



Queensland Government

Disability Services Queensland

Disability Services Queensland

Statement of Affairs 2005

Foreword

I am pleased to present the Statement of Affairs for Disability Services Queensland. This document has been prepared in accordance with section 18 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* (the Act). The objective of the Act is to provide more open, accountable and responsible government by extending as far as possible the right of the community to access information held by Queensland Government agencies. This provides members of the community with the opportunity to ensure that documents concerning their personal affairs are accurate, complete, up-to-date and not misleading.

The Statement of Affairs provides insight into the department's structure and functions, the types of documents it holds, and how members of the community can be involved in the policy and decision-making processes of government. The publication also contains advice to assist members of the community to exercise their rights to access and amend information held by the department.

I trust that you will find the Statement of Affairs a useful reference tool for accessing information about the department's services and activities.

Linda A. Apelt
Director-General

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Overview of Disability Services Queensland

Disability Services Queensland traces its origins to the Intellectual Handicap Services which was created in September 1977 as a distinct entity within the Department of Health. The service brought together a number of disparate units established within the Department of Health in previous years. In December 1987, Intellectual Handicap Services was transferred to the former Department of Family Services, and in 1996 was renamed Disability Services as a program area of the former Department of Families, Youth and Community Care.

On 6 December 1999, the Queensland Government established Disability Services Queensland as a separate government department. The department is responsible to the Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors, the Honourable Warren Pitt MP and the Director-General is Ms Linda Apelt. As at 30 June 2005, the department had 2195 full-time equivalent staff with 57 per cent located in regional or rural areas of Queensland. Disability Services Queensland has an estimated budget of \$520.4 million for 2005-06.

Role of Disability Services Queensland

Our purpose

Disability Services Queensland's purpose of *delivering quality services and building supportive communities* summarises the way we view our role in the community.

Our vision

Disability Services Queensland supports the following vision for people with a disability, as stated in the *Queensland Government Strategic Framework for Disability 2002–2005*:

A society that values people with a disability, upholds their rights, and supports their equitable participation in everyday life.

The key elements that underpin this vision include a society which:

- values the contribution of all individuals
- recognises and accepts individual differences
- empowers people with a disability and their families
- supports the participation of individuals and their inclusion in everyday community life
- provides an environment that is accessible to all individuals and enables people to achieve their goals
- upholds the rights of all people
- recognises and supports the important role of families and communities.

Our values

The following values guide the department's decisions and actions:

Respect – our behaviour recognises the values, contribution and diversity of individuals

Integrity – we act honestly and ethically

Accountability – we are accountable for our decisions and actions

Consumer focus – our aim is to provide the best possible services

Collaboration – we engage with our stakeholders

Learning – we continuously improve our services.

Our roles

Disability Services Queensland is the Queensland Government department responsible for providing leadership in disability services and programs for people with a disability, their families and their carers. Our key roles are:

- developing policy and strategy
- acquiring and allocating funds
- purchasing and procuring services
- assessing need
- providing services.

Through these roles we enable the Queensland Government to:

- ensure a coordinated and strategic approach to disability issues across government
- raise the profile of disability issues
- provide leadership across the disability sector
- increase opportunities for people with a disability to access, participate in and contribute to their communities
- form partnerships with the disability sector.

As outlined in the *Disability Services Queensland Strategic Plan 2005–09*, the department has adopted 15 strategic objectives. These objectives have been developed from four key perspectives: stakeholders; internal processes; learning and organisational development; and resource management.

Perspective	Strategic Objective
Stakeholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve the quality of disability services for people with a disability and their families and carers • increase disability services for people with a disability and their families and carers • build supportive communities • achieve a whole-of-governments approach to increase access to mainstream services for people with a disability
Internal processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strengthen the capability of Accommodation Support and Respite Services, and Programs and Community Specialist Services • strengthen the capability of non-government and community providers • implement processes to ensure quality services • improve funding acquisitions, allocation and accountability • improve policy and legislation development and evaluation to assist government decision making • strengthen organisational governance • improve key business processes and systems • strengthen partnerships with people with a disability and other stakeholders
Learning and organisational development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recruit, develop and retain a skilled workforce • build a performance-orientated culture
Resource management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • operate within approved budget.

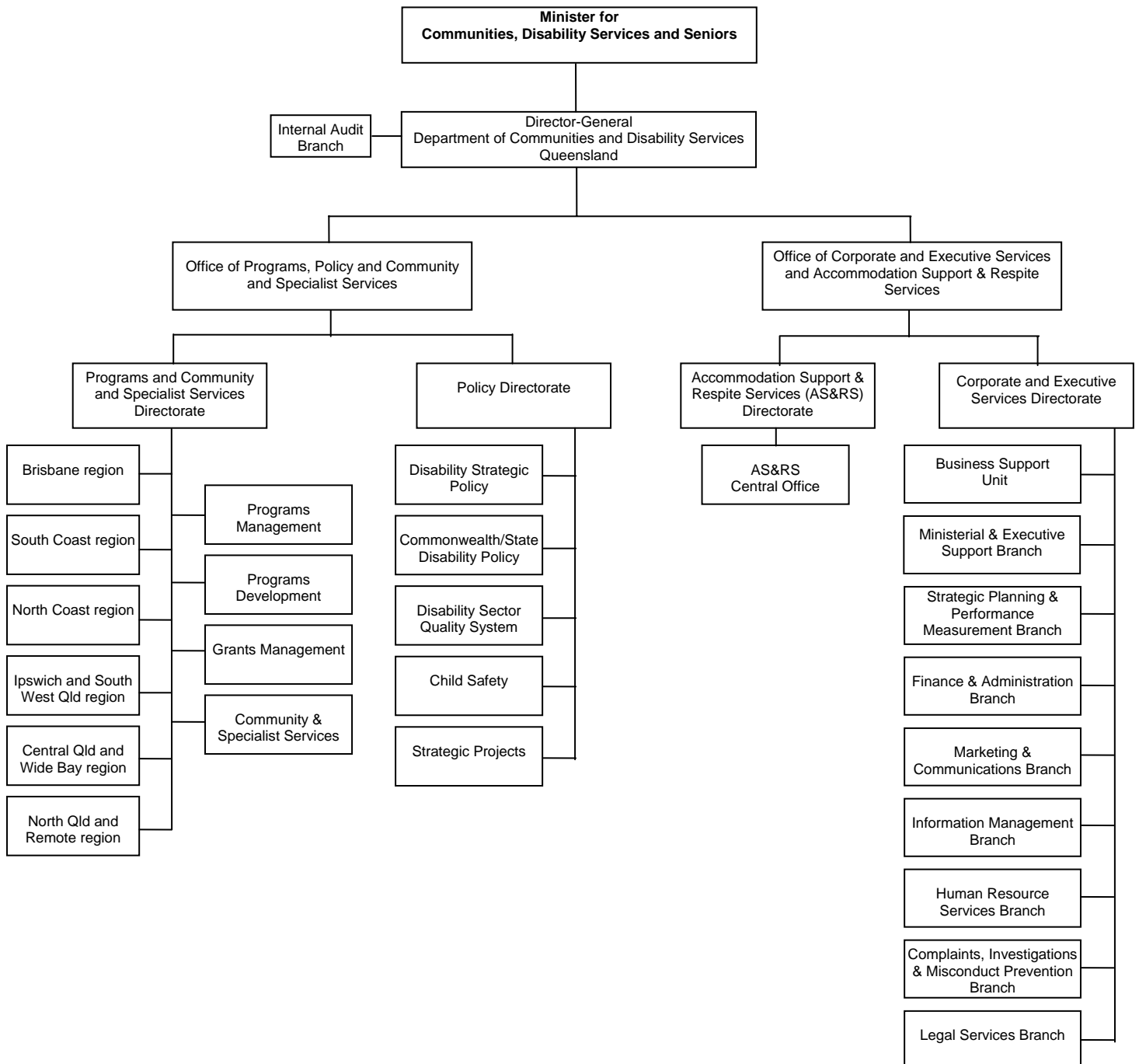
The department funds and provides a range of programs and services for people with a disability across the State in six regions: Brisbane; South Coast; North Coast; Ipswich and South West Queensland; Central Queensland and Wide Bay; and North Queensland and Remote). In 2006, the department's services will be reorganised so that programs and services are provided in 10 regions. Services funded by the department include:

