

Letter of compliance

Friday 9 September 2022

The Honourable Leeanne Enoch MP
Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts

GPO Box 806
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Minister

I am pleased to present the Annual Report 2021–22 and financial statements for the Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA).

I certify this Annual Report complies with:

- the prescribed requirements of the *Financial Accountability Act 2009* (Qld) and the *Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019* (Qld), and
- the detailed requirements set out in the *Annual report requirements for Queensland Government agencies*.

A checklist outlining compliance with the annual reporting requirements can be found on page 88 of this report.

Yours sincerely



Paul Melville
Board Chair, Residential Tenancies Authority

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Accessibility



The Queensland Government and the RTA are committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. If you have difficulty in understanding this report, you can access the Queensland Government's Translating and Interpreting Services online via www.qld.gov.au/help/languages or by calling the RTA on 1300 366 311 and we will arrange an interpreter to communicate this report to you.

Additional online reporting

The following additional annual reporting requirements can be accessed through the Queensland Government Open Data website (data.qld.gov.au):

- consultancies
- overseas travel
- Queensland Language Services Policy.

Providing feedback

Readers are invited to comment on this report by emailing annualreport@rta.qld.gov.au or by calling the RTA Contact Centre on 1300 366 311.

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For more information on access and use visit: <https://www.qgcio.qld.gov.au/documents/information-access-and-use-policy-is33>.

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To read the Residential Tenancies Authority Annual Report 2021–22 online visit: rta.qld.gov.au/annualreport.

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Chair's message

It gives me great pleasure to present the *Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA) Annual Report 2021–22*, which details the RTA's ongoing efforts and achievements to help make renting work for everyone.

There were several changes this year designed to positively impact Queensland's rental sector.

Firstly, the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008* was amended with the passing of the *Housing Legislation Amendment Act 2021*, following consultation with the sector, and the RTA is currently implementing the changes. These amendments, which came into effect in October 2021, provide critical protections and options to support tenants experiencing domestic and family violence. Over the next two years, we will continue to support the sector as additional reforms are implemented around pets, ending a tenancy, repair orders and minimum housing standards.

Secondly, due to sector dynamics and advancements at the RTA, a new strategic plan was launched earlier than scheduled on 1 July 2022. The *RTA Strategic Plan 2022–26* outlines a renewed focus on: improving customer experience through the delivery of new digital services and experiences; continued influence and partnerships with stakeholders across the sector; and building a sustainable and contemporary organisation to support our staff. Recent changes to the RTA funding model also ensure the sustainability of our operations and the delivery of the new strategic plan.

My appointment as Board Chair comes to an end on 31 October 2022. Since joining the RTA Board in May 2017, I've seen great progress achieved by our people in the face of a global pandemic, extreme weather events, and low vacancy rates. It has been a privilege to witness and contribute to the growth of the organisation, and I am confident this will continue under the direction of the next Board Chair and the Board.

Thank you to both the Honourable Leeanne Enoch MP, Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts and the Honourable Mick de Brenni MP, former Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport, as well as their teams, for their ongoing work in helping the RTA achieve positive outcomes for the sector.

Finally, I would like to say a very big thankyou to all the wonderful people who work at the RTA. The organisation has changed enormously over the last five years. It has had to deal with everything from pandemics to significant legislative reforms whilst going through an operational transformation – all of which was handled with the upmost skill and judgment. The team have been excellently led by our CEO Jennifer Smith and the Executive Leadership Team. I would also like to thank my fellow Board members for their support and counsel and wish them, and all at the RTA, every success over coming years. It has been a pleasure to serve and be part of such a wonderful organisation.



Paul Melville Board Chair

CEO's message

It's been another challenging year for Queensland's rental sector and I'm immensely proud of the work the RTA has done in supporting Queenslanders. In the 2021–22 financial year, our Contact Centre received over 368,000 calls and conciliated over 19,000 disputes. Despite the challenges the sector faced, we retained strong customer satisfaction rating of 83 per cent for our services.

This year we continued to work closely with our stakeholders, from consultation to help inform the development of the new *RTA Strategic Plan 2022–26*, to ongoing engagement through the Stakeholder Forum. We also collaborated with our Stakeholder Working Group on new resources to educate customers on their rights and responsibilities.

