

# Our strategic priorities

## Engaging with the community

### Surveys

This year QCAT analysed a range of perspectives through three tailored surveys:

1. A user survey of QCAT's performance, particularly in relation to our fairness, efficiency and professionalism.
2. A user survey accessing QCAT's phone and counter services and online accessibility.
3. A stakeholder survey of senior executives from priority stakeholder organisations assessing the quality of QCAT information, appropriateness of their contact and our performance.

### User surveys

This year we applied new methods to the annual user survey's functions and content and delivery. The aim was to improve user response rates and tailor the survey based on the status of people's matters (ongoing or completed).

The response rate to the survey concerning QCAT's performance improved to a 24% response rate with 3836 users responding, compared to a 9.7% response rate in 2014-15.

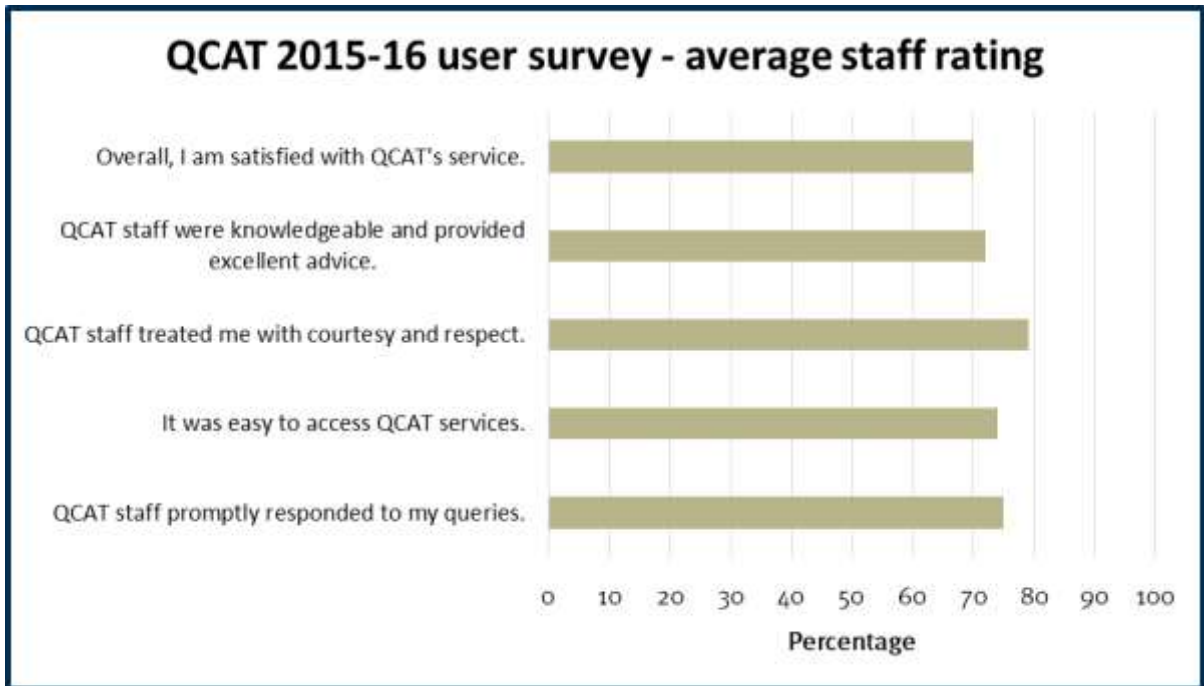
On average, only 18% of people expressed a negative experience across our client and member services.

Positive survey results included:

