



Pets

This fact sheet explains the rights and responsibilities of people who own pets and live in a property managed by Housing Plus. It also includes information on what you can do if neighbours' pets are causing problems.

Can I keep pets in my Housing Plus property?

Before getting a pet, you must talk to housing staff and get approval. Staff will take into consideration the following when making a decision:

- + Is a pet suitable to the property;
- + Is the property a leasehold property and if so, will the landlord allow pets;
- + Will a pet disturb the peace and quiet of your neighbours;
- + Is the animal a restricted dog under the Companion Animals Act, such as pit bulls or fighting dogs;
- + Is the dog declared dangerous by the local Council or court; and
- + Does the animal meet Council requirements. Some Councils may limit the number of animals you can keep, or not allow you to keep certain animals such as roosters.

What are my responsibilities if I keep a pet?

- + Make sure that your pet doesn't annoy your neighbours;
- + Make sure your pet doesn't cause any damage to your property;
- + Keep your property clean so it's not a health risk and doesn't attract pests like rats or fleas;
- + Ensure you have written permission from Housing Plus before altering your home for your pet, such as adding a cat door or building a bird aviary onto the house. Housing Plus will not pay for any alterations.
- + If you have a dog or cat, you must also register it with your council, and you must make sure your dog can't stray from your home or yard.

What if I live in a unit?

If you live in a unit or apartment you may be approved to keep a pet, but you should follow a few common sense rules so that your pet doesn't disturb your neighbours.

- + Select your pet with care so that it suits your lifestyle and is suitable for living in a flat. For example, apartments without private open space are not suited to dogs. Consider an bird or fish;
- + Make sure your pet is healthy, well nourished, groomed, vaccinated, well exercised and comfortable in the company of people;
- + Do not allow your pet to roam. If you have a dog, it should be kept on a lead outside your unit and in common areas.
- + Keep other animals such as rabbits, ferrets and guinea pigs in carrying cages; and
- + Pick up and properly dispose of any waste or mess your pet makes.



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What can I do if my neighbour's pet is causing problems?

- + The first thing to do is to talk to your neighbour about the problem.
- + Talk in a calm way about how their pet's behaviour is affecting you.
- + Don't blame the other person for their pet's behaviour, such as accusing them of being a bad neighbour or not looking after their animals;
- + Give your neighbour a chance to give their side of the story;
- + Work out a reasonable solution to fix the problem.

What if talking to my neighbour doesn't work?

If you find it too difficult to talk to your neighbour on your own, or you can't reach an agreement, you can call the Community Justice Centre. Community Justice Centres use expert mediators who hear both sides of the story and try to help you reach an agreement that everyone is happy with.

What if my neighbour won't go to the Community Justice Centre?

If your neighbour won't go to the Community Justice Centre or you can't reach an agreement with them, you should contact your local council and advise them about the animal(s) that are a nuisance or causing disturbance. If the animal has attacked someone, you might also want to contact the police. If an animal is being mistreated or has been abandoned you should contact an animal welfare agency.

What if none of this works?

If none of these steps work you can ask Housing Plus Housing staff for help. Housing staff will need as much information as possible, including any letters from the

council or police event numbers, and may speak to other neighbours.

Usually Housing Plus will discuss the problem with your neighbour and try to find a solution. If the problem continues, Housing Plus may ask for orders from the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal including, if necessary, the removal of the animal.

Any questions

If you have any questions about the information in this Fact Sheet, or on any other housing related matters, please contact staff at your local branch.

These responsibilities are the conditions of your Tenancy Agreement with Housing Plus. If your pet is a nuisance to your neighbours, Housing Plus may ask you to remove it.



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