



Australian Capital Territory

Common Boundaries Act 1981

A1981-39

Republication No 22

Effective: 1 May 2024

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About this republication

The republished law

This is a republication of the *Common Boundaries Act 1981* (including any amendment made under the *Legislation Act 2001*, part 11.3 (Editorial changes)) as in force on 1 May 2024. It also includes any commencement, amendment, repeal or expiry affecting this republished law to 1 May 2024.

The legislation history and amendment history of the republished law are set out in endnotes 3 and 4.

Kinds of republications

The Parliamentary Counsel's Office prepares 2 kinds of republications of ACT laws (see the ACT legislation register at www.legislation.act.gov.au):

- authorised republications to which the *Legislation Act 2001* applies
- unauthorised republications.

The status of this republication appears on the bottom of each page.

Editorial changes

The *Legislation Act 2001*, part 11.3 authorises the Parliamentary Counsel to make editorial amendments and other changes of a formal nature when preparing a law for republication. Editorial changes do not change the effect of the law, but have effect as if they had been made by an Act commencing on the republication date (see *Legislation Act 2001*, s 115 and s 117). The changes are made if the Parliamentary Counsel considers they are desirable to bring the law into line, or more closely into line, with current legislative drafting practice.

This republication does not include amendments made under part 11.3 (see endnote 1).

Uncommenced provisions and amendments

If a provision of the republished law has not commenced, the symbol **U** appears immediately before the provision heading. Any uncommenced amendments that affect this republished law are accessible on the ACT legislation register (www.legislation.act.gov.au). For more information, see the home page for this law on the register.

Modifications

If a provision of the republished law is affected by a current modification, the symbol **M** appears immediately before the provision heading. The text of the modifying provision appears in the endnotes. For the legal status of modifications, see the *Legislation Act 2001*, section 95.

Penalties

At the republication date, the value of a penalty unit for an offence against this law is \$160 for an individual and \$810 for a corporation (see *Legislation Act 2001*, s 133).



Australian Capital Territory

Common Boundaries Act 1981

Contents

	Page
Part 1	Preliminary
1	Name of Act 2
1A	Dictionary 2
1B	Notes 2
Part 2	Dividing fences
Division 2.1	Fences requested by occupiers
2	Definitions for div 2.1 3
2A	When land is a <i>parcel of land</i> 4
2B	When land is not a <i>parcel of land</i> 5
2C	Cost of erecting new fence includes cost of removing existing fence 5
2D	Cost of erecting fence includes fee payable to surveyor 5

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Common Boundaries Act 1981
Effective: 01/05/24

contents 1

Contents

	Page	
4	Application to ACAT—new fence determination	6
5	Application to ACAT—repair determination	7
6	Application to ACAT—repair cost determination	8
7	Application to ACAT—unleased land determination	9
8	Parties to applications	9
9	Non-compliant notices	10
10	ACAT powers—new fence determination	10
11	ACAT powers—repair determination	11
12	ACAT powers—repair cost determination	12
13	ACAT powers—unleased land determination	13
13A	Matters to be taken into account—dividing fences a safety barrier for regulated swimming pool	14
14	Applications for variation of certain determinations	14
18	Service of documents	14
19	Apportionment of liability of joint lessees	15
21	Div 2.3 not affected	16
22	Directions about entry by people on land	16
Division 2.2	Fences required by authority	
23	Boundary between leased and unleased land	16
24	Boundary between 2 parcels of leased land	17
25	Notice under div 2.2	17
26	Noncompliance with notice under div 2.2	17
Division 2.3	Damage by fire to fences	
26A	Damage by fire to dividing fence	17
Part 3	Party walls	
27	Meaning of <i>party wall</i> in pt 3	19
28	Erection of party walls	19
Part 4	Miscellaneous	
29	Regulation-making power	21

	Contents
	Page
Dictionary	22
Endnotes	
1 About the endnotes	24
2 Abbreviation key	24
3 Legislation history	25
4 Amendment history	30
5 Earlier republications	35



Australian Capital Territory

Common Boundaries Act 1981

An Act relating to dividing fences and party walls

Part 1 Preliminary

1 Name of Act

This Act is the *Common Boundaries Act 1981*.

1A Dictionary

The dictionary at the end of this Act is part of this Act.

Note 1 The dictionary at the end of this Act defines certain terms used in this Act, and includes references (*signpost definitions*) to other terms defined elsewhere in this Act.

For example, the signpost definition '*party wall*, for part 3 (Party walls)—see section 27.' means that the term 'party wall' is defined in that section for part 3.

Note 2 A definition in the dictionary (including a signpost definition) applies to the entire Act unless the definition, or another provision of the Act, provides otherwise or the contrary intention otherwise appears (see [Legislation Act](#), s 155 and s 156 (1)).

1B Notes

A note included in this Act is explanatory and is not part of this Act.

Note See the [Legislation Act](#), s 127 (1), (4) and (5) for the legal status of notes.

Part 2 **Dividing fences**

Division 2.1 **Fences requested by occupiers**

2 **Definitions for div 2.1**

In this division:

Note A definition applies except so far as the contrary intention appears (see [Legislation Act](#), s 155).

basic fence means—

- (a) for a fence to be erected between parcels of land in the city area—a basic urban fence; or
- (b) in any other case—a basic rural fence.

basic rural fence means a wire fence that is 1.2m in height above finished ground level and has—

- (a) for intermediate posts—steel line posts spaced at 4m intervals; and
- (b) for strainer posts—hardwood posts spaced at 40m intervals with hardwood bracing at corners; and
- (c) 3mm galvanised steel wire at the top, bottom and mid-line of the fence; and
- (d) 1060mm wide and 40mm mesh size galvanized wire netting.

basic urban fence means a timber paling fence, that is 1.5m in height above finished ground level and has—

- (a) reinforced spade-end precast concrete posts spaced at 2.4m; and
- (b) a 75mm x 50mm hardwood rail at the top and bottom of the fence that is fixed to the posts; and
- (c) 100mm x 12mm hardwood palings nailed to the rails.

new fence determination means a determination of the ACAT under section 10.

occupier, in relation to a parcel of land, means—

- (a) for a parcel held under a lease, other than a weekly or fortnightly tenancy, from the Commonwealth—the person by whom the parcel is so held; or
- (b) for a parcel vested in a person for an estate in fee simple—the person in whom the parcel is so vested; or
- (c) if neither paragraph (a) nor (b) applies—
 - (i) for Territory land—the Territory; and
 - (ii) for national land—the Commonwealth.

registrar means the registrar of the Magistrates Court.

repair cost determination means a determination of the ACAT under section 12.

repair determination means a determination of the ACAT under section 11.

rules means the rules under the [ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008](#).

unleased land determination means a determination of the ACAT under section 13.