- assisting people with a disability to obtain information and access to services
- community support for people with a disability and their families
- respite services to provide temporary support, allowing families and carers of people with a disability a rest period
- community access to services to assist people with a disability to participate in everyday activities, including learning and life skills, recreation and other activities
- supported accommodation services for people with an intellectual disability
- advocacy and information services
- quality assurance services.

Structure and functions of Disability Services Queensland

Our structure

Disability Services Queensland is organised into four directorates, which operate under the following structure:



Our functions

Disability Services Queensland is organised into four directorates divided across two functional areas: the Office of Programs, Policy and Community and Specialist Services and the Office of Corporate and Executive Services and Accommodation Support and Respite Services. Each of these areas reports to an Assistant Director-General.

The key purpose of the Office of Programs, Policy and Community and Specialist Services is to enable the department to deliver on its commitment to provide quality services, supports and opportunities for people with a disability and their families and carers. This area is made up of the following directorates:

- the **Programs and Community and Specialist Services Directorate**, which purchases and procures disability services and provides community and specialist services
- the **Policy Directorate**, which provides leadership, advice and policy development on strategic, Commonwealth/State and legal policy issues affecting people with a disability.

The key purpose of the Office of Corporate and Executive Services and Accommodation Support and Respite Services is to enable the department to deliver on its commitment to provide the best possible services, supports and opportunities for the department's stakeholders. This area is made up of the following directorates:

- the **Accommodation Support and Respite Services Directorate**, which provides accommodation support and respite services to people with an intellectual disability
- the **Corporate and Executive Services Directorate** provides corporate and executive services to Disability Services Queensland, Department of Communities and the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy. The directorate provides support to the Director-General and Minister and is responsible for strategic planning and performance, finance and administration, human resources, information management, marketing and communications, legal services, and complaints and misconduct prevention.

The location and contact details for all of the department's offices are listed on page 24.

Advisory boards, committees and other bodies

Disability Services Queensland's corporate governance committees support the department to operate in an efficient manner and ensure transparent, accountable and effective governance. Each board, committee and advisory group has specific terms of reference with defined objectives and a requirement to evaluate their operations to assess whether they are meeting their objectives. The following boards and committees are internal departmental bodies.

Portfolio Governance Board

The Portfolio Governance Board serves as the key governing body for the portfolio of Disability Services Queensland and the Department of Communities, with a corporate-strategic role across the functions of both departments. The board provides advice to the Director-General on significant cross-portfolio policies, issues and proposals and is responsible for making decisions to strategically guide policy, programs and/or services delivered by both agencies. It has a focus on strategic finance, human resource, information management and risk management issues.

Senior Executive Group

The Senior Executive Group comprises the most senior executives within the portfolio of Disability Services Queensland and the Department of Communities. The group supports the Director-General by sharing information relevant to the portfolio, such as key directions and decisions from the Minister and/or Cabinet; significant management issues, including workplace issues; and upcoming Board of Management and Portfolio Governance Board agendas. It also updates the Director-General on significant upcoming events, submissions and activities; monitors the Cabinet work program and strategic projects; and serves as an editorial committee for corporate/strategic communications.

Board of Management

The Board of Management has the key governance role for Disability Services Queensland. It ensures that the department meets its portfolio responsibilities and implements strategies and policies determined by the Portfolio Governance Board. The board operates under a formal charter that details its functions and responsibilities. Duties and responsibilities as defined by the charter include, but are not limited to:

- leading organisational improvement
- advising the Director-General on corporate and strategic priorities
- coordinating strategic policy advice
- promoting innovation and research in the development of policy, programs and service delivery
- ensuring effective use of human and financial resources and infrastructure
- monitoring the department's performance across key areas and initiatives, including the work of departmental committees.

Budget Review Committee

The Budget Review Committee improves corporate governance through its focus on the strategic management of the department's financial position. The committee's key functions are:

- identifying risk and advising the Director-General on the management and mitigation of financial risk
- overseeing the development of the department's annual budget submission to the Cabinet Budget Review Committee and Queensland Treasury
- overseeing the preparation and finalisation of the Annual Financial Statements
- approving annual resource allocations (budgets) to cost centres and gaining Board of Management endorsement of same, including both output (operating) and equity (capital)
- addressing strategic budget and financial issues across the department
- monitoring the financial performance of the department against the annual budget and strategic plan
- facilitating communication between the committee, directorates, area offices and the disability sector.

Information Management Steering Committee

The Information Management Steering Committee is a shared committee with the departments of Communities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy. It develops strategies and policies for information management and information technologies across the departments and provides advice to the Board of Management, business managers and various project steering committees. The committee does not approve budgets but provides advice and recommendations to the Board of Management and the Budget Review Committee to support budget deliberations.

Learning and Organisational Development Committee

The Learning and Organisational Development Committee identifies learning priorities and opportunities for departmental staff and oversees the development, implementation and monitoring of associated activities and strategies. The committee has representatives from all directorates in Disability Services Queensland. The membership covers a wide range of occupations to ensure that views are accurately reflected, and includes representatives from the Queensland Public Sector Union and the Australian Workers' Union.

