
Version 2.0 | Date Effective: 9 April 2026

1. Purpose

This policy establishes a lawful, transparent and standardised framework for the receipt, assessment and processing of requests to **search** (including litigation searches), **inspect**, and/or **obtain copies** (including certified copies) of **filed documents** held by the Industrial Registry on behalf of the Industrial Court of Queensland (Court), the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (Commission) and the Industrial Registrar.

It ensures that these functions are performed efficiently and in accordance with the *Industrial Relations Act 2016* (IR Act) and the *Industrial Relations (Tribunals) Rules 2011* (Rules) as well as relevant public recordkeeping obligations under the *Public Records Act 2023*.

2. Scope

This policy applies to litigation searches as well as requests to search, inspect and obtain copies of filed documents contained within case files, whether held in digital or physical form, together with the associated activities required to facilitate the lawful release of such material and to maintain accurate logs of those actions.

It *does not* extend to judicial or Member notes, deliberative or internal working material, correspondence (including listing notices), internal memorandums, or any information that is subject to suppression, non-publication requirements or other legal prohibitions, unless an express authorisation permits access to that material.

3. Principles

The principle of open justice is subject to lawful limitations on access to information, including restrictions imposed by the Court, the Commission or the Industrial Registrar. While such limitations may apply, parties should be aware that, subject to the relevant rules and the discretion exercised by the Court, Commission or Industrial Registrar, any document filed in a proceeding may, subject to the Rules and the discretion of the Court, Commission or Industrial Registrar, be accessed by members of the public, including representatives of the media.

Accordingly, parties commencing proceedings bear responsibility for taking any necessary steps to protect information they regard as confidential, should they wish to prevent its wider disclosure (such as seeking suppression through making the appropriate application).

The Court, the Commission and the Industrial Registrar remain cognisant of the need to adopt procedures that ensure equitable protections for all parties and safeguard against any misuse of

tribunal processes. This policy gives effect to r 228 of the Rules, which vests in the Industrial Registrar the authority to approve requests to search, copy and inspect documents filed in a proceeding.

In order to maintain accuracy, consistency and proper oversight in the management of case files, it is the established position of the Industrial Registrar that, where a matter has been allocated to a current Member, the Member's views will be sought to inform the Industrial Registrar's decision.

4. Legislative and Policy Framework

4.1 Framework

To ensure that search, inspection and copying activities are undertaken in a lawful and consistent manner, this policy is informed by the following legislative and policy instruments.

- [Industrial Relations Act 2016](#) (IR Act) - outlines the powers and functions of the Members of the Court and Commission, and the Industrial Registrar.
- [Industrial Relations \(Tribunals\) Rules 2011](#) (Rules) - governs the Industrial Registrar's authority to approve or refuse searches, inspections and the issuing of copies (including certified copies); prescribes fees; and permits the Industrial Registrar to require up to seven days' notice before access or certification is granted.
- [Public Records Act 2023](#) (PR Act) - establishes recordkeeping obligations for public authorities¹, including access and restricted-period settings; informs how filed documents are retained, accessed, released and disposed of, and underpins the maintenance of accurate logs and release records.
- [Right to Information Act 2009](#) and [Information Privacy Act 2009](#) - provide the broader statutory context for access to government-held information and the protection of personal information; guide decisions on redaction, lawful limitations, and privacy-respecting release conditions when responding to search, inspection and copy requests. Requests relating to right to information or information privacy matters are outside the scope of this policy. This policy does not create information access rights beyond those available under the IR Act, Rules, or a direction of the Court or Commission. Such enquiries must be directed to the Office of Industrial Relations. The *Right to Information Act 2009* does not apply to the Court, the Commission, the Industrial Registrar or the Industrial Registry when they are performing judicial or quasi-judicial functions. This exemption also extends to Registry Officers to the extent their work relates to the judicial or quasi-judicial functions of the Court, Commission or Industrial Registrar².
- [Human Rights Act 2019](#) - requires proper consideration of human rights in decision-making, including balancing open justice with privacy and reputation rights when determining whether and how documents may be searched, inspected or copied.