This year we supported the sector by commencing implementation of the first stage of reforms under the *Housing Legislation Amendment Act 2021*. We will continue to support the sector to understand and navigate the additional upcoming reforms, which will be released in separate stages over the next two years.

To further support our customers in 2021–22, we:

- launched the final product in the RTA Web Services suite, the Bulk Bond Lodgement service
- launched our Proactive Compliance Program, allowing us to identify agencies with high rates of non-compliance around lodging bonds within the required 10-day period, and provide tailored education sessions
- delivered 70 tailored information and education activities, including 14 in-person and online sessions for property managers and owners in Cairns, Gold Coast, Mount Isa, Gladstone, Ipswich and the Redlands.

This year we also embarked on a Customer Experience Research Project. This saw extensive engagement with our stakeholders and customers to better understand their experiences and how we can improve our processes to better support them. This consultation will continue into the 2022–23 financial year, and I'm looking forward to sharing the findings and outcomes with you in next year's annual report.

I would like to recognise the significant efforts of RTA Board Chair Paul Melville, who in the last five years has worked to improve the culture and reach of the organisation, with insightful conversations with the Board, executives, staff and our customers. Paul has been deeply involved with the RTA's transformation and has united support from all of us. Paul, thank you for your service and for helping us map our future direction through the *RTA Strategic Plan 2022–26*. I have every confidence that you have set us on the right course.

I look forward to continuing the excellent work we're doing with the Honourable Leeanne Enoch MP, Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts, and her staff. I'd also like to thank Clare O'Connor, Director-General of the Department of Communities, Housing and Digital Economy and her team, the RTA Board and members of our Stakeholder Forum and Stakeholder Working Group. Finally, my greatest thanks and appreciation goes to all the staff and the Executive Leadership Team at the RTA.



Jennifer Smith Chief Executive Officer

About us

Our vision and purpose

The Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA) is Queensland's independent statutory authority that administers the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008* (RTRA Act). We offer a range of services to uphold fairness, integrity and balance within the residential rental sector, and empower Queenslanders to make informed renting choices.

In addition to providing tailored tenancy information, support, education and bond management services, the RTA offers a free dispute resolution service to help parties resolve tenancy issues in a cost-effective manner and potentially avoid legal action. We also provide education to our customers about their legislative obligations and investigate alleged offences under the RTRA Act, with the aim to prevent repeat offending and improve compliance.

With the rental landscape shifting rapidly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the RTA has continued to monitor and research residential rental data and trends. We have strengthened our relationships with key stakeholders and industry sector bodies, allowing us to proactively identify the challenges our customers face, tailor our services to best serve their needs and concerns, and make renting work for everyone.

The RTA is governed by a Board of Directors, which is appointed by the Queensland Parliament's Governor in Council, and is responsible to the Minister for Communities and Housing, Minister for Digital Economy and Minister for the Arts, the Honourable Leeanne Enoch MP.

Our objectives and strategies

The *RTA Strategic Plan 2019–23* outlined four strategic objectives that guided our organisation, including our people and our investments in projects and initiatives. Through this plan, we aimed to provide smart digital services, improve business efficiency, build a customer-focused workforce, and ensure customers valued our services. Our strategic plan reinforced our commitment to delivering excellent customer services and experiences, and provided clear direction and performance indicators to guide us towards being a customer-centric organisation. It also demonstrated our commitment to protect and promote human rights in our decision-making and actions.

At the beginning of 2022, we made the decision to undertake a comprehensive review of the *RTA Strategic Plan 2019–23* and replace it one year ahead of schedule. This plan was developed in 2018 and no longer reflected the landscape of Queensland's rental sector, which has changed significantly over the past few years. On 1 July 2022, we launched our new *RTA Strategic Plan 2022–26*. As this annual report reflects the RTA's achievements over the 2021–22 financial year, before the new strategic plan came into effect, all reporting measures refer to those outlined in the *RTA Strategic Plan 2019–23*.

The RTA also supports the *Queensland Housing Strategy 2017–2027*, a 10-year framework led by the Queensland Government, to create better housing pathways and help every Queenslanders access a safe, secure and affordable home.

