



Free Legal Assistance for Litigants in Person

The Self-Representation Civil Law Service is independently operated by the Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House Inc (QPILCH) and provides free, confidential and impartial legal advice. QPILCH is an independent, non-profit community based legal organisation that coordinates the provision of pro bono legal services in public interest matters for individuals and community groups.

What we can do

QPILCH's Self-Representation Civil Law Service (**SRCLS**) can:

- assist eligible litigants in person (**LIPs**) with the conduct of their court proceeding in the civil trial jurisdiction of the Supreme and District Courts (including applications)
- refer ineligible LIPs to more appropriate avenues for assistance.

Discrete legal assistance will be provided directly to LIPs by the SRCLS solicitor and by volunteer solicitors from QPILCH member law firms.

The solicitor will provide the following legal services to assist LIPs to put their case forward:

- give legal advice
- draft documents, including pleadings, affidavits, court forms, submissions and correspondence
- conduct legal research
- suggest other options for resolution of the court proceeding
- assist with associated problems
- refer appropriate cases for further advice, support or representation.

The solicitor will assist LIPs to potentially overcome some of the problems associated with self-representation, including to:

- understand the law, process and procedure, legal concepts, the rights and perspective of the other party, and the perspective and requirements of the court
- observe court rules and proper process
- be aware of potential orders and the effect of not complying with orders
- present their case in the best light and in the best possible way.

What we cannot do

The solicitor and the SRCLS **will not**:

- be responsible if a limitation period expires before the client can be assisted by the SRCLS
- take on the conduct of the client's legal problem or court proceeding
- represent the client at hearings or trials
- act for the client as their solicitor on the court record
- sign any documents on behalf of the client
- communicate with the court, the other parties or legal representatives on the client's behalf
- pay for any fees, disbursements or costs orders incurred by the client.

Eligibility for assistance

The SRCLS will assist LIPs (ie, litigants without representation), and potential LIPs. However, the degree of assistance provided will be determined by the LIP's means and priority will be given to those LIPs who cannot afford private representation.

The following LIPs **are eligible** for assistance from the SRCLS:

- individuals
- small corporations

- community organisations
- plaintiffs and defendants
- applicants and respondents.

The following LIPs **are not eligible** for assistance from the SRCLS:

- persons declared vexatious litigants by the court
- large corporations.

The SRCLS reserves the right to **not provide** assistance to LIPs:

- whose case lacks legal merit
- who do not comply with the orders of the Court or the advice of the SRCLS
- who can afford representation
- who raise a conflict of interest
- who are eligible for legal aid
- whose requests are so urgent, the SRCLS cannot effectively assist them in time.

Policies and procedures

Requests for assistance can come by direct referral, telephone or email. The request will initially be assessed by the SRCLS paralegal who will:

- ask you to complete the Client Intake Form or help you to complete it
- assess your eligibility for assistance
- explain how the SRCLS can assist you
- ask you to read and complete the Terms & Conditions or help you to complete it
- ensure that the SRCLS has all of the documents and information in order to assist you
- make an appointment for you with a solicitor
- refer you to the appropriate organisation or agency for assistance if you are not eligible for assistance from the SRCLS.

The solicitor will:

- examine your documentation prior to your appointment
- take instructions from you and provide assistance to you in a 45 minute appointment
- assess the legal merit of your case
- determine the level of assistance to be provided to you by the SRCLS
- assist you to undertake the steps you need to take to continue with the court proceeding
- advise you at each stage of the court proceeding to help you with the necessary step
- provide you with ongoing assistance through correspondence and further appointments
- refer cases with strong prospects of success to QPILCH member firms and barristers for some form of assistance.

Contact us

Please contact the SRCLS for more information, to make an appointment, or to obtain or lodge the forms. You can also download the applicable forms and documents from QPILCH's website www.qpilch.org.au.

You can contact the SRCLS by:

Post: Coordinator, QPILCH Self-Representation Civil Law Service
 GPO Box 1543, Brisbane Qld 4001
 Phone: 07 3224 5166 (Tues to Thurs)
 Phone: 07 3012 9773 (Mon and Fri)
 Fax: 07 3211 2278
 Email: selfrepsadmin@qpilch.org.au

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