

Australasian Legal Information Institute

User Guide to AustLII



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Australasian Legal Information Institute

A joint facility of UTS and UNSW Faculties of Law

[Advanced Search](#) [[LawCite](#)] [[Help](#)]

[430 databases](#) from all Australasian jurisdictions

Last updated 27 September 2010

News & Database Additions

- [Employment Opportunities at AustLII for 2010](#) - Expressions of interest sought.
- [Training Programme in Free-Access Online Legal Research](#) - Next course is in Sydney on Monday, 22 November 2010.
- [AustLII News 2010 No 2 \(24 September 2010\)](#) (PDF)
- [Dickson v The Queen \[2010\] HCA 30](#) (22 September 2010)
- AustLII thanks [University of New England](#), [The College of Law and Curtin University](#) for their contributions.
- [High Court Bulletin \[2010\] HCAB 8](#) (13 September 2010)
- [Northern Territory Repealed Regulations](#)
- [Northern Territory Repealed Acts](#)
- [Northern Territory Magistrates Court 2002-](#)
- [Queensland Legal Practice Tribunal 2004-2009](#)
- [Queensland Mental Health Court 2002-](#)
- [New Zealand Real Estate Agents Disciplinary Tribunal 2010-](#)
- [New Zealand Complaints Review Tribunal 1994-](#)
- [New Zealand Licensing Authority of Secondhand Dealers and Pawnbrokers 2005-](#)
- [Commonwealth Ombudsman's Investigation Reports 1996-](#)
- [New South Wales Ombudsman Special Reports to Parliament 1999-](#)
- [NT Ombudsman Reports to the Legislative Assembly 2002-](#)
- [Queensland Ombudsman Investigative Reports 2002-](#)
- [Victorian Historical Acts 1851-1995](#)
- [Supreme Court of South Australia - Full Court 2010-](#)
- [Australian Parliamentary Library Bills Digests 1976-](#)

Past announcements...

Latest Australasian Catalog Additions

- [Foolkit - A Lawyer's Toolkit](#)
Link added: >> South Australia >> [Introductions to Law](#)
- [Past additions...](#)

Update Status

- [Update Status for Case Law](#)
- [Update Status for Journals](#)
- [Update Status for Legislation](#)

AustLII Contributors

[AustLII Annual Report 2009 \(2008 2007\)](#)
[Law Council encourages 2010 contributions](#) (PDF)

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Research Projects

- [Australian Legal Scholarship Library](#)
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Special Features & Tools

- [AustLII User Guide](#)
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Cases & Legislation

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>> [New Zealand](#) (NZLII)

Libraries

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Catalog

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AustLII participates in the [free access to law](#) movement, a grouping of the following organisations:





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User Guide to AustLII

This *User Guide* is © AustLII but may be copied unaltered and distributed.
Version 27/9/10 - Check the AustLII website <<http://www.austlii.edu.au/>> for later versions.

Essentials: Free access, Australia-wide coverage

The Australasian Legal Information Institute (AustLII) <<http://www.austlii.edu.au/>> provides free access to over 430 full text Databases from all Australasian jurisdictions. They can be searched together, separately, by jurisdiction, or as individual databases. They include nearly 500,000 cases all forms of legislation from all jurisdictions, plus treaties, law journals, law reform reports and other content. The LawCite international free access citatory is fully integrated into AustLII, allowing citations of Australian cases, journal articles and other content to be tracked across AustLII and collaborating LIIs internationally. AustLII also includes a Catalog of thousands of Australian law-related websites and a 'Law on Google' facility which helps make web searches more precise. AustLII includes New Zealand content from the New Zealand Legal Information Institute (NZLII).

Browsing the Databases

To find all databases for a jurisdiction, select it from AustLII's front page to go to the jurisdiction's page on AustLII. The databases are listed first on the jurisdiction page, under 'Databases'. Select the name of a database to go to its home page, which shows the number of items in the database, the range of years from which they are derived, the date of the most recent item added and both annual and alphabetic tables of contents (both may not be available in some cases).

