

# REVITALISING THE NATIONAL COMMUNITY HOUSING STANDARDS

A community housing industry led project to revisit and revitalise the NCHS turning them into *tools for improvement*.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

This is a community housing industry led project to revisit and revitalize the NCHS turning them into “tools for improvement” – carried out by professional, independent and experienced assessors – making clear recommendations and sharing best practice to raise individual performance.

It's a great opportunity to:

- **raise the profile** of a still quite small and unknown sector that arguably has yet to publically articulate and distinguish its model from that of the public or private sectors
- **reward well-performing organisations** through the assurance system. This will energise teams and providers, and assist them in attracting and retaining high quality staff
- **Motivate other organisations** to improve, therefore contributing to higher standards more widely
- **Promote success nationally** – it'll apply in different jurisdictions across Australia

Support the industry's case for the government-imposed contractual and regulatory burden to be reduced

Many CHPs already understandably feel they are overburdened by regulatory and contractual requirements so the scheme will be voluntary and modular to allow CHPs of different sizes and scope to participate.

**THIS PROJECT IS MANAGED BY CHIA NSW, CHIA & CHIA VIC**



## THE BACKGROUND

Originally developed in the late 1990s as an industry-led and industry-owned precursor to the introduction of formal regulation, the drafting of National Community Housing Standards was part of an early pitch to expand the capacity of the not-for-profit housing sector. Through three editions, the most recent dating from 2010, the NCHS served as a unifying set of good practice aspirations for the sector.

**The proposal to revisit and revitalize the NCHS consists of:**

- **updating the NCHS**
- **introducing a (voluntary) national industry service** to assess community housing providers (CHPs) against the NCHS. This will be based on the model of in-depth assessments developed in a previous NSW Community Housing Industry Development project
- **Developing a quality assurance system** for CHPs that recognises attainment against the NCHS
- **Promoting information about the NCHS ratings / quality assurance scheme** to stakeholders: including investors, all levels of government, tenants, prospective tenants and tenant advocates.

Seed funding to kick start the process has been secured from the NSW Government (Department of Family and Community Services). The first part of the project will therefore be managed by the Community Housing Industry Association NSW (CHIA NSW) but with the active involvement of CHIA and other state and territory peak organisations.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact [nchs@communityhousing.org.au](mailto:nchs@communityhousing.org.au) for more information or if you have any questions / queries.

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## WANT TO HELP?

We are looking for individuals and CHPs to support and drive the project with us.

### BECOME ACTIVELY INVOLVED

Become a **'champion'** and help to promote the project to your peers, governments and other agencies which comes naturally with a place in the project governance

**Input into the design** of one or more of the standards

**Sponsor the project.** We need to raise more money. This is an industry led and owned project and your contributions large or small are critical to its success. All contributions will be recognised. Sponsors will have the opportunity to be pilots for the assessment process.

## THE DETAIL

**What will the standards look like?  
How do they fit with the current system?**

The intention is to:

- **Establish clear and measurable standards** that articulate the not for profit community housing industry's purpose, service quality and governance aspirations
- **Be flexible enough to allow**  
(1) the diversity of CHPs to use and  
(2) to enable gradations of assessment (self, voluntary and independent)
- **Encourage a culture of continuous improvement** and responsiveness to tenants and other stakeholder needs and requirements
- **Support the building of provider capacity** in governance, strategic planning and risk management to enable CHPs to thrive in the evolving business environment
- **Enable cross sectoral / jurisdictional comparisons** of relevant business aspects
- **Complement the National Regulatory System** by providing service users, Government, and private investors with a credible and robust assessment of organisational performance and capability that extends significantly beyond compliance with regulatory standards
- **Establish the role and importance of industry led quality assurance** as a key pillar of a well-functioning regulatory regime.
- **In the medium term, reduce the costs** and burden to government and industry of regulation (including contract management).

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

We will be meeting with state and national peak bodies to speak about the project in the early part of the New Year and a project reference group will be established with representatives from the community housing industry and other key stakeholders. A communications plan will also be drawn up.

**For more information, please contact  
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