

# Provider Registration User Guide



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## 1. About the National Regulatory System for Community Housing



The National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) is a regulatory system designed to contribute to a well governed and managed community housing sector, and provide a platform for the ongoing development and viability of the community housing sector across Australia.

<sup>1</sup> Policy and funding agencies are usually, but not always, the housing agency in the particular jurisdiction. For the purposes of this document, the term 'housing agency' will be used, but it is acknowledged that this will include policy and funding agencies for those jurisdictions where relevant.

Community housing providers are organisations that deliver social or affordable housing for people on lower incomes and housing-associated services covered by the social and affordable housing policies of government policy and funding agencies<sup>1</sup>.

The key objectives of the NRSCH are to:

- provide a consistent regulatory environment to support the growth and development of the community housing sector
- pave the way for future housing product development
- reduce the regulatory burden on housing providers working across jurisdictions
- provide a level playing field for providers seeking to enter new jurisdictions.

The governance arrangements are set out in an Inter-Government Agreement (IGA) for a National Regulatory System for Community Housing and provide for the establishment of the National Regulatory Council as an independent advisory committee.

A suite of Operational Guidelines guides the overall operation of the NRSCH in accordance with the National Law.

The scope of a Registrar's functions under the National Regulatory System is limited to regulatory activities. State and territory housing authorities, depending on the arrangements in each jurisdiction, will continue to have responsibility for policy, funding and industry development decisions.

## 2. Getting started

Providers will be asked to nominate a staff member to complete the registration process. This person will receive all contact from the Primary Registrar's Office and will be known as the Nominated Main Contact. This will be the person with access to the online registration system known as CHRIS (the Community Housing Regulatory Information System)

To login to CHRIS, go to [www.nrsch.gov.au](http://www.nrsch.gov.au) or click on the link in the 'Portal access granted' email.

To log in, use the information sent to the Nominated Main Contact in the 'Portal access granted' email sent by the system, and the "Invitation to begin application process" email.

Upon login, the Nominated Main Contact will see the following page:

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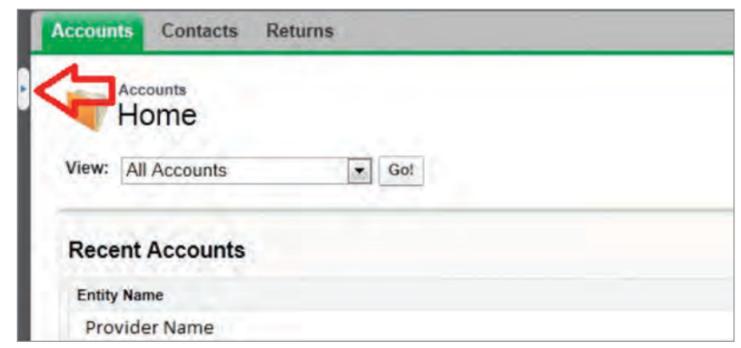
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The home screen will show the provider account. If Nominated Main Contact doesn't see the name of the provider's account press the 'Go!' button. The home screen has tabs running across the top of the page, which provide quick access to the account, contacts and returns.

For ease of use, the system features a pop up left side menu, which the user is able to access by clicking on the small arrow icon on the left of the screen:



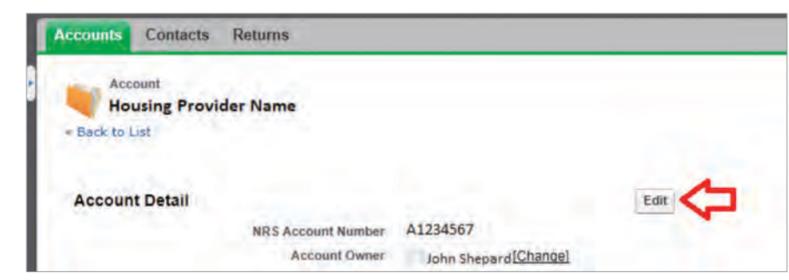
Clicking on the small arrow will show a menu with recent items, messages and alerts, and help links. The recent items are helpful as they enable a user to visit links they have previously accessed via only one mouse click, instead of having to navigate through the system.

## 3. The accounts tab

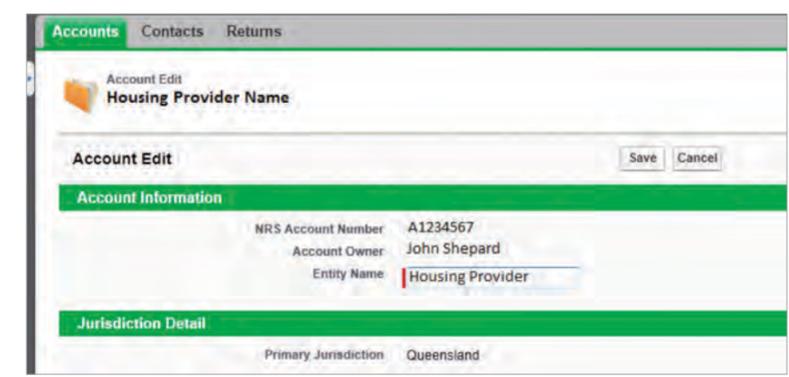
The Nominated Main Contact will be able to edit some of the provider's details listed on the account tab, including: entity details; main activities and main clients; and the provider's address. The latest performance metrics will show the most recent financial performance metrics and some non financial performance metrics (these may be blank until the provider submits). Some details like jurisdiction detail and number of community housing assets cannot be changed by the provider and will be updated by the system based on information submitted by the provider such as the Community Housing Asset Performance Report.

## 4. Editing provider details

To edit details click on the 'edit' button at the top of the account page.



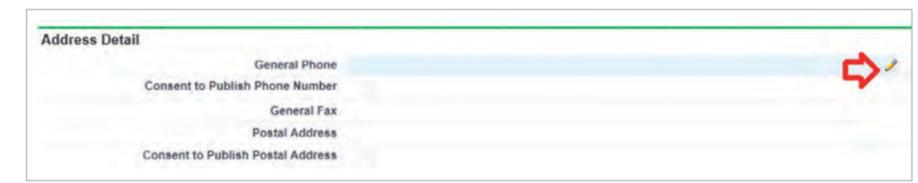
Once clicked, the section headings (such as account information and jurisdiction detail as seen below) will be highlighted in green to signify a user is in edit mode. Whilst in this screen, the Nominated Main Contact will be able to fill out the required sections.