¹ See s 8(1)(e) of the *Public Records Act 2023*

² See Schedule 2, Part 2, of the *Right to Information Act 2009*

- [Acts Interpretation \(Fee Unit\) Regulation 2022](#) - provides the framework for indexing prescribed fees referenced in the Rules, ensuring fee amounts for non-party searches and inspections, copies and certified copies for both parties and non-parties remain current.
- [Industrial Registry Retention and Disposal Policy 2025](#) – sets out the foundational principles of record keeping regarding the retention and disposal of files and records for the Court, Commission and Industrial Registry.
- [Industrial Registry Privacy Policy 2025](#) – outlines how personal information is collected, used, disclosed, stored and managed.
- [Queensland Government General Retention and Disposal Schedule \(GRDS\)](#)
- [Industrial Relations Tribunals Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule \(RDS\)](#)
- [Industrial Relations Tribunals Sector RDS Appraisal Log](#)
- Practice directions, internal security protocols and Information and Court Technology policies (e.g. [Industrial Registry Mandatory Notification of Data Breach Policy and Response Plan 2025](#)).

4.2 What is a public record?

For the purposes of this policy, it is essential to clarify the meaning of 'public record' in the context of the functions of the Court, Commission and Industrial Registrar.

A **public record** under the PR Act is any information, in any format, that is made, received or kept with regards to the activities, decisions or operations of a public authority. The PR Act applies to the Court, the Commission, and the Industrial Registrar insofar as the Industrial Registrar is the public authority responsible for official court records³.

Accordingly, all administrative, case-related and operational records generated in the course of performing statutory functions must be made, kept and managed in accordance with the PR Act. However, the management of Court and Commission case file records must operate alongside the Industrial Registrar's statutory powers and responsibilities under the IR Act and Rules, noting that the PR Act is expressly subject to any other Act that restricts access, specifies that a record is not a public record, or otherwise modifies record-keeping requirements. This ensures that the Industrial Registrar's decision-making authority, confidentiality obligations, and control over particular classes of records under the IR Act continue to prevail where relevant.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The following roles and responsibilities ensure that search, inspection and copying activities are carried out lawfully, consistently and in accordance with this policy.

- **Industrial Registrar:** In accordance with r 228 of Rules - approve/refuse searches/inspections; approve/refuse certified copies; set conditions. The Industrial Registrar may delegate the role of assessing and approving requests to the Deputy Industrial Registrar, where appropriate.

³ See ss 6(1)(d), 8(1)(e) and 9(1)(b)(i) of the *Public Records Act 2023*

- **Member (Judicial Officer):** consulted where a matter is/was allocated (Industrial Registrar may seek views on considerations before approval).
- **Records Management and Client Services Officer/Records Officer/Client Service Manager/Corporate Services (Registry Officers):** triage, log, coordinate search/release, issue invoices/credit notes, process payments, check on suppression status, supervise inspections, maintain audit through case management system.
- **Requestors:** supply particulars; pay fees where applicable; comply with conditions of use.

6. Requirements

6.1 Considerations before making a request

Before submitting a request, the requestor should consider whether the document may already be freely accessible within the proceeding, such as by obtaining it directly from a party.

Decisions of the Court, Commission or Industrial Registrar are available to be freely accessed via the Supreme Court Library (SCL) website (www.sclqld.org.au), unless a suppression order is in place,

Prior to making a request, it is expected that the requestor will act on, or give careful consideration to:

- whether the request is the most efficient method possible to access the document;
- whether the document may be more easily and cost effectively obtained from the original source;
- framing the request in a concise and accurate manner via the request form (e.g. providing matter name details and identifying the document/s as accurately as possible); and
- consider whether there may be a likelihood of objection from a party as a result of the request.

6.2 Making a search, inspection and/or copy request

Requests for a search, inspection or copy of case files must be submitted in writing via the request form available on the website. Alternatively, the requestor may contact the Industrial Registry to have a form sent directly to them. The request must clearly identify the name, matter number (if known), and the specific records sought. The requestor must provide sufficient information for Registry Officers to accurately locate the relevant file, noting that searches will only be conducted in accordance with the timeframes and access limitations set out in this policy.

To ensure compliance with privacy obligations, all requestors are afforded confidentiality when making a request. The Court, Commission and Industrial Registry do not disclose the identity of a requestor to any other party. While a party may enquire whether a request has been made in relation to their file (and may be advised of that fact) the identity of the individual who made the request will not be released.

