

QCAT media policy

The Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT) is an independent, accessible tribunal that efficiently resolves disputes and makes decisions on a range of matters.

The tribunal's purpose is to provide a quick, inexpensive avenue to resolve legal disputes between parties.

We are committed to a fair and transparent process that allows the media access to QCAT records.

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

1. Parameters of QCAT media statements

Due to QCAT's independence, the tribunal cannot:

- comment on cases or clients before the tribunal
- provide advice on points of law regarding current cases
- express opinions on legislative reviews or Bills before parliament

The tribunal may provide media information on:

- promotion of justice or social welfare events, such as the LawRight Queensland Legal Walk or World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
- QCAT corporate operations, such as service delivery results (eg annual report data), non-confidential projects and executive appointments.

2. Advice on QCAT proceedings

A list of proceedings is published daily on QCAT's website at qcat.qld.gov.au.

Generally, proceedings for the next business day are published by close of business the previous business day.

3. Publication of QCAT decisions

Written QCAT decisions are published on the Supreme Court Library Queensland website, sclqld.org.au/caselaw/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 the order covers.

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

This is a search of QCAT databases for case files based on general parameters such as an individual's or a business's or corporation's name, or a case or matter number. Journalists and other members of the public (non-parties) can request to view QCAT's register or record of proceedings.

- a. Non-parties may request searches of the QCAT register:
 - i. [online](#)
 - i. via post: GPO Box 1639, Brisbane, Qld, 4001 with a completed [credit card authorisation form](#), cheque or money order.
 - ii. in person: QCAT, Level 9, 259 Queen Street, Brisbane along with cash, credit card, cheque or money order payment.
- b. QCAT must receive the request in writing. The request must include the name of at least one party to the proceeding.
- c. Searches by non-parties 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. Additional fees are payable if the file is located off site and needs to be recalled, or for any photocopying required, see fee information at [qcat.qld.gov.au > resources > fees-and-allowances > administrative-fees](#).
- d. Results may be delivered via email, post or fax, or at the QCAT counter.

5. Access to record of proceedings (inspection of case files)

This is a request to view a case file.

- a. File inspections from non-parties are subject to fees as listed at [qcat.qld.gov.au > resources > fees-and-allowances > administrative-fees](#).
- b. People are required to lodge a written request to view a QCAT case file.
 - i. enquiries@qcat.qld.gov.au
 - ii. GPO Box 1639, Brisbane, QLD 4001
 - iii. fax: 07 3221 9156
 - iv. QCAT, Level 9, 259 Queen Street, Brisbane along with cash, credit card, cheque or money order payment.
- c. QCAT staff will check file availability and whether it is subject to any non-publication orders or is covered by legislation that prevents access. While case files are generally open for public inspection, QCAT must give due consideration to which documents can be inspected. Some categories of cases, such as those involving children, are not available.
- d. If the file is available and can be accessed, QCAT staff will advise on timeframes for viewing and request file inspection payment. Please note:
 - i. It is generally not possible to view the file immediately and a minimum 24 hours' notice is required prior to inspection. Timeframes depend on file, facility and staff availability.
 - ii. It is recommended that a viewing appointment is made to avoid lengthy waiting times.
 - iii. Files cannot be sent to regions outside of where the matter was heard.

- e. A [search and copy form](#) must be completed. This form specifies 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.
- f. QCAT staff will supervise viewing in a file inspection room on the QCAT premises. The administrative staff member cannot answer any questions regarding the file aside from simple administrative matters on photocopying information. Any other media enquiries should be directed to QCAT's Communication and Engagement Manager, qcat.mediaenquiries@justice.qld.gov.au, 0400 674 778.
- g. A request can be made to photocopy portions of the file contents, subject to QCAT fees. If a substantial amount of copying is required, QCAT may not be able to provide the information immediately. Taking photos of the information using a phone or other device is prohibited.
- h. Any additional fees such as photocopying must be paid prior to leaving QCAT's premises.

6. Accessing archived records

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

7. Access to hearings

Generally all QCAT hearings, except those relating to children, are open to non-parties – subject to QCAT-ordered restrictions.

Non-parties are not permitted to attend mediations. Compulsory conferences are also private unless directed otherwise by the presiding member.

Non-parties 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, eg hearings about child protection issues and reviews of decisions about blue cards.

8. Use of social media

Journalists are permitted to use social media during proceedings provided it does not interfere with or interrupt proceedings. Social media use is subject to any non-publication orders and legislative restrictions, eg those which require proceedings be held in private.

It is the responsibility of the journalist to ensure compliance with court reporting laws and any non-publication orders.

9. Recording hearings

The audio content of the recording may not be broadcast – see [QCAT Practice Direction No 10 of 2010: Private audio-recording of proceedings](#).

10. Media interviews

Generally, media interviews are not permitted to be conducted on QCAT premises, and it is preferable if filming and interviews are conducted outside QCAT’s Brisbane location – the same as they would be conducted outside a regional Magistrates Court. If access is required for this purpose, please contact QCAT’s Communication and Engagement Manager.

11. 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.

Auscript provides recording and transcription services to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal and other courts throughout Queensland. Requests and information about fees should be directed to Auscript, clientservices@auscript.com.au, 1800 287 274 or auscript.com.

12. Complaints

Applicants who are dissatisfied with a registry decision about a register or record of proceedings may seek a review under the [QCAT complaints protocol](#).

13. Media contact

QCAT’s Communication and Engagement Manager,
qcat.mediaenquiries@justice.qld.gov.au, 0400 674 778.

Alternatively, contact the Department of Justice and Attorney-General’s media team on 07 3239 0782 or 07 3405 3762 or via media.relations@justice.qld.gov.au.

14. QCAT contact details

Level 9, 259 Queen Street, Brisbane
8.30am – 4.30pm (Monday to Friday)
1300 753 228
enquiries@qcat.qld.gov.au
qcat.qld.gov.au