To save changes click the 'save' button on the edit page. It is recommended that users save often whenever they are entering new data as the system does not auto save and work may be lost if the tab or browser is closed.

Navigate through the system by using the 'back to list' link at the top left of the screen or by clicking on the account name, return number or contact name, rather than clicking the back button on the browser. Pressing back will return the user to the last completed action and can start an endless loop or result in work being lost.

Parts of the account can be edited individually. This can be done on the account page or a return by double clicking on the small pencil icon to the right of the editable fields on the account.



Double clicking on the pencil icon will enable a user to edit that field of the account without needing to enter edit mode. However – double clicking the pencil icon will only enable a user to edit that particular field. The system will not automatically save work so the save button must be clicked when editing is completed.

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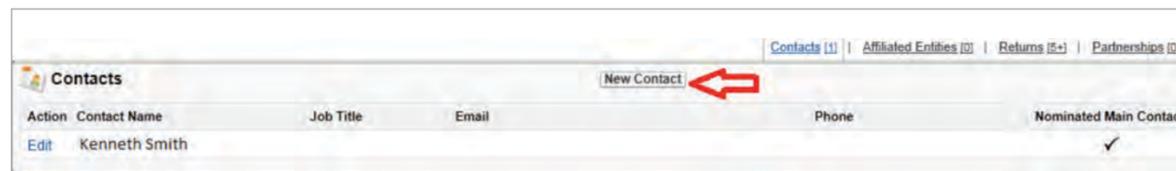
## 5. Contacts, affiliated entities and applications

On the account page there are four links: Contacts, Affiliated Entities, Returns and Partnerships. Clicking on these links jump to the bottom of the page where an item can be selected. Hovering the cursor over these links pops up a box with further information and allows access to edit or view the same information



These links are also viewable by scrolling down to the bottom of the page.

The Contacts link provides information on the contacts associated with the provider's account. The nominated contact will be indicated with a tick box against their name. Users are able to create a new contact by selecting the 'new contact' link and are required to do so as part of the ETF.



**Note:** All correspondence through CHRIS will be sent to the Nominated Main Contact and enquires related to the return are made to the Nominated Main Contact. Providers are able to add more contacts, however it will only be the Nominated Main Contact who will receive correspondence through CHRIS.

The contacts link is also able accessible via the tab labelled 'Contacts' at the top of the page.

The 'Affiliated Entities' link is where all affiliated entities are listed by the provider's Nominated Main Contact. The Nominated Main Contact is able to create a new affiliated entity listing by selecting the 'New Affiliated Entity' button.

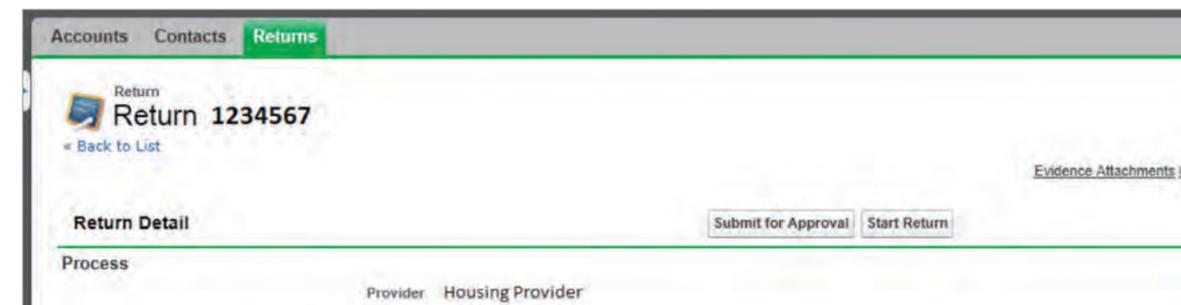


As part of the Eligibility and Tier form (ETF), a provider will be required to complete information on affiliated entities. The Nominated Main Contact will enter these details and check the accuracy of the details before they submit the ETF. Applications with incorrect or incomplete data will be rejected and the provider will be asked to correctly submit missing or incomplete information. For more information on affiliated entity arrangements, please consult the [National Regulatory System for Community Housing Guidance Note on Affiliated Entity Arrangements](#).

The Returns link is where all the provider's returns are listed, historic and current. Over time there will be returns from previous years however at the beginning of the registration process the provider will be completing an Eligibility and Tier Form.

Action	Form Reference	Form Status	ETF Start Date	ETF Due Date	Return Start Date
<a href="#">Edit</a>	<a href="#">Return 1367</a>	Scheduled	13/11/2013	20/11/2013	4/12/2013
<a href="#">Edit</a>	<a href="#">Return 1391</a>	Scheduled	13/11/2013	20/11/2013	4/12/2013

As can be seen above, hovering over the Returns link will show the form reference, the ETF start and due date, the return start and due date and the record type. The returns link is also accessible via the returns tab on the top menu. Clicking on the return number will open the return.



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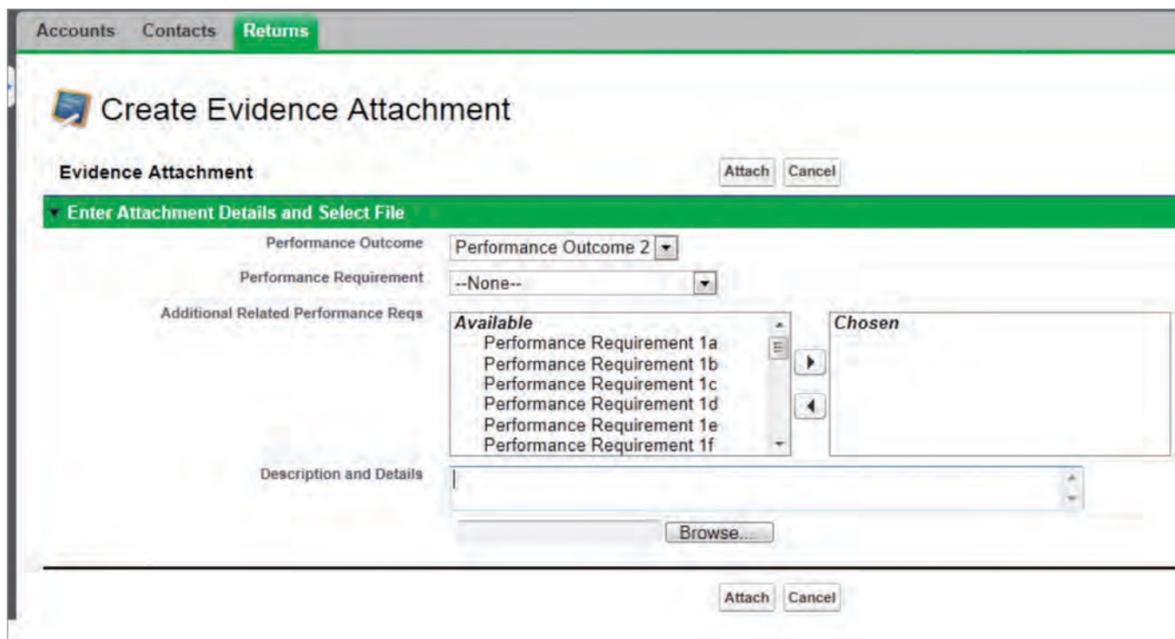
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## 6. Evidence attachments

