



May 2020

# National Rental Affordability Scheme

## Coronavirus

The coronavirus represents a significant challenge for Australia's community and economy.

The department continues to undertake its day-to-day work managing the National Rental Affordability Scheme (the Scheme), and explore ways we can support approved participants, tenancy managers, investors and tenants during this difficult time.

The department will continue to process statements of compliance in order of receipt. We expect minimal disruption to the assessment of approved participants' claims and the time taken to issue your incentives.

### Extension of time for 2019–20 statements of compliance

An authorised delegate of the Secretary of the department has approved an extension of time for all approved participants to provide their statements of compliance for the 2019–20 NRAS year **until 30 September 2020** (from the current 30 June 2020). The extension will allow approved participants additional time to prepare and finalise their requirements.

However, please be aware NRAS incentive payments cannot be issued until the statement of compliance and essential supporting documentation for the statement (specifically the tenant demographic assessment information and the market rent valuation) have been submitted to the department via the NRAS portal.

### Extension for other documents and information required for 2019–20 NRAS year

An authorised delegate of the Secretary of the department has approved an extension of time for all approved participants to provide other required documents and information in relation to the 2019–20 NRAS year **until 30 November 2020**. This means that any other outstanding documents or information (other than what is required to submit the statement of compliance) will not affect the availability of incentives for the 2019–20 NRAS year unless they are not submitted by the new deadline of 30 November 2020.

Examples of documents and information allowed to be outstanding include (but are not limited to): advising of changes to approved participant details and changes to investor details which would otherwise have been required by 28 April 2020, and signed lease agreements.

However, documents or information not submitted by the new deadline or submitted by the deadline but found to impact the 2019–20 incentive paid, will result in the department correcting the paid incentive amount. This is usually actioned by adjusting the amount of a subsequent incentive, but can also involve the raising of a debt under section 56 of the National Rental Affordability Scheme Regulations 2020.

## Tenant eligibility and income

As a matter of policy, the following payments will not be counted as income for the purpose of NRAS and therefore not impact tenant eligibility:

- the two \$750 Economic Support Payments, and
- up to \$10,000 in 2019–20 and \$10,000 in 2020–21 in superannuation payments accessed by individuals affected by coronavirus.

Income support payments are counted as income as part of the NRAS eligibility assessment, and as such, the additional fortnightly payment of \$550 (Coronavirus Supplement) on top of the current income support payment will also be counted. Jobkeeper payments will also count for income.

## Statutory Declarations

From time to time a statutory declaration may be required as supporting evidence to meet requirements under the National Rental Affordability Scheme Regulations 2020, for example to support a request to transfer allocations or in relation to tenant income.

We understand social distancing rules may make it difficult to get documents witnessed by an authorised witness such as justice of the peace. In these circumstances, the department can accept alternative forms of declarations in lieu of a statutory declaration. Appropriately authorised digital signatures will also be accepted.

In relation to tenant income, tenants may be requested to provide proof of income at a later date. Please note, sole reliance by the approved participant on a statutory declaration or other form of declaration by the tenant without other supporting evidence is at the risk of the approved participant.

Importantly, providing false or misleading information to the department may result in a breach determination under the National Rental Affordability Scheme Regulations 2020.