

student emergency medical dispatcher

queensland ambulance service

# a true call in life



being a student emergency medical dispatcher





## about department of community safety

Queensland's Department of Community Safety (DCS) has an integral role in supporting and promoting healthy, safe and secure communities through public safety, emergency management and secure and appropriate corrective services.

DCS employs approximately 10,350 full time and part time employees, and is supported by more than 55,000 volunteers across Queensland.

The four operational Divisions of the DCS are Queensland Ambulance Service, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, Emergency Management Queensland and Corrective Services Queensland.

## about queensland ambulance service

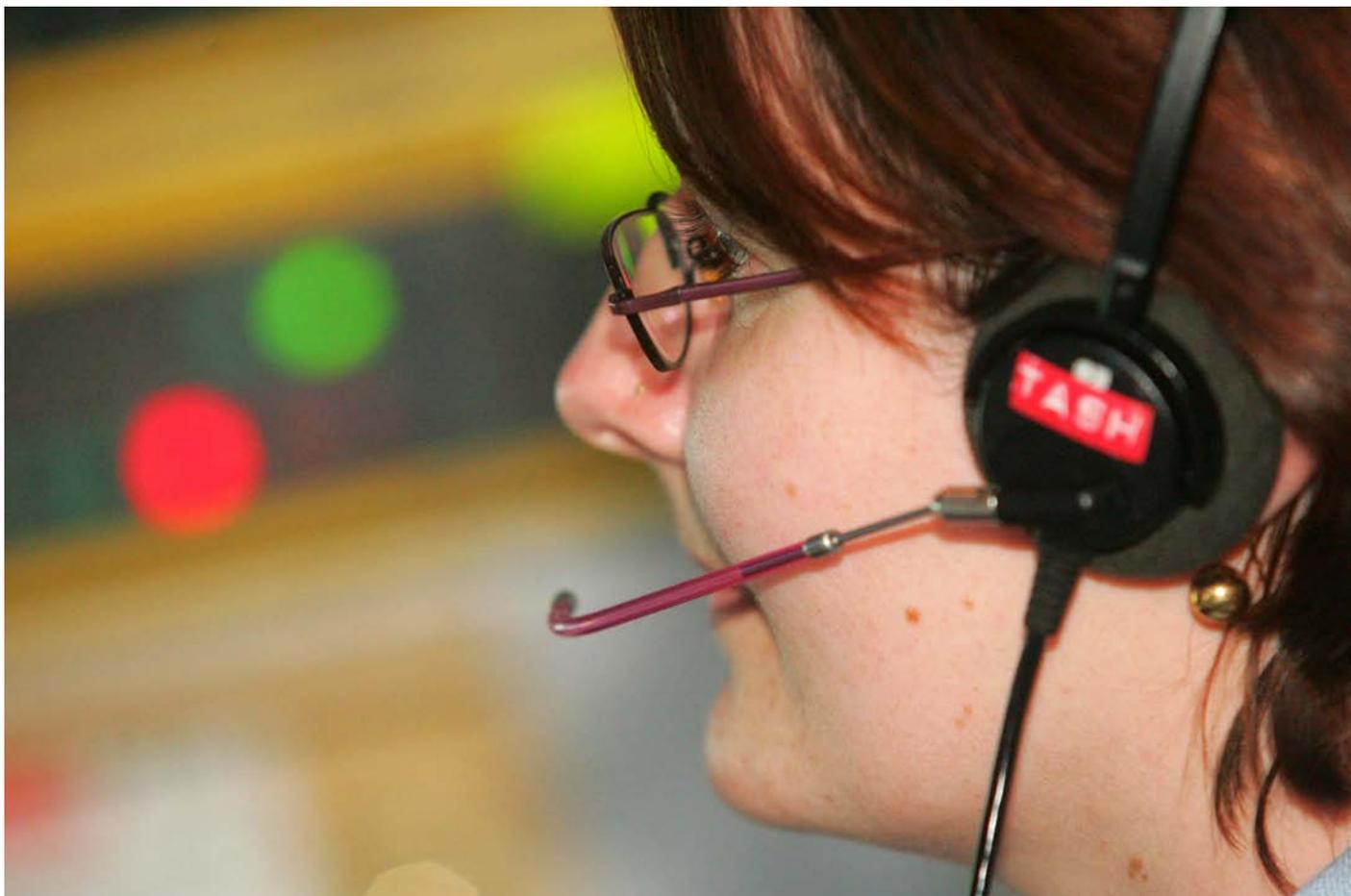
Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) provides ambulance services to the public, health institutions, community and sporting groups, businesses, medical research bodies and other Government agencies.