Evidence needs to be uploaded to the return as part of the registration process. Once the Nominated Main Contact clicks on Start Return they will see the 'Add Attachment' link at the bottom of the page. This is where all evidence attachments related to each individual evidence category can be submitted. Clicking on the 'Add Attachment' button will show this 'Create Evidence Attachment' page:



The relevant Performance Outcome and Performance Requirement must be selected for each evidence attachment. Additional related performance requirements should also be selected if the evidence attachment is being submitted as evidence of compliance with multiple performance outcomes.

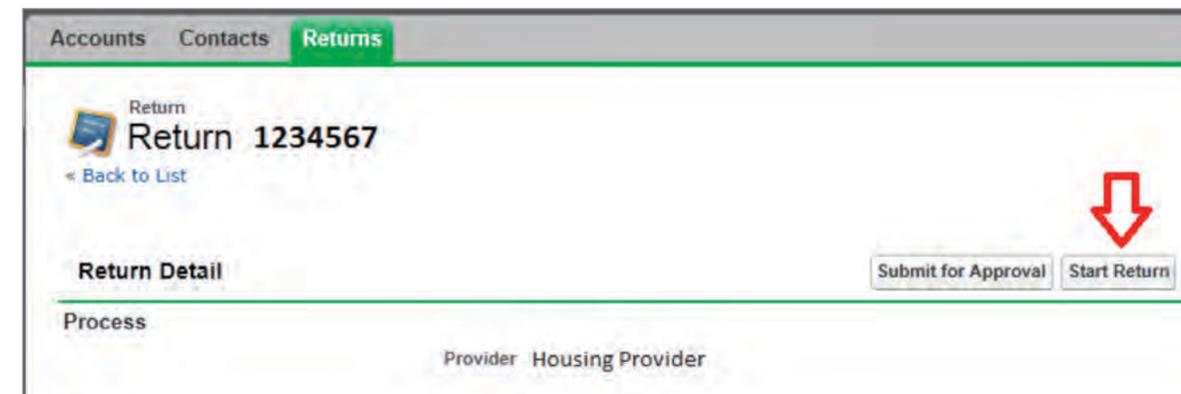
The description and details box should be completed by the Nominated Main Contact to include a description of the evidence and reference to relevant page numbers. A clear description will assist the Primary Registrar's Office when assessing the return, but will also assist the Nominated Main Contact in ensuring all necessary evidence has been attached prior to the submission of the return.

Once the Nominated Main Contact has selected the Performance Outcome and Performance Requirement that the evidence attachment relates to, clicking the 'browse' button will allow the user to select the file they wish to attach from their computer. Clicking on the 'attach' button will then attach the document to the system.

When completing the registration return, a user will need to attach supporting evidence for each Performance Outcome. Refer to the [Evidence Guidelines](#) and the [Registration Return Guide](#) for assistance in determining what evidence is required for each Performance Outcome. Evidence can be used for multiple performance outcomes, it only needs to be attached once but each related performance outcome should be selected.

## 7. Completing the ETF

Click on the 'Returns' tab then select the return to be edited. The first part of the registration process is the Eligibility and Tier Form. To edit this form, click on the 'Start Return' button at the top of the return page.



As with the edit screen for the account details, the page headings in this screen will be highlighted in green. After following the instructions in the form, selecting the checkboxes to confirm all required information and evidence has been attached/completed.

1. Chair or equivalent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. Public Officer or equivalent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. Treasurer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. Chief Executive or equivalent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5. External auditor	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Provider entity details checked	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Affiliated entities checked	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Constitution attached	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CH asset summary report attached	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Community housing declaration confirmed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Asset list declaration confirmed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ready to submit ETF	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

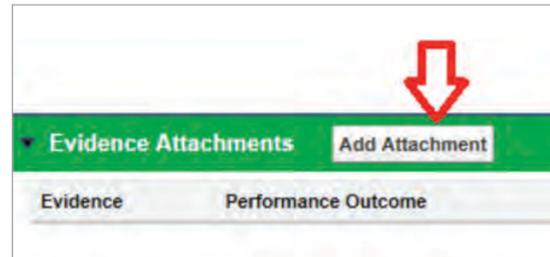
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To attach the necessary evidence required for the ETF, click on the 'Add Attachment' button at the bottom of the return. This will only be visible after the 'Start Return' button has been clicked and the return is editable.

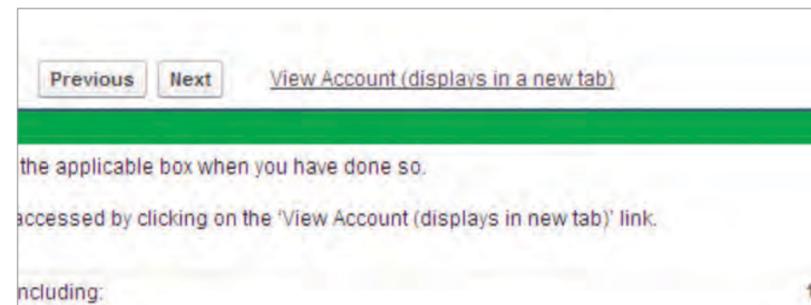


Clicking on the 'Add Attachment' button will launch the evidence attachment page. See the evidence attachment section above for more details. Evidence successfully attached will be visible at the bottom of the return.

