

Downing Centre Local Court

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The Downing Centre Local Court is Sydney's busiest criminal court complex.

The Local Courts are on levels 4 and 5 and deal with all types of criminal and traffic cases, from State offences such as drink driving, [assaults](#), [AVOs](#) and drug possession and supply to Commonwealth cases such as [tax fraud](#), [drug importation](#) and [social security offences](#).

Court 4.4 is where many criminal and traffic cases start. It is called the 'Registrar's court' and is presided over by an administrative officer called a Registrar.

If the matter is in the court list for the first time, it can be adjourned to another date for the defendant to obtain legal advice.

If the defendant wishes to plead guilty to a minor criminal or traffic charge, the case will usually go before a Magistrate in court 4.5 on the same day.

If a not guilty plea is entered, the case will normally be adjourned for 6 weeks to allow the prosecution to serve the 'brief of evidence' – which are the statements and materials relied upon to support the charges.

If the case involves a domestic assault, and the defendant wishes to plead not guilty, a hearing date will normally be set anywhere between 4 and 12 weeks away when the parties will need to attend court and the Magistrate will decide whether the defendant is guilty or not guilty.

If the case is very serious, called a 'strictly indictable

case', it won't be finalised in the Local Court. It will normally go into Local Court 5.2 which is the DPP court and will eventually go into the District Court list which is in court 3.3.

Commonwealth cases are usually dealt with in court 5.5, on level 5.

Defended hearings are usually undertaken in courts 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8.

Applications such as Apprehended Violence Orders ('AVO's') and appeals against traffic infringements, habitual offender declarations, licence suspension and so on are normally dealt with in court 4.3.

The Probation and Parole Service and Legal Aid are also located on level 4.

Level 1 contains various services such as the police prosecutors and MERIT officer (Magistrates Early Referral Into Treatment officer).