

Our customised services

In 2021–22, the RTA supported Queenslanders to navigate extreme weather events, the expiration of temporary COVID-19 Emergency Response measures, and the implementation of Stage 1 of the *Housing Legislation Amendment Act 2021* (HLA Act). We also continued our journey of digital optimisation by investing in several projects to further deliver on our strategic objectives of providing smart digital services which are valued by our customers.

RTA Web Services

On 6 December 2021, we released the Bulk Bond Lodgement Web Service which is the final product in the RTA Web Services suite. The Bulk Bond Lodgement service allows joint lessors, agents, student accommodation providers and property managers working on behalf of an organisation to lodge multiple bonds and bond increases in a single online transaction.

As we celebrate the third year of RTA Web Services, the RTA has processed 1,368,343 requests in total through this online platform. In 2021–22, through the RTA Web Services, we processed:

- 213,200 bond refund requests
- 215,610 single bond lodgements
- 7,782 bulk bond lodgement submissions, consisting of 48,914 lodgements/bond increases
- 142,644 requests to update customer details
- 13,089 bond dispute resolution requests
- 13,958 change of bond contributors requests
- 3,144 tenancy dispute resolution requests.

This financial year, we saw a 5 per cent increase in uptake across all RTA Web Services and 70.2 per cent of all tenancy and bond forms were lodged through our digital channels.

To ensure accessibility for vulnerable customers and those without digital access, the RTA also provides paper form options, contact centre support and services tailored to the needs of community housing providers and support service providers.

Supporting Queenslanders through legislation changes

On 20 October 2021, the *Housing Legislation Amendment Act 2021* (HLA Act) received royal assent and became law. The HLA Act amends our existing legislation – the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008* and the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Regulation 2009*.

While the HLA Act became law in October 2021, the changes from the amendments are being implemented in separate phases over a three-year period to provide sufficient time for the sector to adequately prepare for, understand and adopt the changes.

The first phase, which commenced on 20 October 2021, incorporated the domestic and family violence (DFV) provisions outlined in the temporary *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation (COVID-19 Emergency Response) Regulation 2020*, which expired on 30 April 2022. These provisions introduced greater DFV protections for tenants and residents, allowing a person experiencing DFV to end their interest in a tenancy quickly and leave the property, or take certain measures to ensure they can stay in the rental property safely.

To help our customers understand these provisions, we:

- published a new DFV page on our website that provides information about what processes need to be followed when a person experiences DFV in a rental property
- developed factsheets for tenants and residents to explain the process and legislative requirements for when a tenant or resident leaves due to DFV, including educating all parties on the new DFV bond refund process
- developed individual flowcharts outlining the process for tenants, property managers and rooming accommodation residents and providers
- updated existing forms and created several new forms in line with the DFV provisions
- delivered two webinars on DFV provisions
- introduced new internal staff processes to reflect the new DFV provisions
- published a Talking Tenancies podcast on the provisions
- delivered 93 hours of DFV-specific training to our Customer Experience Officers and updated all DFV-specific standard responses.

The second phase of the amendments, which includes legislation changes around renting with pets, ending a tenancy and repair orders, will commence on 1 October 2022. The third phase, which will introduce minimum housing standards, will commence for new tenancy arrangements from 1 September 2023 and all tenancies from 1 September 2024.

We will continue to tailor and align our customer support services and resources in line with amended legislation across all channels to ensure our customers understand their rights and responsibilities. We will also continue to work with our key stakeholders to provide education on the reforms.

Customer Experience Research Project

As outlined under the *RTA Strategic Plan 2019–23*, we're committed to improving customer experience and investing in digital optimisation.

In light of this, in 2021–22, we engaged external consultants to help us:

- conduct comprehensive market research and industry benchmarking
- review the performance of our current service delivery to improve business efficiency and internal capabilities
- engage with stakeholders, tenants, peak bodies and associations, and the Queensland Government to gather feedback on current and future needs.

The outcomes of these actions will be provided in the form of key recommendations. These will allow us to improve customer experience and internal capabilities across all our channels, including digital optimisation and transformation.