2A When land is a *parcel of land*

For this division, land is a *parcel of land* if—

- (a) the land is held by a person under a lease, other than a weekly or fortnightly tenancy, from the Territory; or
- (b) the land is held by a person under a land sublease; or

- (c) the land is a block within the meaning of the *Districts Act 2002* on which there is a building other than—
 - (i) a bus shelter; or
 - (ii) a building consisting only of a public toilet.

2B When land is not a *parcel of land*

- (1) For this division, land is not a *parcel of land* if—
 - (a) the land is a public park; or
 - (b) the land is a reserve; or
 - (c) the land is a sports ground.

- (2) In this section:

reserve—see the *Nature Conservation Act 2014*, section 169.

Note Reserves include wilderness areas, national parks, nature reserves, catchment areas and other areas of public land.

2C Cost of erecting new fence includes cost of removing existing fence

For this division, if a new fence is to be erected in place of an existing fence, the cost of removing the existing fence is taken to be part of the cost of erecting the new fence.

2D Cost of erecting fence includes fee payable to surveyor

For this division, a fee payable to a surveyor to survey the boundary or line along which a fence is to be erected is taken to be included in the cost of erecting the fence or erecting a new fence in place of an existing fence.

4 Application to ACAT—new fence determination

- (1) This section applies if—
- (a) adjoining parcels of land are not separated by a fence; and
 - (b) the occupier of 1 of the parcels has asked the occupier of the adjoining parcel to join in erecting a fence between the parcels; and
 - (c) either—
 - (i) the occupier of the adjoining parcel has refused to join in erecting the fence; or
 - (ii) the occupiers of the parcels are unable to agree about a matter relating to the construction of the fence.

- (2) Either occupier may apply to the ACAT for a new fence determination.

Note If a form is approved under the [ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008](#) for the application, the form must be used.

- (3) However, an occupier must not apply to the ACAT unless—
- (a) the occupier has given the occupier of the adjoining parcel (the *other occupier*) a notice asking the other occupier to discuss erecting, and paying for, the fencing of the boundary between the parcels; and
 - (b) 30 days have passed since the day the occupier gave the notice to the other occupier.

Note If a form is approved under the [ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008](#) for the notice, the form must be used.

- (4) For subsection (1), an occupier who does not join in erecting a fence within 14 days after the day the occupier is asked to join is taken to have refused to join in erecting the fence.

5 Application to ACAT—repair determination

- (1) This section applies if—
- (a) adjoining parcels of land are separated by a fence; and
 - (b) the occupier of 1 of the parcels of land has asked the occupier of the adjoining parcel to join in repairing or replacing the fence; and
 - (c) either—
 - (i) the occupier of the adjoining parcel has refused to join in repairing or replacing the fence; or
 - (ii) the occupiers of the parcels of land are unable to agree about a matter relating to the repair or replacement of the fence.

- (2) Either occupier may apply to the ACAT for a repair determination.

Note If a form is approved under the [ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008](#) for the application, the form must be used.

- (3) However, the occupier of a parcel must not apply to the ACAT unless—

- (a) the occupier has given the occupier of the adjoining parcel (the ***other occupier***) a notice asking the other occupier to discuss the repair or replacement of the fence between the parcels; and
- (b) 30 days have passed since the day the occupier gave the notice to the other occupier.

Note If a form is approved under the [ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008](#) for the notice, the form must be used.

- (4) For subsection (1), an occupier who does not join in repairing or replacing a fence within 14 days after the day the occupier is asked to join is taken to have refused to join in repairing or replacing the fence.

6 Application to ACAT—repair cost determination

- (1) This section applies if—
 - (a) a fence between adjoining parcels of land has been damaged or destroyed; and
 - (b) the fence needs to be repaired or replaced without delay to protect people lawfully at premises on 1 of the parcels or to prevent the escape of animals.
- (2) The occupier of either parcel may, without giving notice to the occupier of the adjoining parcel, repair or replace the fence.
- (3) The occupier who repairs or replaces a fence under subsection (2) may apply to the ACAT for a repair cost determination.

Note If a form is approved under the [ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008](#) for the application, the form must be used.

- (4) However, the occupier must not apply to the ACAT unless—
 - (a) the occupier has given the occupier of the adjoining parcel (the *other occupier*) a notice asking the other occupier to discuss contributing to the cost of repairing or replacing the fence; and
 - (b) 14 days have passed since the day the occupier gave the notice to the other occupier.

Note If a form is approved under the [ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008](#) for the notice, the form must be used.

- (5) In this section:

people lawfully at premises includes a person—

- (a) living in the premises; or
- (b) invited to visit the premises by a person living in the premises;
or
- (c) otherwise lawfully entitled to be at the premises.

7 Application to ACAT—unleased land determination

- (1) This section applies if—
 - (a) the occupier of a parcel of land has begun erecting a fence between the parcel and adjoining land that is not a parcel of land for this division; and
 - (b) after the erecting began, the adjoining land becomes a parcel of land for this division.
- (3) The occupier may apply to the ACAT for an unleased land determination.

Note If a form is approved under the [ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008](#), s 117 for this provision, the form must be used.

