

# Barking Dogs Information Pack



Council understands barking dogs can be a noise nuisance. Complaints about barking dogs is a difficult issue for Council to resolve, and is ranked as the number one complaint within Local Government.

Complaints against barking dogs can be difficult to resolve because:

- each individual will have a different view as to what is a noise nuisance – this will vary as a result of the location of the dog to the complainant, the noise tolerance level of the complainant, the type of barking and time/length of the barking
- the owners often are not aware that their dog is barking excessively
- investigating these matters is time consuming and only valid complaints will be investigated

Council Rangers will thoroughly investigate valid complaints to ascertain whether the barking is causing a nuisance. Evidence is a primary requirement of the investigation.

Council understands the gathering of evidence and completing barking dog diaries is time consuming and difficult, however is necessary to prove the complaint.

Rangers require complainants to agree to be a witness in Court and provide evidence if the matter is to proceed.

Some dogs bark because they:

- are chained up and don't have enough room to move
- are deliberately being provoked
- are unintentionally provoked by people or other roaming animals
- aren't getting enough exercise
- aren't properly trained
- are hungry
- may suffer from separation anxiety, are lonely, sick or are generally neglected

Chronic barking is a sign that something isn't right and this can be a nuisance. If it can be rectified before Council Rangers intervene, it is better for all parties involved.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE TROUBLED BY A BARKING DOG\*

### 1. Discuss

Contact the dog owner first. How you do this is your decision. You may decide to talk personally with the owner, telephone or write to the owner. The dog owner may not be aware their dog is barking, particularly if it only occurs during the owner's absence. In most cases owners will want to do the right thing and cooperate. A *Barking Dog Courtesy Letter* is included in this package and can be printed and forwarded on to your neighbour without having to contact Council. Remember to be courteous when contacting the dog owner. Sometimes they may not know how to go about fixing the problem so be prepared to assist with information.

### 2. Wait

If the owner agrees to do something about the barking, allow time for the owner to take action to address the nuisance barking and wait a few weeks to see if they have been successful in their efforts. Dogs cannot be trained overnight and implementing training or strategies can be a process of elimination, therefore extra time will be required to achieve the desired outcome.

### 3. Lodge Complaint to Council

A written complaint may be lodged with Council. In urban areas, complaints must be from two residents before Council will take action in relation to a barking dog.

Your complaint should include a copy of the completed *Barking Dog Diary* that has been completed for at least 14 consecutive days. The accuracy of information provided relating to the reason, time, date and duration of the barking is crucial if the matter is to proceed. Also note that only one dog can be named per diary.

\*This procedure is for urban barking complaints where a single dog is identified, it does not apply to barking dog complaints in rural areas or complaints regarding multiple dogs where a single animal cannot be identified as being the issue.

This is due to legislative restrictions and requirements when issuing orders. A Nuisance Order can only be placed on one dog, not multiple dogs.

Rangers will investigate the matter once all relevant information is received. Rangers will monitor the noise, speak with surrounding residents, evaluate any action the owner of the dog has taken to rectify the issue, as well as liaise with the complainants.

Council requires your agreement to act as a witness in Court and provide your evidence if the matter proceeds. Your signature agreeing to this is required on the Barking Dog Information Sheet. Please remember that if a Ranger issues a Nuisance Order on a dog, the owner has the right of appeal, therefore you may be required to provide evidence in Court.

Council requires you to agree to complete a Barking Dog Diary for up to six months for evidence if the matter proceeds to Court and/or a Nuisance Dog Order is issued to the dog owner restricting the barking. Your signature agreeing to the keeping of such a diary will be required on the Barking Dog Diary.

#### 4. Contact a Community Justice Centre

Contact a Community Justice Centre and/or take private civil action. Until such time Council receives two written complaints with correctly completed Barking Dog Diaries, Council is unable to take further action. You may choose to take civil action in Court or contact the Community Justice Centre (CJC). CJC is government-funded but made up of independent centres that specialise in settling differences between neighbours through a mediation process. This is where you meet with the people who are making the noise, together with a CJC representative to try and solve the problem. The CJC does not charge clients for the use of this service and they do have a high success rate. For more information on your nearest CJC, visit [cjc.nsw.gov.au](http://cjc.nsw.gov.au)

### **BARKING DOGS IN RURAL AREAS**

For barking complaints in rural areas or in situations where there are multiple dogs and no single animal can be identified, you will be required to file with the Local Court and take civil action against the owner.

