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MARSH MERCER KROLL
GUY CARPENTER OLIVER WYMAN

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QCAT Registry: Organisational Design Preliminary Findings



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Introduction

- This presentation contains preliminary observations from Mercer's consultation with the Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney-General (the Department) regarding the organisational structure of QCAT's Registry
- This presentation introduces:
 - the key design principles underpinning Mercer's analysis
 - the key functions identified as necessary in the QCAT Registry
 - potential areas for centralisation; and
 - the benefits of centralisation

Design Principles

- “The key design principles which have been identified, as a result of the consultation and research undertaken, underpin the development of an organisational structure which is strongly linked to the achievement of outcomes.”

Design Principle	Explanation
Customer focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> QCAT’s mandate is to provide a service to the general public. As such, maintaining a focus (and culture) around the client is critical. <i>The organisational structure needs to support a strong customer focus</i>
Readiness and Timeliness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the nature of Tribunals in general, users have an expectation that processing of matters will be dealt with in a timely way, and in some instances urgently <i>The organisational structure needs to be dynamic enough to respond to urgent matters and encourage efficiencies that will result in timely processing of matters in all instances</i>
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to QCAT’s services should be simple and user friendly for all residents of Queensland, (including those in regional locations). Inherent in the concept of accessibility is that services should be easy to use. <i>The organisational structure needs to include specific functions that focus on community engagement, user education and provision of information</i>
State wide service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most Registry staff will be Brisbane based, however the structure needs to cater for delivery of services (in particular, hearings) in regional locations. <i>The organisational structure needs to support coordination of the delivery of services in regional locations</i>

Design Principles

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Design Principle	Explanation
Catering for all matter types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matter types will not be homogenous. Hence the Registry will need to ensure it is equipped to deal with a large range of matter types, with varying degrees of complexity. <i>The organisational structure needs to cater for a range of matter types and as a result, different case management approaches</i>
Centralisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A degree of centralisation of common functions will be important to ensure efficiencies are gained and expertise is developed across QCAT. <i>The organisational structure will require centralisation of a range of functions and activities to enable more efficient and effective service delivery</i>
Flexible work allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amalgamation will enable the management of the flow of matters through the Registry more efficiently by establishing a flexible, agile and responsive workforce. This will require a cross-fertilisation of capability and familiarity with a range of jurisdictions for staff within the Registry. <i>The organisational structure will support flexibility and lateral movement to ensure breadth of expertise is obtained and flexibility in managing work load is achieved</i>
Strengthening Management Capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The requirement to manage the volume of matters and the number of staff within QCAT's Registry will mean there is a significant need for a well defined executive function and management structure. <i>The organisational structure will need a clearly defined executive function and management structure to ensure successful delivery of services</i>

Design Principles

- *“The key design principles which have been identified, as a result of the consultation and research undertaken, underpin the development of an organisational structure which is strongly linked to the achievement of outcomes.”*

Design Principle	Explanation
Clear lines of separation between President, Members and Registry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst it is necessary for the Registry to support Members, it is critical that there is a clear and understood separation between the functions of members and registry staff to ensure that the members focus remains on the delivery of effective and fair decision making, whilst the registry’s focus remains on the efficient and effective preparation and processing of matters. • <i>The organisational structure will need to ensure there are appropriate ‘touch points’ between Members and Registry staff, including appropriate touch points for case preparation</i>
Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given the significant change associated with the amalgamation of existing Tribunals into a single QCAT, it is important to consider that QCAT will continue to evolve over time. • <i>The organisational structure must provide the opportunity for continuous improvement in ‘the way things are done’</i>
Efficient processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Registry structure must be supported by efficient processes to ensure success. As such, the structure must also lend itself to the processes that are already in existence within many Tribunals and also be responsive to the common case management process. • <i>The organisational structure must align with commonly accepted processes that contribute to the efficient and effective flow of matters through the Registry</i>