Risk Management Committee

The Risk Management Committee helps to reduce the department's vulnerability to corporate risk by identifying, analysing, evaluating, treating and monitoring those influences that could jeopardise the department's operation and performance. Through the Risk Management Framework, the committee also ensures that risk management is incorporated into the culture and working practices.

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee provides independent comment, advice and counsel to assist the Director-General to effectively discharge her responsibilities prescribed in the *Financial Administration and Audit Act 1997*, the *Financial Management Standard 1997* and other legislation. In its advisory role, the committee is informed by management and internal audit and external audit representatives but has no line authority.

Agency and Local Consultative Committees (ACCs and LCCs)

The State Government Departments Certified Agreement 2003 provides that each agency will have a joint union/employer ACC. Within Disability Services Queensland, there are two ACCs: one to address issues in Accommodation Support and Respite Services and the other within the Office of Programs, Policy and Community and Specialist Services. Union/employer Consultative Committees aim to promote employment equity, the resolution of workplace issues, and to improve the flow of information within the organisation and between union members, other staff members and management. The functions of the ACCs include:

- consultation on industrial issues
- reviewing the use of temporary and casual employment
- dispute resolution
- agency implementation of other aspects of the certified agreement.

LCCs are a forum for similar issues to be discussed at the local level. LCCs provide regular reports to local staff and the ACC in terms of their achievements and, where necessary, they can also refer matters to the ACC for advice or resolution. Similarly to the ACCs, the LCCs aim to improve service through management and unions working together to jointly address problems in the workplace, address issues of importance to either parties, improve information processes throughout the organisation and progress workplace reform agendas. Within Disability Services Queensland, there are various LCCs in place. Staff may approach their Managers, Union representatives or the Human Resource Services Branch at any time if they have any queries about their LCC.

Workplace Health and Safety Sub-Committees

The Workplace Health and Safety Sub-Committees are sub-committees of the ACCs and drive an agreed Workplace Health and Safety Strategy through the prioritisation of the agencies' critical workplace health and safety issues. The Accommodation Support and Respite Services Workplace Health and Safety Sub-Committee deals with issues relevant to that area, while the Disability Services Queensland Staff Workplace Health and Safety Sub-Committee deals with issues relevant to the Office of Programs, Policy and Community and Specialist Services.

Acts administered by Disability Services Queensland

The Minister for Disability Services administers the following legislation under existing administrative arrangements:

Disability Services Act 1992

This legislation aims to establish:

- the principle that people with a disability have the same rights as other members of society
- the objectives to be promoted in the development and implementation of programs and services for people with a disability
- funding mechanisms for state grants of financial assistance for specialist disability services.

Following Disability Services Queensland's comprehensive review of the *Disability Services Act 1992*, a package of reforms was announced in May 2005 that will include new disability legislation to address rights, protection and services and a Public Benefit Test to determine whether disability services (both government and non-government funded) should have increased regulation. In December 2005, the Disability Services Bill 2005 was introduced into the Queensland Parliament.

Guide Dogs Act 1972 and Guide Dogs Regulations 1997

This legislation ensures that dogs guiding blind persons or aiding deaf persons, and dogs being trained to guide blind persons or aid deaf persons, have a legally enforceable right to enter public places and public passenger vehicles. Disability Services Queensland is currently undertaking a review to examine whether the recognition currently afforded to guide dogs should be extended to assistance dogs.

Legacy Trust Fund Act 2001

This legislation gives Disability Services Queensland the ownership and management of the Legacy Trust Fund to assist Queenslanders who are blind or vision impaired. The department advertised widely for grant applications in April 2002, and distributed the fund to 24 services that could demonstrate that their innovative projects assisted blind and vision-impaired people. These projects included recreation and leisure activities, equipment, skill development, advocacy and community awareness, information services, and staff training. All funds were expended and, as this was a one-off project, no further funds are available for distribution.

Other legislation relevant to the department's functions include:

Anti-Discrimination Act 1991

Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)

Disability Services Act 1986 (Commonwealth)

Family Services Act 1987

Guardianship and Administration Act 2000

Mental Health Act 1974

Mental Health Regulation 1985

Powers of Attorney Act 1998

Public Trustee Act 1978.

All legislation is available for viewing via www.legislation.qld.gov.au/OQPChome.htm.

Effects of Disability Services Queensland's functions on the community

Disability Services Queensland is committed to achieving significant improvements in the quality of life of people who have a disability. The *Queensland Government Strategic Framework for Disability 2002–2005* is a strong commitment from the Queensland Government to improve the lives of people with a disability and their families, by recognising that the policies, programs and services of all government departments have an impact on people with a disability, their families and their carers. The framework was developed in collaboration with people with a disability, their families, service providers, the broader community and other levels of government.

The following outlines some of the department's strategic initiatives and significant programs that have recently guided the provision of disability services in Queensland.

Commonwealth–State/Territory Disability Agreement 2002–2007 (CSTDA)

The CSTDA is a five-year binding agreement between the Commonwealth Government and State and Territory governments regarding funding and service delivery arrangements for the provision of disability services for each jurisdiction. The CSTDA enables negotiation regarding the transfer of services between one level of government and another. Under the CSTDA, the Commonwealth has responsibility for the administration of employment services, and States and Territories are responsible for the administration of accommodation support, respite, community support and access, and other non-vocational services. Both levels of government are jointly responsible for advocacy services and research and development.

The CSTDA is comprised of a Multilateral and a Bilateral Agreement. The Multilateral Agreement provides the national framework for disability services and enables funds to be contributed by the Commonwealth and the State. It also defines services eligible for funding and outlines the requirements for the collection and publication of disability-services-related data and other accountability requirements.

The Bilateral Agreement provides for actions between the Commonwealth and individual States and Territories on strategic disability issues within the broad national framework. Under the Bilateral Agreement, Queensland and the Australian Government are focusing on the following areas of mutual interest: the aged care/disability services interface; employment and day activity options; issues for people with an acquired brain injury; a more coordinated and effective approach to advocacy; disability advisory bodies; and sharing of information on service strategies and demand trends.

Future Directions for Disability Services

The *Future Directions for Disability Services* initiative was announced in June 2003 and outlines the Queensland Government's broad investment in disability services and supports to 2006-07. The initiative addresses the key outcomes of Disability Services Queensland's Funding Reform Project, which signalled the start of a long-term strategy to reform the way the Queensland Government funds and delivers disability services and support. *Future Directions for Disability Services* shows the way forward for the continued reform of the disability service system, in partnership with people with a disability, their families and carers, and government and non-government service providers. It includes new initiatives and acknowledges the need for further consultation on proposed changes to Disability Services Queensland's assessment, prioritisation, service and funding approaches.