Our contribution to community objectives

The RTA is committed to supporting the Queensland Government's objectives for the community – *Unite and Recover* – by backing our frontline services and providing easy to access services to support the residential rental sector.

Our operations

Contact Centre phone enquiries

2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
401,069	360,399	426,615 [^]	423,221 [*]	368,695[†]

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

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

[†]Includes 4,839 COVID-19 enquiries

New bond lodgements ¹

2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
272,939	267,210	268,188	238,099	232,011

Number of bonds held ² (30 June)

2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
607,053	621,960	638,481	631,545	624,427

Value of bonds held ³ (\$'M 30 June)

2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
855.58	900.8 [^]	943.4	971.0	1,025.0

[^] Figure updated due to the definition of unclaimed bond monies being redefined

Conciliated disputes ⁴

2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
16,657	17,627	19,882 [^]	21,163 [*]	19,733[†]

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

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

[†] Includes 53 COVID-19 related disputes

Investigations finalised

2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
1,018 (Received 1,020 requests)	1,159 (Received 1,040 requests)	1,050 (Received 925 requests)	567 (Received 490 requests)	241 (Received 243 requests)

Website visits

2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
2,219,609	2,270,595	2,939,273	3,123,023	3,396,313

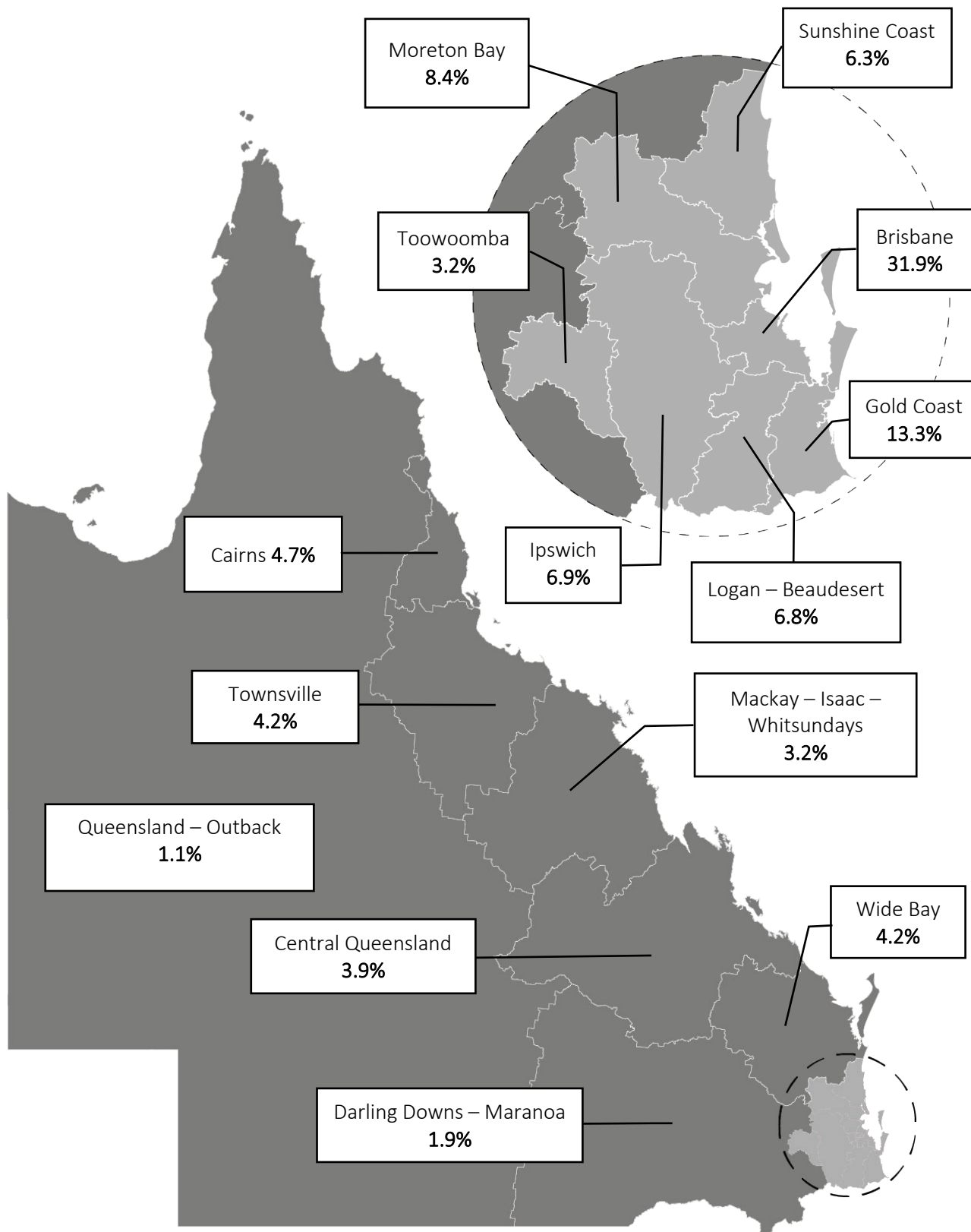
Operating surplus/(deficit) (\$'M)

