

# Using QCAT services

## Representation and legal advice

As part of an independent tribunal, QCAT members and registry staff are unable to provide legal advice to clients. Staff may refer clients to their local community legal centre or to a private solicitor to seek advice.

Generally, QCAT expects all parties to represent themselves in all tribunal proceedings. However, parties do have the right to seek permission (seek leave) to be represented before the tribunal. Some parties do not need to seek leave, such as a child or person who has impaired decision making, and in certain kinds of disciplinary matters.

## Support and advocacy

### Community legal centres

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

### Court Network

Court Network is an Australian not-for-profit court support service providing non-legal information, support and referral services to all persons attending court/tribunals.



#### Court Network

Since the launch of QCAT in December 2009 Court Network Volunteers have provided assistance to over 40,000 court users in Queensland which includes assistance to over 5,000 Brisbane QCAT clients. Of those assisted in the Brisbane tribunal 91 per cent were self-represented.

Court Network has 130 Volunteers in Brisbane CBD, Cairns and Townsville courts.

### Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House (QPILCH) – Self Representation Service



The QPILCH Self Representation Service has been hosted by QCAT since January 2010. QPILCH is an independent not-for-profit community legal centre that coordinates the provision of pro bono legal services for individuals and community groups.

QPILCH provides free legal advice and assistance to existing and prospective parties in eligible QCAT jurisdictions including anti-discrimination, child protection, guardianship and administration, administrative review and QCAT appeals.

In 2010-2011, the Self Representation Service processed 171 applications for assistance and provided 202 appointments to QCAT clients.

### **Tenants' Union of Queensland (TUQ)**

QCAT hosts the TUQ to provide weekly workshops for QCAT clients in their Brisbane registry office. The TUQ is a statewide community organisation focussed on the rights of residential tenants, including caravan park and boarding house residents. The free workshops assist existing and potential clients with completing and filing applications, preparing materials for hearings, and learning more about their rights and responsibilities under the law.

## **Our complaints and feedback policy**

QCAT encourages feedback from clients and stakeholders to assist in responding to emerging client service issues and to maintain client satisfaction. We aim to process complaints through a fair, timely, easy to use and confidential process.

In 2010-11 the rate of complaints received by QCAT was 0.4 per cent of total applications. This reflects a decrease from the 2009-10 figure of 0.5 per cent.

Complaints relating to policy and procedure decreased by over 57 per cent in 2010-11, reflecting an increased awareness of how QCAT operates.