

Justice and Community Safety Directorate

Laws and Law Making

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Australia and its States and Territories are governed by a variety of laws.

In the ACT the laws that govern our rights and responsibilities, entitlements and obligations include:

- The [Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia](#).
- Commonwealth Acts passed by the [Australian Parliament](#), and regulations and other legislative instruments made under the laws of the Commonwealth which are accessible on the [Comlaw website](#).
- ACT Acts passed by the [ACT Legislative Assembly](#), and regulations and other legislative instruments made under the laws of the ACT. These are accessible on the [ACT legislation register](#).
- Certain obligations resulting from Australia's participation in international treaties. For more information about these visit the federal [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade](#) website.
- Common law, which is the law created by court judgments through the interpretation of legislation and the exercise of inherent jurisdiction.
- International laws governing governments and organisations. Find out more from the federal [Attorney-General's website](#).

The ACT is an Australian territory that derives its principal authority for self-government from a law of the Australian Parliament called the [Australian Capital Territory \(Self-Government\) Act 1988](#). That Act creates the Legislative Assembly for the ACT and, subject to certain exceptions, gives it power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Territory.

The Justice and Community Safety Directorate supports the law-making processes of the ACT in a variety of ways, including:

- Drafting - the office of the Parliamentary Counsel drafts Bills for the Government and private Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and maintains a register of laws applicable in the ACT.
- Law reform - the Directorate's Legislation and Policy Branch is the main area responsible for advising Government on options for changes to existing laws and development of new laws and policy in the justice and community safety portfolio.
- Legal advice - the [ACT Government Solicitor](#) is responsible for the provision of legal advice to the Attorney-General and the Government.
- Dispute resolution - the Directorate provides administrative support to the judiciary in the [Supreme Court and the Magistrates Court](#) and to the presidential and other members of the ACT Civil and

Administrative Tribunal (ACAT).