

Our customised services

In 2020–21, the RTA turned its focus to supporting Queenslanders recovering from the impacts of COVID-19 while helping customers navigate changes to the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020* (referred to as the COVID-19 Regulations). We continued our journey in digital optimisation, investing in several projects to further deliver on our strategic objectives of providing smart digital services and ensuring customers value RTA services.

RTA Web Services

The RTA released two new Web Services in 2020–21. The Change of Bond Contributors Web Service launched on 10 August 2020, enabling customers to change and update details of bond contributors and associated bond contribution amounts quickly and easily online when tenants in a property have been approved to change. This service was also developed to process agreed bond contributor changes automatically within hours.

Following the success of the COVID-19 Dispute Resolution Web Service in April 2020, the RTA released the Tenancy Dispute Resolution Web Service on 28 January 2021. This service offers our customers a convenient, digital way to request dispute resolution assistance from the RTA for a tenancy dispute that occurs during a tenancy, or a claim for compensation over the bond amount at the end of a tenancy. It complements the RTA's online bond dispute request process which forms part of the Bond Refund Web Service.

As we celebrate the second year of RTA Web Services, the RTA has processed 766,692 requests in total through the digital platform, which included:

- 296,722 bond refund requests
- 287,475 bond lodgements
- 155,213 requests to update customer details
- 15,797 bond dispute resolution requests
- 10,291 change of bond contributors requests
- 1,194 tenancy dispute resolution requests.

Supporting Queenslanders

The COVID-19 Regulations have been amended twice during the year, firstly on 30 September 2020 and again on 30 April 2021. These changes were implemented to help the Queensland residential rental sector transition back to normal tenancy arrangements and processes under the RTRA Act. The RTA has continued to tailor and align its customer support services and resources with the amended legislation, updating its educational resources and the information available across all channels to help customers understand their tenancy rights and responsibilities.

In December 2020, the RTA upgraded its telephone and voice infrastructure to a new contemporary platform to enable easy, real-time collaboration with customers and improve workforce management. To further ensure continuity of service, a secure web-based conferencing product was implemented to enhance the dispute resolution experience for our conciliators and customers, which maintains the effective facilitation of private sessions with individuals during a teleconference conciliation.

Customer satisfaction

Our Customer Experience division asked customers to assess various aspects of the service they received, including timeliness of response, ease of access, RTA staff performance, service outcome and overall satisfaction with the service provided. Excellent customer service was achieved year-round, with high ratings of 84.9 per cent recorded in November 2020, and 84.6 per cent in October 2020 and again in June 2021. An average customer satisfaction rating of 82.6 per cent was recorded in 2020–21 for the delivery of services to our customers.

Bond management

Our customers have been enjoying the efficiencies of completing essential bond and tenancy transactions online at any time, any place and on any device, as is evident from the increased uptake and engagement with RTA Web Services.

In the second year of RTA Web Services and to deliver on the RTA's strategic objective to provide smart digital services, we released the Change of Bond Contributors Web Service on 10 August 2020. This Web Service has helped customers to quickly and easily request and obtain agreement online for changes to bond contributors or bond allocation amounts. Since its launch in August 2020, over 40 per cent of change of bond contributors requests have been submitted via this new Web Service, with a peak experienced in January 2021 that saw more than 59.5 per cent of change of bond contributors requests submitted digitally via this new channel.

Average processing times

	Bond lodgements	Bond refunds
All channels (digital + paper)	2.5 days	0.7 days

Bond forms processed

2016–17 to 2020–21

	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21
Bond lodgements	412,504	424,416	418,557	396,674 Paper: 288,658 Digital: 108,016	364,262 Paper: 184,810 Digital: 179,452
Bond refunds	329,358	321,086	312,749	296,628 Paper: 158,255 Digital: 138,373	267,098 Paper: 35,827 Digital: 231,271
Bond change forms*	122,366	72,401	69,437	77,007	69,556

* Bond change forms

Change of rental property (Form 3)

Change of property manager/owner (Form 5)

Change of bond contributors (Form 6)

To support the Queensland Government's objective of *Unite and Recover*, the RTA Bond Refund Web Service has been part of delivering excellent frontline services in the rental sector. This digital channel for requesting bond refunds, which provides an option for customers to fast track agreed refund requests, surged in popularity in its second year. Of the total bond refund requests received in 2020-21, an average of 78.6 per cent were submitted through the Bond Refund Web Service, with the number of digital bond refund requests increasing by 67.1 per cent compared to the previous year. In 2020–21, of the total bond refunds, 74.2 per cent of bond money by value was returned to tenants.

The total number of bond lodgement forms processed decreased by 12.5 per cent and the total bond refund forms processed reduced by 13.5 per cent compared to the previous year, consistent with the increase in the median length of tenancies (see page 11). Contributing factors for the reduced volume include high rental demand and low rental vacancy rates brought about by interstate migration, less movement in the sector with COVID-19 lockdowns, as well as reduced numbers of international students due to the continued border closures and ongoing impacts of the pandemic.

