



Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority

Strategic Plan: 2023/2024 –
2025/2026

October 2023



About RHRA

- Mandated by Government to administer Ontario's *Retirement Homes Act, 2010* (the Act)
- Core responsibility: enhance safety and consumer protection of residents of Ontario's retirement homes (currently between 60,000 and 70,000 seniors)
- RHRA's Board of Directors is accountable to the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility - a Memorandum of Understanding sets out the roles and obligations of RHRA and Government
- RHRA fulfills its mandate* by:
 - Informing and educating the retirement home sector, residents and public about the Act, regulations and role of the RHRA
 - Licensing Ontario's 776 retirement homes and maintaining a searchable retirement homes database of licensed retirement homes available on our website
 - Inspecting retirement homes, overseeing compliance with the regulations and care standards and enforcing the Act for the protection of residents
 - Advising the Minister/Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility on emerging trends and policy matters related to retirement homes
- The Objects are set out in section 16 of the *Retirement Homes Act, 2010*, which can be found in their entirety on [RHRA's website](#)

About the Strategic Plan

- The Strategic Plan sets out RHRA's priorities, objectives and strategies for the next three years, together with key performance measurements
- The Strategic Plan is supported by an annual Business Plan that defines various activities to support each objective and consider any environmental and/or operational changes
- RHRA produces an Annual Report which describes progress against both the Strategic Plan and Business Plan commitments

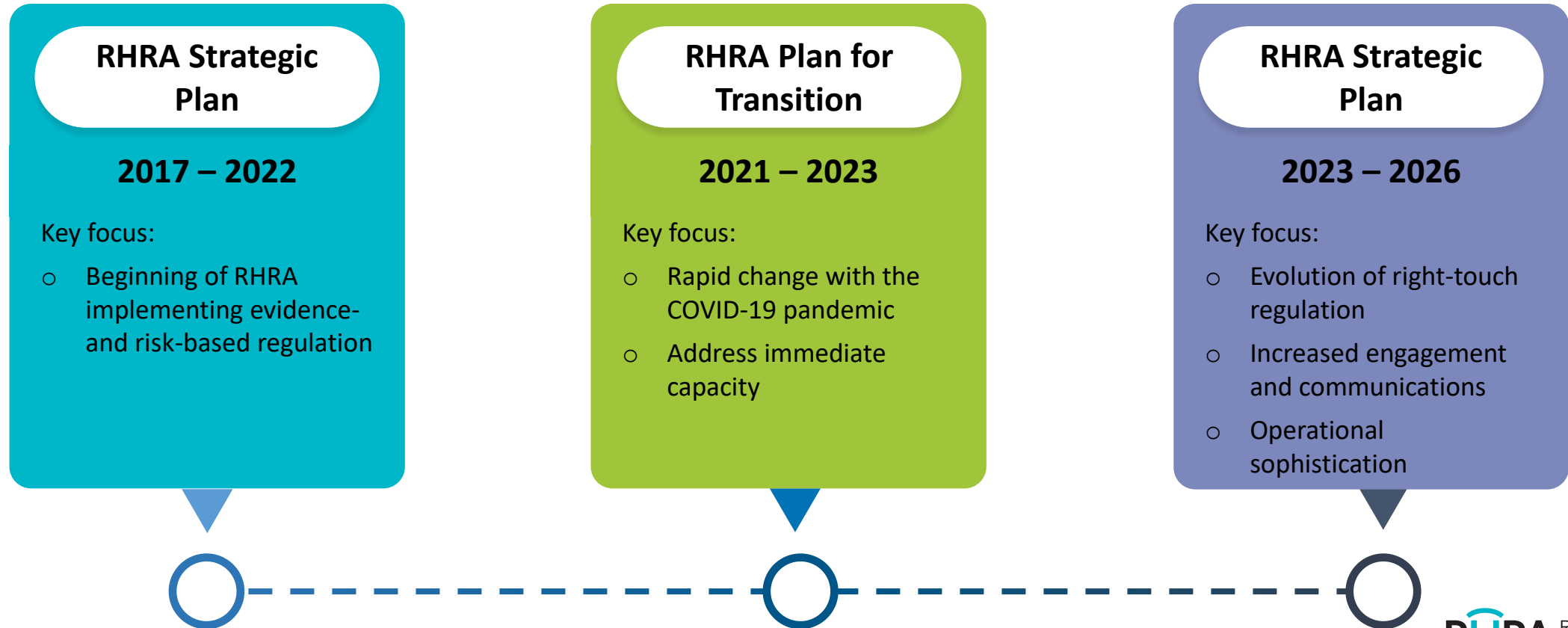
About the Strategic Plan

- Builds on RHRA's previous strategic plans using the foundation established for evidence-driven and risk-based regulatory practices focused on resident harm reduction
- Places emphasis on activities that promote a culture of care through compliance
- Prioritizes awareness among residents to support their informed decision-making
- Focuses on engagement with residents, licensees, the sector and the community
- Provides groundwork for RHRA to apply right-touch regulation through collection and analysis of information

Building on Past Progress

RHRA has made progress since inception despite significant challenges that impacted the sector broadly

This Strategic Plan builds on prior strategies and progress:



Environmental Context

Economic, demographic and industry factors present challenges and opportunities:

- Plan developed during period of transformation in post-pandemic environment

Increasing expectations:

- Need for resident protection has been increasing and has been accelerated with effects of pandemic
- Demand for RHRA services has been consistently growing – particularly in post-pandemic world exceeding pre-pandemic levels
 - Sustained year-over-year increases in inquiries, complaints, reports of harm and responsive inspections

Environmental Context

Aging population:

- Ontario's demographics show an increasingly aging and diverse population – by 2025, there will be 3 million older adults in Ontario¹ – the fastest growing demographic group in the province
- Early research suggests that in aggregate, the health profiles of residents continue to shift toward greater care needs
- A more nuanced view suggests that as operators emerge from the pandemic there may be a clearer distinction between those homes targeting a more independent resident profile, while others cater to residents with higher care needs
- Nearly 40 per cent of residents living in licensed retirement homes have been diagnosed with dementia²
- At any given time, between 10,000 and 11,000 of the approximately 65,000 residents in licensed retirement home are on long-term care waiting lists³
- New/innovative models of operation may require different regulatory approaches

