



Housing
Registrar

Regulatory Update Report 2020–21

August 2021



Treasury
and Finance

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Foreword

The Regulatory Update Report provides information on the regulatory activities and performance of the Housing Registrar for the 2020–21 financial year, including delivery of the 2020–22 Corporate Plan.¹

It has been an extraordinary year for the community housing sector in Victoria.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented ongoing risks and challenges for the sector and those challenges continue. In response we recalibrated our regulatory priorities to allow us, and the registered agencies we regulate, to focus on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We monitored emerging risks and controls and observed registered agencies putting in place a range of precautionary measures to protect the safety and welfare of tenants, staff and the community. This meant we deferred some regulatory activities to address areas of immediate concern, including extending certain reporting requirements and regulatory processes.

We closely monitored the impacts on the sector and supported registered agencies and tenants with relevant advice, and coordinated our response with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) and the Community Housing Industry Association Victoria (CHIA Vic). We identified only minimal impacts on the financial viability of the sector, however some registered agencies reported increased costs associated with implementing additional preparedness measures. Despite being under stress, the sector continues to be resilient and agile in response to the novel challenges presented by the pandemic, including adjusting its approach to service delivery where necessary to minimise risks to tenants and staff.

Throughout these unprecedented times, our key day-to-day regulatory functions – including compliance and performance assessments, public reporting, receipt of referred complaints from tenants and prospective tenants, and being a generally inquiry point for the public, remained open for our stakeholders who relied on them. We increased transparency of the regulatory system through the introduction of public reporting of performance information, produced a new website and refreshed the content to make it more accessible and user friendly. We regularly communicated with the sector through Guidance Notes, quarterly newsletters and targeted regulatory engagement.

In addition to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are operating in a significant growth environment. Housing Associations and Housing Providers are participating in the Government's \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build (BHB), Rapid Grants Round, and obtaining financing from the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation. Over the next four years, it is estimated the size of the sector will grow by approximately 4,200 dwellings². This funding environment has generated interest from Victorian and interstate entities seeking registration under Part VII of the *Housing Act 1983 (Vic)*. We responded rapidly by increasing our resources and building our internal capability in early 2021 to facilitate delivery of these initiatives (including registrations, monitoring emerging risks and building our complaints and investigations capabilities).

¹ The Sector Performance Report 2019–20 is published separately and contains detailed analysis of sector performance for the 2019–20 financial year from regulatory reporting received in 2020–21. Information on the Housing Registrar's financial results is reported as part of financial statements in the Department of Treasury and Finance's Annual Report.

² As of 30 June 2020 the sector provides rental housing services for 19,816 tenancy units.

As part of the Big Housing Build, the Victorian Government has commissioned a Review of Social Housing Regulation (Review) delivered by an independent panel of experts. The Review will identify future regulatory arrangements to provide strong resident protection, better information to Victorians and position the social housing sector for growth and transformation over coming decades. The Interim Report is scheduled for delivery in November 2021 and the Final Report in March 2022. We welcome the Review's findings and this important work to create a better social housing system for all Victorians. We strongly encourage registered agencies and other stakeholders to participate in consultation opportunities.

In 2021–22, the Housing Registrar will continue to strive for organisational excellence, better regulation, and strong partnerships and engagement through the delivery of our 2020–22 Corporate Plan. We will continue to strengthen our capabilities to support our vision and purpose, enhancing our transparency, improving our strategic planning and communication, and implementing systems to better report on what we do. We will continue to work closely with our valued stakeholders in our commitment to deliver outcomes for tenants and prospective tenants through robust and outcomes focused regulation.



Bernard Gustin
Registrar
of Community
Housing Agencies



David Schreuder
Director,
Housing Registrar

Snapshot report – A year in review

A compliant, well performing sector

We completed annual compliance and performance assessments for each of the 38 registered agencies delivering rental housing services in Victoria in the 2019–20 financial year, including assessing continuous improvement and progress against regulatory action plans. The sector overall achieved a very high compliance rate and 95 per cent were assessed as compliant or having capacity to comply with Performance Standards. 87 per cent of registered agencies met all Performance Standards.

A more transparent regulatory system

We publicly reported compliance and performance information for each of the 38 registered agencies delivering rental housing services in Victoria in the 2019–20 financial year. Through recent transparency reforms, we introduced new Performance Reports to be published annually for each registered agency. The Performance Reports contain information on the registered agency's performance against Key Performance Measures, comparative analysis with similar providers, and are made publicly available on the Register of Housing Agencies (the Public Register).

Facilitating sector growth through the Big Housing Build

We adjusted our regulatory approach in response to the emerging growth environment to focus on emerging risks and manage an increasing volume of registration requests and inquiries. We established a registrations team and streamlined our processes to ensure registration applications can be thoroughly assessed and completed on a timely basis to meet funding and project requirements. We registered two new housing providers, *Building Communities (Vic) Ltd* and *National Affordable Housing Consortium – Victoria Ltd* and have received several other registration applications currently under review.

Responding to the impacts of COVID-19

We continued to adjust our regulatory approach to respond to the impacts of COVID-19 on the community housing sector. This included focusing on emerging risks, including higher density accommodation providers. We worked with the sector to promote compliance with tenancy laws Government policy and health advice and we published several Guidance Notes. Our insights from this work were that the sector overall responded with agility and efficiency in putting in place precautionary measures to protect the health and wellbeing of tenants and staff and minimise the risks of outbreaks.

Effective complaints management

The sector overall demonstrated strong complaints practices and effective complaints management systems. Positively, only 5.3 per cent of the 113 cases referred to the Housing Registrar required a regulatory response³. Every complaint and inquiry referred to the Housing Register was reviewed for indicators of systemic issues and compliance with Performance Standards.

The low proportion of regulatory responses demonstrates that registered agencies overall have good complaints practices and cultures, and the matters referred to the Housing Registrar generally did not reveal systemic failure or non-compliance with Performance Standards. In most cases, tenant complaints referred to the Registrar were successfully resolved between the registered agency and the complainant.

In December 2020, we conducted one on-site inspection of a rooming house where continuous improvement opportunities were identified and voluntarily implemented by the registered agency.

Assessing our performance for continuous improvement

We overall performed well in the 2020-21 financial year against six Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in our performance framework with identified areas of improvement. We were assessed as meeting five KPIs and 'somewhat meeting' one KPI (KPI1) – compliance, monitoring and enforcement activities are conducted in a timely manner. This rating for KPI1 was due to the timeliness of annual compliance assessments and associated public reporting (which were impacted by revised reporting dates due to COVID-19 and reprioritisation of resources). We have identified an improvement plan for the 2021-22 financial year (discussed on page 11 of this report). This self-assessment of our performance framework relied on a range of evidence sources as detailed in Appendix 1.

³ Regulatory responses included directions on tenant outcomes with the registered agency, development of regulatory action items to promote continuous improvement and one on-site inspection.

