

Establishing and maintaining tenancies

Keeping pets policy

Policy section: 1.0

Policy: 1.2.10

Section name: Establishing and maintaining Tenancies

Document name	Keeping pets
Applicability	Mission Australia Housing
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1 Purpose

- 1.1 To outline requirements for tenants or applicants of Mission Australia Housing (MAH) who wish to have a **pet** at their property.
- 1.2 To outline requirements for staff involved in reviewing tenant requests to have a /s at their property.

2 Related policies

- 2.1 This policy is to be read in conjunction with the:
 - 2.1.1 [Start of Tenancy Policy](#), which outlines requirements wherever new tenancies are established with MAH.
 - 2.1.2 [Tenant Responsibility for Maintenance Policy](#) which outlines tenants' property care responsibilities, including with regard to pets.

3 Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to staff responsible for managing tenants and properties of MAH.

4 Guiding principles

- 4.1 Consideration is given to the location, size and suitability of a property where managing pet approval requests.
- 4.2 Consideration is given to tenants who need an animal of assistance for their health and wellbeing wherever required.
- 4.3 Tenants requiring an **assistance animal** will be accommodated in a suitable property wherever possible.
- 4.4 Properties are managed in accordance with the requirements of residential tenancy and rooming accommodation legislation.
- 4.5 Tenants are given opportunities to appeal organisational decisions in order to ensure fair and transparent outcomes.
- 4.6 MAH upholds accountability and transparency through its record keeping practices.

5 Policy

- 5.1 Tenants will be required to seek the permission of MAH to have any type of pet at their property.
- 5.2 MAH is generally accepting of pets living at properties of MAH, providing that a pet is suitable to the type of property and housing program, and providing a pet does not cause a nuisance to neighbours as per state-based residential tenancy and rooming accommodation legislation.
- 5.3 MAH encourages tenants who require an assistance animal with activities of daily living to inform MAH and provide substantiating evidence before they move into a property as per the [Housing Allocations Policy](#). Wherever possible and permitted by housing program guidelines and state based legislation, MAH will allocate applicable tenants with a property that is suitable for keeping an assistance animal.
- 5.4 Where existing tenants, due to disability or health needs, come to require a property that is suitable for an assistance animal, they are encouraged to initiate a transfer request as per the [Transfers Policy](#).
- 5.5 Pets will generally be permitted in capital properties (i.e. those owned by MAH) where:
 - A tenant has maintained their property to a reasonable standard, including no evidence of property neglect or deliberate damage
 - A pet would not compound any noise issues
 - There are no concerns for the wellbeing of the pet
 - After obtaining a pet, a tenant continues to maintain their property to a reasonable standard.
- 5.6 Large domestic animals including dogs and cats will generally not be permitted in boarding and rooming accommodation settings.

- 5.7** Tenants in properties that MAH manage on behalf of other owners will be advised that MAH does not have the delegation to approve pet requests and MAH will be unable to guarantee that animal requests will be approved. MAH will relay any pet approval requests for tenants of leasehold properties to the relevant property owner or owners.
- 5.8** Tenants who do not seek permission to keep a pet at their property will be in breach of their lease or rooming accommodation agreement and they may be required to remove the animal from their property as per the [Breach of Tenancy Policy](#). Continued failure to remove an animal may result in steps to have a tenancy ended as per the [Ending Tenancies Policy](#).
- 5.9** Tenants with pets who are absent from their property for extended periods will be required to establish alternative arrangements for the care of their animal as per the [Absence from Dwelling Policy](#). MAH takes no responsibility for the care of pets and tenants will be responsible for any damage resulting from a pet at their property as per the [Debt Management Policy](#).
- 5.10** If a tenant keeps a pet, MAH may request that the tenant have the property steam cleaned or fumigated during or at the end of their tenancy.
- 5.11** MAH may contact animal welfare services to protect the wellbeing of an animal living at a property where required, and would provide access to these services when legally required to and/or in an emergency.
- 5.12** Staff will inform tenants of their right to appeal organisational decisions and to complain about the services of MAH as per the [Appeals Policy](#) and [Complaints Policy](#).
- 5.13** Staff will store all information relating to pet requests in the tenancy management system.

6 Definitions

Pet/companion animal: is any animal that is generally kept by a tenant for enjoyment, recreation and company. They include animals such as fish and mice, and larger domestic animals such as cats and dogs.

Assistance animal: an animal that has been specially trained to perform tasks to assist a person with disability or assist a person with particular health support needs.