1. Source: Ontario Ministry of Finance Population Projections, [2021-2046](#)

2. Source: McMaster University Study: *Examining Health Service Rates Among Residents of Retirement Homes and Other Older Adult Populations in Ontario, Canada: A Population-Based Cohort Study*, based on 2018 data

3. Source: Auditor General of Ontario Value-for-Money Audit of the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority, Follow-Up ([2022](#))

Environmental Context

Challenging Operating Environment for Licensees:

- Homes continue to experience financial and operational pressure resulting from the effects of the pandemic and other factors:
 - Staffing shortages and increased costs due to a competitive labour market
 - Sustained expenses for Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC)
 - Challenges with occupancy and the costs associated with attracting new residents
 - High inflation
 - Significant development/construction costs for new builds
- Market analysis of the retirement home sector⁴ and public statements from operators suggests that recovery through 2023 is expected with occupancy levels at pre-pandemic levels by 2024
- Ontario's retirement home sector serves the needs of older adults across the spectrum – from independent living with few care services, to those needing some assistance with daily living, to those who require memory care

4. Source: Cushman and Wakefield: Canadian Seniors Housing Overview 2023, [published March 2023](#)

Environmental Context

RHRA Operating Considerations:

- RHRA continues to see significant increases in activity and issues requiring regulatory intervention
- Heading into the strategic planning process, RHRA took steps to address both efficiencies and ensuring sufficient cost recovery to fulfil its resident protection mandate while ensuring long-term financial sustainability
- RHRA created a strong foundation by investing in its digital capability to improve operations and enable future ease of doing business with RHRA for licensees and the public
- RHRA is in the process of addressing nearly 200 recommendations arising from external independent reviews
- Public awareness levels remain relatively low and there is room for improvement to engage key stakeholders, including residents, their families, licensees and the sector

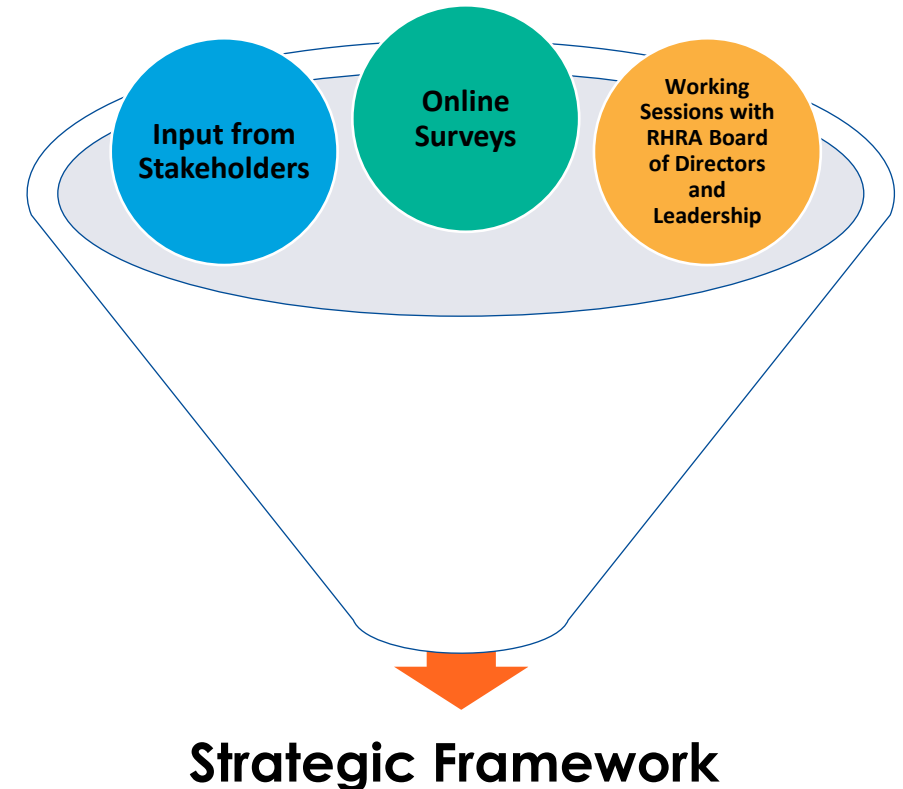
STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Extensive Stakeholder Consultations

RHRA engaged internal and external stakeholders with support from an independent facilitator

Activities

- Conducted **interviews and focus groups** with residents, community partners, licensees, industry associations, seniors' organizations, health care organizations and government
- Distributed two **surveys** to residents and family members, licensees and the public to gather broader perspectives on RHRA
- RHRA's Board and leadership held several **working sessions** to consider input in developing the Strategic Plan



Extensive Stakeholder Consultations

Conducted significant outreach to obtain the views of diverse stakeholders



1,300

Innovative Research Survey Participants

(Market survey conducted to enhance public survey)

- 69% Considering Residence (Ontarians 55+)
- 31% Current Residents

169

Licensee and Stakeholder Survey Participants

- 47% Licensees
- 28% Retirement Home Employees
- 9% Residents
- 8% Resident's Family/Caregiver
- 5% Public

40

Focus Group Participants

20

Interview Participants


Lines of Inquiry

The following are high-level lines of inquiry we asked stakeholders:

- RHRA's Role and Mandate
- RHRA Successes
- RHRA Challenges
- RHRA Potential Areas of Priority

Extensive Stakeholder Consultations

RHRA extends special thanks to the following groups/organizations which participated in focus groups and one-on-one interviews for their contributions

