

About us



The Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) was established on 1 December 2009 under the *Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009*. QCAT has successfully amalgamated 18 tribunals and 23 jurisdictions into a one-stop-shop for community justice and dispute resolution in Queensland.

QCAT operates as a tribunal, not a court, and in keeping with statutory requirements acts with as little formality and technicality as possible.

Our vision

Actively resolve disputes in a way that is fair, just, accessible, quick and inexpensive.

What we do

QCAT makes decisions on a range of matters across:

- administrative decisions
- administration for adults
- anti-discrimination matters
- building disputes
- children and young people matters
- guardianship for adults
- minor civil disputes including consumer, debt and residential tenancy disputes
- other civil disputes
- occupational regulation matters including police, health professionals and legal practitioners
- retail shop lease disputes.

QCAT reviews decisions made by government agencies and statutory authorities (review decisions). These decisions were previously reviewed by the Supreme Court, the District Court, the Magistrates Court or a former tribunal or other statutory bodies e.g. the Gaming Commission and Information Commissioner.

In certain circumstances, the Appeal Tribunal of QCAT hears appeals against decisions of the tribunal.

Our clients

Our clients include the Queensland community, Queensland Government departments and agencies and representatives of tribunal users. Due to QCAT's wide-ranging jurisdictions, the tribunal can affect many aspects of the Queensland community.

Our core values

Our values are embedded in our day-to-day operations and guide all that we do:

- independence – we are impartial and consider all matters on their individual merits
- integrity – we ensure that our decisions are open to scrutiny and review
- responsiveness – we aim to understand your unique needs and ensure that your matter is heard in a timely manner
- fairness – we aim to understand your issues, we explain what we are doing and how fair outcomes have been reached
- active resolution – we clarify the issues, and resolve them
- cost effective – we resolve disputes as effectively and efficiently as possible.

QCAT in action: When shop keepers and landlords disagree

Bob and Sue are tenants in a group of shops owned by Charlie. Charlie constructed a coffee shop in a kiosk in the vicinity of his shops, which Bob and Sue claim compromised the visibility of and access to their shop.

Bob and Sue applied to QCAT to seek compensation under the *Retail Shop Leases Act 1994* for loss of turnover and future loss, and asked that QCAT order the kiosk be closed and that Charlie reduce their rent by 30 per cent.

The tribunal member accepted evidence that the new entrances created as part of the centre development took customers within a close proximity of Bob and Sue's shop and determined that Charlie had taken all reasonable steps to ensure a clear passage for customers to their shop.

The member dismissed the claim for compensation, and advised Bob and Sue that their claims for rent reduction and that the coffee kiosk be closed were not within the jurisdiction of QCAT (particularly if this involves a tenant [of the coffee shop] that is not party to the proceedings).

