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BOND RETURN REQUEST

Residential Tenancies Act 2010 (NSW) — Part 8 (ss.157–182)

Your bond, your claim — file first via Rental Bonds Online and put the 14-day clock on the landlord

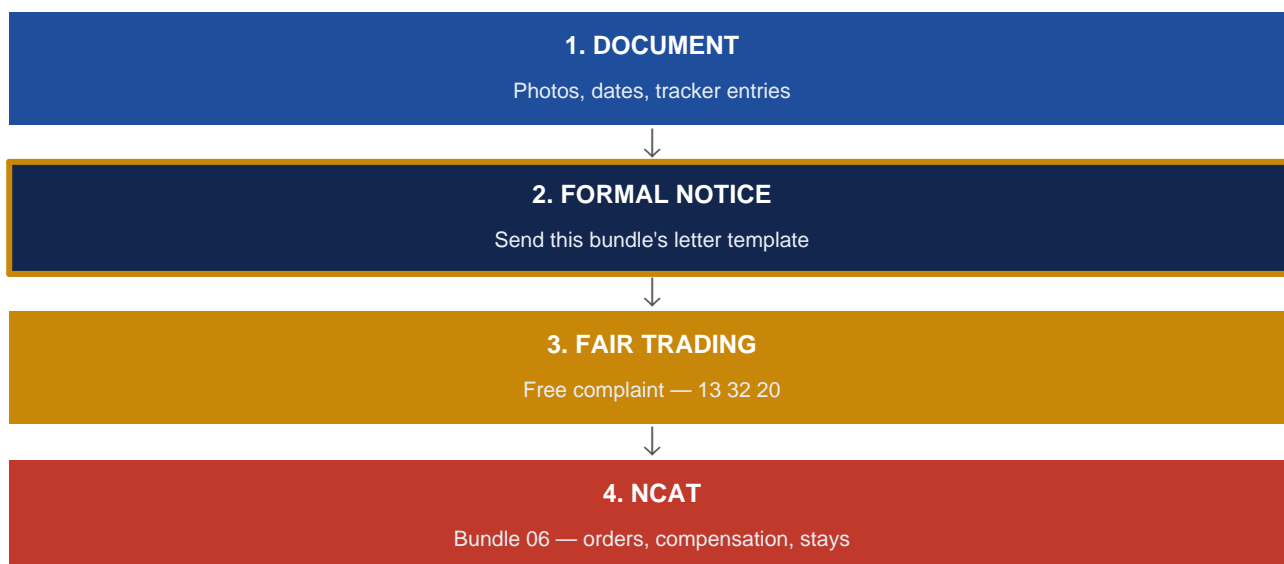
WHEN TO USE THIS BUNDLE

Use this bundle at the end of your tenancy to recover your bond. The strategy is claim first, notify second: lodge your own RBO claim the day you vacate, then let the letter and your evidence do the rest.

KNOW THE LAW — BOND RETURN IN NSW (PART 8)

Your bond is held by NSW Fair Trading — not the landlord. Either party can claim it, and you never need the agent's signature or permission to claim your own money: lodge your claim through Rental Bonds Online (RBO) the day you vacate. The landlord then has 14 days to apply to NCAT if they want to dispute it — if they don't, the bond is paid to you. Fair wear and tear is not chargeable, and every deduction must be justified against your move-in condition report.

HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS — YOUR ESCALATION PATH



The highlighted box shows where this bundle fits in the journey.

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STEPS TO SUCCESS

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01 Photograph the property thoroughly before vacating

Mirror your move-in documentation exactly — every room, surface, and appliance. Email the set to yourself for a timestamped record (see Bundle 12).

02 Compare against your original condition report

Note where the property is in the same or better condition than move-in — this is your evidence against deductions.

03 Lodge your RBO claim the day you vacate — don't wait for the agent

You do not need the agent's permission or signature. Lodge via Rental Bonds Online as soon as you vacate. This starts the 14-day clock running against the landlord: if they do not apply to NCAT within 14 days, the bond is paid to you. Waiting for the agent hands them control of the timeline.

04 Send the notification letter the same day

The letter tells the agent the claim is lodged, the evidence is on record, and any deduction must now be pursued through NCAT with evidence — inside their 14 days.

05 Challenge every unjustified deduction

Itemise your objections in writing against the condition report and photos. Fair wear and tear is not chargeable. Unresolved disputes go to NCAT via Bundle 06.

IF YOU NEED TO ESCALATE — WHAT NCAT CAN ORDER

If the landlord disputes your claim, NCAT decides on evidence: your move-in condition report, your move-out photos, and your tracker. Renters who file first and document well recover their bonds; landlords chasing unjustified deductions rarely survive a well-indexed photo set.

★ GOOD TO KNOW — FILE FIRST — THE CLOCK RUNS AGAINST THEM

A tenant-initiated RBO claim reverses the power dynamic: instead of you chasing your own money, the landlord must lodge an NCAT application within 14 days or the bond is paid out to you. File the day you hand back the keys.

★ GOOD TO KNOW — SMART RENTAL BONDS — NSW'S PORTABLE BOND SCHEME

NSW is introducing a portable bond scheme ('Smart Rental Bonds') targeted for mid-2026, letting you transfer your existing bond to a new tenancy instead of paying a second bond upfront. Check fairtrading.nsw.gov.au for current availability before you move.

■ CRITICAL — DON'T WAIT FOR THE AGENT — FILE THE CLAIM YOURSELF

You never need the agent's permission to get your bond back. File your own claim via Rental Bonds Online the day you vacate. That puts the 14-day dispute clock on the landlord — not you — and if they stay silent, the bond is paid to you automatically.

■ CRITICAL — FAIR WEAR AND TEAR IS NOT DAMAGE

Landlords cannot deduct for normal wear — scuff marks, carpet flattening, small nail holes, faded paint — and cannot charge full replacement cost for depreciated items. Challenge every unjustified deduction in writing.

1. COPY

Copy the letter below into a new email

2. FILL

Replace every **[bracketed]** field with your details

3. SEND

Email it — request a read receipt, save a copy

Fill in every **[bracketed]** field, then send via email — request a read receipt.

SUBJECT:

FORMAL NOTICE — BOND CLAIM LODGED VIA RBO: [Insert Property Address]

1. NOTICE OF VACATION

- I confirm that I vacated the above property on **[Insert Vacate Date]**.
- The premises were left reasonably clean, consistent with their condition at the commencement of my tenancy. Move-out photographs are on record.

2. NOTICE OF BOND CLAIM LODGED

- I have lodged a claim through Rental Bonds Online for the full release of my bond of **[\$[Insert Bond Amount]**.
- The claim was lodged on **[Insert Claim Date]**. You will receive notification from NSW Fair Trading directly.

3. PROCESS AND TIMELINE

- If you consider any deduction is justified, you must apply to NCAT within 14 days of notification, with evidence for each item assessed against the move-in condition report.
- If no application is made within 14 days, the bond will be released to me in full.
- Fair wear and tear is not chargeable, and I will contest any unjustified deduction with my complete photographic record.

4. EVIDENCE ON RECORD

- All move-in and move-out records — condition reports, dated photographs, and correspondence — are maintained in a chronological evidence index.

Yours sincerely,

[Your Full Name]

[Property Address]

[Date]

[Contact Number / Email]