

Public Order (Protection of Persons and Property) Act 1971

No. 26, 1971

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**About this compilation**

**This compilation**

This is a compilation of the *Public Order (Protection of Persons and Property) Act 1971* that shows the text of the law as amended and in force on 11 May 2018 (the ***compilation date***).

The notes at the end of this compilation (the ***endnotes***) include information about amending laws and the amendment history of provisions of the compiled law.

**Uncommenced amendments**

The effect of uncommenced amendments is not shown in the text of the compiled law. Any uncommenced amendments affecting the law are accessible on the Legislation Register (www.legislation.gov.au). The details of amendments made up to, but not commenced at, the compilation date are underlined in the endnotes. For more information on any uncommenced amendments, see the series page on the Legislation Register for the compiled law.

**Application, saving and transitional provisions for provisions and amendments**

If the operation of a provision or amendment of the compiled law is affected by an application, saving or transitional provision that is not included in this compilation, details are included in the endnotes.

**Editorial changes**

For more information about any editorial changes made in this compilation, see the endnotes.

**Modifications**

If the compiled law is modified by another law, the compiled law operates as modified but the modification does not amend the text of the law. Accordingly, this compilation does not show the text of the compiled law as modified. For more information on any modifications, see the series page on the Legislation Register for the compiled law.

**Self‑repealing provisions**

If a provision of the compiled law has been repealed in accordance with a provision of the law, details are included in the endnotes.

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An Act relating to the Preservation of Public Order in Certain Territories and in respect of Commonwealth Premises, the Premises of certain Federal Courts and Tribunals and the Premises and Personnel of Diplomatic and Special Missions, Consular Posts, Designated Overseas Missions and International Organizations

Part I—Preliminary

1 Short title

This Act may be cited as the *Public Order (Protection of Persons and Property) Act 1971*.

2 Commencement

This Act shall come into operation on the day on which it receives the Royal Assent.

4 Interpretation

(1) In this Act, unless the contrary intention appears:

***assembly*** means an assembly of not less than three persons who are assembled for a common purpose, whether or not other persons are assembled with them and whether the assembly is at a particular place or moving, and includes the conduct in connexion with that common purpose of all or any of the persons in the assembly.

***Commonwealth premises*** means premises, whether in a State or in a Territory, occupied by the Commonwealth or by a public authority under the Commonwealth.

***constable*** means a member of the Australian Federal Police or of the Police Force of a State or Territory.

***consular post*** means a consulate‑general, consulate, vice‑consulate or consular agency established in Australia by another country with the consent of the Government of Australia.

***designated overseas mission*** has the same meaning as in the *Overseas Missions (Privileges and Immunities) Act 1995.*

***diplomatic mission*** means a permanent diplomatic mission accredited to Australia by another country.

***Foreign Affairs Department*** means the Department administered by the Minister administering the *Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities Act 1967*.

***frisk search***means a search of a person conducted by quickly running the hands over the person’s outer clothing.

***international organization*** means an international governmental organization of which Australia is a member, and includes an agency of such an organization.

***Police Force*** means the Australian Federal Police or the Police Force of a State or Territory.

***premises*** means any land, building or part of a building.

***prescribed staff member***, in relation to a designated overseas mission, means a member of the staff (including the head) of the designated overseas mission who is specified in regulations made for the purposes of this definition.

Note: A person may be prescribed by name, by reference to the holding of a specified office or position or by reference to membership of a specified class.

***protected person*** means a person who is:

(a) a member of the diplomatic staff (including the head) of a diplomatic mission or special mission;

(b) a member of the staff (including the head) of a consular post who is entrusted with the exercise of consular functions;

(ba) a prescribed staff member of a designated overseas mission;

(c) a high officer of an international organization; or

(d) a representative of a member of an international organization at a meeting of, or under the auspices of, the organization;

but does not include a person who is an Australian citizen or is permanently resident in Australia.

***protected premises*** means premises, whether in a State or in a Territory:

(a) occupied for the purposes of:

(i) a diplomatic mission;

(ii) a special mission; or

(iii) a consular post;

(b) formerly occupied for purposes referred to in paragraph (a), being premises to which Article 45 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations or Article 27 of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations applies;

(ba) occupied for the purposes of a designated overseas mission;

(c) occupied by an international organization, or used for the purposes of a meeting of, or under the auspices of, an international organization;

(d) used as the residence of, or otherwise for the private accommodation of, a protected person; or

(e) formerly used as the residence of, or otherwise for the private accommodation of, the head of a diplomatic mission, being premises to which Article 45 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations applies.

***protective service officer*** has the same meaning as in the *Australian Federal Police Act 1979*.

***public authority under the Commonwealth*** means an authority or body (not being an incorporated company or association) constituted by or under a law of the Commonwealth or of a Territory.

***screening search***means a search of a person conducted by equipment designed to carry out such a search without touching the person.

***special mission*** means a temporary mission which is sent to Australia by the government of another country with the consent of the government of Australia.

***State*** includes the Northern Territory.

***Territory***, except in subsection 25(2), means:

(a) the Australian Capital Territory; or

(aa) Norfolk Island; or

(b) the Jervis Bay Territory; or

(c) the Territory of Christmas Island; or

(d) the Territory of Cocos (Keeling) Islands.

***unreasonable obstruction*** means an act or thing done by a person that constitutes, or contributes to, an obstruction of, or interference with, the exercise or enjoyment by other persons of their lawful rights or privileges (including rights of passage along the public streets) where, having regard to all the circumstances of the obstruction or interference, including its place, time, duration and nature, it constitutes an unreasonable obstruction or interference, and ***unreasonably obstructs*** has a corresponding meaning.

(2) References in this Act to a member of the Australian Federal Police shall be read as including references to a special member of the Australian Federal Police.

(3) The Governor‑General may make regulations for the purposes of the definition of ***prescribed staff member*** in subsection (1).

5 When assembly is *in relation to* protected premises or a protected person

For the purposes of this Act, but without limiting the operation of this Act:

(a) an assembly is in relation to protected premises if persons in the assembly are on protected premises, or are at a place in the vicinity of protected premises by reason of the fact that that place is in the vicinity of those protected premises; and

(b) an assembly is in relation to a protected person if persons in the assembly are at a place by reason of the fact that a protected person is present at or in the vicinity of that place.