Some findings and outcomes of this research project will be provided in the *RTA Annual Report 2022–23*.

Bond management

The RTA have implemented procedures to improve customer experience, including same day processing of paper and online bond refund forms. For the 2021–22 period, bond refunds have been processed within 0.6 days on average.

In the third year of RTA Web Services, which were designed to deliver on the RTA’s strategic objective to provide smart digital services, we released the Bulk Bond Lodgement Web Service. This service allows customers to lodge and pay for multiple bonds in a single online transaction, while also reducing data entry requirements for RTA staff. Since its launch, over 19.1 per cent of bond lodgement requests have been submitted via this service.

Average processing times

	Bond lodgements	Bond refunds
All channels (digital + paper)	3.0 days	0.6 days

Bond forms processed

2017–18 to 2021–22

	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
Bond lodgements and bond increases	424,416	418,557	396,674	364,262	451,366
Paper	-	-	72.8%	50.7%	41.6%
Digital	-	-	29.2%	49.3%	58.4%
Bond refunds	321,086	312,749	296,628	267,098	258,802
Paper	-	-	53.4%	13.4%	11.6%
Digital	-	-	46.6%	86.6%	88.4%
Bond change forms*	72,401	69,437	77,007	69,556	80,333
Paper	-	-	-	-	82.6%
Digital	-	-	-	-	17.4%

* Bond change forms

Change of rental property (Form 3)

Change of property manager/owner (Form 5)

Change of bond contributors (Form 6)

In 2021–22, tenants and residents were refunded an average of 74.9 per cent of their bond. While the number of total bonds held by the RTA decreased in the 2021–22 financial year, the total number of bond lodgements and bond increases processed by the RTA increased by 23.9 per cent. This is due to a significant rise in the number of bond increases.

The total bond refunds processed reduced by 3.1 per cent compared to the previous year. The reduction in refunds is consistent with the increase in the median length of tenancies and bond increases (see page 11). Contributing factors for the reduced volume of refunds may include high rental demand and low rental vacancy rates, which have been brought about by increased interstate migration, building delays following the COVID-19 pandemic, and fewer properties available in Queensland’s primary rental market (South East Queensland) following the 2022 Eastern Australia floods.

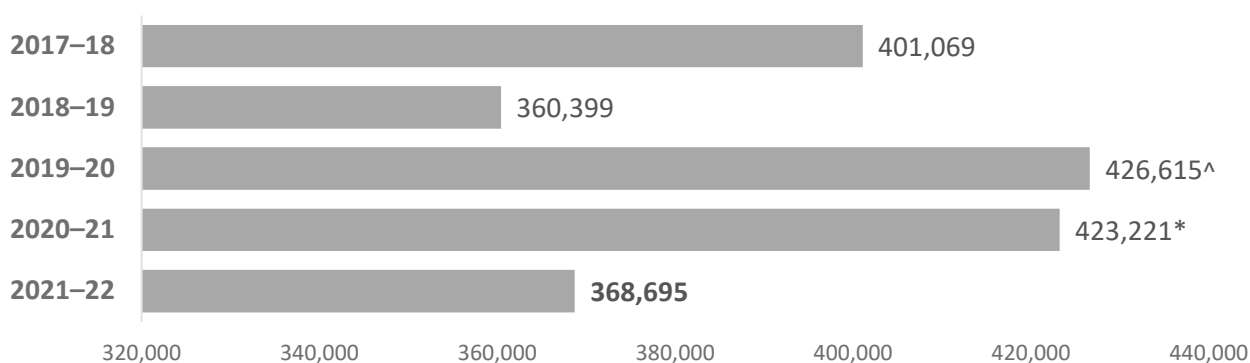
Contact Centre

The RTA Contact Centre provides customers with tailored tenancy information, helping tenants, residents, property managers and owners to make informed decisions.

