

# Keeping Pets in Rental Homes

December 2022



## About Make Renting Fair NSW

Make Renting Fair NSW is a community campaign. We know everyone deserves a home that is affordable, stable, healthy, and 'feels like home'. Working with community organisations, faith based peaks, unions and directly with renters, the campaign is focused on making renting fair for the more than 1 in 3 households who rent their home in NSW.

*The work of Make Renting fair takes place on unceded Aboriginal land across the state of New South Wales. The Tenants' Union of NSW office is located on the unceded land of the Gadigal of the Eora Nation.*

## Contact

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## About this submission

This is a submission compiled of the contributions, stories and views from over 75 renters, collected via a survey on the Tenants' Union of NSW website, through Tenants' Union of NSW and Make Renting Fair social media channels, in Make Renting Fair campaign meetings, and at an in-person event. Please see Appendix 1 attached for the de-identified raw survey data.

We encourage you to read this submission in conjunction with the Tenants' Union of NSW submission to the consultation.

## Recommendations

We note the recommendations made in the Tenants' Union of NSW's submission to this consultation:

### **Recommendation 1**

Change NSW residential tenancy laws on keeping pets in rental properties so as to make it easier for renters to keep pets. A model should be implemented that ensures renters are able to decide to keep a pet, except where it would be unreasonable to do so.

### **Recommendation 2**

If the tenant must continue to seek consent to keep pets on the premises, the landlord must only be able to withhold consent through an order from the Tribunal.

The Tribunal, when determining whether it is reasonable for a landlord to withhold consent should consider only a limited number of factors, these being whether:

- the premises are unsuitable to keep the animal; or
- keeping the animal on the premises would result in unreasonable damage to the premises; or
- keeping the animal on the premises would be an unacceptable risk to public health or safety; or
- the landlord would suffer significant hardship; or
- keeping the animal on the premises would be contrary to other legislation, council order or strata by-law.

### **Recommendation 3**

If the landlord wishes to deny permission for a renter to keep a pet, the onus should be on the landlord to obtain a Tribunal order allowing them to refuse consent.

### **Recommendation 4**

If further guidance is required to assist the Tribunal in determining whether a residential property is appropriate based on the welfare needs of the specific pet, additional guidelines be developed and added to the *Companion Animals Act 1998*.

### **Recommendation 5**

Amend the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010* to prohibit landlords and agents from asking about pet ownership at the application stage.

### **Recommendation 6**

Amend the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010* to prohibit 'no pets' terms in residential tenancy agreements.

### **Recommendation 7**

Continue to prohibit landlords and real estate agents from requesting pet bonds.

### **Recommendation 8**

Consideration be given to how the NSW government can improve landlord uptake of

insurance, including consideration of any benefits of requiring 'landlord insurance' as a basic form of business insurance when renting a residential premises.

### **Recommendation 9**

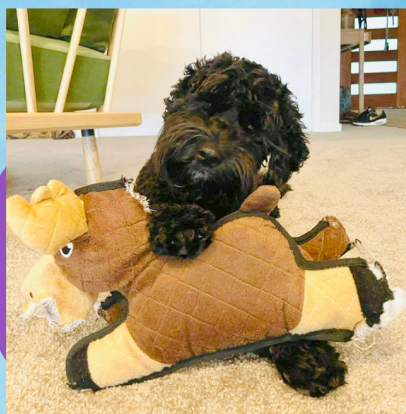
Remove 'no grounds' eviction provisions (sections 84 and 85) of the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010* and replace them with a range of 'reasonable' grounds for ending a tenancy, based on community consultation.

### **Recommendation 10**

Reforms to make it easier for renters to keep pets be implemented as soon as is practicable through a two phase implementation of a new model.

## Stories and experiences of NSW renters

Some contributions to this submission have been edited for length and/or clarity. Please see Appendix 1 attached for de-identified raw survey responses.



*"I would rather live under a bridge or in my car than give up my dog."*

— Renter, Central Coast



*I was extra careful with my dog's training to make sure he didn't annoy the neighbours. I lived in fear that I wouldn't be able to find a home for me and my pet if we had to move. I would rather live under a bridge or in my car than give up my dog.*

*Pets are better emotional support than most humans. Pets bring life and joy to the home. I don't think I would have gotten through lockdown without my pet. Pets make a house a home. Their companionship is good for mental well-being. It shouldn't be up to a landlord if we own a pet. Renters are not second class citizens, we should have the same rights as homeowners.*

**Renter, Central Coast, survey serial #3**

*"I struggle with chronic and severe **mental health issues** and I find **animals very comforting**.*

*I don't have a pet whilst I'm **trapped in the rental market** since I don't want to risk being homeless or having to surrender a pet I grow to love."*

— Renter, Haberfield



*"I struggle with chronic and quite severe mental health issues and I find the presence of animals to be very comforting. But I don't have a pet and I don't feel like I should own one whilst I'm trapped in the rental market as I don't want to risk being homeless or having to surrender a pet I grow to love.*

*No one should have to choose between keeping a pet and being homeless. Landlords need to accept that their properties are investments, and like any investment there are risks. If they can't accept that people want to LIVE in the homes they rent, maybe they should seek out other investment opportunities."*

**Renter, Haberfield, survey serial #8**



*After moving into a house that had been advertised as "pets on application" we asked to get a cat and were refused. We moved out at the end of that 9 month lease so that we could try again. Two years ago we had to move because the landlord was selling the house and wanted to sell it empty. We had a cat at the time (he has since passed away) and found that about half the houses advertised in our area (Sydney's Inner West) said "no pets"; most of the others said "pets on application", and very few said "pets welcome".*

*Our tenancy laws are completely outdated - based on an assumption that renting is a temporary form of accommodation that people will only live in for a short period while saving to buy. Now that so many individuals and families have been locked out of owning a home, our tenancy laws need to catch up and recognise that people are paying rent to LIVE in a home, not stay for a short while. Renters are no less likely to be responsible pet owners than homeowners are, and we pay bond in case there is any damage left unresolved. Why should kids have to grow up without pets just because their parents/carers can't afford to buy a house?!*

