

**INQUIRY INTO RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES
AMENDMENT (PROTECTION OF PERSONAL
INFORMATION) BILL 2025**

Organisation: Lucy's Project, Aboriginal Advisory Network, Domestic Violence
NSW, No to Violence, People with Disability Australia and Full
Stop Australia

Date Received: 6 March 2026

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5 March 2026

The Chair
Portfolio Committee No. 8 – Customer Service
Legislative Council
Parliament of New South Wales
6 Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Sent via email: PortfolioCommittee8@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Portfolio Committee,

RE: Submission to the Inquiry into the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Protection of Personal Information) Bill 2025

Lucy's Project is a national charity working at the intersection of domestic and family violence ("DFV") and companion animals.

We advocate for systemic reform to ensure that victim-survivors of DFV are not forced to choose between their safety and their companion animals.

Lucy's Project welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to the Inquiry into the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Protection of Personal Information) Bill 2025 ("Inquiry").

We wish to reiterate that the ongoing barriers to accessing rental housing for women, children and animals experiencing DFV mean that the limited number of places in NSW emergency, crisis and transitional accommodation services that can accommodate people with animals are in high demand. Women, children and animals may not be able to exit this accommodation for extended periods of time while seeking to find animal-inclusive rental housing, which limits availability for other women, children and animals seeking to leave a violent perpetrator.

For victim-survivors of DFV, companion animals are often a source of emotional support, a critical part of safety planning, and a target of coercive control.



We acknowledge that we live and work on the lands of First Nations peoples and pay our respects to Elders past and present. We recognise the strength and resilience of human and animal victim-survivors of domestic and family violence and their right to safety.

Housing systems that create instability for people with animals can delay exit from violence and increase vulnerability. Access to safe and affordable rental housing that accommodates people with animals is critical to safety planning, recovery and long-term stability for victim-survivors.

As stated in a joint letter with the Women's Legal Service NSW and Domestic Violence NSW that was sent to Minister Chanthivong on 26 February 2024, Lucy's Project wishes to reiterate the following broader recommendations for tenancy reform:

Broad Recommendations

- i. Animal-inclusive rental housing should be the default. Where a landlord wants to prohibit animals from residing at the property, the landlord should be required to obtain an order from the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal to do so.
- ii. Landlords and real estate agents should be prohibited from asking about animals when people are applying for rental housing. This would benefit victim-survivors with companion and assistance animals who are urgently seeking safe housing.
- iii. Landlords and real estate agents should be prohibited from making blanket 'no pets' terms and advertising 'no pets' tenancies and continue to be prohibited from asking for 'pet bonds' in addition to the standard bonds.
- iv. 'Reasonable grounds' for eviction should be introduced to replace 'no grounds' evictions provisions for renters on fixed term and periodic agreements. Sections 84 and 85 of the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010* should be amended.

Lucy's Project has previously provided detailed submissions to the NSW Government on tenancy reform and animal-inclusive housing, including our [Submission into Changes to Keeping Pets in Rental Homes in NSW](#) (December 2022) and our feedback on the draft Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill in 2024. Those submissions provide further background to the recommendations reiterated above.

We understand that this Inquiry is particularly focused on possible unintended effects of the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Protection of Personal Information) Bill 2025 ("**Bill**") on renters with animals. In recognition that some of our initial recommendations may not be implemented in the current round of tenancy law reform, Lucy's Project has outlined our feedback on specific provisions of the revised draft *Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill 2024* below.

Grace period

Lucy's Project supports the introduction of a grace period allowing a tenant to keep an animal after entering into a tenancy agreement while seeking consent.

However, a 7-day grace period under proposed s 73B(1A) is insufficient. Many renters – including victim-survivors of DFV – enter tenancy agreements while already caring for animals. A short grace period creates significant uncertainty and may place tenants in breach if consent is refused.

The grace period should be extended to a minimum 14 days and should operate for the duration of any proceedings in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (“**NCAT**”) under s 73G where a tenant disputes a refusal.

The Bill does not address the consequences where a landlord refuses consent for a renter to keep a pet. We propose that renters be granted a minimum of 30 days to secure alternative accommodation for their pet. This safeguard is essential to prevent situations in which renters are forced to make hasty decisions that may compromise the welfare of the animal.

Early termination without penalty

Lucy’s Project proposes that the Bill includes an additional provision which allows a tenant to terminate their tenancy without penalty if consent to keep an animal is refused and the application was made within the grace period.

A renter should not be forced to choose between housing and their companion animal, nor incur financial penalties for exercising their rights.

This safeguard is particularly important for victim-survivors who may need to relocate urgently for safety.

Advertising transparency

Lucy’s Project supports stronger disclosure requirements at the advertising stage.

Where there are legitimate grounds for refusing animals – for example where the landlord resides at the premises, a relevant law prohibits animals, or the property is genuinely unsuitable for animals – this information should be disclosed upfront.

Greater transparency will reduce disputes and prevent renters from entering into unsuitable tenancies.

Pet application process

The underlying issue remains the current pet application model, which places the onus on tenants to apply for consent and initiate NCAT proceedings if refused.

Lucy’s Project strongly supports further review of the pet application process to consider a model consistent with other Australian jurisdictions, where the onus is on the landlord to seek orders from NCAT if they wish to prohibit animals.

Recommendations

Lucy's Project recommends that the Committee:

1. Amend proposed s 73B to extend the grace period beyond 7 days and ensure it operates until any NCAT proceedings under s 73G are finalised.
2. Renters be granted a minimum of 30 days to secure alternative accommodation for their pet where a landlord refuses consent.
3. Include provision in the Bill to allow early termination of a tenancy without penalty where consent to keep an animal is refused.
4. Introduce stronger disclosure obligations at the advertising stage where there are legitimate grounds for refusing animals.
5. Conduct a broader review of the current pet application process to shift the onus onto landlords.

Lucy's Project endorses the Tenants' Union of NSW's feedback on the Bill, in recognition that improving tenants' rights and their access to rental housing will help to remove barriers to safety for people and animals experiencing DFV.

To ensure the effectiveness of the tenancy law reform, as previously recommended in our feedback on the draft Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill in 2024, Lucy's Project recommends that a community education campaign is developed to ensure tenants and landlords have a comprehensive understanding of their rights and responsibilities under the law. Education should be accessible and culturally safe, and consideration should be made to ensure that people with disability, First Nations people, people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, and young and older people are supported to understand and fully exercise their rights and uphold their responsibilities under the law.

Lucy's Project would welcome the opportunity to continue to be consulted on tenancy law reform and I can be contacted at _____ or on _____

Yours sincerely,

Anna Ludvik

(Acting) Chief Executive Officer
Lucy's Project