8 Parties to applications

The parties to an application are—

- (a) for a new fence determination—the applicant and the person to whom the applicant gives a notice under section 4 (3) (a); and
- (b) for a repair determination—the applicant and the occupier to whom the applicant gives notice under section 5 (3) (a); and
- (c) for a repair cost determination—the applicant and the person to whom the applicant gives the notice under section 6 (4) (a); and
- (d) for an unleased land determination—the applicant and the owner or occupier of the adjoining parcel of land; and
- (e) for an application to which section 9 applies—
 - (i) the applicant; and

(ii) either—

(A) the person to whom a document mentioned in section 9 (2) (a), (b) or (c) is given; or

(B) the person declared under an order under section 9 (2) (d) to be the respondent to the application.

9 Non-compliant notices

(1) An applicant who fails to comply with a notice requirement under section 4 (3), section 5 (3) or section 6 (4) (the *relevant provision*) may apply to the ACAT for an order under this section.

(2) The ACAT may, by order—

(a) accept a document given to the respondent as notice under the relevant provision; or

(b) correct a defect in a notice given to the respondent; or

(c) deal with the application as if the notice given to the respondent complied with the relevant provision; or

(d) if no notice has been given under the relevant provision—declare who the respondent to the application is.

(3) If the parties consent, the ACAT may, by order, waive a requirement to—

(a) give written notice; or

(b) wait a certain period before making an application.

10 ACAT powers—new fence determination

(1) This section applies if the ACAT holds a hearing on an application for a new fence determination.

- (2) The ACAT may determine—
 - (a) the nature of the fence that should be erected between the parcels of land occupied by the parties; and
 - (b) the line where the fence should be erected; and
 - (c) the party who should be responsible for erecting the fence; and
 - (d) the amount that should be contributed by the other party to the cost of erecting the fence; and
 - (e) how, and by when, the amount should be paid to the party responsible for erecting the fence.
- (3) If a party asks the ACAT to determine that a basic fence is to be erected between the parcels of land to which the application relates, the ACAT must not require the party to contribute more than $\frac{1}{2}$ the cost of erecting a basic fence between the parcels.
- (4) Subsection (3) does not apply in relation to parcels of land if the ACAT is satisfied that—
 - (a) it is not practicable for a basic fence to be erected between the parcels of land; or
 - (b) there are special circumstances that require a fence, other than a basic fence, to be erected.

11 ACAT powers—repair determination

- (1) This section applies if the ACAT holds a hearing on an application for a repair determination.
- (2) The ACAT must determine if the fence to which the application relates is in need of repair or replacement.

- (3) If the ACAT determines that the fence is in need of repair or replacement, the ACAT may determine—
- (a) whether the party other than the applicant should be required to contribute to the cost of the repair or replacement of the fence; and
 - (b) the nature of the repair that is required or the nature of the replacement fence that should be erected; and
 - (c) the line where the fence should be erected; and
 - (d) the party who should be responsible for the repair or replacement; and
 - (e) the amount that should be contributed by the other party to the cost of the repair or replacement; and
 - (f) how, and by when, the amount should be paid to the party responsible for the repair or replacement.
- (4) For the purpose of determining the amount that should be contributed under subsection (3) (e), the ACAT must apply the principle that the cost should be borne by the parties in equal proportions unless there are circumstances that make it just that 1 party bears a greater proportion of the cost than the other party.

12 ACAT powers—repair cost determination

- (1) This section applies if the ACAT holds a hearing on an application for a repair cost determination.
- (2) The ACAT must determine whether it is reasonable for the party other than the applicant to be required to contribute to the cost of the repair or replacement by the applicant.
- (3) If the ACAT determines that it is reasonable for the party to be required to contribute to the cost of the repair or replacement, the ACAT must also determine—
- (a) the amount that should be contributed; and

- (b) how, and by when, the amount should be paid to the applicant.
- (4) For the purpose of determining the amount that should be contributed under subsection (3) (a), the ACAT must apply the principle that the cost should be borne by the parties in equal proportions unless there are circumstances that make it just that 1 party bears a greater proportion of the cost than the other party.

13 ACAT powers—unleased land determination

- (1) This section applies if the ACAT holds a hearing on an application for an unleased land determination.
- (2) The ACAT must determine whether it is reasonable for the party other than the applicant to be required to contribute to the cost of the applicant erecting the fence.
- (3) If the ACAT determines that it is reasonable for the party to contribute to the cost, the ACAT must also determine—
 - (a) the amount that should be contributed; and
 - (b) how, and by when, the amount should be paid to the applicant.
- (4) For subsection (3) (a), the amount must be—
 - (a) if the adjoining land became a parcel of land for this division less than 6 months after the applicant began erecting the fence—the lesser of the following:
 - (i) $\frac{1}{2}$ the cost of erecting the fence;
 - (ii) $\frac{1}{2}$ of what it would have cost to erect a basic fence; and
 - (b) if the adjoining land became a parcel of land for this division 6 months or more after the applicant began erecting the fence—a reasonable amount that is not more than the lesser of the following:
 - (i) $\frac{1}{2}$ the cost of erecting the fence;
 - (ii) $\frac{1}{2}$ of what it would have cost to erect a basic fence.

13A Matters to be taken into account—dividing fences a safety barrier for regulated swimming pool

- (1) This section applies if—
 - (a) the ACAT is required to make a determination under this division; and
 - (b) the determination involves a fence that forms part, or will form part, of a safety barrier for a regulated swimming pool.
- (2) The ACAT must take into account the matters prescribed by regulation.
- (3) In this section:

regulated swimming pool—see the [Building Act 2004](#), section 83B (1).

safety barrier, for a regulated swimming pool—see the [Building Act 2004](#), section 83B (1).

14 Applications for variation of certain determinations

- (1) A person who was a party to an application for a determination under this division (other than under section 13) may apply to the ACAT for a variation of the determination.

Note If a form is approved under the [ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008](#) for the application, the form must be used.

- (2) The parties to the application are the applicant and the other party to the application on which the determination was made.