*Pets play such an important role in health and wellbeing. They're great for mental health, exercise, companionship, helping kids learn responsibility and care. It is so much harder to find a rental property when you have a pet and we have an awful situation where pets sometimes have to be given up and/or people stay in unsafe DV situations because they can't find anywhere to go where they can take their pet/s.*

**Renter, Petersham, survey serial #62**

*I don't have a pet because my landlord won't allow it, and it impacts my mental health. I grew up with dogs and they were wonderful companions, they bring so much joy and laughter to a home. We pay hundreds of dollars to our landlords each week - they can afford the risk.*

**Renter, Ashfield, survey serial #22**

*Studies show that owning a pet reduces stress, anxiety and depression; ease loneliness; encourage exercise and improve your overall health. Why should these health benefits only be accessible to homeowners? I think the current laws contribute to an incohesive and unjust society. Also, the current laws send a message that all tenants are unreliable and cannot be trusted to be responsible pet owners. My belief is that a tenant is responsible for all damage incurred no matter what, and whether caused by another human, or pet is irrelevant.*

*We have been tenants for 18 years at the same property. We have made several requests to be allowed to have a pet, all denied. The reasons given by the landlord were that pets cause damage. The landlords also own the house next door to ours. They have leased that house to their family members who have all been allowed to have pets.*

**Renter, Hornsby, survey serial #41**



*"As a young woman living alone I feel safer having dogs around. But my renting options are very restricted, and I often have to **pay above advertised to secure housing.**"*



— Renter, Newtown

*As a young woman living alone I feel safer having dogs around. But my renting options are very restricted, and I often have to pay above advertised to secure housing. If the issue with pets is property damage and/or noise, how is it different from having children in a home? Ensuring and enforcing responsible pet ownership is a more productive route that benefits all involved.*

**Renter, Newtown, survey serial #25**

*"For many of us, our pets are as close as a family member.*

***If you are evicted and forced to move you cannot just abandon your dog."***

— Renter, Broadmeadow



*Even though I have permission now, there have been times where we have had to move due to no fault eviction and then moved into somewhere that wouldn't allow pets and lied about having a dog out of desperation. If you are evicted and forced to move you cannot just abandon your dog. For many of us, our pets are as close as a family member.*

**Renter, Broadmeadow, survey serial #6**

*I strongly believe that the laws should change. Renters have the same desire for animal companionship as anyone else, and the fact that we have to ask someone else's permission to keep a pet is infantilising and unfair.*

*My cat is 17 years old and it's only in the past year that she's been officially permitted by a landlord. For the 16 previous years during which I've been renting as cat owner, I've had to hide her during rental inspections and from the property owners, because none of my previous leases have permitted animals. I've always had that background anxiety that if my cat was discovered by a landlord or real estate agent I could be evicted. I've sometimes done ad-hoc rescue and re-homing of street kittens as well, and I don't like knowing that if I try to help an animal, I put my own housing at risk.*

*Pets are important to me because I love animals and I like to be around them. As a single person and renter facing constant economic insecurity, the companionship of an animal has been really beneficial for my mental health over many years. Everybody should be able to experience the love of a companion animal. NSW has really backwards laws on renters and pets and it needs to change!*

**Renter, North Sydney, survey serial #58**

*My landlord keeps refusing requests to get a pet, citing potential floorboard damage as the reason why even though I've offered to replace the floorboards! We need to tighten up on reasons why a landlord can refuse a pet.*

**Renter, Meadowbank, survey serial #45**

*I'm very limited in the rental properties I can apply for because landlords can just automatically refuse them. I have had applications refused explicitly because I have a dog, even though she's been absolutely no problem at previous properties.*

*I love my dog very much and during lockdown she was a massive help, both in having another creature to interact with and a reason to leave the house when I had very little motivation to. She's also good friends with our neighbours, who enjoy her company.*

*Allowing pets by default would make the whole experience of renting easier for a lot of people, and it's unfair that having a pet is basically a privilege for homeowners that property investors can bestow on renters if they feel like it.*

**Renter, Dulwich Hill, survey serial #2**



# Camperdown Memorial Rest Park

## Saturday 19 November




**The pets say:**  
**End blanket 'no pets' clauses**  
**in NSW tenancy law.**







Name:  Postcode:

 My renting story:


As a out of home care social worker, believe it is Beneficial for ~~Both~~ Both sides ~~for~~ that tenants ~~to~~ have an animal. These animals can be a support system, which can improve tenant participation and engagement.



As an out of home care social worker, I believe it is beneficial for both sides that tenants have an animal. Animals can be a support system, which can improve tenant participation and engagement.

**Renter, Chippendale**

Name:  Keisha. Postcode:  2038

 My views on pets & renting in NSW:


I rent in Annandale with my partner. We love our apartment, it is our home. I have never even considered getting a pet because of tenancy laws. I would love a dog.



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**Renter, Annandale**

Name: Asha Postcode: 2008

 My views on pets & renting in NSW:


Pets should absolutely be allowed in rentals → people ~~have~~ depend on their pets - and they should be allowed.



*Pets should absolutely be allowed in rentals. People depend on their pets - and they should be allowed.*

**Renter, Chippendale**

Name:  Postcode:

 My renting story:

I rent in Petersham with my partner and our gorgeous dog Bonnie. We're building a family and want to put down roots in our community which we love. Unfortunately the current laws around pets in rentals mean we feel constantly insecure for fear of being evicted. This makes it hard to feel secure and make long-term plans. When increasing numbers of Australians are renting for life, our laws need to catch up to reflect this and give renters a more equal playing field.

