

Pets

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to explain what Bridge Housing considers is a companion pet in accordance with the *Companion Animals Act 1998* and to set out the conditions under which Bridge Housing will usually grant written permission for a tenant to keep a pet in their home.

Scope

This policy applies to all tenants of Bridge Housing.

Policy overview

Bridge Housing recognises that pets can enrich the lives of their owners. Bridge Housing has implemented a fair, consistent and transparent process for granting permission to keep a pet. Bridge Housing 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.

In line with the *Companion Animals Act 1998*, Bridge Housing considers a household pet to be a companion animal that is being kept as a household pet and that provides health 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.

Given the variety of household pets and the range of properties and tenures that Bridge Housing offers, Bridge Housing will individually consider each application on its merits. Bridge Housing will take into account 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.

As a responsible landlord, Bridge Housing will usually grant approval for a tenant to keep a small household pet in their home if the following conditions are met:

- Dogs and cats are registered and micro chipped to fully comply with the *Companion Animals Act 1998* and *Companion Animals Regulation 2008*

- The approved pet complies with what Bridge Housing has identified as a household pet
- The approved pet 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 approval to keep a pet in the property
- The pet is unlikely to interfere with the reasonable peace, comfort and privacy of neighbours in accordance with the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010*

The tenant will be required to complete and agree to a pet contract that sets out their responsibilities as a pet owner in a Bridge Housing property.

Policy

Household pets

Bridge Housing 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. If the pet falls into this category then as long as the other conditions outlined in this policy are met, Bridge Housing will usually grant permission to keep this type of pet.

Bridge Housing will generally only approve a maximum of two pets in a property.

Bridge Housing does not consider poultry (chickens and other fowl), livestock or exotic animals to be a household pet. Therefore tenants are not permitted to keep these types of animals in its properties.

All cats and dogs approved as pets in Bridge Housing properties must be micro chipped and registered on the NSW Companion Animals Register with the local council. Further details on this requirement can be found at: www.petregistry.nsw.gov.au.

Restricted and dangerous dogs as defined by the *Companion Animals Act 1998* and local councils are not permitted by Bridge Housing.

Bridge Housing 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.

Failure to comply with this Pet Policy will result in Bridge Housing 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.

Properties and pets

Bridge Housing manages a range of properties. Not all of these are suitable for pet ownership. Bridge Housing will make each assessment based on the type of pet, the type of property, and any strata or by laws that may restrict the keeping of pets.

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 Bridge Housing property, they will need to seek re-approval as not all Bridge Housing properties are suitable for pet ownership.

All Bridge Housing tenants approved for keeping a pet will complete a pet contract. Pet owners are required to pay 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.

Complaints and appeals

This is an appealable policy.

If a tenant is not satisfied with a service provided by Bridge Housing or does not agree with a decision it has made, they can ask for a formal review. To do this, the tenant can complete either an **I want to complain** form or an **I want to appeal** form, details of which appear in the Bridge Housing Complaints and Appeals Policy.

This policy and information leaflet is available from Bridge Housing's office or can be downloaded from our website www.bridgehousing.org.au.

If a tenant is unhappy with the outcome of an appeal to Bridge Housing, they can lodge a second level appeal with the Housing Appeals Committee. The Housing Appeals Committee is an independent agency that reviews certain decisions made by staff of Community Housing organisations and Housing NSW. For information on the Housing Appeals Committee call 1800 629 794 or go to www.hac.nsw.gov.au.

Related documents

Legislation

- *Residential Tenancies Act 2010*
- *Residential Tenancies Regulation 2010*
- *Companion Animals Act 1998*
- *Companion Animals Regulation 2008*

Documents supporting this policy

- Pet Procedure
- Pet Training Guide
- Responsible Pet Ownership Department of Premier and Cabinet
- Pet Contract
- Tenant Handbook
- Starting a Tenancy Checklist

Translation Service

English

If you need help to understand this letter please contact the Telephone Interpreters Service on 131-450 and ask them to contact on 9699-6055 for you at no cost. You can also come to the Bridge Housing office and ask for assistance in your language.

Simplified Chinese

如果您理解这封信有困难, 请拨打电 话传译服务 131450 要求电话传译 服务替您拨打 Bridge Housing, 电话 9699-6055。这项服务是免费的。您也可以到 Bridge Housing 的办公室来。 要求用您的语言来协助您。

Spanish

Si necesita ayuda para entender esta carta, por favor comuníquese con el Servicio Telefónico de Intérpretes al 131450 y solicite que lo contacten sin cargo con Bridge Housing al 9699-6055. También puede dirigirse a las oficinas de Bridge Housing y solicitar asistencia en su idioma.

Russian

Если для понимания содержания этого письма Вам необходима помощь, свяжитесь, пожалуйста, с Телефонной переводческой службой по номеру 131450 и попросите соединить Вас с Bridge Housing по номеру 9699-6055. За соединение платить не нужно. Кроме того, Вы можете лично посетить офис Bridge Housing и попросить об услугах переводчика.

Greek

Εάν χρειάζεστε βοήθεια για να κατανοήσετε την παρούσα επιστολή, παρακαλώ επικοινωνήστε με την Υπηρεσία Τηλεφωνικών Διερμηνέων στο 131-450 και ζητήστε τους να επικοινωνήσουν με το 9699-6055 για εσάς χωρίς καμία χρέωση. Μπορείτε επίσης να επισκεφθείτε το γραφείο Bridge Housing και να ζητήσετε βοήθεια στη γλώσσα σας.

Vietnamese

Nếu cần người giúp để hiểu thư này xin quý vị liên hệ với Dịch Vụ Thông Ngôn Điện Thoại số 131450 và nhờ họ liên lạc với Bridge Housing qua số 9699-6055 cho quý vị một cách miễn phí. Quý vị cũng có thể đến Văn Phòng của Bridge Housing và xin giúp đỡ bằng ngôn-ngữ của quý-vị.