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1. AdvantAge
 2. Advocacy Centre for the Elderly
 3. Belmont House
 4. CanAge
 5. Christie Gardens
 6. College of Nurses of Ontario
 7. Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario
 8. Hamilton Health Sciences, Juravinski Hospital
 9. Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant, HCCSS
 10. Home and Community Care Support Services
 11. Home Care Ontario
 12. Local Health Integration Network, HCCSS
 13. Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility
 14. Ministry of Health
 15. Ministry of Long-Term Care
 16. Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery
 17. Mountainview Residence and Terrace
 18. Niagara Region Public Health
 19. Ontario Health
 20. Ontario Hospital Association
 21. Ontario Personal Support Workers Association
 22. Ontario Retirement Communities Association
 23. Ontario Society of Senior Citizens Organizations
 24. Ottawa Public Health, IPAC
 25. Provincial Geriatrics Leadership Ontario
 26. Public Health Sudbury & Districts
 27. Renfrew County and Care for Health & Community Services
 28. RHRA Residents' Network
 29. RHRA Staff
 30. RHRA Stakeholder Advisory Council (SAC)
 31. Schlegel Villages
 32. Seasons Retirement Communities
 33. The Empire Living Centre, North Bay
 34. Village of Taunton Mills

What We Heard

Several themes emerged from those conversations that helped inform the strategy:

- Stakeholders recognized RHRA's ability to **adapt and collaborate during the pandemic**
- There is an opportunity to **improve collaboration** with retirement home licensees and the broader sector
- RHRA continues to advance its sophistication in its **regulatory operations**
- Continuously improve **administrative processes** to make it easier to engage with RHRA
- There is **limited awareness** and understanding of RHRA's role among residents and families
- Prepare for the future – **the sector is changing** as residents have a wide spectrum of care needs and RHRA will need to adapt

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023 – 2026

Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026

The following diagram summarizes RHRA’s Strategic Plan for the 2023 – 2026 period

VISION

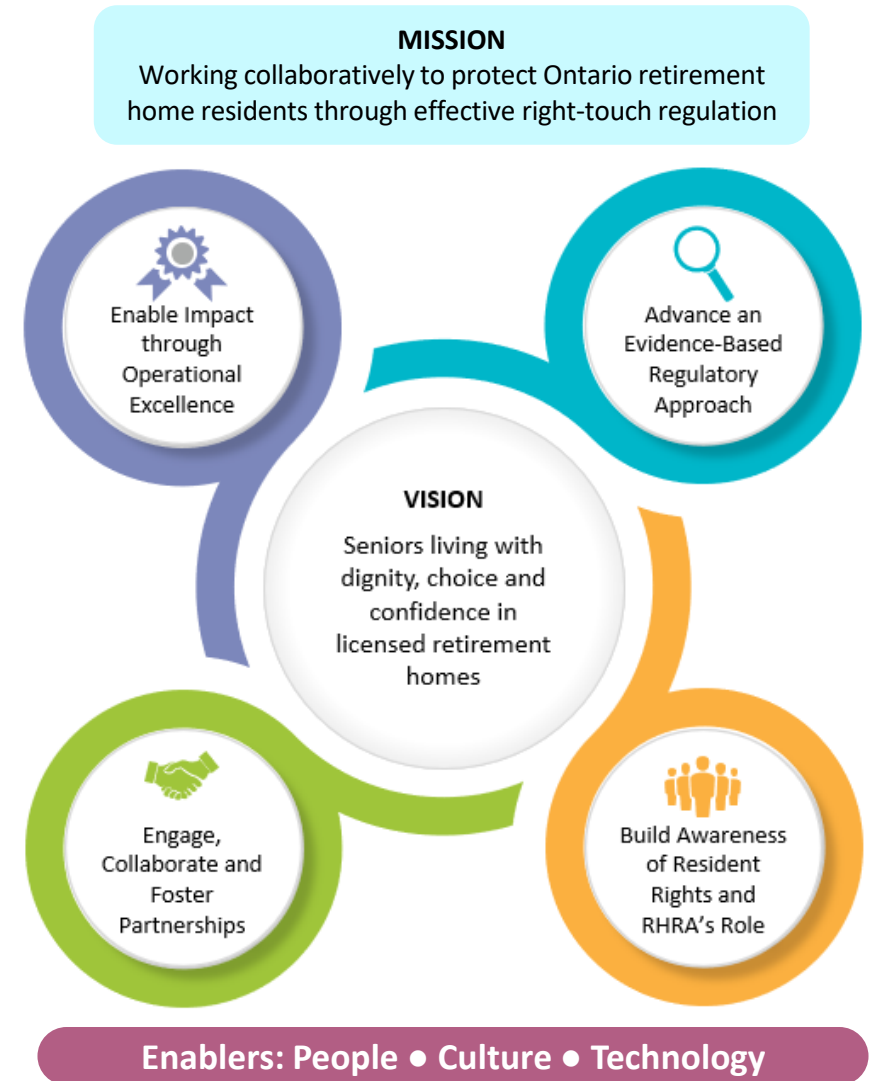
Seniors living with dignity, choice and confidence in licensed retirement homes

MISSION

Working collaboratively to protect Ontario retirement home residents through effective right-touch regulation