In 2021–22, the Contact Centre responded to 368,695 phone enquiries, which is a 12.9 per cent decrease from last year. The reduced volume of calls was offset by an increase in the length and complexity of the enquiries we received due to stresses in the rental market. The average talk time has increased to 483 seconds, a 15 per cent increase compared to 421 seconds in the previous year. RTA staff answered an average of 1,440 calls each working day, which is down from 1,686* calls per day in 2020–21.

* The average calls per day in 2020–21 did not include the 7,071 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

In addition to enquiring on the phone, RTA customers can also self-service with information from other channels and platforms including the website.

Customer feedback

The RTA values the opinions of our customers and actively encourages and seeks feedback about our services. Customers have the option to provide feedback on the quality of service they have received through a range of communication channels.

In 2021–22, 83 per cent of customers surveyed agreed that the RTA provided a high-quality service year-round. Customers are asked to provide feedback on timeliness of response; ease of access; RTA staff performance; service outcome; and overall satisfaction with the service provided. This year, customers rated RTA staff performance as the highest quality aspect of their experience. We responded to 109 formal customer complaints, with 90 resolved during initial contact and 19 requiring further action.



An average customer satisfaction rating of **83%** was recorded in 2021–22 for the delivery of services to our customers

Dispute resolution

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

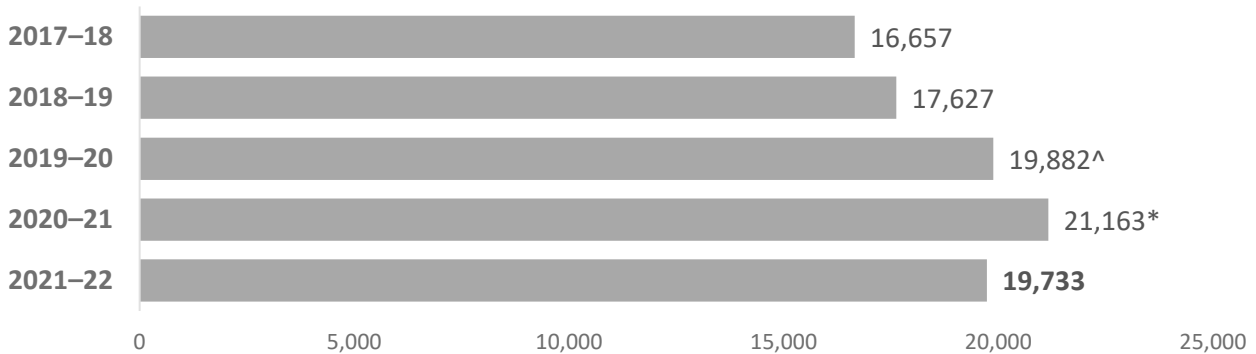
We triage all incoming dispute resolution requests to determine whether the matter is suitable for conciliation. Disputing parties are contacted for further information and are given the opportunity to have their say. A trained RTA conciliator then facilitates confidential negotiations between the disputing parties, either through one-to-one phone calls or a group teleconference. Conciliators cannot make decisions about disputes or enforce rules or regulations. Their role is to provide structure to the discussion, aid in negotiations, educate parties on their rights and responsibilities and to help them reach an agreement.



In 2021–22, the RTA resolved **76.3%** of all disputes where parties volunteered to participate

In 2021–22, we resolved over 76 per cent 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