QAS aims to improve the health, wellbeing and quality of life of the community through the delivery of high quality pre-hospital emergency care, specialised transport services and a range of related preventative and community services.

Ambulance services across Queensland are coordinated through fifteen Local Ambulance Service Networks (LASNs).

Communications centres are located in Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Buderim, Brisbane, Southport and Toowoomba.

QAS services are provided from over 230 locations throughout the State.



## the job is more than just answering calls

While answering emergency triple zero (000) calls is a key aspect of an Emergency Medical Dispatcher's role, the job also encompasses many other tasks.

Being able to type (ideally at 40 words per minute with 95% accuracy), multitask, use a computer, read maps, listen and forward plan whilst providing clear and authoritative direction in a calm manner, are essential skills required to perform the duties of an Emergency Medical Dispatcher.

The first few minutes of an emergency are critical. Early help can save lives.

Having a vital role in such circumstances, Emergency Medical Dispatchers provide instructions to guide callers in performing First Aid practices until a Paramedic crew arrives at the scene.

Furthermore, Emergency Medical Dispatchers are responsible for the effective coordination and dispatching of the most appropriate resource/s to respond to emergencies.

A critical part of an Emergency Medical Dispatcher's duties is to also complete accurate and detailed reports.

## Natasha Allen Emergency Medical Dispatcher, Southport

It was an early Friday evening when the triple zero (000) call came through to the Southport Communications Centre. A severe motor vehicle accident had occurred at Broadbeach Waters on the Gold Coast.

Emergency Medical Dispatcher, Natasha Allen remembers responding to the call.

"There were two vehicles involved in the incident and people were trapped," recalls Natasha.

"It was a bit daunting as this was the first multi-casualty accident I'd dispatched crews to.

"I arranged for multiple Queensland Ambulance units, Police and Firefighters to attend the incident."

Having now worked as an Emergency Medical Dispatcher for more than five years, Natasha shares her vast experience with newcomers to the Communications Centre by mentoring.

"In this fast paced job, I am always faced with new challenges but I have been taught the skills to deal with the hurdles and maintain a professional front.

"It is great knowing that I can make a difference to someone who calls for assistance.

"I realise how important my job is so I always strive to be a step ahead, not just for myself but for the next person who dials triple zero."



## do you have what it takes?

A career as a Student Emergency Medical Dispatcher can be very rewarding but it is not for everyone.

The role requires attention to detail in a technical environment and the ability to multitask. These skills are vital to maintaining the welfare of the community and, as such, the job is a highly valued profession.

But being a Student Emergency Medical Dispatcher can be tough as the working environment can be stressful.

Persons interested in becoming a Student Emergency Medical Dispatcher, should ask themselves the following questions:

- Are you a good communicator?
- Do you have the ability to manage extreme situations with calmness and leadership?
- Are you a good team player, supportive of other team members?
- Do you have a genuine willingness to contribute to the community?
- Are you committed to maintaining and developing your skills?
- Do you enjoy shift work?

- Are you a caring and tolerant person?
- Do you appreciate the need to adhere to procedures in the workplace?
- Are you able to multitask within a technical environment?
- Do you enjoy working with people from diverse backgrounds?
- Can you listen and enter details into a computer at the same time?
- Do you enjoy working in an urgent and dynamic working environment?
- Do you possess a positive attitude which allows you to make effective and timely decisions under pressure?

If a person truthfully answers 'yes' to all these questions and has the passion and drive to become a Student Emergency Medical Dispatcher with the QAS, their journey has just begun.

The next step is to become familiar with details of QAS Student Emergency Medical Dispatcher training, avenues of career progression and the QAS Student Emergency Medical Dispatcher Recruitment Process.



