

# QCAT media guidelines

The Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) delivers justice in a way that is independent, efficient, expert, accessible and flexible. The tribunal is committed to a fair and transparent process to allow members of the media access to QCAT records.

Journalists are entitled to the same information as other members of the public.

## 1. Advice on QCAT proceedings

A list of proceedings is published daily on the QCAT website at [www.qcat.qld.gov.au](http://www.qcat.qld.gov.au) (generally proceedings for the next business day are published by close of business the previous business day).

## 2. Publication of QCAT decisions

Written decisions made by QCAT are published on the Supreme Court of Queensland Library website at <http://www.sclqld.org.au/qcat/>

Decisions which have involved either children or other vulnerable people are de-identified to protect the party's identity. If a non-publication order has been made the published decision will also be de-identified to the extent necessary to protect the information covered by the order.

## 3. Access to QCAT files

While case files are generally open for public inspection, QCAT must give due consideration to which documents can be inspected. In addition, some category of cases e.g. those involving children are not available for public inspection at all.

Requests may be made to view:

- the QCAT register of proceedings (subject to a fee – see page 3)
- the QCAT record of proceedings (subject to a fee – see page 3).

QCAT registry staff endeavour to address all file inspection applications in a timely manner in consideration of operational demands.

## 4. Accessing QCAT register of proceedings (list of cases before QCAT)

- a. Journalists may request searches of the QCAT register:
  - i. via email: request to [enquiries@qcat.qld.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@qcat.qld.gov.au) along with a credit card authorisation form (available from <http://www.qcat.qld.gov.au/forms.htm>)
  - ii. via post: request to GPO Box 1639, Brisbane, QLD 4001 with a completed credit card authorisation form, cheque or money order
  - iii. via fax: request and a completed credit card authorisation form to 07 3221 9156
  - iv. in person: QCAT, level 9, 259 Queens Street, Brisbane along with cash, credit card, cheque or money order payment.
- b. A request must be received by QCAT in writing and must include the name of at least one party to the proceeding.

- c. Searches by any non-party (including journalists) are subject to a fee. This fee is required to be paid in advance of the search – there is no refund regardless of the outcome of the search. Additional fees are payable if the file is located off-site and needs to be recalled, or for any photocopying required (see fee information on page 3).
- d. The journalist may request the results of the register search be delivered in writing (via fax, email or post) or verbally at the counter.

## **5. Access to record of proceedings (case files)**

- a. Journalists are required to lodge a written request to view a QCAT case file:
  - v. via email: request to [enquiries@qcat.qld.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@qcat.qld.gov.au)
  - vi. via post: request to GPO Box 1639, Brisbane, QLD 4001
  - vii. via fax: request to 07 3221 9156
  - viii. in person: QCAT, level 9, 259 Queens Street, Brisbane along with cash, credit card, cheque or money order payment.
- b. QCAT staff will check file availability and whether it is subject to any non-publication orders or is covered by legislation that prevents access.
- c. If the file is available and able to be accessed, QCAT staff will advise on timeframes for viewing. Please note it is generally not possible to view the file immediately due to availability of file inspection rooms and supervisory staff, as well as use of the file by staff or members. It is recommended that journalists make a viewing appointment to avoid lengthy waiting times.
- d. QCAT staff will ask you to complete a *Request for file inspection* form. This form includes a note that it is the responsibility of any person using material from the file to ensure that the intended use of that material does not breach any relevant legislative provision or tribunal order. It also acknowledges liability for costs incurred.
- e. QCAT staff will supervise viewing in a file inspection room on the QCAT premises. The administrative staff member will be unable to answer any questions regarding the file aside from simple administrative matters around copying of information. Any other media inquiries should be directed to Communication Services Branch on +61 7 3239 0782 or +61 7 3405 3762
- f. You may request portions of the file contents be photocopied, subject to the fees outlined above. If a substantial amount of copying is required, you may not be able to be provided with the information immediately. You are not permitted to take pictures of the information using a phone or other device.
- g. Prior to leaving the QCAT premises you must pay the amount advised by QCAT staff (depending on time spent inspecting the file and any photocopying requested).

## **6. Accessing archived records**

- a. If requesting access to a file which is archived off site, additional costs are generally applicable if the file. QCAT staff will advise timeframes for retrieval of files if they are located off site.
- b. File access will then generally follow the same processes as outlined above.

## **7. Access to hearings**

Generally all QCAT hearings, except those relating to children, are open to members of the media and public – subject to QCAT-ordered restrictions.

Members of the media and public are not permitted to attend mediations. Compulsory conferences are private unless directed otherwise by the presiding Member.

Members of the public (including the media) may be excluded from proceedings if:

- an order is made that the proceedings be conducted in private
- an order is made that certain persons are excluded from a proceeding
- the matter is covered by an enabling Act that requires the proceeding to be held in private, e.g. hearings about child protection issues.

Hearings for children and young people matters are usually conducted in private due to additional confidentiality conditions.

## **8. Filming and recording at hearings**

Members of the media are permitted to attend hearings and make a private audio recording (using a hand-held recorder) for the purposes of maintaining accuracy of reporting. In making the recording:

- the recording must be done unobtrusively and without interruption to proceedings
- the audio content of the recording may not be broadcast – see [QCAT Practice Direction No 10 of 2010: Private audio-recording of proceedings](#)

Filming or photography of QCAT proceedings is generally not permitted. Specific requests can be made to the JAG Communication Services.

## **9. Interviews and press conferences**

Generally, press conferences and interviews are not permitted to be conducted on the QCAT premises. Specific requests can be made to the Communication Services Branch on +61 7 3239 0782 or +61 7 3405 3762.

## **10. Fees for register and file access**

For administrative fee information please visit <http://www.qcat.qld.gov.au/administrative-fees.htm>

In all instances, a written request in person or via post or email is required for the request to be accepted and processed. The acceptance of a request by QCAT does not guarantee the request will be granted.

## **10. Recordings and transcripts**

Recordings and transcripts of proceedings may be requested for any hearing. Restrictions apply to proceedings subject to non-publication orders or other QCAT ordered or legislative restrictions. Recordings and transcripts requested are subject to a prescribed fee.

To request an audio recording please lodge a [Request for reasons or audio recording](#) form with QCAT.

To order a transcript, please lodge a [Request for transcript – Party form](#) (this form must be lodged with Auscript). Fees are charged by Auscript for this service.

Visit [www.auscript.com.au](http://www.auscript.com.au) or contact 1800 287 274 for more information.

### **11. Complaints**

Applicants who are dissatisfied with a registry decision may seek a review under the QCAT Complaint Protocol  
(see [http://www.qcat.qld.gov.au/Publications/QCAT\\_Complaint\\_Protocol.pdf](http://www.qcat.qld.gov.au/Publications/QCAT_Complaint_Protocol.pdf)).

### **12. Media contact**

Department of Justice and Attorney General – Communication Services Branch  
+61 7 3239 0782 or +61 7 3405 3762 to speak to a media officer, or email your inquiry to  
[media.relations@justice.qld.gov.au](mailto:media.relations@justice.qld.gov.au)

### **13. QCAT**

Level 9, Bank of Queensland Centre  
259 Queen Street, Brisbane  
Business hours: 8.30am – 4.30pm (Monday to Friday)  
Phone: 1300 753 228  
Email: [enquiries@qcat.qld.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@qcat.qld.gov.au)  
Website: [www.qcat.qld.gov.au](http://www.qcat.qld.gov.au)