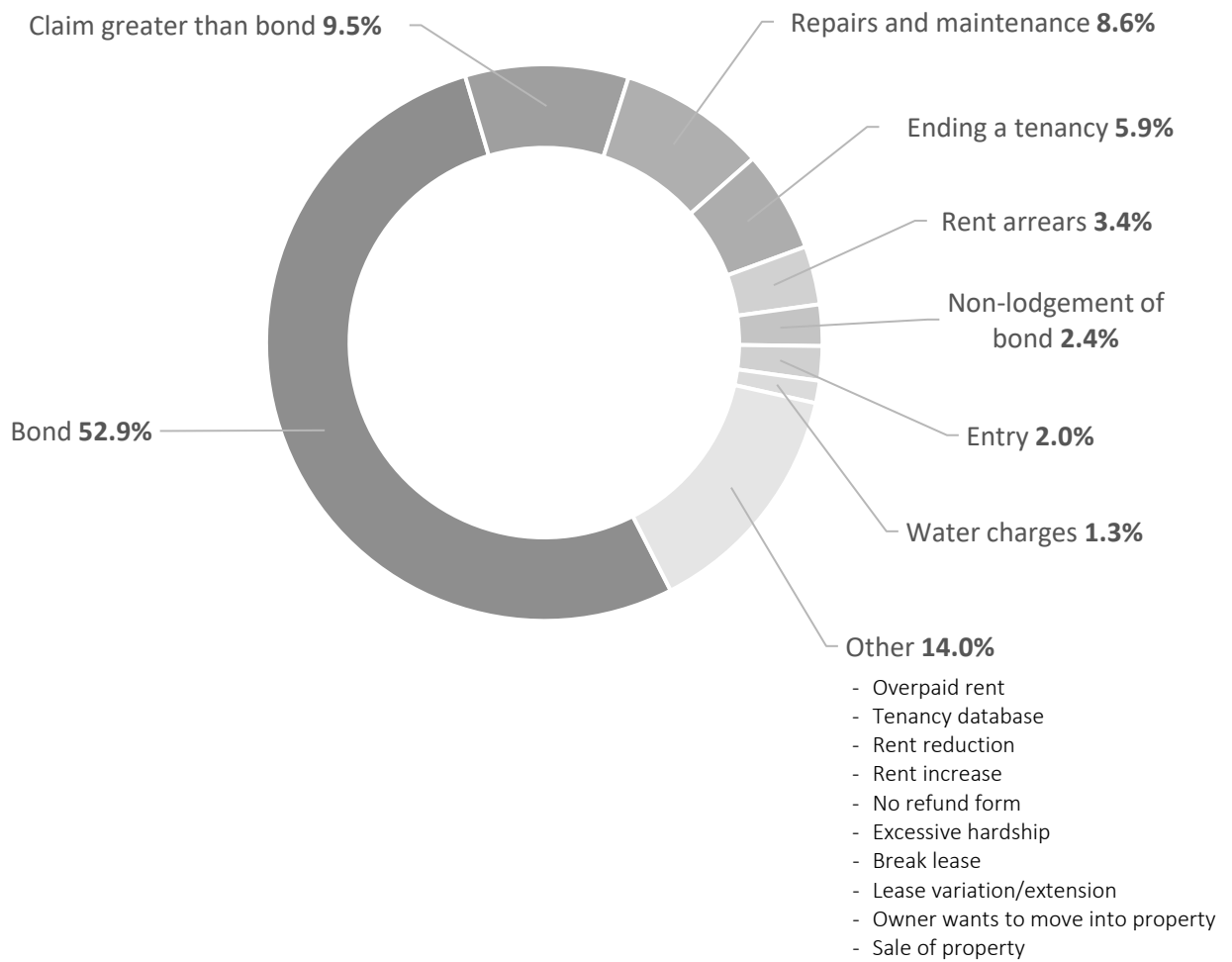
28 per cent of disputes occur during a tenancy. Disputes which occur during a tenancy include disagreements around repairs and maintenance, rent arrears, entry to the property, water charges, and other disputes.

How a bond will be paid out at the end of a tenancy remains the primary reason for conciliated disputes. Compensation claims for amounts more than the bond and claims submitted after the bond has been paid out represent 9.5 per cent of all disputes.

Due to recent flood events, there has been an increase in disputes relating to repairs and maintenance and disputes around ending a tenancy. The low vacancy rates currently being experienced in the Queensland rental market have also led to an increase in disputes about rent increases.

Following the introduction of the new DFV provisions for tenants and residents in October 2021, the Dispute Resolution Service has conciliated 157 disputes relating to bond claims for tenancies impacted by DFV and 120 disputes where the tenancy is ongoing but DFV has been experienced.

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 1,611 conciliated disputes progressed to QCAT in 2021–22, which represents 8.2 per cent of all conciliated disputes.