



Australian Capital Territory

Testamentary Guardianship Act 1984

A1984-34

Republication No 9

Effective: 11 September 2012 – 21 November 2018

Republication date: 11 September 2012

Last amendment made by [A2012-40](#)

About this republication

The republished law

This is a republication of the *Testamentary Guardianship Act 1984* (including any amendment made under the [Legislation Act 2001](#), part 11.3 (Editorial changes)) as in force on 11 September 2012. It also includes any commencement, amendment, repeal or expiry affecting this republished law to 11 September 2012.

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 \$110 for an individual and \$550 for a corporation (see [Legislation Act 2001](#), s 133).



Australian Capital Territory

Testamentary Guardianship Act 1984

Contents

	Page
1 Name of Act	2
2 Dictionary	2
3 Notes	2
4 Meaning of <i>parent</i>	2
5 Meaning of <i>guardian</i>	3
6 Meaning of <i>testamentary guardian</i>	3
7 Application of Act	3
8 Appointment of testamentary guardians	4
9 Appointment by persons not entitled to guardianship	4
10 Time when appointment effective	4
11 Effect of appointment	5
12 Applications to Supreme Court	6
13 Powers of Supreme Court	7

Contents

Dictionary	Page 8
Endnotes	
1 About the endnotes	9
2 Abbreviation key	9
3 Legislation history	10
4 Amendment history	13
5 Earlier republications	16
6 Renumbered provisions	16



Australian Capital Territory

Testamentary Guardianship Act 1984

An Act to provide for the appointment of testamentary guardians, and for related purposes

1 Name of Act

This Act is the *Testamentary Guardianship Act 1984*.

2 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 ‘*guardian*, of a child—see section 5.’ means that the term ‘guardian’ is defined in that section.

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)).

3 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.

4 Meaning of *parent*

In this Act:

parent of a child does not include a parent whose guardianship of the child has been abrogated by—

- (a) a judgment, decree or order of a federal court or a court of a State that is in force; or
- (b) a judgment, decree or order of a court in a foreign country that is in force and that would be recognised by a Territory court in conformity with the common law rules of private international law.

Note *State* includes the Northern Territory (see [Legislation Act](#), dict, pt 1).

5 Meaning of *guardian*

- (1) For this Act, a *guardian* of a child (other than a reference to a testamentary guardian) means any guardian of the child, whether appointed—
 - (a) in accordance with this Act or a law of a State; or
 - (b) by a judgment, decree or order of a federal court or a court of a State; or
 - (c) in accordance with a law of a foreign country or part of a foreign country or by a judgment, decree or order of a court in a foreign country and that would be recognised by a Territory court in conformity with the common law rules of private international law.
- (2) However, a *guardian* of a child does not include—
 - (a) the director-general responsible for the *Children and Young People Act 2008*; or
 - (b) a Minister of the Commonwealth or of a State who, under a law of the Commonwealth or of the State is, in his or her capacity as Minister, the guardian of the child.

Note *State* includes the Northern Territory (see *Legislation Act*, dict, pt 1).

6 Meaning of *testamentary guardian*

In this Act:

testamentary guardian means a guardian appointed under section 8.

7 Application of Act

- (1) This Act applies in relation to a child—
 - (a) whether the child was born in the ACT or elsewhere; and
 - (b) whether the child was born before or after the commencement of this Act.

(2) Nothing in this Act is to be taken to affect the operation of the following sections of the *Adoption Act 1993*:

- section 8 (Rules of private international law not to apply)
- section 43 (General effect)
- section 53 (Recognition of Australian adoptions)
- section 57L (Recognition of adoption order made outside Australia).

8 Appointment of testamentary guardians

Each parent and each guardian of a child may, by will or codicil, appoint a person to be a guardian of the child or persons to be guardians of the child.

9 Appointment by persons not entitled to guardianship

An appointment of a testamentary guardian of a child by a person who was not, immediately before the person's death, a parent or guardian of the child is of no effect.