Legislation databases

Front page of each database

- [Database Search]** limits scope of search to database named at the top of page.
[Name Search] limits scope of the search to names of legislation in this database. Search with key words in the title of a known piece of legislation.
'**Last updated: ...**' most recent date database was updated on system;
NOTE- *does not indicate legislation is consolidated to that date.*

Additional button on each piece of legislation or section (if available)

[\[Index\]](#) [\[Table\]](#) [\[Search\]](#) [\[Notes\]](#) [\[Noteup\]](#) [\[Previous\]](#) [\[Next\]](#) [\[Download\]](#) [\[Help\]](#)

- [Table]** goes to the table of contents, at the entry for this section.
[Notes] displays associated notes; amendment histories etc.
[Noteup] searches automatically for all materials on AustLII which refer to this section.
[Previous] goes to preceding section; use for 'stepping back' through sections.
[Next] goes to the next section; use to 'step through' sections.
[Download] downloads copy of whole legislation (not single section); choose ASCII or (if available) RTF; if ASCII, print or save using normal browser commands

[Related Items] (if available) lists related items: Explanatory Memorandum, Statement, Notes etc

Case Law databases

- [Database Search]** limits search to only the current database.

[Name Search] limits scope of search to titles of cases in current database only.
[Recent Decisions] displays most recent cases added, by date of the case.

Searching the Databases

There are 3 search options: from the front page, a jurisdiction page, a database front page, or the Advanced Search page

- The **Front page search** is at the top of AustLII's front page - use to search all databases
- The **Jurisdiction page search** limits searches only to databases from the jurisdiction that has been chosen; it also allows searches of the Catalog/Websearch or law on Google, for material from that jurisdiction.
- The **Advanced Search Form** (accessed from the front page) allows various special searches (eg legislation only); it also allows special search types (eg this Boolean query).

Connectors (used for all 3 search options)

Operator	Meaning	Example
and	page contains both terms	negligen* and defam*
or	page contains either of two terms	weapon or gun or firearm or pistol
not	page contains 1st term but not 2nd	trust not family
near	1st term is within 50 words of 2nd	disclos* near offence
w/n or /n/	1st term is within <i>n</i> words of 2nd	court w/5 jurisdiction
pre/n	1st term must precede 2nd term by less than <i>n</i> words	contempt pre/3 court
()	Always use parentheses if search includes two types of connectors	contempt near (radio or television)
n *	Use * for truncation	'negligen*' finds negligent, negligence, negligently etc
	Regular plurals, and singulars, are searched automatically	'firearm' = 'firearms' and vice-versa 'treaty' = 'treaties' and vice-versa

Searching for phrases – To search for a phrase, put it in double quotes (eg “freedom of information”). This is not necessary for a Boolean search (ie if connectors are used) but it is better to be sure.

Search terms the same as connectors – If a phrase is searched for which contains a connector, the whole phrase should be put in double quotes (eg “fit and proper person”).

Display of Database search results

Where Databases are searched, five options allow different displays of search results (Display ‘By Citation Frequency’ is shown below).

By Relevance – The default results display is by order of likely relevance to the search request, most relevant first. The percentage ranking (‘relevance ranking’) next to each document shows 100% for the first document if it contains all search terms. All others are ranked pro-rata to that document according to number, frequency and location of search terms they contained. The ‘**Collapse Multi-sections** | Show All Sections’ option makes search results which contain numerous references to legislation more readable by reducing the number of sections visible.

By Date – Results are sorted by date order, most recent date displayed first (ie reverse chronological order). Legislation is displayed by the date the Act was passed or the Regulation

made, not by the date on which a particular section or clause was amended. The 'Collapse Multi-sections' option is available.

By Citation Frequency – Results are sorted by the frequency with which items (cases, journal articles, treaties or law reform reports) are cited in the LawCite citator. The LawCite logo following each search result item is a link to that item's citation record in LawCite. The number of stars (1-5) indicates the frequency with which the item is cited. See the separate user guide page for LawCite.

