



Engaging
with the
community

Tribunal users



QCAT prides itself on the professionalism, integrity and impartiality of its staff and decision-makers and values the right of parties to have access to a quality service.

Our Service Charter

You have a right to:



- a fair and impartial hearing
- reasonable help to understand the tribunal's practices and procedures
- respect from registry staff and tribunal members
- your personal and confidential information being treated in compliance with relevant legislation.

We will:

- treat you with courtesy, respect and professionalism
- respect the diversity of the community
- provide fair and equitable access to services
- provide you with clear and accurate information about our practices and procedures
- provide you with detailed information through fact sheets and the QCAT webpage
- welcome your comments and deal with any reasonable problems.

We cannot:

- provide you with legal advice, however we can refer you to legal and community organisations which may be able to assist you
- provide advice about what to say during a hearing
- talk to a tribunal member or adjudicator on your behalf
- other than through the appeals system, alter decisions of a decision-maker or the outcomes of hearings.

You can help us by:

- having your case number and details ready when calling the tribunal
- providing us with timely and accurate information
- treating staff and members/adjudicators and other parties with courtesy and respect
- letting us know if you have any special needs
- telling us how we can improve our services
- asking us to explain anything you are not sure of.

Talk to your QCAT: Minor civil disputes

QCAT hosted the first *Talk to your QCAT* community forum in October 2013. The forum focussed on minor civil disputes, which make up approximately half of QCAT applications.

Over 150 members of the community and QCAT stakeholder groups attended to learn more about resolving minor civil disputes; lodging or responding to an application; tribunal processes and basic legislation; self-representation and the role of the Tribunal within Queensland's judicial system.

Almost 17,000
MCD
applications
were received in
2013-14



QCAT decision-makers and staff provided information on MCDs via a community forum.

Accessibility

QCAT have delivered ongoing development of online resources, including content and online form development as part of the Your Rights, Crime and the Law web portal at <http://www.qld.gov.au/law/>

Hearing loop facilities have also been made available in Brisbane hearing rooms to ensure accessibility for parties with a hearing impairment.

Support and advocacy

Community legal centres throughout Queensland play a key role in supporting people using QCAT services with advice, advocacy and representation.

The QPILCH Self Representation Service provides free legal advice and assistance to self-represented parties in eligible QCAT jurisdictions including anti-discrimination, child protection, guardianship and administration, administrative review and QCAT appeals. QCAT is QPILCH's largest source of referrals with 93 Tribunal users supported by the service in 2013-14.

In 2013-14 Court Network Volunteers provided assistance to more than 9,204 people using QCAT in Brisbane. Thirty per cent of those assisted were for claims; 22 per cent were for tenancy matters; and 79 per cent were unrepresented.

Communicating decisions

In 2013-14, the Supreme Court of Queensland Library published approximately 766 decisions handed down by the tribunal and 342 decisions of the appeal tribunal. Tribunal decisions are available from <http://www.sclqld.org.au/caselaw/QCAT>

Client satisfaction



The overall satisfaction rating of 72 per cent (comparable to 74 per cent in 2012-13) reflected a high level of satisfaction with QCAT service delivery regardless of satisfaction with case outcomes.

The client satisfaction rating includes assessment of accessibility; service delivery; satisfaction with outcome; knowledge and skills; fairness and equality; and member conduct and professionalism.

“The QCAT service was professional and fair”

Specific results from the survey included:

- 80 per cent agreed they had been treated with courtesy and respect during their QCAT experience
- 77 per cent agreed the QCAT decision-maker acted professionally
- 75 per cent agreed the decision-maker had appropriate knowledge and skills
- 74 per cent agreed they had received a prompt response from QCAT
- 73 per cent agreed staff had appropriate knowledge and advice from staff
- 72 per cent found the Tribunal easy to access
- 68 per cent were satisfied with the outcome (this is a significant results given that many matters before the Tribunal are adversarial disputes were there is likely to be a ‘winner’ and a ‘loser’).

“All our contact with QCAT staff has been positive, supportive and informative”

Our stakeholders



A snapshot of stakeholder engagement in 2013-14

- jointly produced the *Getting a fair go in the Tribunal* video with Anti-Discrimination Queensland to provide assistance for parties involved in discrimination matters. The video is available from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EzxigZ3Mz3o&feature=c4-overview&list=UU7Ko4Y36y-i6D25yfgL638g>
- regular contributions to stakeholder publications e.g. the RTA's *Open House* newsletter
- membership of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC) customer reference group
- presentations by staff and decision-makers to a diverse range of stakeholders e.g. Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services (QAILS), the Queensland Law Society and Foster Care Queensland
- assistance with training for organisations e.g. Court Volunteer Network and QPILCH

QCAT encouraged knowledge sharing and development through hosting delegations from the South Australian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT), Bhutanese National Legal Institute and senior Fellows from Mongolia.

Stakeholder satisfaction

Annual stakeholder satisfaction research assesses accessibility; fairness; communication and engagement; knowledge and information; professionalism and accountability; independence and efficiency.

In 2013-14 QCAT achieved an overall stakeholder satisfaction level of 73 per cent. This reflects an 18 per cent increase in satisfaction since the research was first undertaken in 2010.

Specific results from the survey included:

- 80 per cent of stakeholders agreed that QCAT provide information in a timely and efficient manner



- 77 per cent agreed that the decision-maker had appropriate knowledge and skills
- 77 per cent agreed the Tribunal is accessible
- 72 per cent agreed that QCAT engages with their organisation to meet the needs of our users.