## careers and training

The QAS is committed to training and education as a long term investment aimed at maintaining a highly skilled workforce.

It is through quality training that a Student Emergency Medical Dispatcher develops the confidence, skills, knowledge and ability to manage increasingly complex emergency situations.

An essential component of the Student Emergency Medical Dispatcher role is to undertake ongoing training including a period of working as observers on road.

Student Emergency Medical Dispatchers are also required to successfully complete a Certificate III in Ambulance Communications (Call Taking) and a Certificate IV in Ambulance Communications (Dispatch) within the first 12 months of their employment.

Furthermore, Student Emergency Medical Dispatchers must undertake a multitude of training programs, activities and assessments throughout their career to ensure their skills remain at an optimum level.

## student training

The initial training for Student Emergency Medical Dispatchers, with a duration of seven weeks, is followed by mentoring within an appointed Communications Centre.

Initial training includes call taking, dispatch coordination, advanced medical terminology, Advanced First Aid theory and practicum and training on MPDS (Medical Priority Dispatch System) and CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch).

This training is all competency based and makes extensive use of simulated exercises and scenarios.

Student Emergency Medical Dispatcher training generally occurs between the hours of 8am and 4pm, Monday to Friday at the Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy, School of Ambulance and Paramedic Studies in Brisbane.

## school of ambulance and paramedic studies

The Queensland Combined Emergency Services Academy (QCESA), School of Ambulance and Paramedic Studies is responsible for implementing QAS training.

The role of QCESA is to prepare staff for service in the QAS and enhance and develop the performance levels of all ambulance personnel to a standard of excellence expected by the community.



## rank structure

The Emergency Medical Dispatcher rank structure is as follows:

- Emergency Medical Dispatcher Level 1 (Student)
- Emergency Medical Dispatcher Level 2
- Emergency Medical Dispatcher Level 3
- Emergency Medical Dispatcher Level 4
- Emergency Medical Dispatcher Level 5
- Team Leader/Communications Centre Supervisor Level 1
- Team Leader/Communications Centre Supervisor Level 2
- Team Leader/Communications Centre Supervisor Level 3
- Team Leader/Communications Centre Supervisor Level 4

## rank progression

There are five pay points within the Emergency Medical Dispatcher classifications and four pay points within the Team Leader/Communications Centre Supervisor classifications.

Progression to Emergency Medical Dispatcher pay point 2 is subject to:

- Successful completion of the probationary period;
- Achievement of competency in Certificate IV in Ambulance Communications or equivalent (as determined by the Commissioner);
- Achievement of the requirements for progression as outlined in the *Queensland Ambulance Service Enterprise Partnership Certified Agreement 2005*; and
- Successful performance, including work performance and conduct approved by the appropriate delegate.



## emergency medical dispatcher employment categories

QAS employs Student Emergency Medical Dispatchers on a permanent basis. A permanent full time employee works all the normal rostered hours and receives all the leave entitlements under the *Award*.

## emergency medical dispatcher hours of work

Emergency Medical Dispatchers are required to work 38 hours on a rotating shift basis. Rosters reflect an average of 40 hours per week. The additional two hours per week (accrued time) will be accumulated and taken in scheduled blocks according to the QAS Scheduled Absence Policy and Procedure.

Please note, the QAS is currently progressing towards implementing 12 hour rosters in Communications Centres across the State.

## salary (effective from 1 October 2011)

Emergency Medical Dispatchers employed by the QAS are covered by the *Queensland Ambulance Service Employees' Award - State 2003* and the *Queensland Ambulance Service Enterprise Partnership Certified Agreement 2005*. Details of the *Award* and *Agreement* can be found at [www.wageline.qld.gov.au](http://www.wageline.qld.gov.au)

Pay Level	Base per fortnight	Annual Gross Salary	Approx. State Average Annual Salary during 2009-10
Emergency Medical Dispatcher Pay Point 1 (Student)	\$1,683.83	\$43,930	\$54,000
Emergency Medical Dispatcher Pay Point 2	\$1,803.04	\$47,040	\$56,000
Emergency Medical Dispatcher Pay Point 3	\$1,961.34	\$51,170	\$63,000
Emergency Medical Dispatcher Pay Point 4	\$2,030.72	\$52,980	\$68,000
Emergency Medical Dispatcher Pay Point 5	\$2,100.48	\$54,800	\$70,000

Base wages do not include penalty rates for weekends or afternoon and night shift allowances. These are included in the Approximate State Average Annual Salary figures.

