

WHAT HAPPENS IF MY MATTER IS ADJOURNED?

- If your case is a difficult one, the Magistrate might decide to take some time-out to make sure your sentence is the most appropriate one for you.
- If the Magistrate adjourns the Court, this could be for any time from an hour to some days, while the Koori Court Officer speaks to you and/or your family, and/or your solicitor and other agencies which may help them to put together a plan as part of your sentencing order.
- You will be called back to the Court and the Magistrate will explain your sentencing order to you. The Koori Elder or Respected Person may also help you to understand your sentencing order.

WHO CAN I SPEAK TO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

- A Koori Court Officer is based at the Bairnsdale, Broadmeadows, LaTrobe, Mildura, Shepparton, Swan Hill, and Warrnambool Koori Courts, as well as at Melbourne and Mildura Children's Koori Courts.
- If you have any questions, please contact the Koori Court Officer at the Court on:
Bairnsdale Koori Court: (03) 5153 1000
Broadmeadows Koori Court: (03) 9221 8900
LaTrobe Valley Koori Court: (03) 5116 5222
Melbourne Children's Koori Court: (03) 8601 6700
Mildura Koori (Adult's and Children's) Court: (03) 5021 6000
Shepparton Koori Court: (03) 5821 4633
Swan Hill Koori Court: (03) 5032 1352
Warrnambool Koori Court: (03) 5564 1111
- You should also talk to your lawyer before deciding to go to the Koori Court. If you do not have a lawyer, you can call the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service on (03) 9419 3888 or Victoria Legal Aid on (03) 9269 0210 or 1800 677 402 (Legal Information Service)



The Koori Court logo was created by Mildura based artist Lance Atkinson, a Gamilaraay man.



KOORI COURT

A Defendant's Guide

For more information please contact the Koori Court Unit at the Magistrates' Court of Victoria
436 Lonsdale Street, Victoria 3000.
Phone (03) 9603 9364.



Department of Justice

www.magistratescourt.vic.gov.au

The Koori community and the
Department of Justice working together.
An Initiative of the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement

WHAT IS THE KOORI COURT?

- The Koori Court has been set-up as part of the Magistrates' Court.
- The Koori Court is not as formal as mainstream Court so you, the defendant, can speak up for yourself. The Koori Elder or Respected Person, your family, the Koori Court Officer and any other person within the courtroom can have a say too.
- The court listens to cultural advice from people in the Court on the day. This helps to make sentencing orders that are culturally appropriate to Koories.

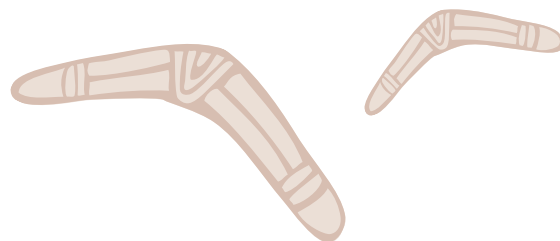
The Koori Court wants to:

- Be inclusive and bring family and the Koori community together to talk about your offending.
- Make it easier for you to come along and have your say in court.
- Reduce or stop offending behaviour.
- Reduce the number of Koories going to prison whenever it is possible.

WHERE ARE THE KOORI COURTS LOCATED?

A Koori Court division is located at the following Courts:

- Bairnsdale
- Broadmeadows
- La Trobe Valley
- Melbourne (Children's Court)
- Mildura (Adult and Children's Court)
- Shepparton
- Swan Hill
- Warrnambol



AM I ELIGIBLE TO GO TO THE KOORI COURT?

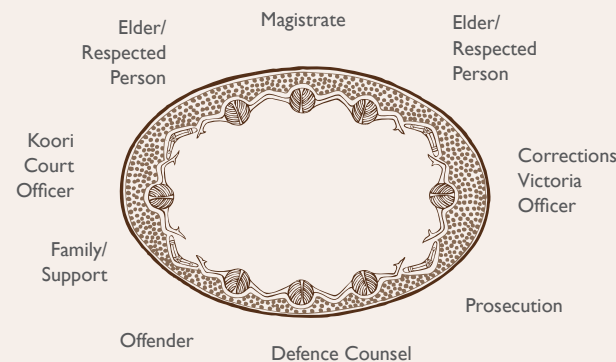
To be eligible for entry into the Koori Court, you must:

- Be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.
- Be charged with an offence that can be heard in a Magistrates' Court.
- Be charged with an offence that does not involve family violence offences or sexual assault.
- Live within, or have been charged within, the boundary area of a Koori Court.
- Plead guilty to the offence.
- Be willing to come to Koori Court to talk about your story and join in the sentencing conversation.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN I GO TO THE KOORI COURT?

- The Court is more informal.
- The Magistrate will sit with you and other people that are involved in your case at a table.
- You will be able to sit with a family member or friend.
- People in the court will speak in 'plain' English and avoid legal talk. The Koori Court Officer is there to help you understand the proceedings.
- To use the Koori Court you must show that you take responsibility for your actions. This means you will try not to offend again.

This diagram explains where everyone will sit in the Koori Court:



WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE KOORI COURT?

- The Koori Courts are open and accessible to the public for observation, similar to mainstream courts.
- Koori Elders or Respected Persons, a Koori Court Officer, you, the defendant and your family can all contribute during the Court hearing.
- The Koori Court Officer is available to provide assistance and referrals to defendants to access support services. Koori specific services will be sought as far as possible.
- The Koori Elders or Respected Persons will provide the court with advice relating to cultural matters. The Magistrate might consider this advice when handing down the most appropriate sentence order.

WHAT SENTENCING OPTIONS AND COURT ORDERS CAN THE KOORI COURT GIVE?

- As in a mainstream Court, the person who makes the decision on your sentence is the Magistrate.
- The Koori Court has the same power to make Court Orders as in any mainstream Court, including the power to send offenders to prison.
- However, the primary goal of the Koori Court is to make sentencing options that are culturally appropriate to Koories and reduce the rate of re-offending.