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*When increasing numbers of Australians are renting for life, our laws need to catch up to reflect this and give renters a more equal playing field.*

**Renter, Petersham**



*We were told in the inspection for our current unit that the landlord was fine with dogs, and most of the other units in the building have dogs. After we signed our lease we put a deposit on our dog and informed our agent without thinking they'd have a problem - however they sent a direct email from the landlord saying that she wouldn't allow it. Our neighbours told us not to worry because the landlord never comes over anyway, so we got our dog. This experience really shook us. We're currently month to month and are worried about finding a new rental for all of us. We've been saving for a house since 2020 and keep getting pushed out of the market.*

*I have a 5 month old baby and he is messier than my dog. We wanted to raise our kid around pets to teach him to respect animals and be aware of other living things. The dog has made our life much better and I'd get her again. I work in mental health and psychiatric settings and having a pet makes a huge difference to my health. My dog has meant me and my partner survived lockdown, became healthier and met new friends in our suburb.*

**Renter, Parramatta, survey serial #20**



*My partner and I live in a sharehouse that has one landlord-approved dog. I have wanted to adopt a dog for many years but have been nervous about the consequences as a renter trying to find a new home. I ended up secretly adopting a dog without the knowledge of my landlord (who lives two doors up the road) which was very stressful as I had to sneak my dog in and out of the house for walks.*

*My mum was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease in February and I was diagnosed with Crohn's disease in August. Having a dog during this incredibly difficult year has been a huge comfort for me, has given me a reason to get out of bed and out of the house on some days, and she's been great company when I've had to spend weeks in bed. It's also been really heartwarming to see this tiny, nervous rescued chihuahua come out of her shell and actually enjoy her life after being used for breeding for the first three years of her life!*

*My partner and I would like to move out of our sharehouse and into a place of our own but with the current rental crisis and the fact we now have a dog, that doesn't feel like a possibility for us at the moment. I think it is unfair that landlords have so much control over renters' lives and that it is stressful having a pet just because I can't afford to buy my own home!*

**Renter, Marrickville, survey serial #12**



*There are secret cats and dogs in properties all throughout NSW, and they overwhelmingly don't cause any nuisance, damage or problems of any kind. It's about time the laws were changed so that renters don't have to go through the tedious, stressful charade of hiding the pets that already live in so many rental properties.*

*Landlords need to understand that they have chosen to make a living out of other peoples' need to live and have a home, and that being an investor should not automatically give them the right to dictate how other people live their lives. The housing situation in Australia is ridiculous, and it's unfair that one third of households don't have the same rights as those who are lucky enough to own their own (or multiple) homes. It is sheer luck, and privilege, for the most part, that separates home owners from renters*

*I am a former tenant, I rented for nearly 20 years around the inner west, in share houses and with my partner. In every house I've rented in, at least one person has had a 'secret cat'. We reasoned that if we asked for permission, there was a chance that we'd have our application to rent rejected, which, with the difficulty in finding an affordable rental, was not a risk we could take. It seemed like a more sensible risk to not disclose the cat, hide it when inspections came up, and deny its existence if ever questioned. This didn't seem to be a problem for most places I rented for most of the time I was a renter, and I know countless people, friends and family, who have done the same. My 77 year old father is a renter with a 'secret cat' who puts his cat in the car when there is an inspection, for example.*

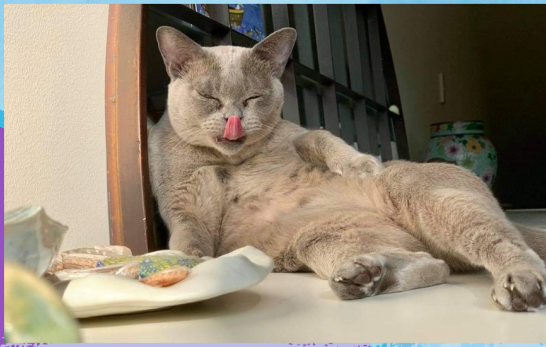
*In the last property I lived in, my landlord would turn up unexpected, look through our windows, snoop around and in doing so discovered the existence of our 'secret cat'. They told us to get rid of it or move out. Coincidentally, the cat was old and sick and we needed to have it put down at about the same time. But it was stressful and unfair nonetheless. The cat was quiet, clean and didn't cause any damage to the property. Subsequently we couldn't get another pet at that property, although we would have liked to at the time. We couldn't afford to move. My partner, who suffers from PTSD, experienced severe mental health problems in the years following the cat's death, and I sincerely think that having a companion animal at that time would have made it easier for him. He felt too overwhelmed to go through the process of registering a support animal. I imagine there are a lot of people in this situation.*

*Pets, cats and dogs in particular, are a part of many people's lives and families. I find it deeply unfair that some people (home owners) have a right to have pets, while others don't. I am a home owner now, but I strongly support tenants' rights to have pets.*

**Former renter, Katoomba, survey serial #57**

*Pets are great for mental health and it feels unnecessarily controlling to disallow them. In the current rental crisis I've avoided getting a pet thus far to try to make finding a new place a little less difficult. It's incredibly hard and emotionally taxing to find a rental as it is.*

**Renter, Newtown, survey serial #24**



*"I was couch surfing for six weeks trying to find a place I could have my 15-year-old cat. There was no way I was going to abandon my constant companion. It was incredibly stressful and exhausting."*



— Renter, Lilyfield

*I was couch surfing for six weeks trying to find a place I could legitimately have my cat. At the time my cat was 15 years old, there was no way I was going to abandon my constant companion; that's cruel. It was incredibly stressful and exhausting.*

*The law should make it easier for renters to keep pets. Most pet owners are responsible and barriers to keeping pets actually means animals are abandoned or surrendered. Our cats are a great source of comfort for me and my family. They bring us together, and during COVID; they were a solace to my teenagers who were feeling isolated from friends. As a bonus, our neighbours love seeing our cats sunbaking in their window bed!*

**Renter, Lilyfield, survey serial #33**



*"I've been looking for a pet-friendly rental for 5 months that meets my disability access needs. My birds bring me real joy: spending time with my boys, listening to them talk and sing. All I want is somewhere I can live with my birds."*



— Renter, Armidale

*I've been looking for a rental for months. I have certain accessibility needs because of my disabilities. Nearly every place I find, the ad says strictly no pets. There have been two places I've come across in five months that meet my needs, are in my budget, and explicitly say they allow pets. Two.*