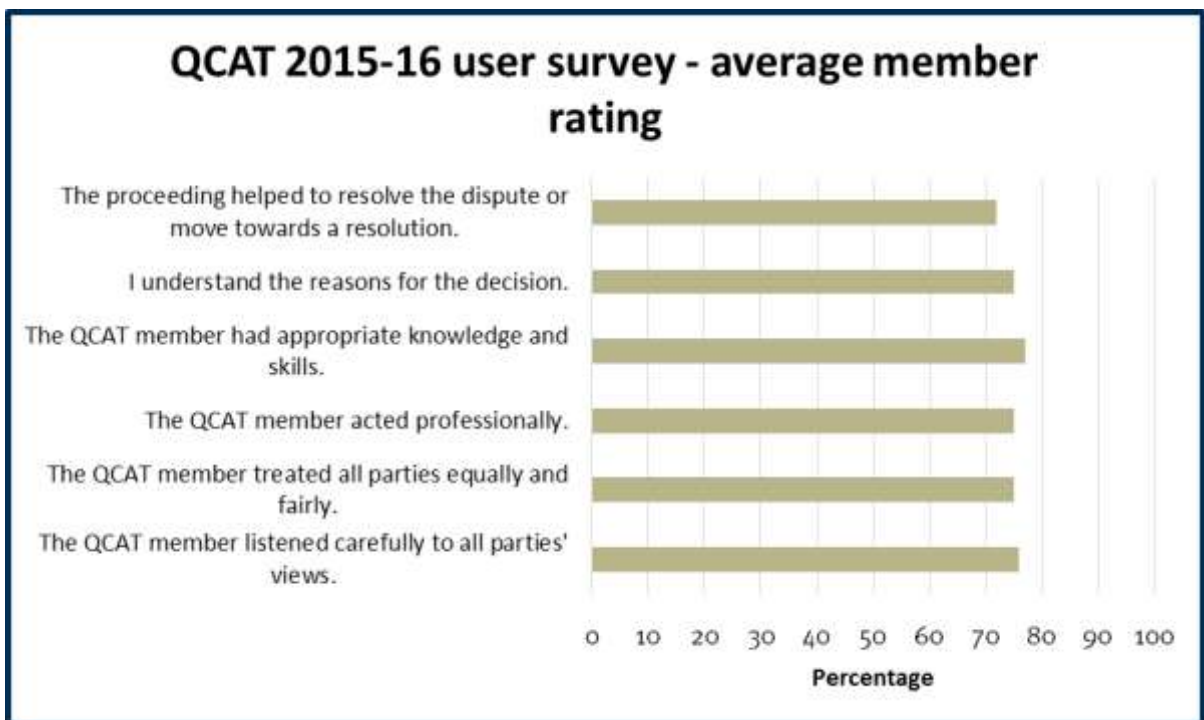
- 75% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing the member acted professionally
- a 4% increase in the number of people strongly agreeing or agreeing it was easy to access QCAT's services.

The results also highlighted the potential for dispute resolution improvement, mindful of course that the survey delivery method and content altered this year.

The common thread through these results is the need for improved QCAT decision communication, procedures for which will be given careful consideration in 2016-17.



QCAT survey results – staff performance criteria



QCAT survey results – member performance criteria

## User Insight

This year we conducted a targeted survey into the accessibility of our online information and how Tribunal users found the information they needed. During a four-week period 181 participants responded to the survey either on the phone or over the counter to assess why they were using those channels instead of the website. The majority were parties to minor civil disputes, predominantly either tenancy or minor debts.

These survey results showed:

- 51% of users tried to access information or a service online before either calling or visiting a counter
- Of the users who did not first try to access information online 38% identified they preferred to access government services online and 31% preferred to access these services by telephone
- The primary reasons for telephoning after searching online included not being able to find information online (31%), wanting to talk to someone (26%) and difficulty understanding the online information (25%)
- The primary reasons for visiting a counter after searching online included to lodge documents (63%) and needing information or advice (13%).

