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QUEENSLAND NARRATING SERVICE

CLIENT HANDBOOK

Queensland Narrating Service

Primary Service

The Queensland Narrating Service (QNS) is an autonomous organization operating on a not-for-profit basis providing alternative formats for people with print disabilities. To date the service predominately has been to arrange for volunteer narrators to transcribe print material into audio format, which can easily be accessed using standard audio equipment. QNS volunteer narrators transcribe recreational novels into audio format (subject to provisions of copyright), and these audio books are supplied to libraries for inclusion in their restricted access collection. Narrators also produce educational materials in the preferred audio format of students with print disabilities, from primary to post graduate levels. QNS produces audio materials for individuals' needs for vocational and everyday living. The provision of alternative formats must be available to people with print disabilities to ensure their independent access to information.

History of the Queensland Narrating Service

In November 1967 the Queensland Tape Recordists Association (QTRA) was formed as a social club for those interested in tape recording as a hobby. In May 1968 the QTRA Auxiliary for the Blind was formed for the specific purpose of reading material onto tape for the Blind, and particularly for blind students at the Narbethong School. This service was extended to include the physically handicapped in May 1969 when the Auxiliary became known as the Auxiliary for the Handicapped.

In February, 1973 the Auxiliary became an independent organization, with the next title of Queensland Tape Service for the Handicapped, its constitution being sanctioned by the Justice Department in November, 1973.

A full copy of the Potted History is available in standard print (Arial 12), large print (Arial 16).

How does the Service Operate?

The service is managed by a community based committee which is elected annually. The day-to-day operations are carried out by paid part-time staff, but many of the narration services are provided by volunteers.

Who can Access the Service

Any person with a print disability can access the services of QNS. The target group for print disability services comprises people who:

1. are blind or vision impaired
2. have physical disabilities which limit their ability to hold or manipulate information in a printed form
3. have perceptual or other disabilities which limit their ability to follow a line of print or which affect their concentration
4. cannot comprehend information in a print format due to insufficient literacy or language skill

Verification of print disability will be required before new clients are accepted. Services will be withdrawn if the client no longer meets the print disability criteria.

How to Access the Service

Consumers/Clients can contact QNS personally by:-

- ← Phone: (07) 3324 0004
- ← Post: PO Box 1383, Coorparoo DC Q 4151
- ← Email: qns@qns.net.au
- ← Web: www.qns.net.au

The service hours of operation are 9am to 2.30pm Monday to Friday 51 weeks of the year.

Requests are made by Government departments, community organizations, blindness agencies, Disability Liaison Officers of educational institutions on behalf of students and individuals.

What Service is available

- ← Transcribing printed material into the consumers preferred audio format - CD, MP3 & DAISY
- ← QNS can advocate on your behalf if an official document needs to be transcribed into audio format.

Cost Recovery

A nominal fee, which covers direct production costs. Contracts/Agreements for the production of multiple copies for Corporate, Government Departments, Blindness Agencies, Educational Institutions, Aged Care Facilities and Community Organizations will be made on an individual basis.

Client Rights

The concept of 'client rights' is part of the commitment that QNS makes to its clients. QNS endeavours to tailor its service delivery so that people with print disabilities can participate in the planning, development, operation and review of services they receive. It endeavours to meet the needs and goals of individual service users, and promotes their participation as active members of the community.

- ← the client should be aware of all the options available, and any fees to be charged;
- ← Services should be provided in a manner, which respects the dignity, independence and consideration of the client regardless of age, gender, religion and culture and is responsive to the physical needs of the client. Clients should be made aware of the standard of service which they can expect:-
 - ☒ Adequate turn-around times;
 - ☒ High quality accurate narration;
 - ☒ Availability of specialist narrators where appropriate;
 - ☒ Personalised access to the Service

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- ← clients have a right to complain about the service they are receiving without fear of retribution;
- ← complaints by clients should be dealt with fairly, promptly and without retribution;
- ← clients' views should be taken into account in the planning and evaluation of the service;
- ← clients' rights to privacy and confidentiality should be respected.