Evidence Attachments		
Evidence	Performance Outcome	Performance Requirement
<a href="#">EV0543</a>	Performance Outcome 4	Performance Requirement 4a

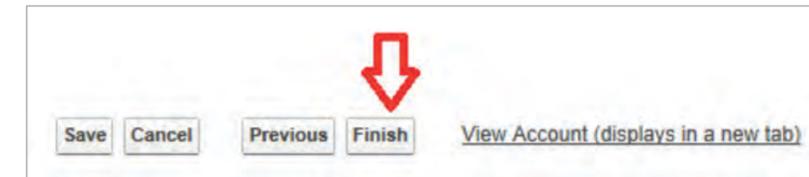
## 8. Adding Affiliated Entities and Contacts on the account page

Some information such as the affiliated entities details and contacts are accessed from the account page as these are not specific to a particular return. To navigate easily to the account page whilst completing the return click on the 'View Account (displays in a new tab)' link at the top page whilst editing the return.



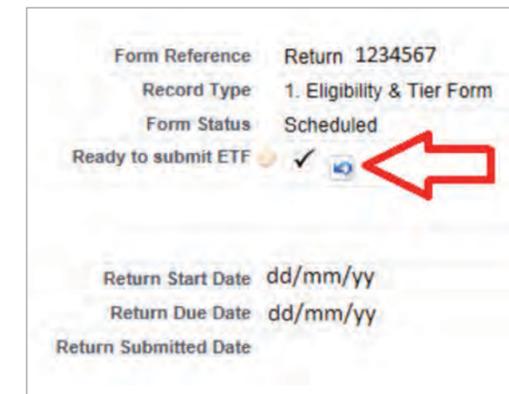
## 9. Submitting the ETF

Once the provider is satisfied that the form has been correctly completed, including checking the entity details on the account page, creating any required affiliated entity details, checking and confirming contacts and attached all necessary evidence, click the 'Finish' button.

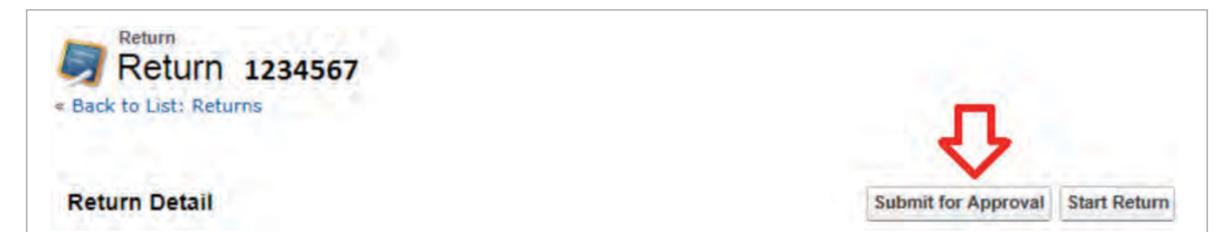


Clicking on the 'Finish' button will return a user to the overview screen, where they can review data entered and will be able to submit the ETF return.

**Note:** To be able to submit the ETF the 'Ready to submit to submit ETF' tick box must be ticked. This is found on the bottom right hand side of the last page of the ETF form or at the top right hand side when in the overview page.



If this checkbox is not selected, the Nominated Main Contact will not be able to submit the ETF return. Once this box is ticked click the 'Submit for Approval' button on the ETF overview page.



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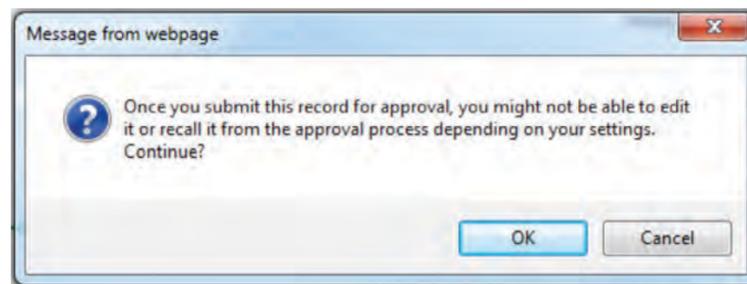
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If the Nominated Main Contact attempts to submit the return and receives an error message, this may be as a result of not making an entry where an entry is required, or entering a letter in a numeric field. If an error message is shown follow the instructions in red to remedy the issue before trying to submit the form again submitted.

When a user has clicked the 'Submit for Approval' button, a window will pop up reminding the Nominated Main Contact that once the form is submitted, they will not be able to edit information on their application:



Once a user has clicked 'OK', the Primary Registrar's Office will be automatically notified that the return has been submitted. At this point, the return becomes locked as represented by the lock icon to the left of the edit button. The return is unable to be edited.



The Nominated Main Contact will know that they have successfully submitted the ETF when the Nominated Main Contact receives the following email:

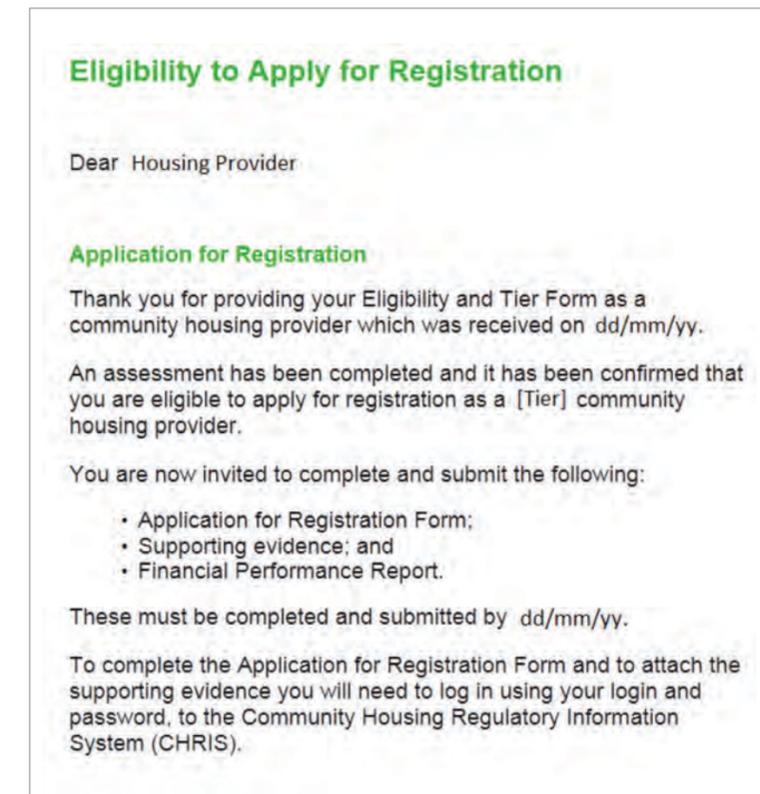


If the application needs to be modified after submission please contact the Primary Registrar's Office.

