Oaths and Affirmations Act 1984

A1984-79

Republication No 11
Effective: 26 September 2022

Republication date: 26 September 2022

Last amendment made by A2018-9
(republication includes editorial amendments under Legislation Act)
About this republication

The republished law

This is a republication of the *Oaths and Affirmations Act 1984* (including any amendment made under the *Legislation Act 2001*, part 11.3 (Editorial changes)) as in force on 26 September 2022. It also includes any commencement, amendment, repeal or expiry affecting this republished law to 26 September 2022.

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 includes 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 \[\text{U}\] 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 \[\text{M}\] 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).
# Oaths and Affirmations Act 1984

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2. Abbreviation key
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An Act relating to oaths and affirmations
Part 1

Preliminary

1 Name of Act
This Act is the *Oaths and Affirmations 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.

*Note 2* A definition in the dictionary 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.

5 Certain provisions subject to court rules
The following provisions of this Act are subject to rules made, and forms approved, under the *Court Procedures Act 2004*:

- section 7 (Oath or affirmation by witness)
- section 8 (Oath or affirmation by interpreter)
- section 10 (Oath or affirmation by deponent to affidavit)
- section 11 (Authority to administer oath etc)
- section 12 (Swearing or affirming of affidavit)
- section 13 (Affidavit by affirmation)
- part 5 (Manner of taking oaths and making affirmations).
Part 2 Form of oaths and affirmations

6 Oath or affirmation of office

(1) An oath of office to be taken by a person under a law in force in the ACT shall, where the form of oath is not prescribed by or under that law, be in accordance with the form of oath specified in schedule 1.

(2) Where a person is entitled or required to make an affirmation of office instead of taking an oath of office and the form of affirmation is not prescribed by or under the relevant law, the affirmation shall be in accordance with the form of affirmation specified in schedule 1.

6A Oaths or affirmations by members of Assembly

(1) A member of the Legislative Assembly must, before taking his or her seat, make and subscribe either or both of the following:

(a) an oath or affirmation in accordance with the form in schedule 1A, part 1A.1;

(b) an oath or affirmation in accordance with the form in schedule 1A, part 1A.2.

(2) This section has effect despite the Self-Government Act, section 9 (1).

7 Oath or affirmation by witness

(1) An oath to be taken by a person called as a witness in a proceeding shall, where no other form of oath is prescribed by or under the relevant law, be in accordance with the form of oath specified in schedule 2.

(2) Where a person called as a witness in a proceeding is entitled or required to make an affirmation instead of taking an oath, and the form of affirmation is not prescribed by or under the relevant law, the affirmation shall be in accordance with the form of affirmation specified in schedule 2.
8 **Oath or affirmation by interpreter**

(1) An oath to be taken by a person who is an interpreter in a proceeding shall be in accordance with the form of oath specified in schedule 3.

(2) Where a person who is an interpreter in a proceeding is entitled or required to make an affirmation instead of taking an oath, the affirmation shall be in accordance with the form of affirmation specified in schedule 3.

10 **Oath or affirmation by deponent to affidavit**

(1) An oath to be taken by a deponent to an affidavit for use in a proceeding shall be in accordance with the form of oath specified in schedule 5.

(2) Where a deponent to an affidavit for use in a proceeding is entitled or required to make an affirmation instead of taking an oath, the affirmation shall be in accordance with the form of affirmation specified in schedule 5.
Part 3

Administration of oath or affidavit

10A Authority to administer oath or affirmation to member of Assembly

An oath or affirmation referred to in section 6A shall be made and subscribed before the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court or a judge of that court authorised by the Chief Justice.

11 Authority to administer oath etc

(1) Subject to section 10A, an oath to be taken or affidavit to be made for the purposes of a proceeding or for any other purpose under a law in force in the ACT may be sworn or affirmed—

(a) in the ACT, before a justice of the peace, a notary public for the ACT or a legal practitioner; and

(b) in a State or another Territory, before—

(i) a person referred to in paragraph (a); or

(ii) a justice of the peace of that State or Territory; or

(iii) a notary public for that State or Territory; or

(iv) any other person having authority to administer an oath in that State or Territory; and

(c) in any other place, before—

(i) a person referred to in paragraph (a); or

(ii) an Australian diplomatic or consular representative in the country in which that place is situated; or

(iii) a notary public for that place; or

(iv) any person having authority to administer an oath in that place.
(2) A person authorised under subsection (1) to administer an oath may, for any purpose for which the oath may be administered, administer an affirmation.

