

## Barking dogs - dog owner

Barking is a natural behaviour for dogs. It is one way in which they communicate. Dogs bark for numerous reasons including boredom, excitement, distress, territorial defence, fear and anxiety. Solutions for problem barking will differ from dog to dog.

Some barking dogs become a real neighbourhood nuisance, greatly reducing the quality of life for their neighbours and increasing neighbourhood tensions.

Barking dogs are the most common animal behaviour problem Council is asked to deal with.

### My dog is barking, what should I do?

When dogs bark excessively there is usually an underlying issue. Before you can successfully manage a barking problem, you will need to identify the cause. You may need to do some detective work to obtain information, especially if the barking occurs when you are not at home.

To identify the cause, you could:

- talk to your neighbours to find out the times your dog is barking
- drive or walk around the block and watch/listen for a while
- start a tape recorder or video camera when you leave for work.

Barking is a problem if the dog barks:

- when left alone for extended periods
- immediately after you leave home
- excessively when people pass by your property
- when attention seeking.

You know you have a problem when:

- your neighbours tell you
- a complaint is lodged with Council
- it annoys you.

Council recommends you consider the following options in the first instance.

### Contact your vet to discuss the issue

Dogs can sometimes bark due to other underlying health issues (particularly if the issue is causing pain or discomfort). It is recommended that you consider taking your dog to your vet for a check-up to discuss the barking and identify any possible short and long-term solutions.

### Increase exercise

Taking your dog for a good walk provides your dog with physical and mental stimulation.

A walk in the morning and/or having a 'dog walker' in the middle of the day can help tire your dog out, reduce anxiety levels and help reduce barking behaviours.

You could also consider taking your dog to an off-leash dog park. Check out the list of dog off-leash areas in the Moreton Bay region.

### Stimulation

A bored dog will often seek to attract attention by barking. Provide stimulation such as:

- chew toys or toys with treats stuffed inside can help preoccupy a dog for some time
- a meat bone to provide hours of chewing time for your dog
- dropping you dog at doggy day-care or a friend's place for company during the day.

### Training

Regular dog training can provide your dog with mental, physical and social stimulation. You can also train your dog to only bark on command.

Consult a professional dog training service to assist you with a range of dog behavioural issues, including barking. Details can be found at your local pet store, vet or Association of Pet Dog Trainers website [www.apdt.com.au](http://www.apdt.com.au).

### Fencing design

Dogs often bark at regular disturbances such as rubbish trucks and people passing by. Filling in gaps and cracks in your fencing will block the dogs view and may reduce the problem barking.

## Keeping your dog inside

Your dog may be particularly attracted to barking at native wildlife (such as possums and birds) or a neighbourhood cat. Keeping your dog inside (especially if it is barking at night-time) can help alleviate excessive barking at times that are sensitive to residents in your neighbourhood.

## Your responsibilities as a dog owner

Dog owners are responsible for making sure their dogs don't bark too much and cause a noise nuisance.

A barking dog is considered a noise nuisance if it makes a noise which unreasonably disrupts or inhibits activities at adjoining or nearby land by making a noise which is repetitious or incessant. It may take some time to change the dog's behaviour.

Not all dog barking is considered a noise nuisance. Barking is a natural behaviour for dogs and is one of the ways they communicate.

## What happens if Council receives a complaint about my dog barking?

Council will send a letter, fact sheet and noise diary to the complainant (via post or email) and encourage them to speak with the owner of the barking dog.

At the same time, Council will send a letter and information to you as the dog's owner to let you know a complaint has been received and some potential solutions.

The complainant will be requested to complete a noise diary for a minimum period of 14 days and return it to Council. The noise diary helps Council establish patterns of when the dog is creating the noise nuisance and provides information on possible triggers for the noise.

If a completed noise diary is received, a Council officer will review the diary to assist further investigation. The returned noise diary is a key piece of information that assists Council understand the nature of the situation.

If the officer is satisfied that the dog is causing an ongoing noise nuisance, Council may issue a fine and a notice to remedy may also be served as the keeper of the dog. Alternatively, Council may determine that education is the most appropriate response.

## What will Council do if the barking continues to cause nuisance?

Should Council receive a further complaint regarding the nuisance barking dog, a Council officer will contact the complainant to obtain statements of events and gather any evidence to support the complaint.

You will also be contacted as the dog's owner to advise a further complaint has been received. If Council is satisfied that a nuisance exists and there is a failure to comply with the notice, Council may issue a further fine, commence legal or other action to resolve the matter which may include seizing the dog/s.

## Further information

There are a number of professionals who may be able to assist with your dog's barking. Reputable dog trainers can be found on the Association of Pet Dog Trainers website [www.apdt.com.au](http://www.apdt.com.au)

The RSPCA is a great source of information with various articles available online [www.rspca.org.au](http://www.rspca.org.au).

Visit [www.moretonbay.qld.gov.au](http://www.moretonbay.qld.gov.au).

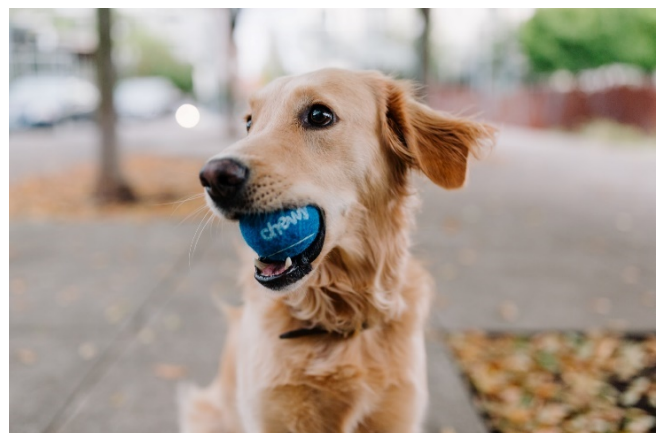


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# Communication cards

Dear neighbour

I believe my dog/s are barking/howling excessively which may be causing some concerns in the neighbourhood. I'm currently trying to address this situation and would like your assistance.

Can you please complete the below and drop this survey back in my letterbox at:

.....

Your dog/s is not causing me concern

Your dog is causing me concern

Please provide details of this noise (i.e. date, time and regularity)

Please include your name and phone number if it's okay for me to contact you about your feedback:

.....



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