

Barking Dogs

Information

Package



Did you know?

Walking your dog for at least 15 minutes a day means they are less likely to bark from boredom

Barking dogs are one of the most complained about issues to Council and one of the most difficult issues to resolve.

Chronic or excessive barking indicates something is wrong and can be a community nuisance. Often, owners are unaware of the excessive barking, which can signify anything from playfulness to danger.

Dogs may bark excessively because they are chained and lack space to move, provoked by people or other animals, not getting enough exercise, not properly trained, bored, suffering from separation anxiety, lonely, sick, hungry, or neglected. Addressing a dog's basic needs can sometimes easily stop the barking.

Complaints about barking dogs are challenging for Council to resolve because each person has a different view of what constitutes a noise nuisance, depending on the dog's location, the complainant's noise tolerance, and the type and duration of barking.

Council Rangers must investigate to determine if the barking is a nuisance and require complainants to agree to be witnesses in court and provide evidence. Gathering evidence and completing barking dog diaries is time-consuming and difficult.

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT MY BARKING DOG?

- Exercise your dog – working off excess energy means they are less likely to bark from boredom (simply walk your dog for at least 15 minutes a day).
- Make sure your dog receives veterinary attention when required.
- Leave toys out for your dog to play with.
- Make sure your dog has plenty of food, water and shelter from both the sun and rain.
- Discipline your dog - take it to obedience school or puppy preschool and talk to your vet about training courses.

BUT MY DOG STILL KEEPS ON BARKING

- Confine your dog in the back yard, away from interference or provocation by passing traffic and pedestrians.
- Restrict your dog's vision through the fence and or gate.
- Consider training, talk to specialists dog trainers and or dog behaviourists.
- Insulate the kennel against noise and weather.
- Keep your dog inside or confined to an enclosure at night.
- Use a citronella anti-barking collar which triggers a harmless citronella spray under the dogs nose when it barks. These collars have a high success rate and can be purchased online or at pet stores.

WHAT TO DO IF TROUBLED BY A BARKING DOG

1. Discuss

Discuss the issue with 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's only doing it when they are out. In most cases owners will want to do the right thing and will co-operate.

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.

Be specific and tell the dog owner if the dog is barking at certain times or at certain things and give them an opportunity to correct the problem.

If requested, Council will contact the dog owner to advise them of the complaint regarding alleged excessive barking and their responsibilities under the *Companion Animals Act 1998 (NSW)*.

2. Wait

If the owner agrees to do something about the barking please wait a few weeks to see if they have been successful in their efforts. If Council has contacted the dog owner on your behalf allow time for the owner to take action to address the nuisance barking.

3. Talk to the Neighbours

Pass on this brochure to other potentially affected neighbours, download at ballina.nsw.gov.au/dog-and-cat-ownership.

IMPORTANT WEBSITES

epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/noise/neighbourhood-noise/dealing-with-barking-dogs

legislation.nsw.gov.au refer to Companion Animals Act 1998.

4. Lodge Complaint with Council

A written complaint may be lodged with Council. Please note that two (2) written complaints must be lodged before Council will take action regarding a barking dog.

Council also requires a **Barking Dog Information Sheet** and **Barking Dog Diary** that has been completed for at least fourteen (14) days.

The accuracy of information provided regarding the reason, time, date and duration of the barking is crucial if the matter is to proceed.

Council requires your signature on the Barking Dog Information Sheet agreeing to act as a witness in court and provide evidence if the matter proceeds to Court.

Council requires you to agree to complete a Barking Dog Diary for up to six (6) months for evidence if the matter proceeds to Court and/or a Nuisance Dog Order is issued to the Dog owner restricting the barking.

Under the Companion Animals Act, a dog is considered a nuisance if it *makes a noise, by barking or otherwise, that persistently occurs or continues to such a degree or extent that it unreasonably interferes with the peace, comfort or convenience of any person in any other premises.*

If the dog belongs to a dog owner who lives in Department of Communities & Justice (DCJ) Housing, we also recommend that you lodge a complaint with DCJ Housing. Ph 1800 422 322 or email feedback@dcj.nsw.gov.au

5. Contact a Community Justice Centre (CJC) and/or take Private Civil Action

Until Council receives two (2) written complaints with completed barking dog diaries, Council is unable to take further action. However, you can choose to take civil action in Court or contact a Community Justice Centre (CJC).

CJC are government-funded but 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. This process will not cost you any money, and has a high success rate

To find your nearest CJC, visit www.cjc.justice.nsw.gov.au