

Pets Policy



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1. Purpose

This policy outlines the conditions under which WHL will grant written permission for a renter to keep a pet in their home.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all renters and most properties managed by WHL. This policy does not apply to the Rooming House program.

3. Policy statement

WHL acknowledge that pets can enrich the lives of their owners. WHL has implemented a fair, consistent, and transparent process for granting permission to keep a pet. WHL understands that a refusal to keep a pet may cause distress to renters and will follow the policy set out below when granting permission to keep a pet.

WHL will review each application to keep a pet in a property based on its individual merits and in line with the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 ("RTA").

4. Definition

A pet is defined in the RTA as any animal, other than an assistance dog that is trained to perform tasks or functions that assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effects of their disability (as defined in the Equal Opportunity Act 2010). Renters are already able to keep an assistance dog without the requirement of consent from the residential rental provider.

WHL will generally permit cats, dogs, small birds in cages and fish.

5. Applying for a pet

Renters wishing to keep a pet must complete the prescribed CAV Pet Request Form.

WHL will consider any legal or regulatory requirements, the type of property and tenure, the size and type of pet and the potential for any damage to the property or interference with neighbours.

If a renter requests to keep a pet using the approved form, WHL cannot unreasonably refuse consent.

In general terms, WHL will grant approval for a renter to keep a household pet in their home if the following conditions are met:

- All cats and dogs must be registered with the local council and where required will also be micro chipped.
- All renters wishing to keep a pet at a property must first make an application to WHL to keep a pet.
- Pet is suitable for the amenity of the building.

Renters will also be issued a letter advising upon approval of the pet that the renter:

- Is responsible for the cost of any damage to the property and/or any issues that may arise from keeping pet/s at the property.
- Is responsible for ensuring that pet/s do not create a nuisance to neighbours.
- Returns the property to Women's Housing Ltd in the condition that it was provided. This includes the garden.
- Upon vacating the property there will be no animal faeces in the garden. This is always applicable to THMs as these properties have WHL gardeners employed to maintain the garden.

6. Pets at properties without consent

Should a WHL staff member become aware of a pet at a property that is not subject to consent, the following action should be taken:

- Advise the Tenancy Officer of this matter.
- Tenancy Officer will contact renter by the phone to discuss allegation of pet being retained on the property and that WHL is required to approve the pet. Advise renter that Pet Request Form will be sent out to the renter in the mail and that this should be completed and returned within 14 days.
- The Tenancy Officer will issue a letter with the Pet Request Form advising the renter to apply for permission to keep a pet at the property.
- Obtain form and provide renter with permission/refusal.
- Provide renter with letter outlining responsibilities in keeping a pet at the property or advise of refusal and the process at VCAT.

7. Pet unsuitable for a property

Should Tenancy Officer determine that a pet is not suitable for a property, then the Tenancy Officer will make an application to VCAT within 14 days of receiving an application in the prescribed form and renter will be advised that WHL is making this application.

If such an application is made, VCAT will determine if the refusal is reasonable (in which case an order excluding the pet from the rental premises will be made) or that the renter can keep the pet.

If VCAT makes an order excluding a pet from the rented premises; and at least 14 days have passed since the order took effect; and the renter has not complied with the order, then a NTV will be issued.

Should WHL receive complaints about a pet, WHL will raise these issues with the renter and attempt to find a resolution. If this fails, the Tenancy Officer will follow processes as prescribed within the Residential Tenancies Act.

8. Right of appeal

All decisions can be appealed by providing further information to WHL that may amend the previous decision. This process is set up in WHL's Complaints and Appeals Policy.

9. Reviewing

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years

10. Related documents

- Pet Request Form as prescribed by CAV
- Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Renter Damage Policy

11. Relevant legislation

- The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Residential Tenancies Act 1997
- Housing Act 1983 (Vic)