*I've lost two jobs since the pandemic started, so have had to move in with family I don't get along with. My birds are the only thing the last three years that have brought me any real joy: spending time every day with my boys, listening to them talk and sing. All I want is somewhere I can be by myself with my birds. But they won't let me have that.*

**Renter, Armidale, survey serial #10**

*With covid isolation and increasing mental health issues it's important not to feel alone. Pets give comfort and company, and improve mental and physical health and wellbeing. This saves the government money in Medicare and other programs. To me, pets mean love, health, companionship, happiness, socialising, and fitness.*

*I have had to give away pets when forced to find new rentals. I have asked twice in the eight years I have been in my current home and the answer has been no. I have always been a good tenant and there is no reason why that would change if I had a pet.*

**Renter, Hamilton, survey serial #40**

*I have lived in my current rental for three years. It is a stand alone, 4 bedroom, 2 bathroom house in a new estate with an average sized yard. We have never caused any problems here, it's always clean, tidy and well looked after. We've had no issues raised during inspections, and the rent is always on time or early.*

*18 months ago I requested a large breed dog at the property which was declined. I was heartbroken but moved on. Almost 6 weeks ago I sent another written request for a dog and I am yet to receive an answer. If I was in Victoria, I could have gotten the dog after 2 unresponsive weeks. Instead, I am sat in limbo not knowing if it's a yes or no and too scared to send any more follow up emails in case they decide I'm too much trouble and evict me.*

*Dogs are my life. I have owned dogs all my life until I moved into this rental and was told I cannot have one. My mental health is suffering without a companion animal and my 5 year old daughter is heartbroken she can't have a dog.*

**Renter, Hunter Valley, survey serial #32**

*The stress of moving and inspecting rentals plus the cost of renting going up is enough stress let alone having to think about moving with a pet. You know if you seek a new place you're likely to get rejected vs someone who is pet-free. It's hard. I think we should treat each applicant without discrimination - we shouldn't have to note a pet until you get to the offer stage.*

**Renter, Dulwich Hill, survey serial #16**

*I am afraid to apply to have my pet on my lease out of fear that the application will be denied. The rental market is already so tight with such little supply that I can't afford to be rejected. There is no reason to not allow pets in a rental property - humans do far more damage than pets do. It's inhumane and unfair for renters who already have far less rights than landlords.*

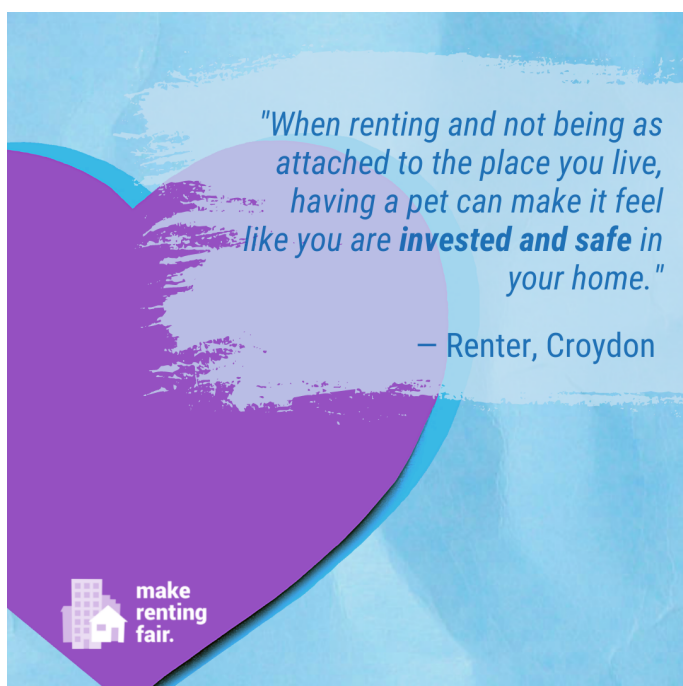
**Renter, Ashfield, survey serial #23**



*I've been on the go, moving into short term rentals and living in my van with my dog since June 2021, which has had a huge impact on my mental health. I've had to move up and down the East Coast to wherever I could find a pet friendly room to live in. My boy Arlo has saved me from the darkness that sometimes creeps into my thoughts. Without Arlo my mental health would have been so heavy I may not even be here today. I owe him my life.*

*I've had to struggle and fight so much for something that I should not be deprived of: a safe place to call home. It's inhumane and unjust how we get treated because we've decided to look after an animal. Pets have an amazing ability to create warmth without wanting anything in return. They give you unconditional love and with training, can be better housemates than some humans.*

**Renter, survey serial #21**



*Pets provide the comfort and love that being at home brings. When renting and not being as attached to the place you live, having a pet can make it feel like you are invested and safe where you live with them.*

*Pet owners are just as responsible (if not more so) in looking after a house as any other renter. Potential damages to the property could occur in a multitude of different ways and are covered by the renter's bond.*

**Renter, Croydon, survey serial #11**



*I have never attempted to ask for permission to get a pet as my leases have always stated no pets, but owning a pet would be good for sure. People who rent alone are often lonely. There is much evidence that proves a companion pet can improve mental & physical well-being.*

**Renter, Tahmoor, survey serial #34**

*Isn't the whole point of bond to cover any damage? What difference if it's done by people or pets?*

**Via social media**

*I've had difficulties obtaining permission to have a pet. Most people are very responsible with pets, and they help in so many ways. Pets help with social isolation, better mental and physical health outcomes, and a sense of companionship. Pets also help people who struggle with loneliness and social isolation engage in the community.*

**Renter, Teralba, survey serial #35**

*Pets are good for mental health, quality of life, and moving without them or being forced to put them down to find a place to live is inhumane. The bond is meant to cover damages, and there are inspections to avoid issues like the property being mistreated.*

**Renter, Ashfield, survey serial #50**

*We only got a pet at our current rental home. We were lucky the owners said yes. If we are asked to leave our current rental home, we are worried that in a tight rental market it will be difficult to get a rental in our price range that will allow our dog. As we got a greyhound, we'll also need a place with a backyard for him to zoom in. We have the additional worry that as our child is in school, we are restricted to a certain geographical area so they don't have to travel long distances or move schools. Therefore, finding an affordable rental may be difficult and let's hope not impossible.*

*It's extremely difficult to buy a home right now - as it has been for a long time and will continue to be. Renters should not have to sacrifice having a pet and other basic lifestyle choices. They are part of the family, they are great company for all of us and good for mental health and physical health, due to the walks.*

**Renter, Earlwood, survey serial #51**

## Renters need homes that feel like home



A rental is not just a landlord's investment property, it's a person or family's **home**.