To deliver a better deal for people with a disability, their families and their carers, the Queensland Government, under *Future Directions for Disability Services*, has:

- provided \$200 million in additional funding over four years to 2006-07 to increase services to adults and young people with a disability, to strengthen families and build community capacity, and to improve the viability, quality and accountability of disability services
- endorsed the continuing reform of the disability sector by:

- introducing new initiatives around family support, quality and innovative service approaches
- releasing a consultation paper in 2004 that outlines an improvement strategy across the four key areas of needs assessment, prioritisation, service responses and funding approaches, which will inform future funding, policy, program and service delivery directions
- changing Disability Services Queensland's business model to better deliver these reforms.

Legislative Reform Project

The Legislative Reform Project addresses the Government's election commitments to review the *Disability Services Act 1992* and develop a carer recognition policy.

The review of the *Disability Services Act 1992* will provide an improved legislative platform for disability policy and contemporary disability services for the department and people with a disability, their families and carers, and government and non-government service providers. Extensive public consultation has been held, in which over 800 people contributed over two phases, to ensure that all stakeholders' views were considered.

A package of reforms was announced in May 2005 that will include new disability legislation to address rights, protection and services and a Public Benefit Test to determine whether disability services (both government and non-government funded) should have increased regulation. In December 2005, the Disability Services Bill 2005 was introduced into the Queensland Parliament.

After extensive community consultation, the Carer Recognition Policy was released in October 2003 during Carers Week. The policy signifies the importance of unpaid carers to families and the Queensland community and provides a clear set of principles and guidelines for government agencies to adopt in designing and delivering relevant policies, programs and services. Disability Services Queensland has commenced the development of a whole-of-government action plan to assist in the policy's implementation. Some of the issues identified as priorities for the action plan include young carers, ageing carers, education and information, and balancing employment and caring responsibilities.

Queensland Disability Service Standards

Launched in 2004, these ten service standards support the rights of people with a disability in relation to services that they receive. Each standard contains a set of indicators to provide a gauge as to whether or not the intent of each standard is being met. Standards include service access; individual needs; decision making and choice; privacy, dignity and confidentiality; and complaints and disputes.

Local Area Coordination Program

This innovative program supports people with a disability and their families living in regional communities. The program operates in 23 locations around the State and provides a network of Local Area Coordinators who work at the individual, the family and the community level to facilitate changes that assist people with a disability to live and participate in the community and that assist families to continue to provide care. Coordinators assist clients and their families to determine their own needs, purchase support, obtain information and funding, and build community support networks. In 2004-05, 1716 people throughout the state were assisted through the program to access services and supports, an increase of 366 on the previous year.

Building Inclusive Communities Grants Program

Through this program, funding is provided for a range of community based events that promote a more inclusive, welcoming and supportive community. Funding is allocated for both statewide (up to \$15 000) and regional (up to \$5000) initiatives to celebrate Disability Action Week in July and International Day of People with a Disability on 3 December.

Disability Action Week

Disability Action Week is the major community-awareness event within the Queensland disability sector. The theme for Disability Action Week 2005 was *Changing Queensland* focusing on changing the way that people think about people with a disability. Features of the week include the presentation of awards acknowledging outstanding contributions by individuals, groups and organisations; community events; a family fun day; and a two-day conference, *Shared Visions*, focusing on the development of a shared vision for the future of disability in Queensland.

Community participation in Disability Services Queensland

Disability Services Queensland has a strong commitment from the State Government to work in close partnership with people with a disability, the families of people with a disability and service providers. Through close collaboration, the department seeks to improve its policies, programs and the quality of its services. This section outlines the key mechanisms Disability Services Queensland uses to facilitate community participation. These mechanisms complement the Government's *Community Engagement Improvement Strategy*, which aims to improve community engagement practices across the sector. This is a sound investment in better policy making as it allows all government agencies to tap new sources of ideas, information, expertise and resources when making decisions.

Consultative committees

Details of consultative committees which advise on and monitor the implementation of government policies are outlined below. These committees include representatives from the department, the disability sector and the community. There are no boards, councils, committees or other bodies that are part of the department, or that have been established for the purpose of advising the department, whose meetings are open to the public or whose meeting minutes are available for public inspection.

Disability Advisory Councils

Disability Councils provide an opportunity for Queenslanders with a disability, their families, service providers and local community members to get involved in government decision making, particularly in regard to the delivery of quality disability services in the State. The councils provide advice to the Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors on the views and opinions of Queensland's communities on disability issues.

There are two advisory bodies: the Disability Council of Queensland and the ten Regional Disability Councils.

In 2004 a Ministerial review of advisory bodies was conducted resulting in enhancements to the functionality of the councils through redefining the role and functions and increasing financial and administrative support. In addition, new administrative arrangements were entered into between government departments supporting the advisory bodies. The Department of Communities now provides community engagement and administrative support to the activities of the disability councils. Disability Services Queensland works with the disability councils to identify and respond to disability issues at a regional and state-wide level. A Memorandum of Understanding supporting these arrangements has been developed between Disability Services Queensland and the Department of Communities. The administrative arrangements will change as from 1 January 2006 with the Central Project Team transferring to Disability Services Queensland to improve links to the Office of Programs, Policy and Community and Specialist Services. The existing Memorandum of Understanding will be rewritten with a review at the end of the project in July 2007.

Further information on the role and membership of the advisory councils can be obtained at: www.communities.qld.gov.au/community/disabilitycouncils

Disability Council of Queensland

The Minister appoints the Chair of the Disability Council of Queensland, with the remaining members being Chairs of the 10 Regional Disability Councils. Members are remunerated for their participation and are provided administrative support through a Principal Project Officer, Project Support Officer and an Administrative Officer.

The responsibilities of the Disability Council of Queensland include:

- providing advice to the Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors on a range of issues affecting services to people with a disability
- working closely with the Director-General and senior staff of the Department of Communities and Disability Services Queensland

- advocating for the needs of Queenslanders with a disability and their families
- establishing and maintain formal links with the National Disability Advisory Council.

The new Disability Council of Queensland was formally appointed on 9 December 2004 for a three-year term.

Regional Disability Councils

Regional Disability Councils provide advice to the Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (the Minister) on issues impacting on people with a disability and their families at a local and regional level. The Minister appointed new members to the State's 10 Regional Disability Councils for a three-year term commencing on 9 December 2004.

The major role of Regional Disability Councils is to:

- build the knowledge and expertise of local communities in relation to disability issues
- facilitate partnership between government and the community at a local level
- strengthen the capacity of people with a disability and families to participate actively in the decisions that affect their lives.

At the Minister's direction, the Regional Disability Councils may be asked to link with the Disability Council of Queensland on state-wide issues relating to the development of policy and the provision of services to people with a disability, their families and carers.

