

## 2.3.4 Pets



### **Preamble**

Women's Housing Company (WHC) is a community housing association as part of the social housing system in NSW. WHC provides long term housing for single women and medium term housing through support partnerships.

WHC guarantees the following of all landlord responsibilities as stated in the NSW Residential Tenancy Act 1987.

WHC recognises that applicants and tenants needs differ greatly based on past experiences, independent living skills, cultural and language backgrounds, age, health which are all factors contributing to differing expectations. As a social housing provider we are committed to provide best quality services at all times. It is recognised that needs and expectations may not always be possible to meet by WHC.

WHC understands that pets can be life saving in times of hardship; that applicants and tenants can experience negative health impacts if they are separated from their pets.

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### **POLICY**

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Women's Housing Company aims to facilitate the accommodation of applicants and tenants and their pets if possible within the limitations of property availability, suitability and organisational viability.

As the majority of Women's Housing Company properties consist of blocks of units, the accommodation of pets is the exception rather than the rule.

Applicants are required to clearly state on the application form and in communication with WHC that they require to be housed with a pet and identify the type of pet.

Written permission from Women's Housing Company must be obtained PRIOR to getting a pet, a Pet Request Form for each pet needs to be signed with specifies conditions.

Tenants are responsible for the actions of their pet and any damage their pet does to the interior or exterior of the property. Pets are not to be left unsupervised at properties overnight or when the tenant pet owner is absent for 24 hours or more.

In cases permission for an animal is not granted, permission is revoked, or unresolvable complaints about the pet have been received, Women's Housing Company can seek an order at the Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal, this may result in the pet needing to be removed from the property.

Women's Housing Company Ltd cannot give permission for pets to tenants accommodated in leasehold properties. Permission must be obtained from the owner of the leasehold property, which is not Women's Housing Company. There may also be strata restrictions on keeping pets at the property.

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**PROCEDURE**

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Applicants are given an opportunity to identify the need to be housed with pets on the application form. Applicants are encouraged to restate this need, if applicable, at each contact with WHC.

Tenants requesting to live with a pet at a Women's Housing Company capital property, are required to lodge a Permission for Pet form.

Each application will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the housing workers; taking into consideration property conditions, outdoor spaces, location of common areas and tenant issues when assessing requests for pets.

The outcome of the pet request will be communicated to the tenant in writing.

The following guidelines must be adhered to when considering permission for pets:

- Dogs must be housed in ground floor accommodation where there is a fenced in yard or courtyard area attached to the unit.
- Cats should be either indoor cats or have a means of accessing the property that does not involve going through the common area.
- Pets must not roam the common areas.

Tenants are responsible for cleaning up any droppings from their pet that may be left in common property. This includes taking responsibility for cleaning after cats spraying in common property and possibly clearing garden beds.

Women's Housing Company reserves the right to withdraw permission for the pet if the animal impacts irreconcilably on the other residents of the block, or visitors to the block (including contractors).

The keeping of pets without permission from Women's Housing Company is a breach of clause 30.7, which states that the tenant agrees:

*'to keep no animals or birds on the premises without the prior written consent of the landlord'.*

Such tenancy breaches are pursued by the housing worker through the Consumer Trader and Tenancy Tribunal.

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**Date developed: 2000**

**Date/s policy was ratified and/or changed by Board: 28/8/07**

**Note:** Procedures are designed to guide the implementation of a policy and will be updated on a regular basis as part of ongoing best practice service improvement.