Renters should be able to make simple choices to make the house they live in a home, including whether they can adopt a pet.

**End blanket 'no pets' clauses in NSW tenancy law.**

Signed... Annie

Human(s): Gemma

Animal(s): Annie Chihuahua

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Human(s): Cyha

Animal(s): Bunny

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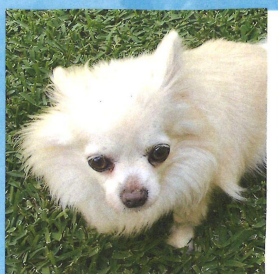
Signed...

Animal's name: Rosie

Human's name: PAUL

Postcode: 2104

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Signed...

Animal's name: Jinjah + Gerhe

Human's name: Cyha

Postcode: 2107

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Happy, Central Coast



Rocky, Sydney



Tara, Ashfield



Armar, Kempsey



*We were evicted from our prior rental due to a new property manager who didn't agree with animals in rentals. My dog is a therapy dog for my PTSD, and had been approved prior to this property manager taking over.*

**Renter, Glenmore Park, survey serial #38**

*I've had fewer choices of rentals, and struggled to find places with adequate fencing. I've grown up with my pets, they help me immensely with the management of my mental health issues and bring me great joy. I believe that if the problem with pets is damage to the property, or noise, how is that different to just being a normal tenant who could cause damage or noise in any other way?*

**Renter, St Peters, survey serial #30**

*I have found that a huge percentage of the market will not allow pets on rented premises. I have two types of pets as I live on a rural property. I have drop-ins that visit, I call them free and wild spirits, and they bring me a lot of pleasure. I also have my domesticated bunnies, which have been hand raised from birth. We have a great bond and they return love by snuggling and playing with me.*

*Pets are comforting and great for mental health. Animals are used in palliative care and hospitals to promote wellbeing. They're great for people suffering with mental issues and trauma. When you have a pet they are part of the family, they bring joy to life and help to bond families. Why not let people have pets? If the premises are left in the same condition as when you move in, what is the problem?*

**Renter, Macksville, survey serial #31**

*There are many ways in which landlords have excessive power in the tenant-landlord relationship, but this is the worst. I've experienced suspicion by real estate agents, and flat refusal to allow "animals" in the house. My dogs are my family. I need them as much as they need me.*

**Renter, Ashfield, survey serial #44**



*My new landlord wouldn't allow pets, so I had to hide my cat at my parents' or hide him in the laundry room. Pets help with mental health and the idea that a landlord could make you surrender a pet is a horrible idea.*

*Most pets cause the same amount if not less mess and damage than babies or young children, and most responsible pet owners would get a quiet animal that wouldn't disturb apartment block neighbours, and happily clean any mess.*

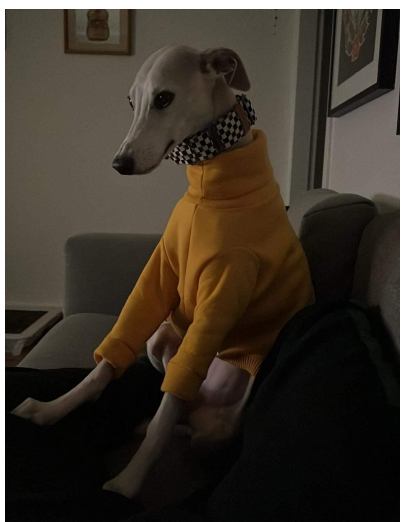
**Renter, Rose Bay, survey serial #15**



*I've wanted a pet for a long time and have been lucky to find an apartment that would accept a cat. It's really hard finding a pet "considered" place as it also always adds to the price.*

*Pets are such good company. I think we all found in COVID how much connection was necessary, and they also ground us in what's important, which is getting by and being there for each other. Changing the rules would help get pets off the streets, out of state run and funded pounds, and help everyone's wellbeing.*

**Renter, Marrickville, survey serial #13**



*We've had to go through multiple approval processes, subjected to ridiculous conditions and flat out refusal of applications once we advise of our pet. My pet is important to me as she is a member of my family. She brings joy and love into my life and my house and I couldn't imagine life without her.*

**Renter, Summer Hill, survey serial #26**

*I've been denied rental applications and been unable to find pet-friendly rentals. This has meant I've lived in less than admirable living situations or needed to move back to the family home, outside of the city, with a 2-hour commute each way to my job.*

*If the issue with keeping pets is property damage or noise, how is it different to having children, or leasing your property as a share-house to multiple friends/partners? Pets are so important for my health and well-being. They provide love, responsibility, companionship and joy.*

**Renter, Newtown, survey serial #28**

*Pets are part of the family and they enhance our quality of life. Everyone is entitled to good quality of life and the love and compassion pets give. Owning a pet can help children to understand not only love but responsibility. Much more needs to be done to help tenants keep their pets.*

**Renter, Campbelltown, survey serial #36**

*My pets have been used by landlords and agents as a manipulative device: don't ask for repairs, we know you have pets and therefore we'll just evict you. My pets provide a significant role in maintaining my physical and mental health. I make all other decisions, particularly around housing, based on their needs as a priority.*

