



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Dear approved participant

Update on 2014-15 payments processing and advice in preparation for 2015-16 payments processing

I am writing to provide you with an update on the progress of issuing incentives for the 2014-15 NRAS year, as well as to provide some early advice on preparations for 2015-16 payments processing.

Update on the issuing of incentives for the 2014-15 NRAS year.

Payment processing for 2014-15 has been progressing well, and to date over 14,600 incentives have been issued. The remaining Statements of Compliance are in progress, and at various stages of the assessment process.

The timing of payment processing has been based on when approved participants lodged their Statements of Compliance and notified the Department they were #ready. Those approved participants who lodged by 30 June have had their incentives issued. Those who lodged later were queued for processing.

The Department aims to complete the assessment of all Statements of Compliance as soon as possible. We are unable to advise a timeframe for finalising the issuing of incentives as this is dependent on whether we identify any issues that require clarification from approved participants during assessment. However, there has been a considerable improvement in rates of non-compliance compared with the 2013-14 NRAS year.

Status of Statements of Compliance in the NRAS Portal

The Department is aware that some approved participants are relying on the status of their Statements of Compliance in the NRAS Portal as a means of identifying where the assessment process is up to. You should be mindful that this may not be a true reflection of the process and if you are seeking an update you should contact the Department directly.

Further, if an approved participant does identify comments on a Statement of Compliance for a particular dwelling in the portal, they should wait until the Department makes contact before trying to rectify. This will help to avoid unnecessary delays.

Preparation for 2015-16 payments processing

As outlined above, the earlier approved participants are able to submit Statements of Compliance and notify they are #ready, the earlier incentives are issued. With the increase in levels of compliance in 2014-15, it is unlikely that the Department will extend the submission date for Statements of Compliance for the 2015-16 NRAS year beyond 30 June 2016 without strong reasons. Under sub-regulation 17 (2B), approved participants are able to request an extension beyond this date, however the Department encourages approved participants to lodge as early as possible.

To this end, there are a number of things approved participants can do to prepare for 2015-16 payment processing. This includes the submission of Tenant Demographic Assessments (TDA's) and well as finalising Market Rent Valuations.

Tenant Demographic Assessments (TDAs)

The completion of a TDA for each NRAS dwelling is a mandatory requirement of the annual assessment of eligibility for an NRAS incentive.

To assist in the timeliness of incentive processing, approved participants are encouraged to submit completed TDA's as soon as possible rather than waiting for the end of the NRAS year or the submission of Statements of Compliance.

Market Rent Valuation

For those NRAS dwellings entering their first, fifth or eighth year in the Scheme, there is a requirement for a market rent valuation to be prepared and lodged.

Under the NRAS regulations, the market rent valuation must be prepared and lodged within 13 weeks either side of the first available for rent date for new dwellings, and for those dwelling entering the fifth or eighth years, within 13 weeks either side of the last date of the fourth and seventh years respectively. This requirement was introduced from the 2014-15 NRAS year and did not apply to prior years.

Approved participants who have dwellings with a market rent valuation due, are encouraged to obtain and lodge these as soon as they can, within the required timeframe. If that is not possible, approved participants can apply for an extension to the lodgement date as provided in sub-regulation 16 (6A). The NRAS Delegate must not approve an extended period for lodgement unless satisfied that the applicant for the approval has a reasonable excuse for not being able to lodge the valuation within the required period.

Again, approved participants are strongly encouraged to finalise these processes as early as possible in order to support the timely issuing of incentives for their dwellings in 2015-16.

If you have any questions, or would like any additional information please contact nras@dss.gov.au.

I would also like to advise that the Department will close for the Christmas break at 12 noon on Thursday 24 December 2015 and reopen on Monday 4 January 2016.

On behalf of all of us here at the Department, I would like to wish you and your staff a safe and restful Christmas break and we look forward to working with you in 2016.



Damian Coburn
Branch Manager
NRAS

1 December 2015