Contact Centre

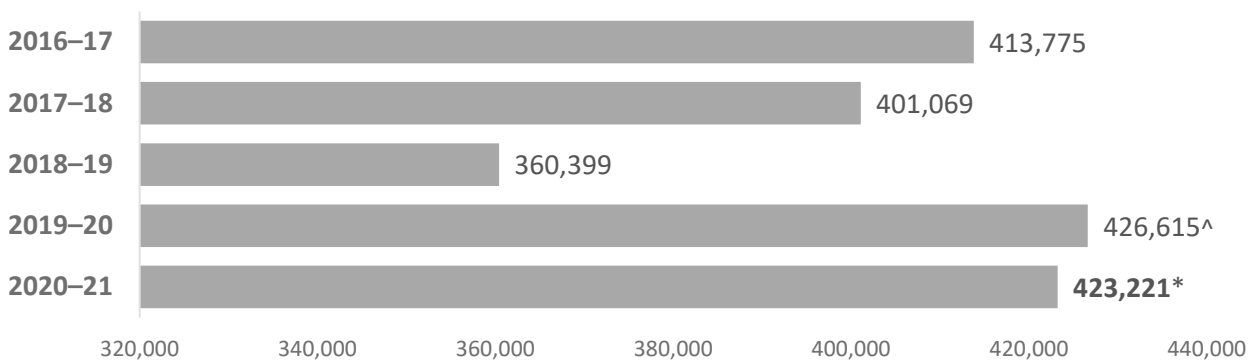
The RTA Contact Centre provides customers with tailored tenancy information, helping tenants and property managers/owners to make informed decisions. This year, the RTA Contact Centre responded to 423,221 phone enquiries, which is an 0.8 per cent decrease from last year.

RTA staff answered an average of 1,686 calls each working day in 2020–21 (up from #1,610 calls per day in 2019–20).

The average talk time has remained similar at 421 seconds in 2020–21, compared to 428 seconds in the previous year. In addition to enquiring on the phone, RTA customers can also self-service with information from other channels and platforms including the website.

The average calls per day in 2019–20 did not include the 30,786 COVID-19 hotline enquiries received by an external contact centre engaged by the RTA. This hotline was transferred back to the RTA to manage in December 2020.

Contact Centre phone enquiries



[^] Includes 30,786 COVID-19 hotline enquiries

^{*} Includes 7,071 COVID-19 hotline enquiries



An average customer satisfaction rating of **82.6%** was recorded in 2020–21 for the delivery of services to our customers

Dispute resolution

The RTA offers a free, impartial and independent dispute resolution service to help tenants, property managers and property owners resolve tenancy disputes and reach a mutually agreeable outcome. Customers who volunteer to participate in this process may be able to avoid the need for legal action through the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT), saving time and money. Through conciliation, customers also gain valuable negotiation and self-resolution skills that can help address concerns, sustain their tenancies and preserve their relationship with the other party.

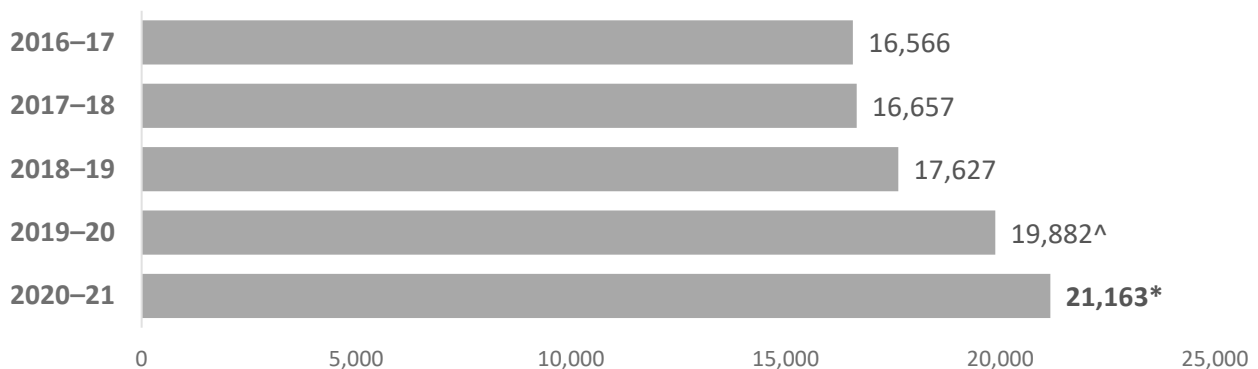
When a dispute resolution request is received by the RTA, it is first assessed to determine whether the matter is suitable for conciliation. Disputing parties are then contacted for further information and an opportunity to have their say. A trained RTA conciliator then facilitates confidential negotiations between the disputing parties, either through one-to-one phone calls or a group teleconference. RTA conciliators are impartial and cannot make decisions. Their role is to provide structure to the discussion and negotiation, educate parties on their rights and responsibilities, and help them reach agreement.