**Renter, Coffs Harbour, survey serial #42**

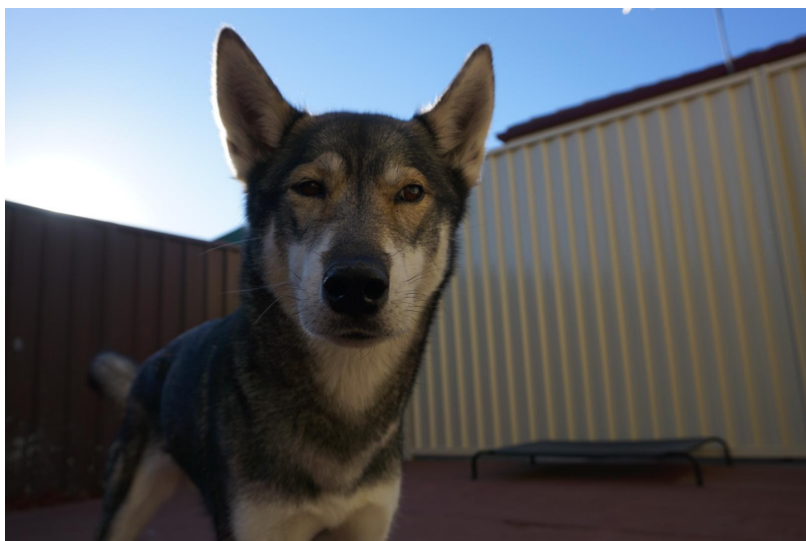
*I've often seen no pets allowed as default lease requirement, with no negotiation possible. As a person with a disability, my mental health can manifest as clinical depression and chronic anxiety. Pets support mental health in a positive way: combating loneliness, prompting outdoor exercise as needed by pet as well as socialisation opportunities that may arise from this, providing affection, mood lifting, companionship and motivation to care for another being which can provide reprieve from self-focussed unhappiness.*

**Renter, Narooma, survey serial #43**

*We have not told our landlord we have a cat, we know they will not allow it. Landlords refuse pets on arbitrary reasons, assuming they will always cause a mess or somehow cause damage to the property, but this is far from the truth. Pets are important for mental health and combatting loneliness, something we're all familiar with.*

**Renter, survey serial #4**





*I've had to pay at least 15% more in rent, with the only reasoning being we have a pet. I've also been denied rentals due to my pet.*

*This is detrimental for my health, social life and overall well-being.*

**Renter, Belfield, survey serial #27**



*Finding a place to rent and being open about having a pet, it's next to impossible. My pet is part of my family, I love them and they bring joy and structure to my life.*

*Pets help people with chronic illness, neurodivergence and mental health issues, it's unfair to ban these people from having them unless they put down a mortgage that they can't afford or pay increased rent.*

**Renter, Marrickville, survey serial #14**



*It was challenging for me to find a house with a pet, it eliminated a lot of options in an already tight rental market. When we applied it was 'pets on application' so we had no idea if our pet would be approved. Our dog is part of our family, so surrendering our dog was not an option.*

**Renter, Katoomba, survey serial #46**

*We have to smuggle our cat and all signs of her existence out of the house twice a year for inspections, and keep her out of sight of any tradespeople or similar who attend our home. We worry that if she meows when we are not home or somehow irks a neighbour we could be reported and lose our home, even though we are good tenants and are often praised by the real estate for how well we keep the home. If this were to happen we might also be blacklisted and have trouble finding another rental.*

*Renters shouldn't be second-class citizens. If a pet causes damage to the home, the renter should bear the cost of any repairs, as they would for any other damage caused to the home. But the choice and risks of pet ownership should be open to renters as capable adults, instead of being restricted.*

**Renter, Petersham, survey serial #47**

*It should be much easier for renters to keep pets - especially low-maintenance, low-mess pets like cats. People should also be protected from ridiculous cleaning/pest-control costs at the end of the tenancy where the pet has not impacted the property.*

*I personally don't have a pet but know many renters who have wanted one. A friend of mine was told to pay an exorbitant fee to get her apartment fumigated when her lease ended, even though she only had 1 indoor cat who had not impacted the property whatsoever. Not only should people be able to have pets, but they should also not be required to pay fumigation/cleaning fees where there are no grounds.*

*Pets are so important to people's well-being and overall happiness. They can also help people create routine and become comfortable with responsibility.*

**Renter, Sydney, survey serial #9**

*Pets are a huge contributor to improved mental health and quality of life, particularly for people living alone. They also cause no more structural damage to a property than humans accidentally, but other potential tenants have a much better chance at being chosen than renters with pets.*

**Renter, Camperdown, survey serial #19**

*Pets provide comfort to all and also provide families with important life lessons. they add to general well being. There's a problem with the lack of properties that encourage pet ownership.*

**Renter, Dulwich Hill, survey serial #39**



*"My dog is my **best friend** and provides me so much **emotional support** and a reason to get out of bed on my down days. **He's more than a pet, he's a member of the family.**"*



— Renter, Marrickville

*I have experienced countless (more than 20) application rejections because of my dog, despite a flawless rental history. Until I found where I currently live, I faced so much discrimination because I have a dog. Even offering up to \$100 rent more a week, I was getting rejected on the basis of my dog.*

*My dog is my best friend and provides me so much emotional support and a reason to get out of bed on my down days. He's more than a pet, he's a member of the family.*

**Renter, Marrickville, survey serial #19**



*"I was asked for a 'pet bond' on top of my normal bond which I pushed back on and got approval. But now I'm **sure they will keep my bond or a portion just because I have a pet.**"*



— Renter, Dulwich Hill

*I was asked for a 'pet bond' on top of my normal bond which I pushed back on and got approval but only for a small dog. Ironically the small dogs in our block bark the most. I am sure they will keep my bond or a portion just because I have a pet.*

*I am unable to have children of my own so I am glad I can have a pet now as I probably won't own my own home in the next few years. Having a pet makes me feel less alone, and allows my partner and I to have something to make us feel whole.*

**Renter, Dulwich Hill, survey serial #16**

*We aren't allowed to get a companion animal according to our housing provider even though both my partner and I have doctor's notes from multiple doctors saying we need one. I also have four autistic children who would love a pet.*