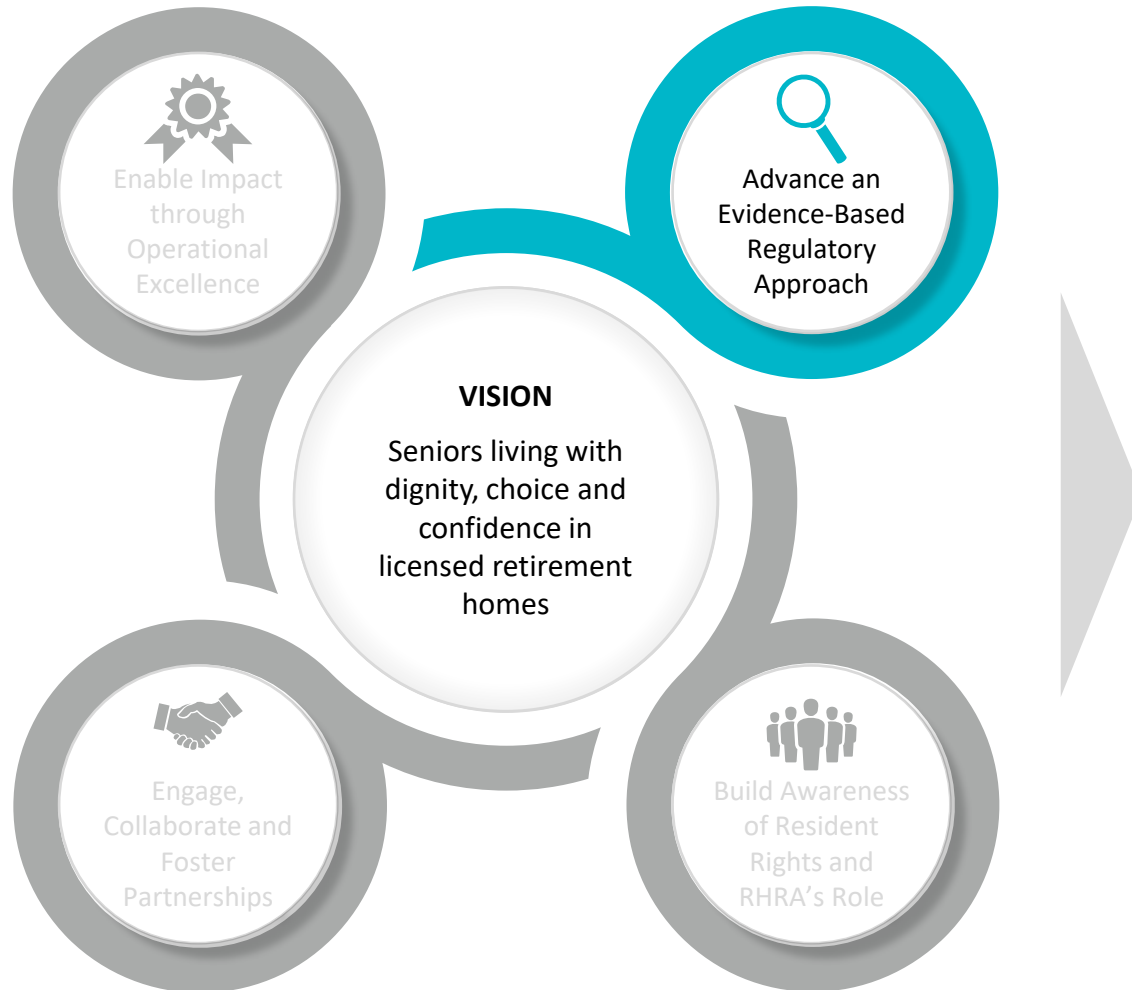
VALUES

- **Excellence** – efficient, effective and continuously improving
- **Integrity** – principled, honest and respectful
- **Adaptability** – responsive, proactive and innovative
- **Accountability** – transparent and responsible actions



Strategic Objective #1 – Advance an Evidence-Based Regulatory Approach

Using an evidence-based approach to regulation that is preventative, efficient, data-focused and aligns with best practices



We Will:

- Evaluate, streamline and implement regulatory activities that are aligned with best practices and are outcome-focused
- Take a preventative and evidence-based approach to our regulatory and enforcement activities
- Educate and collaborate with the sector to help licensees comply with regulations and legislation
- Continue to advance our approach to analyzing data to inform regulatory activities

Expected Outcomes:

- Regulatory emphasis is on areas of greatest potential harm to residents
- Increase in trust and confidence in RHRA's regulation of the sector
- RHRA's interventions demonstrate a contribution to preventing harm

Strategic Objective #1 – Advance an Evidence-Based Regulatory Approach

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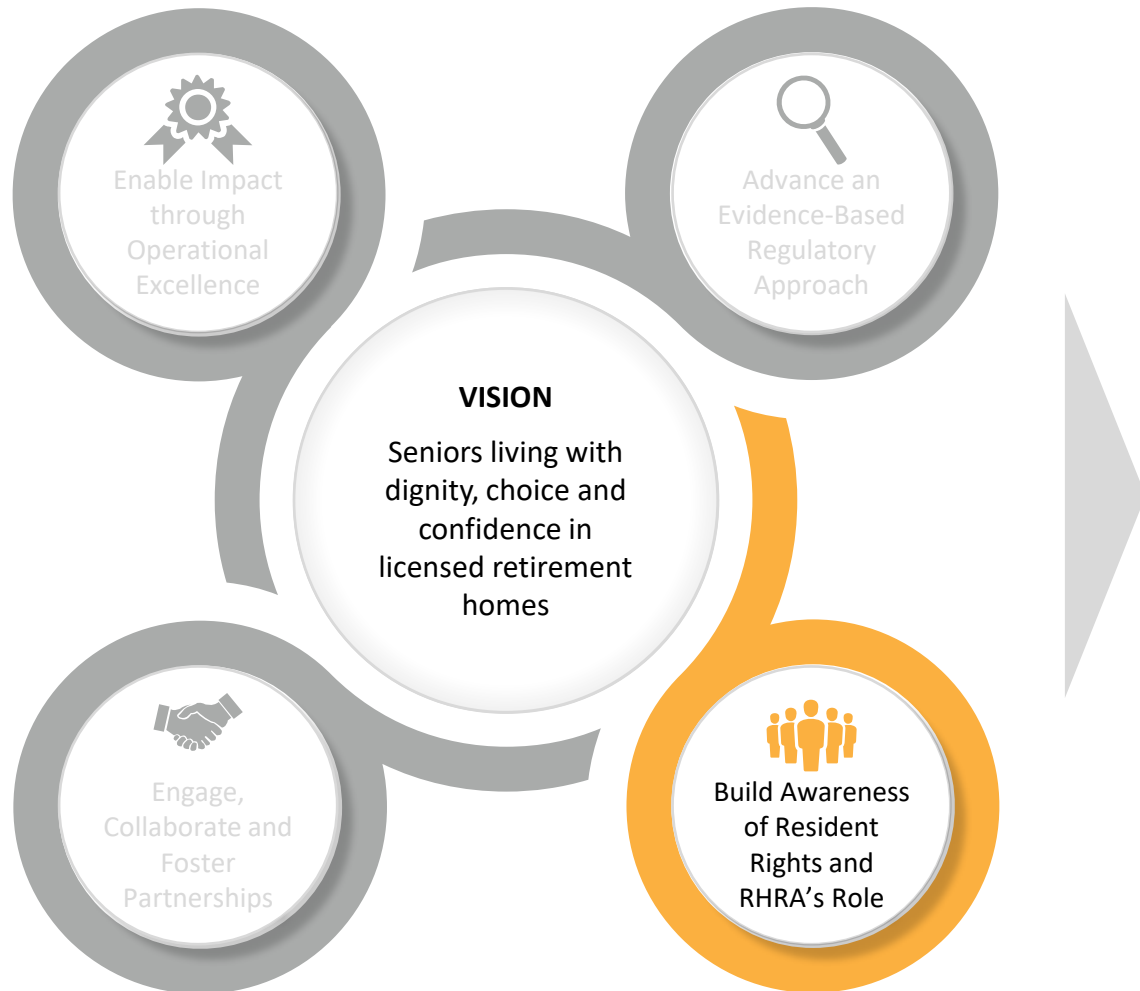
Strategic Initiatives	Key Activities
1. Implement an annual information submission program from licensees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collect and analyze information from licensees to inform the way we regulate ○ Share findings back with the sector, while enhancing operational effectiveness and efficiency through right-touch regulation
2. Develop an approach to right-touch regulation that fits with environments of varying risk and burden reduction to licensees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop a proposed segmentation model⁵, and if appropriate revise policies to align with implementing a segmentation model ○ Assess and explore fee model options based on segmentation and other considerations
3. Emphasize initiatives that promote a culture of care through compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Update approach to communicating standards (e.g., CAMs⁶) and define additional licensee proactive support processes (e.g., compliance support) ○ Look for opportunities to engage differently with multi-home operators to improve overall compliance ○ Increase transparency to help residents, the public and industry understand and interpret risk
4. Evolve risk framework to sustain focus on preventing and mitigating harms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continuously enhance the model for risk of harm and seek external validation on significant updates (e.g., a segmentation framework)