Sector key highlights as at 30 June 2020

19 816

tenancy (rental) units
under management

10 273

properties owned
by the sector with
a carrying value
of \$3.7 billion

\$337
million

operating revenue,
up 3 per cent from the
previous year

\$4.1
billion

total assets, up 10 per
cent from the previous
year; equity continued to
represent a major portion
of total assets, while
liabilities remained stable

97.2%

average occupancy rate

Looking forward

In 2021–22, the Housing Registrar is anticipating:



Contributing to the successful delivery of the Victorian Government's \$5.3 billion **Big Housing Build** through assessing new market entrants, working closely with our valued stakeholders, and adjusting our regulatory approach to the new growth environment



The **Review of Social Housing Regulation** Final Report to be released in March 2022, delivering recommendations for future regulatory arrangements to provide strong resident protection, better information to Victorians and to position social housing for growth and transformation over coming decades



Continuing to improve our regulatory approach by utilising intelligence and data to drive compliance and enforcement activities



Nurturing strong stakeholder relationships and building new ones to understand wider system and sector issues, trends and to support good outcomes for tenants



Continuing to deliver against our three priorities of Better Regulation, Organisational Excellence, and Strong Partnerships and Engagement and the 2020–22 Corporate Plan

Our performance framework

In 2018–19, the Housing Registrar developed a regulatory performance framework identifying key performance indicators (KPIs), largely based on the Australian Government's *Regulator Performance Framework*².

This performance framework has been developed to evaluate our performance and measure success against our organisational and strategic objectives, including to:

- > ensure we support compliance activities through clear and effective communication and guidance to registered agencies and other stakeholders
- > maximise our effectiveness and efficiency by continuously improving internal capability, regulatory practices and systems
- > adopt a risk-based and proportionate approach to compliance activities
- > understand the impact of our activities on registered agencies, supported by a strong awareness of the operating environment and organisations that we regulate
- > contribute to the ongoing improvement of the regulatory framework
- > maximise the value generated from the data we collect by disseminating it to the public, registered agencies and other stakeholders to inform decisions and generate insights.

²https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/Regulator_Performance_Framework.pdf



With these objectives in mind, the Housing Registrar developed the following KPIs:

KPI	Description
1	Compliance, monitoring and enforcement activities are undertaken in a coordinated, streamlined and timely manner
2	Communications and engagement with registered agencies and other stakeholders are outcomes-driven, clear and timely
3	Regulatory and compliance risks are identified, closely monitored and proactively mitigated proportionate to the risks being managed
4	The regulator contributes to continuous improvement of the regulatory framework
5	The regulator promotes transparency in the regulatory system and the sector
6	The regulator does not unnecessarily impede the efficient operation of registered agencies

For each of these six KPIs, the Housing Registrar has identified measures of good regulatory performance and associated activity-based evidence that is used to self-assess performance.

The Housing Registrar also identified several measures to describe what constitutes good regulatory performance in the context of the Housing Registrar’s role and responsibilities. These measures have guided the types of evidence the Housing Registrar has collected to assess performance.

In the 2020–21 financial year, the Housing Registrar collected a mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence related to each of the KPIs. The evidence came from a range of sources to ensure there was adequate assessment of the Housing Registrar’s performance. The evidence collected includes:




- > results from feedback mechanisms (including annual registered agency survey results)

- > data that measures the timeliness and responsiveness of the Housing Registrar
- > records of stakeholder engagement through multiple channels, such as consultative committees, industry forums and cross-agency initiatives
- > records of published guidance that assists registered agencies to comply with regulation
- > internal records of performance metrics associated with KPIs.

A detailed summary of the assessment of the Housing Registrar’s performance for 2020–21 and evidence against each of the KPIs is available at **Appendix 1**.

Evaluation of evidence and self-assessment







In 2020–21, the Housing Registrar assessed its performance against each KPI based on the scale below.

KPI assessment		
	Met: Performance met the targets	
		Somewhat met: Performance generally met the targets with some room for improvement
		
		Not met: Targets not met, significant areas for improvement identified

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The Housing Registrar's performance in 2020–21

Based on all evidence sources, the Housing Registrar has been assessed as having met five KPIs and 'somewhat met' one KPI:

Key performance indicator		KPI assessment
1	Compliance, monitoring and enforcement activities are undertaken in a coordinated, streamlined and timely manner	 Somewhat met
2	Communications and engagement with registered agencies and other stakeholders are outcomes-driven, clear and timely	 Met
3	Regulatory and compliance risks are identified, closely monitored and proactively mitigated proportionate to the risks being managed	 Met
4	The regulator contributes to continuous improvement of the regulatory framework	 Met
5	The regulator promotes transparency in the regulatory system and the sector	 Met
6	The regulator does not unnecessarily impede the efficient operation of registered agencies	 Met

Performance Improvement Plan for 2021–22

To improve performance against KPI 1 for the 2021–22 financial year, the Housing Registrar has identified the following action items:

- > Streamline annual compliance assessments – the Housing Registrar has undertaken a review of the assessment process and identified improvement opportunities to be implemented in 2021–22
- > Earlier public reporting of compliance and performance information – the Housing Registrar will put measures in place to improve the timeliness of public reporting of performance and compliance information to make this information more valuable and relevant to our stakeholders.

Sector survey results

The Housing Registrar continues to proactively seek feedback from stakeholders to promote greater accountability, transparency and continuous improvement opportunities in our regulatory approach and impact.

The Housing Registrar's 2021 sector survey was conducted in May–June 2021, following the completion of the Registrar's 2019–20 annual compliance and performance assessment cycle.

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Objective

- > understand the views of registered agencies
- > self-assess as part of our annual reporting on the regulator's performance
- > identify continuous improvement opportunities to enhance the regulatory system and reduce regulatory red tape
- > continue to promote greater accountability and transparency in the community housing sector in Victoria

The survey was sent out to all 40 registered agencies and included 23 questions across five key areas:

- i. Resources
- ii. Engagement with the Housing Registrar Team
- iii. Annual Compliance Assessment (ACA) process
- iv. Community Housing Information Management and Engagement System (CHiMES)
- v. Benefits of Regulatory System and Continuous Improvement

This year, we added two new questions related to the ACA process and CHiMES. These questions are designed to gauge registered agencies' understanding of compliance status determined by the Registrar and their experience in CHiMES as agency users/authorisers.

Response rates

98%

Surveys returned across
the sector

100%

Surveys returned by
housing associations

97%

Surveys returned by
housing providers

We appreciate the time registered agencies take to complete this survey and provide valuable feedback. These survey results enable us to identify opportunities for continuous improvement to promote best practice regulation that encourages strong compliance and performance in the sector

Benefits of being involved in Victoria's regulatory system

When asked about the benefits of being involved in Victoria's regulatory system, registered agencies cited:

- > Access to government funding and low-cost loans
- > Access to the Housing Registrar's resources, including compliance advice, better practice guidance, and performance reports
- > Compliance and performance information assists organisations to increase operational and service delivery efficiency
- > Promoting accountability and transparency to ensure quality housing services are delivered to tenants.

Key results and highlights

100%

Satisfaction with the level of engagement with the Housing Registrar team.⁵

95%

Indicated that they had a clear understanding of the ACA process.