In 2020–21, the RTA resolved **70.5%** of all disputes where parties volunteered to participate

The number of conciliated disputes below reflects all dispute resolution requests that proceeded to conciliation, excluding instances where disputing parties subsequently withdrew from the conciliation process or were unable to be contacted for conciliation.

Conciliated disputes



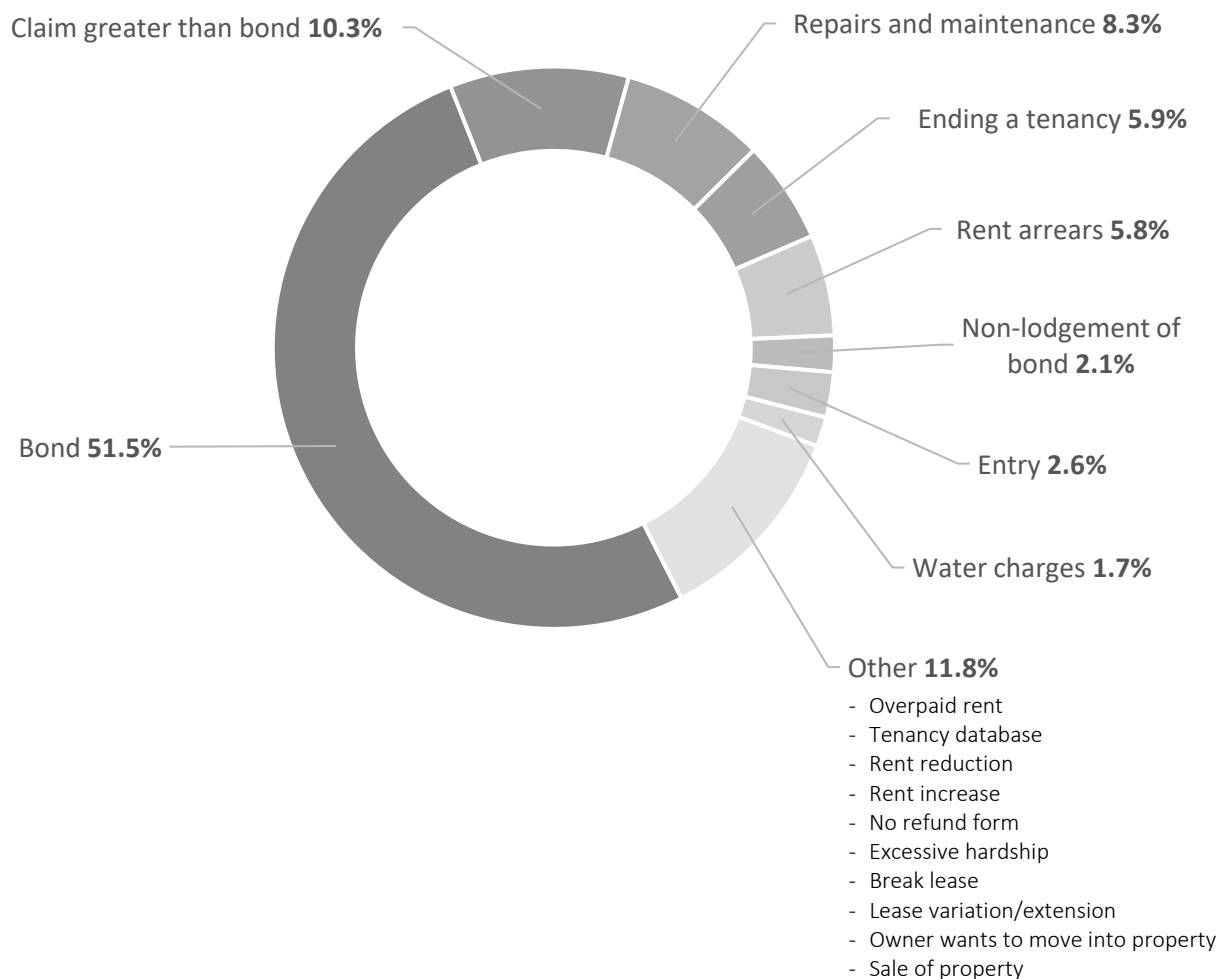
[^] Includes 1,791 COVID-19 related disputes

^{*} Includes 1,080 COVID-19 related disputes

With the new Tenancy Dispute Resolution Web Service launched in January 2021, much of the dispute resolution request process has been automated, enabling our staff to focus on providing valuable and tailored support to our customers.

How a bond will be paid out at the end of a tenancy remains one of the main reasons for conciliated disputes. Compensation claims for amounts in excess of the bond and claims submitted after the bond had been paid out represent 10.3 per cent of all disputes. Some 38.2 per cent of disputes occur during a tenancy and often relate to ending a tenancy, rental arrears, repairs and maintenance.

Dispute reasons



Parties who were unable to resolve disputes through conciliation were given information on how to seek a ruling from QCAT if they wished. Note that not all parties took unresolved disputes to QCAT – some chose not to pursue further action and others would later reach agreement between themselves. A total of 2,187 conciliated disputes progressed to QCAT in 2020–21, which represents 10.3 per cent of all conciliated disputes.