5A Application of the *Criminal Code*

(1) Chapter 2 of the *Criminal Code* applies to all offences against this Act*.*

Note: Chapter 2 of the *Criminal Code* sets out the general principles of criminal responsibility.

(2) Section 10.5 of the *Criminal Code* applies to an offence against section 13F as if it covered conduct that is justified or excused by a law of the Commonwealth or of a State or Territory.

Part II—Provisions applying in Commonwealth Territories and on Commonwealth premises

6 Assemblies involving violence or apprehension of violence

(1) Where persons taking part in an assembly that is in a Territory or is wholly or partly on Commonwealth premises conduct themselves, in the Territory or on the Commonwealth premises, in a way that gives rise to a reasonable apprehension that the assembly will be carried on in a manner involving unlawful physical violence to persons or unlawful damage to property, each of those persons commits an offence, punishable on conviction by a fine of not more than 20 penalty units.

(1A) For the purposes of an offence against subsection (1), absolute liability applies to such of the following physical elements of circumstance as are relevant to the offence:

(a) that the assembly is in a Territory or is wholly or partly on Commonwealth premises;

(b) that the persons conduct themselves in the Territory or on the Commonwealth premises.

Note: For ***absolute liability***, see section 6.2 of the *Criminal Code*.

(2) A person who, in a Territory or on Commonwealth premises, while taking part in an assembly, intentionally does an act of physical violence to another person, or an act that results in damage to property, commits an offence, punishable on conviction by imprisonment for not more than 12 months.

(3) For the purposes of an offence against subsection (2), absolute liability applies to the physical element of circumstance of the offence, that the person is in a Territory or on Commonwealth premises.

Note: For ***absolute liability***, see section 6.2 of the *Criminal Code*.

7 Causing actual bodily harm or damage to property

(1) A person who, in a Territory or on Commonwealth premises, while taking part in an assembly, intentionally causes:

(a) actual bodily harm to another person; or

(b) damage, to an extent exceeding $1,500, to property;

commits an indictable offence, punishable on conviction by imprisonment, in the case of causing actual bodily harm, for a term not exceeding five years or, in the case of causing damage to property, for a term not exceeding three years.

(2) For the purposes of an offence against subsection (1), absolute liability applies to such of the following physical elements of circumstance as are relevant to the offence:

(a) that the person is in a Territory or on Commonwealth premises;

(b) that the extent of the damage to property exceeds $1,500.

Note: For ***absolute liability***, see section 6.2 of the *Criminal Code*.

8 Dispersal of certain assemblies

(1) Where there is an assembly consisting of not less than twelve persons in a Territory and:

(a) persons taking part in the assembly have conducted themselves in a way that has caused a member of a Police Force of the rank of Sergeant or above reasonably to apprehend that the assembly will be carried on in a manner involving unlawful physical violence to persons or unlawful damage to property; or

(b) the assembly is being carried on in a manner involving such unlawful violence or damage;

a member of a Police Force of the rank of Sergeant or above may give a direction under this section.

(2) A direction under this section shall be given orally and in such a manner as to be likely to be audible to the persons constituting the assembly, or to as many of them as practicable, and shall be in accordance with the following form or to the like effect:

In pursuance of the Public Order (Protection of Persons and Property) Act of the Commonwealth of Australia, I [*name of police officer*], being a Sergeant [*or higher rank, as the case may be*] in the [*name of Police Force*], direct all persons taking part in this assembly to disperse forthwith. Persons who fail to disperse may render themselves liable to the penalties provided by the Act.

(3) Where:

(a) a direction is given under this section; and

(b) the assembly, to the number of not less than twelve persons, continues after the expiration of fifteen minutes from the time of the direction;

each of those persons who has failed to comply with the direction commits an offence, punishable on conviction by imprisonment for not more than 6 months.

(3A) Strict liability applies to paragraphs (3)(a) and (b).

Note: For ***strict liability***, see section 6.1 of the *Criminal Code*.

(3B) Subsection (3) does not apply to a person who has a reasonable excuse.

Note: A defendant bears an evidential burden in relation to the matter in subsection (3B) (see subsection 13.3(3) of the *Criminal Code*).

(4) For the purpose of:

(a) dispersing an assembly in respect of which a direction has been given under this section; or

(b) dispersing or suppressing an assembly to which paragraph (1)(b) applies (whether or not a direction has been given under this section in respect of the assembly);

it is lawful for a person to use such force as he or she believes, on reasonable grounds, to be necessary for that purpose and is reasonably proportioned to the danger which he or she believes, on reasonable grounds, is to be apprehended from the continuance of the assembly.

9 Unreasonable obstruction

(1) A person who, in a Territory or on Commonwealth premises, while taking part in an assembly, engages in unreasonable obstruction commits an offence, punishable on conviction by a fine of not more than 20 penalty units.

(2) For the purposes of an offence against subsection (1), absolute liability applies to the physical element of circumstance of the offence, that the person is in a Territory or on Commonwealth premises.

Note: For ***absolute liability***, see section 6.2 of the *Criminal Code*.

10 Weapons, missiles etc.

(1) A person who, in a Territory or on Commonwealth premises, while taking part in an assembly:

(a) has in his or her possession a weapon, a missile or a destructive, noxious or repulsive object or substance;

(b) discharges or uses a weapon or throws a missile;

(c) throws, releases or deposits a destructive, noxious or repulsive object or substance; or

(d) throws, releases, deposits or deals with an object or substance, being reckless as to whether doing so will cause injury to persons or damage to property;

commits an offence.

(1A) For the purposes of an offence against subsection (1), absolute liability applies to the physical element of circumstance of the offence, that the person is in a Territory or on Commonwealth premises.

Note: For ***absolute liability***, see section 6.2 of the *Criminal Code*.

(1B) Paragraph (1)(a) does not apply if the person has a reasonable excuse.

