

# Community Housing Regulation and Registration System



November 2008

## Frequently Asked Questions



It is illegal for an officer of Housing NSW to ask for money or favours or other benefits of any kind in exchange for helping you with your housing needs.

It is also illegal for you or anyone else to offer money or favours or other benefits of any kind to an officer of Housing NSW in exchange for helping you. If you have any information regarding this, please contact Business Assurance on 1300 468 746. Housing NSW may refuse the provision of further housing services to anyone who has engaged or sought to engage in corrupt or illegal conduct.

### 1. Why does my organisation have to be registered?

Under the amendments to the *Housing Act 2001*, passed in November 2007, Housing NSW will only provide assistance to registered community housing organisations. Assistance, provided under a community housing agreement, is defined as (but not limited to) funding, properties, and land or partnership arrangements with Housing NSW.

### 2. Do all organisations have to be registered?

All organisations that provide community housing under a community housing agreement with Housing NSW must be registered.

### 3. What does registration mean for my organisation?

All registered community housing organisations must comply with the regulatory code prescribed under the amendments to the *Housing Act*.

The regulatory code covers nine performance areas, including: fairness and tenant satisfaction, sustainable tenancies and communities, asset management, sound governance, standards of probity, protection of government investment, efficient and competitive delivery of community housing, and development projects that are timely, minimise budget variances, and deliver appropriate and affordable new homes.

There are four classes of registration: growth providers, housing providers, housing managers and small housing managers. The Registrar of Community Housing determines the class of registration. This will depend on the size and scale of the community housing business.

To become registered, an organisation needs to provide evidence that is relevant to its class of registration and demonstrate that it complies with the performance area. An organisation is only expected

to demonstrate compliance with a performance area if it is involved in that activity.

### 4. If we are registered will there be additional properties or funding?

Being registered does not mean you will get additional properties or funding. However, only registered organisations will be considered for additional properties or funding, if available.

### 5. When will the Office of Community Housing (OCH) be providing information about the new registration system? How will I know what is happening and what my organisation is expected to do?

OCH has updated the sector on the implementation of the new regulatory system. The draft Regulation and Regulatory Impact Statement has been released for public comment.

As we move closer to the commencement of the new system, further information will be provided about what to expect when registering, timelines, preparation and ongoing registration compliance.

In addition, the Registrar will develop and consult on guidelines and other supporting material.

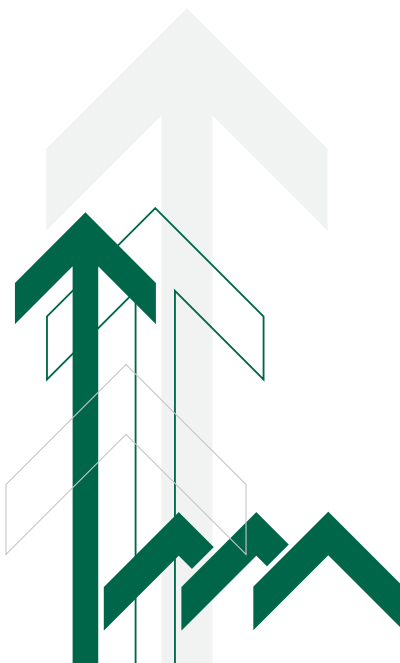
Once the system commences, all community housing providers will receive more specific information about timelines and how to prepare for registration.

### 6. When does the new registration system begin?

The new system will be implemented in 2009.

### 7. When will my organisation have to be registered?

Under the amendments to the *Housing Act*, all community housing organisations that receive assistance under a community housing agreement with Housing NSW need to be assessed for registration under the new system within two years.



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### **8. Can we submit an application for registration at any time within the two years?**

You will receive information about when to submit an application from the Registrar of Community Housing.

### **9. What happens if my organisation doesn't get registered?**

Any organisation that provides community housing and is not registered will be ineligible for assistance from Housing NSW.

Further information about pathways for non-registration will be provided by OCH over the coming months.

### **10. If my organisation doesn't get registered the first time can we re-submit?**

Processes for re-submission of registrations are being reviewed by the Office of the Registrar of Community Housing (ORCH). Community housing providers will be advised in due course.

### **11. We have not been able to get registered under PBRS and have missed out on additional properties. What will be the timing for our registration – will we be given priority or left until last?**

All organisations which have community housing agreements with Housing NSW must be assessed for registration within two years. Given the number of organisations to be registered, considerable planning is underway to ensure this target is achieved.

### **12. Our organisation is part of a group, or larger organisation. Who will need to be registered?**

An organisation must be a legal entity to enter into a community housing agreement with Housing NSW. The legal entity status and registration process will be discussed and negotiated with ORCH.

### **13. My organisation is already registered/regulated under another government agency? Why do I have to be registered with you?**

OCH acknowledges that some organisations are required to be registered by other government agencies.

Under the amendments to the *Housing Act*, all community housing organisations with a community housing agreement with Housing NSW must be registered to continue to receive assistance.

The focus of registration under the Housing Act will be the housing services that are provided. Other government registration systems will not have this as their main focus.

### **14. My organisation is certified/ accredited under another system. Will the community housing regulatory system recognise this?**

Community housing organisations need to provide evidence to demonstrate that they meet the regulatory code which is relevant to their class.

ORCH will acknowledge instances where community housing providers may be certified (for example, quality certification under ISO9001), or accredited (for example against the National Community Housing Standards, or the Aged Care Standards) under another system.

In these cases, evidence provided for certification or accreditation could be relevant for the community housing regulatory framework as evidence of compliance (for example, relevant and current policy and procedural documents). Evidence of certification and accreditation may also be required. Each assessment will be determined on a case-by-case basis.



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### Interpreter Services

If you have difficulty understanding English, contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450.

The Translating and Interpreting Service will telephone Housing NSW for you at no cost.

If you are hearing impaired, please contact the TTY Service on 1800 628 310.

#### Arabic

خدمة الترجمة الخطية والشفوية المجانية  
اتصل على الرقم 131 450

#### Chinese

免費的翻譯傳譯服務  
致電 131 450

#### Russian

Служба бесплатного письменного и устного перевода  
Позвоните по номеру 131 450

#### Spanish

Servicio Gratuito de Traducción e Interpretación  
Llame al 131 450

#### Vietnamese

Dịch vụ Phiên dịch và Thông dịch Miễn phí  
Điện thoại 131 450

### 15. Will OCH only support larger community housing providers?

The NSW Government's goal is to provide more secure, well-managed homes for those on lower incomes who can't afford to rent or buy in the private sector, as well as to provide affordable housing for people on low to moderate incomes.

Building on community housing's strong track record, the government plans to significantly increase the amount of community housing over the next 10 years.

The introduction of a new system of registration for community housing providers will support the growth of community housing. A sound regulatory foundation will create additional confidence in providers and attract potential investors in the community housing sector.

However, OCH recognises that diverse and flexible responses are required to meet housing needs and that a variety of community housing provider models are required to achieve this.

This is reflected in the new regulatory system, which has four different classes of regulation and is designed to accommodate organisations of varying size and focus.

### 16. What impact will the regulatory system have on tenants?

To be registered as a community housing provider in NSW, organisations must ensure that tenants and applicants for community housing are treated fairly, and that services to tenants are of a high quality. This will help to protect tenants and improve services.

Aside from the increased protection and assurance provided through the regulatory system, tenants will not be directly affected.