(3) In this section:

Australian diplomatic or consular representative means—

(a) an Australian consular officer under the Consular Fees Act 1955 (Cwlth), section 2 (Interpretation); or

(b) an Australian diplomatic officer under the Consular Fees Act 1955 (Cwlth), section 2; or

(c) an employee mentioned in the Consular Fees Act 1955 (Cwlth), section 3 (c) or (d) (Fees may be prescribed for consular Acts); or

Note The Consular Fees Act 1955 (Cwlth), s 3 (c) and (d) mentions employees of the Commonwealth and employees of the Australian Trade Commission authorised, in writing, by the secretary to the Cwlth department.

12 Swearing or affirming of affidavit

Where, by a law in force in the ACT, an affidavit is required or permitted to be made, the affidavit may be sworn or affirmed in accordance with part 5.

13 Affidavit by affirmation

Where a deponent to an affidavit makes an affirmation under section 10 (2), the form of jurat shall be varied and the necessary alterations shall be made so as to conform with the affirmation.
Part 4  Affirmations

14  Entitlement to make affirmation

(1) In any case where an oath is required or permitted by law, a person is entitled, instead of taking such an oath, to make an affirmation.

(2) This section has effect notwithstanding anything contained in any other Territory law.

15  Requirement to make affirmation

Where a person required or permitted by law to take an oath—

(a) appears to a person before whom an oath may be taken to be incompetent to take an oath; or

(b) is objected to, on grounds a person before whom an oath may be taken considers reasonable, as incompetent to take an oath; or

(c) wishes to take an oath in a form and manner permitted under section 21, but it is not, in the opinion of a person before whom an oath may be taken, reasonably practicable without inconvenience or delay for him to take that oath at the appropriate time and place;

the person before whom an oath may be taken may require that firstmentioned person to make an affirmation instead of taking an oath.

16  Effect of affirmation

An affirmation made by a person under this part has the same effect for all purposes as if that person had taken an oath.
Part 5  Manner of taking oaths and making affirmations

Section 17

17 Oath or affirmation by spoken words or other means

(1) A person taking an oath must, if the person is physically capable of doing so, in the presence of the person before whom the oath is taken, say the words of the oath.

(2) A person making an affirmation shall, if the person is physically capable of doing so, in the presence of the person before whom the affirmation is made, say the words of the affirmation.

(3) The words of an oath or affirmation shall be spoken in the English language or such other language as the person before whom the oath is taken or affirmation made allows.

(4) A person who is incapable of speaking may express the words of an oath or affirmation by signs or by such other means as the person before whom the oath is taken or affirmation made allows.

18 Written evidence of oath or affirmation of office

A person who has taken or made an oath or affirmation of office shall, in the presence of the person before whom the oath or affirmation was taken or made, sign an instrument showing the form of that oath or affirmation, and the person before whom the oath or affirmation was taken or made shall certify on the instrument that the oath or affirmation was taken or made and the date on which it was taken or made.
19 **Affidavit by person unable to understand English**

Where, in relation to an affidavit, an oath or affirmation is allowed to be taken or made in a language other than English, the person before whom the affidavit is made shall certify in or below the jurat that a person whose name and address are stated in the certificate swore or affirmed before the firstmentioned person—

(a) that he or she had in the presence of the firstmentioned person interpreted to the deponent—

(i) the contents of the affidavit; and

(ii) the words of the oath or affirmation; and

(b) that the deponent seemed to understand the affidavit and the oath or affirmation; and

(c) that the deponent had sworn or affirmed that the contents of the affidavit so interpreted to him or her were true.

20 **Affidavit by illiterate or blind person**

Where it appears to the person before whom an affidavit is made that the deponent is illiterate or blind, the person shall certify in or below the jurat that the affidavit was read in his or her presence to the deponent and that the deponent seemed to understand the affidavit.
Part 6  Miscellaneous

21  Alternative form and manner for oath

(1) Subject to sections 6A and 15 but notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, where a person who is required or permitted to take an oath states, in the presence of the person before whom the oath is to be taken, that an oath taken in a form and manner other than the form and manner specified in this Act would be binding on him or her, the oath may be taken in that form and manner.

(2) It is not necessary that a religious text be used in taking an oath.