2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22
(7.9)	8.6	(43.3)	35.3	(56.3)

1. Includes new bond lodgements for general tenancies and rooming accommodation.
2. Includes bonds held for general tenancies and rooming accommodation.
3. Excludes unclaimed bond monies.
4. Methodology changed in 2019–20 to more accurately reflect dispute resolution requests that proceeded to conciliation in the last five years. This excludes dispute resolution requests where parties subsequently withdrew from the conciliation process or were unable to be contacted.

Our customers

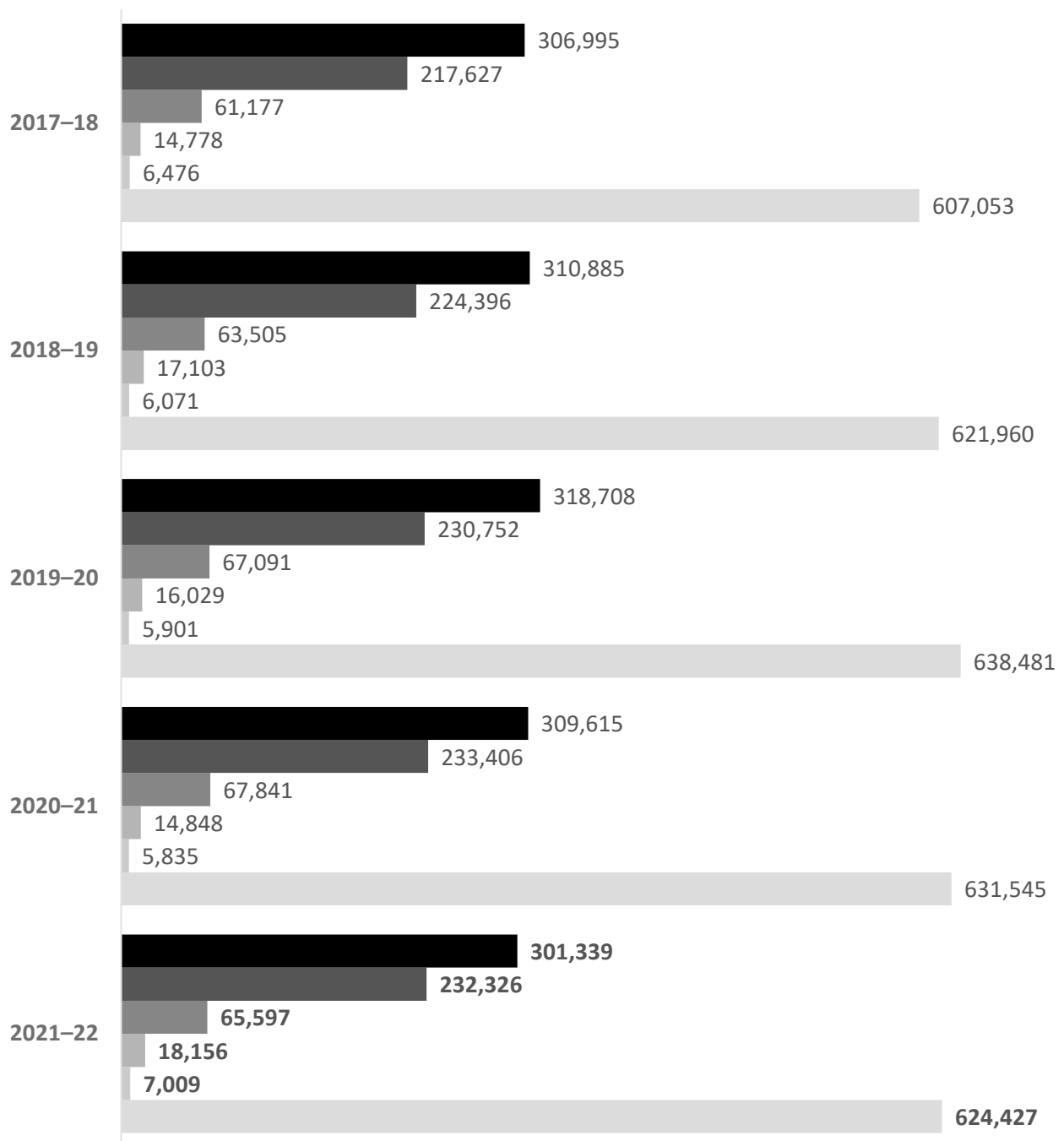
The data below is based on bonds held by the RTA as of 30 June 2022. Locations of major regions in Queensland below are based on Statistical Area Level 4 (SA4s)¹.



