



Housing
Registrar

Corporate Plan

Registrar of Housing Agencies

2020–22



Treasury
and Finance

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Foreword

The Housing Registrar's *Corporate Plan 2020–22* outlines the key strategies, activities and areas of focus that we will use to achieve our purpose between 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2022. It also describes our operating environment and performance measures. The Corporate Plan builds on the commitments delivered in the Housing Registrar's *2018-20 Strategic Plan* and extends the priorities for two years in response to the growth and reform environment.

The Government's \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build will provide significant funding and growth into social housing. The rapid grants round of funding through the Social Housing Growth Fund will increase the size of the sector by at least 4 200 new dwellings resulting in a 43 per cent increase in the number of assets owned by the sector. This change in funding environment will impact the focus of the regulator as new entities look for opportunities to participate in the Victorian social housing system and the sector experiences significant growth, bringing associated risks to registered agencies and tenants.

The Victorian Review of Social Housing Regulation will deliver its interim report in November 2021 and Final Report in March 2022. This will deliver recommendations to identify future regulatory arrangements to provide strong resident protection, better information to Victorians and position social housing for growth and transformation over the next decades. The Housing Registrar welcomes the review. We look forward to actively participating in the review and considering its findings.

We will also continue to monitor the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the community housing sector and adjust our regulatory approach where necessary.

Our priorities remain focused on (1) **organisational excellence**, (2) **better regulation** and (3) **strong partnerships and engagement**.

On behalf of the team we look forward to continuing working closely with our stakeholders across the social housing sector to deliver our shared goals.



Bernard Gustin
Registrar
of Community
Housing Agencies



David Schreuder
Director,
Housing Registrar

The Housing Registrar

The Housing Registrar comprises the Office of the Housing Registrar which supports the Registrar of Housing Agencies (the Registrar) in discharging the Registrar's powers under the *Housing Act 1983* (Vic). The key functions of the Registrar are to register, regulate and develop the community housing sector in Victoria (including against Performance Standards and intervention guidelines).

The Office of the Housing Registrar is located in the Department of Treasury and Finance. The Assistant Treasurer/Minister for Regulatory Reform is responsible for the administration of Part VIII of the *Housing Act* which establishes the Registrar.

Our purpose is to enable the development, growth, and continual improvement of the Victorian community housing sector through proactive, transparent, and risk-based regulation that promotes tenant outcomes. To achieve this, we take an integrated approach to regulation that focuses on financial viability, good governance and the quality of rental housing services.

We are committed to continuous improvement and risk-based regulatory engagement to promote outcomes whilst reducing the regulatory burden on registered agencies. We are focused on safeguarding and promoting the interests of tenants and prospective tenants who access community housing services provided by registered agencies.



The sector we regulate

As at 30 June 2020

We safeguard and protect the interests of:

18 544

social housing tenants who live in homes owned or managed by registered community housing agencies.

The community housing sector has:

19 816

tenancy units (rented) are owned and managed

38

registered agencies under the *Housing Act 1983*

91.1%

of non-urgent maintenance requests for tenants were completed within 14 days

97.2%

with an average occupancy rate

\$4.1 billion

as the total asset value

\$179.7 million

worth of grants attracted (capital grants and operating granting)

92.7%

of tenant complaints are resolved in 30 days

Looking forward:

4 200

new dwellings will be owned by the community housing sector through the Big Housing Build

5 200

new homes will be delivered through partnerships between Government, community housing and private sector

10%

of all net new social dwellings will support Aboriginal housing needs

March 2022

Is the date of the Victorian Government Review of Social Housing Regulation Final Report

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Our strategic framework

Vision

A well-regulated, growing and sustainable community housing sector that provides access to safe, secure and affordable housing solutions for Victorians

Purpose

To enable the development, growth, and continual improvement of the Victorian community housing sector through proactive, transparent, and risk-based regulation that promotes tenant outcomes

Principles

We are:

Outcomes-focused • risk-based and adaptable • proportionate
• intelligence-led and evidence-based • collaborative • transparent

Priorities

Organisational excellence

To ensure the capabilities of the Housing Registrar to meet current and future challenges by enabling a high-performance culture that values and supports our people

Better regulation

We will promote better regulation by:

- > proactively engaging with registered agencies to achieve compliance against Performance Standards
- > reducing the regulatory burden across the regulatory system
- > facilitating investment in the sector by promoting confidence in performance of the community housing sector
- > making the regulatory system and the performance of the community housing sector more transparent
- > identifying opportunities for continuous improvement

Strong partnerships and engagement

We are committed to:

- > building high-value and purposeful relationships
- > being visible, open and engaged
- > raising awareness of the regulatory system and the Housing Registrar's role
- > providing compliance advice and better practice guidance to the community housing sector to support registered housing agencies

Outcomes

We deliver effective regulation that:

- > promotes the growth and continual improvement of the community housing sector
- > protects government's investment for the benefit of tenants, the community and future generations
- > delivers safe, secure and affordable housing solutions to Victorians

Our changing external environment

Big Housing Build

Through the Big Housing Build, the Victorian Government is investing \$5.3 billion in more homes for more Victorians – Victoria’s largest-ever investment in social and affordable housing.