18 Service of documents

- (1) A document that is required by this division to be served on the occupier of a parcel of land may be served—
 - (a) if the occupier is the Territory—by sending the notice by post to the director-general; and

- (b) if the occupier is the Commonwealth—by sending the notice by post to the secretary to the Commonwealth department for the time being responsible for the administration of national land; and
 - (c) in any other case—by sending the document by post addressed to the occupier at the occupier’s address last known to the person sending the document or at the parcel of land.
- (2) If 2 or more people are the occupiers of a parcel of land, a document that has been served on one of them is taken to have been served on all of them.
- (3) This section does not limit the operation of any other territory law (including the [rules](#)) that authorises or requires service of a document otherwise than as provided under this section.

19 Apportionment of liability of joint lessees

- (1) In this section:
order means—
- (a) a determination of the ACAT under this division; or
 - (b) an order (however described) under the [rules](#) in relation to the enforcement of a determination mentioned in paragraph (a).
- (2) If 2 or more people occupy a parcel of land as joint tenants, tenants in common or joint lessees and an order requires them to make a payment—
- (a) they are jointly and severally liable for the payment of the amount payable under the order; and
 - (b) as between themselves, the liability to pay the amount must, in the absence of agreement to the contrary, be borne in equal proportions; and
 - (c) one of them who pays more than his or her proportionate amount may recover the excess as a debt due by the others.

21 Div 2.3 not affected

This division does not affect the operation of division 2.3 (Damage by fire to fences).

22 Directions about entry by people on land

- (1) This section applies if the ACAT makes a determination under this division in relation to erecting, repairing or replacing a fence.
- (2) The ACAT may give the directions that it considers necessary in relation to the entry of people on land to erect, repair or replace the fence.
- (3) However, the ACAT must not give directions under this section in relation to the entry of people on land, other than land occupied by—
 - (a) a party to the application; or
 - (b) a sublessee, tenant, licensee or other person in possession from a party to the application.
- (4) If a person is given a direction under this section, the person may enter on land to undertake work necessary to erect, repair or replace the fence stated in the direction—
 - (a) at any reasonable time; and
 - (b) in accordance with the direction.

Division 2.2 Fences required by authority

23 Boundary between leased and unleased land

If there is a common boundary between a parcel of leased Territory land and an area of unleased Territory land, the territory planning authority may, by written notice to the lessee of the parcel of leased land, require the lessee to erect a fence on that boundary or any part of it.

24 Boundary between 2 parcels of leased land

If there is a common boundary between 2 parcels of leased Territory land included in different leases, the territory planning authority may, by written notice to each lessee, require them jointly to erect a fence on that boundary or any part of it.

25 Notice under div 2.2

A notice under section 23 or 24 must specify the fence to be erected and the part of the boundary where it is to be erected.

26 Noncompliance with notice under div 2.2

If a fence in compliance with a notice is not erected within 1 month after the date of the notice—

- (a) the territory planning authority may, at the cost of the lessee, cause the fence to be erected; and
- (b) the lessee must pay to the authority, on demand, the amount fixed by the authority as the cost of erecting the fence or as the proportion payable by the lessee of that cost.

Division 2.3 Damage by fire to fences

26A Damage by fire to dividing fence

- (1) This section applies if—
 - (a) the occupier of land (the *clearing occupier*) clears the land of flammable materials for the space of 6m from a fence (a *dividing fence*) dividing the land from the land of another owner or occupier; and
 - (b) the other owner or occupier (the *non-clearer*) neglects or omits to clear the owner or occupier's land; and
 - (c) damage from fire happens to the dividing fence because of the neglect or omission.

- (2) The non-clearer must, at the non-clearer's expense, arrange for the dividing fence to be repaired or replaced within—
 - (a) 1 month after the day it is damaged; or
 - (b) if the ACAT extends the time to repair or replace the fence—the extended time.
- (3) If the non-clearer applies for an extension of time to repair or replace the dividing fence, the non-clearer must give the clearing occupier reasonable notice of the application.
- (4) If the non-clearer refuses or omits to repair or replace the dividing fence within the time required under subsection (2), the clearing occupier may repair or replace the fence.
- (5) An amount incurred by the clearing occupier repairing or replacing the dividing fence is taken to be an amount owing to the clearing occupier by the non-clearer.

Part 3 Party walls

27 Meaning of *party wall* in pt 3

In this part:

party wall—

- (a) means a wall or structure designed for the common use of 2 or more buildings and erected, or to be erected, on a common boundary, or part of such a boundary, between 2 parcels of land, and extending laterally into each of those parcels of land; and
- (b) includes any wall that is completely or partly used to support 2 or more buildings, if the wall was erected in connection with a building for which there is a certificate of occupancy under the *Building Act 2004*.

28 Erection of party walls

If, in a building approval under the *Building Act 2004* for a building to be erected on land that is leased Territory land, a party wall is shown or provided for on the common boundary, or part of that boundary, between 2 parcels of land that are leased Territory land—

- (a) the lessee of each parcel of land may, during the term of the lease—
 - (i) erect, maintain and use a party wall in the position shown on the building plan or design; and
 - (ii) use for the support of the building or buildings provided for in, or shown on, the building plan or design and erected on the parcel of land of which he or she is lessee any party wall so erected; and
- (b) the lessees of the 2 parcels of land may agree about the lessee by whom the party wall is to be erected and in what proportions the cost of erection is to be borne by them; and

- (c) if the lessee of 1 parcel of land (the *first lessee*) has at the lessee's expense erected a party wall—the lessee of the other parcel of land must immediately after beginning to erect a building on the other parcel of land pay to the first lessee a proportion of the cost of the erection of the party wall; and
- (d) in default of agreement between the lessees about the apportionment of the cost of erecting a party wall—the territory planning authority may, at the request of either lessee, determine the cost of erecting the party wall and the proportion of the cost to be borne by each lessee; and
- (e) if any period has elapsed between the date of the completion of a party wall by the lessee of 1 parcel of land and the date of the beginning of the erection of a building on the other parcel of land—a reasonable allowance must be made for depreciation of the party wall in determining the proportion payable by the other lessee of the cost of erection of the party wall; and
- (f) the amount agreed on, or determined by the territory planning authority, as payable by 1 lessee to another lessee under this section is a debt due and recoverable by the other lessee in any court of competent jurisdiction.