Our organisational structure

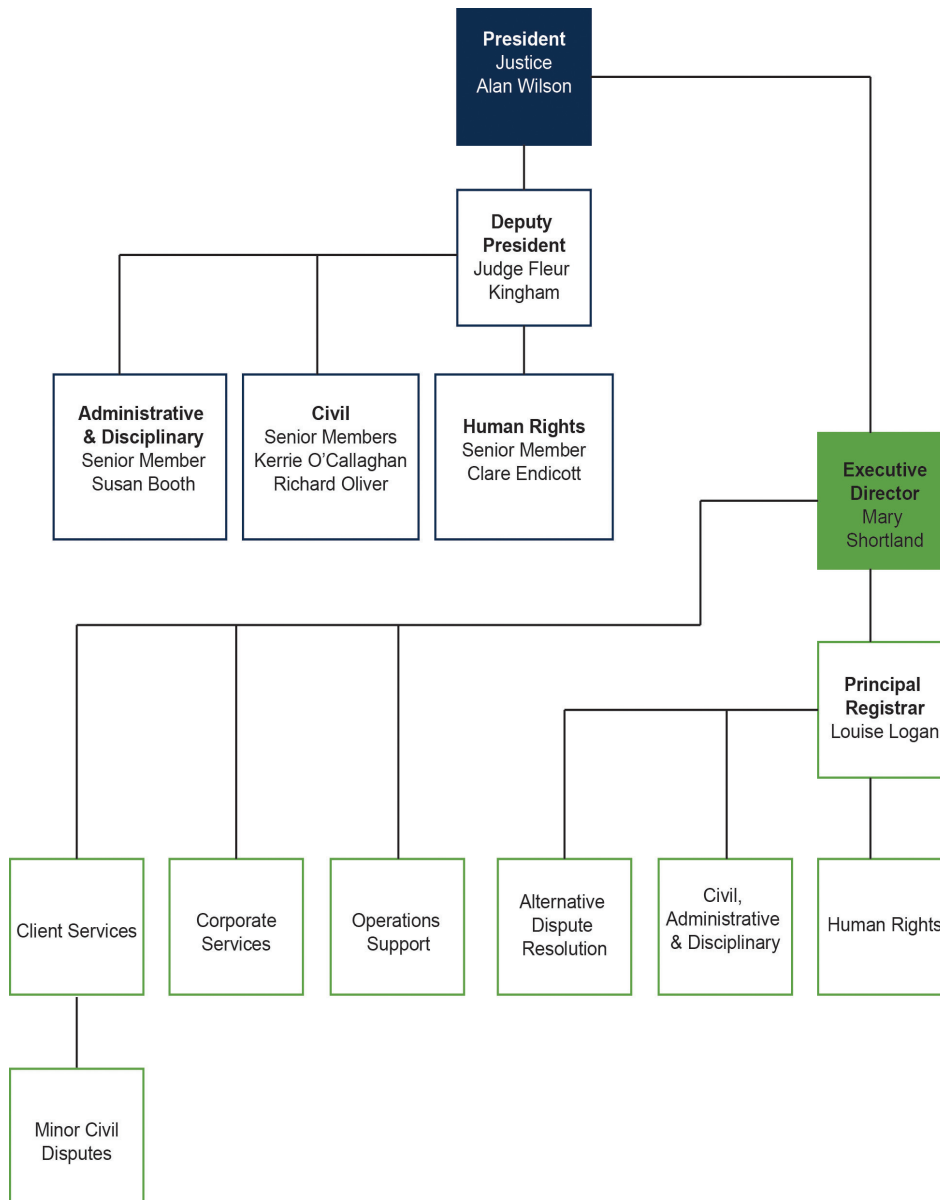


Figure 1: QCAT organisational structure 2010-11

Our members and adjudicators

Members and adjudicators conduct hearings and make decisions for QCAT matters, and may also conduct compulsory conferences and mediations.

The President decides which members and the number of members (no more than three) who will hear a matter based on the nature, importance and complexity of the case. In some cases, specific legislation dictates a specific person must hear a matter e.g. under

the *Legal Profession Act 2007* a Supreme Court judge must hear matters related to legal practitioners.

Members can either be lawyers or other people who have knowledge, expertise or experience relating to the type of matter being heard. For example, a teacher may be utilised for hearing teacher disciplinary matters, or a psychologist or social worker may provide an invaluable contribution in guardianship or child protection matters.

Sessional members are appointed throughout Queensland to ensure locals have access to locally based mediation and hearings.

Adjudicators are lawyers who hear minor civil disputes and some other matters.

Supreme and District Court judges and magistrates may be appointed as supplementary members. All magistrates throughout Queensland are automatically appointed as ordinary members of QCAT to hear minor civil disputes.

Members reflect the social and cultural diversity of the community and include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Our regional services

QCAT services are delivered throughout the State in conjunction with the Magistrates Court. Approximately half of matters are heard outside of Brisbane either by magistrates hearing QCAT minor civil disputes or regular hearings by QCAT members.

The local Magistrates Court is the first point of contact for suburban Brisbane and non-Brisbane based QCAT clients.

Members also serve regionally to ensure access to local decision-makers.

To ensure accessibility, the tribunal considers alternative arrangements for parties who are unable to access their local courthouse.