## 10. Registration return process

If the ETF has been submitted with all the necessary evidence the Primary Registrar's Office will assess the ETF and determine whether the provider is likely to be eligible for registration and the likely Tier in which the provider should apply.

The staff from the Primary Registrar's Office will send an email to the provider noting the provisional tier and advising that the registration return is now available for the provider to complete.

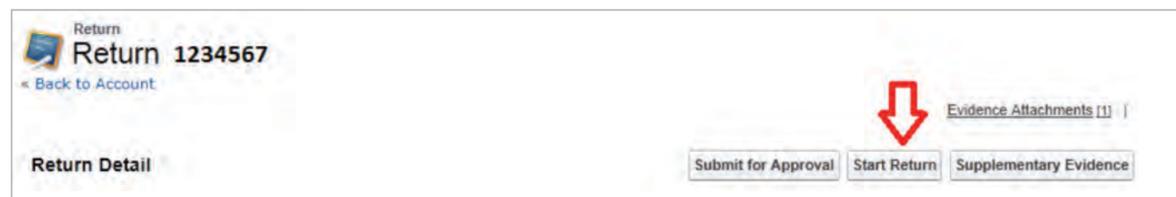


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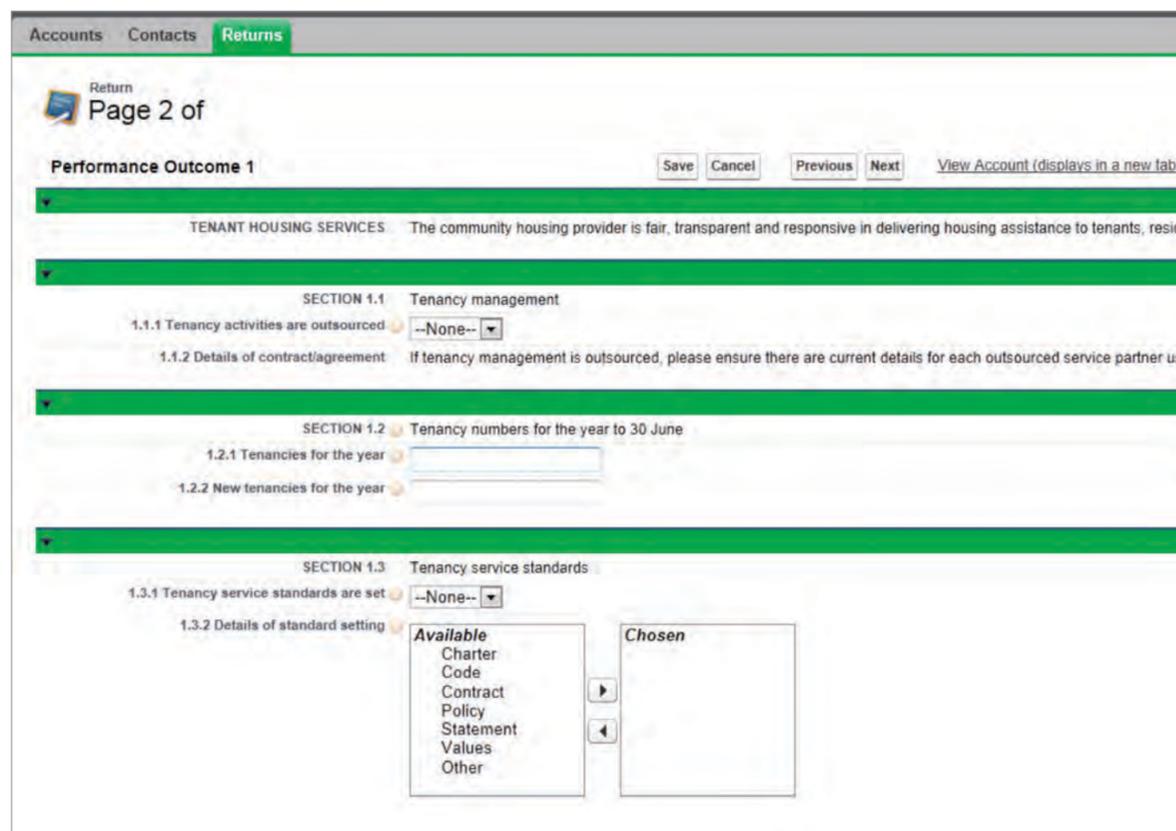
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## 11. Completing the registration return

Completing the registration return is very similar to completing the ETF. The Nominated Main Contact will log in to the portal using the same username and password as before. To edit the registration return, click on the return form reference number (as with the ETF) then click on the 'Start Return' button at the top of the returns tab.



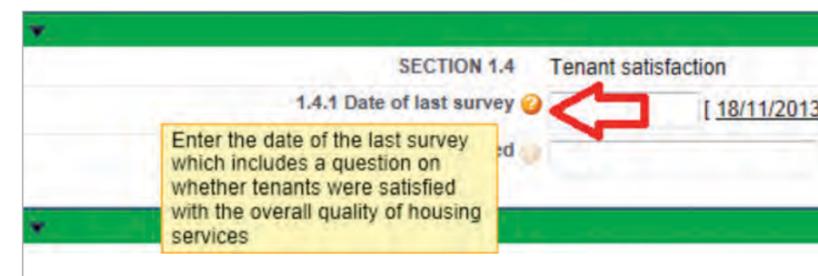
Clicking on the 'Start Return' button will commence the application process and allow the Nominated Main Contact to complete the form.



