

6 March 2026

To: The NSW Legislative Council, Portfolio Committee No. 8 - Customer Service

Re: Inquiry into the Residential Tenancies (Protection of Personal Information) Bill

Dear Committee,

Domestic Violence NSW (DVNSW) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Committee regarding the Inquiry into the Residential Tenancies (Protection of Personal Information) Bill (the Bill).

DVNSW strongly supports reforms that better protect the personal information renters and prospective renters are required to share. This is particularly important for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence (DFV). This Bill will prevent the rental system from demanding maximum personal exposure upfront and will give victim-survivors stronger tools to access, control, correct and delete information that could put them at risk. However, in its current form the proposed legislation may have possible unintended effects on pet owners and victim-survivors.

Women and children experiencing DFV often need to secure safe, stable housing quickly to stay safe, yet the private rental market can be difficult to navigate under urgent time pressure. Limited affordability and availability, competitive application processes, and uncertainty about lease conditions can leave victim-survivors with little bargaining power and few realistic options, particularly when they are trying to relocate discreetly and avoid further harm. For many, the challenge is not simply finding any property, but finding a property that is safe, affordable, and genuinely accessible in the timeframe that safety demands.

The following recommendations address a major barrier victim-survivors face in the rental market: where they delay leaving violence due to a fear or threat that their animals will be harmed¹. This can force victim-survivors into unsafe housing options or result in the highly distressing relinquishment of animals.

Domestic Violence NSW makes the following five recommendations:

1. Require landlords to apply to the Tribunal where they do not consent to a tenant keeping a pet, rather than placing the onus on the tenant.
2. Extend the seven-day grace period to 14 days, allowing tenants to move in with their pet and apply for consent at the commencement of the tenancy.
3. Allow tenants to end a tenancy without penalty if a landlord refuses consent to keep a pet, and provide a 30-day period for tenants to secure alternative accommodation from the date of refusal or from an NCAT decision confirming that refusal.

¹ Domestic Violence NSW 2020. Submission to the NSW Department of Communities & Justice Review into Animal Abuse and Domestic and Family Violence.

4. Require landlords to disclose at the point of advertising any reasonable grounds that may affect a tenant keeping a pet at the property.
5. Where a landlord fails to disclose reasonable grounds for refusing a pet, and later refuses a pet application on those grounds, require the landlord to pay the tenant's reasonable moving costs.

Fairer pet decisions for victim-survivors

Shifting the burden onto landlords to take disputes to the Tribunal, extending the grace period to 14 days, and allowing tenants to end a tenancy without penalty while providing a 30-day period to secure alternative accommodation if consent for a pet is refused would help ensure the rental system does not punish victim-survivors at the point they most need fast, predictable and safe housing.

In practice, these changes would reduce administrative burden, limit opportunities for arbitrary refusals, and create a clear, time-bound path to resolve disagreements without placing the administrative and emotional burden on tenants who are often navigating trauma, financial stress, and urgent safety planning.

Up-front disclosure to prevent harm and unsuitable tenancies

Victim-survivors with pets make decisions about their safety under immense time pressures. If victim-survivors were able to access reliable information about known barriers to keeping a pet such as fencing constraints, by-laws, or property features, they could avoid signing up to an unsuitable tenancy. Up-front disclosure at the advertising stage, and an obligation to cover reasonable moving costs when a landlord refuses a pet application based on undisclosed "reasonable grounds," would prevent avoidable harm to victim-survivors.

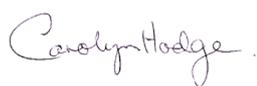
Requiring disclosure at the advertising stage makes expectations clear upfront. It prompts landlords to be transparent, reduces disputes later, and helps prevent victim-survivors from moving into tenancies that cannot accommodate their pets – avoiding unnecessary moves and added risk.

Moving costs where material constraints are withheld

Linking disclosure to an obligation to cover reasonable moving costs where landlords withhold relevant information creates a practical incentive to comply. It recognises the real financial and emotional costs of being misled, deters advertising that omits material constraints, and supports stable, safe housing outcomes for victim-survivors and their animals.

DVNSW would welcome the opportunity to provide evidence to the Committee at the Hearing on 16 March 2026.

Sincerely,



Carolyn Hodge
Acting CEO

About DVNSW

DVNSW is the peak body for specialist domestic and family violence (DFV) services in NSW. With approximately 200 member organisations across the state and diverse lived expertise advisory groups, we work to improve policy, legislative and program responses to DFV through advocacy and collaboration.