

Keeping a Pet

Bridge Housing understands that owning a pet brings many benefits to a tenant's life. These benefits must be balanced against the impact that keeping a pet has on your neighbours and the suitability of the property.

This factsheet provides important information about owning a pet when you live in a Bridge Housing property.

Approval to keep a pet

All tenants must seek written approval from Bridge Housing before they bring a pet into their home.

This means that before you adopt a pet you should contact your Housing Manager providing details of the type of pet you are thinking of and complete a Request to Keep a Household Pet Form.

Your Housing Manager will then check whether the pet is suitable to be kept at your property in accordance with Bridge Housing's Pet Policy.

Your Housing Manager may also visit your home to make sure your pet is suitable for your property and to discuss your responsibilities as a pet owner in a Bridge Housing property.

Depending on the property and the impact on your neighbours, your Housing Manager may also discuss the proposal with the neighbours in your block.

If your pet is an assistance animal registered under Section 59 of the Companion Animals Act 1998 or Section 9 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, please discuss this with your Housing Manager.

If you are a tenant of Bridge housing and you have pets that have not been approved, contact your Housing Manager to discuss what you need to do.

Bridge Housing properties and pets

Bridge Housing manages a range of properties. Not all of these are suitable for pets or certain types of pets. Your Housing Manager will advise you of any restrictions on owning a pet in your property when you are applying.

Responsibilities of keeping a pet

If your application to keep a pet is approved, you will be asked to sign a Pet Contract for each pet in your home. The pet contract sets out your responsibilities as a pet owner in a Bridge Housing property. These include complying with the Companion Animals Act 1998, any Local Government regulations and maintaining your property at an appropriate standard.

Pets that are generally approved

Bridge Housing considers a household pet to be a small, domesticated animal such as a small dog (less than 10kgs), a cat, caged bird/s, fish in a small tank, or a small mammal like a rabbit or guinea pig.

Bridge Housing generally only allows a maximum of two pets per property.

Types of pets that will not be approved

You will not be granted approval to keep a restricted dog or a dangerous dog. A restricted dog is one declared under the Companion Animal Act 1998 or other legislation to be a restricted dog including cross breeds with these dogs. A dangerous dog is one declared dangerous by a local Council.

We do not consider poultry (chickens and other fowl), livestock or exotic animals to be household pets. Therefore, tenants are not permitted to keep these types of animals in their properties.

Types of pets with restrictions and conditions for approval

Bridge Housing does not encourage the ownership of reptiles and insects due to the specialised nature of their care and living conditions. Tenants wanting to keep such animals must have, where applicable, the required licence. Applications will be assessed individually.

The Companion Animals Act 1998

The Companion Animals Act 1998 places a number of obligations and responsibilities on the pet owner. Bridge Housing expects these conditions to be met for permission to be granted:

- Cats and dogs must be micro chipped and registered.
- The owner of the pet is responsible for ensuring the pet does not harm or threaten anybody or another animal nor should it cause a nuisance.
- Dogs must be kept under effective control and not allowed to roam.

The Residential Tenancies Act 2010

Tenants are also reminded of their responsibility to keep the property in a reasonable standard both internally and externally, specifically:

- Tenants must ensure that their pet does not interfere with the reasonable peace, comfort and privacy of neighbours.
- Tenants have any carpets professionally cleaned and/or the property fumigated at the end of the tenancy.
- Tenants will be held responsible for paying for any repairs or damages caused by the pet.

Where a tenant fails to comply with the Pet Policy, Bridge Housing will take 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.

Need further information?

A copy of Bridge Housing's pet policy can be found on our website www.bridgehousing.org.au.

If you would like to apply for a pet, please contact your Housing Manager on 8324 0800 or download a Request to Keep a Household Pet Form from our website.

If you are experiencing nuisance from a neighbour's dog, you are encouraged to contact the local Council.