1. SA4s are the largest sub-state regions in the main structure of the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) and are designed for the output of a variety of regional data by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), representing labour markets or groups of labour markets within each state and territory.

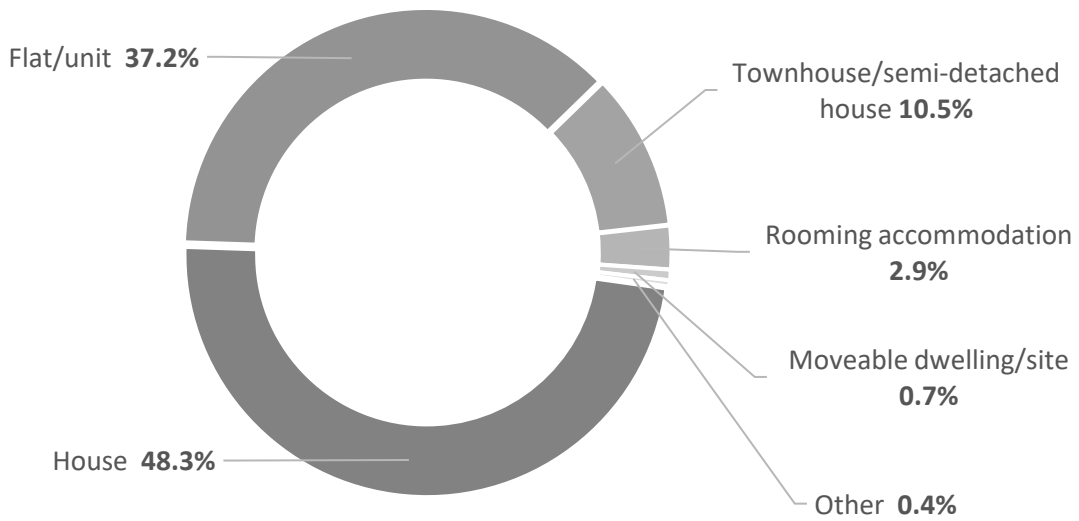
Total bonds held by dwelling type

The data below shows the total bonds held per dwelling type in the June quarter of each financial year between 2017–18 and 2021–22.



