



## Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House Incorporated

### About QPILCH

Incorporated in 2001, QPILCH is the primary facilitator of structured pro bono legal services in Queensland. QPILCH is committed to improving access to justice for people who cannot afford to pay a private lawyer or who are ineligible for legal aid, and for the community groups that support them.

QPILCH refers individual matters to law firms and barristers, coordinates direct legal services for particular disadvantaged client groups and undertakes legal research and community legal education.

QPILCH collaborates with law firms, barristers, the Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services Inc., the Queensland Law Society Incorporated, the Bar Association of Queensland, Legal Aid Queensland and university law schools.

QPILCH is a public benevolent institution, endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office as a Deductible Gift Recipient. All QPILCH accounts are independently audited.

### How can I help?

The Bar Association of Queensland (**BAQ**) is a founding member of QPILCH, and encourages all members of the Bar to become involved to the greatest extent possible.

#### Become a QPILCH member

There are currently 100 QPILCH member barristers. Your involvement will broaden our member base, provide critical financial support to QPILCH and enable us to more effectively target the pro bono commitment of the Queensland profession.

#### Sign up to receive referrals of pro bono work

QPILCH has operated a Public Interest Referral Service since 2001 and, since 2009, has managed Pro Bono Referral Services for both the Queensland Law Society (**QLS**) and the BAQ, bringing the management of all pro bono requests for assistance in civil law matters under one roof.

These services together receive an average of 500 applications for pro bono assistance a year, of which approximately one third are deemed eligible for pro bono assistance. Firms and barristers accept referrals of pro bono work when they have expertise, capacity and interest in the referral.

Public interest cases are referred through the Public Interest Referral Service to **QPILCH member firms and barristers**.

Other cases, involving people experiencing hardship with meritorious legal issues, are referred through the Bar Pro Bono Referral Service which is run in conjunction with the QLS Pro Bono Referral Service. **All BAQ members can participate in this service**. There are currently 134 barristers registered to participate in the Bar Pro Bono Referral Service.

The QPILCH Self Representation Service, which operates in QCAT, the Queensland Court of Appeal, the Supreme and District Courts of Queensland, and the Federal Court and Federal Circuit Court, presents further opportunity for barristers to undertake pro bono work.

The Self Representation Service is supported by specialist panels, including a Mediation Panel, Court of Appeal Advice Panel and Tribunal Representation Panel, to which member barristers are encouraged to join.

## Become actively involved

The greater the number of actively involved barristers, the greater the number of disadvantaged and vulnerable people are assisted.

Currently\*, a total of 178 barristers are registered with QPILCH. Of those barristers:

- 13 are Queens Counsel;
- 18 have more than 20 years experience;
- 35 have more than 10 years experience (**senior junior Counsel**);
- 38 have more than 5 years experience (**junior Counsel**); and
- 74 have less than 5 years experience (**junior-junior Counsel**).

Barristers who accept pro bono referrals may provide opinions in complex matters, represent clients (instructed by a firm or on a direct brief basis), or assist clients to mediate and resolve matters out of court.

A review of recent work undertaken by barristers reveals that since July 2012, 79 matters have been accepted. Of those matters:

- **52%** were picked up by junior-junior Counsel;
- **9%** were picked up by junior Counsel;
- **30%** were picked up senior junior Counsel;
- **4%** were picked up by Counsel with more than 20 years experience; and
- **5%** were picked up by Queens Counsel.

The following areas of law comprise the largest percentage of those referrals:

Refugee & Immigration	13.25%	Consumers & Complaints	7.23%
Government/Admin	8.43%	Discrimination	6.02%
Employment	8.43%	Tenancy	6.02%
Credit & Debt	8.43%	Environmental Planning	4.82%
Property Disputes	7.23%	Wills & Estates	3.61%

## What are the benefits of being involved?

The benefits of being involved in QPILCH's pro bono programs are many, including:

- improved relationships with senior members of the Bar and national and local law firms which undertake pro bono work;
- improved relationships with clients who value practitioners' pro bono commitments;
- access to support, when required (in direct brief cases or otherwise), from senior members of the Bar and law firms already involved in QPILCH's pro bono programs;
- access to senior law students who can assist with research and other tasks;
- the opportunity to engage in pro bono work which is targeted, addresses unmet legal needs, and effects systemic change;
- the opportunity to gain experience, including court experience, and improve skills; and
- the opportunity to contribute to a positive image of the profession to build public confidence in lawyers and the justice system generally.

If you would like to become a member or register for the BAQ Pro Bono Referral Service, please visit [www.qpilch.org.au](http://www.qpilch.org.au) or for more information, please contact us.

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\* The information in this brochure is current as at 30 March 2014.