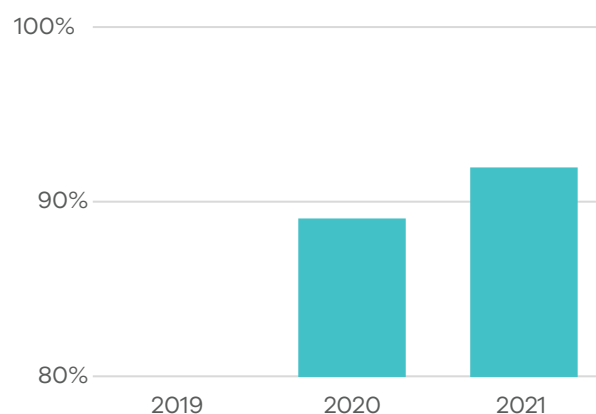
97%

Indicated that they understood their organisation's responsibilities and the Housing Registrar's role in relation to complaints management.

97%

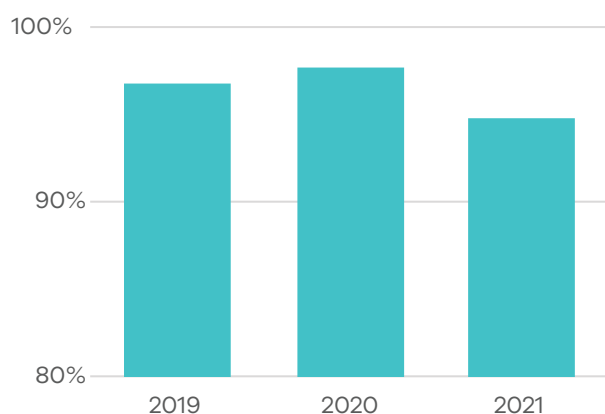
Indicated that their Board/governing body understood their role for the ACA process and was actively engaged throughout.

The Housing Registrar's regulatory approach was responsive and adaptable to changing conditions in the environment.



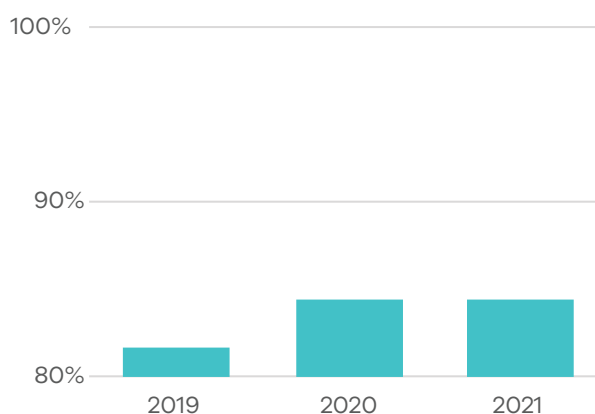
More than 90% indicated that the Housing Registrar's approach was responsive and adaptable to changing conditions in the regulatory environment, a 3% improvement from the 2020 survey result. This is a positive result, particularly given the challenges faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–21. Registered agencies have also reported support for the Housing Registrar's responsive and flexible regulatory approach during the pandemic.

You were satisfied with the Housing Registrar’s resources available to support your organisation.



The Housing Registrar has a range of resources available to support registered agencies as well as promote transparency, accountability and confidence in the community housing sector. Registered agencies continued high satisfaction with the Housing Registrar’s resources is an acknowledgement that the sector sees value in these resources.

The Annual Compliance Assessment was completed and outcomes communicated with your organisation within a reasonable timeframe.



In 2020–21, 84% of respondents agreed (or strongly agreed) that the 2019–20 Annual Compliance Assessment was completed, and outcomes communicated, within a reasonable timeframe. We note slightly higher levels of disagreement than previous years. This result may be impacted by delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We have also commenced a review of the Annual Compliance Assessment process to improve efficiency and timeliness.

Survey results reflect continued general satisfaction with the Housing Registrar's resources, engagement, the Annual Compliance Assessment process and the CHiMES system, with opportunities for information sharing across the sector. Registered agencies reported:

'The response of the HR team was outstanding. Their responses demonstrated clear understanding and an ability to be responsive to our organisations needs during the dynamic environment of the pandemic.'

'We have appreciated our engagement with the Housing Registrar Team, the Team's efforts to understand our organisation and to adapt its approach and requests to our organisation's unique circumstances.'

'The Registrar could be more proactive in promoting cross agency support of resources. Especially the larger ones to the smaller ones.'

Continuous Improvement

The Housing Registrar is committed to continually improving its performance as a regulator. This includes taking action from feedback received through annual sector surveys. Last year, survey results identified opportunities for improvement relating to resources, engagement, the Annual Compliance Assessment process and CHiMES. To address this, in 2020–21 we have:

- > Improved resources for the sector and the community, including:
 - increased compliance and performance information published on the Public Register
 - refreshed the Housing Registrar website to improve accessibility, including our regulatory framework and complaints information
 - published additional compliance guidance materials
- > Enhanced the Housing Registrar business system, CHiMES, including:
 - improvements to recording of cases (including complaints) and enquiries received by the Housing Registrar to better capture and report data
 - updates to some reports and forms including the KPM report to assist agencies to complete these reports
 - implementation of the Housing Registrar's new logo and colour palette across the system
 - other upgrades to usability and fixes for bugs identified by system users.

Feedback from the 2021 survey will be taken into consideration for the Housing Registrar's 2021–22 workplan. We will continue to report on how survey feedback helps the regulator improve its performance in future Regulatory Update Reports.

The following section of the report contains a summary of the Housing Registrar’s progress, including key deliverables, against its three priority areas for the 2020–21 financial year.

Priority 1: Organisational excellence

The Housing Registrar is committed to:

Ensuring the Housing Registrar has the capabilities to meet current and future challenges by enabling a high-performance culture that values and supports our people.

We continued to build organisational capability in response to the changing operating environment to meet current and future demands. This included equipping the Housing Registrar to respond to emerging risks and opportunities, including significant sector growth and emergence of new market entrants (including those with more complex corporate governance structures) driven by the Big Housing Build.

In 2020–21, this included:

- > Increasing our resources from 10 to 12 staff
- > Creating two new teams including a ‘registrations team’ and a ‘complex complaints and investigation team’
- > Reviewing our processes to identify efficiencies and more streamlined, proportionate and outcomes focused approaches to delivering regulation. This included revising approaches and timelines for:
 - registration processes (implemented in 2020–21)
 - complaint reviews and investigations (implemented in 2020–21)
 - annual compliance assessments (part implemented in 2020–21 with further amendments to be introduced in 2021–22)
 - public compliance and performance reporting (part implemented in 2020–21 with further amendments to be introduced in 2021–22)
- > Publishing a new website and refreshing all content and materials to make this information more user friendly and accessible to tenants, prospective tenants and other stakeholders
- > Delivering a suite of enhancements to our business system, CHiMES, to improve usability for all users (including regulatory analysts and registered agencies) and to facilitate public reporting.

Resourcing for growth and emerging risks

The Housing Registrar increased resources and invested in building internal capacity to better position the regulator for the emerging environment, including the significant sector growth generated from the \$5.3 billion Big Housing Build.

In 2020–21, the Housing Registrar established:

- > A 'registrations team' to manage the increase in registrations and enquiries. This team was created to:
 - conduct thorough assessments of registration applications
 - deliver strong engagement and communications with interested parties
 - achieve faster registration timeframes to meet funding and project financing requirements.
- > A 'complex complaints and investigations team' supported by a new complaints management framework. This team was created to:
 - review and respond to complex complaints from tenants, prospective tenants and third parties
 - identify and address non-compliance and unresolved rental housing issues including investigations. The team carried out its first physical inspection of a rooming house in December 2020 (following the referral of tenant complaints). The investigation identified continuous improvement actions which promoted better safety and welfare of tenants in this facility in collaboration with the registered agency
 - carry out regulatory intervention by the Registrar under the Intervention Guidelines as a last resort to ensure tenant protections and mitigate significant potential harms.