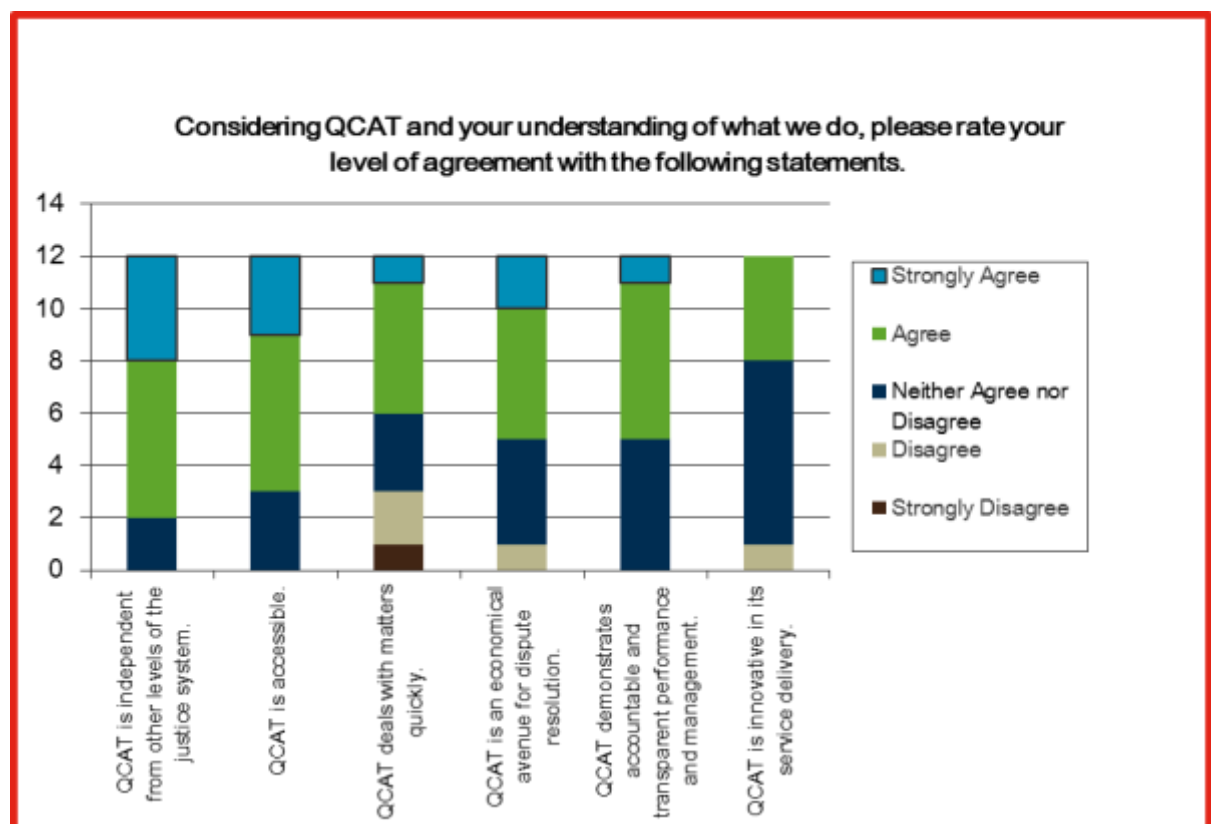
These results inform our ongoing development of online resources and how best to meet the information needs of the Tribunal's users.

## Executive survey

This year, the QCAT stakeholder survey targeted chief decision makers from priority stakeholder organisations across government, regulatory and non-profit sectors. The purpose was to examine the difference (if any) between the stakeholder and user surveys to better inform QCAT's stakeholder engagement plan.

There was a 70% response rate with executive stakeholders revealing they:

- feel satisfied with the quality of QCAT's information and level of engagement
- are happy with the direct contact they receive from QCAT
- would like to receive information on decisions directly affecting them, QCAT statistics and reporting
- generally feel QCAT is independent, accessible, efficient, economical, accountable and transparent.



QCAT 2015-16 executive stakeholder survey results

## Stakeholder engagement

This year our stakeholder engagement included:

Stakeholder	Our 2015-16 collaboration
Australian Guardianship and Administration Council	QCAT continues its commitment to AGAC meetings, held every six months. This enables the Tribunal to participate in an Australia wide response to important issues, such as the introduction of NDIS and to learn from the experience of similar Tribunals.
Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency	QCAT meets regularly with AHPRA to discuss the health practitioner disciplinary list.
Aurukun	Together with the Queensland Family and Child Commission, Public Safety Business Agency and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, QCAT participated in a presentation to the Aurukun community about child protection issues. In particular, a member of QCAT spoke to the community about the Tribunal's approach to Blue Card applications.
Bar Association of Queensland	QCAT consults with the Bar Association of Queensland regarding process and practice issues.
Building Dispute Practitioners Society	In 2015-16, the BDPS created a sub-committee to meet with the Tribunal to discuss ways in which the building jurisdiction could be improved. The Tribunal met with the sub-committee on two occasions.
Child related stakeholder forums	The Tribunal hosted a number of child related forums through the year, inviting government stakeholders (e.g. Public Guardian, Public Safety Business Agency, Queensland Family and Child Commission and Department of Education Training and Employment) and community organisations (e.g. Foster care Queensland, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Service, CREATE Foundation, QPILCH and Youth Advocacy Centre).
Council of Australasian Tribunals	Tribunal members participated in the annual COAT conference in Hobart including one member delivering a paper on judicial oversight of the Tribunal. The President is a member of the COAT executive as the Treasurer.
Legal Services Commission	QCAT consults with the LSC regarding process and practice issues.