The Approximate State Average Annual Salary figures are an approximate only. Wages vary throughout the State.

## leave

Emergency Medical Dispatchers (excluding those who are employed at the Brisbane Communications Centre (AFCom)) are entitled to six weeks and two days annual leave per annum with 13.67% leave loading (in accordance with clause 7.1.7 of the *Queensland Ambulance Employee's Award - State 2003*).

Emergency Medical Dispatchers who are employed at AFCom are entitled to six weeks annual leave per annum with 14.58% leave loading (in accordance with clause 4.13 (4) of the *AFCom Enterprise Partnership Certified Agreement 1997*).

All Emergency Medical Dispatchers are entitled to 80 hours per annum accumulative of Sick Leave and 13 weeks Long Service Leave for each 10 years of service with the QAS.

## recognition of prior service

Recognition of Prior Service (RPS) for leave purposes may apply to some ex-employees of Interstate Ambulance Services and State and Federal Public Services provided there is no break in service greater than three months. RPS applies to Long Service and Sick Leave only.

Employment with a service outside Australia is not considered towards RPS.

## superannuation

Emergency Medical Dispatchers are required to contribute to QSuper, the superannuation scheme for Queensland Public Sector employees. In this scheme, both the employee and employer make contributions. For more information regarding superannuation with QSuper, visit [www.qsuper.qld.gov.au](http://www.qsuper.qld.gov.au)

## salary packaging

All QAS employees have the option of making additional contributions to their superannuation fund, rent/housing and/or lease of motor vehicle/laptops through salary packaging using their pre-tax income. For more information on salary packaging, phone : RemServ on 1800 646 972 or visit [www.remserve.com.au](http://www.remserve.com.au)

## probation

All Student Emergency Medical Dispatchers are required to undertake a probationary period of 12 months.

Continued employment in an Emergency Medical Dispatcher role is subject to satisfactory achievement of the competencies within the Certificates and other mandatory training, in particular:

- Phase 1 - Induction and Emergency Medical Dispatcher call taking competency in a simulated environment.
- Phase 2 - Achievement of call taking competency in an operational environment.
- Phase 3 - Achievement of dispatching competency in an operational environment.

## uniforms

The wearing of the QAS uniform is specific to the public's identification of the QAS and its officers.

The QAS uniform is also a means of promoting a professional public image and gaining clear, authoritative passage in the performance of Ambulance duties.

The design of the uniform is safe, functional and comfortable to meet the varying needs of service delivery and Workplace Health and Safety requirements. Furthermore, the wearing of the uniform ensures a common dress standard throughout the QAS.

## role description

The Queensland Ambulance Service Student Emergency Medical Dispatcher Role Description clearly outlines the key accountabilities, duties and responsibilities of the Student Emergency Medical Dispatcher role.

The Role Description also identifies specific selection criteria that, along with the key accountabilities, provide the basis of the assessment tools in the recruitment process. All assessment tools in the process relate to the Role Description.



# roleDESCRIPTION

**Role Title:** Student/Emergency Medical Dispatcher

**Date of Review:** November 2012

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## YOUR OPPORTUNITY

To contribute to the goal of Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) to minimise loss of life, reduce pain and suffering and promote optimal recovery of patients who require pre-hospital care, emergency medical response or specialised transportation.

The purpose of an Emergency Medical Dispatcher is to receive emergency calls and to coordinate QAS resources and patient movements in accordance with QAS policies, procedures and Communications Supervisor instructions.

