



Australian Capital Territory

Legislation (Statutory Interpretation) Amendment Act 2003

A2003-18

An Act to amend the *Legislation Act 2001*

*Notified under the Legislation Act 2001 on 9 April 2003
(see www.legislation.act.gov.au)*

The Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory enacts as follows:

1 Name of Act

This Act is the *Legislation (Statutory Interpretation) Amendment Act 2003*.

2 Commencement

This Act commences on the day after its notification day.

Note The naming and commencement provisions automatically commence on the notification day (see Legislation Act, s 75 (1)).

3 Act amended

This Act amends the *Legislation Act 2001*.

4 Chapter 14

substitute

Chapter 14 Interpretation of Acts and statutory instruments

Part 14.1 Purpose and scope

136 Meaning of Act in ch 14

In this chapter:

Act includes a statutory instrument.

Note Section 7 (3) provides that a reference to an Act includes a reference to a provision of an Act. Section 13 (3) provides that a reference to a statutory instrument includes a reference to a provision of a statutory instrument.

137 Purpose and scope of ch 14

- (1) The purpose of this chapter is to provide guidance about the interpretation of Acts.
- (2) This chapter is not intended to be a comprehensive statement of the law of interpretation applying to Acts.
- (3) In particular, this chapter assumes that common law presumptions operate in conjunction with this chapter.
- (4) Subsection (3) also applies to common law presumptions that come into existence after the commencement of this chapter.

Part 14.2 Key principles of interpretation

138 Meaning of *working out the meaning of an Act*

In this part:

working out the meaning of an Act means—

- (a) resolving an ambiguous or obscure provision of the Act; or
- (b) confirming or displacing the apparent meaning of the Act; or
- (c) finding the meaning of the Act when its apparent meaning leads to a result that is manifestly absurd or is unreasonable; or
- (d) finding the meaning of the Act in any other case.

139 Interpretation best achieving Act's purpose (IA s 11A)

- (1) In working out the meaning of an Act, the interpretation that would best achieve the purpose of the Act is to be preferred to any other interpretation.
- (2) This section applies whether or not the Act's purpose is expressly stated in the Act.

140 Legislative context

In working out the meaning of an Act, the provisions of the Act must be read in the context of the Act as a whole.

Examples

- 1 The long title of an Act provides that it is an Act to give certain benefits to the holders of pensioner cards. Section 4 provides ‘This Act applies to a holder of a pensioner card’. Section 22 provides that the commissioner may grant ‘a person’ an exemption from payment of rates. The Act does not contain a definition of ‘person’. Section 22 must be read in the context of the Act as a whole so that the commissioner may only grant exemptions to people who are holders of pensioner cards.
- 2 The *Drug Testing Regulations 2001* (made under the *Drug Testing Act 2000* (hypothetical)), regulation 6 contains the following heading:

6 Corresponding law—Act, s 100, def *corresponding law*

The heading indicates that the regulation has been made for the definition of *corresponding law* in the *Drug Testing Act 2000*, section 100.
- 3 Regulation 12 (1) of a subordinate law refers to ‘an order under the *Crimes Act 1900*, section 402’. No other kind of order is mentioned in the regulation and the word ‘order’ is not otherwise defined in the subordinate law. Subregulations (2), (4), (7) and (9) of the same regulation, which merely refer to ‘the order’, are to be understood as referring to the order mentioned in subregulation (1).

Note 1 See s 126 and s 127 for material that is, or is not, part of an Act or statutory instrument.

Note 2 An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see s 126 and s 132).

141 Non-legislative context generally (IA s 11B)

- (1) In working out the meaning of an Act, material not forming part of the Act may be considered.

Note 1 See s 146 for the meaning of *may* and *must*.

Note 2 See s 126 and s 127 for material that is, or is not, part of an Act or statutory instrument.

Note 3 See s 142 for material that may be considered in working out the meaning of an Act or statutory instrument.

- (2) In deciding whether material not forming part of an Act should be considered in working out the meaning of the Act, and the weight to be given to the material, the following matters must be taken into account:

- (a) the desirability of being able to rely on the ordinary meaning of the Act, having regard to the purpose of the Act and the provisions of the Act read in the context of the Act as a whole;
- (b) the undesirability of prolonging proceedings without compensating advantage;
- (c) the accessibility of the material to the public.

- (3) Subsection (2) does not limit the matters that may be taken into account.
- (4) For subsection (2) (c), material in the register is taken to be accessible to the public.