Note: A defendant bears an evidential burden in relation to the matter in subsection (1B) (see subsection 13.3(3) of the *Criminal Code*).

(2) An offence against subsection (1) is punishable on conviction:

(a) in respect of an offence arising under paragraph (1)(a)—by a fine of not more than 20 penalty units; or

(b) in any other case—by imprisonment for not more than 6 months.

11 Additional offences on premises in a Territory

(1) A person who trespasses on premises in a Territory commits an offence, punishable on conviction by a fine of not more than 10 penalty units.

(2) A person who:

(a) engages in unreasonable obstruction in relation to the passage of persons or vehicles into, out of, or on premises in a Territory, or otherwise in relation to the use of premises in a Territory;

(b) while trespassing on premises in a Territory, behaves in an offensive or disorderly manner; or

(c) being in or on premises in a Territory, refuses or neglects to leave those premises on being directed to do so by the occupier or a person acting with the authority of the occupier;

commits an offence, punishable on conviction by a fine of not more than 20 penalty units.

(2A) For the purposes of an offence against subsection (1) or (2), absolute liability applies to the physical element of circumstance of the offence, that the premises are in a Territory.

Note: For ***absolute liability***, see section 6.2 of the *Criminal Code*.

(2B) Subsection (1) and paragraph (2)(c) do not apply if the person has a reasonable excuse.

Note: A defendant bears an evidential burden in relation to the matter in subsection (2B) (see subsection 13.3(3) of the *Criminal Code*).

(3) Notwithstanding section 23, the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions, or of a person, or of a person included in a class of persons, authorized by the Director of Public Prosecutions for the purposes of subsection (2) of that section, is not required for the institution of proceedings for the prosecution of an offence against this section.

(3A) This section is not intended to exclude or limit the concurrent operation of any law of the Australian Capital Territory.

(4) In this section, ***premises*** does not include Commonwealth premises.

12 Additional offences on Commonwealth premises

(1) A person who trespasses on Commonwealth premises commits an offence, punishable on conviction by a fine of not more than 10 penalty units.

(2) A person who:

(a) engages in unreasonable obstruction in relation to the passage of persons or vehicles into, out of, or on Commonwealth premises, or otherwise in relation to the use of Commonwealth premises;

(b) being in or on Commonwealth premises, behaves in an offensive or disorderly manner; or

(c) being in or on Commonwealth premises, refuses or neglects to leave those premises on being directed to do so by a constable, by a protective service officer, or by a person authorized in writing by a Minister or the public authority under the Commonwealth occupying the premises to give directions for the purposes of this section;

commits an offence, punishable on conviction by a fine of not more than 20 penalty units.

(3) For the purposes of an offence against subsection (1) or (2), absolute liability applies to the physical element of circumstance of the offence, that the premises are Commonwealth premises.

Note: For ***absolute liability***, see section 6.2 of the *Criminal Code*.

(4) For the purposes of an offence against paragraph (2)(c), strict liability applies to the physical element of circumstance of the offence, that the direction had been given by:

(a) a constable; or

(b) a protective service officer; or

(c) a person authorised in writing by a Minister or the public authority under the Commonwealth occupying the premises to give directions for the purposes of this section.

Note: For ***strict liability***, see section 6.1 of the *Criminal Code*.

(5) Subsection (1) and paragraph (2)(c) do not apply if the person has a reasonable excuse.

Note: A defendant bears an evidential burden in relation to the matter in subsection (5) (see subsection 13.3(3) of the *Criminal Code*).

(6) Subsection (2) does not apply in relation to Commonwealth premises being used exclusively in connection with the sittings, or any other operation, of a court as defined in the *Court Security Act 2013*.

Note: A defendant bears an evidential burden in relation to the matter in subsection (6) (see subsection 13.3(3) of the *Criminal Code*).

13 Evidence

(1) In proceedings arising out of this Part:

(a) a certificate in writing given by an authorized person certifying as to any matter relevant to establishing that particular premises are, or were at a particular time, Commonwealth premises is prima facie evidence of the matter so certified; and

(b) a writing purporting to be such a certificate shall, unless the contrary is proved, be deemed to be such a certificate and to have been duly given.

(2) In this section, ***authorized person*** means a person in respect of whom there is in force for the time being a delegation of any power under section 139 of the *Lands Acquisition Act 1989*.

Part IIA—Provisions relating to premises of certain investigatory authorities

13A Interpretation

In this Part, unless the contrary intention appears:

***authorised officer*** for an investigatory authority means:

(a) a constable; or

(b) a person authorised to exercise powers under this Part in relation to the authority by:

(i) the Minister; or

(ii) if the authority has power to administer its own affairs—a person exercising that power on behalf of the authority.

***authority premises*** for an investigatory authority means any premises occupied or used (whether permanently or temporarily or under a lease or otherwise) in connection with the sittings, or any other operations, of the authority.

***explosive substance***includes:

(a) any material for making an explosive substance; and

(b) any apparatus, machine, implement or material used, or intended to be used, or adapted, for causing, or aiding in causing, an explosion in or with an explosive substance; and

(c) a part of such an apparatus, machine or implement.

***firearm***means a weapon designed or adapted to discharge shot, a bullet, or any other missile, as a result of the expansion of gases produced in the weapon by the ignition of strongly combustible materials, or by compressed air or other gases, whether stored in the weapon in pressurised containers or produced in the weapon by mechanical means, and includes a part of such a weapon and ammunition for use in such a weapon.

***investigatory authority*** means a tribunal, authority or person having power under a law of the Commonwealth to require the production of documents or the answering of questions.

***offensive weapon***means any article:

(a) made or adapted for use for causing injury to, or incapacitating, a person; or

(b) intended by the person having it with him or her, for such use;

and includes a part of such an article.

13B Application of Part

This Part applies only to an investigatory authority that is prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this Part.

13C Power of authorised officer to require information

(1) Subject to any limitations and restrictions provided by the regulations, if an authorised officer for an investigatory authority believes on reasonable grounds that it is necessary in the interests of security to do so, the officer may require a person who is on the authority premises to tell the officer:

(a) the person’s name; and

(b) the address of the person’s place of residence; and

(c) the person’s reason for being on the premises; and

(d) evidence of the person’s identity.