## QAS ARE SEEKING APPLICANTS

The QAS is seeking applicants for the position of Student/Emergency Medical Dispatcher who:

- Are good communicators;
- Possess the ability to manage extreme situations with calmness and leadership;
- Are good team players, supportive of other team members;
- Have a genuine willingness to contribute to the community;
- Are committed to maintaining and developing your skills;
- Enjoy shift work;
- Are caring and tolerant;
- Appreciate the need to adhere to procedures in the workplace;
- Are able to multitask within a technical environment;
- Enjoy working with people from diverse backgrounds;
- Can listen and enter details into a computer at the same time;
- Enjoy working in an urgent and dynamic working environment; and
- Possess a positive attitude, allowing effective and timely decisions to be made under pressure.

## ARE YOU THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THE JOB?

Applicants are required to provide proof of Australian citizenship, Australian permanent residency status or New Zealand citizenship on application.

## YOUR DUTIES/RESPONSIBILITIES

- Receive and action telephone messages requiring urgent assistance, prioritise tasks and determine appropriate courses of action in a timely and professional manner.
- Coordinate QAS resources and patient movements in strict accordance with QAS policies and procedures.
- Operate the Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system, radio communications system and ancillary equipment, professionally and proficiently in accordance with QAS standard operating procedures.
- Maintain an operational log, recording relevant details of incidents and actions during the shift using computerised/manual records as required, according to QAS policies and procedures.

- Liaise as necessary with operational staff and other service providers to ensure effective mobilisation of resources.
- Communicate in a supportive manner with distressed callers requiring assistance.
- Contribute to a safe and healthy working environment through an understanding of contemporary human resource management policies and practices and available staff support services such as “Priority One” Telephone Counselling Services and other Departmental resources.
- Demonstrate an awareness of people with diverse cultural backgrounds and undertake all available cross-cultural related training to ensure rapid and appropriate responses to operational requirements.
- Student/Emergency Medical Dispatchers are required to complete a Certificate III and IV in Ambulance Communications within 12 months from commencement of training at the QAS Education Centre.

### BASIS FOR ASSESSMENT

You will be assessed on the basis of experience and capability in the following:

1	Demonstrated ability to analyse problems and prioritise emergencies in a calm manner to determine appropriate courses of action using existing resources.
2	The ability to remain calm in an acute situation.
3	Highly developed interpersonal and communications skills and the ability to operate effectively in a team environment.
4	Ability to undertake and complete the required training program for an Emergency Medical Dispatcher.
5	Knowledge of, or demonstrated ability to, rapidly acquire knowledge of QAS policies and procedures including Equal Employment Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination.
6	Demonstrated understanding of and commitment to professional customer service and equity within the workplace.

**APPLICANTS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO PROVIDE WRITTEN RESPONSES ADDRESSING THE SELECTION CRITERIA.**

