



National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS)

Information for tenants

What is NRAS?

The National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS or the Scheme) is a long term commitment by the Australian Government to invest in affordable rental housing. NRAS provides people on a low to moderate income with an opportunity to rent homes at a rate that is at least 20 per cent below market value rent.

NRAS homes are **not** social housing — they are affordable private rental homes.

Homes can range from studio apartments right through to family homes, and are located where affordable rental accommodation is most needed, especially in areas where employment, schools and other services are available nearby.

NRAS homes may remain in the Scheme for up to 10 years provided they continue to meet eligibility requirements.

NRAS tenants have the same rights given to all tenants under the relevant residential tenancy law in the State or Territory where the property is located.

New NRAS homes will continue to become available for rent up to June 2016. *However, as there is a significant demand for these properties, there is no guarantee that all eligible applicants will be able to rent one.*

Who is eligible to rent an NRAS property?

NRAS rental homes are available to low and moderate income Australians – people who may find it hard to pay market rental rates.

To be eligible to rent an NRAS property, potential tenants:

- will need to provide written evidence of their gross income, both with their initial application and every year afterwards to the tenancy manager

- must not exceed the income limits for their household compositions.

The total income of the all tenants of an NRAS rental property is used to calculate the overall household income for that property.

How can I apply to rent an NRAS property?

The Australian Government **does not** select or manage NRAS tenancies. You can apply to rent an NRAS property through an NRAS approved participant or their tenancy manager in your State or Territory. The list is available at www.dss.gov.au/nras.

If you live in Queensland, you will have to apply to join the Queensland Government's One Social Housing Register.

Who manages the NRAS tenancy?

NRAS tenancy managers are selected by the NRAS approved participant and may be a real estate agent, a housing organisation or other approved manager. An NRAS approved participant may also manage tenancies itself rather than engaging a third party to do so.

The NRAS tenancy manager is required to perform functions such as:

- assessing initial and on-going tenant eligibility through appropriate written evidence, such as payslips, employer contact details etc., and determining the gross household income for the 12 months prior to the day on which the household would become tenants
- maintaining waiting lists for NRAS homes
- determining the rents charged to tenants
- providing appropriate property management and maintenance functions
- managing the on-going tenancy.

What are the income limits for NRAS tenants?

The gross income limits for eligible households to rent NRAS homes are specified in the NRAS Regulations. Note that because these levels are subject to indexation, current levels are different to the figures that were initially specified in the Regulations. Information on current, indexed thresholds is available below. For NRAS purposes, a household is considered to be all tenants of the dwelling. Therefore, the income of all residents will be included in the gross income as a member of the household.

The 2013-14 household income eligibility limits are:

Household composition	Household income limit (\$)
One adult	47,289
Two adults	65,378
Three adults	83,466
Four adults	101,555
Sole parent with one child	65,423
Sole parent with two children	81,108
Sole parent with three children	96,793
Couple with one child	81,063
Couple with two children	96,748
Couple with three children	112,433

After you have commenced tenancy in an NRAS dwelling, if your annual household income exceeds the applicable household income limit by 25 per cent or more in two consecutive years, you will cease to be an eligible tenant. This does not mean that you will be evicted necessarily; it just means that the approved participant will no longer be entitled to incentives under the Scheme in relation to your rental dwelling. You will still have rights under your lease and the residential tenancy laws of your State or Territory.

There is no asset test in determining tenant eligibility, except for tenants in Queensland. For more information contact the Department of Communities (Housing and Homelessness Services) on 1300 880 882 or email the Department of Housing Queensland at nras@housing.qld.gov.au.

In other States or Territories, where a tenant receives a one-off lump sum payment (for example, a lottery win or inheritance), only income earned from investing the lump sum would be assessed as income, that is, income from dividends or interest.

Your continuing eligibility needs to be assessed each year by the approved participant. The approved participant will request an annual income statement; they may also request other information, including your type of work and number and ages of people living in the house. They require this information to satisfy the Australian Government that they continue to meet all conditions of allocation under the Scheme in relation to your rental dwelling.

What rights do I have as a tenant?

All NRAS approved participants must comply with the residential tenancy law and tenancy and property management regulations in the State or Territory in which the property is located.

As with any rental property, you should sign a rental agreement or lease, which will be subject to the laws of the State or Territory in which the property is located.

If you have any problems with your tenancy, you should first speak with your tenancy manager. If you are unable to resolve an issue:

- you are encouraged to contact the relevant State or Territory agency which is responsible for administering residential tenancy laws
- you can also find tenant advisory services in your State or Territory.

Any eviction must also be in accordance with the applicable State or Territory residential tenancy laws and the terms of your lease.

Note: The Australian Government is not involved in placing tenants or any on-going tenancy management issues.

More information

For more information visit www.dss.gov.au/nras.