



**2018–19**

ANNUAL REPORT

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# Letter of compliance

4 September 2019

**The Honourable Mick de Brenni MP**

**Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology, Minister for Sport**

GPO Box 2457

Brisbane Qld 4001

Dear Minister

I am pleased to present the Annual Report 2018–19 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 the annual reporting requirements is located on page 87 of this report.

Yours sincerely



**Paul Melville**

*RTA Board Chair*

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Making our report accessible



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**Additional online reporting**

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

- Consultancies
- Overseas travel
- Queensland Language Services Policy.

**Providing feedback**

Readers are invited to comment on this report via email to [annualreport@rta.qld.gov.au](mailto:annualreport@rta.qld.gov.au) or by contacting the RTA Contact Centre on 1300 366 311.

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# Chair's message

**It gives me great pleasure to present the Residential Tenancies Authority (RTA) Annual Report for 2018–19 outlining the RTA's efforts and achievements to transform and optimise customer services, and further its vision of renting that works for all Queenslanders.**

The highlights of the 2018–19 financial year for the RTA were:

- Approval of a 4-year Strategic Plan which incorporates our Roadmap to Success
- Working with the Government and Queenslanders on the Renting in Queensland (RiQ) initiative
- Assisting the people of Townsville who were impacted by the Townsville floods
- Expanded stakeholder forums with organisations that touch our industry

The RTA is transforming into a more responsive, customer-focused organisation. There has been a re-alignment of our Executive Leadership Team to reflect the Strategic Plan and ensure we can achieve our objectives. The transformation has a strong focus on customer service, allowing the use of digital solutions as well as other channels so customers can more easily access RTA services.

The Queensland Government's Open Doors to Renting Reform consultation (as part of the RiQ initiative) touched hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders. RTA staff attended 20 information stalls and various events across Queensland, in particular regional areas of the state. During the extensive nine-week consultation period, the RTA continued to provide support to all sections of government and Queenslanders.

The effect of the early 2019 floods on the people of Townsville was heart-wrenching. In the immediate aftermath, the RTA moved quickly to establish a presence in Townsville. We attended flood forums to provide on-the-ground support and prioritised phone enquiries and dispute resolution requests from flood affected areas. The RTA also supported a multi-agency initiative at a dedicated Rental Recovery Hub in Townsville to help those impacted by the natural disaster.

The RTA has recently expanded stakeholder forums which gives us all an opportunity to share our experiences and look at ways of improving renting in Queensland.

I would like to thank the Honourable Mick de Brenni MP, Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport, his office and all the staff at the Department of Housing and Public Works who interact with the RTA. Their support has been significant and is greatly appreciated.

Finally, I would like to thank the wonderful staff at the RTA who provide a fabulous service to Queenslanders who look to the RTA for support and advice. The work and dedication of RTA staff have been critical to our achievements throughout the year and the staff have been ably led by our CEO Jennifer Smith and the Executive Leadership Team.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Melville'.

**Paul Melville**  
*RTA Board Chair*

# Chief Executive Officer's message

## The past 12 months have seen a number of changes to better position the RTA for the future.

Realising a critical need for change to meet evolving customer expectations in a rapidly growing sector, the RTA launched a Roadmap for Success to highlight its journey of transformation in the years to come. Teams were re-aligned for greater business efficiencies with a focus on achieving enhanced client service, improved business systems, adaptive people and business sustainability.

All frontline services are now streamlined within the Customer Experience division to deliver tailored, efficient customer services. A new division with a strong focus on strategy and innovation has been introduced to facilitate and drive a culture of contribution and advancement within the RTA. We have also enjoyed a renewed emphasis on our people and culture to enhance leadership capabilities, improve staff engagement and maintain a culture of high performance and excellence.

Under the Roadmap for Success, the launch of our Digital Strategic Plan led the way for the RTA's digital optimisation to support the delivery of smart, digital solutions. Multiple digital initiatives have begun rolling out with the most significant project being the development of web services. I am immensely proud of the RTA's delivery of our first web service on 24 June 2019, enabling customers to lodge single bonds online in one simple transaction, reducing our reliance on manual, paper-based processes and providing more convenience for our customers. This achievement is a wonderful display of the commitment of all RTA staff and the project team towards positioning the RTA for the future.

