Registration Number, Museum Code, Title, Object Name, Subjects and Brief Description. Use other fields as required.

Examples of possible use of fields in entries:

Books – Registration Number, Museum Code, Object Name, Title, Author, Brief Description, Subjects, Classification, Place, Publisher, Date Made, Size

For example:

Registration Number: B042

Museum Code: VBHS

Object Name: Book

Title: Fernshaw the forgotten village

Author: Mitchell, Alma

Brief description: The story of the village of Fernshaw from 1864-1890 and of Fernshaw Park. List of residents of Fernshaw and district, Fernshaw subdivision, important dates in the history of Fernshaw. Photographs, index. Bibliography.

Subjects: Fernshaw; Fernshaw Park; Parks and reserves

Classification: 13.D
Place: Healesville
Publisher: Healesville Historical Society
Date Made: 2001
Size: 112p

Photographs – Registration Number, Museum Code, Object Name, Title, Brief Description, Photographer, Subjects, Place, Date Made, Size

For example:

Registration Number: P220
Museum Code: VBHS
Object Name: Photograph
Title: Junior school playground
Brief Description: Coloured photograph of climbing frame in the junior school playground at Bayswater West Primary School.
Subjects: Bayswater West Primary School; Schools; Bayswater; Playground equipment
Photographer: Court, Vicki
Place: Bayswater
Date Made: 2001
Size: 10 cm x 8 cm

Maps – Registration Number, Museum Code, Object Name, Title, Brief Description, Subjects, Date Made, Size

For example:

Registration Number:
Museum Code: VBHS
Object Name: Map
Title: Dandenong Creek
Brief Description: Map showing the course of the Dandenong Creek as it flows through Wantirna and Bayswater before part of the creek was diverted into pipes underground.
Subjects: Dandenong Creek; Bayswater; Wantirna
Date Made: 1931
Size: 40 cm x 35 cm

Audiotapes – Registration Number, Museum Code, Object Name, Title, Brief Description, Subjects, Date Made, Size

For example:

Registration Number: B431
Museum Code: VBHS
Object Name: Audiotape
Title: Laundry days of old
Brief Description: Interview with Mavis Brown of Ferntree Gully regarding the method of laundering clothes in the 1920s. Interview conducted by Jenny Smith.
Subjects: Brown, Mavis; Washing clothes
Date Made: 1991
Size: 14 min

Vertical File – Registration Number, Museum Code, Object Name, Title, Brief Description, Subjects, Author, Classification, Source

For example:

Registration: V542
Museum Code: VBS
Object name: Article
Title: Family ties to tragic past
Brief description: Attempts to discover information about a family member killed in an accident at Boronia Level Crossing in April 1926
Subjects: Barr, Charles; Boronia Railway Crossing; Railways; Boronia
Author: Hahn, Maree
Classification: Boronia Railway Crossing
Source: Boronia and The Basin Community News, May 2004, p8

For further information about this project contact the Royal Historical Society of Victoria – office@historyvictoria.org.au