10 Time when appointment effective

An appointment of a testamentary guardian of a child takes effect—

- (a) where the appointor is survived by a parent of the child—
 - (i) if the instrument of appointment shows that the appointor intended the appointment to take effect on his or her death—on the death of the appointor; or
 - (ii) in any other case—on the death of that parent; or
- (b) where the appointor is not survived by a parent of the child—on the death of the appointor.

11 Effect of appointment

- (1) A testamentary guardian of a child has responsibility for the long-term welfare of the child and has, in relation to that child, all the powers, rights and duties that are vested by law or custom in the guardian of a child, other than—
 - (a) the right to have the daily care and control of the child; and
 - (b) the right and responsibility to make decisions concerning the daily care and control of the child.
- (2) Without limiting the application of subsection (1), a testamentary guardian of a child:
 - (a) may take into his or her custody, and may manage, the real and personal property of the child (not being property held by a trustee under a trust) until he or she ceases to be the guardian of the child; and
 - (b) holds any real and personal property of the child that comes into his or her custody as trustee for the child; and
 - (c) may bring such proceedings as may be necessary to give effect to all or any of his or her powers under this section, including his or her powers as trustee for the child; and
 - (d) is responsible for accounting to the child, when the child attains the age of 18 years, for his or her custody and management of that property.
- (3) Where, at any time after an appointment of a testamentary guardian of a child takes effect—
 - (a) no parent of the child is alive; and
 - (b) no judgment or order of a federal court or a court of a State or Territory granting custody or the right to have the daily care and control of the child (however expressed) to another person is in force; and

- (c) no order relating to the child has been registered under the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cwlth), section 68; and
- (d) no order that would, under the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cwlth), section 60A have effect for that Act as if it were an order granting custody of the child is in force;

then the testamentary guardian has, in addition to the rights and responsibility referred to in subsections (1) and (2)—

- (e) the right to have the daily care and control of the child; and
- (f) the right and responsibility to make decisions concerning the daily care and control of the child.

(4) Where—

- (a) an appointment of a testamentary guardian of a child has taken effect; and
- (b) another person or persons has or have the guardianship of that child;

the testamentary guardian shall discharge his or her responsibility and duties and exercise his or her powers and rights in relation to that child jointly with that other person or those other persons.

12 Applications to Supreme Court

- (1) A testamentary guardian whose appointment does not, under section 10, take effect on the death of the appointor may at any time apply to the Supreme Court for an order that his or her appointment take effect immediately.
- (2) Where an appointment of a testamentary guardian of a child has taken effect under section 10 (a) (i) or subsection (1), a parent of that child may apply to the Supreme Court for an order that the guardianship of the testamentary guardian be suspended until the death of the parent or for such period as is specified in the application.

- (3) On an application under this section, the Supreme Court may make or refuse to make the order sought, and may make such other orders as it thinks just.

13 Powers of Supreme Court

- (1) Nothing in this Act shall be taken to affect the powers of the Supreme Court relating to the guardianship and custody of children.
- (2) Without limiting subsection (1), nothing in this Act shall be taken to affect the power of the Supreme Court—
 - (a) to settle disputes in relation to a child between persons having the guardianship of the child; or
 - (b) to appoint a guardian of a child; or
 - (c) to appoint 1 of a number of persons having the guardianship of a child to be the sole guardian of that child; or
 - (d) to revoke the appointment of a guardian of a child.

Dictionary

(see s 2)

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:

- ACT
- child
- civil union
- foreign country
- State
- Supreme Court
- the Territory.

child means a person who is not and has not been married or in a civil union, and has not attained the age of 18 years.

guardian, of a child—see section 5.

parent, of a child—see section 4.

testamentary guardian—see section 6.

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

Endnotes

3 Legislation history

3 Legislation history

The *Testamentary Guardianship Act 1984* was originally the *Testamentary Guardianship Ordinance 1984*. It became an ACT Act on self-government (11 May 1989).

Before 11 May 1989, ordinances commenced on their 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).