Reviewing our internal processes

We reviewed internal processes to identify efficiencies in our approach to registrations, annual compliance and performance assessments. The findings of the review will inform more streamlined processes to promote greater regulatory insights, more timely assessments and earlier publication of compliance and performance information. Improved processes include proactive consideration of compliance performance throughout the year and streamlined complaints processes to be implemented throughout 2021–22.

CHiMES enhancements

In April 2021, the Housing Registrar completed a suite of updates to our business system, the Community Housing Information Management and Engagement System (CHiMES). CHiMES is used to submit, store and exchange regulatory information between the Housing Registrar and registered agencies. The updates aimed to improve usability and increase transparency and data quality.

The updates to CHiMES included:

- > Improvements to the Register of Housing Agencies (the Public Register) – improved user experience including registered agency listings and more accessible contact details
- > Enhanced public reporting of compliance and performance information – publication of the Performance Report (see page 21 for further information)

- > Changes to simplify the registration application process – improved functionality to enable applicants to provide extra information and documents through CHiMES throughout the application process
- > Improved asset reporting – updates to asset list to include Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) as a new housing type and to include SDA in the asset summary report as a sub-category of long-term housing. The disaggregation of some long-term properties as SDA will allow the Housing Registrar to assess the impacts of SDA portfolios on Key Performance Measures.



Priority 2: Better regulation

The Housing Registrar is committed to:

- > Supporting registered agencies to achieve good governance, financial viability, quality tenancy services and asset management through regular compliance assessment
- > Reducing the regulatory burden on registered agencies
- > Facilitating greater investment in the sector by promoting confidence in the performance of registered agencies
- > Making our regulatory approach and processes more accessible and transparent
- > Identifying opportunities for improvement, including through feedback mechanisms.

In 2020–21, the Housing Registrar delivered better regulation through:

- > Completing annual compliance and performance assessments for each registered agency that delivered rental housing services in Victoria in the 2019–20 financial year. Where compliance issues or continuous improvement opportunities were identified these were captured in regulatory action items⁶ and were accompanied by proportionate regulatory engagement activities to monitor progress. For more information on sector performance for the 2019–20 financial year, please see the Sector Performance Report
- > Creating a more transparent regulatory system and sector through the introduction of public reporting of performance information for each registered agency (introduced for assessments relating to the 2019–20 financial year). Previously, only aggregated performance information was publicly reported
- > Flexible and adaptive regulatory engagement, including adjusting our regulatory engagement strategy to redirect our resources to respond to emerging risks impacting the sector from Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- > Reducing regulatory red tape on providers through revised reporting requirements and publication of guidance notes. Including:
 - extending reporting timelines for the 2019–20 financial year and removing the requirement for unaudited financial statements for the 2020–21 financial year
 - issuing a range of guidance notes to promote compliance and continuous improvement.

New website, refreshed content and rebranding

On 1 March 2021, The Housing Registrar launched its new website, branding and logo. The website was redesigned to have more accessible content and intuitive navigation making it easier for tenants, registered agencies, stakeholders, and members of the public to access information relevant for them.

The website contains refreshed information that is easier to find so that our stakeholders can more easily understand the role of the Housing Registrar, who we regulate and how we regulate. This included:

- > New guidance for tenants and prospective tenants on how to refer an unresolved complaint to the Housing Registrar
- > New registration guidance for rental housing providers interested in delivering community housing services in Victoria and participate in the Big Housing Build
- > Revisions to the Public Register to facilitate performance reporting.

The Housing Registrar branding and logo was updated in conjunction with the launch of the new website. The new branding and logo presents a contemporary design reflecting our commitment to continuous improvement, transparency reform and risk-based, outcomes-focused regulation.

Performance Reports

In April 2021 the Housing Registrar introduced the first publication of performance information for registered agencies against Key Performance Measures (KPMs) reported for the 2019–20 financial year onwards. This consisted of publication of a *Performance Report* and associated guidance materials, informed by annual compliance and performance assessments (and made publicly available on the Public Register).

The *Performance Report* continues to increase the transparency and accountability of the sector and builds upon the transparency reforms delivered as part of the Housing Registrar's *2018–20 Strategic Plan* (which introduced public reporting of compliance information from the 2018–19 financial year onwards and use of Registrar's intervention powers under Division 8 of the Housing Act).

The *Performance Report* contains performance information for each registered agency against the following KPMs:

- > total number of housing units owned and managed (separated by Long Term and Transitional Housing Management property types)
- > total annual rent due to each registered agency for long term properties
- > rental arrears as a percentage of total annual rent due for long term properties
- > average long-term vacant tenantable turnaround days
- > tenant satisfaction with housing services provided
- > tenant satisfaction with tenant consideration of views
- > total number of complaints received from tenants and prospective tenants

- > complaints resolved within 30 days
- > completed urgent requested repairs within 24 hours
- > completed non-urgent requested repairs within 14 days
- > tenant satisfaction with repairs and maintenance.

This report was developed in collaboration with the KPM Working Group comprised of representatives from the sector, CHIA Vic and chaired by the Housing Registrar.

This public reporting approach of performance information is similar to that of the Scottish Housing Regulator, considered by the KPM Working Group to provide a better practice approach to public performance reporting. The Housing Registrar is continuing to identify further options for transparency reform as part of the *2020–2022 Corporate Plan* and will continue to work closely with the KPM Working Group to implement further reforms.

Guidance to support and improve regulatory reporting

In 2020–21, the Housing Registrar continued to support registered agency reporting through guidance notes and improved Financial Performance Report templates.

In August 2020, the Housing Registrar published the Guidance Note - *Self-assessment of performance against business plans and Performance Standards*. The guidance supports registered agencies to undertake self-assessments as part of Annual Compliance Assessments. It describes the purpose and value of self-assessments and the Housing Registrar's approach to reviewing, assessing and validating the information provided. The guidance note also contains a reporting example for self-assessment against the Community Engagement Performance Standard.

In September 2020, the Housing Registrar made enhancements to the Financial Performance Report (FPR) template to improve the data collected for registered agencies' finances, loans, grants and developments. Capturing this data in the FPR template enables the Housing Registrar to more accurately undertake financial assessments and modelling and further aligns the Housing Registrar with the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH). Additionally, the enhancements assist the Housing Registrar's ability to respond to information requests from the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC).

Supporting sector growth

In November 2020, the Victorian Government announced a \$5.3 billion investment in social and affordable housing through the Big Housing Build. With the announcement and access to funding from NHFIC, the community housing sector is anticipated to experience significant growth; both in the number of registered agencies and the number of affordable housing units owned and managed by housing providers and housing associations.

In response to this change in funding environment, the Housing Registrar has received a high volume of registration enquiries from Victorian and interstate providers as new entities look for opportunities to gain access to funding and deliver community housing services.

In 2020–21, the Housing Registrar responded to registration enquiries and supported two registered agencies through the registration process. This included publication of revised registrations guidance and through enhanced CHiMES capabilities which improves functionality to streamline registration applications.

