



SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIAN

GENEALOGISTS

Submission to the  
2023/24 Pre-Budget Submissions

Authorised by The Society of Australian Genealogists  
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## 2023/24 PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION FUNDING AFFECTING CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

The Society of Australian Genealogists welcomes the opportunity to contribute our thoughts and concerns regarding the 2023/24 Budget.

This submission conveys the key issues identified by the Society of Australian Genealogists as a non-profit organisation dedicated to helping people to learn more about their past. The concerns we raise are commonly shared across the Australian genealogical community.

### 1. Society of Australian Genealogists

Founded in 1932, the Society of Australian Genealogists (SAG) is the oldest family history society in Australia. Its principal objective is *the advancement of genealogical education*, which is reflected in its education and training program, events, and collections.

Our Mission is to: *Inspire all to learn more about their past.*

SAG provides education and resources to help nearly 4,000 members research their own identities and family history, using whatever resources are available within their own families as well as in the public domain. Genealogists research and collate family trees in order to understand our own heritage or that of any person we are trying to help. An intrinsic part of this process is accessing records, written and visual material, and public recordings. Therefore, appropriate access to documentation is a vital consideration of our research.

Australia's cultural institutions, particularly those dedicated to recording the stories that constitute our nation, such as the National Library of Australia and National Archives of Australia, are crucial resources to family historians.

### 2. Appropriate funding for cultural institutions

To support family connections and to develop Australia's story, we need access to publicly available data, records, reporting, imagery, and ephemera. The National Library of Australia's online service, *Trove*, is a critical archive of this information. Recent reporting however indicates that insufficient government funding has placed *Trove* in jeopardy.

As Australia's largest family history society, our members use *Trove* to support research on a daily basis. We find the stories of our ancestors via the joy of wedding announcements, the depictions of debutante ballgowns, the tragedy of funeral notices, the disgrace of criminal gazettes, and the determination of industrial actions.

*Trove* is a global leader in digitisation efforts. Its use is free and is easily accessible for all Australians. It allows ordinary Australians, in particular family historians, to access their past in the form of six billion digital items, with ease from their own homes. It is imperative that this repository of Australian history not be allowed to fall into disrepair or disappear altogether due to lack of funding.

In addition, the National Library of Australia provides a range of fellowships, scholarships, and grants. This funding enables small organisations and researchers opportunities to assess, review, analyse, and develop collections, research, and publications, adding to the wider Australian story. The Society of Australian Genealogists was honoured to be granted a Community Heritage Grant in 2022, which has allowed us to assess the value of our collection and its potential contribution to Australia's historical narrative. Adequate funding should be provided to the National Library of Australia to continue these financial aids, encouraging the continued telling of our national story.

The Society of Australian Genealogists encourages the Government to recognise the efforts and successes of our cultural institutions, and the value they provide to our country. These efforts can only be supported through adequate and secure funding into the future.



The Hon Tony Burke MP

Minister for the Arts

PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

I write on behalf of the 3,600 members of the Society of Australian Genealogists, to express concerns regarding the funding of *Trove*.

The Society is alarmed regarding reports that the National Library of Australia will not have sufficient funding to maintain the current *Trove* service and requests strong consideration is given to securing adequate funding in the upcoming budget.

*Trove* represents the story of Australia, capturing the mosaic of our history through newspapers, images, music, letters, journals, and magazines, in a free and easily accessible format for us all.

As Australia's largest family history society, our members use *Trove* to support research on a daily basis. We find the stories of our ancestors via the joy of wedding announcements, the depictions of debutante ball gowns, the tragedy of funeral notices, the disgrace of criminal gazettes, and the determination of industrial actions. Our members also contribute to *Trove's* continued development, by correcting transcriptions and creating records lists.

In announcing Government's progress on the 'National Cultural Policy' in August 2022, you stated the policy would focus on the strength of institutions. Safeguarding adequate funding for the National Library of Australia to enable the continued delivery of *Trove* is a crucial step towards achieving this focus and will demonstrate the Government's commitment to the arts.

*Trove* needs secure and adequate funding to guarantee we don't lose access to Australian stories.

Yours sincerely,



Melissa Hubert  
President  
Society of Australian Genealogists