22  Validity of oath or affirmation

(1) Where a person has taken or made an oath or affirmation the person is required or permitted to take or make in accordance with a form prescribed by or under a law in force in the ACT or in any form and manner that the person has stated to be binding on him or her, that person is bound by the oath or affirmation for all purposes for which it was taken or made.

(2) Where a person has taken an oath in accordance with this Act or another law in force in the ACT, the fact that the person did not at the relevant time have any religious belief or did not for any other reason regard the oath as binding on the person does not affect the validity of that oath.

23  Effect of noncompliance

The validity of an oath or affirmation is not affected by reason only of a failure to comply with the provisions of part 2 or 5.
24 Oath or affirmation for purposes of foreign tribunal

(1) Subject to this section, a person appointed by a foreign tribunal to take evidence in the ACT for that tribunal may administer an oath or affirmation in the ACT for the purpose of taking that evidence.

(2) Where an oath or affirmation to be administered under subsection (1) relates to evidence to be taken for a foreign tribunal other than a court or a judge, the oath or affirmation shall not be administered without the consent of the Minister.

(3) Nothing in this section authorises a person to administer an oath or affirmation in connection with criminal proceedings.

(4) In this section:

- foreign tribunal means a person or body authorised by a law of a place outside the ACT to take or receive evidence in that place.

25 Oath or affirmation without authority

(1) A person shall not, unless the person is authorised to do so by or under a law in force in the ACT—

(a) require another person to take an oath or make an affirmation; or

(b) administer an oath or affirmation to another person.

(2) A person who wilfully contravenes subsection (1) commits an offence.

Maximum penalty: 50 penalty units, imprisonment for 6 months or both.

26 Oath etc for purposes of foreign law

(1) Subject to section 24 (2), where an oath, affirmation or affidavit is required or permitted by a foreign law for any purpose, nothing in this Act makes it an offence for an authorised person to administer the oath or affirmation, or take the affidavit, for that purpose.
(2) In this section:

authorised person means a person authorised under this Act to administer an oath or affirmation, or take an affidavit.

foreign law means a law of a place outside the ACT.

27 Fee

A fee is not payable to any person in respect of an oath taken or affirmation made in accordance with this Act.
Schedule 1  Oath and affirmation of office
(see s 6)

Oath

I, A.B., swear (or the person taking the oath may promise) by Almighty God (or the person may name a god recognised by the person’s religion) that I will well and truly serve in the office of

So help me God! (or the person may use a similar expression recognised by the person’s religion)

Affirmation

I, A.B., solemnly and sincerely declare and affirm that I will well and truly serve in the office of
Schedule 1A  Oaths and affirmations by member of Legislative Assembly

(see s 6A)

Part 1A.1

Oath

I, A.B., swear (or the person taking the oath may promise) by Almighty God (or the person may name a god recognised by the person’s religion) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Charles the Third, His heirs and successors according to law. So help me God! (or the person may use a similar expression recognised by the person’s religion)

Affirmation

I, A.B., solemnly and sincerely declare and affirm that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King Charles the Third, His heirs and successors according to law.
Part 1A.2

Oath

I, A.B., swear (or the person taking the oath may promise) by Almighty God (or the person may name a god recognised by the person’s religion) that I will faithfully serve the people of the Australian Capital Territory as a member of the Legislative Assembly and discharge my responsibilities according to law. So help me God! (or the person may use a similar expression recognised by the person’s religion)

Affirmation

I, A.B., solemnly and sincerely declare and affirm that I will faithfully serve the people of the Australian Capital Territory as a member of the Legislative Assembly and discharge my responsibilities according to law.
Schedule 2  Oath and affirmation by witness

(see s 7)

Oath

I swear (or the person taking the oath may promise) by Almighty God (or the person may name a god recognised by the person’s religion) that the evidence I give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Affirmation

I solemnly and sincerely declare and affirm that the evidence I give will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.
Schedule 3 Oath and affirmation by interpreter

(see s 8)

Oath

I swear (or the person taking the oath may promise) by Almighty God (or the person may name a god recognised by the person’s religion) that I will well and truly interpret the evidence that will be given and do all other matters and things that are required of me in this case to the best of my ability.

Affirmation

I solemnly and sincerely declare and affirm that I will well and truly interpret the evidence that will be given and do all other matters and things that are required of me in this case to the best of my ability.
Schedule 5  
Oath and affirmation by deponent to affidavit  

(see s 10)

Oath

I swear (or the person taking the oath may promise) by Almighty God (or the person may name a god recognised by the person’s religion) that the signature to this affidavit is my signature and that every statement in the affidavit is true.

