

Information for People Affected by Barking Dogs



Barking is a natural behaviour for dogs, and it is just one way in which they communicate. However, we understand in some cases barking dogs may become a neighbourhood nuisance impacting on the amenity of the area. If a barking dog affects you, we recommend the following actions:

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's only barking when they are out. In most cases owners will want to do the right thing and will cooperate.

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 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.

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. *Contact Council*

Ask Council for additional copies of this brochure for you to pass onto other potentially affected neighbours. Or go to Council's website www.blandshire.nsw.gov.au and view barking dog information.

4. *Lodge Complaint to Council*

A written complaint may be lodged with Council. Please note that two (2) written complaints must be lodged regarding a barking dog. Complaints must be from two (2) independent residents before Council will take action in relation to a barking dog.

Along with your written complaint Council will require a copy of the completed Barking Dog Information Sheet and the Barking Dog Diary that has been completed for at least fourteen (14) days.

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

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

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. Your signature agreeing to the keeping of such a diary will be required on the Barking Dog Diary.

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

Until such time Council receives two (2) written complaints with completed barking dog diaries, Council is unable to take further action and you are advised to take civil action in Court or contact the Community Justice Centre (CJC).

CJC are government funded but independent centres that specialise in settling difference 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 process will not cost you any money, and has a high success rate.

For information on your nearest CJC, visit www.cjc.justice.nsw.gov.au or phone 1800 990 777 (free call).

Alternatively, you can apply to the local court for a Noise Abatement Order. If the court is satisfied that the dog is causing an offensive noise, or that the noise is likely to recur, it may order the owner to stop the noise within a specific timeframe or prevent a recurrence.

