

Frequently asked questions

For Tenants

January 2014

This FAQ sheet presents questions and answers for tenants about the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH).

1. Who is covered by the National Regulatory System?

The NRSCH is designed to regulate providers of community housing. There will be no obligation for housing providers to be registered under the national system. However, individual government policy and funding agencies may make registration a precondition for receiving funding or investment and for delivering funded housing services.

2. How will the national regulatory system benefit me?

Tenants will be able to have confidence that their housing provider is meeting nationally consistent performance standards for service delivery.

3. Will the security of my tenancy be affected by the new system or by the registration class of my provider?

No, access and eligibility requirements will continue to be determined by the policies of government and funding agencies. Requirements under the National Regulatory Code regarding outcomes for tenants will be the same for all registered community housing providers regardless of registration class.

4. What are the performance outcomes required of my provider under the National Regulatory Code?

The seven performance outcomes are:

- Tenant and housing services - the community housing provider is fair, transparent and responsive in delivering housing assistance to tenants, residents and other clients
- Housing assets - the community housing provider manages its community housing assets in a manner that ensure suitable properties are available at present and in the future
- Community engagement - the community housing provider works in partnership with relevant organisations to promote community housing and to contribute to socially inclusive communities
- Governance - the community housing provider is well governed to support the aims and intended outcomes of its business
- Probity - the community housing provider maintains high standards of probity relating to the business of the provider
- Management - the community housing provider manages its resources to achieve the intended outcomes of its business in a cost effective manner
- Financial viability - the community housing provider is financially viable at all times.

5. Will I be able to make a complaint about my housing provider under the new national regulatory system?

Yes. Complaint procedures will be in place in each state and territory. Registrars will not look at complaints about individual tenancy matters.

They will only investigate complaints where they may give rise to a risk that a registered provider is not complying with the National Regulatory Code.

Tenants will be able to make enquiries or lodge complaints in relation to their registered provider's compliance with the Code via the NRSCH website at: www.nrsch.gov.au.

6. What are the benefits of allowing housing providers to operate in multiple jurisdictions?

The new system will make it easier for providers who wish to operate in more than one jurisdiction by reducing red tape and regulatory burden. The new system will provide a consistent regulatory environment to give funders, lenders and investors confidence that the community housing sector is well managed. This will support the growth and development of the community housing sector which will help to provide more homes and reduce homelessness.

7. Who is responsible for determining policy and funding decisions under the new system?

Policy and funding decisions will continue to be a matter for state, territory and federal governments, which enables localised responses to meet housing need.

8. What happens if my provider breaches the National Regulatory Code?

The NRSCH is designed to identify, monitor and respond to risks that have serious consequences for tenants, funders and investors, community housing assets and the reputation of the sector.

Registrars will aim to engage with the provider early when early warning signs are identified in order to avoid the possibility of serious non-compliance, will work to return the housing provider to full compliance where non-compliance occurs or, as a last resort, will deregister the provider.

9. What will happen to me in the event of my provider being deregistered or wound-up?

It is a condition of registration that, upon cancellation of registration, the housing provider must transfer or merge all existing social and affordable housing assets remaining after the payment of its liabilities either back to government or to another registered housing provider. The existing tenancies would be included in this.

10. When will the national system commence?

Registration under the new system formally commences from 1 January 2014 (Phase 2), following a six month period of system testing and evaluation (Phase 1) during 2013. Individual states and territories will transition to the national system over an 18-month period, according to Registrar timetables in each jurisdiction.