Note The register is the ACT legislation register (see dict, pt 2, def *register*).

- (5) For this section, proof is not required in relation to any material in the register if the material is authorised by the parliamentary counsel under this Act.

- (6) For subsection (5), it is presumed, unless the contrary is proved, that a copy of any material that is accessible at an approved website and purports to be authorised by the parliamentary counsel under this Act is authorised by the parliamentary counsel under this Act.
- (7) Subsection (6) does not limit any other law providing how a court or tribunal may be informed about the material for this section.

142 Non-legislative context—material that may be considered (IA s 11B)

- (1) In working out the meaning of an Act, material mentioned in table 1, column 2 may be considered.
- (2) In working out the meaning of a statutory instrument, material mentioned in table 1, column 3 may be considered.
- (3) This section does not limit the material that may be considered in working out the meaning of an Act or statutory instrument.

Table 1

column 1 item	column 2 Act	column 3 statutory instrument
1	<p>material not forming part of the Act contained in an authorised version of the Act</p> <p><i>Note</i> See ch 3 (Authorised versions and evidence of Acts and statutory instruments).</p>	<p>material not forming part of the statutory instrument contained in an authorised version of the instrument</p> <p><i>Note</i> See ch 3 (Authorised versions and evidence of Acts and statutory instruments).</p>

column 1 item	column 2 Act	column 3 statutory instrument
2	any relevant report of a royal commission, law reform commission, committee of inquiry or other similar body that was presented to the Legislative Assembly before the Act was passed	<p>any relevant report of a royal commission, law reform commission, committee of inquiry or other similar body that was presented to the Legislative Assembly—</p> <p>(a) if the statutory instrument was presented to the Assembly—before the end of 6 sitting days after the day the instrument was presented to the Assembly; or</p> <p>(b) in any other case—before the instrument was made</p>
3	any relevant report of a committee of the Legislative Assembly that was made to the Assembly before the Act was passed	<p>any relevant report of a committee of the Legislative Assembly that was made to the Assembly—</p> <p>(a) if the statutory instrument was presented to the Assembly—before the end of 6 sitting days after the day the instrument was presented to the Assembly; or</p> <p>(b) in any other case—before the instrument was made</p>

column 1 item	column 2 Act	column 3 statutory instrument
4	any explanatory statement (however described) for the bill that became the Act, or any other relevant document, that was presented to the Legislative Assembly before the Act was passed	if the statutory instrument was presented to the Legislative Assembly—any explanatory statement (however described) for the instrument, or any other relevant document, that was presented to the Legislative Assembly before the end of 6 sitting days after the instrument was presented to the Assembly
5	the presentation speech made to the Legislative Assembly during the passage of the bill that became the Act	if the statutory instrument was presented to the Legislative Assembly by a member of the Assembly—any presentation speech made to the Assembly
6	official reports of proceedings in the Legislative Assembly in relation to the bill that became the Act	if the statutory instrument was presented to the Legislative Assembly—official reports of proceedings in the Legislative Assembly in relation to the statutory instrument
7	any relevant treaty or other international agreement to which Australia is a party	any relevant treaty or other international agreement to which Australia is a party

143 Law stating material for consideration in working out meaning

- (1) If a relevant law provides that stated material may or must be considered in working out the meaning of an Act or statutory instrument, that does not by implication prevent other material of the same or similar kind being considered in working out the meaning of the Act or instrument.

Example

The *Computer Crime Act 2000* (hypothetical) contains the following provision:

4 Report may be used as an aid to interpretation

The *Community Law Reform Report on Computer Crime* (CLRC No X) may be considered in working out the meaning of this Act.

This does not limit access to other non-legislative material of the same or a similar kind for working out the meaning of the *Computer Crime Act 2000*.

Note An example is part of the Act, is not exhaustive and may extend, but does not limit, the meaning of the provision in which it appears (see s 126 and s 132).

- (2) In this section:

relevant law means—

- (a) in working out the meaning of an Act—the Act or another Act;
or
- (b) in working out the meaning of a statutory instrument made under an Act—the Act, another Act or the instrument; or
- (c) in working out the meaning of a statutory instrument made under another statutory instrument—an Act or either instrument.

Endnote

Republications of amended laws

For the latest republication of amended laws, see www.legislation.act.gov.au.

[Presentation speech made in Assembly on 13 March 2003]

I certify that the above is a true copy of the Legislation (Statutory Interpretation) Amendment Bill 2003 which was passed by the Legislative Assembly on 3 April 2003.

Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

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