## What can I do if my dog is barking?

- Exercise your dog
- Make sure your dog receives veterinary attention when required
- Leave out toys for your dog to play with
- Make sure your dog has plenty of food, water and shelter
- Discipline your dog – take it to obedience school or puppy pre-school and talk to your vet
- Confine your dog in the backyard, away from interference and/or provocation by passing traffic including pedestrians
- Restrict your dog's vision through the fence and gate
- Consider training, talk to specialist dog trainers and/or dog behaviourists
- Insulate the kennel against noise and weather
- Keep your dog inside or confined to the garage or a similar enclosure at night (this could include crate training)
- Consider using a training/anti-barking collar. The best place to find one would be online. Alternatively contact your local vet for recommendations
- Consider using a husher muzzle. This muzzle still allows the dog to be able to eat and drink, however minimises barking
- Visit [john-hall.com.au/bark-n-mad.htm](http://john-hall.com.au/bark-n-mad.htm)  
This website and app enables you to monitor your dog's barking while you are out. It also has a facility to deliver reprimands and/or praise

**DISCLAIMER** | The information contained in this fact sheet is general in nature and should not be relied upon as the complete source of information to be considered. This document is not intended as a substitute for consulting relevant legislation or for obtaining appropriate professional advice relevant to your particular circumstances.

# Barking Dog Courtesy Letter

Dear Neighbour,

You may not be aware that your dog is consistently barking, causing a noise disturbance.

Mid-Western Regional Council suggests I contact you as the first step, to raise my concern and make you aware, rather than lodging a formal complaint.

The dog barks at these times:

DATE	BARKING START TIME	BARKING STOP TIME	WHAT IS THE DOG BARKING AT?

Council has tips on how to stop barking. See [midwestern.nsw.gov.au](http://midwestern.nsw.gov.au).

Please assist by working with your dog to stop the excessive barking.

FROM YOUR NEIGHBOUR

AT



# Barking Dog Noise Diary

About this diary

This diary is to be completed for a minimum period of **14 consecutive** days.  
 Each page must be initialled, and this page must be signed and witnessed.  
 Only one diary can be utilised per dog.  
 Be **very specific** with the log – a generalised timeframe of sporadic barking is not sufficient.  
 This diary must be completed as instructed, and failure to do so may render the document invalid.  
 If you are unsure about anything contained in this pack, please contact 02 6378 2850 and request a Ranger call you.

## 1. COMPLAINANT DETAILS

Submitted by (Name):

Address:

  


Contact phone number:

Email address:

## 2. BARKING DOG DETAILS

Dog's name (if known):

Address:

  


Description of dog causing the nuisance barking and location of dog on the property:

**ADDITIONAL DIARIES:** If there are additional dogs at the location also causing a barking nuisance please advise how many additional diaries have been submitted this time period.

## 3. DISCUSSION WITH NEIGHBOUR DETAILS

The first thing you can do if you are troubled by barking dog noise is to discuss the issue with your neighbour (dog's owner/carer).

Date you discussed nuisance barking issue with the relevant dog owner/carer:

Date you sent/left Barking Dog Courtesy Letter at barking dog address:

## 4. INFORMATION PACK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Before you start filling out this diary, it is important you have read the Barking Dogs Information Pack and understand what you can do or may be required to do when you are troubled by a barking dog. Please initial and date here to show you have read the Barking Dogs Information Pack and you understand what actions you may be requested to undertake, including the accurate completion of the Barking Dog Noise Diary.

Complainant initials

Date:

## 5. SIGNATURES

Complainant signature:

Witness name and signature:

Date:

Date:

## OFFICE USE ONLY

Document No.

Date Received





