



Factsheet No. 6

How do I defend myself in the Local Court

- Which Court will I be in on the day?
- Which documents should I have prepared and filed before I go to Court?
- How do I collect my evidence?
- What happens the first time I go to Court?
- What happens if we do not reach an agreement at the pre-trial review?
- I need an interpreter. Will there be one available?
- Will I have to pay costs if I lose?
- What happens if I lose and I don't have the money to pay?

If you cannot afford or do not want a solicitor to defend you, make sure you receive some legal advice and information from places such as a community legal centre as to what you can expect when you are in court. A Chamber Magistrate of the Local Court can also be very helpful in guiding you through the process of how to defend yourself. It is not necessarily hard to defend yourself but you need to be prepared. You will probably need to file documents before the court date and it is best if you are familiar with court procedure and rules. Anybody can watch proceedings in a local court and it is a good idea to go to the court before your matter is listed to be heard, or earlier on the same day as your matter is listed, and watch the magistrate deal with matters that are similar to your own.