

Scope

This policy outlines the conditions under which Pacific Link Housing Limited (PLH) will allow tenants to keep pets according to legal requirements of the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 (RTA), the Residential Tenancy Agreement and the Companion Animals Act NSW 1998 (CAA). This policy applies to all tenancies including transitional tenancies where the support provider has given their permission.

Purpose

PLH understands that living with a pet can positively impact a person's wellbeing. Where possible and practical, PLH will permit tenants to keep a pet. This policy explains what PLH considers is a companion pet in accordance with the CAA and sets out the conditions under which PLH will usually grant written permission for a tenant to keep a pet in their home. The policy is intended to ensure that tenancy issues in relation to property care and neighbour disturbance do not arise through the keeping of pets.

Applying for Approval

Tenants may not keep pets without the prior consent of PLH. Tenants must request permission in writing, providing any necessary evidence required by PLH, prior to moving in or acquiring the pet. Evidence required would include, but is not limited to, the type, breed and size of the pet, registration details and the length of time that the tenant has owned the pet.

PLH recognises that pets can enrich the lives of their owners. PLH has a fair, consistent and transparent process for granting permission to keep a pet. PLH understands that refusal to keep a pet may cause distress to tenants and will follow the policy set out below when granting permission to keep a pet. Given the variety of household pets and the range of properties and tenures that PLH offers, PLH will individually consider each application on its merits. PLH will take into account:

- any legal or regulatory requirements,
- strata rules or bylaws,
- the type of property and tenure and suitability for pet ownership,
- the permission of the private owner for leasehold properties,
- the size and type of pet and
- the potential for any damage to the property or interference with neighbours.

Where a tenant receives approval to keep a pet, it is with the understanding that this approval is for the current property. If the tenant moves to another PLH property, they will need to seek re-approval as not all PLH properties are suitable for pet ownership.

Conditions of Approval

As a responsible landlord, PLH will consider granting approval for a tenant to keep a small household pet in their home as a special condition of the Residential Tenancy Agreement, if the following conditions are met:

- Dogs and cats are registered and micro chipped to fully comply with the CAA and its regulations (further details on this requirement can be found at: www.petregistry.nsw.gov.au),
- The approved pet complies with what PLH has identified as a household pet as outlined below and is properly cared for,
- The tenant complies with any licencing requirements and any relevant local council regulations or other legislation that restricts the keeping of certain types of animals,

- The property is suitable for the pet and the tenant has been given written approval by PLH to keep a pet in the property, and
- The pet is unlikely to interfere with the reasonable peace, comfort and privacy of neighbours in accordance with the RTA and is kept under control in common areas,
- The tenant completes and agrees to a pet contract that sets out their responsibilities as a pet owner in a PLH property, and
- The tenant pays for the cost of any property damage caused by their pet and for carpet cleaning and, where necessary, fumigation at the end of the tenancy.

PLH will send a letter advising the tenant of the outcome of their request for approval within 10 business days, unless further documentation has been requested. The letter will also advise the tenant of their right of appeal if they disagree with the decision.

Household pets

In line with the CAA, PLH considers a household pet to be a companion animal that is being kept as a household pet and that provides wellbeing benefits to a person. Companion animals may help relieve stress, provide psychological support or serve a more active role such as a guide or assistance dog. PLH considers a household pet to be a small pet such as a dog, cat, caged bird/s, fish in a small tank, or a small mammal like a rabbit or guinea pig. PLH will generally only approve a maximum of two pets in a property.

PLH does not encourage the ownership of reptiles and insects due to the specialised nature of their care and living conditions. Tenants approved to keep such animals must have, where applicable, the required licence. They must also demonstrate that they have adequate knowledge to meet the care and welfare needs of the animal, including the provision of a suitable environment.

Animals not permitted

PLH does not consider poultry (chickens and other fowl), livestock or exotic animals to be a household pet and tenants are not permitted to keep these types of animals in its properties. Restricted and dangerous dogs as defined by the CAA and local councils are not permitted by PLH.

Withdrawing permission to keep a pet

Failure to comply with this Pets Policy will result in PLH taking action. This can range from working with the tenant to resolve any problems caused by pet ownership, withdrawing permission to keep a pet or seeking an order from the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) if there has been a breach of the Residential Tenancy Agreement.

Complaints and Appeals

If a tenant is not satisfied with a service provided by PLH or does not agree with a decision it has made, they should first discuss their concerns with their Housing Manager. If they are still not satisfied they can ask for a formal review. Refer Complaints and Appeals Policy.

Craig Brennan

Craig Brennan, CEO April 2019