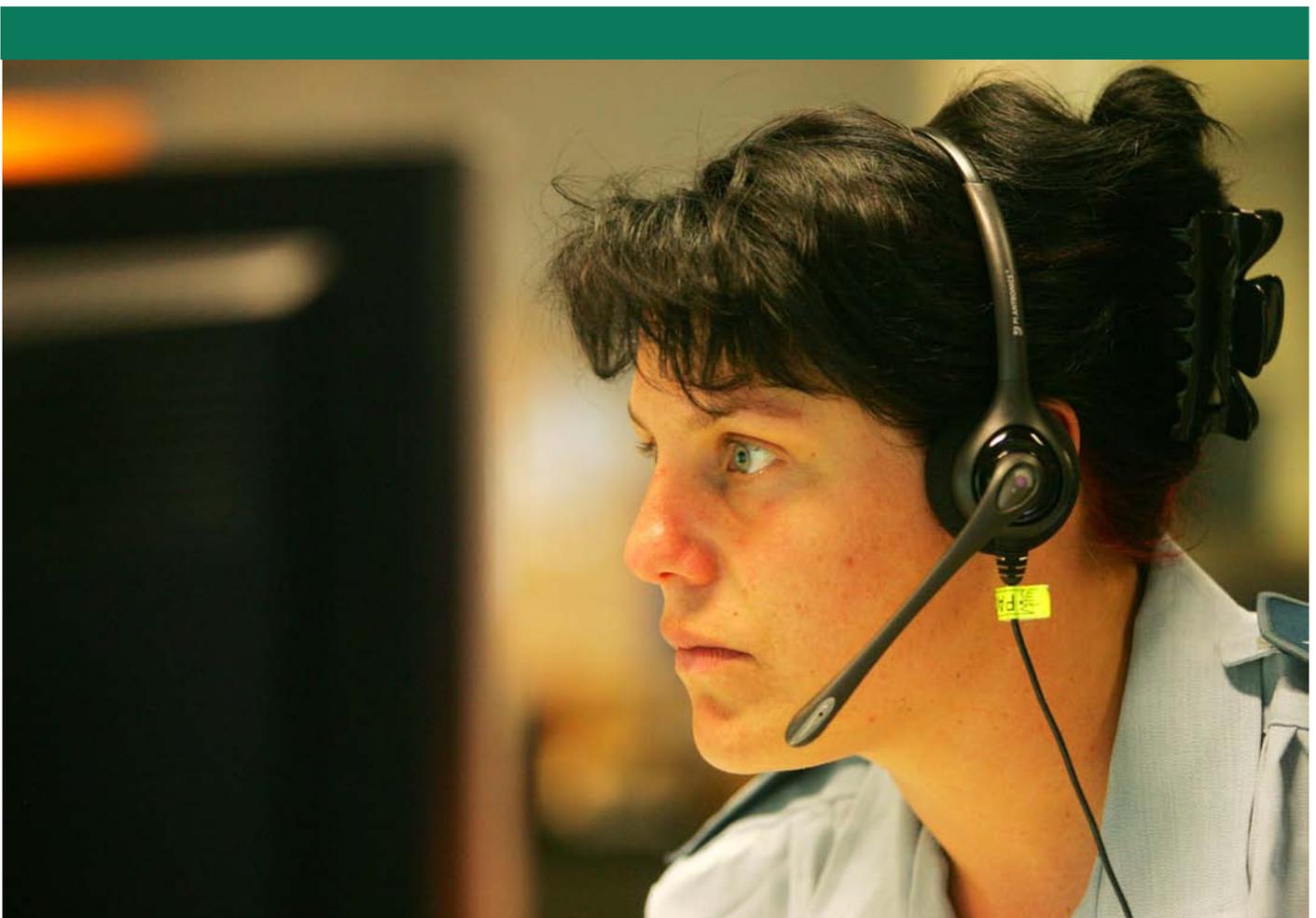
### OTHER RELEVANT SELECTION INFORMATION

- Criminal History Checks are conducted on applicants who are selected for a position. A criminal history may not necessarily exclude applicants from further consideration.
- Applicants are required to undertake the following assessment as part of the selection process:
  - Interview;
  - Work Related Assessments;
  - Psychometric Assessment; and
  - Medical Assessment.
- Applicants who fail to meet QAS standards on the assessments may be deemed ineligible for re-application.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Reporting Relationships - Student/Emergency Medical Dispatchers report to their Communications Centre Supervisor and Communications Manager.
- The QAS recognises prior learning under prescribed conditions.
- An appointment to the position of Student/Emergency Medical Dispatcher is not appealable.
- New employees to the Department will be on probation for a period of 12 months.

- Student/Emergency Medical Dispatchers are required to participate in a shift roster that may provide coverage up to 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Student/Emergency Medical Dispatchers may be required to work reasonable overtime and to be on call to perform overtime work during a specified period of time outside normal rostered hours.
- The Department of Community Safety (DCS) is an Equal Employment Opportunity employer and particularly encourages applications from:
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people;
  - People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds;
  - Women; and
  - People with a disability.
- A non-smoking policy is effective in Queensland Government buildings, offices and motor vehicles.
- Privacy Notice - The personal information applicants provide will only be used for the purpose of processing their applications. It will only be disclosed to authorised persons or if disclosure is required to fulfill statutory, administrative or other public responsibilities.
- Each officer within the DCS is required to take an active role in managing risks in accordance with DCS policies and guidelines. The contribution each officer makes collectively allows DCS to achieve organisational goals, discharge accountability, manage competing priorities, use resources effectively, and continue to achieve high standards of customer service both internally within DCS and to the community.



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