

Interpreters

Clients who do not speak English as a first language can ask for an interpreter to assist them if they need one. Non-English speaking people can also access the **toll free** information line by calling the **Translating and Interpreting Service** on **131 450** and asking them to connect to **Legal Aid** on **1800 019 343**.

Free Legal Information

The **NT Legal Aid Commission** operates a **free call** legal information line. People can obtain free legal information about various issues. Information can be sent out and clients can be referred to other agencies that can assist them. The service operates Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 4.00pm. Call **1800 019 343**.

Community Legal Education

The **NT Legal Aid Commission** produces a range of written, audio and visual legal information on different legal topics, including criminal law matters. We can also provide information sessions on a range of legal matters. For further information or to obtain publications contact the **Community Legal Education Officer** in the Darwin office (see contact details).

What if I'm Arrested?

You should give police your name and address when asked. It is best not to say anything else to police until you have obtained legal advice. You can tell the police you want to speak to a lawyer. If you are arrested after hours, the **Criminal Law Section** has an after hours number which is **0401 119 044** in Darwin and **0401 119 020** in Alice Springs.

Contact Us

NT Legal Aid Commission

- Darwin:** 6th Floor
9-11 Cavenagh Street
Darwin NT 0800
Tel: 08 **8999 3000**
- Katherine:** 20 Second Street
Katherine NT 0850
Tel: 08 **8973 8704**
- Tennant Creek:** 61 Patterson Street
Tennant Creek NT 0860
Tel: 08 **8962 1985**
- Alice Springs:** 77 Hartley Street
Alice Springs NT 0870
Tel: 08 **8951 5377**

Legal Information Line: 1800 019 343

Website: www.ntlac.nt.gov.au

Email: info@ntlac.nt.gov.au

Criminal Law Section

A guide to the
Criminal Law Practice of the
NT Legal Aid Commission



Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission

About Us

The **NT Legal Aid Commission** is an independent statutory Commission. There are Legal Aid Commissions in each State and Territory. The Legal Aid Commission in the NT will usually only assist in relation to legal matters in the NT, but help can be given to apply for aid from a Commission in another State.

Assistance in Criminal Law Matters

The **Criminal Law Section** employs lawyers who specialise in criminal law matters. We provide free and confidential legal advice, as well as ongoing representation (if eligible), in most criminal law matters, including:

- Property offences
- Drug offences
- Sexual offences
- Assault

The lawyers employed in the **Criminal Law Section** are very experienced in their field. They are committed to providing quality legal advice to clients. Everything you tell your legal aid lawyer is confidential.

Services We Offer

Duty Lawyer Service

The Criminal Law Section has a **duty lawyer** at the **Magistrates Court** to assist people who do not have a lawyer. A duty lawyer can:

- Assess the seriousness of your case
- Provide you with legal advice
- Help with a simple guilty plea or adjournment
- Negotiate with the prosecutor
- Help you to access legal aid
- Apply for bail
- Vary bail conditions

This service is available every day in Darwin and at other times at Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. See the back of brochure for contact details in your area.

Advice Sessions

The Criminal Law Section runs two **free confidential legal advice clinics** in Darwin each week on Monday and Wednesday. Appointments are essential. The Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs offices offer a similar service. See back of brochure for contact details.

Conflicts & Referrals

A conflict of interest sometimes arises between clients. Usually this happens when we have represented one of the people involved in the matter before. This means that the Criminal Law Section cannot represent a person. If that happens, there are many **private lawyers** who accept legal aid referrals. The NT Legal Aid Commission then pays for the private lawyer to give advice and (if eligible) provide ongoing representation.

Representation

Grants of legal aid funding are available for people who have a criminal law matter which falls within our guidelines and who need ongoing representation. This means you need more than just advice from a solicitor to deal with your matter. Representation can

be provided for offences in the **Magistrates Court** and the **Supreme Court**. The Criminal Law Section also acts in matters before the **Court of Criminal Appeal** and the **High Court of Australia**.

Juveniles

The Criminal Law Section has lawyers who specialise in **youth justice**. The same assistance can be provided to young people as to adults in advice sessions, the duty lawyer service and ongoing representation.

Prisoners

The Criminal Law Section has a regular **duty service** at the Darwin and Alice Springs prisons. Inmates can request to see a Legal Aid Lawyer through the prison social worker. The Commission has produced the "**Inmates Law Handbook**" to help prisoners deal with issues facing them in prison. Prisoners also have access to the toll free Legal Information Line.

Your Obligations/Our Obligations

If you receive a grant of legal aid for your criminal matter, you have some obligations to meet under that grant. You must pay a contribution toward the cost of providing you with legal aid, as assessed by us. You must keep all appointments with your solicitor, keep us informed of any change in your personal or financial circumstances and communicate in a courteous manner with our office. Our staff will keep you informed of developments in your matter and will respond to letters and phone calls in a timely and courteous manner.