

Companion Animal Management – Barking Dogs

Is your well-being affected by a barking dog?

Kempsey Shire Council is involved with 250 barking dog complaints annually, which requires many work hours for Council's Rangers.

Council has power under the following New South Wales legislation to effectively address barking dog problems.

- Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997.
- Companion Animals Act 1998.
- Local Government Act 1993.

Council is fully aware that a barking dog nuisance is a source of frustration and irritation and creates disharmony between neighbours.

Is the barking a nuisance behaviour?

Does the barking that is affecting you constitute nuisance behaviour? It must be acknowledged that dogs bark for many reasons; however nuisance barking must be differentiated from normal behaviour. The following are examples of nuisance barking:

- If the dog takes a long time to settle after barking begins i.e. greater than 5 minutes OR at regular intervals.
- The dog barks for prolonged periods during the night or early hours of the morning.

What can I do if the dog barks persistently when the owners are away?

The majority of barking dog complaints can be resolved simply by making owners aware that the problem exists.

It enables the owner to take measures to rectify the problem.

Tell the owner of the dog that the dog is barking and stress how it is impacting on you and your family.

Dogs left unattended (absent owners)

Surveys have determined that barking is most likely to occur when the owners of the dog are away from home, i.e. all family members work and the children are at school. If the dog is annoying you, it would be most certainly affecting the owners.



If the owners are absent a lot of the time, they may be unaware that their dog is barking constantly.

Why do dogs continually bark? Dogs will bark if they:

- Have been banished to the backyard.
- Receive no company or control.
- Are bored.
- Receive no exercise.
- Are cold or hot, sick or injured.
- Are frightened or aggressive.

What can I do if my dog continually barks?

- Seek specific details from your neighbours as to when and why they believe the dog is barking.
- Provide adequate shelter from the weather i.e. a kennel or in the laundry.
- Ensure your animal is fed at night, so it is not hungry throughout the night.
- Exercise your dog daily.
- Provide mental stimulation for your dog, toys etc.
- Provide companionship for your dog.
- Get to know your dogs' barking triggers i.e. the postperson, police sirens, storms etc.
- Seek advice and assistance from a veterinarian or dog trainer.

The NSW Companion Animals Act defines nuisance barking as a dog that 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.

What will Council do about a persistent barking dog?

A nuisance barking letter and information brochure will be sent to both the complainant and the dog owner.

The dog owner, under natural justice, has to be given time to implement the strategies to overcome the barking issues.

Should the situation not improve after fourteen (14) days, and the complainant advises Council, in writing, a diary recording sheet to officially record the frequency (time) and duration of barking will be sent to the complainant.

When the diary is returned to Council, Council Rangers conduct a survey of residents in the surrounding neighbourhood to determine whether a public nuisance exists.

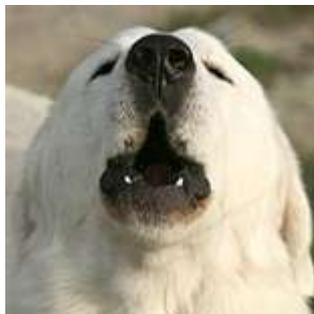
If a genuine issue is established and the owner fails to undertake measures to rectify the situation, a Nuisance Order may be issued under the NSW Companion Animals Act. Failure to act on the Order may result in an on the spot fine being issued.

Other Agencies you may contact besides Council

Contact a Community Justice Centre (CJC), these are government-funded but independent centres that specialise in settling differences between neighbours without entering into complicated legal processes. They will suggest mediation, which is where you meet with the dog's owner and a CJC representative to try and resolve the problem. This is a free process and has a 95% success rate. For information on your nearest CJC, visit www.cjc.nsw.gov.au

The Local Court

You can issue your own noise abatement directive under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997. To apply for an order, contact your nearest local court.

**Library**

You can contact your local library for books on caring for and controlling barking dogs.

Vets

Local vets can be contacted for advice and information.

RSPCA

The local RSPCA Branch can be contacted on 02 9770 7555 or visit the website www.rspca.org.au for further information.

Ranger Services

Kempsey Shire Council Ranger Services can be contacted on 02 6566 3200.

This fact sheet has been developed in the interests of community education, health and safety, as part of Kempsey Shire Council's commitment to its community.

**For further information and advice on
Barking Dogs
Contact:**

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West Kempsey

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www.kempsey.nsw.gov.au