

How to Secure a Rental With a Pet – 6 Tips to Get You In!



It's hard enough to secure a rental property these days let alone doing it with a pet. It is even more challenging when you're looking at apartments versus houses. Firstly, most apartments or units are not advertised as pet friendly, and more often than not, owners will have concerns over your capability to keep a dog or cat in an apartment with no yard. The handful of properties that may be ok with having pets rarely advertise as such; so the only way to find out is to you ask the question.

Over 60% of Australia's household population own a pet of some kind, yet about a third of households rent. This highlights that many of the rental-seeking population around Australia also have a pet in tow. It is a genuine problem our rental market faces, so today I've listed strategies to help you secure a rental unit or apartment when you already have a pet.

1. Get in with your local agent

The first thing you should do is call local agents in the area and brief them in , with as much notice as possible. Whilst it is all good and well to respond to online listings and ask each and every agent the status of pets in every property you are interested in; this is clearly not time efficient. Instead, call up a couple of the key agents in your chosen area; give them as much lead time as possible, and brief them in specifically about your pet requirements. If it is a cat is it short hair or long hair? Small dog or big? Puppy with lots of energy, or mature older dog that sleeps most of the day? The more detail, the better!

2. Widen your reach

Another strategy is to consider broadening out your desired suburb or location range. Pet-friendly apartments and units really are as rare as hen's teeth; so you may have to include surrounding suburbs beyond your target area, in your considerations.

3. Be obedient

For dog owners if you'd done any doggie school pet training; you should supply any evidence of this (certificates; receipts for completion of a course) as part of your rental application even if it is not explicitly asked for. Agents will usually make special mention to owners about applicants who have a pet, who supply something like this. It shows that your pet is toilet trained, disciplined, and not likely to make mess or disruptive noise for neighbours.

4. Keep your check-ups in check

For both cat and dog owners; it is also worth providing evidence of any flea-tick check-up reports or receipts from vet visits that you've had in the past 6-12 months, as part of your application. Again, this information may not be requested but providing it will help give peace-of-mind to the real estate and owner that your pet is hygienic and will not attract any disease and bugs.

5. Keeping up with the committee

Check up on the body corporate policy that an apartment block already maintains in regard to pet allowance, regardless of the owner's personal stance on the issue. This is important because an owner/landlord may give authority for a pet to be allowed; but problems can arise when you move in and neighbours hear or see a pet in the building, and then report it to the body corporate committee. This can and does happen. Speaking from experience as an owner-occupier in a small strata-managed block; I'd heard dogs barking and seen a cat on a neighbour's windowsill in our building and assumed it was pet friendly. My flatmate and I had then got a pet, only to have our neighbour report this to the body corporate.

6. Special circumstances

It turned out that that the current dog and cat owner spotted, achieved special permission for their pets from the body corporate committee due to personal circumstance. My advice here is that a body corporate committee policy may say 'no pets, however, exceptions can be made if special circumstances arise. In my case; the dog owner actually suffered from a mental illness and requested the pet as his therapeutic companion. The cat owner was successful because she pushed the body corp by supplying references from previous rentals. So if you are already currently renting with a pet and are looking to move, my advice is to request a reference from your current landlord or estate agent that specifically mentions the pet-status. This is something you can add in to future applications.

When considering a rental with a pet in tow, the best plan is to pre-plan and ask ahead. Being aware of what the policies are and flagging them in advance; along with honesty when presenting yourself in the best possible light, are the best things you can do to secure the property.