

Winda-Mara Housing Program (WMHP) Pet Policy

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WMHP Pet Policy

Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation ('WMAC') and Winda-Mara Housing Limited ('WMHL') work together to deliver safe, secure and affordable housing solutions for eligible Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members living in far southwest Victoria.

The activities, principles, policies and elements that contribute to and regulate the housing schemes of WMAC and WMHL are collectively referred to as the Winda-Mara Housing Program ('WMHP').

The WMHP's policies and procedures are designed so that its practice and service delivery align with the following cultural statement:

Our vision is to create a thriving community where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have access to safe, affordable, and culturally appropriate housing. We aspire to empower individuals and families through improved health, education, and wellbeing, fostering a strong sense of identity and pride in our cultural heritage. Through collaboration and sustainable development, we aim to build a future where every member of our community has the opportunity to flourish and succeed.

1. Introduction

WMHP is committed to:

- meeting its legal, regulatory, and contractual duties;
- taking a person-centred approach to decisions made;
- supporting renters to keep a pet at their property where it is reasonable to do so.

2. Scope

This is a Housing Program Policy. It applies to all residential tenancies managed by WMAC or WMHL.

3. Purpose and Objectives

This policy outlines the circumstances under which pets can be kept at a WMHP property.

4. Keeping a Pet at a Property

A renter is required to seek written permission from WMHP before keeping any type of pet or assistance animal at a property.

Applicants must request permission to keep a pet before accepting a property offer. WMHP cannot unreasonably refuse consent to keep a pet.

If approved, renters are responsible for ensuring their pets:

- comply with Council by-laws;
- comply with Owners Corporation rules, as relevant;
- are de-sexed and microchipped, as appropriate to local Council laws;
- are properly cared for;
- do not cause a nuisance to others or soil shared areas;
- do not endanger other renters, employees or contractors attending the property;
- do not cause damage or trauma to other renter's pets;
- do not cause any damage to the property.

Any issues arising from the keeping of pets that result in tenancy or property concerns are managed in accordance with the Breach of Rental Agreement Policy. This may result in action being taken under the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA).

5. Application for a Pet

Renters and prospective renters can request to keep a pet at the property by completing a Pet Request form. WMHP must respond to a request to keep a pet within 14 days.

When deciding whether to consent to a pet request WMHP will consider:

- the pet's age, size, temperament, training or other characteristics;
- whether the premises are suitable for keeping the type or number of pets (e.g., size of property or room, outdoor areas);
- other pets approved to be kept on the premises;
- whether the pet is permitted or regulated under any Act, regulations, local Council or strata by-laws;
- whether the pet is to be kept inside or outside.

6. Failure to Seek Approval

Renters who do not seek permission to keep a pet at their property will be in breach of their Rental Agreement and may be required to remove the animal from their property. Continued failure to remove an animal may result in steps being taken to have a tenancy ended as per the WMHP Ending Tenancies and Eviction Policy.

7. References

7.1 External or Statutory Requirements

This policy complies with the following external legislation or requirements:

- *Housing Act 1983 (Vic)*
- *Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (Vic)*
- Victorian Housing Registrar Performance Standard 1 (Tenant and Housing Services)
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)*
- *Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Vic)*
- The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986

7.2 Internal Requirements and Forms

This policy refers to the following internal documents, which are available in the WMHP Document Register:

- WMHP Pet Request Form
- WMHP Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures
- WMHP Ending Tenancies and Evictions Policy
- WMHP Establishing a Tenancy Policy
- WMHP Property Damage by Renter Policy
- WMHP Goods Left Behind Policy
- WMHP Anti-social and Dangerous Behaviour Policy

8. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier if the legal, regulatory, and contractual environment requires.

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AMENDMENT HISTORY

Date	Version	Approved by	Amendment Notes
16-07-2024	1.0	Board of Directors	New Document. Full review from previous ToR incorporating new Housing Program