The Regional Disability Councils receive administrative support through a part time Community Support Officer with the Department of Communities in each region.

Accommodation Support and Respite Services Service User Advisory Group

The Service User Advisory Group provides an opportunity for service users of the Accommodation Support and Respite Services directorate and families to provide feedback and input into services that affect their lives.

The Advisory Group provides advice to the Executive Director from a service user perspective, on key aspects of service delivery and strategies that ensure service delivery meets Queensland Disability Service Standards.

The Service User Advisory Group meets approximately two to three times a year and has a membership of service users and family members from throughout Queensland. The Advisory Group met in Brisbane for the inaugural meeting in June 2005 and is scheduled to meet again in February 2006.

Community consultation

The department undertakes consultation with the community on a regular basis, with the objective of improving policies, programs and the quality of services. Extensive community consultation is undertaken in the development of new legislation and about specific issues. Disability Services Queensland employs a variety of methods to facilitate community involvement in its policy development process:

- discussion papers seeking community and stakeholder feedback on policy proposals and/or adjustments to existing policy or legislative frameworks, for example consultation papers on the review of the *Disability Services Act 1992*, the assistance dog and guide dog review, the development of the Carers Action Plan and improvement strategies for needs assessment, prioritisation, services responses and funding approaches through the Have Your Say initiative
- targeted consultation, meetings and forums with people with a disability, their families, service providers, advocacy organisations, and the peak bodies, ACROD and Queensland Alliance, regarding specific policy issues

- community membership on departmental working groups and reference groups to canvass and examine disability issues
- surveys of key clients, including the Consumer Survey, to obtain feedback on departmental services and products and to determine whether services are meeting the needs of clients.

Community Cabinet

Individuals and community groups may also request formal deputations with the Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors at Community Cabinet meetings to discuss disability issues of particular interest to them. The details of upcoming Community Cabinet meetings are available from www.thepremier.qld.gov.au/community_consultation and are also advertised in state and regional newspapers.

Community Forums

Ministerial Regional Community Forums are held regularly across the state to enable representatives from a broad cross-section of a community to discuss ideas and issues, to identify local priorities and needs and/or to raise proposals of regional significance. Information about this forum process is available from www.communities.qld.gov.au/community/regional/minforum/index.html.

Type of documents held

Disability Services Queensland creates and has in its custody a wide range of corporate and operational documents, including reports, agendas and minutes of meetings, plans, audio/visual materials, computer records, general correspondence, internal working documents, departmental publications (including brochures, booklets, reports and videos), graphs and diagrams, films, microfiche or microfilm, photographs, newsletters, policy documents and procedure manuals. Many of these documents are available for inspection by members of the community.

The majority of departmental records are held in regional and area offices and comprise confidential, client-related information. Accordingly, this information is not available to the public. In addition to a sizeable collection of client records, the department also has administrative and policy records located in its central office.

This section lists departmental documents and publications that are available for inspection free-of-charge. A photocopying charge per page may apply. Many of the department's publications and resources are available from the department's Internet site via www.disability.qld.gov.au/publications. People with a disability may also request access to departmental publications in a particular format, such as CD-ROM, large print, audio tape, braille and html.

Departmental documents and publications may also be available for inspection via the Information Resource Unit. Contact the unit for information about times during which documents may be viewed, photocopied or printed out. The details are:

Information Resource Unit

CorporateLink
Level 1
111 George Street
Brisbane QLD 4001

Phone: 3224 6046

Facsimile: 3224 6044

infodesk@cscentre.qld.gov.au

To facilitate access to departmental activities and staff, the department's Disability Information service provides a general referral service regarding disability services and publications provided by the department, other government agencies and service providers.

Disability Information

Phone: Brisbane callers: 07 3224 8444

Toll Free: 1800 177 120

TTY (Free): 1800 010 222

TTY (telephone typewriter): 07 3896 3471

Facsimile: 07 3896 3467

Email: disabilityinfo@disability.qld.gov.au

Inquiries regarding departmental publications, policies and procedures may also be made at your local departmental office (refer to page 24).

Publications available

Disability Services Queensland produces the following range of documents and publications. These publications are available from the Disability Services Queensland website at www.disability.qld.gov.au under Information/Publications & resources or About us/Strategic directions. Disability Services Queensland staff can also access these publications and assist with requests for publications in alternative formats such as html, large print or audio tape. Phone our disability information services on freecall 1800 177 120 or TTY freecall 1800 010 222, or email disabilityinfo@disability.qld.gov.au

Corporate publications

- Annual Report (2000-2001 to 2004-2005)
- Budget Highlights (2002-2003 to 2005-2006)
- Business Model Information Brochure – Disability Sector
- Delivering quality services and building supporting communities (corporate brochure)
- Disability Discrimination Action Plan 2003–05
- Disability Services Queensland Multicultural Action Plan 2005-2009
- Disability Services Queensland Privacy Plan
- Disability Services Queensland Strategic Plan 2005–09
- Future Directions for Disability Services
- Ministerial Portfolio Statements (2002-2003 to 2005-2006)
- Queensland Government Strategic Framework for Disability 2002–2005
- Reconciliation Statement and Action Plan 2004-07
- The First Progress Report on the Queensland Government Strategic Framework for Disability Services 2000–2005
- The Second Progress Report on the Queensland Government Strategic Framework for Disability 2002–2005 (revised version of 2000–2005)

Support and service publications

- Accommodation Support Manual
- Adult Lifestyle Support Program (information sheet)
- Post School Services Adult Lifestyle Support Program (information sheet)
- Family Support Program for Adults (information sheet)
- Family Support Program for Children (information sheet)
- Friendship Support Direction Statement
- General Service Agreement Guide Book
- Guidelines for Collaboration in the Provision of Services to people with a dual diagnosis of intellectual disability and mental illness
- Local Area Coordination – The Essential Elements (seven signposts on the road less travelled)
- Local Area Coordination (information paper)
- Resident Support Program (brochure)
- Services and Support for People with a Psychiatric Disability
- Strategic Plan for Psychiatric Disability Services and Supports

Key projects publications

- Assistance dogs and guide dogs review (summary document and discussion paper)
- Disability Advocacy Program: Identifying gaps in individual advocacy across Queensland in the Disability Advocacy Program
- Disability Sector Quality Systems – resource kits
- Funding reform project (information kit)
- Partners in Quality - Resources and Guide
- Queensland Disability Services Standards (booklet)
- Quality system brochure: The quality system: what it means for people with a disability, families and carers (brochure, policy and comparison tool)
- Have your say: On improving disability services in Queensland

Community involvement publications

- A Way with Words – guidelines for the portrayal of people with a disability
- Better communication postcards
- Carer Recognition: Queensland Government Carer Recognition Policy
- Preventing and responding to the abuse, assault and neglect of people with a disability (brochure, policy, resource booklet and PowerPoint presentation for funded NGO's)

News and events publications

- *Connect* (departmental magazine)
- CSTDA NMDS helpline (newsletter, documentation, data guide)

Workforce planning

- People Management Toolkit
- Planning for Capability Workforce Planning – Moving Forward
- Planning for Capability – Disability Sector Five-Year Workforce Plan 2001–2006
- Planning for Capability – Disability Sector Workforce Planning Guide
- Workforce planning spreadsheet

Accessing and amending documents

The objective of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* (FOI Act) is to extend as far as possible the right of the community to have access to information held by the Queensland Government. The purpose of the FOI Act is to supplement and complement existing access arrangements, not to replace them.