Legislation before becoming Territory enactment

Testamentary Guardianship Act 1984 A1984-34

notified 23 July 1984

commenced 23 July 1984

as amended by

Children's Services (Miscellaneous Amendments) Ordinance 1986

Ord1986-14

notified 4 June 1986

commenced 26 April 1988 (s 2 and Cwlth Gaz 1988 No S116)

Testamentary Guardianship (Amendment) Ordinance 1987

Ord1987-15

notified 1 May 1987

commenced 1 May 1987

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 see Cwlth Gaz 1989 No S164)

Legislation after becoming Territory enactment

Adoption (Consequential Amendments) Act 1993 A1993-23 s 6

notified 8 April 1993 (Gaz 1993 No S57)

s 1, s 2 commenced 8 April 1993 (s 2 (1))

s 6 commenced 31 July 1993 (s 2 (2) and see Gaz 1993 No 28)

Statutory Offices (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1994 A1994-97 sch pt 1

notified 15 December 1994 ([Gaz 1994 No S280](#))
s 1, s 2 commenced 15 December 1994 (s 2 (1))
sch pt 1 commenced 15 December 1994 (s 2 (2) and [Gaz 1994 No S293](#))

Children and Young People (Consequential Amendments) Act 1999 A1999-64 sch 2

notified 10 November 1999 ([Gaz 1999 No 45](#))
s 1, s 2 commenced 10 Nov 1999 (s 2 (1))
sch 2 commenced 10 May 2000 (s 2 (2))

Legislation (Consequential Amendments) Act 2001 A2001-44 pt 382

notified 26 July 2001 ([Gaz 2001 No 30](#))
s 1, s 2 commenced 26 July 2001 (IA s 10B)
pt 382 commenced 12 September 2001 (s 2 and see [Gaz 2001 No S65](#))

Civil Unions Act 2006 A2006-22 sch 1 pt 1.28

notified LR 19 May 2006
s 1, s 2 commenced 19 May 2006 (LA s 75 (1))
sch 1 pt 1.28 never commenced

Note Act repealed by disallowance 14 June 2006 (see *Cwlth Gaz* 2006 No S93)

Statute Law Amendment Act 2007 A2007-3 sch 3 pt 3.98

notified LR 22 March 2007
s 1, s 2 taken to have commenced 1 July 2006 (LA s 75 (2))
sch 3 pt 3.98 commenced 12 April 2007 (s 2 (1))

Civil Partnerships Act 2008 A2008-14 sch 1 pt 1.24

notified LR 15 May 2008
s 1, s 2 commenced 15 May 2008 (LA s 75 (1))
sch 1 pt 1.24 commenced 19 May 2008 (s 2 and [CN2008-8](#))

Endnotes

3 Legislation history

Children and Young People (Consequential Amendments) Act 2008
A2008-20 sch 3 pt 3.19

notified LR 17 July 2008
s 1, s 2 commenced 17 July 2008 (LA s 75 (1))
s 3 commenced 18 July 2008 (s 2 (1))
sch 3 pt 3.19 commenced 27 October 2008 (s 2 (4) and see [Children and Young People Act 2008](#) A2008-19, s 2 and [CN2008-13](#))

Adoption Amendment Act 2009 (No 2) A2009-36 sch 1 pt 1.5

notified LR 22 October 2009
s 1, s 2 commenced 22 October 2009 (LA s 75 (1))
sch 1 pt 1.5 commenced 22 April 2010 (s 2 and LA s 79)

Administrative (One ACT Public Service Miscellaneous Amendments) Act 2011 A2011-22 sch 1 pt 1.153

notified LR 30 June 2011
s 1, s 2 commenced 30 June 2011 (LA s 75 (1))
sch 1 pt 1.153 commenced 1 July 2011 (s 2 (1))

Civil Unions Act 2012 A2012-40 sch 3 pt 3.25

notified LR 4 September 2012
s 1, s 2 commenced 4 September 2012 (LA s 75 (1))
sch 3 pt 3.25 commenced 11 September 2012 (s 2)