This investment represents significant growth opportunities for the community housing sector. There is increased registration interest in Victoria from a range of different entities seeking to develop and provide community housing services. The significant growth anticipated brings additional risks into the system, with new providers and more complex structures, including special purpose vehicles, increasing the need for proactive and risk based regulation to identify and respond to emerging risks.

To contribute to the successful delivery of the Big Housing Build, we work with our stakeholders to proactively identify and manage emerging risks. We will leverage our strong understanding of the sector to support growth and promote tenant outcomes.

The Victorian Government Review of Social Housing Regulation

In November 2020 the Victorian Government announced an independent review of social housing regulation as part of the \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build.

The review will:

- > examine regulatory oversight
- > consider how the system can support high quality resident and community outcomes in public, community, and affordable housing
- > ensure strong resident outcomes over the long term
- > examine the case for common regulation for all social housing (including public and community housing)
- > examine the case for Victoria’s participation in the national regulatory scheme

We recognise that any recommendations arising from the review may impact the operations and focus of the Housing Registrar. In anticipation of the release of the final report in March 2022, this Corporate Plan sets our direction for the two years to June 2022.

¹ <https://www.vic.gov.au/review-social-housing-regulation>

Continuing to respond to the impacts of COVID-19

We have responded to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and aligned our regulatory approach to the Victorian response by:

- > focusing our regulatory engagement approach on emerging risks to the sector and individual registered agencies
- > reviewing and adjusting regulatory reporting requirements to reduce regulatory burden and assist registered agencies to meet changing priorities (including preparedness arrangements)
- > providing COVID-19 related guidance and updates to the community housing sector, including in relation to changes to Government policy, legislation and regulatory reporting requirements
- > continuing to review our regulatory approach and adjusting as necessary.

We will continue to support the work of the Victorian Government, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and the Community Housing Industry Association by:

- > monitoring and reporting on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the community housing sector
- > clarifying changes in Government policy and law impacting the community housing sector where they impact on regulatory and reporting requirements against Performance Standards
- > using the information provided by our stakeholders to adjust our regulatory engagement strategy
- > continuing to work closely with stakeholders to ensure a coordinated and proactive response to emerging issues.



Organisational excellence

A high-performance culture that values and supports our people

We will ensure the Housing Registrar is ready to meet current and future challenges through continuing to improve our operations, resources and capability.

We will prioritise resourcing ourselves to respond to rapid growth in the community sector driven by the \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build. We will focus our resources on:

- > risk-based and proportionate regulatory engagement with each registered agency to ensure regulatory action plans promote continuous improvement and ongoing compliance with Performance Standards
- > processing registrations and communicating with stakeholders interested in participating in the Big Housing Build in accordance with funding and project timelines

- > education and targeted capability building in collaboration with other parts of government and the social housing system
- > building our investigations capability to respond to complaints, proactively address non-compliance and intervene as a last resort to ensure protections and good outcomes for tenants.



Additional projects include:

2020–21	2021–22
<p>Review internal processes for Annual Compliance Assessments to enhance standardisation and ensure best use of resources</p>	<p>Develop and implement a data validation strategy to identify issues and drive improvements for registered agency data integrity</p>
<p>Refresh our complaints management framework</p>	<p>Review our internal complex complaints and investigations processes</p>
<p>Enhance CHiMES to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > support further public reporting of registered agency performance outcomes > enhance management of complaint and enquiry information > implement multi-factor authentication for enhanced security > improve usability and fix system bugs 	<p>Streamline internal processes for Annual Compliance Assessments to ensure best use of resources</p>
<p>Housing Registrar rebrand to reflect the Housing Registrar’s ongoing commitment to continuous improvement, transparency reform and risk-based, and outcomes-focused regulation</p>	

Better regulation

Improving our regulatory framework and reducing regulatory burden

As part of our 2018–20 Strategic Plan, we delivered a number of reform projects to create more accountable and transparent regulation. This included implementing public reporting on:

- > the compliance status of each registered agency on an annual basis. This includes performance against gazetted Performance Standards and Key Performance Measures
- > any regulatory intervention action taken by the Registrar under Division 8 of the Housing Act
- > self-assessment of the Housing Registrar’s performance against our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) including evidence from sector surveys and other sources.

We will continue to publish compliance guidance and better practice guides to assist registered agencies meet compliance obligations and promote continuous improvement opportunities.

We will source and use intelligence and data to inform our understanding of tenant experiences and drive risk-based, targeted and proportionate regulatory activities. This will improve our ability to identify systemic issues and target our attention, taking a strategic approach to compliance and enforcement activities.

