

Barking Dogs in our Community

All dogs bark, but in some cases the barking dogs may become a real neighbourhood nuisance - greatly reducing the quality of life for their neighbours and increasing neighbourhood tensions.

Council understands the value of enjoying a peaceful neighbourhood, and appreciates that resolving noise nuisance complaints can sometimes be confronting or difficult. The information provided is to assist in understanding the roles of the aggrieved party, Council and the dog owner.



My neighbour's dog barks, what can I do as an aggrieved party?

Talk to your neighbour - Your neighbour may not be aware that their dog is barking or that their dogs' barking is bothering you. If the barking persists after a week or two, speak with your neighbour again to provide feedback.

If your neighbour is unapproachable, or does not agree that a problem exists, you should contact Council for further advice or contact the Dispute Resolution Centre for a free mediation service to work through the issue. Information on this service can be located through <http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/justice-services/dispute-resolution/mediation>

How to lodge a complaint

Council will need the correct address of where the dog is kept, a description of the dog, a detailed list of dates, times and possible causes for the dogs barking, and how the barking is affecting you. This information will assist us to carry out a fair and impartial investigation and may also help the animal's owner understand and resolve any problems that may be contributing to excessive barking.

What can Council do to assist me?

What happens to my complaint?

In the first instance Council will contact the dog's owner and let them know that a complaint has been received. We will also provide the owner with information on why dogs bark excessively and suggest ways in which this can possibly be resolved.

Give your neighbour time - Understand that the dog owner needs time to fix the problem, there are no quick fixes to a barking problem. If however the excessive barking problem

does not abate, Council needs to be advised so we can investigate the matter further.

Is my complaint going to be taken seriously?

Yes, Council has a legal obligation to investigate all complaints, however some barking may not constitute a noise nuisance under the local law even if it annoys you.

Council must be satisfied that the dog/s is in fact creating a nuisance by barking. If Council is unable to determine that a nuisance exists it is unable to take any further action.

Council's investigation process forms part of a legal process and as such it is necessary to obtain sufficient information/evidence to confirm the existence of a nuisance. It is also necessary that Council satisfies the requirements of relevant legislation and provides reasonable time and notice to the owner of the offending dog, therefore these matters are unlikely to be resolved quickly.

If Council is satisfied that a nuisance exists a notice may be served upon the keeper of the offending dog/s requiring them to abate the nuisance. Should the keeper of the dog fail to comply with the notice, Council may issue a fine, commence legal action or other action to resolve the matter. In the event that legal action is taken, all parties including the complainant and other witnesses may be asked to attend court to provide evidence.

My dog barks – What can I do as a dog owner?

Do you have a problem?

Barking is a natural behaviour for dogs. It is one way in which they communicate. A dog which barks excessively to cause nuisance barker however, is often one which over reacts to life's perceived threats or worries and where normal 'events of everyday life' causes excessive and

For more information on this topic, contact your local Council.

prolonged barking that is 'above and beyond the call of duty'.

A dog's barking may become a problem if the dog barks when:

- left alone for extended periods of time
- you leave home
- people enter or pass your property
- the dog seeks attention

You know your dog may be causing a noise nuisance by its barking when:

- your neighbours tell you
- a complaint has been made to Council
- it annoys you!

It is not Council's responsibility to resolve the problem for you. As the dog owner you need to firstly accept that your dog may be causing a problem and then take appropriate action to stop your dog barking excessively and these matters are unlikely to be resolved quickly.

Council is obligated to advise you that there are legal ramifications for not abating any noise nuisance.

Assess the problem - If you wish to reduce your dog's barking, you need to understand why he or she is barking. Ongoing barking is often a symptom of another problem, and taking time to understand what makes dogs bark - is the first step towards solving this problem, both for the dog involved and your neighbours.

Why do dogs bark?

- Dogs are social animals and often bark when they are lonely
- Separation from an owner can cause dogs to stress
- Barking may also be the result of boredom, frustration, or a dog's way of seeking attention from its owner
- Dogs bark out of fear - this can be fear of people, objects, or other dogs
- Dogs bark when there is a threat to their territory
- Playing with your dog often stimulates barking
- Some breeds have a reputation for barking
- Some dominant dogs bark until they get what they want.

The most important first step is to work out why your dog is barking. Once you know the symptom, you can find the cure. Utilising a counting collar can give you as the dog owner the opportunity to acknowledge and fix the problem or rule out the allegation. Council may be able to assist with the provision of bark count collars.

Control the barking

Behavioural problems can be understood if you learn more about your pet's behaviour. Barking can be controlled through several small behavioural changes, some as small as walking your dog twice a day to relieve boredom.

Seek professional help from an Animal behaviourist / trainer or talk to Council if necessary.

Help is available!