4 Amendment history

Name of Act

s 1 sub [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.488

Dictionary

s 2 am [Ord1986-14](#) s 11; [A1994-97](#) sch pt 1; [A1999-64](#) sch 2;
[A2006-22](#) amdt 1.119 ([A2006-22](#) rep before commenced by
disallowance (see Cwlth Gaz 2006 No S93))
defs reloc to dict [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.489
sub [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.490

Notes

s 2A renum as s 3

Meaning of *parent*

s 2B renum as s 4

Meaning of *guardian*

s 2C renum as s 5

Meaning of *testamentary guardian*

s 2D renum as s 6

Notes

s 3 **orig s 3**
renum as s 7
pres s 3
(prev s 2A) ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.490
renum as s 3 [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.494

Meaning of *parent*

s 4 **orig s 4**
renum as s 8
pres s 4
(prev s 2B) ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.490
renum as s 4 [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.494
am [A2008-14](#) amdt 1.83; pars renum R5 LA

Meaning of *guardian*

s 5 **orig s 5**
renum as s 9
pres s 5
(prev s 2C) ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.490
renum as s 5 [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.494
am [A2008-20](#) amdt 3.43; [A2011-22](#) amdt 1.440

Endnotes

4 Amendment history

Meaning of *testamentary guardian*

s 6 **orig s 6**
renum as s 10
pres s 6
(prev s 2D) ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.490
renum as s 6 [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.494

Application of Act

s 7 **orig s 7**
renum as s 11
pres s 7
(prev s 3) am [A1993-23](#) s 6
renum as s 7 [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.494
am [A2009-36](#) amdt 1.7

Appointment of testamentary guardians

s 8 **orig s 8**
renum as s 12
pres s 8
(prev s 4) renum as s 8 [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.494

Appointment by persons not entitled to guardianship

s 9 **orig s 9**
renum as s 13
pres s 9
(prev s 5) renum as s 9 [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.494

Time when appointment effective

s 10 **orig s 10**
om [Ord1989-38](#) sch 1
pres s 10
(prev s 6) renum as s 10 [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.494

Effect of appointment

s 11 **orig s 11**
om [A2001-44](#) amdt 1.4022
pres s 11
(prev s 7) am [Ord1987-15](#); ss renum R3 LA
renum as s 11 [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.494

Applications to Supreme Court

s 12 (prev s 8) am [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.491, amdt 3.492
renum as s 12 [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.494
ss renum R4 LA

Powers of Supreme Court

s 13 (prev s 9) renum as s 13 [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.494

Dictionary

dict

ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.493

am [A2012-40](#) amdt 3.103

def **child** am [A2006-22](#) amdt 1.117 ([A2006-22](#) rep before commenced by disallowance (see Cwlth Gaz 2006 No S93))
reloc from s 2 [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.489

am [A2012-40](#) amdt 3.102

def **exnuptial child** om [A2006-22](#) amdt 1.118 ([A2006-22](#) rep before commenced by disallowance (see Cwlth Gaz 2006 No S93))

reloc from s 2 [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.489

om [A2008-14](#) amdt 1.84

def **guardian** ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.493

def **parent** ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.493

def **testamentary guardian** ins [A2007-3](#) amdt 3.493

Endnotes

5 Earlier republishings

5 Earlier republishings

Some earlier republishings 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 republishings have also been published in printed format. These republishings 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	Ord1989-38	31 August 1991
2	A1993-23	31 August 1993
3	A2001-44	4 February 2002
4	A2007-3	12 April 2007
5	A2008-14	19 May 2008
6	A2008-20	27 October 2008
7	A2009-36	22 April 2010
8	A2011-22	1 July 2011

6 Renumbered provisions

This Act was renumbered under the [Legislation Act 2001](#), in R4 (see [Statute Law Amendment Act 2007](#) A2007-3 amdt 3.494). Details of renumbered provisions are shown in endnote 4 (Amendment history). For a table showing the renumbered provisions, see R8.

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