

Pet friendly accommodation



Although more than two thirds of Australians are pet owners, many are routinely banned from rental accommodation. Yet experience shows that pet owners can make responsible and reliable long-term tenants, with a well managed pet friendly policy actually helping to improve profitability, broaden the pool of prospective tenants, lower vacancy rates and reduce tenant turnover.

Few rental agreements in Australia even mention pets with the unfortunate default position being that pets are not admitted. Although landlords and managing agents cannot discriminate against prospective tenants on the basis of race, religion or family relations, bans are often imposed on pets with relatively few tenants permitted to keep them as a result.

Clear guidelines and policies on the keeping of pets can assist in screening out irresponsible owners while not penalising responsible pet owners.

The brochures 'Tenants with Pets' and 'Renting with Pets' have been developed for use in all States and Territories and provide information that will help landlords, managing agents and pet owners overcome the issues associated with owning pets in rental accommodation. The brochures are available for free download on the Australian Companion Animal Council website www.acac.org.au.

Ryan Blunden created the website "Pet Friendly Rentals" once he recognised the lack of pet friendly accommodation that was advertised. It was Ryan's own experience as a tenant that provided the initial inspiration.

"A few years ago I nearly had to give Tonka (his dog) up because I was finding it so hard to find somewhere suitable for the two of us to live," said Ryan. "It was such a distressing and worrying time (for both Tonka and I) that I swore I would do whatever I could to prevent other people from having to experience the same kind of stress."



Tricia Wiles – Purrfect Pawtraits

"In June 2008 I developed and released a small but significant piece of software which allows pet owners to quickly and easily search for pet friendly rental listings on various real estate websites such as Realestate.com.au."

Ryan Blunden, Founder, Pet Friendly Rentals

The website gives pet owners Australia-wide the ability to search for pet friendly rentals across several suburbs in minutes instead of hours, greatly increasing their chances of finding a suitable property.

Benefits of pet friendly rental accommodation

- More access to the companionship and other social networks and supports that pet ownership brings for responsible local residents
- Less surrenders of dogs and cats at pounds and shelters due to difficulty finding suitable accommodation permitting pets

Tips

- Distribute the free brochures 'Renting with Pets' and 'Tenants with Pets' through your Council office and local Real Estate Agents
- Publish information supporting the need for pet friendly accommodation in local newspapers and Council newsletters

Web Links

Pet Friendly Rentals - www.petfriendlyrentals.com.au

Australian Companion Animal Council - www.acac.org.au.