

Scope

This policy outlines the conditions under which Pacific Link Housing Limited (PLH) may grant permission to 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 only applies to long term tenancies, not to transitional tenancies.

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 sets out a fair, consistent and transparent process that is in accordance with legislation. The policy further outlines the responsibilities of tenants where approval is given by PLH to keep a pet.

Applying for Approval

Tenants may not keep pets without the prior consent of PLH. Tenants must request permission in writing, and provide any necessary evidence required by PLH, prior to moving in or acquiring the pet. Evidence required can include, but is not limited to, the type, breed, age and size of the pet, registration (and if applicable licence) details and the length of time that the tenant has owned the pet. Permission must be requested for every additional pet proposed to be brought into the household.

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 consider:

- any legal or regulatory requirements, including local council 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 whether it is microchipped and registered
- the history of the tenancy 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.

Household pets

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. Under no circumstances will PLH approve the keeping of a dangerous or menacing animal.

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 or strata bylaws, 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 above 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 14 business days, unless further documentation has been requested or we are awaiting a response from the landlord/owner, strata manager or council. The letter will also advise the tenant of their right of appeal if they disagree with the decision.

Tenant responsibilities

When permission to have a pet is granted, tenants are responsible for:

- Caring for the pet
- Meeting the terms of their Residential Tenancy Agreement Pet Clause and making sure the pet does not interfere with the reasonable peace and enjoyment of their neighbours
- Following any relevant local council regulations
- Complying with any relevant legislation relating to the pet
- Keeping the animal under control and on a leash (dogs) while in the common area of properties
- Keeping cats inside and not allowing them to stray in common areas (complexes).

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 Officer. If they are still not satisfied they can ask for a formal review. Refer Complaints and Appeals Policy.

Related Documents

Residential Tenancies Act 2010
Residential Tenancies Regulation 2010
Companion Animals Act NSW 1998
Companion animals Regulation 2008 (NSW)
Strata bylaws, as appropriate

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