

## The Youth Koori Court

The Youth Koori Court is part of the Children's Court, which deals with young Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders who have been charged with a criminal offence.

The Youth Koori Court has the same powers as the Children's Court but involves the Aboriginal community in the court process. The aim of the program is to:

- involve your family and the Aboriginal community in the court process;
- help you better understand what happens at court; and
- connect you to services that can help you stay out of trouble with the law.

It is not as formal as the Children's Court. You will have a chance to speak for yourself about what is going on in your life.

Elders, your family, supporters and any other person in the court room will also have a chance to talk about you and your offending.

This will help the Magistrate decide on the appropriate sentence.

### Can I go to the Youth Koori Court?

To go to the Youth Koori Court you must:

- a. be Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander;
- b. plead guilty to the offence or be found guilty of the offence after hearing;
- c. be between the ages of 10 to 17 years at the time of the offence; and

- d. want to have your matter heard in the Youth Koori Court.

Before you start the program you will meet with the Koori Court Officer to see if the program is right for you.

At this meeting you might talk about school or work, where you live and what help you need to stay away from Court. This is called a Suitability Assessment.

### What happens in the Youth Koori Court?

The Youth Koori Court is informal. Everyone, including you and your lawyer, sit around a table to talk about your offending.

People at the Youth Koori Court may be:

- Your family and supporters
- Magistrate
- Elders or Respected Persons
- Juvenile Justice Officer
- Koori Court Officer
- Staff from support services
- Police prosecutor

You will be given a chance to talk about your feelings and why you choose to come to the Youth Koori Court.

If you are accepted into the program you will go to another meeting called Youth Koori Court Conference.

### What will happen at the Youth Koori Court Conference?

At the conference everyone, including you, will talk about what help you need and what you can do to stay out of trouble.

A Children's Registrar will help everyone come up with an Action and Support Plan. The plan might set out ways for you to:

- improve your cultural connections;
- stay at school or get work;
- have stable accommodation; or
- sort out any health, drug or alcohol issues.

Once everyone has agreed on a plan you will go back to the Youth Koori Court for the Magistrate to approve the plan.

### How long does the program go for?

You have 6 months to complete the program.

But, you will have to come back to Court after 3 months for the Magistrate to check on how you are going with the plan.

### What happens when I finish the program?

When you complete the program a Juvenile Justice Officer will write a report.

This report will help the Magistrate decide how to sentence you.

The sentence will depend on the offence, what you have done to complete the Action and Support Plan, your personal circumstances and whether you have committed other crimes.

## Where is the Youth Koori Court?

The Youth Koori Court is located at:

Parramatta Children's Court  
2 George Street, Parramatta

Phone: (02) 8688 1888

Email: [childrens\\_court@agd.nsw.gov.au](mailto:childrens_court@agd.nsw.gov.au)

If you have any questions, please contact the Aboriginal Client and Community Support Officer on (02) 8688 1421.

## Where can I get help?

You can get legal information and advice at:

- Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS) provide free legal advice and representation to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders. Call them on 1800 765 767.
- Legal Aid can provide free legal advice. Call them on 1800 888 529.
- LawAccess is a free government telephone service that provides legal information, advice and referrals for people who have a legal problem in NSW. Call them on 1300 888 529.
- If you would like a private solicitor to represent you contact the Law Society of New South Wales on 9926 0300 to get the names of lawyers near you.



*Children's Court of New South Wales*

[www.childrenscourt.justice.nsw.gov.au](http://www.childrenscourt.justice.nsw.gov.au)

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### Fact sheet