The Registrar approved two new registrations in 2020–21:

- > National Affordable Housing Consortium Victoria Ltd (NAHCV) became a registered housing provider in August 2020
- > Building Communities Victoria Limited (BCVL) became a registered housing provider in April 2021.

The number of registrations is forecast to continue to grow in 2021–22, with several applications and enquiries received from interested agencies that are currently under review by the Housing Registrar.

As part of the *2020–2022 Corporate Plan*, the Housing Registrar is continuing to explore opportunities to further streamline the registration process and strengthen relationships with key stakeholders.

Priority 3: Strong partnerships and engagement

The Housing Registrar is committed to:

- > Proactively building high-value and purposeful relationships
- > Being visible, open and engaged
- > Raising awareness of the regulatory system and the Housing Registrar's role
- > Providing advice and guidance to the community housing sector to support the regulation of registered agencies

The community housing sector is comprised of a diverse and complex stakeholder environment as part of the broader social housing system. As we turn our attention to emerging risks inherent with a rapidly changing environment, we continue to place the upmost value on our strong relationships with Government, industry bodies, advocates, and the community housing sector.

Strong stakeholder relationships in the social housing system encourages better outcomes for tenants and prospective tenants through more closely aligned systems, proactive risk management, information sharing where appropriate (and greater intelligence) and identification of continuous improvement opportunities.

The Housing Registrar continued to prioritise communications with key stakeholders to support open and engaged relationships. In 2020–21, this included:

- > Delivering quarterly communications to the sector through our newsletter, EQUIP, providing guidance on upcoming compliance and reporting requirements and regulatory news
- > Publishing guidance notes in relation to key areas of regulatory focus and engagement, including the impacts of Coronavirus (COVID-19)
- > Publishing compliance, performance and key regulatory information and analysis through the Sector Performance Report and Regulatory Update Report
- > Participation in monthly NRSCH Registrars and Registrars Advisory Group meetings and working groups (including communities of practice and data workshops)
- > Completing a survey of registered agencies and receiving and analysing and reporting on feedback.

The Review of Social Housing Regulation

The Review of the Victorian Social Housing Regulatory System (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 (public and community)
- > examine the case for Victoria’s participation in the NRSCH.

The Review will be undertaken over 12 months with consultation papers being issued mid-2021, an interim report November 2021, and the final report due in March 2022.

We strongly encourage registered agencies and stakeholders to participate in consultation opportunities to create a better social housing system for all Victorians.

Sector consultation and regulatory stewardship

The Housing Registrar continued to seek the views of the sector through consultation processes, feedback mechanisms, quarterly attendance at CHIA board meetings and working groups. Consultation and consideration of sector impacts is part of our regulatory approach and role in system stewardship, including when identifying regulatory reform options.

In 2020–21, the Housing Registrar’s Key Performance Measures (KPM) Working Group developed options for the implementation public reporting of performance information. The KPM Working Group was established as a consultation point for transparency reform and will be used to consider future reform opportunities in collaboration with the Housing Registrar.

Collaborating with government

During 2020–21 the Housing Registrar worked with the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) to better align systems, share information, and identify opportunities for cost effective alignment to reduce the burden on providers operating in multiple jurisdictions. This has involved attending monthly Registrars Group meetings, Registrars Advisory Group meetings, communities of practice meetings (the Analytics Information Reporting Community of Practice and Financial Analyst Community of Practice) and NRSCH Data Collection and Performance Assessment Workshops.

Additionally, the Housing Registrar provided Registered Agency Regulator Opinions to government funders considering investment in the community housing sector through registered agencies. This has included providing valuable inputs for the Rapid Round funding of the Social Housing Growth Fund (SHGF) and to NHFIC for various funding programs.

Appendix 1: Evidence of the Housing Registrar's performance of KPIs

Registrar self-assessment: KPI 1

KPI 1: Compliance, monitoring and enforcement activities are undertaken in a coordinated, streamlined and timely manner

 Somewhat met

The Housing Registrar measures its performance against KPI 1 using three performance indicators:

- > The Annual Compliance Assessments are completed promptly, and outcomes are communicated with the agencies without delay
- > The Housing Registrar's decisions and advice are provided in a timely manner and clearly articulate expectations and the underlying reasons for decisions
- > The lead regulator and financial regulator collaborate in assessing the registered agency and identifying risks.

During 2020–21, all Annual Compliance Assessments with the exception of one registered agency were completed by 7 May 2021. The finalisation of assessments by the Housing Registrar was delayed this year, primarily due to regulatory reporting extensions provided to registered agencies due to the impact of COVID-19. This also impacted regulatory engagement schedules and meeting times to progress the assessments in some cases.

The average time for the Housing Registrar to finalise the compliance and performance assessments was 102 days (measured from the date registered agencies provided all reporting), compared with 62 days in 2019–20. Streamlining our assessment and public reporting processes is a priority for 2021–22. Factors which impacted these delayed timeframes included:

- > The Housing Registrar's focus on emerging risks on the sector due to COVID-19. This included reallocating resources throughout 2020–21 in addition to reporting and regulatory engagement extensions
- > The introduction of new performance reporting and associated CHiMES and process enhancements also created additional steps in finalising assessments and public reporting which will be streamlined for future compliance and performance assessments
- > Significant increase in registration requests and inquiries driven by the Big Housing Build and NHFIC funding.

During 2019–20, executive summaries were prepared by lead and financial analysts for each registered agency and published on the Public Register. These executive summaries provide a statement of a registered agency's compliance with the *Housing Act 1983* and Performance Standards, as well as a summary of registered agency information for the performance year under assessment. A *Performance Report* for each registered agency were also published on the Public Register for the first time. The Performance Report provides information on Key Performance Measure (KPM) results for the relevant performance year for each registered agency. Excluding one registered agency, all executive summaries and Performance Reports were published on the Public Register by 7 May 2021.

During 2020–21, the Housing Registrar created 113 cases in CHiMES with an average response time of 20.8 days between creation and closure. The average case length for cases classified as complaints was 29.5 days which was within the preferred timeframe of 30 days.

This was a significant improvement from 55.9 days in 2019–20 and reflected continuous improvement and our focus on complaints managements in 2020–21. Cases classified as General Enquiries were open for an average time of 13.3 days.

In May 2021, an Annual Compliance Assessment workshop was held to facilitate an open discussion between both lead and financial regulators on streamlining opportunities for the Annual Compliance Assessment process and improvements which could be implemented during 2021–22. Throughout the year the Housing Registrar team also holds weekly strategy meetings to ensure priorities and risks (including resource issues) are discussed and appropriately managed and so that lead and financial regulators are kept informed of core work and deliverables across the team.

Assessed evidence

- > 37 out of 38 2019–20 Annual Compliance Assessments completed by 7 May 2021
- > Average time of 102 days to finalise a review for registered agency sign-off, compared with 62 days in 2019–20
- > Publication of compliance outcomes, Executive Summaries and Performance Reports to the Public Register by 7 May 2021
- > 113 cases in CHiMES with an average response time of 20.8 days
- > Average case length for cases classified as complaints of 29.5 days (preferred time frame of 30 days)
- > Average case length for cases classified as General Enquiries of 13.3 days
- > Weekly meetings and one review meeting regarding annual compliance assessments to ensure team consensus and information sharing
- > Regular fortnightly team meetings.

