

Deputy Premier John Rau

Attorney-General
Minister for Justice Reform

Monday, 30 March, 2015

SACAT now open

South Australia's central body for dispute resolution has opened its doors today.

Attorney General John Rau said the South Australia Civil and Administrative Tribunal (SACAT) is huge step forward for our justice system and the South Australian community and is the result of years of work.

"I want our justice system to be fair and accessible to everyone, SACAT will be a one stop shop for most administrative disputes and tribunals.

"The first phase of legislation passed last year moved the Residential Tenancies Tribunal, Guardianship Board and Housing Appeal Panel into the SACAT.

"SACAT will also hear land valuation matters that were previously dealt with by the Supreme Court.

"This will streamline the process and will offer real benefits for the public and the justice system."

Mr Rau said the Tribunal's work is divided into three streams that reflect the broad categories of work; community matters, housing and civil matters, and administrative and disciplinary matters.

An experienced Executive Senior Member has been appointed to lead each of these streams while expert members remain on hand to assist the Tribunal with matters that require a specific area of expertise.

"These are the first of many jurisdictions that will move to SACAT over the coming years," he said.

"SACAT will take on the functions administered by a range of bodies and authorities.

"For example, disputes of the return of a bond to a tenant or a family dispute about the best way to make decisions for a parent with mental incapacity will be heard by SACAT.

"It is expected that around 120 Acts will move over to SACAT over time and the Tribunal will continue to adapt as its role expands."

SACAT President, Justice Greg Parker, said the Tribunal will place a great emphasis on accessibility and efficiency for the public.

“SACAT has been provided with the tools to be as flexible as possible so as to handle matters in the most appropriate way, which will be determined on a case-by-case basis,” Justice Parker said.

“Alternative dispute resolution can be used to assist parties to reach an agreement without the need for a hearing. Or, where necessary, SACAT has the power to obtain evidence and manage proceedings.

“A single online form replaces multiple paper applications and there will be a once of application fee of \$69. These will replace the diversity of application forms and fees that were previously in place.

“Cases can also be heard in regional areas and via video conferencing or telephone and Tribunal members will continue to attend hospitals for hearings where necessary.

“There is also a public kiosk based at SACAT headquarters at 100 Pirie Street where online applications can be made with the advice and assistance of trained community access officers.”

For more information about SACAT or to lodge an application visit www.sacat.sa.gov.au

Member of the public can call 1800 723 767 to speak with an experienced community access officer about particular matters.