

Policy Title	Keeping Pets
Policy Date	February 2026
Authorisation	Executive Housing & Property
Policy Owner	Executive General Manager, Housing Operations
Policy Category	Mission Australia Housing Operational Policy
Policy Subcategory	Housing – Tenancy Management

1 Purpose

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 This policy outlines the requirements for tenants or applicants of Mission Australia Housing (MAH) who wish to keep a pet or assistance animal at their property.

1.2 Coverage

- 1.2.1 This document is a national policy and covers Mission Australia Housing (MAH), and its entities. All references to Mission Australia Housing, MAH and Housing means MAH and its entities unless specifically stated otherwise.
- 1.2.2 This policy applies to all forms of housing provided by MAH including social, affordable and transitional housing.
- 1.2.3 This policy applies to housing provided by MAH in the jurisdictions of New South Wales (NSW), Tasmania (TAS), Victoria (VIC), Queensland (QLD), Western Australia (WA) and the Northern Territory (NT). Where jurisdiction-based variations exist in policies and procedures, these will be identified in the document.

1.3 Information on procedures and other related policies

- 1.3.1 This policy focuses on why certain things need to be done. It is supported by procedures that provide more detail on the “what” to do.
- 1.3.2 Other MAH policies also need to be considered in managing pets and assistance animals. To assist you, these are identified where relevant in this policy and supporting procedures.

2 Scope

2.1 Parts of Mission Australia that this policy covers

2.1.1 This policy applies to MAH staff responsible for working with MAH clients, tenants and properties.

2.2 Definitions

2.2.1 Key terms used in this policy are defined in the following table.

Term	Definition
Assistance animal	An animal that has been specially trained to perform tasks to assist a person with a disability, or to assist a person with particular health support needs.
Pet/companion animal	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.

3 Policy

3.1 Guiding principles

3.1.1 MAH is focused on the needs of tenants and their families:

- Consideration is given to tenants who need an animal of assistance for their health and wellbeing wherever required.
- Tenants requiring an assistance animal will be accommodated in a suitable property wherever possible.

3.1.2 The MAH process for approving pets is fair and transparent:

- Consideration is given to the location, size and suitability of a property when managing pet approval requests.
- The basis for decisions is explained to tenants.
- Tenants are given the opportunity to appeal decisions in order to ensure fair and transparent outcomes.

3.1.3 The MAH process complies with relevant laws and procedures:

- Properties are managed in accordance with the requirements of residential tenancy and rooming accommodation legislation, taking property owner requirements into account.

3.1.4 Tenants are required to seek the permission of MAH to have any type of pet or assistance animal at their property.

3.1.5 MAH is generally accepting of pets living at MAH properties provided that:

- The tenant has completed the MAH Pet Application Form for Tasmania or the appropriate State application form in New South Wales, Queensland or Western Australia.
 - A pet is suitable for the type of property and housing program.
 - The pet does not cause a nuisance to neighbours as per state-based residential tenancy and rooming accommodation legislation.
 - There is ongoing adherence to any property by-laws that may be in effect.
 - The pet is not a dangerous dog as defined under the appropriate state-based Companion Animals Act.
 - There is no property or tenancy matters that may impact the ability for the tenant to suitably look after a pet.
- 3.1.6 Tenants requiring an assistance animal to help with daily living should provide the evidence set out in the **Allocation of Housing Policy** at the time of application. 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.
- 3.1.7 Where existing tenants come to require a property that is suitable for an assistance animal due to disability or health needs, Housing Officers should assess the existing property and consider any possible minor modifications. Where the property is found to be unsuitable, Housing Officers should encourage tenants to initiate a transfer request as set out in the **Transfers and Other Changes to Tenancy Policy**.
- 3.1.8 MAH is required to respond to pet requests within specific timelines. If MAH does not respond within the timeline the pet request may be automatically approved, as outlined in the table below:

State	Specific Requirements
New South Wales	<p>MAH must respond within 21 days of the date the NSW Pet Application Form is received and state two key pieces of information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether MAH approves or refuses the request • Other conditions for approval or reasons for refusal. If MAH does not respond within 21 days, the request is automatically approved as per the RTA.
Northern Territory	<p>MAH must respond within 14 days of receiving the pet request. If the MAH objects to the proposed pet, then they must make an application to NTCAT within 14 days. The NTCAT member decides whether MAH's objections are reasonable.</p>
Queensland	<p>MAH must respond within 14 days of receiving the QLD Pet Request Form and state two key pieces of information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether MAH approves or refuses the request • Other conditions for approval or reasons for refusal. If MAH does not respond within 14 days or states to two key pieces of information the request is automatically approved as per the RTA.
Tasmania	<p>There is no specific time to respond or process if MAH refuses. However, MAH will seek to respond within 14 days</p>
Western Australia	<p>Tenant must submit a request to the landlord to keep a pet using Form 25 Pet Request.v</p> <p>MAH has 14 days starting the day after they receive the form to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a decision and let the tenant know, and • Apply for Commissioner Approval to refuse if needed <p>If MAH wants to set any special conditions, they need to get Commissioner approval. Conditions only apply if they are approved.</p> <p>MAH must respond within 14 days of receiving the pet request</p>

3.2 Limitations

3.2.1 Pets will generally be permitted in properties owned by MAH where:

- The type of pet requested is allowed under state or local government rules applying in that area;
- 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; and
- After obtaining a pet, a tenant continues to maintain their property to a reasonable standard.

3.2.2 Large domestic animals including dogs and cats will generally not be permitted in boarding and rooming accommodation settings.

3.2.3 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 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/s.

3.3 Failure to seek approval

3.3.1 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 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 being taken to have a tenancy ended as per the **Ending Tenancies Policy**.

3.4 Tenant responsibilities

3.4.1 Tenants with pets or assistance animals are responsible for:

- Ensuring that the property is properly maintained. Where 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.

3.4.2 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**.

3.4.3 MAH takes no responsibility for the care of pets, and tenants will be responsible for any damage resulting from a pet to their property as per the **Bad Debt Management Procedure**.

3.5 Appeals

3.5.1 Staff will inform tenants of their right to appeal decisions and to complain about the services of MAH as per the **Appeals and Complaints Policy**.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 Housing staff including Housing Officers and Client Service Officers are responsible for:

- Informing tenants of their rights and responsibilities in accordance with this policy.
- Inspecting properties and assessing tenant pet and assistance animal requests in

accordance with this policy.

- Issuing notices where required in accordance with this policy.
- Keeping records of the process in the relevant systems.
- Recommending improvements to this policy and associated procedures
- Contact local Council or animal welfare agencies where there are concerns for the welfare of an animal.

4.2 Team Leaders/Regional Managers are responsible for:

- Assisting housing staff to implement this policy.
- Ensuring good management of evidence in the tenancy management system.
- Incorporating this policy and associated procedures into staff induction and training.
- Ensuring staff are aware of and have access to this policy and associated procedures.
- Escalating feedback about this policy to the policy owner and/or policy writer.

4.3 The Operations Manager and State Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring that MAH complies with this policy and associated procedures.
- Recommending any changes to this policy and associated procedures.