

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2016-2017 Additional Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 4.1 Housing and Homelessness

Question No: SQ17-000229

Topic: National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS)

Hansard page: Written

Senator Doug Cameron asked:

In relation to ANAO Report No. 23 of 2016-17 into the Administration of Allocations and Incentives under the National Rental Affordability Scheme:

1. Please advise progress made by the Department to implement the recommendations made in the report.
2. Have the recommendations been fully implemented?
3. When is implementation expected to be completed?
4. What changes, if any, have been found necessary to DSS management systems to implement the recommendations?
5. With respect to the ANAO finding that continual changes to the NRAS regulations have rendered them complex and lacking clarity, is a review of the regulations either under consideration or being conducted?
6. If a review is under consideration, when is a decision expected to be made about whether to review the regulations?
7. If a review is being conducted, when will it be completed?

Answer:

1. The Department accepted all three of the recommendations made by the ANAO in Report No.23 2016-17 National Rental Affordability Scheme – Administration of Allocations and Incentives. Implementation progress as at March 2017 is below:
 - Recommendation 1 – Development of a Risk Management Framework that incorporates a targeted risk-based approach to compliance is well advanced. The Framework will outline the approach to be taken toward risk in the administration of NRAS, and outline measures that will be implemented in 2017 to strengthen risk-based compliance, program integrity and overall program management. The Risk Management Framework is expected to be implemented by 30 June 2017.
 - Recommendation 2 – Work on the NRAS IT systems is being undertaken in two phases. Phase one is complete and included development of a comprehensive list of IT enhancements to be delivered in phase two. Phase two enhancements will reduce manual compliance processing and streamline Portal functionality for external users. Phase two work will be progressively implemented and is expected to be completed by 30 June 2018.
 - Recommendation 3 – a strategic compliance plan has been developed which identifies activities to be undertaken in 2017 that focus on verifying the reliability of information provided by approved participants. The strategic compliance plan outlines the context, objectives and timeframes for the compliance activities and will be finalised by 30 June 2017. The first compliance activity is underway with other activities to be conducted in accordance with the plan continuing throughout 2017.

2. Please refer to answer 1.
3. Please refer to answer 1.
4. Changes to the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) Information Technology systems to reduce manual processing and streamline functionality will occur progressively over the next 12 months.
5. In November 2016, the Department undertook a public consultation process seeking stakeholder feedback on ways to improve the administration of the Scheme, including the NRAS Regulations. The consultation concluded in December 2016. Feedback from the consultation process will be used to inform any future regulatory amendments.
6. The timing and detail of any regulatory amendments is a matter for Government.
7. The timing and detail of any regulatory amendments is a matter for Government.