

# Barking Dog Information Package



## Nuisance caused by barking dogs due to;

- chained to a fixed point and don't have enough room to move around
- being provoked deliberately or unintentionally by people or other roaming animals
- not getting enough exercise
- not properly trained
- bored
- may suffer from separation anxiety
- lonely, sick, hungry, or generally neglected.

## Complaints about barking dogs are a difficult issue for Council to resolve because:

- each individual will have a different view as to what is a noise nuisance and this will vary as a result of the location of the dog to the complainant, the noise tolerance level of complainant, the type of barking and time/length of barking.
- Council Rangers need to investigate complaints to ascertain whether the barking meets the legislative requirements for creating nuisance.
- Council Rangers require complainants to agree to be a witness in Court and provide evidence if the matter is to proceed.

- the owners often are not aware that their dog is barking excessively.
- barking is simply one way dogs communicate and can mean anything from playfulness to danger.
- Gathering the evidence needed to support compliance action can be difficult Affected parties need to maintain detailed barking dog diaries.



Chronic or excessive barking is a sign that something is wrong and can be a nuisance to others in the community. Sometimes stopping a dog from barking can be as simple as taking care of their basic needs.

## Important Websites

[epa.nsw.gov.au/noise/barkingdogs](http://epa.nsw.gov.au/noise/barkingdogs)  
OR

[Legislation.nsw.gov.au](http://Legislation.nsw.gov.au)—refer to Companion Animals Act, Section 32A Nuisance Dogs for definitions of a nuisance dog.

Or

Google: Bark Busters NSW

## How does Council Treat Barking Dog Complaints.

For Council to take action against owners of barking dogs, the barking must first be identified as being a nuisance. The test for this is an objective view and applying the reasonable person test. In order to satisfy this test the subject barking needs to be of community concern, and not that of just one household or person. With this in mind Council will require a minimum of two independent households to register complaints.

## Identified Nuisance Barking

Once a dog has been identified as being a possible nuisance barker the following actions may be taken by Council Rangers:

- In the first instant they will call upon the dog owner and offer advice on reducing the issue of barking.
- If further complaints are received the owner of the dog will receive a written



# More Barking Dog Information

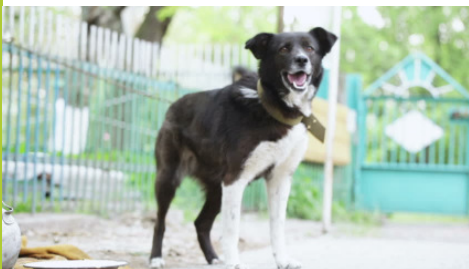


advice from Council, explaining the regulations concerning barking dogs.

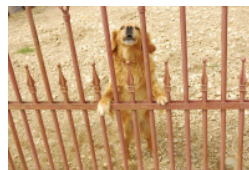
- A letter and barking dog diary will be sent to the Customers explaining the next step in actioning their complaint, which will involve them keeping a diary of the barking over a two week period.
- Rangers will conduct further investigations within the community.
- Once all the evidence is obtained and examined, should the dog or dogs prove to be a nuisance Council may then issue nuisance dog orders on the owner. These orders require the owner to prevent the dog/s from barking and causing a public nuisance. Should these orders be breached, then fines may be issued.



*NOTE: Council does not have the legal power to remove a dog from a property due to its nuisance barking.*



## Resolving The Nuisance.



### ***Make a personal approach and discuss.***

Contact the dog owner first. How you do this is your decision. You may decide to talk personally with 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 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 dog owner if the dog is barking at certain times or at certain things and give them an opportunity to correct the problem.

### ***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.



## Helpful Information!

Contained in this package you will find the following information which can assist in your approach to the barking dog owner.

- A draft letter to the owner re the barking of their dog.
- A behavioural Fact Sheet which can be given to the owner to help them identify the issues with their dog.
- A barking dog diary, for your use in recording the nuisance.

## The dog is still barking!

***If you are still having issues then it is advised that you Make contact with the Community Justice Centre.***

CJC are government funded but independent centres that specialise in settling differences between neighbours through a mediation process. This is a **FREE SERVICE.**

For more information visit their web page at: [cjc.nsw.gov.au](http://cjc.nsw.gov.au)

You may also commence your own legal action and seek a noise control order via the Local Court.



***Council requires two or more Independent Complainants to take action against barking dog owners***

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Date:

Dear Neighbour,

We/I felt you should be made aware that your dog/s is causing a nuisance by barking.

Rather than making a formal complaint to the Coffs Harbour City Council we wanted to take this opportunity to advise you of the situation so that you can take action to rectify the problem.

1. Your dog barks during the \_\_\_\_\_ day / night / both
2. Barking continues for periods of up to \_\_\_\_\_ minutes at a time.
3. The barking is worse when you are \_\_\_\_\_ Home / Not Home / Both
4. The dog barks at the \_\_\_\_\_ Front / Rear / \_\_\_\_\_ Side of yard
5. Your dog appears to be barking at \_\_\_\_\_
6. The dog predominantly barking is (if two dogs) \_\_\_\_\_

By bringing this matter to your attention I hope we are able to resolve this issue in a neighbourly manner.