Affirmation

I solemnly and sincerely declare and affirm that the signature to this affidavit is my signature and that every statement in the affidavit is true.
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:

- instrument (see s 14)
- oath.

court includes a tribunal or person having authority to receive evidence—

(a) under a law in force in the ACT; or
(b) by consent of parties.

proceeding means a matter or inquiry, whether civil or criminal, heard or conducted by a court in which evidence is, or may be, received.
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 replications.

2 Abbreviation key

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

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**Effective:** 26/09/22

**Authorised by the ACT Parliamentary Counsel—also accessible at** www.legislation.act.gov.au
3 Legislation history

This Act was originally a Commonwealth ordinance—the Oaths and Affirmations Ordinance 1984 No 79 (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).

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

Oaths and Affirmations Act 1984 A1984-79

notified 19 December 1984

commenced 19 December 1984

as amended by

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

Statute Law Revision (Penalties) Act 1994 A1994-81 sch

notified 29 November 1994 (Gaz 1994 No S253)
s 1, s 2 commenced 29 November 1994 (s 2 (1))
sch commenced 29 November 1994 (s 2 (2) and Gaz 1994 No S269)

Oaths and Affirmations (Amendment) Act 1995 A1995-34

notified 31 October 1995 (Gaz 1995 No S266)

commenced 31 October 1995 (s 2)
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3 Legislation history

notified 18 December 1995 (Gaz 1995 No S306)
commenced 18 December 1995 (s 2)

Legal Practitioners (Consequential Amendments) Act 1997 A1997-96
sch
notified 1 December 1997 (Gaz 1997 No S380)
s 1, s 2 commenced 1 December 1997 (s 2 (1))
sch commenced 1 June 1998 (s 2 (2))

Legislation (Consequential Amendments) Act 2001 A2001-44 pt 263
notified 26 July 2001 (Gaz 2001 No 30)
s 1, s 2 commenced 26 July 2001 (IA s 10B)
pt 263 commenced 12 September 2001 (s 2 and see Gaz 2001
No S65)

Court Procedures (Consequential Amendments) Act 2004 A2004-60
sch 1 pt 1.57
notified LR 2 September 2004
s 1, s 2 commenced 2 September 2004 (LA s 75 (1))
sch 1 pt 1.57 commenced 10 January 2005 (s 2 and see Court
Procedures Act 2004 A2004-59, s 2 and CN2004-29)

Justice and Community Safety Legislation Amendment Act 2005
(No 2) A2005-11 pt 6
notified LR 11 March 2005
s 1, s 2 commenced 11 March 2005 (LA s 75 (1))
pt 6 commenced 12 March 2005 (s 2)

notified LR 21 December 2005
s 1, s 2 commenced 21 December 2005 (LA s 75 (1))
sch 3 pt 3.17 commenced 11 January 2006 (s 2 (1))

Statute Law Amendment Act 2007 (No 2) A2007-16 sch 3 pt 3.29
notified LR 20 June 2007
s 1, s 2 taken to have commenced 12 April 2007 (LA s 75 (2))
sch 3 pt 3.29 commenced 11 July 2007 (s 2 (1))
Endnotes

Legislation history

Evidence (Consequential Amendments) Act 2011 A2011-48 sch 1 pt 1.27
  notified LR 22 November 2011
  s 1, s 2 commenced 22 November 2011 (LA s 75 (1))
  sch 1 pt 1.27 commenced 1 March 2012 (s 2 (1) and see Evidence Act 2011 A2011-12, s 2 and CN2012-4)

Courts Legislation Amendment Act 2015 A2015-10 pt 13
  notified LR 7 April 2015
  s 1, s 2 commenced 7 April 2015 (LA s 75 (1))
  pt 13 commenced 21 April 2015 (s 2 (2))

Courts and Other Justice Legislation Amendment Act 2018 A2018-9 pt 14
  notified LR 29 March 2018
  s 1, s 2 commenced 29 March 2018 (LA s 75 (1))
  pt 14 commenced 26 April 2018 (s 2)
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<td></td>
<td>def barrister and solicitor om A1997-96 sch</td>
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<tr>
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### Oaths or affirmations by members of Assembly

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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.

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