# Keyword searching in RecordSearch Advanced search screens

## What is a keyword search?

A keyword search is a search for a word, words or phrase in the title or description of a record item, series, agency or depositor (for example, *Barton*, *Cyclone Tracy* or *Snowy Mountains Scheme*). Keyword searches are the quickest and easiest way to search for records on a particular subject, person, place or event.

## What information can RecordSearch search?

Titles and descriptive information about items, series, agencies, persons and organisations can all be searched. You can use a *Basic search for items* or an *Advanced search* which offers more search options. These tips cover searching on the *Advanced search* screens. For undertaking a *Basic search for items*, see the 'Help' text in RecordSearch.

## Keyword search tips

### Wildcard searches

- find variations of a keyword by entering the common stem of the word followed by an asterisk eg *Malay** will find *Malay*, *Malaya*, *Malayan*, *Malaysia* and *Malaysian*
- enter more characters before an asterisk for more precise searching eg use *Malay** (see example above) rather than *Mal** which will find *malaria*, *Malay*, *Malaya*, *Malcolm*, *male*, *Malta*, *Malvern* etc
- find alternative spellings in one search by entering the alternative spellings eg *naturalisation naturalization*, and select the search option *any words* (see below)

### Acronyms

- to find an acronym enter the string with and without full stops eg *CSIRO C.S.I.R.O.* and select the search option *any words* (see below)

### Punctuation

- do not use punctuation or symbols such as + = # ? ( ) [ ] or %

- full stops, apostrophes and slashes can be used eg *C.S.I.R.O.*, *O'Brien* or *11/44 Infantry Battalion*

## Hyphens

- include hyphens eg use post-war not post war, Governor-General not Governor General

## Case

- use full uppercase or full lowercase, or in any combination – the result is the same

## Single letters

- use single letters (or numbers) with an additional term eg *A McKenzie*, *R J Ewing*, *7 Battalion* or *N275920 Rowell*

# Using more than one keyword

## Searching for all words, any words or phrases

If using two or more keywords be sure to select the correct search option (*all words*, *any words* or *exact phrase*) from the drop-down menu. For example, for the keywords *civil defence*

- **all words** (the default setting) will only find records that include both *civil* and *defence*, though they may be separated by other words
- **any words** will find records that include either *civil* or *defence* or both, including records where they are separated by other words
- **exact phrase** will only find records that include both *civil* and *defence* in that exact order, with no other words between.

## Keyword order

Keyword order is only important in *exact p*hrase searches. An *all words* search entered as *malaria Queensland* (ie a search for records containing both these words) will find the same number of items regardless of the order of the words.

In an *exact p*hrase search on proper names such as *Alice Springs* or *Joint Intelligence Bureau* the words must be entered in the exact order that they appear in the name.

# Searching for plurals, synonyms and related terms

## Singular/plural forms

- enter the singular *and* plural forms (eg *internee internees*) as an *any word* search
- enter the stem followed by an asterisk (eg *internee\**). Note that for some keyword stems, records unrelated to the keyword will be retrieved

## Synonyms and related terms

- enter all possible synonyms and related terms eg *Antarctic* and *Antarctica or Antarctic\*;nuclear* and *atomic*; *Sino*, *Chinese* and *China* as an *any word* search
- remember that spelling and usage changes eg *Soeharto* vs *Suharto*; *Roumania* vs *Romania*; *Freemantle* vs *Fremantle*; *communist* vs *communistic*
- remember that names of countries and territories change eg the *Australian Capital Territory* was formerly the *Federal Capital Territory*; *Argentina* was known as *The Argentine*; *Indonesia* was formerly the *Netherlands East Indies* and *East Indies*

## For more information

Read the 'Help' text available in RecordSearch. See also:

- RecordSearch – an overview
- NameSearch

Comments or other feedback can be sent to archives@naa.gov.au