



KOORI COURT

Children's
Koori Court

THE CHILDREN'S KOORI COURT

The Children's Court has two divisions that deal with young people who have been charged with a criminal offence – the Criminal Division and the Koori Court. While the Children's Court also has a Family Division, the Koori Court deals with criminal matters only.

The Children's Koori Court is based on principles of respect and responsibility. If you choose to go to Koori Court, you are making a commitment to show respect to the court, including the Judge or Magistrate, and the Elders & Respected Persons.

THE KOORI COURT AND THE CRIMINAL DIVISION

The Koori Court is a part of the Children's Court, which has the power to deal with young Koori people who have been charged with a criminal offence.

Some things are the same in the Criminal Division and the Koori Court, such as the role of lawyers and the sentencing options that are available to the court. It may be helpful to read the pamphlet about the Criminal Division too, or visit the Children's Court website.

Both the Criminal Division and the Koori Court deal with people who have been charged with a criminal offence committed after their 10th birthday, but before their 18th birthday.

If you are charged with an offence, the police will give you a summons or a charge sheet with details of the charge and when and where to go to court. If you are on bail or charged with a serious crime and do not come to court when you are supposed to, the court can get the police to bring you to court by issuing a request called a warrant.

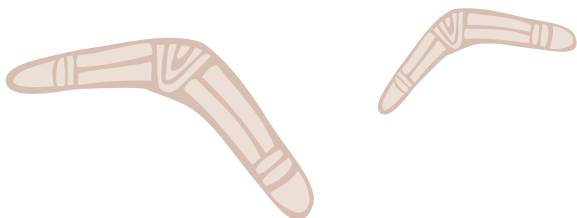
The Children's Koori Court was established because young Koori people are over-represented in the criminal justice system – more so than any other group in our community. The Koori Court is designed to reduce the number of young Koori people returning to court.

GOALS OF THE KOORI COURT

The Koori Court is not as formal as the mainstream Children's Court. You will be given an opportunity to speak for yourself. The Koori Court Elder or Respected Person, your family, the Koori Court Officer and any other person within the courtroom can have a say too. This is done to help the Judge or Magistrate make appropriate sentencing orders.

THE KOORI COURT WANTS TO:

- include family and the Koori community together to talk about your offending;
- make it easier for you to come along and have your say in court;
- reduce or stop offending behaviour; and
- reduce the number of Koories going to prison whenever possible.



CAN I GO TO THE KOORI COURT?

To go to the Koori Court, you must:

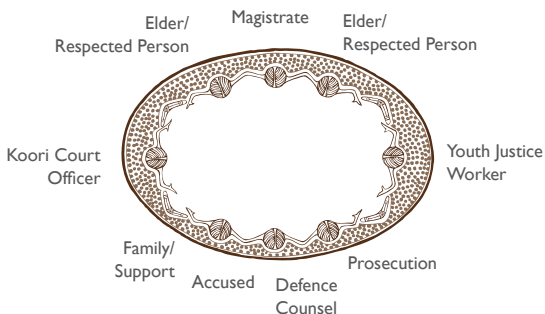
- be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander;
- want to have your case heard in the Koori Court;
- not be charged with a sex offence;
- be pleading guilty to your offence or are found guilty of your offence; and

You should talk to your lawyer about whether you are eligible to have your case heard in the Koori Court. You or your lawyer could also talk to the Children's Koori Court Officer.

At the back of this pamphlet, there is a list of services that will help you find a suitable lawyer if you don't have one. There is also information on how to contact the Children's Koori Court Officer.

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE KOORI COURT?

The diagram below shows where everyone will sit in the Koori Court.



The Judge or Magistrate sits at an oval table across from you. A Koori Elder (or Respected Person) sits on either side of the Judge or Magistrate. You may already know the Koori Elders who will sit on your case. They are respected people in your community who will help the Judge or Magistrate understand your situation. They may also want to talk to you about why you are at court.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE KOORI COURT?

You can ask someone from your family or another person who is helping you, to sit next to you at the oval table. Your lawyer will also sit next to you. Other people who will sit at the table include the Children's Koori Court Officer, a Youth Justice Court Advice Worker from the Department of Human Services and the Police Prosecutor.

WHAT QUESTIONS MIGHT THE COURT ASK ME?

