

QCAT can help deal with small disputes



LEGAL EAGLE JULIAN PORTER

PEOPLE'S eyes light up when I tell them their matter falls within the jurisdiction of the Queensland Civil and

Administrative Tribunal. An independent Tribunal, QCAT aspires to deal with matters "in a way that is accessible, fair, just, economical, informal and quick".

It's a balancing act to meet all these ideals, but on its day QCAT manages to deliver on most of them.

With its upper monetary limit generally set at \$25,000, and its powers

under various acts, QCAT sees some fairly serious matters through its doors.

Matters described as "Minor Civil Disputes" are heard, in the regions, by the local magistrates and JPs, while other matters under "enabling Acts" are generally dealt with from the Brisbane headquarters.

While the onerous

requirements of litigating in a court are reduced, a well-structured application presented in an organised and logical form gets the best results.

Julian Porter is Principal Solicitor of Suncoast Community Legal Service.

This column contains legal information only. Legal advice should be sought in relation to individual circumstances.