

As rental providers for 30 years we wish to make the following observations :

PETS WITHOUT PERMISSION

Our experience of people having pets in homes we have rented to them include the following :

1st .CASE

Through an Agency - a couple moved into our rental property –we were not told previously that they had a large Labrador . As we lived next door -we became aware of it’s presence . The Property Manager when contacted told us the dog was an “outside dog “ and wouldn’t be going inside the house- but would live in a kennel. We did not believe loving pet owners would not bring their pet inside - especially during cold winters or hot summers - as proved to be the case .There was no kennel -the Labrador lived with it’s owners inside the house –as there was no shed it could occupy -we adapted and accepted.

We agreed to a dog hatch being installed in the laundry door so the Labrador could come and go as it pleased .We were told the hatch would be maintained in good order.

After a while we had to have the shower recess replaced because the Labrador was being washed there and scratched many of the tiles of the walls and did other damage.

The people and Labrador rented the house for 7 years . The Agent sold them a house and did not provide us with a 28 day notice and they moved without telling us . The house was left far from clean with dirty marks around the walls at the height of the Labrador which had to be cleaned , carpets badly scratched from the dog needing replacement ,the dog hatch was broken and had to be repaired , the dog’s tray had been emptied near the front door and not covered over with soil -leaving a smell . All of the above had to be cleaned /repaired /replaced at our expense

2nd CASE .

We let a house to a single man in his 20’s . During a house inspection with the Property Manager we noticed a kennel in the back yard .We were told the kennel belonged to a friend who came to stay sometimes at weekends and had a dog.

At a subsequent inspection with the PM -on arrival through the glass front door- a black dog was barking at us. The person renting advised the dog being inside was a temporary measure and agreed in future to keep it in the large, dry ,empty shed in the backyard when it wasn’t running around the backyard .The young man fell behind with his rent and the Property Manager went through a process where he was to receive ongoing support from a counselor in order to maintain his tenancy.Eventually we were advised by the Property Manager that the young man renting had [REDACTED] [REDACTED] trashed the house .

When evicted with the aid of the police they found the dog to be starving and in such a poor state they had to take it away to be put down. The renter had apparently left the dog in the house and gone to live elsewhere .

Every room of the house contained dog faeces and vomit . The carpets had to be removed and the floors polished - the entire house repainted , curtains replaced .

3rd.CASE

Through an Agency the Property Manager advised us that a single woman would be a good tenant After she moved in it was found that she had two Pitt Bull Terriers . The Property Manager advised us that the woman owned one of the dogs and her partner who only visited at weekends the other. We had not been advised that she had a dog or a partner with a dog . It was established that there would be two dogs permanently at the property.

The Property Manager said she was unable to do anything about the situation other than to ask that the dogs not be allowed inside. There was a large shed that could provide shelter for them if required and a large front fence and gate to contain them.

The woman worked Monday – Friday two hours away [REDACTED] and left early and arrived home late.

Complaints were received from neighbours that the dogs were making a lot of noise barking and howling during the day and appeared to be tied to the clothesline .

On at least one occasion the dogs escaped into the street and menaced the neighbours – very concerning [REDACTED] –which could have had serious repercussions -bringing more complaints from the neighbours .

The tenant had the front gate modified to prevent further escapes.

The tenant behaved aggressively .The Property Manager was completely unable to handle the situation and abandoned the tenancy leaving us to deal directly with the tenant and pay the rent into an account. After a time the tenant gave notice and moved. Her parting gesture was to block one of the toilets so completely with toilet rolls a plumber had to be called

After she left it -evidence was found that the dogs had been kept inside- as seen from urinating on the walls ,faeces, scratchmarks and woodwork chewed. The verandah posts near the clothesline were found to have been deeply chewed by the dogs .

CONCLUSION : From these three experiences we are very apprehensive of Tenants with dogs -and feel it is grossly unfair- that the Proposed Changes to the Tenancy Laws include that Tenants may have pets without permission-, as our experience is that very little consideration is being given to the damage that pets can do to Rental Providers property and the resulting emotional consequences for Rental Providers . Also is there to be a limit on the type of pet renters may have?

MORE POWER TO REFUSE OPEN FOR INSPECTIONS DATES IF INCONVENIENT

1. We have also had a tenant who after a time we found many of the plants some valuable like Standard Roses - were disappearing from our rental property garden -and at the same time the tenant appeared to have set up a pot plant business with dozens in the back yard on the back lawn . With subsequent Inspections it was found -that the previous plants in pots had disappeared and there was a completely new lot of plants in pots - at the same time that more plants had disappeared from the garden. The Property Managers said that as she was unable to determine whether or where the tenant was selling the plants she was unable to do anything about what was happening .

The tenant used the tactic of delaying Inspections on the basis of it being inconvenient -at least 8 times -to allow the turnover of the pot plant business she had established.

Needless to say we had to find a more reliable Property Manager .

CONCLUSION: We have always shown courtesy and respect towards renters in relation to Inspections There are concerns that changing this aspect of the legislation to accommodate the convenience of Inspections to the tenant -will work in the favour of unscrupulous tenants and against the rights of Rental Providers and will be used to reduce inspections .

RENTERS BEING ABLE TO MAKE COSMETIC MODIFICATIONS WITHOUT PERMISSION

1. If renters able to do this -it is really concerning what damage might occur to Rent Providers properties -with DIY carpentry etc. ,all sorts of "modifications " will be made from dog hatches to whatever . Holes may appear in walls because the hammer missed the nail . We have had no difficulty in renters making a few changes- but have appreciated that we were consulted had some control over what was done . With this legislation all control will have been removed from the rental provider.

Conclusion : This legislation in removing maintenance control from the Rental Providers has potential for significant damage to rental properties by renters .

HS &JE James