Part 4 **Miscellaneous**

29 **Regulation-making power**

The Executive may make regulations for this Act.

Dictionary

(see s 1A)

Note 1 The [Legislation Act](#) contains definitions and other provisions relevant to this Act.

Note 2 For example, the [Legislation Act](#), dict, pt 1, defines the following terms:

- ACAT
- director-general (see s 163)
- national land
- territory land
- territory law
- territory planning authority.

basic fence, for division 2.1 (Fences requested by occupiers)—see section 2.

basic rural fence, for division 2.1 (Fences requested by occupiers)—see section 2.

basic urban fence, for division 2.1 (Fences requested by occupiers)—see section 2.

land sublease—see the [Planning Act 2023](#), dictionary.

new fence determination, for division 2.1 (Fences requested by occupiers)—see section 2.

occupier, in relation to a parcel of land, for division 2.1 (Fences requested by occupiers)—see section 2.

parcel of land—

- (a) for this Act generally—includes land held under a land sublease; and
- (b) for division 2.1 (Fences requested by occupiers)—see section 2A and section 2B.

party wall, for part 3 (Party walls)—see section 27.

registrar, for division 2.1 (Fences requested by occupiers)—see section 2.

repair cost determination, for division 2.1 (Fences requested by occupiers)—see section 2.

repair determination, for division 2.1 (Fences requested by occupiers)—see section 2.

rules, for division 2.1 (Fences requested by occupiers)—see section 2.

unleased land determination, for division 2.1 (Fences requested by occupiers)—see section 2.

Endnotes

1 About the endnotes

Endnotes

1 About the endnotes

Amending and modifying laws are annotated in the legislation history and the amendment history. Current modifications are not included in the republished law but are set out in the endnotes.

Not all editorial amendments made under the *Legislation Act 2001*, part 11.3 are annotated in the amendment history. Full details of any amendments can be obtained from the Parliamentary Counsel's Office.

Uncommenced amending laws are not included in the republished law. The details of these laws are underlined in the legislation history. Uncommenced expiries are underlined in the legislation history and amendment history.

If all the provisions of the law have been renumbered, a table of renumbered provisions gives details of previous and current numbering.

The endnotes also include a table of earlier republications.

2 Abbreviation key

A = Act	NI = Notifiable instrument
AF = Approved form	o = order
am = amended	om = omitted/repealed
amdt = amendment	ord = ordinance
AR = Assembly resolution	orig = original
ch = chapter	par = paragraph/subparagraph
CN = Commencement notice	pres = present
def = definition	prev = previous
DI = Disallowable instrument	(prev...) = previously
dict = dictionary	pt = part
disallowed = disallowed by the Legislative Assembly	r = rule/subrule
div = division	reloc = relocated
exp = expires/expired	renum = renumbered
Gaz = gazette	R[X] = Republication No
hdg = heading	RI = reissue
IA = Interpretation Act 1967	s = section/subsection
ins = inserted/added	sch = schedule
LA = Legislation Act 2001	sdiv = subdivision
LR = legislation register	SL = Subordinate law
LRA = Legislation (Republication) Act 1996	sub = substituted
mod = modified/modification	<u>underlining</u> = whole or part not commenced or to be expired

3 Legislation history

This Act was originally a Commonwealth ordinance—the *Dividing Fences Ordinance 1981* No 39 (Cwlth).

The *Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988* (Cwlth), s 34 (4) converted most former Commonwealth ordinances in force in the ACT into ACT enactments. This allowed the ACT Legislative Assembly to amend and repeal the laws. This Act was converted into an ACT enactment on 11 May 1989 (self-government day).

As with most ordinances in force in the ACT, the name was changed from *Ordinance* to *Act* by the *Self-Government (Citation of Laws) Act 1989* A1989-21, s 5 on 11 May 1989 (self-government day). The Act was later renamed by the *Land (Planning and Environment) Consequential Provisions Act 1991* A1991-118 (see pt 2 div 5).

Before 11 May 1989, ordinances commenced on notification day unless otherwise stated (see *Seat of Government (Administration) Act 1910* (Cwlth), s 12).

After 11 May 1989 and before 10 November 1999, Acts commenced on their notification day unless otherwise stated (see *Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government) Act 1988* (Cwlth) s 25).

Commonwealth legislation

Common Boundaries Act A1981-39

notified 30 October 1981 (Gaz 1981 No S226)
commenced 30 October 1981

as amended by

Magistrates Court Ordinance 1985 Ord1985-67

notified 19 December 1985 (Gaz 1985 No S542)
commenced 1 February 1986 (Cwlth Gaz 1986 No G3)

Magistrates Court (Amendment) Ordinance (No 3) 1986 Ord1986-74

notified 14 November 1986 (Gaz 1986 No S592)
commenced 14 November 1986

Self-Government (Consequential Amendments) Ordinance 1989 Ord1989-38 sch 1

notified 10 May 1989 (Cwlth Gaz 1989 No S160)
s 1, s 2 commenced 10 May 1989 (s 2 (1))
sch 1 commenced 11 May 1989 (s 2 (2) and Cwlth Gaz 1989 No S164)

Legislation after becoming Territory enactment

Magistrates and Coroner's Courts (Registrar) Act 1991 A1991-44 sch 1

notified 20 September 1991 (Gaz 1991 No S95)
s 1, s 2 commenced 20 September 1991 (s 2 (1))
sch 1 commenced 25 September 1991 (s 2 (2) and Gaz 1991 No S103)

Land (Planning and Environment) (Consequential Provisions) Act 1991 A1991-118 pt 2 div 5, sch 1 pt 5

notified 15 January 1992 (Gaz 1992 No S3)
s 1, s 2 commenced 15 January 1992 (s 2 (1))
pt 2 div 5, sch 1 pt 5 commenced 2 April 1992 (s 2 (2) and Gaz 1992 No 13)