Types of access

Administrative access arrangements

Clients of Disability Services Queensland may access personal information contained in their departmental file through Disability Services Queensland's Administrative access arrangements. This service offers an alternative way of accessing information outside of the formality of the statutory Freedom of Information (FOI) process. Administrative access is free-of-charge and may be arranged through contact with the Disability Services Queensland unit with which clients normally have contact.

Public Service employees have a right of access to information contained in their Employment Record, pursuant to Section 16D of the *Public Service Regulation 1997*. Access is free-of-charge and may be arranged through the Human Resource Services Officer at their work unit.

Privacy access arrangements

Pursuant to the provisions of the Queensland Information Privacy Principles 2001 and the departmental Privacy Plan, a person who is concerned that their personal information held by the department is incomplete, inaccurate, out-of-date or misleading may apply for access to their personal information. Privacy access is free-of-charge. Any request to amend personal information held by the department under the privacy arrangements can only be processed under the FOI Act. If a person has concerns regarding the privacy of their information or believes that their privacy has been breached, they can contact the department's Privacy Contact Officer in the first instance, on 07 3224 8365. The Privacy Contact Officer will provide information regarding the person's rights and courses of action available.

Freedom of Information access

Under the FOI Act, members of the community have a legally enforceable right to:

- apply for access to documents held by the department, or official documents of the Minister
- apply to amend documents relating to their personal affairs.

It is not necessary to give a reason for wanting to access documents. However, any request to amend personal information held by the department will require documentary evidence that the information currently held is incomplete, inaccurate, out-of-date or misleading.

Lodging Freedom of Information applications

If you are seeking access to information held by the department, or an official document of the Minister, that is not publicly available, and you believe is not otherwise accessible, you may make an application to access that information, subject to the provisions of the FOI Act.

The department's FOI Coordinator is the delegated officer responsible for making decisions in relation to FOI access or amendment of applications.

If you wish to make an FOI application, you must either write a letter or lodge an application using the 'Request for access to documents' form (see Appendix 1).

Applications must include:

- your name, address and telephone number
- your signature
- proof of your identity if applying for your own personal information

- written authorisation from the person concerned, if applying for another person's personal information
- a description of the documents or information being sought, with the names and dates of birth of any relevant people. Provide as much information as possible to help the department locate the documents in a timely manner; for example, if known include file titles or references, correspondence details and dates, geographical location of subject matter and the time period you want covered.

Applications should be addressed to:
Freedom of Information Coordinator
Ministerial and Executive Support Branch
Corporate and Executive Services Directorate
Disability Services Queensland
GPO Box 806
BRISBANE QLD 4001

It is recommended that you contact the FOI Coordinator before lodging an application, as this may assist to define the scope of your investigation and confirm that the documents being sought are actually held by the department. The FOI Coordinator can be contacted by phone (07 3224 7058) or facsimile (07 3224 7958) or email foi_disability@disability.qld.gov.au.

Queensland State Archive records or records of other agencies

Applications for access to documents held by the Queensland State Archives for other agencies and which are not reasonably available for public inspection should be addressed to the relevant agency under section 24(1) of the FOI Act.

For the purposes of the FOI Act, a document that:

- (a) has been placed in the custody of the Queensland State Archives by an agency, or
- (b) is not reasonably available for inspection in the Queensland State Archives

is taken to be in the agency's possession or, if the agency no longer exists, the agency whose functions are most closely related to the document if the agency is entitled to access the document.

Information relating to personal affairs

The 'personal affairs' of a person relates to the private aspect of a person's life. While there may be a substantial grey area within the ambit of the phrase 'personal affairs', the phrase has a well-accepted core meaning, which includes:

- family and marital relationships
- health or ill-health
- relationships and emotional ties with other people
- domestic responsibilities or financial obligations.

Usually you cannot access another person's personal documents without their written authority. The authority should be signed by the person giving the authority and witnessed by someone who has known that person for more than 12 months and is not a relative. The witness must be over 18 years of age. An applicant seeking another person's personal information can not be the witness.

In those instances when you are able to access documents that contain personal information regarding another person without their authority, the department will contact that person if it believes that the disclosure would be of substantial concern to them. If the department decides to release any personal information against that person's wishes, it must provide written reasons for the decision and notify the person of their right to seek a review of the decision. If the department decides to accept the other person's views and not release their personal information, it must

provide written reasons for the decision and notify the applicant of their right to seek a review of the decision. No documents would be released until all avenues of appeal had been exhausted.

Cost

You do not have to pay to access documents about your personal affairs and there are no charges for processing your application, including photocopying.

If you wish to access documents that do not concern your personal affairs, such as documents about work-related matters, operations of the department or the personal affairs of another person, an application fee of \$35.25 will be required. This should be paid when making the request. The time period for processing an application for non-personal affairs does not begin until the application fee has been received. Other charges for applications for non-personal information may also apply, including:

- processing charges, if the FOI Coordinator determines that time spent searching, retrieving, examining and scheduling documents will exceed 2 hours. The processing of applications is charged at \$5.20 per 15 minutes
- photocopying charge, of \$0.20 per A4 page.

Processing charges (but not the application fee) may be waived for individuals and organisations that meet eligibility requirements.

Consultation

When processing an FOI application, it may be necessary for the department to consult with a third party if the release of the documents in question is expected to be of substantial concern to that party. The third party's views will be requested as to whether they object to disclosure of the documents. While their views will be taken into consideration, the final decision lies with the FOI Coordinator.

The department may also consult with you if your application is too broad in nature or if processing the application will unreasonably divert the resources of the department or substantially interfere with the performance of the Minister. If a consultation letter is forwarded to you, you must provide a response within 21 days, otherwise the application will be regarded as having been withdrawn.