(2) A person of whom such a requirement is made must not:

(a) refuse or fail to comply with the requirement; or

(b) give false information, or false evidence of identity, in response to the requirement.

Penalty: 20 penalty units.

(3) Subsection (2) does not apply if the person has a reasonable excuse.

Note: A defendant bears an evidential burden in relation to the matter in subsection (3) (see subsection 13.3(3) of the *Criminal Code*).

13D Power of authorised officer to search a person or require a person to deposit personal effects

(1) Subject to any limitations and restrictions provided by the regulations, if an authorised officer for an investigatory authority believes on reasonable grounds that it is necessary in the interests of security to do so, the officer may:

(a) require a person who is on the authority premises to submit to either or both of the following:

(i) a screening search and/or a frisk search of the person;

(ii) a search of any of the person’s personal effects that are reasonably capable of concealing a firearm, explosive substance or offensive weapon;

for the purposes of finding out whether a firearm, explosive substance or offensive weapon is hidden in the person’s clothing or personal effects; and

(b) require a person who is on the authority premises to deposit with the authorised officer any personal effects that are reasonably capable of:

(i) concealing a firearm, explosive substance or offensive weapon; or

(ii) being used to cause injury to, or incapacitate, a person.

(2) A person of whom a requirement is made under subsection (1) must not refuse or fail to comply with the requirement.

Penalty: 20 penalty units.

(2A) Subsection (2) does not apply if the person has a reasonable excuse.

Note: A defendant bears an evidential burden in relation to the matter in subsection (2A) (see subsection 13.3(3) of the *Criminal Code*).

(3) If, in the course of a search under paragraph (1)(a), a firearm, explosive substance or offensive weapon is found, an authorised officer for the investigatory authority:

(a) may take possession of the firearm, substance or weapon; and

(b) may retain it for any period that he or she thinks necessary for the purposes of this Part.

(4) This section does not authorise anyone conducting a frisk search of a person to remove, or to require the person to remove, any of the person’s clothing.

(5) A frisk search of a person under this section is to be conducted by:

(a) an authorised officer of the same sex as the person; or

(b) if an authorised officer of the same sex as the person is not available to conduct the search—any other person who is of the same sex and:

(i) is requested by an authorised officer; and

(ii) agrees;

to conduct the search.

(6) An action or proceeding, whether civil or criminal, does not lie against a person who, at the request of an authorised officer, conducts a search under this section if the person acts in good faith and does not contravene subsection (7).

(7) An authorised officer or other person who conducts a search under this section must not use more force, or subject a person to greater indignity, than is reasonably necessary in order to conduct the search.

13E Removal from authority premises

(1) An authorised officer for an investigatory authority may direct a person to leave the authority premises if the person:

(a) refuses or fails to comply with a requirement made under subsection 13C(1) or 13D(1); or

(b) does not satisfy the authorised officer that the person has a proper reason for being on the authority premises.

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b), without limiting what constitutes a proper reason for being on authority premises, a person has such a reason if he or she wishes to attend the hearing of the proceedings in public by or before the investigatory authority.

(3) If a person refuses or fails to comply with a direction given to the person under subsection (1):

(a) the person commits an offence punishable on conviction by a fine of not more than 20 penalty units; and

(b) a constable may refuse the person entry to, or remove the person from, the authority premises, as the case requires.

(4) Except as provided in subsection (1), a person is entitled to enter and remain on authority premises where a hearing of proceedings is being held in public by or before the investigatory authority concerned if there is room for the person on the premises.

13F Person not to carry firearm, explosive substance or offensive weapon on authority premises

A person must not, while on any authority premises, carry or otherwise have in his or her possession a firearm, an explosive substance or an offensive weapon.

Penalty: Imprisonment for 12 months.

13G Saving

(1) The powers conferred by this Part are in addition to, and do not derogate from, any other powers conferred on or possessed by any court, judge, tribunal, authority or person in relation to the conduct of proceedings by or before an investigatory authority or the regulation of the conduct of people on authority premises.

(2) This Part does not affect any other power of an investigatory authority that is like a power of a court in relation to contempt of the court.

13H Regulations

The Governor‑General may make regulations prescribing matters:

(a) required or permitted to be prescribed for the purposes of this Part; or

(b) necessary or convenient to be prescribed for carrying out or giving effect to this Part;

and, in particular, providing for the dealing with information given by a person in response to a requirement made under this Part.

Part III—Provisions relating to diplomatic and consular premises and personnel, designated overseas missions and international organizations

14 Relation of Part to international law

The provisions of this Part, except in so far as they apply in relation to designated overseas missions, are intended to assist in giving effect, on the part of Australia, to the special duty imposed by international law on a state that receives a diplomatic or special mission, or consents to the establishment of a consular post, to take appropriate steps to protect the premises of the mission or post against intrusion or damage, to prevent any attack on the persons, freedom or dignity of the personnel of the mission or post and to prevent disturbance of the peace, or impairment of the dignity, of the mission or post.

15 Assemblies involving violence or apprehension of violence

(1) Where persons taking part in an assembly that is in relation to protected premises or a protected person conduct themselves in a way that gives rise to a reasonable apprehension that the assembly will be carried on in a manner involving unlawful physical violence to persons or unlawful damage to property, each of those persons commits an offence, punishable on conviction by a fine of not more than 20 penalty units.

(1A) For the purposes of an offence against subsection (1), strict liability applies to the physical element of circumstance of the offence, that the way in which the persons conduct themselves gives rise to a reasonable apprehension that the assembly will be carried on in a manner involving unlawful physical violence to persons or unlawful damage to property.

Note: For ***strict liability***, see section 6.2 of the *Criminal Code*.

(2) A person who, while taking part in an assembly that is in relation to protected premises or a protected person, intentionally does an act of physical violence to another person, or an act that results in damage to property, commits an offence, punishable on conviction by imprisonment for not more than 12 months.

(3) For the purposes of an offence against subsection (1) or (2), absolute liability applies to the physical element of circumstance of the offence, that the assembly is in relation to protected premises or a protected person.