The screenshot shows a search results page with the following elements:

- Sorting tabs: **By Citation Frequency** (selected), By Database, By Date, By Relevance, By Title.
- Sub-sorting: **Least Often Cited** (selected), Most Often Cited.
- Page navigation: Page 1 of: 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
- Results per page: 10 | 20 | 50 | 100
- Four search results are listed, each with a link to the document, a brief description, and a LawCite star rating (all 5 stars):
 - [Australian Capital Television Pty Ltd & New South Wales v Commonwealth \[1992\] HCA 45; \(1992\) 177 CLR 106 \(30 September 1992\)](#)
(From [High Court of Australia](#); 30 September 1992; 430 KB) LawCite ★★★★★
 - [Nationwide News Pty Ltd v Wills \[1992\] HCA 46; \(1992\) 177 CLR 1 \(30 September 1992\)](#)
(From [High Court of Australia](#); 30 September 1992; 291 KB) LawCite ★★★★★
 - [Theophanous v Herald & Weekly Times Ltd \[1994\] HCA 46; \(1994\) 182 CLR 104; \(1994\) 124 ALR 1 \(1994\) Aust Torts Reports 81-297 \(12 October 1994\)](#)
(From [High Court of Australia](#); 12 October 1994; 316 KB) LawCite ★★★★★
 - [ABC v Lenah Game Meats Pty Ltd \[2001\] HCA 63; 208 CLR 199; 185 ALR 1; 76 ALJR 1 \(15 November 2001\)](#)
(From [High Court of Australia](#); 15 November 2001; 501 KB) LawCite ★★★★★

By Title – The results are sorted alphabetically by the title of the document, and displayed from a-z. The 'Collapse Multi-sections' option is available. The 'Collapse Title' option groups the results together based on the first alphanumeric character in the title, that is, 'A' to 'Z' and then '0-9'.

By Database – The search results are displayed grouped into the databases on which they are located. The databases are displayed in the order in which they appear in AustLII's menu structure (not by number of results found in each). To view the results from only one database, click on the number of documents next to the name of the database (Note: to see the results from all databases again, it is necessary to use the 'back' button). The 'Collapse Listing | Expand Listing' option is only available with the 'By Database' display.

[PDF] results – If a search result has '[PDF]' in front of it then it can not yet be displayed as a HTML file (a web page), but instead will automatically be downloaded as a PDF (Portable Document Format) file if the link to the result is selected. PDF files are in the original format provided by the data source and do not have internal hypertext links or 'context' and other navigation buttons otherwise found on LII documents.

Modifying searches - The Search Results page always displays your current search (or stored search) at the top of the page, allowing it to be modified and another search run.

The 'Repeat search over:' box - On the right side of each display of Database search results, the options in this box allow the same search as has just been executed to be repeated over any of 4 other broader sets of data: (i) All AustLII databases (valuable if only one jurisdiction has been searched); (ii) Catalog & Websearch (all countries, not only in Asia); (iii) WorldLII Databases (all databases in the World legal Information Institute); and (iv) 'Law on Google' (no limitation to one country or jurisdiction).

'Context' - going to the occurrences of search terms [\[Context\]](#) - The 'Context' button appears at the top of most documents found in a search. Click on the red arrow to go to the first search term, then forward (or back) on further red arrows to go from one occurrence of search terms to the next. **Wait until the whole document has loaded** before using the 'context' button ie when the status line at the bottom of the screen says 'Document done'.

Advanced search

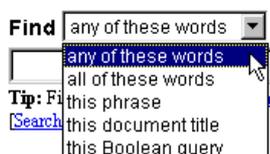
Advanced Search is used principally to choose special selections of databases, and also to select some special search types which it may be easier to use here.

Special selections of databases The following special selections of databases are available (the default is 'All Databases').