Decisions

Time limits for deciding FOI applications as provided in the FOI Act are indicated in the following table:

Day 1	Day 14	Day 45	Day 60	Day 75
Application received	Notify applicant of receipt of application	Decision required if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal documents and no consultation needed • Non-personal documents created after November 1987 and no consultation needed 	Decision required if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal or non-personal documents created after November 1987 and consultation needed • Non-personal documents created prior to November 1987 and no consultation needed 	Decision required if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-personal documents created prior to November 1987 and consultation needed

Inspection of documents

If access to non-personal documents has been granted, the FOI Coordinator will arrange an inspection time that is mutually convenient. An inspection charge of \$5.20 per 15 minutes applies when the department makes an officer available to supervise the inspection of a document. Prior to a full inspection of all the documents retrieved in relation to the application, an estimate of the costs involved (i.e. a preliminary assessment of charges) is prepared and will be forwarded to you. The preliminary assessment of charges outlines the estimated charges for processing time and

photocopying documents and may require that a deposit of 25 per cent of the total charge be paid to the department prior to proceeding further with the processing of the application.

Amendment of personal affairs information

You may request an amendment of documents relating to your personal affairs if you believe that the documents are inaccurate, incomplete, out-of-date or misleading. An application for amendment of information must be in writing, specifying an address to which notices may be sent, giving particulars of the information believed to be inaccurate, incomplete, out-of-date or misleading, and specifying the amendments required.

A decision to amend personal information is made by the FOI Coordinator. If the amendment request is upheld, the original record may not be destroyed but will have a notation added to ensure that the information is complete, accurate, up-to-date and not misleading.

Right of review

FOI applicants have a right to seek a review if:

- they are dissatisfied with a decision to refuse access to a document in full or in part
- a requested amendment of a document is refused
- they are concerned that personal or business affairs will be disclosed to an unauthorised FOI applicant
- a decision is made which is contrary to the views expressed when consulted as a third party.

Applicants will be advised of their review rights in the department's decision letter. In general, review rights occur in two phases: internal review then external review. No documents will be released until all avenues for internal and external review have been exhausted.

Internal review

Both the FOI applicant and any third parties consulted have 28 days from the day that the written notice of the decision is received to lodge an application for internal review of the decision. The person undertaking the internal review will be an officer who is at least as senior as the original decision maker. The internal reviewer must process the application and notify you of the decision within 28 days of receiving the application. There is no fee or charge for requesting an internal review of a decision.

External review

If an FOI applicant or third party is not satisfied with an internal review decision, they may request a review by the Information Commissioner. The Information Commissioner is the independent external review authority established to investigate and review certain FOI decisions of agencies. The Information Commissioner has the power to conduct a complete review of the department's internal review decision.

Requests to the Information Commissioner for an external review must be in writing and made within 28 days from the day on which the written notice of the original or internal review decision is received. There is no fee or charge for requesting an external review.

Written requests for external review should be forwarded to:

The Information Commissioner
Office of the Information Commissioner
GPO Box 3314
Brisbane QLD 4000

Phone: 07 3005 7100
Facsimile: 07 3005 7009
Email: infocomm@infocomm.qld.gov.au

The Information Commissioner may vary, affirm or substitute the decision made in respect of an FOI application or try to mediate a settlement between the parties.

Disability Services Queensland's locations

CENTRAL OFFICE

Location

Level 3A, Neville Bonner Building
75 William Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Phone: 07 3224 8031

Toll Free: 1800 177 120

TTY: 07 3224 8021

TTY Toll Free: 1800 010 222

Postal address

GPO Box 806
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Facsimile: 07 3224 8037

Internet: www.disability.qld.gov.au

BRISBANE REGION

Brisbane Regional Office

Level 1, Peel Street Place
27 Peel Street
SOUTH BRISBANE QLD 4101

PO Box 3389
SOUTH BRISBANE QLD 4101

Phone: 07 3109 7007
Facsimile: 07 3109 7034

Mt Gravatt Office

Ground Level, Garden Square Complex
643 Kessels Road
UPPER MT GRAVATT QLD 4122

PO Box 6461
UPPER MT GRAVATT QLD 4122

Phone: 07 3347 2440
Facsimile: 07 3349 0434

Wooloowin North/Bracken Ridge

1 Albion Place
BRACKEN RIDGE QLD 4017

Phone: 07 3261 3696
Facsimile: 07 3261 2752

Brisbane West Office

Averyon Road
WACOL QLD 4076

PO Box 492
GOODNA QLD 4300

Phone: 07 3274 9409
Facsimile: 07 3274 9721

Wacol Office

Averyon Road
WACOL QLD 4076

PO Box 189
GOODNA QLD 4300

Phone: 07 3274 9377
Facsimile: 07 3274 9310

Goodna Office

18–20 Smiths Road
GOODNA QLD 4300

PO Box 354
GOODNA QLD 4300

Phone: 07 3818 5100
Facsimile: 07 3818 2526

Wooloowin Office

84 Kedron Park Road
WOOLOOWIN QLD 4030

Phone: 07 3630 3200
Facsimile: 07 3357 9536

IPSWICH AND SOUTH WEST REGION

Ipswich and South West Regional Office

5–7 Wharf Street
IPSWICH QLD 4305

PO Box 876
IPSWICH QLD 4305

Phone: 07 3280 1872
Facsimile: 07 3280 1000

Ipswich Office 1

Level 2, The Hayden Centre
Cnr South & East Streets
IPSWICH QLD 4305

PO Box 876
IPSWICH QLD 4305

Phone: 07 3280 1822
Facsimile: 07 3280 1649

Ipswich Office 2

Level 1, Mika House
3 Wharf Street
IPSWICH QLD 4305

PO Box 876
IPSWICH QLD 4305

Phone: 07 3812 4175
Facsimile: 07 3812 4185

Toowoomba Office

Level 1, 162 Hume Street
TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350