Statute Law Revision (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1993 A1993-1 sch 1

notified 1 March 1993 (Gaz 1993 No S23)
commenced 1 March 1993

Bushfire (Amendment) Act 1993 A1993-74 sch 2

notified 22 October 1993 (Gaz 1993 No S215)
commenced 22 October 1993 (s 2)

Public Sector Management (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Act 1994 A1994-38 sch 1 pt 18

notified 30 June 1994 (Gaz 1994 No S121)
s 1, s 2 commenced 30 June 1994 (s 2 (1))
sch 1 pt 18 commenced 1 July (s 2 (2) and Gaz 1994 No S142)

Land (Planning and Environment) (Amendment) Act 1997 A1997-7 s 10

notified 22 April 1997 (Gaz 1997 No S92)
ss 1-3 commenced 22 April 1997 (s 2 (1))
s 10 commenced 24 June 1997 (s 2 (2))

Magistrates Court (Civil Jurisdiction) (Amendment) Act 1997 A1997-94 sch 3

notified 1 December 1997 (Gaz 1997 No S380)
ss 1-3 commenced 1 December 1997 (s 2 (1))
sch 3 commenced 25 May 1998 (s 2 (2) and Gaz 1998 No S140)

Building (Amendment) Act (No 2) 1998 A1998-52 sch pt 1

notified 16 November 1998 (Gaz 1998 No S205)
ss 1-3 commenced 16 November 1998 (s 2 (1))
sch pt 1 commenced 4 January 1999 (s 2 (2) and Gaz 1999 No S1)

Utilities (Consequential Provisions) Act 2000 A2000-66 sch 1 pt 2

notified 20 December 2000 (Gaz 2000 No S68)
s 1, s 2 commenced 20 December 2000 (IA s 10B)
sch 1 pt 2 commences 1 January 2001 (s 2 (1) and Gaz 2000 No S69)

Legislation (Consequential Amendments) Act 2001 A2001-44 pt 68

notified 26 July 2001 (Gaz 2001 No 30)
s 1, s 2 commenced 26 July 2001 (IA s 10B)
pt 68 commenced 12 September 2001 (s 2 and see Gaz 2001 No S65)

Statute Law Amendment Act 2001 (No 2) A2001-56 pt 3.8

notified 5 September 2001 (Gaz 2001 No S65)
s 1, s 2 commenced 5 September 2001 (IA s 10B)
amdt 3.11 commenced 12 September 2001 (s 2 (2))
pt 3.8 remainder commenced 5 September 2001 (s 2 (1))

Districts Act 2002 A2002-39 pt 1.2

notified LR 10 October 2002
s 1, s 2 commenced 10 October 2002 (LA s 75 (1))
pt 1.2 commenced 11 October 2002 (s 2)

Planning and Land (Consequential Amendments) Act 2002 A2002-56 sch 3 pt 3.2

notified LR 20 December 2002
s 1, s 2 commenced 20 December 2002 (LA s 75 (1))
sch 3 pt 3.2 commenced 1 July 2003 (s 2 and see [Planning and Land Act 2002 A2002-55, s 2](#))

Construction Occupations Legislation Amendment Act 2004 A2004-13 sch 2 pt 2.5

notified LR 26 March 2004
s 1, s 2 commenced 26 March 2004 (LA s 75 (1))
sch 2 pt 2.5 commenced 1 September 2004 (s 2 and see [Construction Occupations \(Licensing\) Act 2004 A2004-12, s 2](#) and [CN2004-8](#))

Endnotes

3 Legislation history

Emergencies Act 2004 A2004-28 sch 3 pt 3.4

notified LR 29 June 2004
s 1, s 2 commenced 29 June 2004 (LA s 75 (1))
sch 3 pt 3.4 commenced 1 July 2004 (s 2 (1) and [CN2004-11](#))

Court Procedures (Consequential Amendments) Act 2004 A2004-60 sch 1 pt 1.10

notified LR 2 September 2004
s 1, s 2 commenced 2 September 2004 (LA s 75 (1))
sch 1 pt 1.10 commenced 10 January 2005 (s 2 and see [Court Procedures Act 2004 A2004-59](#), s 2 and [CN2004-29](#))

Statute Law Amendment Act 2007 A2007-3 sch 3 pt 3.21

notified LR 22 March 2007
s 1, s 2 taken to have commenced 1 July 2006 (LA s 75 (2))
sch 3 pt 3.21 commenced 12 April 2007 (s 2 (1))

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Legislation Amendment Act 2008 (No 2) A2008-37 sch 1 pt 1.22

notified LR 4 September 2008
s 1, s 2 commenced 4 September 2008 (LA s 75 (1))
sch 1 pt 1.22 commenced 2 February 2009 (s 2 (1) and see [ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2008 A2008-35](#), s 2 (1) and [CN2009-2](#))

Statute Law Amendment Act 2009 A2009-20 sch 3 pt 3.16

notified LR 1 September 2009
s 1, s 2 commenced 1 September 2009 (LA s 75 (1))
sch 3 pt 3.16 commenced 22 September 2009 (s 2)

Statute Law Amendment Act 2011 A2011-3 sch 3 pt 3.9

notified LR 22 February 2011
s 1, s 2 commenced 22 February 2011 (LA s 75 (1))
sch 3 pt 3.9 commenced 1 March 2011 (s 2)

Administrative (One ACT Public Service Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2011 A2011-22 sch 1 pt 1.31

notified LR 30 June 2011
s 1, s 2 commenced 30 June 2011 (LA s 75 (1))
sch 1 pt 1.31 commenced 1 July 2011 (s 2 (1))

Nature Conservation Act 2014 A2014-59 sch 2 pt 2.2

notified LR 11 December 2014
s 1, s 2 commenced 11 December 2014 (LA s 75 (1))
sch 2 pt 2.2 commenced 11 June 2015 (s 2 (1) and LA s 79)

Planning and Development (University of Canberra and Other Leases) Legislation Amendment Act 2015 A2015-19 pt 4

notified LR 11 June 2015
s 1, s 2 commenced 11 June 2015 (LA s 75 (1))
pt 4 commenced 1 July 2015 (s 2 and [CN2015-9](#))