6.3 Access to documents generally

6.3.1 Transcripts

Requests are not made to the Industrial Registry for accessing transcripts⁴. Copyright in all transcripts belongs to the State of Queensland (Department of Justice). Subject to any order or direction of the Court, Commission or Industrial Registrar, **all** requests for transcripts **must** be made to QTranscripts (www.qtranscripts.justice.qld.gov.au).

Please note that a party to a proceeding, or the party's legal representative, may be entitled to one electronic copy of the transcript (via QTranscripts) without being charged⁵. Further copies, or requests of non-parties, will incur a charge.

6.3.2 Industrial Instruments

Obtaining a copy of an industrial instrument (e.g. an award or agreement) is not a request for the purposes of r 228 of the Rules, and therefore does not require a formal request form. Current industrial instruments are available on the website free of charge.

Requests for copies of historical instruments should be made in writing and forwarded to qircinfoservices@qirc.qld.gov.au. Requestors may also be directed to the SCL (regarding historical decisions made about industrial instruments) or Queensland State Archives (QSA) should they wish to search historical files.

6.3.3 Exhibits and Identification documents

Exhibits tendered in proceedings and documents marked for identification (MFI) are not considered to be filed documents. Therefore, approval for the search, inspection and copying of these documents is subject to approval of the Industrial Registrar, in consultation with the relevant Member (if applicable).

6.3.4 Attendance Notice Material

This policy does not apply to material or documents (or things) produced in accordance with an Attendance Notice. Rule 60 of the Rules applies to the inspection of documents or things produced voluntarily or under attendance notice.

⁴ This applies to both current and historic copies of transcripts

⁵ See reg 8 of the *Recording of Evidence Regulation 2018*

6.3.5 *Registered Industrial Organisation Material*

The Industrial Registrar is responsible for administering key provisions of the IR Act relating to registered industrial organisations, including matters concerning their registration, rules, elections, financial accountability, callings, and governance compliance. These responsibilities arise under Chapter 12 of the IR Act, which sets out the framework for registration, structural changes, elections, amendments to rules, and oversight of governance obligations for industrial organisations, with the Industrial Registrar empowered to investigate breaches and ensure compliance.

Records generated or received by the Industrial Registrar in performing these statutory functions constitute *public records* and are managed accordingly. This includes requirements for proper creation, capture, access, storage, retention, and disposal of those records. As with all records covered by this policy, access to registered industrial organisation records and material will be subject to legislative restrictions, confidentiality obligations, and any relevant directions of the Commission or the Industrial Registrar. Requests to search, inspect and/or copy these documents should be made through the Search and Copy form.

6.3.6 *Industrial Disputes*

Industrial dispute matters (those notices filed in accordance with s 261 of the IR Act) are not searchable while proceedings remain on foot, and for a period of 12 months following the finalisation of the matter, unless otherwise directed by a Member.

6.3.7 *Electronic Files*

Some case files for matters before the Court and Commission are maintained entirely in electronic form, and no physical file is created or retained. All filed documents, correspondence, and other records generated or received in relation to a matter are captured and stored within the electronic case management system, which constitutes the official file for that proceeding.

Search, inspection, and copying procedures apply equally to electronic case files, and the integrity, completeness, and authenticity of the electronic record is preserved throughout the lifecycle of the matter.

6.3.8 *Historical/Archived Files and Records*

Historical and archived case files consist of records of matters that have been finalised and subsequently transferred out of the active case management in accordance with the RDS and GRDS. These files may be stored electronically within long-term digital repositories or held in secure offsite archival storage.

Requests to access historical or archived files must be made via the request form and must include sufficient identifying information to enable the file to be located.

As with historical industrial instrument files, requestors may also be directed to the SCL or QSA should they wish to search historical files.

Once a request is received, a Registry Officer will determine the location of the file and retrieve the file from the relevant archive source, subject to any applicable access restrictions, confidentiality requirements, or statutory limitations.

Where access is approved, copies or inspection may be provided in the format in which the records are held, noting that retrieval times may vary depending on the storage location and the age of the file. Please note that archive retrieval fees will also apply.

