

What can I do if a neighbour's dog is barking excessively?

Many people do not realise their dog is barking excessively as it often occurs while they are at work. We recommend talking to your neighbour and alerting them to the problem. It may be possible to work together to help solve the problem using some of the tips in this brochure.

If the problem persists without any result, you can lodge a complaint with Council. It is important to provide us with accurate information regarding the dog and the property. Information provided will be kept confidential. Anonymous complaints will generally not be acted upon.

If you think a dog is barking because it is being mistreated, you need to contact either the RSPCA, Animal Welfare League or the police as Council is unable to act on animal welfare issues.

Council will not become involved in any domestic disputes between neighbours and if this appears to be the situation, we recommend obtaining free or low-cost legal advice through Legal Aid or Law Access NSW.

Barking dogs and the law

If your dog is found to be barking excessively a nuisance dog order may be issued under the Companion Animals Act. Council must have reasonable evidence to do this. Evidence may include barking dog diaries maintained by neighbours or a Council ranger witnesses the barking.

A nuisance dog order requires the owner to prevent the nuisance behaviour as outlined in the order and remains in force for a period of 6 months. Substantial fines may be issued for non-compliance with this order. In extreme cases, Council may take action in the local courts.

Useful information

Northern Beaches Council
1300 434 434
northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au

Animal Welfare League
8899 3333
awlnsw.com.au

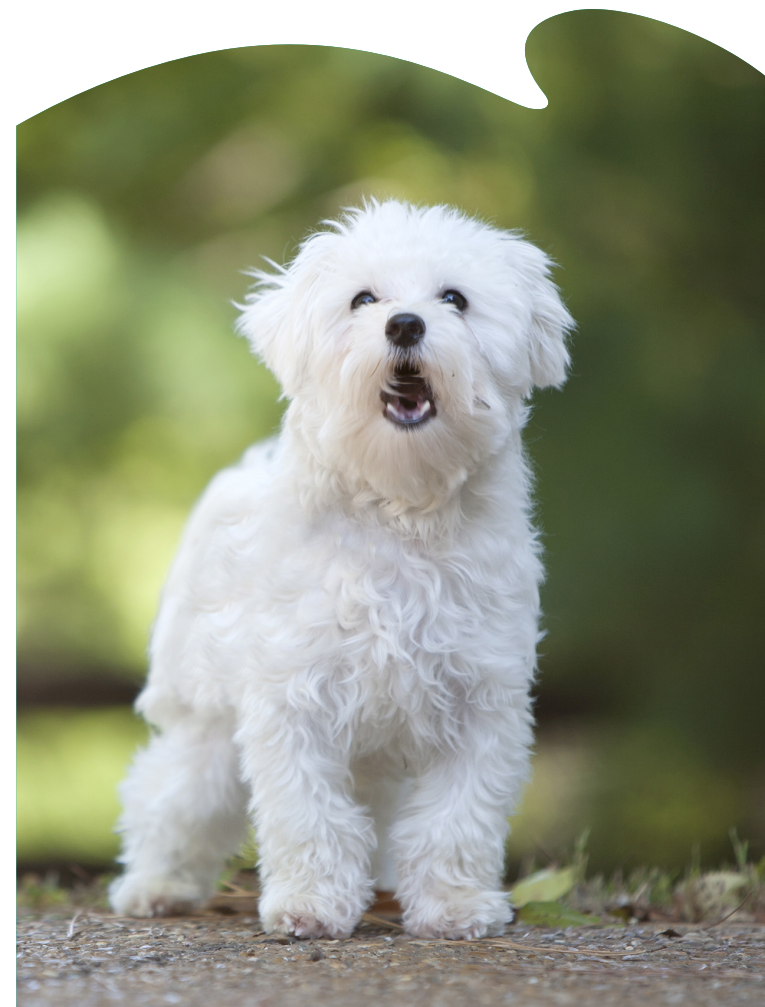
RSPCA
9770 7555
rspcansw.org.au

Pet Professionals Guild Australia
ppgaustralia.net.au

Legal Aid NSW / Law Access
1300 888 529
legalaid.nsw.gov.au

Companion Animals Act 1998 NSW and Protection of The Environment Operations Act 1997
legislation.nsw.gov.au

Your guide to barking dogs



Nuisance barking

Small amounts of barking such as a reaction to a disturbance caused by a passing dog or person is normal. However, when a dog barks persistently so that it unreasonably interferes with the peace, comfort or convenience of any person in any other premises, it's classed as nuisance barking (*Companion Animals Act*).

Is my dog barking too much?

You may not be aware that your dog barks until your neighbour informs you.

If you receive a complaint, it's a good idea to find out when your dog barks and for how long. This may give you some clues as to the reason for the barking. Think about setting up a web cam or video camera to film them.

Nuisance barking causes

Nuisance barking in dogs can occur for many reasons including boredom, anxiety, ongoing disturbances, pain, lack of food or water and excitement.

Boredom

Dogs are very intelligent and highly social creatures. Many resort to barking to entertain themselves and to expend excess energy.

Tips to prevent boredom

- Take your pooch for a walk or run in the morning. A young medium to large dog generally needs 40 minutes exercise a day.

- Hide food around the garden rather than offering it all in a bowl or use an interactive food toy.
- Give your dog big meaty bones, they can't bark if they are chewing.
- Give your dog 2 - 3 toys a day and rotate them so your dog doesn't get bored.
- Give your dog ice blocks such as a frozen bone or some food in an ice cream container with some water or chicken stock.
- Create a digging haven by burying treats.
- Consider getting another dog or a cat to keep them company or organise a play date with another human. Leaving the radio on can also help.
- Hire a dog walker if you don't have time to exercise your dog.

Anxiety

If your dog shows high levels of stress when left alone, it may have separation anxiety. This can be harder to treat and will require time and dedication.

Tips to reduce anxiety

- No excessive greetings or goodbyes. When you make a big deal of leaving it becomes a big deal for a dog.
- Get your dog used to being outside on their own even when you are at home.

- Teach your dog to lie on a mat and not follow you everywhere.
- Consider using a Dog Appeasing Pheromone (DAP). It's been shown to help some dogs and is available from most veterinarians.
- Try a tight fitting garment, it can calm some dogs. This could include a Thundershirt or a tight dog jumper.

Remember the tips above are for a dog who displays mild stress when left alone. If you think your dog has separation anxiety you may also need to seek professional guidance from a Pet Professional Guild Australia dog trainer, behaviour vet or veterinary behaviourist.

Disturbance barking

Some dogs bark at every disturbance outside their yard such as people, dogs, and other animals.

Tips to reduce disturbance barking

- Seek corrective training advice from a qualified dog trainer.
- Block your dog's view so he can't see beyond the fence.
- Create an inner fence 1-2 metres inside your main fence.
- Keep your dog inside.