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Our 2015-16 collaboration</b>
Queensland Health	Our Human Rights Division continued QCAT's strong relationship with Queensland Health through a pilot project to reduce guardianship hearing timeframes for inpatients.
Queensland Law Society	QCAT continues to be invited to address a number of QLS sub-committees about topical issues, including developments in elder law and the process involved in occupational regulation proceedings. QCAT meets regularly with QLS representatives regarding process and practice issues.
REIQ	The Tribunal considers that many residential tenancy disputes can be avoided by proper preparation of tenancy agreements, an understanding of the QCAT hearing process and fair engagement between parties before a dispute escalates. For that reason, QCAT attends the annual REIQ summit, and specialist training days, to assist property managers in correct and respectful communication with tenants and the Tribunal.
Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA)	We published three articles in RTA's Open House newsletter reaching 10,234 subscribers. This year, QCAT and the RTA streamlined bond management and appeal processes to reduce double handling of applications and ensure a fair, timely process for users. We also ensured the current data exchange between RTA and QCAT would be incorporated into the RTA's upcoming system upgrades.

## Our partnerships

<b>Partnering organisation</b>	<b>2015-16 collaboration</b>
Community Legal Centres Queensland	To help consolidate CLCQ's brand, we edited communication, changing language used in online platforms and in user information tools.
Department of Justice and Attorney-General's Dispute Resolution Branch	We maintained a constructive relationship with the dispute resolution branch this year to provide additional mediators for Brisbane matters as required and performed 2020 mediations state-wide at their six Dispute Resolution Centres.

## Partnering organisation

## 2015-16 collaboration

Department of Justice and Attorney-General

The Tribunal receives funding and high-level corporate support from the department. Our independence is enshrined in the *Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009* that states QCAT 'is not subject to direction or control by any entity, including any Minister' (s162). We enjoy a professional, productive relationship with the department which this year included improved interpreter services, mediation service delivery and leadership development.

Inter-Departmental Interpreter Working Group

QCAT is an active participant in the Inter-Departmental Interpreter Working Group, contributing to the government's domestic and family violence reform agenda. A major initiative of the group in 2015-16 was mapping the interpreter process to make it easier for interpreters to engage with the justice system, and developing a domestic and family violence glossary and training. These initiatives were delivered to coincide with the Southport Domestic Violence Court trial.

Supreme Court Library Queensland

The publication of reasons on the Supreme Court Library website is in accordance with the general practice of the Tribunal and is authorised by section 125 of the *Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal Act 2009*. The reasons are part of the Tribunal's public record. In 2015-16, 440 Tribunal reasons, and 195 appeal Tribunal reasons were published on the Supreme Court Library website.

## Our special thanks to

### Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House (QPILCH)

QPILCH is an independent, not-for-profit, community-based legal organisation that coordinates pro bono legal services for individuals and community groups in Queensland. QPILCH offers assistance across a range of jurisdictions such as child protection, guardianship and appeals. For the first time, QPILCH extended its service to include pro bono representation in compulsory conferences in child protection matters. We provide office space for QPILCH support services in Brisbane, which this year provided 303 user appointments. To support the QPILCH service and our users, QCAT offered training to volunteer lawyers on the QCAT appeals procedure, maintained regular contact with the organisation and remodelled the Tribunal's Brisbane premises to create a discrete reception area for QPILCH users.



**Court Network**

In Queensland, approximately 120 trained volunteers support Court and Tribunal users in Brisbane, Townsville and Cairns. Court Network supports users navigating the Tribunal at Brisbane Townsville and Cairns. In 2015-16, Court Network supported 9922 QCAT users. This year, we provided training for Court Network's March intake of 45 volunteers who have since graduated and are on roster across Brisbane Courts and Tribunals.

