

## Message from the Executive Director



Congratulations to all registry staff and tribunal members on another year of growth in sometimes challenging circumstances.

The launch of the inaugural *QCAT Strategic Plan 2012-15* this year has articulated our vision, our values and the culture all QCAT registry staff and members strive for.

Developed in consultation with a diverse range of stakeholders, the plan identifies key priorities over the next three years as we work towards a vision to actively solve disputes in a way that is fair, just, accessible, quick and inexpensive.

Our priorities reflect the dynamic operating context within which we operate, and focus on the areas of both challenge and opportunity.

The establishment of the QCAT Board of Management reflects the refreshed strategic and governance approach to our organisation. We recognise the challenges ahead: we are experiencing an increase in lodgements and jurisdictional demand at a time when resources are constrained throughout the State.

As demand rises, so too does the workload on our staff, testing our service delivery commitment. As we continue to work together to identify innovative ways to deliver, we must also ensure we balance demands with the need for staff training, development and recognition.

We have a lot to be proud of when we consider the achievements of the past year. We have pioneered new processes for professional development and appraisal of the performance of tribunal members, and we have established a new methodology for compulsory conferences, which will ultimately reduce hearings and improve outcomes.

We have worked to meaningfully engage with stakeholders and clients to ensure awareness and accessibility, recognising that education is a key element to ensuring access to justice.

We have delivered clearance rates that defy the resourcing challenges we have faced.

It is a testament to the dedication of registry staff, members and adjudicators that our recent inaugural client satisfaction survey reflected that, on average, 77 per cent of our clients agree they were treated with courtesy and respect. This result reflects the recognition of the high levels of client service provided, which are recognised by clients even if they may be dissatisfied with the decision in their case.

Similarly, our stakeholder satisfaction research (conducted for the second time in 2011), reflects an increase in overall satisfaction from key stakeholder and partner groups.

In the year ahead we face a range of challenges including the commencement of the *Neighbourhood Dispute Resolution Act 2011* and other potential new jurisdictions. Identifying appropriate ways to manage demand without compromising on service standards and outcomes for our clients is paramount.

We must strengthen our regional response for regional and remote accessibility, including establishing a permanent presence in North Queensland to service the regional community more effectively, and continuing to work closely with Magistrates Courts throughout the state.

We will continue to take an active approach to case management, particularly through embedding alternative dispute resolution (ADR) processes and supporting self-represented litigants effectively and efficiently through the dispute resolution process.

We must also confront a changing demographic profile in Queensland as the ageing population grows and requires more and more decision-making support.

We will continue to strive to deliver a fair and just Queensland for all.

**Mary Shortland**  
**Executive Director**  
**September 2011**