

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

ACT Court system

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The ACT Law Courts are presided over by the judiciary and deliver justice to the community through sentencing in criminal cases and rulings in civil cases. The judiciary includes all judges and magistrates and is the third, independent arm of government.

The Directorate supports the judiciary by providing administration and resources.

A number of courts and tribunals operate in the ACT. The role of the courts is to interpret the laws, decide who is right or wrong in a dispute and sentence people who have broken the law.

Laws applicable in the ACT are made by Territory and Federal Governments, and are interpreted by Territory and Federal courts and tribunals. The ACT judicial system is organised into two tiers:

- **Supreme Court**, the superior court in the ACT which hears and determines criminal and civil matters, including appeals from the Magistrates Court and the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal, and the
- **Magistrates Court**, which handles less serious criminal matters and civil disputes up to a jurisdictional limit of \$250,000.

There are also a number of specialised courts including:

- the Court of Appeal, which hears appeals from decisions of the Supreme Court
- the Children's Court, which deals with matters involving children and young people
- the Coroner's Court, which investigates the cause of death in certain circumstances such as sudden or accidental death, as well as investigating causes of fires, and
- the Ngambra Circle Sentencing Court, which sentences indigenous offenders who plead guilty

The Court of Appeal is part of the Supreme Court and the Children's Court and the Ngambra Circle Sentencing Court are part of the Magistrates Court.

Appeals from the Court of Appeal are heard by the High Court of Australia. An appellant must obtain special leave to appeal from the High Court.

Visit the [ACT Magistrates and Supreme courts](#) web sites for all information.

Tribunal

In addition to these courts, the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal operates in the ACT. The ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal provides a way of resolving disputes quickly and fairly in the ACT.

The Tribunal has power to resolve and determine applications about reviews of administrative functions, discrimination complaints, guardianship, financial management and enduring powers of attorney, mental health treatment and care, residential tenancies disputes, energy and water hardship and complaints, civil disputes valued at under \$10,000, unit titles disputes, liquor licensing, compliance with some long service leave obligations, and the discipline of various occupations including construction occupations, surveyors, architects, security agents, real estate agents, and the health and legal professions.

Details of this Tribunal are available on their [website](#).