

Victorian Civil & Administrative Tribunal

"The role of VCAT in a changing world"

The new president of VCAT, Justice Kevin Bell, is undertaking an extensive review of VCAT. Justice Bell is the president of Australia's largest and most diverse civil and administrative tribunal.

Appointed in March last year, Justice Bell has been asked by the Victorian Government, in VCAT's 10th anniversary year, to look closely into the tribunal's past performance and report on how VCAT might continue to deliver low cost, efficient and fast access to justice that is fair to all Victorians.

Justice Bell is looking for ideas or suggestions for shaping the review of VCAT in this changing world, and the roles of alternative dispute resolution and technological innovations in the future.

VCAT should be a world leader in the provision of justice to Victorian individuals, families and businesses. Now is the time to ensure that VCAT takes its proud tradition into the next 10 years of its life.

Over the next few months Justice Bell will consult with the community and with key organisations. He will hold regional forums, topic-based workshops and focus groups to engage face-to-face with the diverse groups and interests that VCAT serves.

Information on these events and other opportunities to participate in consultations can be found on the website dedicated to the president's review at www.vcatreview.com.au.

The role of VCAT in a changing world CONSULTATION PAPER March 2009

CONTENTS:

Introduction, Purpose of consultation paper, VCAT background, Issues identified,
Making a submission, Terms of reference, Purpose of consultation paper.

The purpose of this consultation paper is to stimulate and promote input from VCAT's key stakeholders and the community to discover how VCAT is regarded

in terms of the access, operational and jurisdictional issues specified in the terms of reference. Suggestions are also sought on the direction VCAT needs to take to meet the challenges of the next decade.

This paper provides an overview of the role of VCAT generally, how it is currently structured and its objectives. It also looks at some of the issues and opportunities we face in terms of meeting these objectives, in particular VCAT's role as a centre of excellence in alternative dispute resolution (ADR).

VCAT is committed to consulting with all stakeholders and is keenly interested in obtaining views, comments and suggestions on all the issues raised in this paper and the terms of reference.

For more detailed background refer to Justice Kevin Bell's speech to the Law Institute of Victoria at www.vcatreview.com.au/speech

Interested parties can register to be kept informed of progress through our website www.vcatreview.com.au. There is also the opportunity to attend a number of workshops, focus groups and regional forums throughout the period of community consultation. These events will be advertised on our website and via other forms of media.

Following consultation with our stakeholders and the broader community the president will provide a report to Government in November 2009. The president's report will address the terms of reference and consider options for improving access, efficiency and cost-effectiveness and promoting a best practice approach to all of the tribunal's operations.

LISA Comment: "An opportunity to get a more independent complaints process for people with a disability".

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