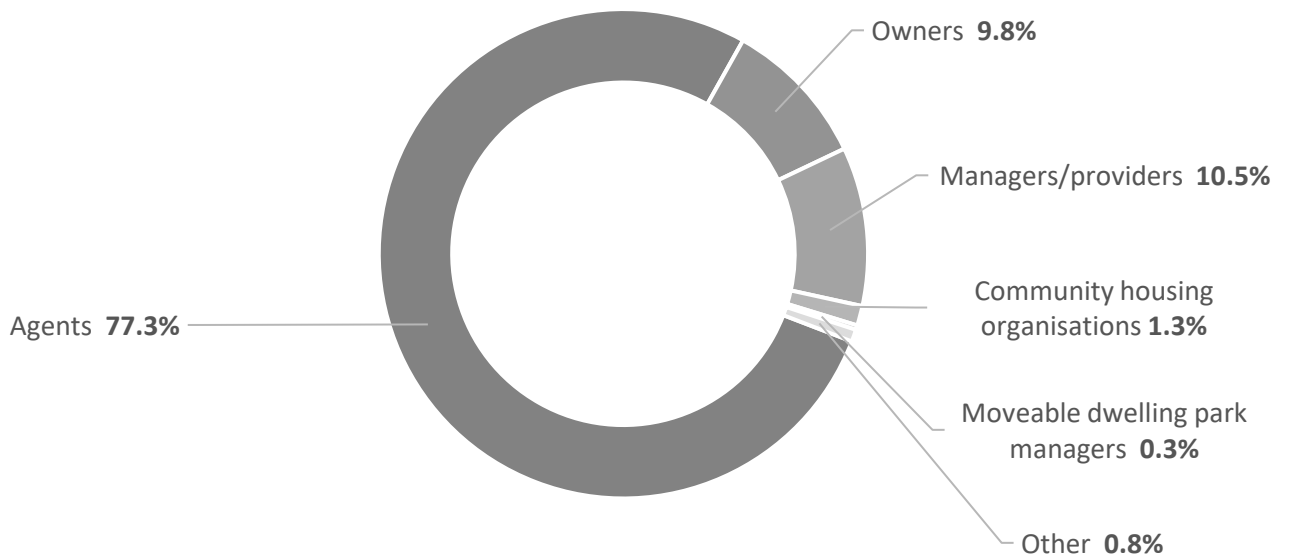
- Houses
- Units
- Townhouses
- Rooming accommodation
- Other dwelling types
- Total

Dwelling type



96% of dwellings are houses, flats and townhouses

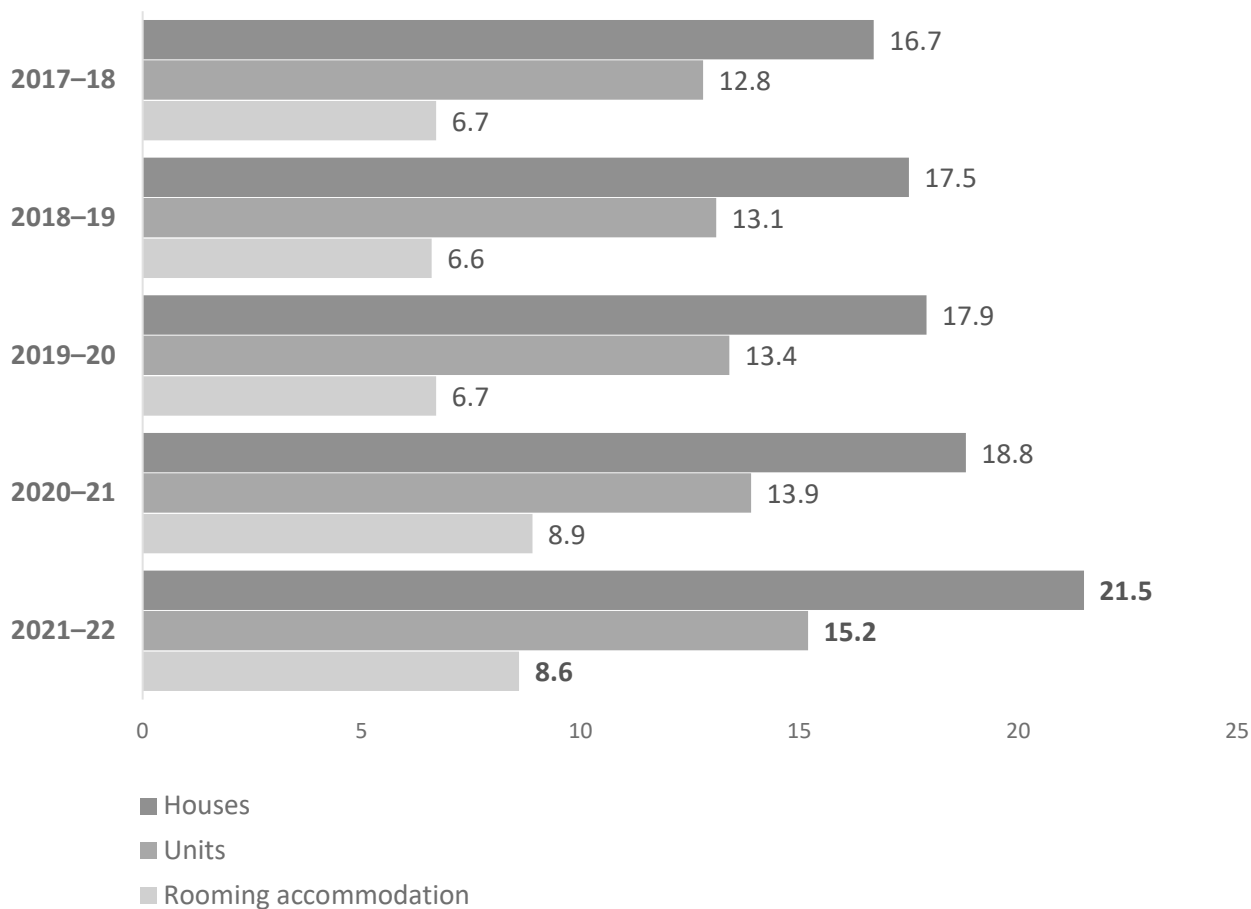
Who manages bonds?



