

NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE ACT 1991

As in force at 1 August 2025

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NORTHERN TERRITORY OF AUSTRALIA

As in force at 1 August 2025

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE ACT 1991

An act to consolidate legislation in relation to the office of justice of the peace

1 Short title

This Act may be cited as the *Justices of the Peace Act 1991*.

2 Commencement

This Act shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by the Administrator by notice in the *Gazette*.

3 Definitions

In this Act, unless the contrary intention appears:

clerk of the peace means the person appointed under section 13 to be the clerk of the peace.

justice of the peace means a person appointed under section 5 to be, or a person who by virtue of holding office in accordance with section 6 is, a justice of the peace.

4 Office of justice of the peace

There shall be an office of justice of the peace.

5 Appointment of justice of the peace

- (1) The Administrator may appoint to the office of justice of the peace as many persons as are necessary to carry out the functions of justices of the peace in the Territory.
- (1A) The Administrator must not appoint a person under subsection (1) unless the Administrator is satisfied that the person is a fit and proper person to be a justice of the peace.

(1B) In deciding whether the person is a fit and proper person to be a justice of the peace, the Administrator must have regard to:

- (a) whether the person has been convicted of an offence in Australia or a foreign country, and if so:
 - (i) the nature of the offence; and
 - (ii) how long ago the offence was committed; and
 - (iii) the person's age when the offence was committed; and
- (b) any other matter the Administrator considers relevant to the decision.

(2) An appointment under subsection (1) may be:

- (a) limited to a term of years; and
- (b) conditional on the person appointed residing in a particular locality.

6 Certain office holders to be justices of the peace

- (1) A person who holds or acts in an office specified in Schedule 1 is, by virtue of holding or acting in the office, a justice of the peace.
- (2) A person referred to in subsection (1) ceases to hold office as a justice of the peace if:
 - (a) the person ceases to hold or act in an office specified in Schedule 1; or
 - (b) the person's appointment as justice of the peace is terminated under section 8(1).

7 Oath of office

- (1) A justice of the peace appointed under section 5 must, before proceeding to exercise the powers or discharge the duties of the office, take an oath in accordance with Schedule 2.
- (2) Where a justice of the peace has once taken an oath, it is not necessary for him or her to take an oath or make an affirmation for the purpose of a subsequent appointment.

8 Termination, &c.

- (1) The Administrator may, by notice in the *Gazette*, terminate the appointment of a person as a justice of the peace.

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- (2) A person whose appointment is terminated ceases to be a justice of the peace on the day specified in the notice published under subsection (1).
 - (3) A justice of the peace may, at any time, resign from the office of justice of the peace by writing addressed to the clerk of the peace.

9 Vacation of office

Subject to section 6, a person ceases to hold office as a justice of the peace if:

- (a) in accordance with section 8(1), the Administrator terminates the appointment;
- (b) he or she has resigned under section 8(3);
- (c) the appointment was subject to a condition and the condition ceases to be fulfilled; or
- (d) the appointment was for a specified period which has expired.

10 Protection of justices of the peace

A justice of the peace has, in the performance of his or her judicial duties as a justice of the peace, the same protection and immunity as a Local Court Judge has in the performance of his or her duties as a Local Court Judge.

11 Authority of justices of the peace

- (1) A justice of the peace is entitled to use the title "Justice of the Peace" or "JP".
- (2) A justice of the peace may exercise any power conferred on a justice of the peace by the common law or this or any other Act, including an Act of the Commonwealth, a State or Territory of the Commonwealth or another country (whether enacted before or after the commencement of this Act).
- (3) A justice of the peace may:
 - (a) administer an oath; and
 - (b) witness an affidavit; and
 - (c) for the purpose of a law in force in the Territory, attest the execution of a document.

12 References to justices of the peace

Where by, under or for the purposes of a law in force in the Territory a power is conferred on, or a function or duty may be performed by, a justice of the peace, that power may be exercised, or the function or duty may be performed, outside the Territory by a person who is a justice of the peace, or a judge for the place in which it is exercised or performed.

13 Clerk of the peace

- (1) The Chief Executive Officer must appoint a person to be the clerk of the peace.
- (2) The clerk of the peace shall maintain a roll of justices of the peace.
- (3) Within 28 days after changing his or her address, a justice of the peace shall, in writing, notify the clerk of the peace of the change of address and the clerk of the peace shall amend the roll accordingly.

