

## What is female circumcision?

Female circumcision or female genital cutting can be a traditional practice in some communities. It is illegal in Australia.

## Does female circumcision happen in Australia?

In 2022, the Australian Government recorded that around 120,000 women living in Australia had their genitals cut in their birth country.

## What does the law say?

Section 74 of the *Crimes Act 1900* makes it a crime for a person to intentionally perform female genital mutilation, circumcision or cutting on another person. The penalty can be up to 15 years imprisonment.

It is not an excuse that the person on whom the female circumcision was performed, or their parent or guardian, consented to it.

## Why is female circumcision illegal?

Amongst other things, female circumcision can cause:

- psychological trauma
- pain
- infection
- severe bleeding
- problems urinating
- complications in childbirth embarrassment

## What should I do if someone I know is involved in female circumcision?

### ✓ Assistance

You can call the police for assistance on 000.

### ✓ Advice

For free and confidential legal advice contact the Racial and Religious Discrimination Legal Service Inc on 02 6100 1875 or email [admin@racialreligiousdls.org.au](mailto:admin@racialreligiousdls.org.au)

### ✓ Counselling

For free and confidential counselling and information call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732.

## What should I do if someone has been or will be taken overseas for female circumcision?

Call the 24/7 Consular Emergency Centre at 1300 555 135 (from Australia) or +61 2 6261 3304 (from overseas) or contact the nearest Australian overseas mission at [dfat.gov.au](http://dfat.gov.au).

You can also contact the Racial and Religious Discrimination Legal Service Inc for further advice.