Justice and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Act 2017 (No 2) A2017-14 pt 3

notified LR 17 May 2017
s 1, s 2 commenced 17 May 2017 (LA s 75 (1))
pt 3 commenced 24 May 2017 (s 2 (1))

Courts and Other Justice Legislation Amendment Act 2021 A2021-13 pt 3

notified LR 9 June 2021
s 1, s 2 commenced 9 June 2021 (LA s 75 (1))
pt 3 commenced 16 June 2021 (s 2 (3))

Planning (Consequential Amendments) Act 2023 A2023-36 sch 1 pt 1.14

notified LR 29 September 2023
s 1, s 2 commenced 29 September 2023 (LA s 75 (1))
sch 1 pt 1.14 commenced 27 November 2023 (s 2 (1) and see [Planning Act 2023 A2023-18](#), s 2 (2) and [CN2023-10](#))

Building (Swimming Pool Safety) Legislation Amendment Act 2023 A2023-46 pt 6

notified LR 15 November 2023
s 1, s 2 commenced 15 November 2023 (LA s 75 (1))
pt 6 commenced 1 May 2024 (s 2 (1))

Endnotes

4 Amendment history

4 Amendment history

Long title

long title am [A1991-118](#)

Preliminary

pt 1 hdg ins [A1991-118](#)

Name of Act

s 1 sub [A1991-118](#)

Dictionary

s 1A ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.104

Notes

s 1B ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.104

Dividing fences

pt 2 hdg ins [A1991-118](#)

Fences requested by occupier

div 2.1 hdg (prev pt 2 div 1 hdg) ins [A1991-118](#)
renum R5 LA

Definitions for div 2.1

s 2 am [Ord1985-67](#); [Ord1989-38](#) sch 1; [A1998-52](#) sch pt 1;
[A2000-66](#) sch 1 pt 2; [A2001-44](#) amdt 1.771; [A2001-56](#)
amdt 3.11, amdt 3.12
def **basic rural fence** sub [A2004-13](#) amdt 2.16
def **basic urban fence** sub [A2004-13](#) amdt 2.16
def **city area** ins [A1991-118](#) sch 1 pt 5
om R8 LA
def **conference** ins [A1997-94](#) sch 3
om [A2004-60](#) amdt 1.41
def **conference notice** ins [A1997-94](#) sch 3
sub [A2001-44](#) amdt 1.769; [A2004-60](#) amdt 1.42
om [A2009-20](#) amdt 3.38
def **court** am [A1997-94](#) sch 3
om [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.105
def **inquiry** ins [A1997-94](#) sch 3
sub [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.106
om [A2009-20](#) amdt 3.38
def **inquiry notice** ins [A1997-94](#) sch 3
sub [A2001-44](#) amdt 1.770; [A2004-60](#) amdt 1.43
om [A2009-20](#) amdt 3.38
def **new fence determination** ins [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.81
def **occupier** am [Ord1989-38](#) sch 1
def **registrar** ins [A1997-94](#) sch 3
def **repair cost determination** ins [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.81
def **repair determination** ins [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.81

def **rules** ins [A2004-60](#) amdt 1.44
sub [A2009-20](#) amdt 3.39
def **unleased land determination** ins [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.81

When land is a *parcel of land*

s 2A ins [A2001-56](#) amdt 3.12
am [A2002-39](#) amdt 1.2; [A2015-19](#) s 9; pars renum R18 LA

When land is not a *parcel of land*

s 2B ins [A2001-56](#) amdt 3.12
am [A2014-59](#) amdt 2.6, amdt 2.7

Cost of erecting new fence includes cost of removing existing fence

s 2C ins [A2001-56](#) amdt 3.12

Cost of erecting fence includes fee payable to surveyor

s 2D ins [A2001-56](#) amdt 3.12

Dividing Fences Act (NSW) to cease to be in force

s 3 om [A2001-44](#) amdt 1.772

Application to ACAT—new fence determination

s 4 am [A1991-44](#); [A1991-118](#); [A1997-94](#); ss renum R5 LA;
[A2004-60](#) amdts 1.45-1.48; ss renum R11 LA (see [A2004-60](#)
amdt 1.49)
sub [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.82
am [A2021-13](#) s 19

Application to ACAT—repair determination

s 5 am [A1997-94](#); ss renum R5 LA; [A2004-60](#) amdt 1.50
sub [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.82
am [A2021-13](#) s 19

Application to ACAT—repair cost determination

s 6 am [A1991-44](#); [A1997-94](#); [A2004-60](#) amdts 1.51-1.55;
ss renum R11 LA (see [A2004-60](#) amdt 1.56)
sub [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.82
am [A2017-14](#) s 9, s 10; [A2021-13](#) s 20

Application to ACAT—unleased land determination

s 7 am [A1997-94](#); ss renum R5 LA; [A2004-60](#) amdt 1.57
sub [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.82

Parties to applications

s 8 am [A1991-44](#); [A1997-94](#); ss renum R5 LA; [A2004-60](#)
amdts 1.58-1.61; ss renum R11 LA (see [A2004-60](#)
amdt 1.62)
sub [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.82
am [A2021-13](#) s 21

Endnotes

4 Amendment history

Non-compliant notices

s 9 hdg sub [A2004-60](#) amdt 1.63
s 9 am [Ord1985-67](#); [Ord1986-74](#); [A1991-118](#); [A1997-94](#);
[A2004-60](#) amdt 1.64, amdt 1.65
reloc to [Magistrates Court \(Civil Jurisdiction\) Rules 2004](#) pt 18
as s 257A by [A2004-60](#) amdt 1.66
ins [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.82
sub [A2021-13](#) s 22

ACAT powers—new fence determination

s 10 am [Ord1985-67](#); [Ord1986-74](#); [A1991-118](#)
om [A1997-94](#)
ins [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.82

ACAT powers—repair determination

s 11 am [Ord1989-38](#); [A1991-44](#); [A1991-118](#); [A1997-94](#); [A2004-60](#)
amds 1.67-1.69; ss renum R11 LA (see [A2004-60](#)
amdt 1.70)
sub [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.82
am [A2021-13](#) s 23; pars renum R20 LA