5. Segmentation model: a model that supports the identification of homes that provide different levels of care and hospitality services

6. CAMs: Compliance Assistance Module

Strategic Objective #2 – Build Awareness of Resident Rights and RHRA’s Role

Increasing transparency and understanding of RHRA's role in the retirement home sector to promote accountability and informed choice



We Will:

- Inform residents, their families/caregivers and prospective residents about their rights and how RHRA helps keep licensed retirement homes accountable for meeting standards
- Help prospective residents and their families understand the benefits of choosing a licensed retirement home
- Openly share our perspective and experience with stakeholders and the public

Expected Outcomes:

- Increase in awareness among residents of the RHRA’s role and the standards retirement homes must meet
- Availability of accurate information equipping current and prospective residents to make informed decisions, particularly around the value of choosing a licensed home

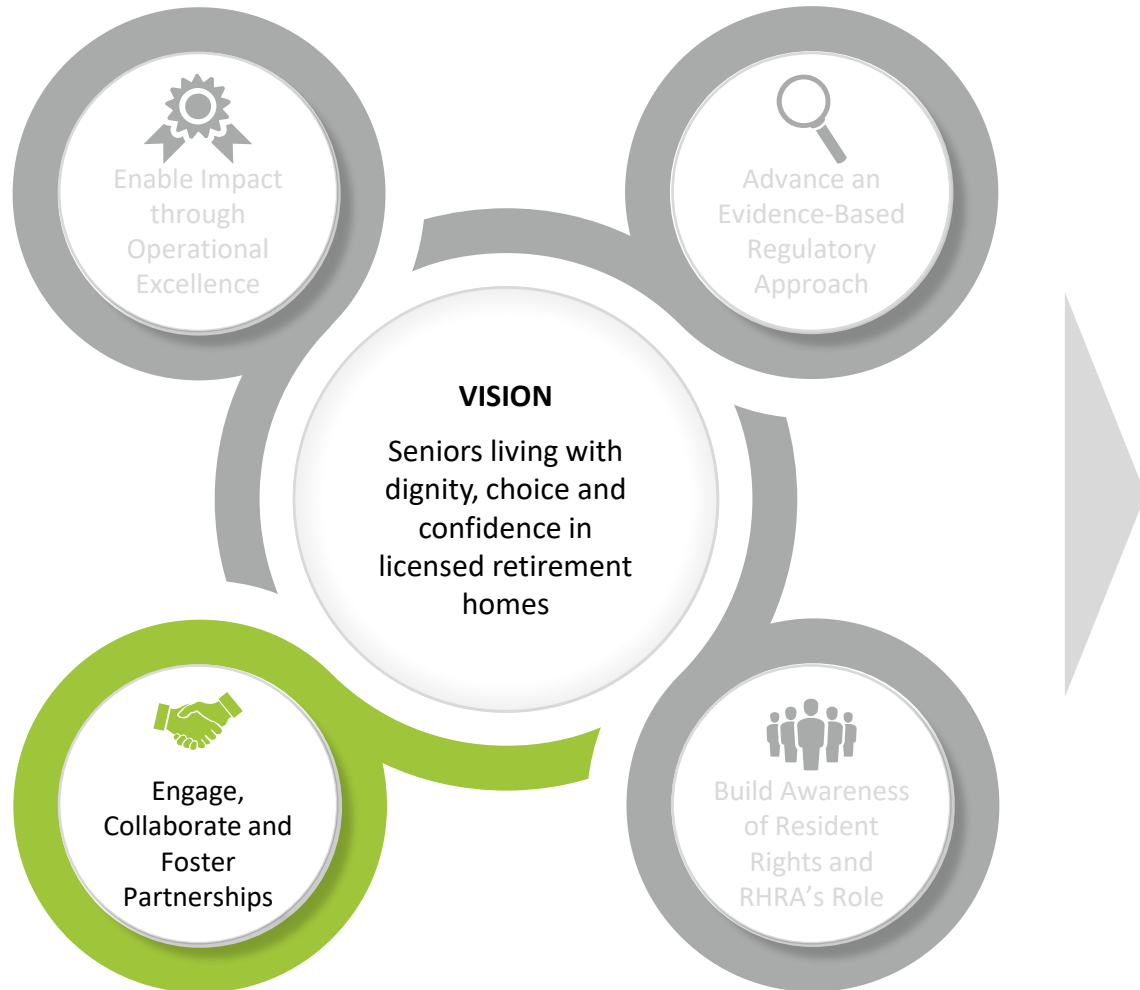
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Increasing transparency and understanding of RHRA's role in the retirement home sector to promote accountability and informed choice

