

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

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.

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. Rangers will carry out noise patrols, speak with surrounding properties, evaluate any action the owner of the dog has taken to rectify the issue, as well as liaise with the complainants.

4. Nuisance Dog Order

If Council deems a Nuisance dog order is necessary, we require your agreement to act as a witness in Court and provide your evidence if the matter proceeds. A Barking dog diary will be need to be filled out and your signature agreeing to this is required. 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.

5. Contact a Community Justice Centre

If the problem persists or your neighbour is unwilling to discuss the matter, then you must contact the Community

*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.

Justice Centre. The CJC provides free Mediation to Help people solve disputes without going to court. The CJC can be contacted on 1800 990 777.

6. Noise Abatement Order

Once CJC has provided mediation, and the noise persists your next step is to seek a Noise Abatement Order. Noise abatement orders are issued by Local Courts to stop offensive noise or prevent it from occurring. To find out more on Noise Abatement orders go to *localcourt.justice.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
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.

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

FROM YOUR NEIGHBOUR

AT