Note: For ***absolute liability***, see section 6.2 of the *Criminal Code*.

16 Causing actual bodily harm or damage to property

(1) A person who, while taking part in an assembly that is in relation to protected premises or to a protected person, intentionally causes:

(a) actual bodily harm to another person; or

(b) damage, to an extent exceeding $1,500, to property;

commits an indictable offence, punishable on conviction by imprisonment, in the case of causing actual bodily harm, for a term not exceeding five years or, in the case of causing damage to property, for a term not exceeding three years.

(2) For the purposes of an offence against paragraph 16(1)(b), absolute liability applies to the physical element of circumstance, that the extent of the damage to property exceeds $1,500.

Note: For ***absolute liability***, see section 6.2 of the *Criminal Code*.

17 Dispersal of certain assemblies

(1) Where an assembly consisting of not less than twelve persons is taking place in relation to protected premises or to a protected person and:

(a) persons taking part in the assembly have conducted themselves in a way that has caused a member of a Police Force of the rank of Sergeant or above reasonably to apprehend that the assembly will be carried on in a manner involving:

(i) unlawful physical violence to persons or unlawful damage to property; or

(ii) offences against section 18 or 20; or

(b) the assembly is being carried on in a manner involving such unlawful violence or damage, or such offences;

a member of a Police Force of the rank of Sergeant or above may give a direction under this section.

(2) A direction under this section shall be given orally and in such a manner as to be likely to be audible to the persons constituting the assembly, or to as many of them as practicable, and shall be in accordance with the following form or to the like effect:

In pursuance of the Public Order (Protection of Persons and Property) Act of the Commonwealth of Australia, I [*name of police officer*], being a Sergeant [*or higher rank, as the case may be*] in the [*name of Police Force*], direct all persons taking part in this assembly to disperse forthwith. Persons who fail to disperse may render themselves liable to the penalties provided by the Act.

(3) Where:

(a) a direction is given under this section; and

(b) the assembly, to the number of not less than twelve persons, continues after the expiration of fifteen minutes from the time of the direction;

each of those persons who has failed to comply with the direction commits an offence, punishable on conviction by imprisonment for not more than 6 months.

(3A) Strict liability applies to paragraphs (3)(a) and (b).

Note: For ***strict liability***, see section 6.1 of the *Criminal Code*.

(3B) Subsection (3) does not apply to a person who has a reasonable excuse.

Note: A defendant bears an evidential burden in relation to the matter in subsection (3B) (see subsection 13.3(3) of the *Criminal Code*).

(4) For the purpose of:

(a) dispersing an assembly in respect of which a direction has been given under this section; or

(b) dispersing or suppressing an assembly to which paragraph (1)(b) applies by reason of its being carried on in a manner involving unlawful violence or damage (whether or not a direction has been given under this section in respect of the assembly);

it is lawful for a person to use such force as he or she believes, on reasonable grounds, to be necessary for that purpose and is reasonably proportioned to the danger which he or she believes, on reasonable grounds, is to be apprehended from the continuance of the assembly.

18 Obstruction, assault etc.

(1) A person who:

(a) assaults a protected person;

(b) harasses a protected person or otherwise unreasonably interferes with the free and safe discharge of the duties of a protected person;

(c) behaves in an offensive, threatening or insulting manner towards a protected person; or

(d) unreasonably obstructs a protected person;

commits an offence, punishable on conviction by a fine of not more than 20 penalty units.

(2) For the purposes of an offence against paragraph (1)(a), (b), (c) or (d), absolute liability applies to such of the following physical elements of circumstance as are relevant to the offence:

(a) that the person mentioned in the paragraph is a protected person;

(b) that interference with the discharge of the duties of such a person is interference with the free and safe discharge of those duties.

Note: For ***absolute liability***, see section 6.2 of the *Criminal Code*.

19 Weapons, missiles etc.

(1) A person who, while taking part in an assembly that is in relation to protected premises or to a protected person:

(a) has in his or her possession a weapon, a missile or a destructive, noxious or repulsive object or substance;

(b) discharges or uses a weapon or throws a missile;

(c) throws, releases or deposits a destructive, noxious or repulsive object or substance; or

(d) throws, releases, deposits or deals with an object or substance, being reckless as to whether doing so will cause injury to persons or damage to property;

commits an offence.

(1A) Paragraph (1)(a) does not apply if the person has a reasonable excuse.

Note: A defendant bears an evidential burden in relation to the matter in subsection (1A) (see subsection 13.3(3) of the *Criminal Code*).

(2) An offence against subsection (1) is punishable on conviction:

(a) in respect of an offence arising under paragraph (1)(a)—by a fine of not more than 20 penalty units; or

(b) in any other case—by imprisonment for not more than 6 months.

20 Additional offences in relation to protected premises

(1) A person who trespasses on protected premises commits an offence, punishable on conviction by a fine of not more than 10 penalty units.

(2) A person who:

(a) engages in unreasonable obstruction in relation to the passage of persons or vehicles into, out of or on protected premises, or otherwise in relation to the use of protected premises;

(b) while trespassing on protected premises, behaves in an offensive or disorderly manner; or

(c) being in or on protected premises, refuses or neglects to leave those premises on being directed to do so by a constable, by a protective service officer, by a protected person residing or performing duties on the premises, or by a person acting in accordance with authority conferred on him or her by such a protected person;

commits an offence, punishable on conviction by a fine of not more than 20 penalty units.

(3) Subsection (1) and paragraph (2)(c) do not apply if the person has a reasonable excuse.

Note: A defendant bears an evidential burden in relation to the matter in subsection (3) (see subsection 13.3(3) of the *Criminal Code*).

(4) For the purposes of an offence against subsection (1) or (2), absolute liability applies to the physical element of circumstance of the offence, that the relevant premises are protected premises.

Note: For ***absolute liability***, see section 6.2 of the *Criminal Code*.

(5) For the purposes of an offence against paragraph (2)(c), strict liability applies to the physical element of circumstance of the offence, that the direction had been given by:

(a) a constable; or

(b) a protective service officer; or

(c) a protected person residing or performing duties on the premises; or

(d) a person acting in accordance with authority conferred on him or her by such a protected person.

