

# Law in the Northern Territory

1863 –

## Details

---

Law in the Northern Territory (NT) needs to be understood in light of the history of the territory's governance. From 1863 until 1911, the territory was known as the Northern Territory of South Australia, having been annexed to the Colony of South Australia by the British Government. The position of Government Resident was responsible for the administration of the Northern Territory, and reported to the South Australian Government. At this time, its laws were made by the Colony and State of South Australia.

In 1911, responsibility for the Northern Territory of Australia was transferred to the Commonwealth of Australia. From 1927 to 1931, the territory was divided at the 20th parallel into two regions, North and Central. Both were administered by the Commonwealth with a Government Resident based in each region. The regions recombined as the Northern Territory in June 1931, and continued to be administered by the Commonwealth of Australia. Laws in the NT between 1911 and 1978 were made by federal (Commonwealth) Acts, or by Ordinances made by the Governor-General.

In 1947, the Northern Territory (Administration) Act was amended to create a Northern Territory Legislative Council. However, power remained with the Commonwealth until 1978 when the Northern Territory (Self-Government) Act 1978 was passed. At this time, all existing laws and ordinances of the NT continued to be in effect.

## More info

---

### Related Entries

#### Related Legislation

- [The State Children Act 1895, Northern Territory \(1895 - 1959\)](#)
- [Status of Children Act 1979, Northern Territory \(1979 - current\)](#)
- [Community Welfare Act 1983, Northern Territory \(1984 - 2008\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Amendment Act 1982, Northern Territory \(1982 - 1984\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Amendment Act \(No.2\) 1982, Northern Territory \(1983 - 1984\)](#)
- [Adoption of Children Act 1994, Northern Territory \(1994 - current\)](#)
- [Adoption of Children Ordinance 1935, Northern Territory \(1935 - 1951\)](#)
- [Northern Territory Aboriginals Act 1910, Northern Territory \(1910 - 1918\)](#)
- [Aboriginals Ordinance 1911, Northern Territory \(1912 - 1918\)](#)
- [Northern Territory Administration Act, 1910](#)
- [Aboriginals Ordinance 1939, Northern Territory \(1939 - 1953\)](#)
- [Status of Children Amendment Act 1985, Northern Territory \(1985 - current\)](#)
- [Northern Australia Act 1926, Northern Territory \(1926 - 1931\)](#)
- [Northern Territory \(Administration\) Act 1931, Northern Territory \(1931 - 1978\)](#)
- [Information Act 2002, Northern Territory \(2002 - current\)](#)
- [Aboriginals Ordinance 1923, Northern Territory \(1923 - 1953\)](#)
- [Aboriginals Ordinance 1924, Northern Territory \(1924 - 1953\)](#)