Other initiatives have included transitioning to a digital mailroom and partnering with Brisbane-based technology firm Idea 11 for end-to-end information and communications technology support to increase our capabilities. Improvements to business processes such as issuing proactive bond refund progress notifications to customers demonstrate the abundance of opportunities for further innovation within the RTA.

Implementing these changes and improvements for greater business operational efficiencies has resulted in budget savings of \$3.5 million in 2018–19 which we can re-invest. This means the RTA can continue with digital optimisation plans and projects to bring faster and more efficient services to our customers across multiple channels.

Our response to the 2019 Townsville floods has also shown the value and importance of the RTA's work. The local renting community was severely impacted and the RTA worked to support their recovery efforts, prioritising 1,060

phone enquiries and 681 dispute resolution requests from flood-affected areas. Our people also provided support and assistance through industry forums and the government-initiated Rental Recovery Hub in Townsville.

Over the past 12 months the RTA has delivered on numerous initiatives in addition to continuing our day-to-day operations to support the Queensland rental sector through bond management, providing tenancy information and support, and driving compliance through education services, investigations and prosecutions. In 2018–19, our services received a customer satisfaction score of 80.1 per cent. We managed 621,958 bonds with a total value of \$897.0 million, answered 360,399 phone enquiries and achieved a 74.2 per cent resolution rate when disputing parties participated in conciliation. A total of 1,159 investigations were finalised over the year, including six prosecutions at the Magistrates Court.

I thank the Executive Leadership Team for their trust, advice and guidance throughout the year to support the RTA through this transformative period. I am grateful for the commitment and dedication of all RTA staff to improve our customer and employee experiences and continue making renting work for everyone. I would also like to thank the RTA Board, the Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport, the Honourable Mick de Brenni MP and the Department of Housing and Public Works (DHPW) for their ongoing guidance and support, particularly Liza Carroll, Director-General of DHPW.

I am excited by the plans and projects in the pipeline for the year ahead and I look forward to continuing the RTA's optimisation journey.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

**Jennifer Smith**  
*Chief Executive Officer*

# About us

**More than one third of households in Queensland are currently renting and with that number on the rise, the rental sector plays an increasingly important role in many Queenslanders' lives. As an independent statutory authority established by the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008* (RTRA Act), the RTA empowers people across the state to navigate the rental market.**

In addition to managing tenancy bonds, the RTA upholds integrity and balance in the sector through a range of other services. We provide statewide tenancy information, education and support to increase the renting community's awareness and understanding of tenancy rights and responsibilities. We offer a free dispute resolution service to help disputing parties resolve issues without legal action. We also investigate alleged offences under the RTRA Act and undertake education and prosecution of offenders.

The RTA remains relevant in a rapidly changing sector by conducting research, undertaking environmental scanning, monitoring data and trends and engaging with key stakeholders and industry sector bodies to identify and proactively respond to the needs and expectations of the sector and our customers.

The RTA is responsible to the Minister for Housing and Public Works, Minister for Digital Technology and Minister for Sport, the Honourable Mick de Brenni MP and governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Governor in Council.

## Our objectives and strategies

In the past year, the RTA launched a Roadmap for Success to highlight our journey for the next three years. A reshape of the organisational structure was implemented to better meet evolving customer expectations and rental community needs.

The strategies and initiatives in our Roadmap for Success aligned closely with our Strategic Plan 2018–22 and also underpin our newly developed and approved Strategic Plan 2019–23. This will help ensure the RTA can continue to deliver enhanced client service, improved business systems, adaptive people and business sustainability.

The RTA also contributes to the *Queensland Housing Strategy 2017–2027*, a 10-year framework that aims to provide Queenslanders with better pathways to safe, secure and affordable housing, in all that we do.

## Our contribution to community objectives

The RTA supports the Queensland Government's Our Future State – Advancing Queensland's Priorities through:

- Be a responsive government –  
The RTA is adopting customer-excellence practices through digital optimisation to ensure our services are simple to use, universally accessible and satisfy customer expectations.



**The RTA strives to balance the social and economic drivers of the sector to maintain an environment where all parties in a tenancy are treated fairly to achieve our vision of renting that works for everyone.**