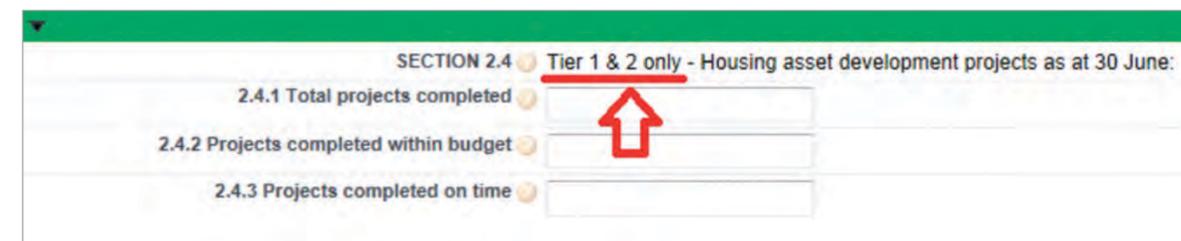
The registration return can now be completed. Each performance outcome has its own page, which includes data fields that a user will need to complete, as well as performance metrics that will be automatically calculated by the system based on the figures by the Nominated Main Contact. The metrics will not be visible until the Nominated Main Contact clicks the save button.

There is opportunity for comment on any information or evidence provided in the performance outcome comments box listed every performance outcome page.

To complete the registration return, a user should refer to the [Registration Return Guide](#) and the [Evidence Guidelines](#). If a user needs assistance when filling out the return, there are question marks in yellow circles throughout the return which provide further information and definitions when a user hovers their cursor over them.



Only questions that relate to the tier in which the provider is applying need to be completed. For example, in Performance Outcome 2, section 2.4 is only required for Tiers 1 and 2.



If sections do not indicate a particular tier, they are to be completed by all tiers. If a section does not apply to the tier in which the provider is applying, enter a zero value. Note that number fields cannot be left blank so if there have been no projects for section 2.4 in the example above, a zero would need to be entered into each field.

Evidence the Nominated Main Contact has successfully attached to the return will be visible at the bottom of each page and additional performance requirements can be added to an existing piece of evidence by clicking on the number of the piece of evidence the Nominated Main Contact wishes to edit.

The 'Previous' and 'Next' buttons will cause the data on that page to save and will take the provider to the next or previous page. If at any point the Nominated Main Contact wishes to stop completing the form or return to the overview page, pressing 'Save' then 'Cancel' will return to the overview page.

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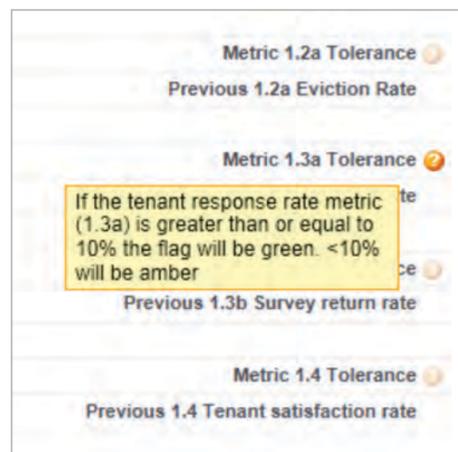
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## 12. Metrics included in the registration return

Once data has been entered and the save button is pressed the system will calculate metrics at the bottom of certain performance outcomes. The help icons next to each metric indicate how these metrics are calculated, and traffic lights will appear if data is outside the thresholds.



**Note:** A red traffic light does not mean the provider has 'failed' a performance requirement or outcome – instead, it indicates that the data does not meet the threshold and the provider has the option to provide an explanation in the comments field for each outcome's metrics.

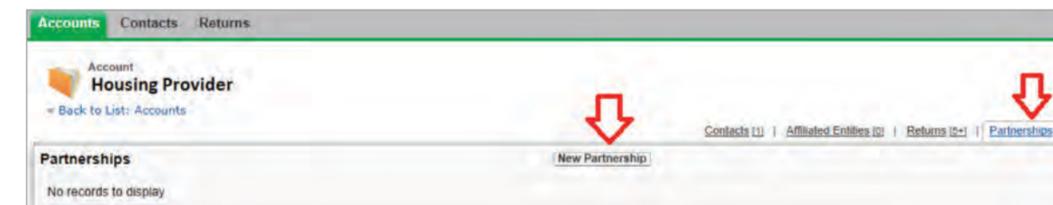
## 13. Attaching files to the application for registration return

After clicking the 'Start Return' button, evidence including the Financial Performance Report and the Community Housing Asset Performance Report can be attached at any time before submission by clicking on the 'Add Attachment' button as was done for the ETF.



## 14. Recording partnerships

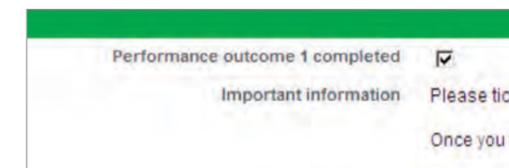
Details on certain partnerships need to be submitted as part of the return and these are recorded on the account page. For example, if a provider outsources tenancy management, the provider will need to add a record for each outsourced tenancy partner by navigating to the 'partnerships' link in the main account page and clicking on the 'New Partnership' button.



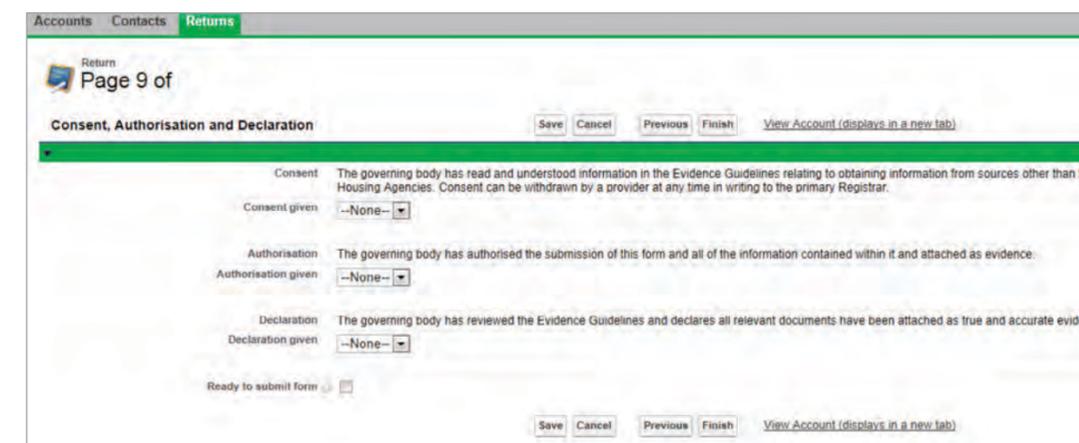
Details on the types of outsourcing arrangements which are required as part of the return are explained in more detail in the return itself and in the Registration Return Guide.

