

Policy

Policy Title	Pets
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Department	CHP, Habitat for Humanity Australia
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Authorised By	B Tasker
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Objective

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

Policy

HFHA recognises that pets can enrich the lives of their owners. HFHA has implemented a fair, consistent and transparent process for granting permission to keep a pet. HFHA 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*, HFHA 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 HFHA offers, HFHA will individually consider each application on its merits. HFHA 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, HFHA will seek to 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 HFHA 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 HFHA property.

Household pets

HFHA 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, HFHA will usually grant permission to keep this type of pet.

HFHA will generally only approve a maximum of two pets in a property, subject to the suitability of that specific property.

HFHA 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 HFHA 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 HFHA.

HFHA 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 HFHA 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

HFHA manages a range of properties. Not all of these are suitable for pet ownership. HFHA 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 HFHA property, they will need to seek re-approval as not all HFHA properties are suitable for pet ownership.

All HFHA 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 HFHA 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 a “**I want to complain**” form or a “**I want to appeal**” form, details of which appear in the HFHA Complaints and Appeals Policy.

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

If a tenant is unhappy with the outcome of an appeal to HFHA, 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