

The Youth Koori Court

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

The goals and objectives of the Youth Koori Court are to:

- Involve your family and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community in the court process;
- Make it easier for you to come to Court and have input in the court process; and
- Reduce the risk factors to your re-offending behaviour.

The Youth Koori Court has the same powers as the Children's Court but involves the Aboriginal community in the court process with the aim of making it a more meaningful experience for you and improving confidence in the criminal justice system.

Eligibility

To go to the Youth Koori Court you must:

- a. Be descended from an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander, identify as an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander and be accepted by the relevant community;
- b. Plead guilty to the offence or be found guilty of the offence after hearing;
- c. Be between the ages of 10 to 18 years at the time of the offence;
- d. Be willing to participate.

If you meet these requirements and appear suitable for inclusion in the Youth Koori Court, the Children's Court will refer your matter to the Youth Koori Court where you will undergo a suitability assessment.

Your suitability for inclusion in the Youth Koori Court will be assessed, based on:

- The availability of services in your area;
- Your commitment to the Youth Koori Court;
- The capacity of the Youth Koori Court to accept you into the program;
- The availability of Elders or Respected Persons; and
- The nature of the offence and your criminal record and the impact on the victim and/or family.

What happens in the Youth Koori Court?

The Youth Koori Court is informal with everyone, including you, your family and supporters, Elders/Respected Persons, Koori Court Officer and staff from support agencies, sitting around a table to talk with you about your offending.

You will be given the chance to talk about why you choose to come to the Youth Koori Court and what is going on in your life to make you get into trouble with police.

Once you have been accepted in the Youth Koori Court program the judicial officer will ask you to go to a Koori Court Conference to talk about your particular needs and interests.

What will happen at the Koori Court Conference?

The Koori Court conference will be run by a Children's Registrar who will help everyone talk about how you can do better and stay away from court. The conference will be attended by:

- You and your lawyer
- Your family and supporters
- At least one Elder/Respected Person
- A Juvenile Justice representative
- The Koori Court Officer
- A representative of support services
- A police prosecutor

At the conference you will be given the opportunity to speak for yourself about:

- What is happening in your life
- Your mob and where you are from
- Your school or where you go to work
- What help you need so that you can do better and stay away from court

The Children's Registrar will help everyone write an 'Action and Support Plan' which will set out ways for you to:

- Improve your cultural connections;
- Stay at school or get work;
- Get stable accommodation; or
- Address any health, drug or alcohol issues.

If the judicial officer approves the plan you will have 6 months to complete the program before you are sentenced.

What happens when I finish the program?

The sentencing options for the Youth Koori Court are the same as the Children's Court which means the Court can make many different orders depending on the type of the offence.

When handing down a sentence the judicial officer will take into account the work you have done to complete the Youth Koori Court program.

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

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

Published in January 2015



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Fact sheet

