

Media Release

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Chilling capital cases among files opened by Public Record Office Victoria

Every year on the 1st of January hundreds of state archives are made public as part of Public Record Office Victoria's annual Section 9 record openings. Under Section 9 of the *Public Records Act 1973* files of a personal or private nature are closed to prevent the violation of personal privacy. These historic records, which as of 1 January have passed their assigned closure period, are of particular interest to family historians waiting on files that mention members of their family tree.

Among the files made public for the first time this year are 1942-43 capital case files. Capital cases relate to those criminal trials where a sentence of death was given. This year the Victorian Government copy of the trial of "Brownout Strangler" Eddie Leonski is included (there is also a copy held on open access with the National Archives in Canberra.) Six months after Leonski was executed at Pentridge, two other men narrowly escaped their death sentences for murder, Norman Morris Searle and Charles Mills - their files sit beside Leonski's as part of this year's openings.

Also among the openings are mental health records, divorce cases, prison registers and other criminal case files of 1943, including an infamous Brighton murder that took place outside the old Coffee Palace, as well as Victorian Railway Records of 1962-63. Director and Keeper of Public Records, Justine Heazlewood, says that the records will help researchers, historians, writers and genealogists paint a fuller picture of Melbourne during those periods.

"These historic records will be invaluable to researchers as they provide not only information about individuals but also a glimpse into the time in which they were written. For instance if your ancestor spent time in an asylum in the 1940s, you can get a sense of what that experience may have been like by looking through some of these records."

A broad guide to time periods for closure under Section 9 is as follows:

- Records primarily concerning adults may be closed for 75 years from the year in which the records were created.
- Records concerning children as the primary subject may be closed for 99 years.
- Records such as staff records where the individuals concerned may still be in the workforce may be closed for a lesser period such as 30, 40, or 50 years as appropriate.

See the following page for the full list of records opened on 1 January 2019. More information on some of the stories contained within these files can be found at prov.vic.gov.au

For more information contact Tara Oldfield, Communications Officer, on 0418 698 364.

Record Title	Date Range
Criminal Trial Briefs	1943
Capital Case Files	1941-1943
Inward Registered Correspondence, Attorney General's Department	1942 - 1943
Divorce Case Files, Melbourne	1942 - 1943
Central Register of Male Prisoners	1942 - 1943
Divorce Case Files, Ballarat	1943
Capital Sentence Files	1943
Wages Records, Country Roads Board	1942 - 1943
Children's Court Register, Castlemaine Courts	1915 - 1919
Children's Court Register, Richmond Courts	Jun 1917 - Mar 1919
Children's Court Register, Prahran Courts	Apr 1917 - Dec 1919
Children's Court Register, Fitzroy	May 1917 - Feb 1919
Children's Court Register, Geelong	Jul 1918 - Sept 1919
Children's Court Register, Collingwood	1907 - May 1919
Children's Court Register, Heidelberg	Sept 1915 - Sept 1919
Minute Books, Pharmacy Board of Victoria	1965 - 1968
Civil Construction Corps Wage Records	1942 - 1943
Criminal Trial Brief Register II	1943
Master Patient Index Cards, Alfred Hospital	1941 - 1943
Ward Registers	1918 - 1919
List of Prisoners, Pentridge Gaol	Nov 1928 - Jun 1943
Divorce Cause Books	May 1942 - Dec 1943
Head Attendant's Daily Report Books, Male Department, Kew Mental Hospital	Dec 1941 - Jan 1943
Clinical Notes of Male Patients, Kew Cottages	26 Jul 1912 - 10 Nov 1919
Asylum Records, Pleasant View	Jul 1940 - May 1943
Head Nurse's Daily Report Book, Female Wards, Kew Mental Hospital	1941 - Jan 1943
Bound Circulated Photographs and Criminal Offences of Convicted Persons	Oct 1942 - Apr 1943
Admission Warrants, Female Patients, Sunbury Mental Hospital	May 1941 - Mar 1943
General Subject Files, Education Department	1978 - 1988
Presentments, Supreme Court of Victoria	1942 - 1943
Register of Prisoners Received and Discharged, J Division, Pentridge	Aug 1939 - Jun 1943
Professional Officers' Cards, Teachers Tribunal	1946 - 1968
Tramway Employees Record Cards	1962 - 1963
Correspondence with Union regarding industrial issues, Victorian Railways	1962 - 1963
Accident Compensation Claim Register, Claims Branch, Victorian Railways	1962 - 1963
Accident Compensation Claim Book, Victorian Railways	1961 - 1963
Classified Technical Teachers Record Books, Education Department	1961 - 1968
Examination Results, Swinburne Technical College	1940 - 1943
Minutes, Country Roads Board	1968
Board Minutes and Papers, Dental Board of Victoria	1967 - Sept 1968
Register of Applicants for Nursing and Other Positions, Royal Children's Hospital	Apr 1959 - Jan 1968
Criminal Presentments and Final Orders, Court of General Sessions Melbourne	1942 - Oct 1943
Admission and Discharge Register of Patients, Fairfield Infectious Diseases Hospital	Jul 1918 - Dec 1919
Admission and Discharge Day Book, Salvation Army, The Haven	Dec 1907 - Oct 1919
Infant Life Protection Register – Applications to Board Out Infants – State Ward and Non-Ward, Children's Welfare Department	Apr 1910 - Jun 1919
Admission and Discharge Register of Patients, Voluntary Boarders, Mont Park Mental Hospital	Mar 1939 - Mar 1943
Observation Ward Report Books, Male Patients, Beechworth Mental Hospital	Feb 1942 - Mar 1943

Note: Due to ongoing work on our digital archive, these records will not be available to order via our online catalogue until later in 2019. In the meantime researchers can order and view these records in our Reading Room by contacting us through our website, prov.vic.gov.au.