

## What is Legal Aid Queensland?

Legal Aid Queensland is a government agency that provides free legal help to financially disadvantaged people in Queensland. We can help you with:

- legal information
- legal advice
- representation in court.

You can phone Legal Aid Queensland's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Information Line on 1300 650 143 for legal advice and information. This is a free service that will provide you with legal information and advice over the phone or face-to-face.

To apply for representation in a legal matter, you need to complete an application form. Application forms are available from our offices throughout Queensland or from solicitors who do work for Legal Aid Queensland.

### We can provide legal advice about:

- domestic violence
- child support
- divorce
- parenting arrangements for your children
- property settlement
- criminal matters and
- anti-discrimination matters.

Legal Aid Queensland has specialist lawyers who can help you with legal problems, including the Violence Prevention and Women's Advocacy team and our family lawyers. We can also refer you to community legal centres, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services, or other community services that might be able to help.

For more information,  
phone our Aboriginal and Torres  
Strait Islander Information Line on  
1300 650 143 or visit our website  
[www.legalaid.qld.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.qld.gov.au)



# Our legal system

Information for Aboriginal and  
Torres Strait Islander women

## Your local Legal Aid Queensland office

**BRISBANE**  
44 Herschel Street

**BUNDABERG**  
3rd Flr, WIN Tower  
Cnr Quay & Barolin Sts

**CABOOLTURE**  
Grd Flr, Kingsgate  
42 King Street

**CAIRNS**  
Lvl 2, Cairns Square  
42-52 Abbott St

**INALA**  
Lvl 1, Inala  
C'wealth Offices  
20 Wirraway Parade

**IPSWICH**  
Lvl 7, 117 Brisbane St

**MACKAY**  
Ground Floor  
17 Brisbane Street

**MAROOCHYDORE**  
Grd Flr M1 Building  
1 Duporth Ave

**MOUNT ISA**  
6 Miles Street

**ROCKHAMPTON**  
Grd Flr, 35 Fitzroy St

**SOUTHPORT**  
Lvl 2, 7 Bay St

**TOOWOOMBA**  
1st Flr, 154 Hume St

**TOWNSVILLE**  
Lvl 4, Northern  
Securities Building  
22 Walker St

**WOODRIDGE**  
1st Flr, Woodridge Pl  
Cnr Ewing Road &  
Carmody St

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Information Line

Confidential legal information, help and other support services

**1300 650 143**

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## How does the legal system work?

- Laws are made by the government.
- These laws are used by courts and tribunals to make decisions.
- Police officers make sure the laws are obeyed.
- Lawyers can help you with the law and your rights and obligations.

## What is a lawyer?

A lawyer is a person with legal training. They may choose to work in different areas of law such as criminal, family or civil law. In Australia, lawyers are also called solicitors or barristers.

## When do I need a lawyer?

It is important to speak to a lawyer if you have a legal problem because they can:

- provide you with legal advice
- explain your rights
- help you in court or in a tribunal
- talk to police or other people involved in your legal problem on your behalf.

## Which courts can I go to?

The family law courts and state Magistrates Courts assist with family law and domestic violence cases.

You should get legal advice if you are not sure which court to use.

## When do I go to a state Magistrates Court?

- This court can hear applications for domestic violence orders, and in some cases orders about children, especially where there is domestic violence involved.
- The person who makes the decisions is a magistrate (called “Your Honour”).

## When do I go to the family law courts?

- The family law courts can make decisions about all types of family law matters, including divorce and cases about property and children.
- The courts will try to help parties reach an agreement before having a final trial.
- The courts have registrars and judges (called “Your Honour”) who make decisions.

## What do I need to do before I start family law proceedings?

In most cases you will need to attend a family dispute resolution conference and try to resolve your family law problem before going to court. If you do not reach an agreement, you may be given a certificate you can use to show the court you attended the conference. You should get legal advice about this.

## When do I go to the High Court?

This court is the final appeal court about Australian laws.

## When do I go to a tribunal?

A tribunal is an independent body to hear and decide disputes. They can review decisions made by some government departments. There are different tribunals that can help you, for example:

- If you disagree with a decision made by Centrelink, you can appeal to the Social Services and Child Support Division, Administrative Appeals Tribunal.
- If you have a dispute about tenancy, building, anti-discrimination, consumer or debt disputes, you can go to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT).

The person who makes decisions in these tribunals is called a “member”. Time limits may apply. You should get legal advice about this.

## When should I get advice?

Try to get legal advice if you think you might have a legal problem, especially before going to court. Call Legal Aid Queensland’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Information Line on 1300 650 143 (for the cost of a local call from a landline in Australia).

## Do you need extra help accessing our services?

We are committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders from all culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. If you would like this publication explained in your language, please phone the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50 to speak to an interpreter. Ask them to connect you to Legal Aid Queensland on 1800 998 980. If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment you can contact us using the National Relay Service. Visit [www.accesshub.gov.au](http://www.accesshub.gov.au) and ask for 1800 998 980 (our legal information line). These are free services.