Most decisions of the Court, Commission and Industrial Registrar are available electronically (via the SCL). However, requests for decisions in undigitised Queensland Government Industrial Gazettes (QGIG) will not incur a fee if the relevant QGIG is readily accessible. Further, requests to inspect the QGIG is free (if the QGIG is readily accessible) and is not subject to an approval process. These requests are made via email to qircinfoservices@qirc.qld.gov.au.

6.3.9 Restricted Documents

In addition to documents that are the subject of a suppression order, the following categories of documents may also be restricted from search, inspection or copying:

- Anti-Discrimination conciliation agreements filed under s 164(2) of the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* remain confidential and are not searchable, other than by the parties to the agreement; or
- other agreements/conciliation agreements (also referred to as Deed of Settlements or Deeds of Release);
- documents sealed in envelopes, whether by a Court or Commission order, which are not to be opened except by an order of the Court or Commission (or Industrial Magistrate, where applicable);
- confidential material tendered in evidence (normally the subject of a suppression order) – this may relate to a person's trade secrets or the financial position of a party or witness - these records cannot, without the consent of the person, party or witness, be inspected by a person other than a Member of the Court or Commission, or an expert witness for the records⁶;
- documents that outline the identity of a person and that identification may endanger the person, for example, in circumstances regarding domestic violence, an individual under 18 years of age, a correctional services officer, a prisoner, a detainee, a patient of a health facility, or a police officer⁷.

⁶ See s 580 of the IR Act

⁷ See *Practice Direction Number 4 of 2023 – Guideline for the Modification of a Document before Publication*

6.4 **Litigation Searches**

A litigation search is a request for the Industrial Registry to conduct a search on the case management system for individual and/or company names, in relation to matters before the Court, Commission or Industrial Registrar.

A separate Litigation Search Request Form is available on the website. Alternatively, the requestor may contact the Industrial Registry to have a form sent directly to them.

The applicable fee, in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Rules and in conjunction with s 2 of the *Acts Interpretation (Fee Unit) Regulation 2022*, applies, regardless of whether or not results or matches are found.

Furthermore, any names on files that have been marked not available for search (e.g. subject of a suppression order) will be excluded from any results or matches found. It is at the Industrial Registrar's discretion to consider if the disclosure of a name is in breach of the Act (or other relevant legislation), whether it will conflict with any existing suppression orders, or will conflict with a matter which is currently before the Court, Commission or Industrial Registrar.

Litigation searches are limited to names appearing on files lodged within the past five years, and results will only be provided where there is an *exact* match (as recorded in the case management system) to the name supplied by the requestor.

7. **Consideration of Request**

Requests for access to case files may be made by parties or non-parties⁸ and will be assessed in accordance with the relevant legislative and procedural requirements.

Where a request is made by a party to the matter, it will be considered and processed in accordance with r 228 of the Rules, ensuring that access is provided only to the extent permitted under that rule and, if relevant, any directions of a Member allocated to the matter.

In contrast, requests made by a non-party will be assessed against the applicable access rules, confidentiality obligations and any statutory restrictions, and will only be granted where release is expressly permitted under the legislation or, if relevant, authorised at a Member's direction.

All requests must meet the requirements of this policy and will be subject to any limitations, conditions or protections that apply.

Upon receiving a written request, Registry Officers will assess:

- whether the case file is searchable;
- whether the file is active (in progress) or finalised;
- whether the file is/was allocated to a current Member of the Court or Commission;

⁸ Including representatives of the media

- whether any restrictions or confidentiality provisions apply (e.g. suppression orders);
- whether the request falls within the Industrial Registrar's authority to release; and
- the urgency of the request.

The Registry Officers will then provide this information to the Industrial Registrar to inform their consideration of the request. The Industrial Registrar will also consider where a request has been made, whether a copy of the case file's document index card can be provided⁹.

If the matter is currently before a Member of the Court or Commission, or if the Member who originally presided over the matter is a current Member of the Court or Commission, that Member will be consulted regarding the appropriateness of the request, taking into account:

- whether a decision is currently reserved on the matter;
- relevant suppression orders or legislative restrictions;
- whether the release of filed documents could be potentially detrimental to the outcome of that matter, or of another matter currently on foot; and
- whether the release of filed documents would be appropriate, having regard to the public interest.