Note: For ***strict liability***, see section 6.1 of the *Criminal Code*.

21 Evidence

(1) In proceedings arising out of this Part, evidence that persons taking part in an assembly were at a place in the vicinity of protected premises, or were at a place at which, or in the vicinity of which, a protected person was present, is evidence that those persons were at that place by reason of the fact that it was in the vicinity of the protected premises, or by reason of the fact that the protected person was present at or in the vicinity of that place, as the case may be.

(2) In proceedings arising out of this Part:

(a) a certificate in writing given by the Secretary of the Foreign Affairs Department, or by an officer of that Department authorized in writing by the Secretary to give such certificates, certifying as to any matter relevant to establishing that:

(i) particular premises are, or were at a particular time, protected premises; or

(ii) a particular person is, or was at a particular time, a protected person;

is prima facie evidence of the matter so certified; and

(b) a writing purporting to be such a certificate shall, unless the contrary is proved, be taken to be such a certificate and to have been duly given.

Part IV—General

22 Arrest

A constable may, without warrant, arrest a person for an offence against this Act if the constable has reasonable ground to believe that the person has committed that offence and that:

(a) proceedings against the person by summons would not be effective; or

(b) the arrest is necessary in order to prevent persistence by the person in, or repetition by the person of, conduct of the kind constituting the offence, or the commission by the person of other offences against this Act.

23 Prosecutions

(1) Offences against this Act, other than an offence against subsection 7(1) or subsection 16(1), are punishable on summary conviction.

(2) Proceedings for:

(a) the commitment of a person for trial on indictment for an offence against this Act; or

(b) the summary prosecution of an offence against this Act;

shall be instituted only with the consent in writing of the Director of Public Prosecutions, or of a person, or of a person included in a class of persons, authorized by the Director of Public Prosecutions, by writing, to give such consents.

(3) Notwithstanding that a consent has not been given in relation to an offence in accordance with subsection (2):

(a) a person may be charged with an offence against this Act;

(b) a warrant for the arrest of a person for such an offence may be issued;

(c) a person may be arrested for such an offence; and

(d) a person charged with such an offence may be remanded in custody or on bail;

but no further step in proceedings of a kind referred to in that subsection shall be taken in relation to the offence until such a consent has been obtained.

(4) Nothing in subsection (2) prevents the discharge of the accused if proceedings are not continued within a reasonable time.

24 Particulars to be furnished in respect of certain offences

(1) Where a person charged with an offence against this Act punishable on summary conviction has requested the informant to furnish to that person further particulars of the conduct the subject of the charge, the court shall not proceed with the hearing of the charge until reasonable particulars of that conduct have been furnished to the person charged, and may accordingly adjourn the proceedings from time to time.

(2) If reasonable particulars of the conduct the subject of the charge are not furnished within a reasonable time, the court may dismiss the charge.

(3) Where, at the hearing of a charge for an offence to which this section applies, evidence is given for the prosecution of conduct that would constitute such an offence but that conduct is different from the conduct of which particulars have been given to the person charged upon a request under this section, the court may, on the application of the person charged and if it is of opinion that that person was misled by those particulars, adjourn the hearing upon such terms as it thinks fit.

25 Exclusion of certain other laws

(1) After the commencement of this Act, the common law with respect to the offences of taking part in an unlawful assembly, a rout or a riot:

(a) does not have effect in a Territory; and

(b) does not have effect in a place that is a Commonwealth place within the meaning of the *Commonwealth Places (Application of Laws) Act 1970* (including a place that becomes such a place after the commencement of this Act), whether by virtue of that Act or otherwise.

(2) An enactment specified in the Schedule to this Act, to the extent that it was, immediately before the commencement of this Act, in force in a Territory or, whether by virtue of the *Commonwealth Places (Application of Laws) Act 1970* or otherwise, in a place that is a Commonwealth place within the meaning of that Act, is repealed, and none of those enactments is, by virtue of that Act or otherwise, in force in a place that becomes a Commonwealth place, within the meaning of that Act, after that commencement.

(2A) In subsection (2), ***Territory*** means the Australian Capital Territory, the Jervis Bay Territory or the Northern Territory.

(3) It is the intention of this Act that the provisions of this Act that apply in relation to assemblies in a State that are:

(a) on Commonwealth premises that are not a Commonwealth place within the meaning of the *Commonwealth Places (Application of Laws) Act 1970*; or

(b) in relation to protected premises or to a protected person;

shall so apply to the exclusion of the common law with respect to the offences of taking part in an unlawful assembly, a rout or a riot and to the exclusion of the enactments specified in the Schedule to this Act.

(4) Except as provided by this section, nothing in this Act is intended to exclude the operation of a law of a State or Territory, whether made before or after the commencement of this Act, to the extent that that law is capable of operating concurrently with the express provisions of this Act.

(5) A reference in the Schedule to a particular enactment shall be read as including a reference to that enactment as amended at any time and to any enactment in substitution for that enactment.

The Schedule

Section 25

Part I—Imperial Enactments

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Enactment | Short title or subject |
| 17 Richard 2, c. 8 | Riots and Tumults Suppression |
| 13 Henry 4, c. 7 | The Riot Act, 1411 |
| 2 Henry 5, Stat. 1, c. 8 | The Riot Act, 1414 |
| 13 Charles 2, Stat. 1, c. 5 | The Tumultuous Petitioning Act, 1661 |
| 1 George 1, Stat. 2, c. 5 | The Riot Act |
| 33 George 3, c. 67 | The Shipping Offences Act, 1793 |

Part II—Other enactments in force in Australia

New South Wales—

Sections 205, 206, 207 and 545C of the Crimes Act, 1900.

Victoria—

Section 206 of the Crimes Act, 1958.

Unlawful Assemblies and Processions Act 1958.

Queensland—

Sections 62, 63, 64, 65, 66 and 77 of the Criminal Code.

South Australia—

Sections 95, 244 and 245 of the Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935‑1966.