Regards

Your Neighbour

*This note has been kindly supplied and is endorsed by Coffs Harbour City Council to encourage neighbours to work together to resolve neighbourhood concerns.*

**COFFS HARBOUR CITY COUNCIL**

# Diary

\* Records 1 to 3 are Examples only.

Date Of Barking Dog	Time Barking Started	Time Barking Stopped	Intermittent (I) Continuous (C)	Extent Of Barking?	Reason For Barking(person walking past, weather, another animal, sirens, etc) Any other information such as (Woken from sleep, could not watch TV, etc)
<i>01/01/01</i>	<i>3:06pm</i>	<i>3:22pm</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>15+ Barks</i>	<i>Other dogs wandering the street.</i>
<i>03/03/03</i>	<i>1:06am</i>	<i>1:11am</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>10 + Barks</i>	<i>Woken from deep sleep. Could not see what the dog was barking at.</i>
<i>04/04/04</i>	<i>3.33pm</i>	<i>5:02pm</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>50+Barks</i>	<i>Dog standing at side gate barking at anyone or anything walking past.</i>

I certify that the above record was kept by me and is a true an accurate record.

Signature.....Date.....

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# Why Does My Dog Bark



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

## **Boredom**

Being alone with very little to do for extended periods of time can lead to boredom, frustration and loneliness for dogs. Bored dogs also show other anti-social behaviours, like trying to escape, being destructive, and chewing and digging. To avoid boredom you need to give your dog plenty to do when it's alone.

- Try interactive toys that hide food or ones that are designed to require more manipulation and work to obtain the food reward. Leave toys, rope, chews, rawhides and even bones for a dog to play with and use up time while alone.
- Give your dog a bone or dog treat when you leave the house. (eg a pigs ear and chew toy). This will teach your dog that when you leave there is a positive reward—The bone or treat.
- Leaving an article of clothing with the scent of the missed loved one on it also works well, especially for puppies.
- Use old drink bottles or milk containers with the lids removed. Cut a few squares in the side and place dry biscuits or ice inside. Your dog will roll them like a toy. They also make good chew toys when empty.

- A variety of toys can be left in the yard for your dog to play with. Be mindful to alternate your dog's toys as they are just like kids— they will get bored with the same toys and ignore them.



## **Excitement**

Anticipating a walk, playing games, playing with children, seeing people in swimming pools, and hearing their owners arriving home, often excite a dog. This uncontrolled barking is fairly easy to fix by removing the source of excitement from the dog and not rewarding the barking behaviour.

- Increase physical exercise
- Regularly walk your dog and change the route you walk.
- Remove direct line of sight between the dog and children or animals, as looking at other animals or children play provoke barking.
- Spend FUN time with your dog.

## **Anxiety**

Dogs are 'pack' animals and dogs regard its owner and family as its pack, and will bark in an attempt to communicate with the missing members of its pack. When dogs are left alone they may fret and become anxious, often barking for extended periods of time. Dogs may also become fearful or anxious of people or objects, like the postman or the neighbour's lawnmower. When dogs bark because of fear or anxiety, it is very important to work on reducing anxiety levels as early as possible. This will benefit your dog and the community.

Avoid routine e.g carry your keys with you at different times not just the times you are leaving.

Companionship: before leaving home, turn on the television or radio, or give your dog an old coat or item of clothing that belongs to you.



**Reasons why your dog may be barking excessively**

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# Why Does My Dog Bark



## Discomfort

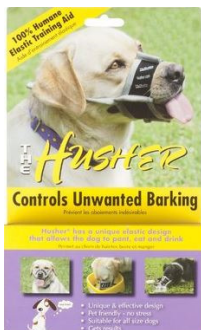
Pain and discomfort, illness or even being restricted to a small area may be a cause of barking. Dogs left chained or tied up may find it difficult to get exercise or water to drink. If your usually quiet dog suddenly starts to bark excessively, check its environment and perhaps take a trip to the vet.

Dogs need enough space to move freely in an enclosed backyard. A dog should not be left on a fixed chain for long periods. If a dog has to be chained, it should be on a running chain.

## Training Aids

Training aids can be used in conjunction with positive and negative reinforcement training.

### **Husher Muzzles**



## **Petsafe Anti-Bark Spray Collar**

These types of devices are to be used in conjunction with corrective training. For advice on their proper use you can contact your local Council's Rangers Office, any recognised dog training organisation, a qualified dog trainer or your local vet for help.



## The Law and what you need to know.

The Companion Animals Act 1998 Section 32A (Nuisance Dogs)

For the purpose of this section, a dog is a nuisance if the dog;

- (a)...
- (b) 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.
- (c)...

If an authorised officer of Council is satisfied that a dog is a nuisance, the officer may, after complying with Section 32A & 32B, issue an order in the approved form to the owner of the dog requiring the owner to prevent the behaviour that is alleged to constitute the nuisance. (*Nuisance Barking*)

The order will specify the behaviour of the dog that is required to be prevented. The order can specify more than one kind of behaviour.

An order will remain in place for 6 months.

The owner of a dog must comply with an order issued to the owner under this section and must continue to comply with it while it is in force.

If the owner of a dog is found to be in breach of an order given to them, then penalties for non compliance may be applied.

The Act provides for Penalty Infringement Notices of \$275 for each offence. Court imposed fines for repeat offences range up to a maximum of \$1,650.



**Reasons why your dog may be barking excessively**

*Helping to achieve the 2030 Community Vision*