Where a request is approved, a Registry Officer will arrange for inspection or provide copies (or certified copies) in the approved format, subject to any applicable fees, conditions and availability.

Requests that do not meet the required criteria, that relate to case files or records that cannot be accessed under legislation or pursuant to a Member's or the Industrial Registrar's discretion, or that seek documents not considered **filed documents**, will be declined, and the requestor will be notified of the decision in writing¹⁰. If the reason the request cannot be met is temporary, the requestor will be advised accordingly; however, no approval is implied and a fresh request will be required. This will be subject to the normal approval process, having regard to any circumstances that may have changed since the initial request (for example, suppression orders or reserved decisions).

8. Fees, Quotes and Invoices

Fees for searching, inspecting, copying, or obtaining a certified copy are set out in Schedule 1 of the Rules, and any increases to those fees are governed by the *Acts Interpretation (Fee Unit) Regulation 2022*.

8.1 Fees

The circumstances in which fees are, or are not, payable are outlined as follows:

- parties (including representatives) do not need to pay the prescribed fee for search or inspection of filed documents;

⁹ Outcome Cards are not searchable and are for internal use only

¹⁰ Please note that the discretionary decision of the Industrial Registrar is final and is not appealable

- a non-party must pay the prescribed fee to search or inspect filed documents;
- parties (including representatives) and non-parties are required to pay for any physical copies made of filed documents;
- a party (including a representative) to a matter which is active and in progress may, within reason¹¹, obtain electronic copies of filed documents via email without paying a fee. For filed documents on a case file that are voluminous, this will not be possible, and the copying fee will apply;
- a non-party must pay the prescribed fee for electronic copies of filed documents;
- a party (including a representative) or a non-party must indicate at the time of making the request whether a certified copy of any or all of the filed documents is required;
- the fee for certification of a filed document is in addition to the fee for a copy of that document;
- the Industrial Registrar may require at least seven days' notice to produce any certified copies of filed documents, if requested; and
- if a file needs to be retrieved from archiving, a retrieval fee will apply.

8.2 **Quotes and Invoices**

Once consideration has been given to the request and approval granted by the Industrial Registrar, the Industrial Registry will prepare a quote outlining the fees payable by the party or non-party. Once the quote has been accepted, an invoice will be raised.

Once payment is received and confirmed, arrangements will be made to search, inspect (if applicable) and make copies or certified copies of the filed documents.

9. **Inspections**

Inspections are supervised, at all times, by a Registry Officer. Inspections are scheduled within Registry opening hours and are contingent on available resourcing and inspection room availability. Inspections will be limited to two hours. Should it be determined that more time would be required, alternative arrangements (such as a longer inspection time, or a second inspection) may be made. Requests for a further inspection must be made within one week of the original inspection, otherwise a new request will be required.

All non-filed documents, or documents deemed not searchable, are removed from a case file prior to inspection. Should the filed documents be in a condition that are fragile or damaged, copies (rather than the originals) of those documents may be made available for inspection, to preserve the integrity of the original case file.

¹¹ Documents must be of a digital file size that may be easily sent via email. This may also relate to the volume or format of the document or other system constraints

Registry Officers cannot answer questions about the documents, other than procedural questions. During an inspection, notes may be made either electronically or physically, however the requestor is prohibited from:

- taking photographs or video recordings of the material/document/s;
- damaging, defacing or modifying the document/s; and
- removing documents from the viewing room.

Should any of the above occur, the inspection will be terminated immediately.

10. Copies of documents

Where copies of document have been requested, and the fee paid (if applicable), if the copies are able to be made available to the requestor electronically the documents will be emailed to the email address provided.

Alternatively, if physical copies are requested, or the documents are too voluminous in nature to be provided via email, physical copies will be made available for collection from the Industrial Registry, or may be posted via Registered Mail to an appropriate postal address provided by the requestor.

If certified copies have been requested, they will be accompanied by a sealed certificate of the Industrial Registrar.

11. Time Frames

Search and Copy requests will be assessed by a Registry Officer and forwarded to the Industrial Registrar.

The Industrial Registrar will consider the request and assessment, and the requestor will be informed of the Industrial Registrar's approval or otherwise, along with a copy of the quote (if applicable) generally within five business days, subject to the complexity of the request and the availability of Members for consultation.