Strategic Initiatives	Key Activities
1. Deepen our understanding of sector and transparently communicate risk and regulatory trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work with other organizations to obtain additional data on resident well-being and care to inform how we regulate more effectively ○ Improve transparency of the Retirement Home Database, and partner with stakeholders to share insights and compliance focus priorities
2. Strengthen forums and processes for feedback with residents and their families to improve their awareness of RHRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop and implement programs to establish partnerships for distribution of materials and explore ways to communicate directly with residents and their families, including new forums for engagement
3. Rebuild/redesign website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improve content, functionality and usability of the website to improve the overall user experience
4. Expand outreach to diverse communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Build relationships with and expand ethno-cultural media outreach, build relationships with groups reflecting the diversity of Ontario, and leverage existing relationships to educate communities about RHRA’s role
5. Inform prospective residents and their families of the value of choosing licensed retirement homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create materials focused on the purpose/value of regulation and develop an approach for licensed homes to communicate the standards they are required to meet ○ Create materials targeted at families of prospective residents for awareness on regulation of licensed retirement homes to support them making informed choices (e.g., what a plan of care is and resident rights)

Strategic Objective #3 – Engage, Collaborate and Foster Partnerships

Strengthening relationships and engaging with stakeholders to collaboratively enhance protection for retirement home residents



We Will:

- Work with residents, families/caregivers, licensees and others in the sector to understand risks to residents and resident protection needs
- Strengthen our community partnerships to share perspectives and work together on common goals
- Engage and collaborate with licensees and sector on common activities that support our mandate while understanding their perspectives, needs and expectations
- Advise and collaborate with the Ontario Government on protection needs and related policy to reduce risk to retirement home residents and prevent harms

Expected Outcomes:

- Improved protection for resident well-being
- Established partnerships that are collaborative and focused

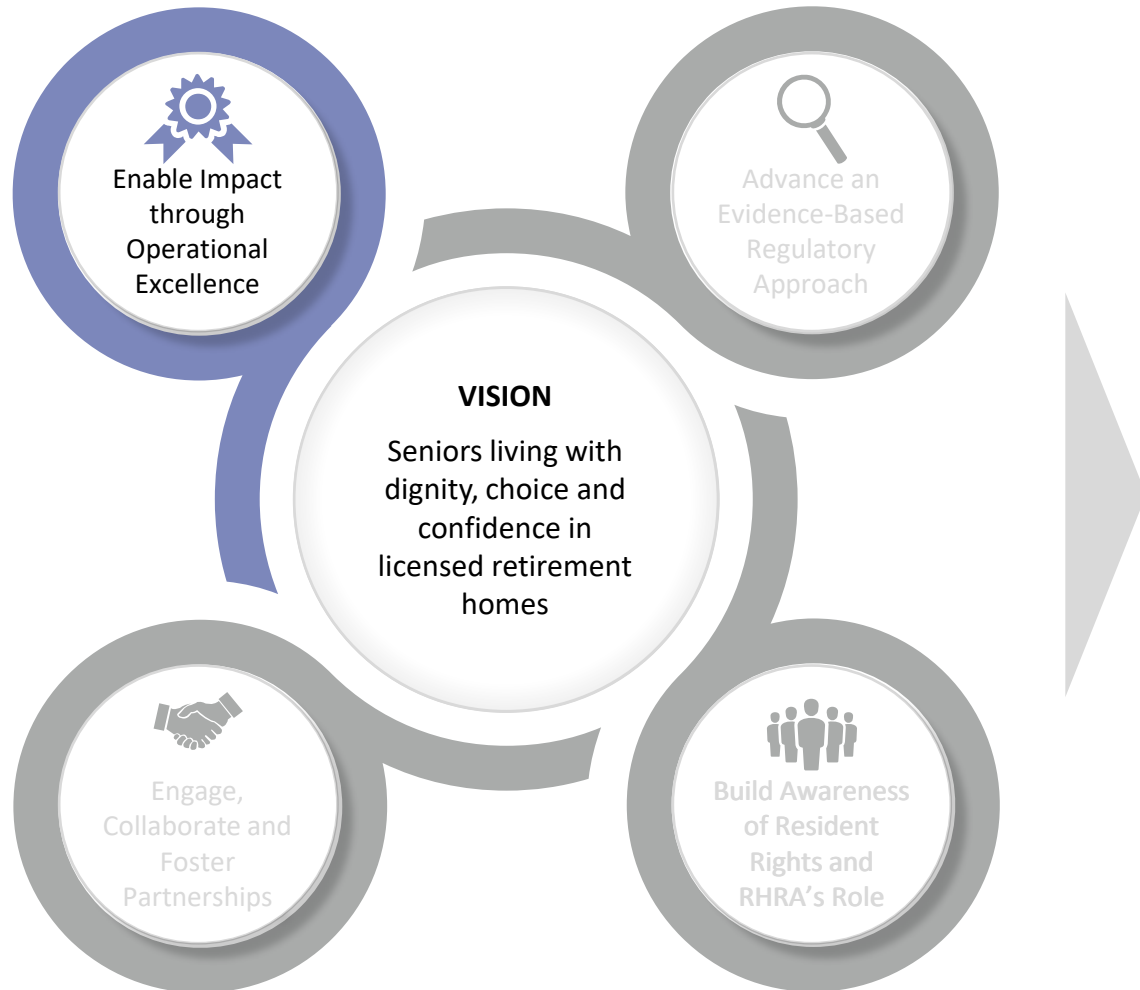
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Strengthening relationships and engaging with stakeholders to collaboratively enhance protection for retirement home residents

