

Animals in an Argyle Housing property

Location	Operations NSW/ACT
Policy Type	Social and Affordable Housing Policy
Version	4.4
Issue Date	July 2023
National Regulatory Code	Performance Outcome 1 – Tenant and Housing Services

1. Objective

- 1.1 Argyle Housing requires its clients to apply for permission to have a pet or assistance animal to live at their property. Where possible, Argyle Housing will approve clients to have animals in their property. Each request is considered on a case by case basis in line with this policy, taking into account the property in which the client resides.

2. Background and Scope

- 2.1 Argyle Housing promotes and respects the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons with a disability and provides a service to clients in line with the principles of the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014, Disability ACT and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).
- 2.2 Argyle Housing supports and encourages a person-centred and culturally sensitive approach to service delivery.
- 2.3 Argyle Housing promotes and respects the rights and freedoms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- 2.4 Argyle Housing understands that some clients may require an assistance animal or companion animal to help them in their everyday activities.
- 2.5 Argyle Housing ensures that its clients comply with restrictions on the keeping of restricted or dangerous dogs imposed by NSW and ACT legislation.
- 2.6 Argyle Housing wants all members of the community, who live near a property managed by Argyle Housing, to feel safe walking past the property.
- 2.7 Animals are often prohibited by private property owners and strata by-laws. Any restrictions on animals that apply to Argyle Housing are stated in the Residential Tenancy Agreement signed by the client at the commencement of their lease.

3. Policy Definitions

Companion Animal	Under the NSW <i>Companion Animals Act</i> , 1998 companion animals include cats; dogs (including dogs such as working dogs and trained assistance animals such as guide or hearing dogs); any animal that is prescribed by the regulations.
Dangerous Dog	Dangerous dogs are dogs that have been declared dangerous by a local council or local court. These include dogs that attack without provocation, or kill a person or animal, or repeatedly threaten to attack or chase a person or animal.
Assistance Animal	<p>An assistance animal is a trained support designed to facilitate the participation of people with disability in accessing various aspects of personal and public life.</p> <p>The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) (DDA) in Section 9, sets out the legal definition of an assistance animal as a dog or other that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) is accredited under a State or Territory law to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effects of disability; or (b) is accredited by an animal training organisation prescribed in the regulations; or (c) is trained to assist a person with a disability to alleviate the effect of the disability and meets standards of hygiene and behaviour that are appropriate for an animal in a public place.

4. Policy Detail

- 4.1. An application form to request a pet or assistance animal can be obtained by contacting the relevant Argyle Housing staff member. It is a requirement that a picture of the pet, proof of relevant registration and evidence of micro-chipping must be attached to the application. Approval must be gained in writing prior to the animal residing at the property.
- 4.2. Argyle Housing considers requests to house an animal in an Argyle Housing property on a case-by-case basis. Factors such as the animal's size and the yard size, whether the animal is an assistance animal, whether strata conditions which restrict the keeping of animals apply to the property and whether the property is owned by Argyle Housing, NSW Government, or private owner etc. are taken into consideration.
- 4.3. If the pet is a companion animal, as listed under the Companion Animals ACT 1998 (NSW) the client must contact the council and ensure the animal is registered as a companion animal.
- 4.4. The Tenancy Officer needs to identify if a dog is a restricted breed or declared dangerous. In these instances, advice will be sought from Local Law Officers as to whether the approval should be given.
- 4.5. Approval will only be granted if the animal is suitable for the property and the client agrees in writing to pay for a professional carpet cleaner to steam clean the carpets as requested at any time during the tenancy and also at the end of the tenancy. This condition applies to any approval for a dog or cat whether they are to live inside or outside the dwelling.
- 4.6. The client must also agree to have the property professionally sprayed for fleas at any time during the tenancy if requested by Argyle Housing staff and also at the end of the tenancy. This condition

applies to any approval for a dog or cat whether they are to live inside or outside the dwelling. Treatment for fleas is compulsory as fleas can take up to 6 weeks to hatch.

- 4.7. The client must also agree to be responsible for any damage their animal may cause inside and outside of the property, including but not limited to works required as a result of animals urinating in a property. This may include carpets needing to be replaced in a property. This work is carried out at the client's expense.
- 4.8. Argyle Housing will not take responsibility for costs associated with modification to secure the animal at the property. Any modification must be approved prior to the change and be professionally completed to minimise damage to the property.
- 4.9. The client may be asked to remove an animal from the property if it causes a nuisance. In this case, the client will have 14 days to comply with the request.
- 4.10. On receiving the required information, the Tenancy Officer will advise the client in writing that approval is granted, conditional on the client's written agreement to the above terms; or declined.
- 4.11. A letter confirming approval or denial of the request will be provided by the Tenancy Officer. This will be documented on the client's file. Clients will be advised in this letter that approval for this animal is non-transferable and any other animals must be approved prior to being housed at the property.
- 4.12. Should an inspection be carried out at the client's home and it is found that there are unapproved pets, pets are living inside the property and/or there is damage caused by the pets, the client will be given 14 days notice to remove the pet from the property and to immediately repair any damages. If an Argyle Housing contractor is required to repair the damages, the client will be charged for the costs.

5. APPEALS

If a client believes Argyle Housing has made a wrong decision regarding their tenancy, they can ask for a formal review of the decision. To do this, they can complete an Appeals Form stating why they disagree with the decision. An appeal can be lodged by completing the 'I Want to Appeal Form' found on the Argyle Housing website www.argylehousing.com.au or available from any Argyle Housing office. The form, or a letter, can be emailed, posted or delivered in person to any Argyle Housing office or submitted online via the Argyle Housing website.

If the appellant remains unsatisfied with the outcome of the first appeal they can appeal to the Housing Appeals Committee (HAC) which is an independent appeals body specifically set up to consider appeals made by social housing clients in NSW. An appellant can access HAC by calling free call 1800 629 794 or can get more information from their Tenancy Officer.

Matters that the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) or the ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACAT) can resolve are not able to be appealed. For example, if Argyle Housing issues a Notice of Termination for breaches of the tenancy agreement.

See Argyle Housing's Appeal Policy for further information.

6. RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

- 6.1 Debt Management Policy
- 6.2 Property Access Policy
- 6.3 Affordable Housing Policy
- 6.4 Property specific Complaints Policies, Procedures and Tools
- 6.5 Argyle Housing Appeal Policy

- 6.6 National Community Housing Standards Reference - 1.3 Changing needs of tenants.
- 6.7 Companion Animals Act, 1998 (NSW)
- 6.8 Domestic Animals Act, 2000 (ACT)
- 6.9 Disability Discrimination Act, 1992

VERSION CONTROL

Version No.	Review Date	Author	Position	Next Review Date
1.0	10/03/14	V. Haddock		09/03/15
2.0	10/03/14	M. Ward	Operations Manager NSW	30/04/16
3.0	01/05/16	M. Ward	GM Operations	01/05/17
4.0	29/08/17	M. Reader	GM Operations	28/08/18
4.1	06/09/18	C. Doherty	Housing Services Manager	05/09/19
4.2	22/04/21	C. Doherty	Housing Services Manager	22/04/23
4.3	26/07/21	J. Chapman	Team Leader	26/07/23
4.4	20/07/23	M. Wilson	Project Officer	20/07/25