The requestor should confirm the quote and then an invoice will be issued. The requestor should make the required payment as soon as possible once an invoice is received.

Once payment is confirmed, arrangements will be made to fulfill the request accordingly.

12. Human rights

The Industrial Registry is committed to acting compatibly with and giving proper consideration to the human rights protected under the *Human Rights Act 2019*. All administrative decisions and service delivery activities relating to search, inspection and copy requests will be carried out in a manner that respects the dignity, equality and rights of all individuals.

If a person believes their human rights have not been properly considered in the administration of this policy, they may raise a complaint with the Industrial Registry.

13. Definitions, references and relating documents

13.1 For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions apply:

Term	Definition
Case file	The official record of a proceeding before the Court, the Commission or the Industrial Registrar, comprising all filed documents and other records captured and maintained in the electronic case management system and/or a physical file.
Certified copy	A copy of a filed document that has been authenticated and certified as a true copy by, or on behalf of, the Industrial Registrar, and issued under the seal of the Industrial Registrar.
Exhibit	A document or thing tendered in evidence in a proceeding. Exhibits are not filed documents for the purposes of this policy unless otherwise ordered or directed.
Filed documents	A document that has been formally filed in a proceeding before the Court, the Commission or the Industrial Registrar in accordance with the relevant legislation and Rules, and forms part of the official case file. Filed documents do not include exhibits, documents marked for identification, internal Registry material, or correspondence not required to be filed.
Inspection	The supervised viewing of filed documents by an approved requestor at the premises of the Industrial Registry, subject to the conditions, time limits and restrictions set out in this policy.
Litigation search	A search conducted by the Industrial Registry of the electronic case management system for individual or company names appearing on case files, in accordance with the criteria, limitations and fees prescribed by the Rules and set out in this policy.
Marked for Identification (MFI)	A document or thing marked for identification during a proceeding but not admitted into evidence. An MFI is not a filed document for the purposes of this policy.
Public authority	Defined at s 8(1)(e) of the <i>Public Records Act 2023</i> , a public authority includes: "...the registrar or other officer of a court with responsibility for official records of the court"

Term	Definition
Public record	A record within the meaning of the <i>Public Records Act 2023</i> , including information made, received or kept by the Industrial Registrar in the exercise of statutory functions in relation to the official records of the Court and the Commission.
Requestor	A party or non-party who makes a request to search, inspect or obtain copies of documents under this policy.
Search	The process undertaken by Registry Officers to locate relevant case files or filed documents in response to an approved request, including searches of electronic systems, physical files and archival holdings.
Suppression Order (or suppression)	An order or direction of the Court, the Commission or the Industrial Registrar that restricts or prohibits the publication, search, inspection or copying of specified information or documents.

13.2 References and related legislation, policies and procedures

- [Industrial Relations Act 2016](#)
- [Industrial Relations \(Tribunals\) Rules 2011](#)
- [Public Records Act 2023](#)
- [Right to Information Act 2009](#)
- [Information Privacy Act 2009](#)
- [Human Rights Act 2019](#)
- [Acts Interpretation \(Fee Unit\) Regulation 2022](#)
- [Anti-Discrimination Act 1991](#)
- [Queensland Government General Retention and Disposal Schedule \(GRDS\)](#)
- [Industrial Registry Retention and Disposal Policy 2025](#)
- [Industrial Relations Tribunals Sector RDS Appraisal Log](#)
- [Industrial Relations Tribunals Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule \(RDS\)](#)
- [Industrial Registry Privacy Policy 2025](#)
- [Industrial Registry Mandatory Notification of Data Breach Policy and Response Plan 2025](#)
- Practice Directions (as issued from time to time)

14. Contact

For further information, please contact the Industrial Registry:

By phone: 1300 592 987

By email: qirc.registry@qirc.qld.gov.au

By post: Industrial Registrar, Queensland Industrial Registry
GPO Box 373, Brisbane QLD 4001

In person: Level 21, Central Plaza 2
66 Eagle Street (Cnr Elizabeth and Creek Streets), Brisbane QLD 4000

Internet: www.qirc.qld.gov.au

15. Version Control

Version	Amendments	Approved	Date
2.0		M. Shelley, Industrial Registrar.	9 April 2026