



POSITION PAPER

De-funding of Trove

NATIONAL TRUST INVOLVEMENT

Trove is an Australian online library database aggregator; a free faceted-search engine hosted by the National Library of Australia, in partnership with content providers including members of the National & State Libraries Australasia. It is one of the most well-respected and accessed GLAM (galleries, libraries, archives, and museums) services in Australia, with over 70,000 daily users.

The site has been described as “a model for collaborative digitization projects and serves to inform cultural heritage institutions building both large and small digital collections” and the reach of Trove’s newspaper archives makes the service attractive to genealogists.

Many of the digital public libraries in the United States came from investigations of Australia’s Trove and seeing what a nation could do investing in a platform that would hold museum, gallery and library archives collections and make them accessible to the world.

As well as providing a service to people overseas, Trove has been an important educational resource for academics and rural communities in Australia and a fundamental element of Australia’s national research infrastructure.

In February, 2016 announced funding cuts to the National Library of Australia (\$20 million “efficiency” dividend) meant that the library may not be able to update material in the Trove database.

From the viewpoint of the National Trust, Trove is an essential research tool for historical research into people and into places of heritage significance, allowing for assessment of that significance, listing on the National Trust Register, statutory heritage listing and informed comment on legislation and planning and development proposals.

De-funding and downgrading of Trove would result in libraries Australia wide having to employ additional staff to deal with inquiries which are currently handled through the Trove system - a very retrograde step.

NATIONAL TRUST POSITION

- The Trust calls for funding for Trove to be maintained so that its database can continue to be updated.
- The Trust supports moves to request the Australian Minister for Infrastructure to expand the definition of infrastructure, to include digital assets like Trove as national infrastructure.
- The Trust believes that it would be unfortunate for such an innovative platform as Trove to be defunded at a time when innovation is being promoted at the national level.

ACTION TO PROMOTE THE TRUST’S POSITION

The Trust will promote its views on this issue with heritage professionals, museums, the National Library of Australia, National & State Libraries Australasia, genealogists, federal parliamentary representatives and candidates for the 2016 Australian Parliament elections and the media.