ACAT powers—repair cost determination

s 12 am [A1997-94](#); ss renum R5 LA; [A2004-60](#) amdt 1.71
sub [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.82

ACAT powers—unleased land determination

s 13 am [A1991-118](#)
om [A1997-94](#)
ins [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.82

Matters to be taken into account—dividing fences a safety barrier for regulated swimming pool

s 13A ins [A2023-46](#) s 30

Applications for variation of certain determinations

s 14 am [A1991-118](#)
om [A1997-94](#)
ins [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.82

Dealing with variations

s 15 am [A1991-118](#); [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.107
sub [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.82
om [A2021-13](#) s 24

Court not bound by rules of evidence

s 16 am [A1991-118](#)
om [A1997-94](#)

Adjournment of inquiries

s 17 am [A1991-118](#)
om [A1997-94](#)

Service of documents

s 18 am [Ord1989-38](#); [A1991-118](#); [A1994-38](#); [A1997-94](#);
pars renum R5 LA; [A2004-60](#) amdt 1.72; [A2011-3](#)
amds 3.103-3.105; [A2011-22](#) amdt 1.97

Apportionment of liability of joint lessees

s 19 am [A1997-94](#); [A2004-60](#) amdt 1.73; [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.83;
[A2011-3](#) amdt 3.106

Ex parte orders may be set aside

s 20 om [A1997-94](#)

Div 2.3 not affected

s 21 am [A1991-118](#); [A1993-74](#); [A1997-7](#)
sub [A2004-28](#) amdt 3.7

Directions about entry by people on land

s 22 am [A1991-118](#)
sub [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.84

Fences required by authority

div 2.2 hdg (prev pt 2 div 2 hdg) ins [A1991-118](#)
renum R5 LA
sub [A2002-56](#) amdt 3.17

Boundary between leased and unleased land

s 23 ins [A1991-118](#)
am [A2002-56](#) amdt 3.19; [A2023-36](#) amdt 1.85

Boundary between 2 parcels of leased land

s 24 ins [A1991-118](#)
am [A2002-56](#) amdt 3.19; [A2023-36](#) amdt 1.85

Notice under div 2.2

s 25 ins [A1991-118](#)
am [A2011-3](#) amdt 3.107

Noncompliance with notice under div 2.2

s 26 ins [A1991-118](#)
am [A2002-56](#) amdt 3.18, amdt 3.19; [A2011-3](#) amdt 3.107;
[A2023-36](#) amdt 1.85

Damage by fire to fences

div 2.3 hdg ins [A2004-28](#) amdt 3.8

Damage by fire to dividing fence

s 26A reloc from [Bushfire Act 1936](#) s 11 by [A2004-28](#) amdt 3.6
sub [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.85

Party walls

pt 3 hdg ins [A1991-118](#)

Endnotes

4 Amendment history

Meaning of *party wall* in pt 3

s 27 ins [A1991-118](#)
am [A2004-13](#) amdt 2.17

Erection of party walls

s 28 ins [A1991-118](#)
am [A2002-56](#) amdt 3.19; [A2004-13](#) amdt 2.18; [A2011-3](#) amdts 3.108-3.112; [A2023-36](#) amdt 1.85

Miscellaneous

pt 4 hdg ins [A2001-44](#) amdt 1.773
om [A2004-60](#) amdt 1.74
ins [A2023-46](#) s 31

Regulation-making power

s 29 ins [A2001-44](#) amdt 1.773
(6)-(9) exp 12 September 2002 (s 29 (9))
om [A2004-60](#) amdt 1.74
ins [A2023-46](#) s 31

Schedule

sch am [Ord1985-67](#); [A1991-44](#); [A1993-1](#); [A1997-94](#)
om [A2001-44](#) amdt 1.774

Dictionary

dict ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.108
am [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.86, amdt 1.87; [A2011-3](#) amdt 3.113;
[A2011-22](#) amdt 1.98; [A2023-36](#) amdt 1.86
def **basic fence** ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.108
def **basic rural fence** ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.108
def **basic urban fence** ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.108
def **conference notice** ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.108
om [A2009-20](#) amdt 3.40
def **inquiry** ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.108
om [A2009-20](#) amdt 3.40
def **inquiry notice** ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.108
om [A2009-20](#) amdt 3.40
def **land sublease** ins [A2015-19](#) s 10
sub [A2023-36](#) amdt 1.87
def **new fence determination** ins [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.88
def **occupier** ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.108
def **parcel of land** ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.108
sub [A2015-19](#) s 11
def **party wall** ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.108
def **registrar** ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.108
def **repair cost determination** ins [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.88
def **repair determination** ins [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.88
def **rules** ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.108
def **unleased land determination** ins [A2008-37](#) amdt 1.88

5 Earlier republications

Some earlier republications were not numbered. The number in column 1 refers to the publication order.

Since 12 September 2001 every authorised republication has been published in electronic pdf format on the ACT legislation register. A selection of authorised republications have also been published in printed format. These republications are marked with an asterisk (*) in column 1. Electronic and printed versions of an authorised republication are identical.

Republication No	Amendments to	Republication date
1	A1991-44	30 September 1991
2	A1993-1	1 March 1993
3	A1994-38	31 January 1995
4	A1997-94	1 June 1998
5	A2001-56	18 January 2002
6	A2001-56	13 September 2002
7	A2002-39	11 October 2002
8*	A2002-56	1 July 2003
9	A2004-28	1 July 2004
10	A2004-28	1 September 2004
11	A2004-60	10 January 2005
12	A2007-3	12 April 2007
13	A2008-37	2 February 2009
14*	A2009-20	22 September 2009
15	A2011-3	1 March 2011
16	A2011-22	1 July 2011
17	A2014-59	11 June 2015
18	A2015-19	1 July 2015
19	A2017-14	24 May 2017
20	A2021-13	16 June 2021
21	A2023-36	27 November 2023

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