Western Australia—

Sections 63, 64, 65, 66 and 67 of the Criminal Code Act 1913.

Tasmania—

Sections 74, 75 and 77 of the Criminal Code.

Northern Territory—

Sections 91, 92, 300, 301 and 302 of the Criminal Law Consolidation Act and Ordinance 1876 to 1969, as in force in the Territory.

Sections 64, 65, 66, 67 and 68 of the Criminal Code Act 1983.

Australian Capital Territory and Jervis Bay Territory—

Party Processions Prevention Act, 1901 of the State of New South Wales, in its application to the Territory.

Sections 205, 206 and 207 of the Crimes Act, 1900 of the State of New South Wales, in its application to the Territory.

Endnotes

Endnote 1—About the endnotes

The endnotes provide information about this compilation and the compiled law.

The following endnotes are included in every compilation:

Endnote 1—About the endnotes

Endnote 2—Abbreviation key

Endnote 3—Legislation history

Endnote 4—Amendment history

**Abbreviation key—Endnote 2**

The abbreviation key sets out abbreviations that may be used in the endnotes.

**Legislation history and amendment history—Endnotes 3 and 4**

Amending laws are annotated in the legislation history and amendment history.

The legislation history in endnote 3 provides information about each law that has amended (or will amend) the compiled law. The information includes commencement details for amending laws and details of any application, saving or transitional provisions that are not included in this compilation.

The amendment history in endnote 4 provides information about amendments at the provision (generally section or equivalent) level. It also includes information about any provision of the compiled law that has been repealed in accordance with a provision of the law.

**Editorial changes**

The *Legislation Act 2003* authorises First Parliamentary Counsel to make editorial and presentational changes to a compiled law in preparing a compilation of the law for registration. The changes must not change the effect of the law. Editorial changes take effect from the compilation registration date.

If the compilation includes editorial changes, the endnotes include a brief outline of the changes in general terms. Full details of any changes can be obtained from the Office of Parliamentary Counsel.

**Misdescribed amendments**

A misdescribed amendment is an amendment that does not accurately describe the amendment to be made. If, despite the misdescription, the amendment can be given effect as intended, the amendment is incorporated into the compiled law and the abbreviation “(md)” added to the details of the amendment included in the amendment history.

If a misdescribed amendment cannot be given effect as intended, the abbreviation “(md not incorp)” is added to the details of the amendment included in the amendment history.

Endnote 2—Abbreviation key

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ad = added or inserted | o = order(s) |
| am = amended | Ord = Ordinance |
| amdt = amendment | orig = original |
| c = clause(s) | par = paragraph(s)/subparagraph(s) |
| C[x] = Compilation No. x | /sub‑subparagraph(s) |
| Ch = Chapter(s) | pres = present |
| def = definition(s) | prev = previous |
| Dict = Dictionary | (prev…) = previously |
| disallowed = disallowed by Parliament | Pt = Part(s) |
| Div = Division(s) | r = regulation(s)/rule(s) |
| ed = editorial change | reloc = relocated |
| exp = expires/expired or ceases/ceased to have | renum = renumbered |
| effect | rep = repealed |
| F = Federal Register of Legislation | rs = repealed and substituted |
| gaz = gazette | s = section(s)/subsection(s) |
| LA = *Legislation Act 2003* | Sch = Schedule(s) |
| LIA = *Legislative Instruments Act 2003* | Sdiv = Subdivision(s) |
| (md) = misdescribed amendment can be given | SLI = Select Legislative Instrument |
| effect | SR = Statutory Rules |
| (md not incorp) = misdescribed amendment | Sub‑Ch = Sub‑Chapter(s) |
| cannot be given effect | SubPt = Subpart(s) |
| mod = modified/modification | underlining = whole or part not |
| No. = Number(s) | commenced or to be commenced |