Registrar self-assessment: KPI 2

KPI 2: Communications and engagement with registered agencies and other stakeholders are outcomes-driven, clear and timely.



The Housing Registrar measures its performance against KPI 2 using three performance indicators:

- > The extent the Housing Registrar provides guidance and information that is up to date, clear, accessible and concise through media appropriate to registered agencies and tenants (around complaints)
- > The Housing Registrar's consideration of the impact on regulated agencies and engagement with sector representatives before revising or changing policies, practices or service standards
- > The Housing Registrar's advice is consistent and supports outcomes that are aligned with the vision and mission of the Housing Registrar.

During 2020–21, the Housing Registrar proactively communicated and engaged with registered agencies and various stakeholders to provide clear and timely information to improve regulatory outcomes and provide guidance to the registered sector.

The following guidance notes were developed to provide direction for registered agencies when completing self-assessments as part of the Housing Registrar's annual reporting requirements, and to support registered agencies to ensure ongoing compliance with Performance Standards following changes to residential tenancy laws:

- > *Guidance Note – Self-assessment of performance against business plans and Performance Standards (August 2020)*

describes the purpose and value of registered agencies undertaking self-assessments and the Housing Registrar's approach to reviewing self-assessments as part of the Annual Compliance Assessment process

- > *Guidance Note – Changes to residential tenancy laws (March 2021)*, registered agencies are required to revise their policies to reflect recent changes to residential tenancy laws.

Guidance notes were developed in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and CHIA Vic and have been published on the Housing Registrar website to ensure they are accessible to all stakeholders.

The Housing Registrar's quarterly newsletter, EQUIP, was published in August 2020, October 2020, January 2021 and May 2021. EQUIP provides quarterly information to the registered sector and other relevant stakeholders including clarifying regulatory reform work, key sector updates and upcoming Housing Registrar engagement opportunities. Articles about successful initiatives undertaken by registered agencies were also published, allowing these to be communicated across the registered sector.

The Regulatory Update Report 2019–20, published in October 2020, provides an annual update on the work of the Housing Registrar and its impacts. This includes progress made in delivering the Housing Registrar's Corporate Plan and reform projects, the performance of the Housing Registrar (including self-assessment and survey results from the sector), sector articles and upcoming priorities. The report also provided an overview of the priorities and areas of focus for the Housing Registrar for 2020–21.

The Housing Registrar's 2020–22 *Corporate Plan* is published on our website. The 2020–22 *Corporate Plan* 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 Housing Registrar launched its new website and logo in March 2021. The website features a clean design and more intuitive navigation making it easier for tenants, registered agencies, stakeholders, and members of the public to access information relevant for them. Policies and guidance materials were also updated, and now include clearer guidance for tenants and prospective tenants on how to lodge complaints about a registered agency (as their residential rental provider).

The Housing Registrar logo was updated in conjunction with the launch of the new website. The new logo presents a contemporary design reflecting our commitment to continuous improvement, transparency reform and risk-based, outcomes-focused regulation. We developed a registration status logos for registered agencies. These logos confirm registration status under the Housing Act as either a housing association or housing provider in Victoria.

Following on from 2019–20, communication with registered agencies has continued to be a key focus of the Housing Registrar during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Communications provided to the registered sector in 2020–21 during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic have included:

- > A *Guidance Note – Coronavirus (COVID-19) communication and reporting to the Housing Registrar (August 2020)* published on the Housing Registrar website. This guidance note included information for registered agencies on regulatory reporting requirements during stage 4 and stage 3 restrictions, including an extension on the end of August reporting tranche for the Annual Compliance Assessment (2019–20 Performance Year).
- > A *Guidance Note – Regulatory Update – Coronavirus (November 2020)* published on the Housing Registrar website. This Guidance note included information on reportable event and communication requirements following the extension of the *COVID-19 Omnibus (Emergency Measures) Act 2020* (Omnibus Act).

Over the past year, the Housing Registrar proactively sought to strengthen collaboration with its key stakeholders and has worked to continuously build open and engaged relationships. This was demonstrated by engagement with external stakeholders, such as the NRSCH, NHFIC, CHIA Vic, Homes Victoria and the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) on joint government work to identify continuous improvement opportunities (including to raise the Housing Registrar's profile, promote market confidence and raise the reputation of the sector).

Positive feedback was received for engagement and information sharing with stakeholders, including to inform government funding decisions. The Housing Registrar also received positive feedback from the sector on changes to our regulatory approach, specifically relating to collaboration, a more outcomes focused approach, new public reporting and higher rate of registered agency satisfaction.

The Housing Registrar's 2021 sector survey was conducted in May–June 2021, following the completion of the Registrar's 2019–20 annual compliance assessment cycle. The survey results reflected continued general satisfaction with the Housing Registrar's resources, engagement with the Housing Registrar team, the annual compliance assessment process and the CHIMES system.

Assessed evidence:

- > The Housing Registrar's 2020–22 *Corporate Plan*
- > Guidance Notes published including:
 - *Guidance Note – Self-assessment of performance against business plans and Performance Standards (August 2020)*
 - *Guidance Note – Changes to residential tenancy laws (March 2021)*
- > 2021 survey results evidence that the sector was satisfied with the level of engagement by the Housing Registrar.
- > Housing Registrar quarterly newsletters providing key quarterly updates to stakeholders, including clarifying regulatory reform work and reporting and other compliance responsibilities

- > Engagement and communications with registered agencies during the coronavirus including:
 - *A Guidance Note – Coronavirus (COVID-19) communication and reporting to the Housing Registrar (August 2020)* published on the Housing Registrar website. This Guidance Note included information for registered agencies on regulatory reporting requirements during stage 4 and stage 3 restrictions, including an extension on the end of August reporting tranche for the Annual Compliance Assessment (2019–20 Performance Year).
 - *A Guidance Note – Regulatory Update Coronavirus (November 2020)*
- > Refreshed Housing Registrar website and content provided in a more user friendly and accessible format
- > New Housing Registrar branding and logo introduced for all communications materials
- > New registered agency registration status logo and style guide (for housing associations and housing providers)
- > Publication of the Regulatory Update Report 2019–20
- > Engagement and feedback from stakeholders including registered agencies (annual regulatory performance survey), NRSCH, DTF and CHIA Vic.

Registrar self-assessment: KPI 3

KPI 3: Regulatory and compliance risks are identified, closely monitored and proactively mitigated proportionate to the risks being managed.



The Housing Registrar measures its performance against KPI 3 using two performance indicators:

- > The Housing Registrar applies a risk-based proportionate approach to compliance obligations, engagement and regulatory enforcement actions
- > The Housing Registrar's approach to regulatory risk is regularly reassessed. Strategies, activities and enforcement actions are amended to reflect changing priorities that result from new and evolving regulatory threats, without diminishing regulatory certainty or impact.

In 2020–21, the Housing Registrar applied a risk-based, proportionate approach for the assessment of registered agency compliance and the development of regulatory plan action items. Annual Compliance Assessments were conducted for 38 registered agencies, one of which was finalised in early 2021–22. Through these assessments, we identified various compliance risks and opportunities for continuous improvement. We worked with registered agencies to develop 146 regulatory plan action items to address these identified risks and improvement opportunities.