Strategic Initiatives	Key Activities
1. Improve stakeholder engagement structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evaluate structure and/or create new structures to capture specific stakeholder perspectives so that RHRA engages in a way that promotes collaboration
2. Increase direct licensee engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engage with licensees on projects of mutual interest, such as the licensee portal and annual information submission ○ Engage a diverse set of licensees to capture unique perspectives from homes of various sizes, business and service models, and who operate in different regions across the province
3. Strengthen engagement with community partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to build and sustain awareness of RHRA and regulation with community partners (e.g., other regulators; Home and Community Care Support Services)
4. Proactively engage elected officials and other government administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strengthen relationships with government officials to increase awareness of the RHRA and the legislation that impacts those living in retirement homes – with a particular focus on constituents choosing a licensed retirement home
5. Provide advice to address definition issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Analyze internal policies and determine priority elements for working with stakeholders to improve clarity and to address situations related to the definition of ‘retirement home’ in the legislation
6. Provide advice and collaborate with the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility/Government on priority items related to consumer and resident protection or legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility/Government's review of items related to infection prevention and control and emergency control/preparedness

Strategic Objective #4 – Enable Impact through Operational Excellence

Achieving greater regulatory impact through operational sophistication, resource efficacy and burden minimization



We Will:

- Continuously find opportunities to minimize administrative burden on the sector and efficiently allocate resources to support right-touch regulatory activities
- Use technology to make it easier for residents, families and homes to interact with us, while maintaining privacy and security
- Continuously improve operations, explore feasible alternative revenue models and practice prudent financial stewardship

Expected Outcomes:

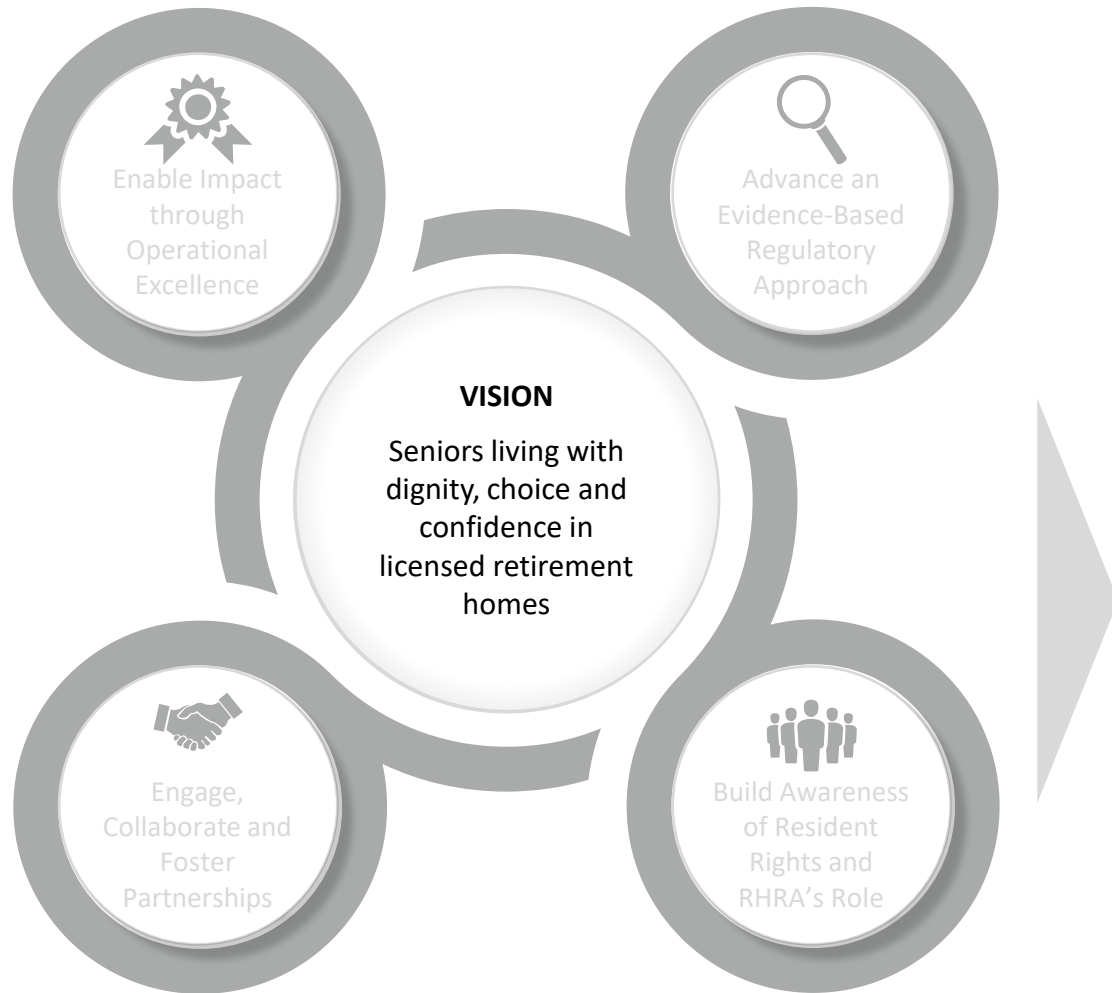
- Reduced administrative burden on the sector
- Continuous process improvements resulting in efficiency and/or effectiveness
- Financial balance and sustainability

Strategic Objective #4 – Enable Impact through Operational Excellence

Achieving greater regulatory impact through operational sophistication, resource efficacy and burden minimization

Strategic Initiatives	Key Activities
1. Standardize internal review processes to routinely evaluate administrative burden reduction and efficiency opportunities	○ Provide recommendations to Government to reduce legislative administrative burdens, establish an internal process to identify efficiencies on an ongoing basis and standardize an annual review process
2. Increase use of technology with licensees and stakeholders	○ Launch a licensee portal with new capabilities to improve direct communications with stakeholders
3. Continue implementation of Data Management Strategy and Privacy practices	○ Strengthen safeguards to ensure the data RHRA has available is securely protected, and privacy protocols are maintained
4. Improve transparency of resource requirements and allocation	○ Aim to enhance fiscal stewardship and transparency of resource allocation to programs. This includes exploring the adoption of a rolling 3-year fee determination process and the feasibility of alternative revenue models