## 15. Submitting the registration return

Once all data fields are complete and all required evidence is attached for each of the performance outcomes, the box at the bottom of each performance outcome must be marked as completed otherwise the return cannot be submitted.



On the final page of the return the consent, authorisation and declaration information, fields must be completed, then the 'Ready to submit form' box must be ticked.



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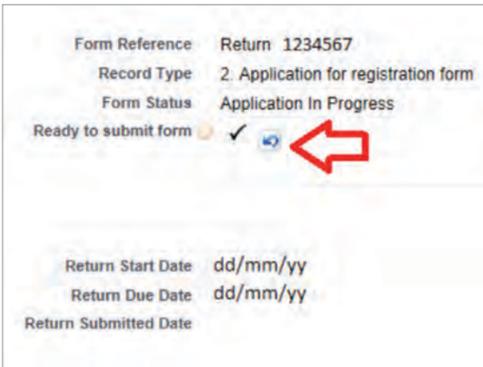
If at any point an error message is shown, simply un-tick the box, resolve the error and try re-ticking the box.

Clicking on the 'finish' button will save the return and the overview of the entire return will be available.

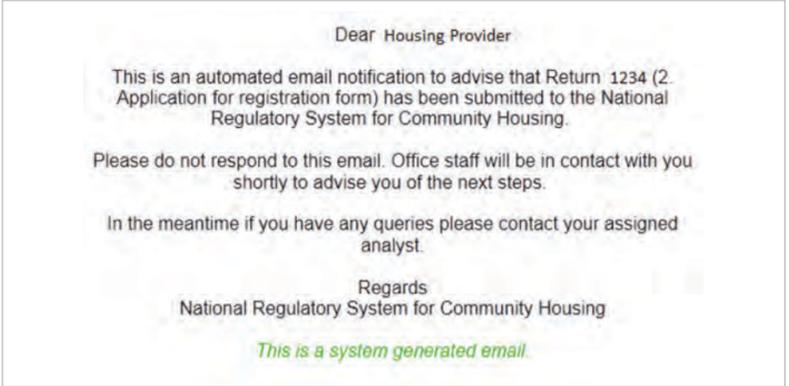
Once all necessary data has been provided and all required evidence has been attached an overview can be printed for the provider's records or for the board by clicking on the 'Printable View' link on the top right hand side of the return overview.

Click on the 'Submit for Approval' button to submit the return to the Registrar.

If there are difficulties submitting, ensure that the performance outcome completed boxes are ticked at the bottom of each page and that the 'Ready to Submit' tick box has been completed. When in the overview this is at the top right hand side of the form.



When this box is ticked, click the 'Submit for Approval' button at the top of the return page. If all required tick boxes have been checked, a pop-up window will appear stating that once the return is submitted changes can no longer be made. Click OK and the registration return will be submitted, the return will be locked and the Nominated Main Contact will receive an email stating that the registration return has been successfully submitted.



# 16. Process post submission of registration return

The Primary Registrar's Office be notified that the return has been submitted. The assessment of the application will then commence.

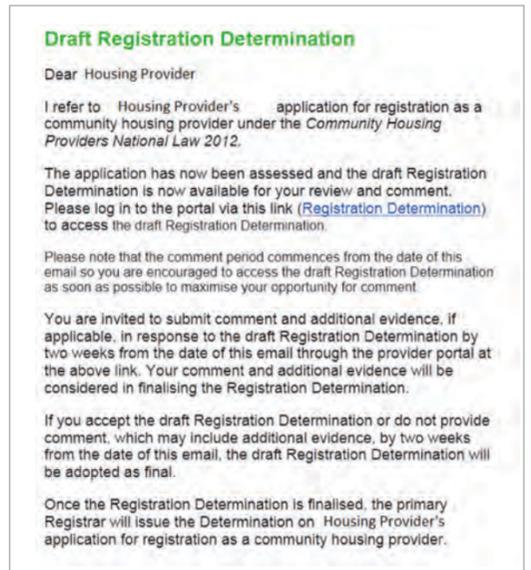
This process may take some time, depending on the adequacy of the information submitted by the provider and other assessments being undertaken by the Registrar's Office. A member of staff may contact the provider over the course of the assessment to request more information or clarify information submitted. A staff member will contact the Nominated Main Contact listed for the provider should they require further information and/or evidence.

If information is required from the provider, this will be requested in one of two ways:

1. If it was information that was required as part of the original application, the return will be unlocked to allow the provider to resubmit with the missing evidence.
2. If it is supplementary evidence that was not required at the time of submission (such as documentation relating to an issue uncovered as part of the assessment) the provider will be asked to submit it using the 'Supplementary Evidence' button at the top of the return. Further details will be provided to the provider when the supplementary evidence is requested.



Once all the necessary evidence has been submitted by the provider, the Primary Registrar's Office will assess the application and complete the draft registration determination. The Nominated Main Contact for the provider will receive an email notifying them that the registration determination has been completed and will log into the system to access the registration determination.