Approximately **97.6%** of rental properties are managed by real estate agents, property managers and owners

Median length of tenancies (months)

The data below shows median length of tenancies in Queensland between 2017–18 and 2021–22.



Weekly median rents

The data below shows median weekly rents for all dwelling types based on new bonds lodged in the June quarter of each financial year between 2012–13 and 2021–22.

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
\$350	\$350	\$350	\$350	\$350	\$360	\$360	\$365	\$370	\$385	\$450

Median rents for Queensland and major centres

The data below is based on new bonds lodged with the RTA in the June quarters of 2021 and 2022. Locations of major centres in Queensland below is based on Significant Urban Areas¹.

Location	2 bedroom flat/unit			3 bedroom house		
	2021	2022	% change	2021	2022	% change
Brisbane	\$405	\$465	14.8%	\$400	\$480	20.0%
Bundaberg	\$250	\$310	24.0%	\$320	\$410	28.1%
Cairns	\$320	\$375	17.2%	\$410	\$480	17.1%
Emerald	\$250	\$280	12.0%	\$335	\$385	14.9%
Gladstone – Tannum Sands	\$200	\$280	40.0%	\$275	\$370	34.5%
Gold Coast – Tweed Heads	\$450	\$560	24.4%	\$520	\$700	34.6%
Gympie	\$230	\$300	30.4%	\$310	\$450	45.2%
Hervey Bay	\$280	\$370	32.1%	\$350	\$450	28.6%
Kingaroy	\$225	\$303	34.7%	\$285	\$365	28.1%
Mackay	\$290	\$350	20.7%	\$380	\$460	21.1%
Maryborough	\$210	\$260	23.8%	\$290	\$375	29.3%
Mount Isa	\$250	\$275	10.0%	\$420	\$450	7.1%
Rockhampton	\$250	\$290	16.0%	\$320	\$400	25.0%
Sunshine Coast	\$400	\$515	28.8%	\$490	\$620	26.5%
Toowoomba	\$265	\$300	13.2%	\$335	\$400	19.4%
Townsville	\$280	\$320	14.3%	\$340	\$390	14.7%
Warwick	\$220	\$245	11.4%	\$280	\$350	25.0%
Yeppoon	\$310	\$380	22.6%	\$380	\$480	26.3%
Queensland	\$380	\$450	18.4%	\$380	\$450	18.4%

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2016) Significant Urban Areas. Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) (ABS Cat. 1270). The Significant Urban Area (SUA) structure of the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) represents significant towns and cities of 10,000 people or more.