The Koori Court is special because you will be able to speak to the court about your feelings and explain to the court why you are there. The court may ask you questions like:

- Why have you chosen to come to Koori Court?
- Who is your mob and where are you from?
- What do the colours on the Aboriginal Flag mean?
- What is going on in your life to make you get into trouble with police?
- What help do you need so that you can do better and stay away from court?
- What are your hobbies and interests?
- Where do you work or go to school?



WHAT WILL THE COURT DO TO ME?

What happens to you is decided by the Judge or Magistrate, not the Koori Elders & Respected Persons.

Sentencing options in the Koori Court are the same as those in the Criminal Division. They include non-accountable undertakings, accountable undertakings, fines, good behaviour bonds, probation, youth supervision orders, youth attendance orders, or sending the offender to a youth residential centre or youth justice centre.

For more information on what the court can do you might like to read the pamphlet about the Criminal Division or visit the Children's Court website www.childrenscourt.vic.gov.au, which includes information on sentencing and a virtual tour of the Koori Court. Your lawyer will also talk to you about possible outcomes in your case.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM IN CUSTODY?

If you are in custody at the time of your Koori Court hearing, either a police officer or Youth Justice Officer will escort you to the court, and will sit with you during your hearing. Because of security and safety reasons, you usually won't be allowed to have any physical contact with other people in the courtroom.



WHAT SHOULD I DO BEFORE MY KOORI COURT DAY?

Ideally, you should talk to a lawyer about your case before your Koori Court hearing day. If you wait until the day of the hearing to speak with your lawyer it may cause a delay in your case starting.

WHERE IS THE CHILDREN'S KOORI COURT?

Melbourne Children's Court
477 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne 3000
Koori Court Officer: (03) 8638 3300

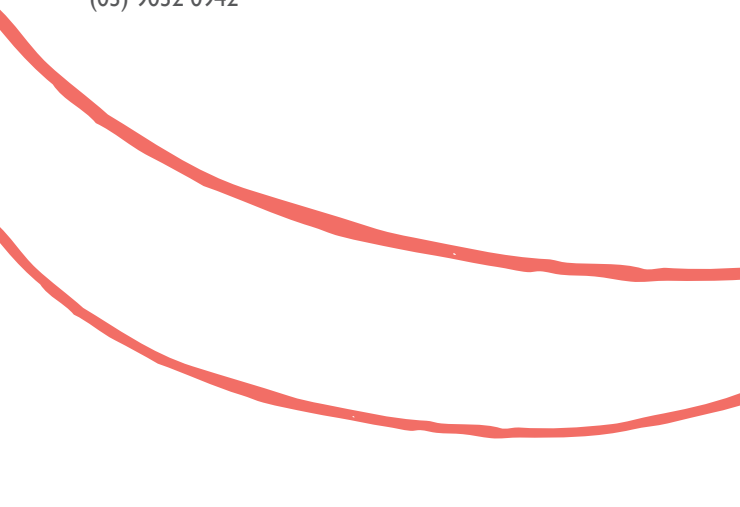
Mildura Court
56 Deakin Avenue, Mildura 3500
Koori Court Officer: (03) 5021 6000

Warranmbool Court
218 Koroit St, Warranmbool 3280
Koori Court Officer: (03) 5564 1111

Bairnsdale Court
Nicholson St, Bairnsdale 3875
Koori Court Officer: (03) 5152 9222

If you have any questions, please contact the Koori Court Officer at the above locations.

You can also contact the Koori Court Unit on
(03) 9032 0942



LEGAL SERVICES

VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL LEGAL SERVICE (VALS)

VALS provides legal aid and assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Telephone VALS 24 hour service on 1800 064 865 (toll free)

VICTORIA LEGAL AID (VLA)

Victoria Legal Aid has a specialist Youth Legal Service for young people appearing before the courts. Telephone the Youth Legal Service on (03) 9269 0234. VLA also provides advice over the phone on (03) 9269 0120 or 1800 677 402 (country callers).

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES

Telephone the Federation on (03) 9652 1500 to find your nearest centre.

A PRIVATE LAWYER

Telephone the Law Institute of Victoria on (03) 9607 9550 to find a lawyer close to you who knows about the Children's Court.



The Koori Court logo was created by Mildura based artist Lance Atkinson, a Gamilaraay man.



Children's Court of Victoria
www.childrenscourt.vic.gov.au