Client Responsibilities

- ← clients' should let the agency know if they no longer require a particular audio format;
- ← clients should act in a way which respects the rights of other consumers and QNS staff;
- ← clients need to take responsibility for the results of any decisions they make;
- ← clients are to play their part in helping QNS to provide them with services (which best meet their requirements).

Client Property

QNS shall exercise care with customer property while it is under the organizations control or being used by QNS staff and volunteers. QNS shall identify, verify, protect and safeguard client property. If client property is lost, damaged or otherwise found to be unsuitable for use, this shall be reported to the customer and records maintained.

Complaints and Disputes

Feedback from consumers is important in ensuring that services are continuing to meet consumers' needs and for planning appropriate services. We aim to provide a high quality service, so we would like to know if you have any concerns with service. Consumer complaints are welcomed and encouraged by QNS. Service will not be withdrawn if a complaint is made.

Several options exist for raising and resolving either individual or group grievances. Wherever possible, grievances should be resolved in the least formal manner.

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Clients have the choice of pursuing their grievances through any one of the following avenues:

- ☒ Personal contact with QNS staff
 - phone - (07) 3324 0004
 - email – qns@qns.net.au
 - post – PO Box 1383, Coorparoo DC Q 4151
- ☒ Contacting the Consumer Representatives on the Management Committee
- ☒ Raising concerns with the Management Committee by writing to the President or Secretary of QNS
 - email – qns@qns.net.au
 - post – PO Box 1383, Coorparoo DC Q 4151
- ☒ Contact via the DLO at the relevant educational institution

Grievances will be handled in a confidential and sensitive manner and records will be kept of grievances raised, action taken, outcomes reached, method of resolution and feedback to originating consumer.

Claims of sexual harassment will be similarly documented and appropriate/legal action taken. Reference can be made to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission.

Privacy Safeguards

QNS recognises the consumer's right to privacy and confidentiality in all aspects of his or her life. Procedures put in place will ensure:

- ☒ Staff are sensitive in discussing personal details regarding individual consumers with other staff, committee members, narrators, outside agencies or others and that staff are aware of Freedom of Information provisions;
- ☒ Information collected is limited to that which is relevant and necessary to the consumer's involvement with the Service;
- ☒ Any personal information is stored securely and is not kept any longer than is necessary and is disposed of in ways that are in keeping with the need to maintain confidentiality;
- ☒ Access to the information is limited to the consumer and to the staff who need to use it;
- ☒ The consumer's written permission is sought before verbal or written information regarding the consumer is released.

Decision Making and Choice

QNS will provide consumers with opportunities to enable them to participate as fully as possible in making decisions about the Service they receive.

The mechanism for gaining consumer input will include:

- ▣ Distribution of brochure (standard or large print) and/or audio format to consumers and potential consumers about what services are available;
- ▣ Distribution of newsletters detailing proposed changes to policy or procedures and calling for comment and input;
- ▣ Regular consumer, staff and public meetings;
- ▣ Provision for consumer participation through establishment of consumer advisory committee and formal links with Management Committee.

Meeting Individual Needs

QNS will endeavour to provide consumers with a service, which meets as closely as possible their individual development, personal needs and goals.

The requests for production of printed material in audio format are made by the individual concerned or by an organization, blindness agency or Disability Liaison

Officer from an educational institution: The client will be kept informed of the progress being made and liaison between the client and narrator will be encouraged.

Employment Conditions

QNS agrees that people with disabilities should enjoy similar working conditions to those expected and enjoyed by the general workforce.

At present no people with print disabilities are employed by the organization.

Mission Statement

Queensland Narrating Service is a non-profit community organisation that enables people to exercise their right to access desired information in audio formats and so enables them to enrich their lives and participate in decisions that affect them. QNS operates in a fair and responsible manner in our dealings with volunteers, staff, funding providers, print-disabled agencies and the broader community.

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