Endnote 3—Legislation history

| Act | Number and year | Assent | Commencement | Application, saving and transitional provisions |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Public Order (Protection of Persons and Property) Act 1971 | 26, 1971 | 13 May 1971 | 13 May 1971 (s 2) |  |
| Statute Law Revision Act 1973 | 216, 1973 | 19 Dec 1973 | 31 Dec 1973 (s 2) | s 9(1) |
| Australian Federal Police (Consequential Amendments) Act 1979 | 155, 1979 | 28 Nov 1979 | 19 Oct 1979 (s 2 and gaz1979, No S206) | — |
| Australian Federal Police (Consequential Amendments) Act 1980 | 70, 1980 | 28 May 1980 | 28 May 1980 | — |
| Director of Public Prosecutions (Consequential Amendments) Act 1983 | 114, 1983 | 14 Dec 1983 | s 25–27: 5 Mar 1984 (s 2(1) and gaz1984, No S55) | s 27(2) |
| Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (No. 2) 1984 | 165, 1984 | 25 Oct 1984 | s 3, 6(1): 22 Nov 1984 (s 2(1)) | s 6(1) |
| Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (No. 2) 1985 | 193, 1985 | 16 Dec 1985 | s 3, 16: 16 Dec 1985 (s 2(1)) | s 16 |
| Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (No. 2) 1986 | 168, 1986 | 18 Dec 1986 | s 3, 5(1): 18 Dec 1986 (s 2(1)) | s 5(1) |
| Statute Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1987 | 141, 1987 | 18 Dec 1987 | s 5(1) and Sch 1: 18 Dec 1987 (s 2(1)) | s 5(1) |
| Lands Acquisition (Repeal and Consequential Provisions) Act 1989 | 21, 1989 | 20 Apr 1989 | s 4 and Sch 2: 9 June 1989 (s 2 and gaz 1989, No S185) | — |
| Territories Law Reform Act 1992 | 104, 1992 | 30 June 1992 | Sch 4: 1 July 1992 (s 2(3)) | — |
| Crimes Legislation Amendment Act 1992 | 164, 1992 | 11 Dec 1992 | s 52: 8 Jan 1993 (s 2(1)) | — |
| Overseas Missions (Privileges and Immunities) (Consequential Amendments) Act 1995 | 58, 1995 | 28 June 1995 | Sch 4: 28 June 1995 (s 2) | — |
| Public Order (Protection of Persons and Property) Amendment Act 1995 | 116, 1995 | 17 Oct 1995 | 17 Apr 1996 (s 2(2)) | — |
| Statute Law Revision Act 1996 | 43, 1996 | 25 Oct 1996 | Sch 5 (item 125): 25 Oct 1996 (s 2(1)) | — |
| Law and Justice Legislation Amendment (Application of Criminal Code) Act 2001 | 24, 2001 | 6 Apr 2001 | s 4(1), (2) and Sch 42: 24 May 2001 (s 2(1)(a)) | s. 4(1) and (2) |
| Law and Justice Legislation Amendment Act 2004 | 62, 2004 | 26 May 2004 | Sch 1 (item 54): 27 May 2004 (s 2(1) item 13) | — |
| Australian Federal Police and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2004 | 64, 2004 | 22 June 2004 | Sch 2 (item 13): 1 July 2004 (s 2(1) items 2, 11) | — |
| Federal Justice System Amendment (Efficiency Measures) Act (No. 1) 2009 | 122, 2009 | 7 Dec 2009 | Sch 4: 7 Dec 2009 (s 2(1) item 2) | — |
| Statute Law Revision Act 2011 | 5, 2011 | 22 Mar 2011 | Sch 6 (items 88, 89) and Sch 7 (item 115): 19 Apr 2011 (s 2(1) items 17, 18) | — |
| Court Security (Consequential Amendments) Act 2013 | 129, 2013 | 1 July 2013 | Sch 1: 1 Jan 2014 (s 2(1) item 2) Remainder: 1 July 2013 (s 2(1) item 1) | — |
| Statute Law Revision Act (No. 1) 2014 | 31, 2014 | 27 May 2014 | Sch 1 (item 57): 24 June 2014 (s 2(1) item 2) | — |
| Statute Law Revision Act (No. 1) 2016 | 4, 2016 | 11 Feb 2016 | Sch 4 (items 1, 254–256): 10 Mar 2016 (s 2(1) item 6) | — |
| Territories Legislation Amendment Act 2016 | 33, 2016 | 23 Mar 2016 | Sch 5 (item 84): 1 July 2016 (s 2(1) item 7) | — |
| Statute Update Act 2016 | 61, 2016 | 23 Sept 2016 | Sch 3 (items 37, 38): 21 Oct 2016 (s 2(1) item 1) | — |
| Home Affairs and Integrity Agencies Legislation Amendment Act 2018 | 31, 2018 | 9 May 2018 | Sch 2 (items 167, 284): 11 May 2018 (s 2(1) items 3 and 7) | Sch 2 (item 284) |

Endnote 4—Amendment history

| Provision affected | How affected |
| --- | --- |
| Title | am. No. 216, 1973; Nos. 58 and 116, 1995 |
| **Part I** |  |
| s. 3 | rep. No. 216, 1973 |
| s. 4 | am. No. 155, 1979; No. 70, 1980; No. 193, 1985; No. 168,1986; No. 141, 1987; No. 104, 1992; Nos. 58 and 116, 1995; No. 64, 2004; No. 5, 2011; No 33, 2016 |
| s. 5A | ad. No. 24, 2001 |
| **Part II** |  |
| s 6 | am. No. 116, 1995; No. 24, 2001; No 4, 2016 |
| s 7 | am. No. 116, 1995; No. 24, 2001; No 4, 2016 |
| s. 8 | am. No. 116, 1995; No. 43, 1996; No. 24, 2001; No 4, 2016 |
| s 9 | am. No. 116, 1995; No. 24, 2001; No 4, 2016 |
| s 10 | am. No. 116, 1995; No. 24, 2001; No 4, 2016 |
| s. 11 | am. No. 114, 1983; No. 165, 1984; No. 164, 1992; No. 116, 1995; No. 24, 2001; No 4, 2016 |
| s. 12 | am. No. 141, 1987; No. 116, 1995; No. 24, 2001; No 129, 2013; No 4, 2016 |
| s. 13 | am. No. 21, 1989; No 61, 2016 |
| **Part IIA** |  |
| Part IIA heading | am No 129, 2013 |
| Part IIA | ad. No. 116, 1995 |
| s 13A | ad No 116, 1995 |
|  | am No 62, 2004; No 122, 2009; No 129, 2013; No 31, 2018 |
| s. 13AA | ad. No. 122, 2009 |
|  | rep No 129, 2013 |
| s. 13B | ad. No. 116, 1995 |
|  | am No 129, 2013 |
| s. 13C | ad. No. 116, 1995 |
|  | am. No. 24, 2001; No 129, 2013 |
| s. 13D | ad. No. 116, 1995 |
|  | am. No. 24, 2001; No 129, 2013 |
| s. 13E | ad. No. 116, 1995 |
|  | am No 129, 2013; No 4, 2016 |
| s. 13F | ad. No. 116, 1995 |
|  | am. No. 24, 2001; No 129, 2013 |
| s. 13G | ad. No. 116, 1995 |
|  | am No 129, 2013 |
| s. 13H | ad. No. 116, 1995 |
| **Part III** |  |
| Part III heading | am. No. 58, 1995 |
| s. 14 | am. No. 58, 1995 |
| s 15 | am. No. 116, 1995; No. 24, 2001; No 4, 2016 |
| s 16 | am. No. 116, 1995; No. 24, 2001; No 4, 2016 |
| s 17 | am. No. 116, 1995; No. 24, 2001; No 4, 2016 |
| s 18 | am. No. 116, 1995; No. 24, 2001; No 4, 2016 |
| s 19 | am. No. 116, 1995; No. 24, 2001; No 4, 2016 |
| s. 20 | am. No. 141, 1987; No. 116, 1995; No. 24, 2001; No 4, 2016 |
| s. 21 | am. No. 5, 2011; No 61, 2016 |
| **Part IV** |  |
| s. 23 | am. No. 114, 1983; No. 165, 1984; No. 116, 1995; No. 24, 2001 |
| s. 25 | am. No. 168, 1986 |
| **The Schedule** |  |
| The Schedule | am. No. 168, 1986; No 31, 2014 |