In 2020–21, 113 enquiries and complaints were received from tenants, prospective tenants, and other stakeholders. These were all reviewed to identify potential compliance risks or systemic issues, and proportionate action taken. For example, one complaint raised a range of concerns for tenant safety at a rooming house. A physical inspection identified a number of continuous improvement opportunities which were voluntarily implemented by the registered agency.

For the first time in Victoria, the Housing Registrar has assessed and approved the registration of a Special Purpose Vehicle as a registered housing provider. Building Communities Victoria Limited (BCVL) became a registered housing provider in April 2021. During assessment the Housing Registrar worked closely with the Public Housing Renewal Program team and other stakeholders to ensure appropriate consideration of regulatory and compliance risks. Upon registration, we developed a regulatory plan to address identified risks and ensure these are mitigated.

We continued to adjust our engagement and regulatory approach throughout the coronavirus pandemic. This has included:

- > reviewing and adjusting regulatory reporting requirements to reduce regulatory burden and assist registered agencies to meet changing priorities (including preparedness arrangements)
- > providing coronavirus (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 proactively engage with registered agencies to understand the impact on the registered sector and to ensure there is effective regulatory oversight of the operational changes required to prioritise the safety of staff and tenants.

With several new staff members in 2021, the Housing Registrar undertook a full review of lead and financial analyst registered agency allocations. This resulted in a revised restructure of lead and financial analysts, and managerial oversight, improving regulatory consistency and smoothing work levels across the team.

Assessed evidence:

- > Annual Compliance Assessments for each registered agency were completed with 146 regulatory action plans prepared where compliance or continuous improvement areas were identified. Including regulatory engagement, with each registered agency throughout the year captured in CHIMES
- > Reviewing 162 enquiries and complaints from tenants, prospective tenants and other stakeholders
- > Carrying out a physical inspection of one rooming house and interviewing staff and tenants
- > Registration of the first Special Purpose Vehicle in Victoria, Building Communities (Vic) Limited, with close engagement with the Public Housing Renewal Program team and other stakeholders throughout the registration process
- > Provided coronavirus (COVID-19) updates to the sector and industry stakeholders throughout the pandemic
- > Conducted a review and realignment of registered agency allocations to improve regulatory consistency and ensure appropriate oversight.

Registrar self-assessment: KPI 4

KPI 4: The regulator contributes to continuous improvement of the regulatory framework



The Housing Registrar measures its performance against KPI 4 using two performance indicators:

- > Demonstrating an understanding of the operating environment of the industry, registered agencies, the needs of tenants, and the current and emerging issues that affect the sector
- > Increasing confidence in the sector through effective regulation and championing continuous improvement.

In the 2021 survey, we asked registered agencies whether they agree that our team demonstrated a good understanding of their portfolio of registered agencies and their business models and whether the Housing Registrar adjusted regulatory engagement focus and frequency when needed. Approximately 90 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Housing Registrar team demonstrated a good understanding of their registered agencies' business. 90 per cent of respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that the Housing Registrar adjusted regulatory engagement focus and frequency when needed. We also asked registered agencies whether the Housing Registrar's regulatory approach was responsive and adaptable to changing conditions in the environment. 92 per cent of respondents considered that our approach was responsive and adaptable to changing conditions in the regulatory environment, an increase from 89 per cent in 2020.

In the 2020–21 financial year, we continued our transparency reform agenda in collaboration with the Key Performance Measures (KPM) Working Group to increase transparency of KPM reporting. Performance Reports were published on the Public Register, providing identified KPM results for each registered agency for the 2019–20 Performance Year. The Housing Registrar considers that increased transparency of registered agency performance and compliance matters helps to promote increased confidence, accountability and improved performance in the sector.

In response to the changing operating environment of the coronavirus pandemic, the Housing Registrar also published various coronavirus (COVID-19) related guidance notes during 2020–21 (*Guidance Note – Coronavirus (COVID-19) communication and reporting to the Housing Registrar (August 2020)* and *Guidance Note – Regulatory Update – Coronavirus (November 2020)*) and increased individual engagement with registered agencies as per KPI 3. Drafting and publishing these materials required in-depth understanding of the sector and business models to make sure that information published by the Housing Registrar was clear, targeted and useful.

Further work to continuously improve the Housing Registrar's regulatory framework during 2020–21 included:

- > Review and improvement of the Financial Performance Report template used by registered agencies for the 2019–20 performance year, including specific tabs on development projects and loans, finance, and grants
- > Refresh of the Housing Registrar website, including updated information on Our Regulatory Framework
- > Enhancements to increase the usability and accessibility of CHIMES

- > Consultation with registered agencies and other relevant stakeholders on proposed changes to legislative reporting requirements under the *Housing Act 1983 (Vic)*.

In addition to the above, the Housing Registrar continued to work in close collaboration with registered agencies, NRSCH registrars and other stakeholders such as CHIA Vic, DFFH and NHFIC on continuous improvement opportunities.

Assessed evidence:

- > 90 per cent of Housing Registrar survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Housing Registrar team demonstrated a good understanding of the registered agencies' business
- > 90 per cent of Housing Registrar survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Housing Registrar team adjusted regulatory engagement focus and frequency when needed
- > 92 per cent of Housing Registrar survey respondents considered that the Housing Registrar's approach was responsive and adaptable to changing conditions in the regulatory environment
- > Continued collaboration with the Key Performance Measures (KPM) Working Group
- > First publication to the Public Register of a Performance Report providing identified KPM data for every registered agency following 2019–20 annual compliance assessments

- > Adjustment of regulatory approach, engagement and communications with registered agencies during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, including through individual engagement and the publication of guidance notes (*Guidance Note – Coronavirus (COVID-19) communication and reporting to the Housing Registrar (August 2020)* and *Guidance Note – Regulatory Update – Coronavirus (November 2020)*)
- > Review and improvement of the Financial Performance Report template used by registered agencies for the 2019–20 performance year
- > Attendance at the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) Registrars Group, Registrars Advisory Group and Working Group meetings to identify alignment and continuous improvement opportunities. This has included partnering with NRSCH Registrars to lead continuous improvement projects

- > Joint project work with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) and CHIA Vic
- > Regular meetings with NHFIC to identify information sharing and continuous improvement opportunities to reduce the burden on registered agencies and improve efficiency of risk management processes
- > Interview for Australian Social Housing Advanced Asset Management (ASHAAM) framework RMIT project
- > Refresh of the Housing Registrar website, including updated content and layout
- > Enhancements to increase the usability and accessibility of CHiMES
- > Consultation with registered agencies and other relevant stakeholders on proposed changes to legislative reporting requirements under the *Housing Act 1983* (Vic).



Registrar self-assessment: KPI 5

KPI 5: The regulator promotes transparency in the regulatory system and the sector



The Housing Registrar's performance against KPI 5 is measured using the following indicators:

- > The Housing Registrar publishes reports and analysis that are respected, trusted and utilised across the industry and accurately reflect the state of the sector and individual agencies
- > The Housing Registrar ensures that relevant data pertaining to the performance and compliance of registered agencies is publicly available
- > The Housing Registrar is open and responsive to requests from regulated entities regarding the operation of the regulatory framework and approaches implemented by the Housing Registrar.