Design Principles

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Design Principle	Explanation
Capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critical to the success of an amalgamated structure is the need to develop both breadth and depth of capability in Registry staff. Breadth to ensure there is flexibility in managing work flow and depth to ensure there is the right level of expertise available to deal with complex matters.• <i>The organisational structure must encourage knowledge growth and create career paths for employees</i>



Key Functions

- *“In the context of the key design principles, it is important to identify the key functions that will be required within the QCAT Registry. Given the nature of the work undertaken, and the relative similarity of the functions identified in existing Tribunals, it is expected that the functions within QCAT will be relatively similar to those already in existence in Tribunal Registries currently.*
- *Based on consultation and research findings, Mercer has identified a number of key functions which are necessary within the QCAT Registry, as listed overleaf.”*



Key Functions

1. Management function	4. Operations Support function
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Leadershipb. Management of work flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a.Schedulingb.Regional Coordinationc.Research/ legal supportd.Hearing Support
2. Case Management function	5. In-take function
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Processing of matters through the Registryb. Prioritization of mattersc. Work load managementd. Line management of case managerse. Professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a.Customer serviceb.Application Processingc.Prioritization of matters
3. Corporate Support function	6. Alternative dispute resolution function
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Human Resourcesb. Financec. Communicationsd. Information Technologye. Records Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a.Determining matters eligible for ADRb.Performing ADR



Potential Areas for Centralisation

- *“In line with recommendations from the Independent Panel of Experts that a common approach to critical process and case management be adopted, Mercer has identified a number of functions that could potentially be centralised within the QCAT Registry. In doing so, it is expected that centralisation of these functions will achieve a common approach and hence lead to efficiencies being gained and more effective service delivery.*
- *Mercer has identified three main potential areas for centralisation:*
 - *the **in-take** function*
 - ***operational support** function and*
 - *the **corporate support** function*
 - *In addition, **Alternate Dispute Resolution** should also be considered as a stand alone function where there is potential for centralisation*
- *The table overleaf discusses each of these functions in detail.”*

Benefits of Centralisation

Function	Benefits of centralisation
In-take	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it will help provide information and procedural advice to the general public in a friendly way, accessible throughout Queensland • by providing the right information and advice straight off, the registry will lower the number of applications that are filed under the incorrect jurisdictions • by centralising the inflow of applications, the registry will be able to flag early in the process the matters that are urgent, thus allowing the tribunal as a whole to be responsive to customers' needs • by centralising the inflow of applications, the in-take function will allow the rest of the registry to make the best use of its resources to ensure timely responses to applications • by centralising the application administration and data entry, it will save time and allow case managers to focus on their core value added of preparing the cases for hearings • the centralisation of the function offers a greater diversity in types of matters that the staff can learn about • it could be used as an entry point or a step in the process of career progression towards case management
Alternative Dispute Resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the centralisation of the function offers a greater visibility to the users of the tribunal • it will allow the tribunal to bring together a pool of mediators and conciliators that will be able to deliver services across the different jurisdictions under QCAT scope, thus delivering efficiencies in use of resources.

Benefits of Centralisation

Function	Benefits of centralisation
Operational Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the centralisation of those functions will allow a focus on optimal usage of members and facilities leading to a focus on service to customers • it will allow the tribunal to bring more diversity for people working in the function, as well as strengthening and broadening their skills • it could be used as an entry point or a step in the process of career progression towards case management
Corporate Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it will allow QCAT to generate efficiencies in use of resources and increase the overall quality of services provided • it will allow QCAT to focus on and deliver in two main areas that have been flagged as important during focus groups, namely Human Resources at a more tactical and strategic level (e.g. training and development, professional development and career progression), and Communications • it will contribute to bringing the registry staff to a harmonised level of use of technology like CaseWorks

- *“In relation to the Corporate Support function, Mercer is mindful that the activities undertaken should not duplicate activities undertaken within either Departmental Corporate Support areas or those undertaken within the Shared Services Agency (SSA).”*

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