

**THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COURT HIERARCHY  
STUDENT PRE-VISIT RESOURCE**

The Western Australian court hierarchy is comprised of three main courts; The Supreme Court, District Court and Magistrates Court. These three courts deal with the majority of the criminal and civil matters in WA. However, there are other WA courts.

1. List any other WA courts you are aware of apart from the Supreme Court, District Court and Magistrates Court.

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**SUPREME COURT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Go to the website for the [Supreme Court of WA](#) and follow these directions: Click on the *About the Court* tab. Complete the following:

2. Identify the jurisdiction of the following Divisions of the Supreme Court of WA.

Court of Appeal Division

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General Division

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**DISTRICT COURT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

Go to the website for the [District Court of Western Australia](#) and click on the *About District Court* tab, then click on the *Publications* tab, then click on *District Court Annual Review 2016*. Complete the following:

3. Identify the jurisdiction of the following Divisions of the District Court of WA.

Criminal Division

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Civil Division

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## MAGISTRATES COURT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Go to the website for the [Magistrates Court of WA](#) and click on the relevant tabs (*Criminal Matters* and *Civil Matters*) and complete the following:

4. Identify the jurisdiction of the following Divisions of the Magistrates Court of WA.

Criminal Matters/Criminal Division

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Criminal Matters/Civil Division

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## WESTERN AUSTRALIAN COURT CASE FINALISATIONS IN 2015-2016

Finalisations represent the completion of matters in our court systems. Matters may be finalised by adjudication, transfer to another jurisdiction (ie. from the Magistrates Court to the Supreme Court), settlement between the parties or withdrawal of a matter. In Western Australia in the 2015-2016 financial year there were 96,627 criminal matters finalised and 60,324 civil matters finalised. The breakdown by court hierarchy is as follows:

Criminal	Number	Percentage
Supreme Court	597	0.61%
District Court	2,071	2.14%
Magistrates Court	93,959	97.23%
Total	96,627	99.98%

Civil	Number	Percentage
Supreme Court	2,726	4.51%
District Court	4,894	8.11%
Magistrates Court	52,704	87.36%
Total	60,324	99.98%

*Note: the above tables do not include probate matters or matters heard in the Family Court, Federal Magistrates Court, Coroners' Court or Children's Court figures.<sup>2</sup>*

5. What do the WA criminal and civil case finalisation figures for the 2015-2016 financial year indicate in terms of the workloads of the 3 main levels of the WA court hierarchy?

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Government Productivity Commission, *Report on Government Services 2017, Chapter 7: Courts*, <http://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2017/justice/courts/rogs-2017-volume-c-chapter7.pdf>  
<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 7.11 and <http://www.pc.gov.au/research/ongoing/report-on-government-services/2017/justice/courts/rogs-2017-volume-c-chapter7.pdf> at Table 7A.6.

## POINTS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE YOUR VISIT TO THE FBLEP

Think about the following points below before you visit the FBLEP. You will review these points after your visit.

6. Identify 5 criminal offences in the jurisdiction of the Magistrates Court of WA.

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7. All criminal charges begin in the Magistrates Court of WA, i.e. the first appearance takes place in the Magistrates Court. Why do all criminal charges begin in the Magistrates Court?

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8. Essential vocabulary regarding the court hierarchy is summary offence and indictable offence. Research the meaning of these two terms and define them in your own words.

Summary Offence

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Indictable Offence

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