



Australian Historical Association Statement on Access to Trove

The Australian Historical Association expresses its disappointment that the National Library of Australia has suspended the Trove API keys of Dr Tim Sherratt. As the peak body for historians, the AHA advocates for the ability of all historians to produce and publicise excellent and ethical historical research, with fair access to historical resources and communities. The suspension of Dr Sherratt's API keys, the result of recent changes to Trove's API policy, marks a troubling restriction to the work of researchers in Australia and overseas.

Dr Sherratt is a committed digital historian and former head of Trove whose work has been crucial to enabling researchers, students, and the public to use the platform to its fullest. The suspension of his access to the Trove interface jeopardises fifteen years of his work. More broadly, the AHA expresses its concern that the changes to Trove's API policy also threatens researchers' access to long-term access to Trove data, given users must seek explicit permission from the NLA in order to download the full text of items using API. The NLA can now also suspend users' API keys without notification. The implication of these restrictions to users' access means the NLA could impose further limitations on researchers over time.

Historians have celebrated Trove since its inception for its provision of rich sources that enable all Australians, particularly those located in regional and remote Australia, to access and understand the past. The AHA urges the NLA to reverse these recent policy changes and allow Trove to continue operating as a hallmark of digital accessibility.

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