<p>Select the AustLII Database(s) to search:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">All AustLII DatabasesAll Legislation DatabasesAll Case Law DatabasesAll Journals DatabasesAll Secondary Materials DatabasesCommonwealth: All Primary Materials	<p><i>Selecting 'All Legislation' on AustLII</i></p> <p><i>Remember to change back to 'All Databases' after a search. To change a selection you must return to the Advanced Search Form.</i></p>
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Search type options

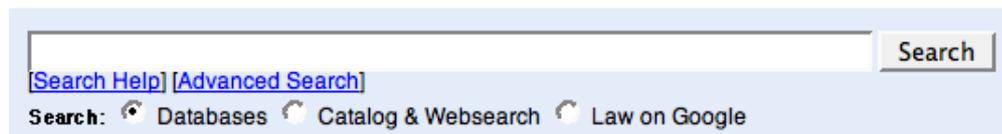
The 'Autosearch' method used on the front page and on the country pages of AustLII tries to work out which type of search the user is conducting and automatically uses that type. The advanced search page allows the choice of 5 other search types (**it is rarely needed, and only by advanced users**):



- **this Boolean query** – (*default option*) Assumes logical and proximity connectors (see above) will be used. Equivalent to including any logical or proximity connector in a search from the front page or a jurisdiction page. *Hint* - use reasonably broad searches (to aid completeness), and rely on the relevance ranking then to provide more precision.
- **any of these words** – Equivalent to putting a Boolean OR between each separate word. Simply enter a few words to indicate the main concepts for which you are looking (eg 'pollution river' or 'program patent'). Equivalent to entering search terms with no connectors on the front page or jurisdiction page (default option).
- **all of these words** – Equivalent to putting a Boolean AND between each separate word.
- **this phrase** – words entered are treated as a literal phrase even if they contain terms normally connectors (eg 'and', 'or', 'near'). There is no need to put inverted commas around the phrase. You can achieve the same thing by putting double quotes around a phrase in any search.
- **this document/legislation title** – only *titles* are searched, not the text. This option is used rarely. You can also limit searches to titles only by using the 'title()' or '@'operator (eg 'title(privacy)').

Searching from jurisdiction pages – 3 options

On each jurisdiction page, the following search box appears. The default search scope is 'Databases' for that jurisdiction (if it has no databases, 'Catalog & Websearch' is the default).



The Databases search option

The Databases search will then search all of the databases listed on that jurisdiction page, but no others. To search only one of the databases, go to that database's home page and choose the 'Databases Search' option (described above). There is at present no way to search a combination of databases from one jurisdiction on this page (an enhancement is planned) but you can use the 'Advanced Search' page to do this.

The Law on Google option

If the 'Law on Google' option is chosen and search terms inserted, then the search is sent to the Google search engine to be carried out, but it is first transformed in three ways in order to make it more useful. First, the search syntax used by the AustLII search engine is translated into that required by Google's search engine (for example, 'or' is translated into 'OR'; phrases are put into quotes); Second, terms to restrict results to those relevant to the jurisdiction are added; eg a search from the NSW page will have 'New South Wales OR site:.nsw.gov.au' added; Third, a list of law-related search terms is added to reduce the likelihood of sites unrelated to law being found or ranked highly. It may sound complicated, but it generally produces good results.

The Catalog & Websearch option

If 'Catalog & Websearch' is selected and search terms inserted, then two results will be displayed. The search results will first list 'WorldLII Catalog - Categories found:' and list the number of category pages in the whole WorldLII catalog (ie not just for the jurisdiction concerned) satisfying the search request, followed by the first four categories and a link to 'More categories...' if there are more. (This does not limit the search to only display categories relevant to the jurisdiction concerned.) The search will also search the full text of web sites listed in the catalog in any of the categories listed on the jurisdiction page, or those below them in the catalog. In other words, a search from the 'Victoria' jurisdiction page should only find websites from India or about Victoria. The results are not as good as the other two options but may sometimes provide additional useful materials. Use this option last.

Browsing the Catalog

The Catalog of some thousands of Australian law-related websites may be browsed from 'Catalog' (and the links under it) at the bottom of the left hand side of AustLII's front page. The relevant parts of the Catalog may be browsed from the categories listed on a jurisdiction page under the heading 'Catalog and Websearch' below the databases for that jurisdiction. The categories listed relate only to the jurisdiction concerned.