Strategic Enablers – People, Culture, Technology



We Will:

- Create a workplace environment that values professional growth and development of staff, fosters succession planning and promotes high-performance standards
- Cultivate an exceptional culture that values equity, diversity and inclusion
- Take full advantage of data to support evidence-based decision-making and to support identification of improvements in our regulatory approach

Enablers: People • Culture • Technology

Expected Outcomes

Executing this Strategic Plan is expected to result in the following outcomes:

For RHRA and Licensees:

- Regulatory emphasis is on areas of greatest potential harm to residents and right-touch regulation
- Increase in trust and confidence in both the regulator and licensed retirement homes
- Established partnerships that are collaborative and focused
- Reduced administrative burden on the sector
- Continuous process improvements resulting in efficiency and/or effectiveness
- Financial balance and sustainability

For Residents and the Public:

- Improved protection for resident well-being
- RHRA's interventions demonstrate a contribution to preventing harm
- Increase in trust and confidence in RHRA's regulation of the sector
- Increase in awareness among residents of the RHRA's role and the standards retirement homes must meet
- Availability of accurate information equipping current and prospective residents to make informed decisions, including around the value of choosing a licensed home

Measuring Performance

Performance Measure	Additional Information	Target Structure
<p>Proportion of High-Risk Homes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Uses RHRA’s risk-based regulatory model to target interventions in the high-risk portion of non-compliant homes operating in Ontario 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proportion of homes in the high-risk category is maintained between 5 per cent and 10 per cent, the range is based on a rolling three-year trend
<p>Licensee Compliance Resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promotes compliance with legislative requirements by proactively identifying and producing education resources on priority topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Every year, the top five areas for risk of harm are identified and any new compliance resources needed are produced within 12 months
<p>Accountability, Trust and Collaboration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demonstrates RHRA’s commitment to continuously improving effectiveness based on stakeholder feedback ○ Measured at minimum once every three years through a multi-stakeholder survey that seeks feedback across 13 categories (listed in their entirety on page nine of RHRA’s 2021 Multi-Stakeholder Research Report) ○ Results are rolled into a combined Accountability Index Score ○ Previous combined index score was 7.3 overall (Stakeholders separately rated RHRA at 7.8 while Residents rated RHRA at 6.8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conduct a multi-stakeholder survey at a minimum once every three years. Next survey to be conducted in Fiscal Year 2024/25 ○ Increase overall Accountability Index Score to 7.5 among stakeholder groups. The survey asks questions of stakeholders and residents each to rate RHRA on satisfaction with service, value delivered and value of oversight, transparency, and responsiveness, among other categories. Satisfaction is measured on 13 categories

Measuring Performance

Performance Measure	Additional Information	Target Structure
Public Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demonstrates RHRA’s commitment to raising awareness of the regulator’s role, resources and value ○ Measured at minimum once every three years through a multi-stakeholder survey ○ In 2021, residents responded with an overall awareness rate of 29 per cent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure resident participation rate of a minimum of 500 responses ○ Increase resident awareness of RHRA to 35 per cent by FY 2025/26
Percentage of Service Standard Attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reflects RHRA’s commitment to delivering on its core mandate efficiently by measuring core regulatory processes against service standards (license applications, inspections, reports of harm, and complaints) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RHRA meets customer service standards for core regulatory processes 90 per cent of the time annually
Operational Effectiveness & Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reflects RHRA’s commitment to minimizing administrative expenses as a per cent of total expenses over 3-year period ○ RHRA has updated its approach to allocating expenses and will establish an appropriate baseline in fiscal 2023/24 to enable year-to-year comparison 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RHRA to establish a baseline by March 31, 2024 for administrative expenses as a percentage of total expenses ○ Maintain administrative expenses at or below baseline percentage ○ RHRA recommendations for burden reduction submitted upon request

Measuring Performance

Performance Measure	Additional Information	Target Structure
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demonstrates RHRA’s commitment to governance best practices and conducts independent governance reviews at minimum of every three years ○ The most recent review was completed in Q4 FY 2022/23 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 100 per cent of recommendations are addressed within 18 months of the review date ○ Independent governance reviews conducted at a minimum every three years
Financial Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demonstrates RHRA’s commitment to prudent financial management while maintaining appropriate financial flexibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Operating expenses are within 3 per cent of budgeted operating expenses ○ Restricted reserves are within 3-6 months of budgeted operating expenses

RHRA’s performance reporting is conducted each year through its Annual Report, available on its [website](#)

COSTING IMPLICATIONS

Statement of Operations

3-year forecast

	2023/24 Budget	2024/25 Projected	2025/26 Projected
	\$	\$	\$
Operating Revenue			
Annual fees	11,746,162	12,700,000	13,350,000
Application fees	690,125	581,000	581,000
Administrative fees	46,000	50,000	55,000
Amortization of capital grants	280,306	280,300	280,300
Total Operating Revenue	12,762,594	13,611,300	14,266,300
Operating Expenses			
Salaries, wages and benefits	10,118,337	10,700,000	11,200,000
Operating	2,517,198	2,750,000	2,800,000
Amortization of capital assets	410,459	446,000	440,000
Total Operating Expenses	13,045,994	13,896,000	14,440,000
Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	(283,401)	(284,700)	(173,700)
Non-Operating Surplus/(Deficit)	291,878	327,000	230,000
Total Surplus/(Deficit)	8,478	42,300	56,300
Net assets, end of year	7,121,260	7,163,560	7,219,860
Reserves			
Unrestricted reserve	(3,951)	1,083	41,704
Operating reserve	6,415,986	6,431,086	6,552,950
Emergency Fund	697,801	722,811	748,571
Total Net Assets	7,109,836	7,154,980	7,343,225
Operating Reserve balance in months of budget expenditures	5.9	5.6	5.4