14 Transitional

- (1) An appointment of a person as a justice of the peace:
 - (a) under section 10(1) of the *Justices Act 1928*; or
 - (b) under section 10(3) of that Act, that is continued in force under section 6 of the *Transfer of Powers (Further Provisions) Act 1977*,

that is in force immediately before the commencement of this Act continues in force as if the appointment was made under this Act and expressed to be for a period of 5 years after that commencement.

- (2) An appointment under section 10(1) of the *Justices Act 1928* of a person that is subject to a condition under section 10(3) of that Act in force immediately before the commencement of this Act continues in force, subject to the conditions expressed in the appointment, as if the appointment was made under this Act.
- (3) A reference to a justice of the peace (however described) shall be read as a reference to a justice of the peace appointed or holding office as a justice of the peace under this Act.
- (4) Where a justice of the peace has taken an oath or made an affirmation of office required under a provision repealed by this Act, it is not necessary for him or her to take an oath or make an affirmation for the purpose of section 7 of this Act.

Schedule 1

section 6

Supreme Court Judge

Associate Judge

Registrar of the Supreme Court

Local Court Judge

Registrar of the Local Court

Judicial Registrar or Registrar of the Family Court of Australia

Mayor of a municipality

Schedule 2

section 7

OATH

I, _____, *[promise/swear etc. as required by Oaths, Affidavits and Declarations Act 2010]* that I will well and truly serve *[Sovereign's name]*, their heirs and successors, in the office of justice of the peace and that I will do right to all manner of people according to law, without fear or favour, affection or ill-will. *[So help me God! or as appropriate]*

ENDNOTES

1 KEY

Key to abbreviations

amd = amended	od = order
app = appendix	om = omitted
bl = by-law	pt = Part
ch = Chapter	r = regulation/rule
cl = clause	rem = remainder
div = Division	renum = renumbered
exp = expires/expired	rep = repealed
f = forms	s = section
Gaz = <i>Gazette</i>	sch = Schedule
hdg = heading	sdiv = Subdivision
ins = inserted	SL = Subordinate Legislation
lt = long title	sub = substituted
nc = not commenced	

2 LIST OF LEGISLATION

Justices of the Peace Act 1991 (Act No. 42, 1991)

Assent date	26 September 1991
Commenced	1 January 1992 (<i>Gaz</i> G50, 18 December 1991, p 3)

Statute Law Revision Act 1993 (Act No. 6, 1993)

Assent date	18 March 1993
Commenced	18 March 1993

Statute Law Revision Act 1997 (Act No. 17, 1997)

Assent date	11 April 1997
Commenced	1 May 1997 (<i>Gaz</i> G17, 30 April 1997, p 2)

Oaths, Affidavits and Declarations (Consequential Amendments) Act 2010 (Act No. 40, 2010)

Assent date	18 November 2010
Commenced	1 March 2011 (s 2, s 2 <i>Oaths, Affidavits and Declarations Act 2010</i> (Act No. 39, 2010) and <i>Gaz</i> G7, 16 February 2011, p 4)

Local Court (Related Amendments) Act 2016 (Act No. 8, 2016)

Assent date	6 April 2016
Commenced	1 May 2016 (s 2, s 2 <i>Local Court (Repeals and Related Amendments) Act 2016</i> (Act No. 9, 2016) and <i>Gaz</i> S34, 29 April 2016)

Supreme Court Amendment (Associate Judges) Act 2017 (Act No. 18, 2017)

Assent date	5 September 2017
Commenced	22 November 2017 (<i>Gaz</i> S84, 21 November 2017, p 1)

Statute Law Amendment (Succession of the Crown) Act 2023 (Act No. 10, 2023)

Assent date	20 April 2023
Commenced	21 April 2023 (s 2)

Attorney-General Legislation Amendment Act 2025 (Act No. 14, 2025)

Assent date	6 June 2025
Commenced	1 August 2025 (<i>Gaz</i> G14, 10 July 2025, p 1)

3 GENERAL AMENDMENTS

General amendments of a formal nature (which are not referred to in the table of amendments to this reprint) are made by the *Interpretation Legislation Amendment Act 2018* (Act No. 22, 2018) to: ss 1 and 14 and Sch 2.

4 LIST OF AMENDMENTS

s 5	amd No. 14, 2025, s 6
s 7	amd No. 17, 1997, s 13; No. 40, 2010, s 118
s 11	amd No. 40, 2010, s 118
s 13	amd No. 14, 2025, s 7
sch 1	amd No. 6, 1993, s 8; No. 8, 2016, s 45; No. 18, 2017, s 36
sch 2	amd No. 40, 2010, s 118; No. 10, 2023, s 5