**Via social media**

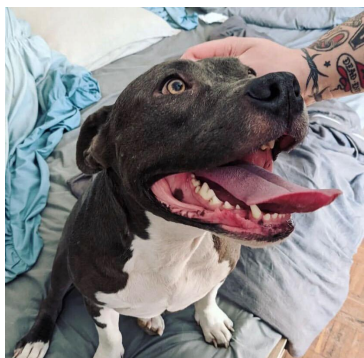




*I adopted Hank a few years ago because he needed a home, he might have ended up in a shelter otherwise. I know him, and I know when I'm looking for new homes the types of homes that will and won't work for him. That's all that should matter, but so many places that would be fine for us say "no pets".*

*Why does someone who doesn't even live at my home get a say in whether or not I can take care of my dog here? If he does cause a problem (just like if I do, or my partner, housemates or friends), the landlord can just take it out of our bond, what else is the bond there for? Renters don't deserve to be controlled like this, we can take responsibility for our pets just like everyone else.*

**Renter, Ashfield, via email**



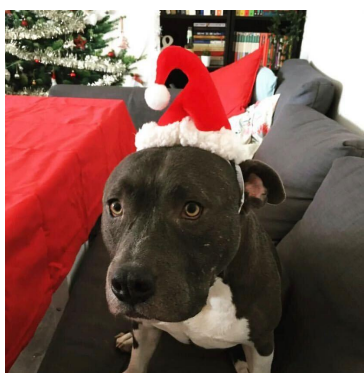
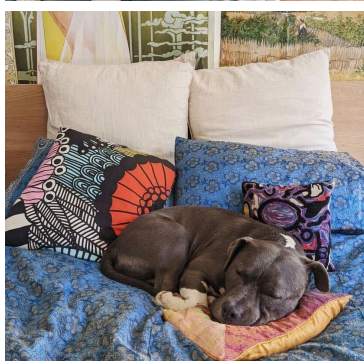
*"I grew up on a farm. I lived around animals my whole life until I moved to Sydney for uni. I've always especially loved dogs, but until a few years ago I couldn't even consider getting a dog because of how hard it is to rent with pets. I couldn't imagine growing to love a dog and then having to give it up because of being forced to move and not being able to find a pet-friendly rental.*

*I adopted my boy 3 years ago after seeing a post on Facebook about a gorgeous staffy in urgent need of a new home. The timing worked out, I'd just started working full-time and felt prepared to take on the responsibility of caring for a dog, and my landlord at the time allowed pets.*

*But I've had to move house several times since. I have a perfect rental history and stable income but every time I've moved it's been extremely hard to find a pet friendly home. It's brought on so much unnecessary stress. My baby does so much to improve my life, and I can't imagine having been without him especially during lockdowns, but it's so unfair that as a renter I also have to live with the constant worry about what could happen to us if I need to move and can't find a place that'll let me bring him.*

*I was so prepared before I adopted Barxie. I did my research, made sure my home was appropriate, made sure I had enough savings to cover emergency vet costs, made sure I had people to take care of him if I ever needed to go out of town, knew the nearest vets - and more. I don't understand why just because I'm a renter there's some assumption that I can't be trusted to properly care for an animal, it's infantilising, and unfair."*

**Renter, Newtown, via message**





*I have a pet, but she is secret. We had a fire alarm the other day, which was not a drill, and I realised that I would have to leave her behind or face everyone in the building. This felt heartbreaking at the time. If the fire had been genuine, many pets might have perished because they couldn't legally be there. This doesn't feel kind.*

*I think pets add significant tangible benefits to a person's well-being and health. There is often very little property damage, which is essentially a myth. I think children could do as much damage as pets. My pet hasn't done any damage so far, and I would happily pay for anything she might do.*

*Different rules on pets and renting across states and territories limits pet owners' ability to relocate. The legal changes in Victoria regarding pet ownership haven't seemed to change much for landlords but have taken a weight off the shoulders of renters. Limiting pet ownership seems unnecessary and somewhat cruel when so many people cherish and love their animals. It pressures the tenant to justify their pet ownership and find properties that accept pets.*

*Pets are essential to me. Animals conserve and construct the world we live in. And we, as humans, aren't different from animals, and we all exist in the world. We need to create spaces that reflect systems as a whole so that we can start looking at us all as a living system that needs care and looking after. Please help to change this - it's such a silly rule that does no good!*

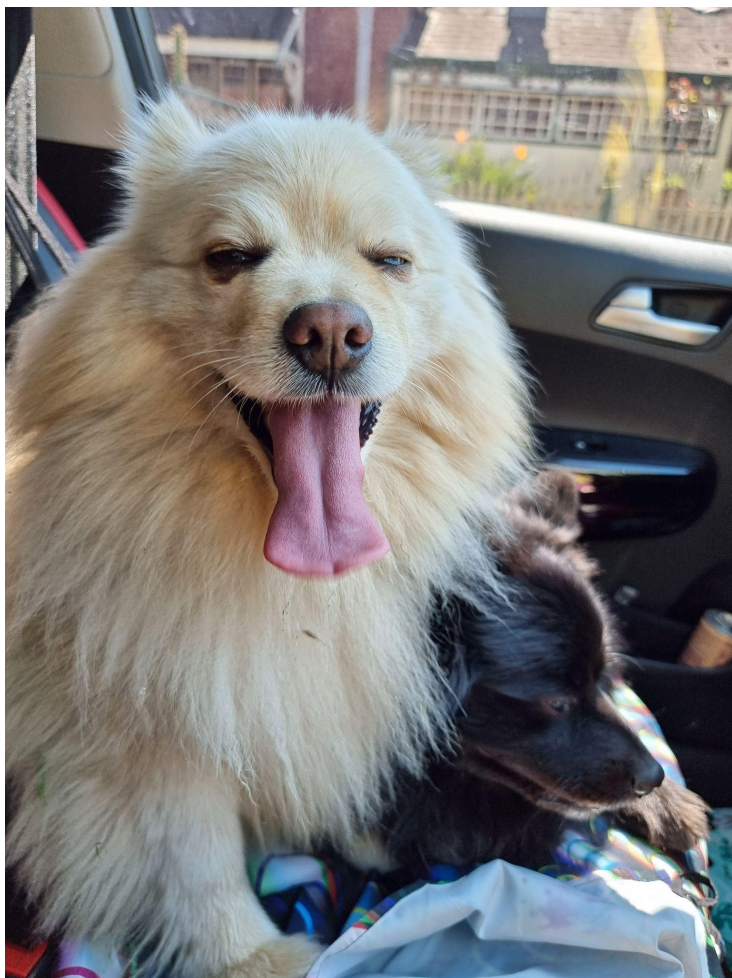
**Renter, survey serial #60**

*Many landlords won't accept applications that include pets. People need pets for mental health reasons, among others. My children need their pets, they are companion animals, and help mental wellbeing.*