PO Box 1058
TOOWOOMBA QLD 4350

Phone: 07 4615 3900
Facsimile: 07 4615 3989 or 4615 3991

SOUTH COAST REGION

South Coast Regional Office

24 Tansey Street
BEENLEIGH QLD 4207

PO Box 1158
BEENLEIGH QLD 4207

Phone: 07 3287 0742
Facsimile: 07 3287 5476

Beenleigh Office

24 Tansey Street
BEENLEIGH QLD 4207

PO Box 1158
BEENLEIGH QLD 4207

Phone: 07 3287 0742
Facsimile: 07 3287 5476

Gold Coast Office

8 Karp Street
BUNDALL QLD 4217

PO Box 8338
GOLD COAST MC QLD 9726

Phone: 07 5531 8055
Facsimile: 07 5574 0154

NORTH COAST REGION

North Coast Regional Office

Level 3, Town Square Precinct
33 King Street
CABOOLTURE QLD 4510

PO Box 1126
CABOOLTURE QLD 4510

Phone: 07 5490 1180
Facsimile: 07 5499 2236

Pine Rivers Office

Level 1, 454 Gympie Road
STRATHPINE QLD 4500

PO Box 181
STRATHPINE QLD 4500

Phone: 07 3881 5600
Facsimile: 07 3881 5656

Sunshine Coast Office

19 George Street
MAROOCHYDORE QLD 4558

PO Box 1177
MAROOCHYDORE QLD 4558

Phone: 07 5456 7000
Facsimile: 07 5443 5931

CENTRAL QUEENSLAND AND WIDE BAY REGION

Central Queensland and Wide Bay Regional Office

74 Ward Street
ROCKHAMPTON QLD 4700

PO Box 8205
ALLENSTOWN QLD 4700

Phone: 07 4932 1600
Facsimile: 07 4932 1611

Bundaberg Office

Claude Wharton Building
46 Quay Street
BUNDABERG QLD 4670

PO Box 1694
BUNDABERG QLD 4670

Phone: 07 4131 5417
Facsimile: 07 4131 5405

Emerald Office

51 Ruby Street
EMERALD QLD 4720

PO Box 1984
EMERALD QLD 4720

Phone: 07 4982 3166

Mackay Office

110 Wood Street
MACKAY QLD 4740

PO Box 532
MACKAY QLD 4740

Phone: 07 4944 6200
Facsimile: 07 4953 1430

Maryborough Office

Cnr Albert and Adelaide Streets
MARYBOROUGH QLD 4650

PO Box 130
MARYBOROUGH QLD 4650

Phone: 07 4123 9132
Facsimile: 07 4123 1240

Rockhampton Office

74 Ward Street
ROCKHAMPTON QLD 4700

PO Box 8205
ROCKHAMPTON QLD 4700

Phone: 07 4932 1600
Facsimile: 07 4932 1611

Whitsunday Office

Shop 5, Deicke Arcade
46 Main Street
PROSERPINE QLD 4800

PO Box 649
PROSERPINE QLD 4800

Phone: 07 4945 5853
Facsimile: 07 4945 5873

Gladstone Office

Government Building
Cnr Oaka Lane Roseberry Street
GLADSTONE QLD 4680

PO Box 586
GLADSTONE QLD 4680

Phone: 07 4972 4388
Facsimile: 07 4972 8903

NORTH QUEENSLAND AND REMOTE REGION

North Queensland and Remote Regional Office

Nathan Business Centre
340 Ross River Road
AITKENVALE QLD 4814

PO Box 1212
AITKENVALE QLD 4814

Phone: 07 4727 0666
Facsimile: 07 4775 4762

Cairns Office

130 McLeod Street
CAIRNS QLD 4870

PO Box 179N
NORTH CAIRNS QLD 4870

Phone: 07 4046 7200
Facsimile: 07 4031 8596

Townsville Area Office

Nathan Business Centre
340 Ross River Road
AITKENVALE QLD 4814

PO Box 1212
AITKENVALE QLD 4814

Phone: 07 4727 0666
Facsimile: 07 4775 4762

Appendix 1: Freedom of Information application

FOI

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
Request for Access to Documents



Queensland Government
Disability Services Queensland

PLEASE COMPLETE ALL RELEVANT SECTIONS

(A) APPLICANT DETAILS

Title: Ms Miss Mrs Mr Other _____ (please specify)

Surname: _____ Given names: _____

Postal address: _____

Suburb/Town: _____ State: _____ Postcode: _____

Telephone no: _____ Facsimile no: _____
(during business hours)

Email address: _____

(B) REQUEST FOR PERSONAL INFORMATION

Date of birth: / / Place of birth: _____

Name used at the time the documents were created (e.g. maiden name): _____

The office(s) with whom you had contact: _____

Describe the documents or information you require:

If the request is for information about someone else (including your children), please provide their:

Date of birth: / / Place of birth: _____

Name used at the time the documents were created (e.g. maiden name): _____

Relationship to you: _____

_____ Date: / /
(signature of applicant)

PLEASE ATTACH A SEPARATE SHEET WITH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IF NECESSARY.

(C) FORM OF ACCESS

I want a copy of the document/s.

I want to inspect the document/s.

(D) PROOF OF YOUR IDENTITY

Section 105 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1992* requires that precautions be taken to ensure that information about personal affairs is released only to the person concerned or their authorised agent. Proof of identity is required before access to personal information can be given. You are required to provide a copy of a document that will prove your identity.

Proof of identity can be established by providing a photocopy of a driver's licence, a Medicare or health benefits card, an identifying page of current passport, a birth certificate or birth extract, a marriage certificate, a naturalisation certificate or citizenship certificate, or immigration papers or other documents issued by the Commonwealth Department of Immigration.

Note: Please attach a copy to this application. DO NOT SEND ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS.

(E) REQUEST FOR NON-PERSONAL INFORMATION

Non-personal applications include requests for information about:

- another person
- any activities of the department, e.g. funding, policy, recruitment and selection.

An application fee of **\$35.25** is payable for requests for non-personal information. This should be paid at the time of making the request. Cheques should be made payable to Disability Services Queensland.

In addition, photocopying or other charges may apply. A preliminary assessment of charges will be provided to you before proceeding with your application. You may be able to negotiate the scope of your application to reduce the amount of time and cost involved. A waiver of fees and charges on grounds of financial hardship may apply to individuals or organisations that meet the eligibility criteria.

Describe the documents or information you require:

(F) ORGANISATION DETAILS

If you are making this request on behalf of an organisation or company, please complete the section below.

Name of organisation: _____

Position held within the organisation: _____

Postal address: _____

Suburb/Town: _____ State: _____ Postcode: _____

Telephone no: _____ Facsimile no: _____

Email address: _____

(G) AUTHORISATION DETAILS

Complete this section only if you are requesting personal information about another person or on behalf of another person (e.g. solicitor).

In those cases where it may not be possible to obtain this authorisation (e.g. the person's whereabouts are unknown or the person is deceased), please provide details in the 'Special Circumstances' section below. The Department may also request further documents to verify the authorisation or to verify the special circumstances.

The person authorising you to have access to the documents should complete the authority.

AUTHORISATION

I, _____, authorise _____
(name of person authorising access) (name of applicant)

to have access to documents that contain my personal information.

(signature of person authorising access) Date: / / Ph: _____
(during business hours)

WITNESS DECLARATION (Note: The witness must not be the applicant)

I declare that I have known the person authorising access for more than 12 months, I am over 18 years of age and I am not a relative of this person. I have witnessed the signing of this authorisation.

(signature of witness) _____
(print name) Date: / /

Postal address: _____

Suburb/Town: _____ State: _____ Postcode: _____

Telephone no: _____
(during business hours)

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Please give details as to why an authorisation can not be completed.

