



QCAT Strategic Plan 2023-2025

Acknowledgement of Country



QCAT acknowledges the first owners and custodians of the land and waters across Queensland and pays respect to their Elders who have spoken for the land in the past and who do so today. QCAT acknowledges their wisdom and leadership.

Contents

Our Objects and Organisational Values	3
QCAT at a glance	4
Some reasons to evolve.....	6
Our strategies	7

Our Objects and Organisational Values

QCAT is a statutory tribunal, with clear legislative objects and remit. QCAT determines matters and disputes in accordance with the *Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009* (QCAT Act) and enabling Acts and applicable Regulations and Rules.

Under the QCAT Act, the President has the function of managing the business of the Tribunal. Unlike other courts, this includes Registry business.

The objects of the QCAT Act include having the Tribunal focus on delivering services in such a way as to:

- deal with matters in a way that is accessible, fair, just, economical, informal and quick; and
- promote and enhance the quality and consistency of Tribunal decisions.

Our organisational values guide the way we carry out our functions.

Our four organisational values are:

Accessible

We will be mindful of potential access barriers involved in engaging with QCAT.

This means that we make our processes as simple as possible and communicate them well, so that Queenslanders understand when and how QCAT can help.

Trustworthy

Queenslanders can have confidence that QCAT has treated them fairly and in accordance with the law.

We will be consistent and transparent about QCAT's processes.

Timely

We understand the emotional, financial and other costs of being involved in litigation.

We will deal with matters as quickly as practicable, including using alternative dispute resolution processes where they are likely to be effective.

Inclusive

We will operate with a culture of respect and inclusivity and engage with Queenslanders in a sensitive and culturally competent way.

Within QCAT we value our people and the diverse perspectives and experiences that they bring.

Our Organisational Values

QCAT at a glance

QCAT is an independent statutory Tribunal established by the QCAT Act. QCAT plays an integral role in the Queensland justice system.

QCAT resolves and determines applications, disputes, reviews and referrals in a wide range of jurisdictions, including:

- Applications in relation to appointments of administrators and guardians
- Administrative review of government and statutory authority decisions
- Occupational regulation and discipline
- Minor civil disputes (MCDs)
- Referrals by the Queensland Human Rights Commission
- Civil disputes.

Currently, over 180 different Acts, in addition to the QCAT Act, confer jurisdiction on the Tribunal to resolve matters. The Tribunal - that is judges, members and adjudicators - is supported by the Registry, which forms part of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

Given QCAT's broad legislative remit, it is on the front line of the justice system. Tens of thousands of people engage with QCAT every year and the decisions QCAT makes can have significant consequences. It is therefore essential that we function in a way that produces sound decisions in accordance with our objects.

QCAT snapshot as at 30 June 2022

28,962

CASES
FINALISED

79%

USER
SATISFACTION

143.5

REGISTRY
FTE

83,331

1300
MANAGED CALLS

26,820

CASES
LODGED

\$29.9m

OPERATING
EXPENSES

194

PEOPLE IN THE
TRIBUNAL

9,253

COUNTER
ENQUIRIES

Source: QCAT Annual Report 2021-22

In recent years, the COVID-19 pandemic, changes in society and community, including economic and other stressors, have escalated demand for QCAT services.

In the last few years, and operating with constrained services, we have focused on:

- Improving our website so that it is simpler and better suited to people's needs, by providing improved factsheets and information available on common questions or issues
- Making significant process improvements to streamline our procedures and tasks
- Utilising technology to support digitisation of some of our jurisdictions and transition us to a more contemporary organisation
- Working with the Magistrates Courts Service to deliver improved local access to QCAT across the whole of Queensland
- Increasing collaboration between the Tribunal and Registry to seek to improve the delivery of QCAT services and functions.

These improvements have been a consideration in the development of the 2023-25 Strategic Plan.



Some reasons to evolve

1. Changing demand for our services and functions

QCAT's case load has been increasing in volume and complexity. Further, QCAT's legislative remit has expanded over time, which has added to the range of matters that come before QCAT. This presents ongoing challenges, particularly in light of extremely scarce resources.

2. Shift and growth in Queensland's population

The State's population continues to grow, particularly in regional areas in south-east Queensland. We are also experiencing an ageing population that is putting, and will continue to put, even greater pressure on our guardianship jurisdiction. QCAT's service models need to evolve to keep pace and be accessible.

QCAT must consider how it can function to maximise its accessibility, inclusivity and trustworthiness for all Queensland citizens, including its different population groups, such as First Nations people, migrants and other minorities.

3. New operational realities

Continued advances in information technology will significantly shape the way that people work.

The Queensland community will expect us to deliver accessible services in a contemporary way.

Our strategies

A contemporary QCAT

The business of both the Tribunal and Registry will seek to meet the needs of a contemporary and changing Queensland society. This includes seeking to ensure that:

- QCAT procedures and case management are fit-for-purpose and technology is strategically used across the organisation, and
- Opportunities for legislative and business reform are identified to better meet our statutory objectives.

- Consistently review and improve procedures and case management processes
- Improve how we collect, store and use data
- Establish, retain and maintain our institutional knowledge
- Transition to an increasingly digitally-integrated organisation
- As an independent stakeholder, actively engage in the Section 240 QCAT Act statutory review
- Act consistently with the *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)*

Dealing with matters in a timely way

QCAT will seek to deal with matters as effectively and efficiently as possible

This includes using alternative dispute resolution processes where data and experience indicate they are likely to be effective.

- Consistently review and seek to improve the legislative and operational environment for dealing with matters in a timely way
- Support parties to come together and resolve disputes faster by providing clear and relevant information about alternative dispute resolution processes available
- Use alternative dispute resolution when it is likely to be effective, that is likely to achieve a meaningful outcome

Accessible services and functions

QCAT will seek to ensure that citizens have equitable access to QCAT.

- Develop processes that are readily navigable for users and which are also consistent with the needs of the Tribunal
- Support parties by providing clear and relevant information about processes and what they need to do to facilitate matters being dealt with in a timely way
- Embrace available technology to optimise accessibility
- Provide reasonable adjustments to facilitate equitable access to QCAT

Skilled, diverse and empowered people

QCAT will seek to ensure that all of QCAT's people are supported to work to their full potential.

- Invest in QCAT'S people and our culture so that QCAT has a positive work environment
- Ensure all QCAT's people feel included, motivated and empowered to share their ideas and concerns and drive positive change across the organisation
- Invest in professional development which is targeted to building the skills needed for QCAT, including further developing leadership skills
- Invest in building cultural competency and safety within QCAT and in the delivery of QCAT's services