**Renter, Faulconbridge, survey serial #59**

*We had to hide our cat for years, our real estate was anti-cat, it never harmed a fly.*

**Via social media**



*Pets are a part of the family these days, and you'll find most people with pets are responsible and will look after the property better than people without.*

**Renter, Ashfield, survey serial #5**



*Landlords have far too much power. Pets are an important part of our lives, and we should not be stopped from having one.*

**Renter, Frenchs Forest, survey serial #7**

*Pets are family, they improve mental illness, they bring joy into humans' lives: that's why they're called "man's best friend". It is difficult finding a place to rent with a pet, which can lead to hopelessness, and having to hide the pet when inspections take place. If a renter wants to move house with their family members, no dependants, children or animals should be left behind.*

*Tenants sign a lease agreement taking accountability and responsibility for their dependants and the property, and there is a bond in place to protect the landlord from damages. If an adult that signs a contract cannot take accountability and respect a property as their home, then that will become evident in inspections whether the renter has pets or not.*

**Renter, Stanmore, survey serial #56**

*The law on pets & renting should change, especially for older renters as they provide company. I know of the owner of an over-50s village that refuses to allow pets under any circumstances.*

**Renter, Redhead, survey serial #37**

*Companion animals are very important, they offer therapeutic benefits, lower stress, depression and loneliness, and give security & joy.*

*I've found just about all real estate agents state "no pets", it's frustrating - it's either be homeless with your dog or re-home your dog if you can. It's a deep-seated need I've had since I was a child to always have a dog. They are your best friend and family. It's very important to me to have a dog but because I've got to rent I'm dogless. I once did get a dog and sneaked him into my rental, but got found out because of a surprise visit from the agent and told to get rid of him.*

*It's so unfair and unjust that other people can tell us how we can and can't live. I'm deprived of having a furry best mate because landlords and real estate agents don't prioritise the mental, physical and emotional wellbeing of renters that want a dog or cat to share their lives with. Enough is enough, we should have a right to keep a pet.*

**Renter, Port Macquarie, survey serial #48**

*If they're worried about damage, renters would be happy to sign an agreement to do repairs I'm sure. Most dogs don't damage property anyway, mine haven't for 25 years. Kids do more damage than dogs.*

**Via social media**





*I find that pets are much easier and less likely to cause damage than say, a small child. We have definitely been overlooked for rentals due to having pets. They are my best friends! They make life so fun, and they relieve a whole bunch of my stress and anxiety. I couldn't imagine my life (or home) without them!*

*Mojo and Sadie say that all rentals should allow pets!*

**Renter, Hornsby, survey serial #17**



*With the current rental crisis in Australia, people with pets are so limited to the properties they can rent. We're being denied properties, and there's a lack of available pet friendly rentals. I love my pets!*

**Renter, Marrickville, survey serial #29**

*Pets help make a house your home. We have been lucky, all of our agents have been wonderful with accepting our cat.*

**Renter, Fern Bay, survey serial #52**

*Even if one landlord agrees to let you have a pet, if you need to move there's no guarantee the next landlord would agree to pets. I can't take the risk of potentially being homeless or having to accept sub-par accommodation in the future.*

*Pets benefit mental and often physical health, and they bring so much joy to life. They likely cause less damage to a house than a young child!*

**Renter, Marrickville, survey serial #53**

*Should have been done 50 years ago! People need their beloved companions & pets too need loving homes.*

**Via social media**

*I am a citizen who contributes to society and pays tax but I'm only allowed to have a pet if my landlord says so. Tenants live under so many restrictive laws - the rest of the population doesn't. My current landlord may be OK but if I had to move? What utter cruelty to the person and the animal to be separated. What right does another person have to deny me health and happiness?*

*Pets are vital to physical and mental health and have been linked to living a longer life. Good tenants will be good with or without pets. Bad tenants will be bad with or without pets. Not sure why being a tenant means I'm not treated like an adult. I work in health care so I'm trusted with people's lives but not a pet?*

**Renter, Wallsend, survey serial #54**



*George (Karate George the cat, the baby of the family at only 2.5 years) and Kali (my old girl, 14 years old) are a part of our family. We've rented their whole lives. I've never once lost a bond.*

*I have lost sleep worrying each time we move about whether we'll be able to find a new home where we can bring them along too.*

*The joy and love they bring into my family's life is worth all the stress and anxiety that brings. But it doesn't make any sense to me that, as a renter, the final choice about whether I can have a pet is up to my landlord, rather than a decision my family gets to make.*

**Renter, Belmore, via email**







*Our dog is family. Pets provide support, comfort, stability, and in the case of a dog, a reason to leave the house. But we have to hide our dog every time there is an inspection.*

*Any damage a pet does to a house should be the responsibility of the pet owner to rectify, just the same as if the tenant damages the house themselves. That's why we have bonds!*

**Renter, Stanmore, survey serial #55**



*Pets add to the quality of life for any person. I absolutely think there should be a fairer balance between what the landlord and the renter can do to actually accommodate for pets. I know the laws now mean decisions are very much in the hands of the landlord, who doesn't actually live there.*

*Finding a place is incredibly hard. There aren't a lot of places that allow pets, and you might have to move quite far out before you can find somewhere that'll do that, or rent might be particularly high. There are a lot of barriers to entry to the rental market if you have a pet.*

*10-week-old Sonny says Make Renting Fair!*

**Renter, Ashfield, captured via voice memo**