



“Pets Negotiable”

Written by Brent Smith

A recent article in the Christchurch Press and on Stuff ([Increase in renting kiwis forced to give up their dogs](#)) has highlighted the difficulties for tenants to find accommodation when they have pets.

Many investors start out with a position of “No Pets” says Pam Marshall, General Manager of Iron Bridge Property Management. Naturally some properties are not suitable for pets (for example apartments or townhouses within a Body Corporate), which is understandable; however if you own a 3 or 4 bedroom family home, not considering any pets at all reduces your tenant selection pool considerably.

Pam’s recommendation is to include the term “Pets Negotiable” when searching for a quality tenant, thus giving you the opportunity to consider all interested parties. Would you consider a retired couple with a small well-trained dog, with great references? Most landlords would, however if you state ‘No Pets’ in your advertising, these potential great tenants will not view your property.

Iron Bridge have been managing properties for over 17 years, and during that time, they have seen some of the best, long-term tenants be pet-owners. “Sometimes, the pets apply with better references than the actual tenant” says Pam, with a grin.

Points to consider when deciding to consider pets in your rental property:

- Obtain detailed and specific references/speak directly to past landlords where the pets in tenant application formally resided
- Ensure you take the maximum 4 weeks bond permitted
- Whilst landlords cannot ask for a ‘Pet Bond’, ensure the rent reflects a fair assessment of the potential risk

- If you agree to a pet/pets; be specific on the Tenancy Agreement what you have agreed to. List the number and type of animal. Just because you agree to a 1 x old Labrador dog at the start of tenancy, does not mean you have agreed to tenants getting a puppy in 12 months time
- Ensure you are conducting regular 3-monthly inspections of the property
- In the unlikely event damage does occur, deal with it immediately once you notice it. Do not leave it until the end of the tenancy; as it could get progressively worse (especially with any lawn/garden damage)

If you have any questions about allowing pets in your rental property or questions about Iron Bridge's 6-stage tenant screening process - please get in touch.