The Housing Registrar publishes two annual reports, the Sector Performance Report and Regulatory Update Report. The Sector Performance Report includes comprehensive details on the total number of tenancies managed by the sector as well as profile of these tenancies, financial metrics and performance against Key Performance Measures (KPMs). All past reports are available on the Housing Registrar's website. The 2021 Survey results demonstrate that 95 per cent of the respondents trusted and utilised the reports and analysis published by the Housing Registrar.

During 2019–20 the transparency of KPM reporting was significantly increased with the introduction of a Performance Report and Explainer Report for each registered agency for the 2019–20 reporting period. The KPMs

contained in the Performance Report were developed by the Housing Registrar in consultation with the KPM Working Group and include performance information on homes and rents, complaints, tenant satisfaction and maintenance. Performance Reports are published on the Public Register, providing identified KPM data for each registered agency. This has replaced deidentified KPM data previously available on the Victorian Government's DataVic database.

Annual compliance assessment outcomes, by registered agency, are available from the 2018–19 reporting period in the Housing Registrar's Public Register. Information is in the form of a table outlining compliance against each of the seven Performance Standards against the criteria of 'met', 'capacity to meet' and 'did not meet'. Formal intervention by the Registrar under the Intervention Guidelines issued on or after 1 July 2019 is also published on the Housing Registrar's Public Register.

During 2020–21, the Housing Registrar website was transitioned to the 'vic.gov.au' platform to promote transparency and accessibility of information to tenants, prospective tenants and the public. All website content was reviewed to ensure we provide relevant and clear information on the Victorian regulatory framework which is easily available online.

As part of NHFIC's credit assessment of registered agencies, the Housing Registrar provides a report to NHFIC on a registered agency's regulatory performance where consent is provided by the registered agency. Four reports on registered agencies were provided to NHFIC in 2020–21.

The Housing Registrar's quarterly newsletter, EQUIP, was published in August 2020, October 2020, January 2021 and May 2021. EQUIP provides quarterly information to the registered sector and other relevant stakeholders including clarifying regulatory

reform work, key sector updates and upcoming Housing Registrar engagement opportunities.

Assessed evidence:

- > Public reporting of compliance and performance information for registered agencies on the Register of Housing Agencies (Public Register)
- > Public reporting of regulatory intervention and the use of the Registrar’s powers under Division 8 of Part VIII of the Housing Act
- > Introduction of the Performance Report and Explainer Report to introduce performance reporting for the 2019–20 compliance year onwards following consultation with the KPM working group
- > Preparation of the 2019–20 Sector Performance Report published in 2021–22 due to delays caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The Sector Performance Report reports on performance of sector and identifies trends and where action may be required with all past reports available on the Housing Registrar website
- > Annual publication of the Regulatory Update Report 2019–20 which includes summary results of the survey of the sector on the Housing Registrar’s performance with all past reports available on the Housing Registrar website
- > Quarterly attendance at CHIA Vic Board meetings
- > Transitioning the Housing Registrar’s website platform to the ‘vic.gov.au’ site to promote transparency and accessibility of information to tenants, prospective tenants and the public
- > 95 per cent of Housing Registrar survey respondents trusted and utilised the reports and analysis published by the Housing Registrar
- > Registered agency performance reports provided to NHFIC on request and with consent from the registered agency
- > Publication of the Housing Registrar quarterly newsletter EQUIP to all registered agencies and a wide variety of stakeholders.

Registrar self-assessment: KPI 6

KPI 6: The regulator does not unnecessarily impede the efficient operation of registered agencies



Met

The Housing Registrar's performance against KPI 6 is measured using the following indicators:

- > The Housing Registrar takes action to minimise the potential for unintended negative impacts of regulatory activities on regulated entities
- > The Housing Registrar implements continuous internal improvement strategies to reduce the costs of compliance for registered agencies
- > There are established feedback mechanisms in the Housing Registrar's operations enabling registered agencies to provide feedback.

In response to the emerging risks of the coronavirus pandemic, we adjusted our regulatory approach to ensure registered agencies were informed on new government policy, legislation and regulatory reporting requirements through the publication of *Guidance Note – Coronavirus (COVID-19) communication and reporting to the Housing Registrar (August 2020)*, *Guidance Note – Regulatory Update – Coronavirus (November 2020)* and ongoing regulatory engagement. End of August reporting dates for registered agencies were extended to the end of October to reduce the regulatory burden on registered agencies during the height of the coronavirus pandemic.

During 2020–21, 146 regulatory action items were identified in response to various compliance risks and opportunities for continuous improvement for registered agencies. We worked with registered agencies to develop regulatory action plans through a risk-based approach to ensure regulatory engagement was proportionate to the risks identified.

The Housing Registrar survey is an established feedback mechanism for registered agencies to provide feedback on resources, engagement with the Housing Registrar team, the Annual Compliance Assessment process, CHiMES and benefits of the regulatory system. There is also the opportunity for registered agencies to provide open feedback through suggestions and comments. 39 registered agencies returned a completed survey to the Housing Registrar.

In order to minimise the unintended negative impacts of regulatory activities, we act with due consideration of the effect of our regulatory actions. In the 2021 survey, the Housing Registrar asked registered agencies whether the regulatory plan items and recommendations were reasonable, targeted and achievable. 37 per cent of registered agencies responded that they strongly agreed with this statement and 50 per cent agreed. There were no 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' results out of the 38 agencies that provided a response to this question.

The Housing Registrar aims to continuously improve and streamline its systems and practices including the reduction of regulatory red tape. In 2019–20 we reviewed registered agency reporting requirements and removed the annual requirement for housing associations to provide unaudited financial statements. Following the completion of the 2019–20 annual compliance assessments, we undertook a process review of the internal Annual Compliance Assessment process to

streamline workflows and identify procedural improvements. These improvements will be implemented for the 2020–21 annual compliance assessment cycle.

Following further improvements made to CHiMES in 2020–21, 79 per cent of respondents were satisfied with accessibility and usability of CHiMES. A trial of a new managed service agreement for CHiMES technical support was commenced in 2020–21 to enhance the ability to respond to CHiMES issues in a timely manner.

Assessed evidence:

- > Use of Regulatory Engagement Tool and tailored regulatory engagement plans for each registered agency to promote a risk based and proportionate approach to regulatory engagement. 146 regulatory action items were created in 2019–20
- > Changing our regulatory focus to respond to the emerging risks of coronavirus (COVID-19). This included publishing guidance materials clarifying new government policy, legislation and regulatory reporting requirements and extended reporting dates for annual compliance assessments to reduce regulatory burden

- > Reducing regulatory red tape by reviewing reporting requirements, including removing the reporting requirement for housing associations to provide unaudited financial statements
- > Out of 113 cases received by the Housing Registrar, 94.7 per cent resolved without requirement for regulatory action
- > Enhancements to increase the usability and accessibility of CHiMES
- > Responses from 39 registered agencies to the 2021 Housing Registrar survey
- > Process reviews of the annual compliance assessment process to identify improvements and streamline workflows
- > Procurement and establishment of a new managed service agreement (trial) for CHiMES technical support to mitigate system risks.



Housing
Registrar



Treasury
and Finance