Australian Court Hierarchy



The apex of the appellate system in Australia is the High Court. All decisions made in the High Court are final and binding on all lower courts across all geographical jurisdictions in Australia.

There are no intermediate courts in the Australian Capital Territory or Northern Territory.

The specialist courts vary between each state and territory, and include the Children's Court, Youth Justice Court, Warden's Court and Drug Court.



High Court of Australia

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Supreme Courts
(Supreme Court, Courts
of Appeal)

Intermediate
Courts

(County/District Courts)

Lower Courts
(Local/Magistrates Courts)

Specialist Courts Court

State/Territory Courts

"The ultimate **responsibility** of the High Court is to **maintain the rule of law**... The Court has to be **independent** if it is to fulfil its roles as a Constitutional Court and a Court of final appeal." (Murray Gleeson, 11th Chief Justice of Australia).

Federal
Court of
Australia

Federal
Circuit and
Family
Court of
Australia

Federal Courts

Notes

The ability to appeal the decisions of lower courts creates a system of review, ensuring that just outcomes are achieved and that the law is applied and interpreted equally and fairly to everyone.

The criminal, civil and administrative trial and appellate jurisdictions of each court varies across the states and territories.

The laws applied by the courts are created by Judges (Common Law, Precedent) and Parliament (Statutory Law).