- [Aboriginals Ordinance \(No.2\) 1924, Northern Territory \(1924 - 1953\)](#)
- [Aboriginals Ordinance 1925, Northern Territory \(1925 - 1953\)](#)
- [Aboriginals Ordinance 1927, Northern Territory \(1927 - 1953\)](#)
- [Aboriginals Ordinance 1928, Northern Territory \(1928 - 1953\)](#)
- [Status of Children Amendment Act 1996, Northern Territory \(1996 - current\)](#)
- [Aboriginals Ordinance \(No.2\) 1928, Northern Territory \(1928 - 1953\)](#)
- [Aboriginals Ordinance 1930, Northern Territory \(1930 - 1953\)](#)
- [Aboriginals Ordinance 1933, Northern Territory \(1933 - 1953\)](#)
- [Aboriginals Ordinance 1936, Northern Territory \(1936 - 1953\)](#)
- [Aboriginals Ordinance 1937, Northern Territory \(1937 - 1953\)](#)
- [Aboriginals Ordinance \(No.2\) 1937, Northern Territory \(1937 - 1953\)](#)
- [Aboriginals Ordinance 1941, Northern Territory \(1941 - 1953\)](#)
- [Aboriginals Ordinance 1943, Northern Territory \(1943 - 1953\)](#)
- [Aboriginals Ordinance 1947, Northern Territory \(1947 - 1953\)](#)
- [Statute Law Revision Act 1991, Northern Territory \(1991 - 2005\)](#)
- [Aboriginals Ordinance 1953, Northern Territory \(1953\)](#)
- [Aboriginals Ordinance 1954, Northern Territory \(1953\)](#)
- [Welfare Ordinance 1955, Northern Territory \(1957 - 1964\)](#)
- [Welfare Ordinance 1957, Northern Territory \(1957 - 1964\)](#)
- [Welfare Ordinance \(No.2\) 1957, Northern Territory \(1957 - 1964\)](#)
- [Welfare Ordinance 1959, Northern Territory \(1959 - 1964\)](#)
- [Welfare Ordinance 1960, Northern Territory \(1960 - 1964\)](#)
- [Welfare Ordinance 1963, Northern Territory \(1963 - 1964\)](#)
- [Social Welfare Ordinance 1967, Northern Territory \(1967 - 1984\)](#)
- [Youth Justice Act 2005, Northern Territory \(2005 - current\)](#)
- [Social Welfare Ordinance 1969, Northern Territory \(1969 - 1984\)](#)
- [Social Welfare Ordinance 1971, Northern Territory \(1971 - 1984\)](#)
- [Social Welfare Ordinance 1972, Northern Territory \(1972 - 1984\)](#)
- [Social Welfare Ordinance 1974, Northern Territory \(1974 - 1984\)](#)
- [Social Welfare Ordinance 1978, Northern Territory \(1979\)](#)
- [Social Welfare Act 1979, Northern Territory \(1979 - 1984\)](#)
- [Care and Protection of Children Act 2007, Northern Territory \(2008 - current\)](#)
- [Community Welfare Amendment Act 1989, Northern Territory \(1989 - 2008\)](#)
- [Aboriginals Ordinance 1918, Northern Territory \(1918 - 1953\)](#)
- [Community Welfare Amendment Act 1995, Northern Territory \(1996 - 2008\)](#)
- [Juvenile Justice Act 1983, Northern Territory \(1983 - 2002\)](#)
- [Community Welfare Amendment Act 1999, Northern Territory \(1999 - 2008\)](#)
- [Community Welfare Amendment Act 2002, Northern Territory \(2002 - 2008\)](#)
- [Care and Protection of Children Amendment Act 2009, Northern Territory \(2009 - current\)](#)
- [Care and Protection of Children \(Children's Commissioner\) Amendment Act 2011, Northern Territory \(2011 - current\)](#)
- [Adoption of Children Ordinance 1949, Northern Territory \(1951 - 1967\)](#)
- [Adoption of Children Ordinance 1950, Northern Territory \(1952 - 1967\)](#)
- [Adoption of Children Ordinance 1964, Northern Territory \(1967 - 1994\)](#)
- [Adoption of Children Ordinance 1967, Northern Territory \(1967 - 1994\)](#)
- [Adoption of Children Ordinance 1968, Northern Territory \(1968 - 1994\)](#)
- [Aboriginals Ordinance \(No. 2\) 1953, Northern Territory \(1953\)](#)
- [Juvenile Justice Act 2002, Northern Territory \(2002 - 2005\)](#)
- [Adoption of Children Ordinance 1969, Northern Territory \(1969 - 1994\)](#)
- [Adoption of Children Ordinance 1976, Northern Territory \(1977 - 1994\)](#)
- [Adoption of Children Act 1979, Northern Territory \(1979 - 1994\)](#)
- [Adoption of Children Amendment Act 1984, Northern Territory \(1984 - 1994\)](#)
- [Adoption of Children Amendment Act 1986, Northern Territory \(1987 - 1994\)](#)
- [Adoption of Children Amendment Act 1991, Northern Territory \(1992 - 1994\)](#)
- [Adoption of Children Amendment Act 2006, Northern Territory \(2006 - current\)](#)
- [Intestate Wards \(Distribution of Estates\) Ordinance 1961, Northern Territory \(1962 - 1979\)](#)
- [Intestate Wards \(Distribution of Estates\) Ordinance 1963, Northern Territory \(1963 - 1979\)](#)
- [Intestate Aboriginals \(Distribution of Estates\) Ordinance 1964, Northern Territory \(1964 - 1979\)](#)

- [Welfare Ordinance 1961, Northern Territory \(1962 - 1964\)](#)
- [Welfare Ordinance 1953, Northern Territory \(1957 - 1964\)](#)
- [Intestate Aborigines \(Distribution of Estates\) Ordinance 1967, Northern Territory \(1967 - 1979\)](#)
- [Intestate Aborigines \(Distribution of Estates\) Act Repeal Act 1979, Northern Territory \(1979 - 1991\)](#)
- [The State Children Amendment Act 1900, Northern Territory \(1900 - 1959\)](#)
- [The State Children Further Amendment Act 1903, Northern Territory \(1903 - 1959\)](#)
- [The Destitute Persons and State Children Acts Amendment Act 1903, Northern Territory \(1903 - 1959\)](#)
- [The State Children Amendment Act 1909, Northern Territory \(1909 - 1959\)](#)
- [State Children Ordinance 1934, Northern Territory \(1934 - 1959\)](#)
- [State Children Ordinance 1952, Northern Territory \(1952 - 1959\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Ordinance 1960, Northern Territory \(1960 - 1984\)](#)
- [Social Welfare Ordinance 1964, Northern Territory \(1964 - 1984\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Ordinance 1964, Northern Territory \(1964 - 1984\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Ordinance 1958, Northern Territory \(1959 - 1984\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Ordinance 1965, Northern Territory \(1965 - 1984\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Ordinance 1967, Northern Territory \(1967 - 1984\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Ordinance \(No.2\) 1967, Northern Territory \(1967 - 1984\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Ordinance 1969, Northern Territory \(1969 - 1984\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Ordinance 1971, Northern Territory \(1971 - 1984\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Ordinance \(No.2\) 1971, Northern Territory \(1971 - 1984\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Ordinance 1973, Northern Territory \(1974 - 1984\)](#)
- [Child Welfare Amendment Act 1981, Northern Territory \(1981 - 1984\)](#)

## Resources

- [Northern Territory documents](#), Documenting a Democracy website, 2011

---

You can view this page online by visiting <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/law-in-the-northern-territory/>