

Introduction to the Queensland Law Handbook 6th Edition.

We live in a world where the law has become more complex partly because more rights are protected and partly because more duties are imposed upon citizens. How do citizens know what rights they have, how they may be enforced and what their responsibilities are under the law? It is more important than ever that ordinary citizens have knowledge of the law as well as access to the legal system.

This handbook provides succinct and clear information, particularly for non lawyers, on the wide variety of laws that may affect them from consumer rights, employment and anti-discrimination laws to complaints against government and criminal law. In addition it explains the court system and the legal services that are available to people to assist in vindicating their rights or to advise on what to do when they find themselves in breach of the law.

The Caxton Legal Centre started life as a few trestle tables in a hall in Caxton Street at Petrie Terrace. It provided free legal advice to people who phoned and people who came in seeking advice. Lawyers and other professionals have given their time and experience freely to the many people who have sought their advice over the years.

The quality of legal advice has been reflected in the quality of volunteers all of whom are hard working as well as committed. The volunteers have included some who became members of Parliament, Judges, magistrates, senior barristers and partners in law firms and those who went on to commence community legal services in other locations or in more specialised areas. As well as providing free advice to right individual wrongs the services have developed a wealth of case studies which have enabled them to argue for reform to the law where it results in widespread injustice.

Once again dozens of volunteers have contributed their time and expertise to creating the Queensland Law Handbook. It is a great practical source of help to members of the community. It plays a crucial role in informing the community of the law and legal processes. Caxton Legal Service should be congratulated for its contribution to legal advice, education and law reform in this State over the many years since its humble, but auspicious, beginnings.