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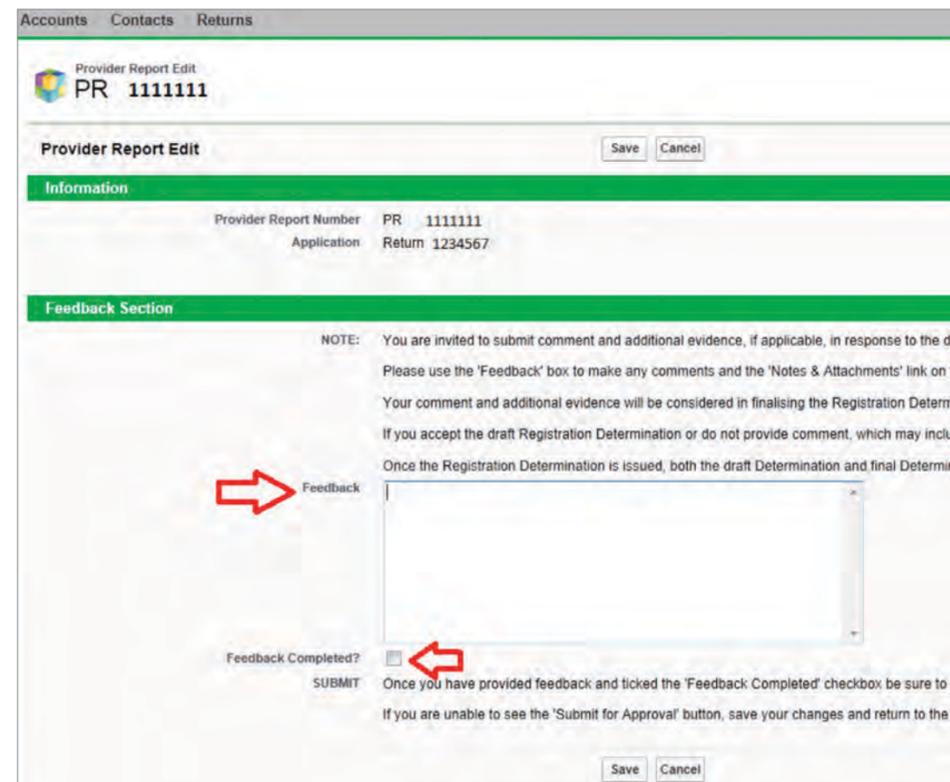
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The provider will then have two weeks from the date the email was sent to comment on the determination through the portal. To provide feedback on the draft registration determination the Nominated Main Contact will need to click on the link in the email notifying the provider that the registration determination is available or, log in to CHRIS, navigate to the returns tab, click on the returns reference number and click the 'provider reports' link at the top of the screen.



Clicking on the provider report number show the Provider Report screen.

Clicking on the edit button will allow the Nominated Main Contact to submit comment on the determination. Once comment has been made, tick the feedback completed checkbox and click the save button.



If the provider is making comment that may result in a change to the provider report, the Nominated Main Contact will need to attach supporting evidence. This can be done by navigating to the notes and attachment link and clicking on the 'attach file' button.



Once comment is made and any necessary supporting evidence uploaded, the Nominated Main Contact will click the 'Submit for Approval' button to send comment and evidence to the Primary Registrar's Office. Staff will consider the feedback and may contact the Nominated Main Contact to clarify matters before issuing the final determination. If the provider does not comment within the allocated two weeks, the draft registration determination will be adopted as the final report.

Once the registration determination report has been finalised, the Nominated Main Contact will receive an email from the Primary Registrar's Office notifying the provider of the outcome of the application. Access to the final report, covering letter, registration certificate and registered provider logo with terms of use of the logo will be accessible through the portal for download.

Congratulations! The registration application process is complete!

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# Glossary

## Appeal Tribunal

The tribunal specified as the Appeal Tribunal in the community housing legislation of the relevant jurisdiction.

## Binding Instructions

Written instructions given by a Primary Registrar to a provider to rectify the Provider's non-compliance.

## Community housing

Housing for people on a very low, low or moderate income or for people with additional needs that is delivered by non-government organisations.

## Community housing asset

- (a) land vested in the provider by or under the community housing legislation of a participating jurisdiction, or
- (b) land acquired by the provider wholly or partly with funding provided by a Housing Agency of a participating jurisdiction, or
- (c) land vested in the provider on which a Housing Agency of a participating jurisdiction has constructed housing or made other improvements, or
- (d) funds provided to the provider by a Housing Agency of a participating jurisdiction for the purposes of community housing, or
- (e) any other asset of the provider that is of a class of assets declared by the community housing legislation of a participating jurisdiction as community housing assets for the purposes of the National Law.

## Community housing legislation

The National Law as applied in or adopted by a jurisdiction, together with any other legislation declared to be community housing legislation by the law of that jurisdiction.

## Community housing provider

An organisation that provides community housing.

## Evidence Guidelines

Guidelines that describe the performance indicators and evidence sources for the assessment of providers against the National Regulatory Code in respect of Tier 1, 2 and 3 providers.

## Housing Agency

A body or officer declared to be a Housing Agency of a participating jurisdiction by the community housing legislation of that jurisdiction for the purposes of the provision of the National Law in which the expression occurs.

## National Law

The state and territory based legislation through which the NRSCH is being introduced. The National Law is enacted in the host jurisdiction, New South Wales, and either applied or adopted by participating jurisdictions.

## National Register

A single national database with the details of all registered community housing providers that is made publicly available.

## National Regulatory Code

The performance requirements that registered housing providers must comply with in providing community housing.

## National Regulatory Council

An independent advisory committee to be appointed by housing ministers as an independent advisory committee to oversee the operation of the NRSCH with Secretariat support.

## National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH)

A national system of registration, monitoring and regulation of community housing providers to encourage the development, viability and quality of community housing to promote confidence in the good governance of registered community housing providers so as to:

- facilitate greater investment in the sector
- make it easier for community housing providers to operate in more than one participating jurisdiction, and
- identify appropriate entities to which government funding for community housing might be provided under other legislation or policies of a jurisdiction.

## Operational Guidelines

The suite of guidelines that governs the operation of the regulatory system including the Evidence Guidelines, the Tier Guidelines and these Enforcement Guidelines.

## Participating jurisdiction

An Australian jurisdiction that applies or adopts the National Law.

## Primary Registrar

The Registrar for the primary jurisdiction in which the community housing provider operates; generally the Registrar in the state or territory in which the provider undertakes the majority of its community housing activity.

## Statutory manager

A Registrar-appointed manager to conduct the affairs and activities of the provider as they relate to the provider's community housing assets if:

- a notice of intent to cancel registration has been issued to the provider, or
- the registrar forms the opinion that the provider has failed to comply with community housing legislation or Binding Instructions and the provider's failure to comply is serious and requires urgent action.

## Tier Guidelines

Guidelines for the application of the three-tiered registration system based on risk, whereby different levels of regulatory oversight apply to providers based on the scale and scope of their community housing activities.

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## For more information

For more information on the National Regulatory System for Community Housing, please visit: [www.nrsch.gov.au](http://www.nrsch.gov.au)