Additional projects include:

2020–21	2021–22
Launch a new website including refreshing the Housing Registrar’s guidance materials and online information for registered agencies and tenants/prospective tenants	Continue to review risk and intelligence tools including the Regulatory Engagement Tool and horizon scanning framework
Publish a self-assessment guide for registered agency annual compliance reporting	Develop a Compliance Framework to identify and prioritise systemic issues and provide transparency for our regulatory response
Implement public reporting of Key Performance Measure results for each registered agency as part of the Annual Compliance Assessment for the 2019–20 Financial Year	Strengthen our financial modelling and forecasting capabilities
Update financial performance reporting templates for improved information quality and usability	

² See page 14 for our KPIs

Strong partnerships and engagement

Nurturing strong stakeholder relationships and building new ones

We will continue to collaborate with other parts of government and key stakeholders on system design and reform opportunities by:

- > supporting funders, including Homes Victoria and the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC), to deliver growth in social housing through the Big Housing Build and other initiatives where we can add value. This may include fast tracking registration requests and sharing information through information-sharing protocols.
- > participating in working groups and regular engagement arrangements with key stakeholders (including CHIA Vic, NRSCH, Homes Victoria, DTF, Victorian Ombudsman) to identify continuous improvement and information sharing opportunities across the social housing system
- > providing input into the Victorian Government's Review of Social Housing Regulation through sharing information including our understanding of the community housing sector and the current challenges and opportunities for the social housing system
- > completing the Housing Registrar's annual sector feedback survey to understand the views of registered agencies and identify continuous improvement opportunities to improve the regulatory system and reduce regulatory red tape
- > providing timely, comprehensive and accurate performance and financial data through the Sector Performance Report and Regulatory Update Report for each financial year
- > delivering our annual Housing Registrar's Sector Forum to support information sharing and collaboration across the sector.

In a rapidly changing environment, we recognise the importance of developing strong relationships with stakeholders to understand wider system and sector issues, trends and to support good outcomes for tenants.

We aim to:

- > enhance and, where appropriate, formalise information exchange with others (including the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Community Housing Industry Association, NHFIC, Human Services Regulator, and the Victorian Ombudsman)
- > strengthen connections with key stakeholders such as community organisations and tenant advocates to understand community perspectives and inform our work priorities
- > deepen our understanding of the businesses of registered agencies and their operational environments to promote better risk management and continuous improvement.

Additional projects include:

2020–21

Refresh our communications strategy

Work with stakeholders across the social housing sector to improve transparency and community understanding of the sector

2021–22

Identify options to improve understanding of tenant experiences and opportunities for continuous improvement

Continue to work with stakeholders across the social housing sector to improve transparency and community understanding of the sector



How we work

Our core values and principles of good regulation drive how we work.

Our core values and principles of good regulation

OUTCOMES-FOCUSED

Our regulatory approach is driven by clear outcomes that are tenant-focused.

RISK-BASED AND ADAPTABLE

Our regulatory approach is risk-based and adaptable, focusing resources to address the most significant emerging risks in order to maximise the outcomes achieved.

INTELLIGENCE-LED AND EVIDENCE-BASED

We gather knowledge, intelligence and evidence from a range of sources, including information provided by registered agencies, tenants and the community, and we use it to determine which risks to focus on and how to design and implement our regulatory approach and engagement activities.

PROPORTIONATE

We intervene only where necessary to address compliance issues and emerging risks. We are mindful of the impact and potential harm of emerging compliance issues and risks in our decision making and regulatory approach.

COLLABORATIVE

We collaborate with registered agencies, stakeholders and with other regulators, providing opportunities to shape our approach to achieve regulatory outcomes and better regulation.

TRANSPARENT

We strive to create a transparent regulatory system and regulated sector that is accountable, high-performing and encourages compliance and continuous improvement.

Our regulatory performance framework

The Housing Registrar's regulatory performance framework evaluates our performance and measures success against our strategic framework. The regulatory performance framework uses six key performance indicators (KPIs) based on the Australian Commonwealth's *Regulator Performance Framework*.

We report on our performance annually in our Regulatory Update Report. This report details our progress for organisational priorities as well as performance against the below KPIs.

Our Key Performance Indicators

KPI 1

Compliance, monitoring and enforcement activities are undertaken in a coordinated, streamlined and timely manner.

KPI 2

Communications and engagement with registered agencies and other stakeholders are outcomes-driven, clear and timely.

KPI 3

Regulatory and compliance risks are identified, closely monitored and proactively mitigated proportionate to the risks being managed.

KPI 4

The regulator contributes to continuous improvement of the regulatory framework.

KPI 5

The regulator promotes transparency in the regulatory system and the sector.

KPI 6

The regulator does not unnecessarily impede the efficient operation of registered agencies.



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