



BARKING DOGS

Most dogs bark, but some dogs can become a neighbourhood nuisance. Their barking can reduce the quality of life for neighbours nearby and can lead to neighbourhood tensions. Complaints to Council about barking dogs far outweigh any other animal management issue.

Continual barking is often a symptom of other issues. Taking time to understand what makes dogs bark is the first step towards solving this issue, both for the dog and neighbourhood.

Animal noise, such as barking, is an offence under Subordinate Local Law No.2 (Animal Management) 2014.

The owner of an animal must comply with the following minimum standards:

- take all reasonable steps to prevent the animals from making a noise or disturbance that causes a nuisance or disturbance to the occupiers of other land or premises;

If Council determines that a noise nuisance exists, compliance action can be taken which may include the issuing of fines.

WHY DO DOGS BARK?

Boredom – Being alone for extended periods or too little exercise can lead to boredom, frustration, and loneliness. Bored dogs are also most likely to display other problem behaviours like digging, being destructive or trying to escape.

To avoid boredom when the dog is alone try some of the following:

- Leave your dog interactive toys or chew toys;
- Give your dog a bone when you leave the house; or
- Leave an article of clothing nearby with the scent of a loved one.

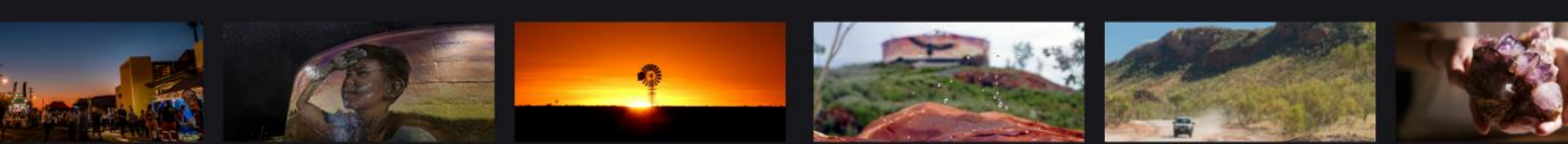
Anxiety – When dogs are left alone, they can become fearful or anxious, often barking for extended periods. Try either of the following:

- Leave a radio on softly for the dog to listen to.
- Leave an article of clothing nearby with the scent of a loved one.

Discomfort – Pain, discomfort, illness or even being chained or restricted to small areas can lead to nuisance barking. If your 'usually quiet' dog starts to become a problem barker, it may be time for a visit to the vet.

Excitement – Anticipating a walk, playing games, seeing people in the pool and hearing their owners arrive home can excite a dog. It is important not to reward this behaviour. Try some of the following:

- Increase physical exercise;
- Regularly walk the dog and change the route;
- Avoid routine, e.g. carry your keys with you at different times not just when you are leaving the house;
- Remove direct line of sight between your dog and anything that may provoke barking; or
- Play fun games with your dog.



Disturbances – Barking episodes can occur when someone walks past or the postman visits. This behaviour is then reinforced as the perceived “intruder” leaves. This behaviour may lead to aggression and neighbours are less likely to be alerted to a real threat to your property. Try either of the following:

- Remove direct line of sight between the dog and anything that may provoke barking; or
- Distract the dog when a disturbance is present.

TIPS TO CONTROL BARKING

Assess the problem by considering the following:

- What makes the dog bark and when?
- How long has it been a problem?
- How did it start?

Talk to the neighbours (optional)

- The neighbours can advise of issues when the dog owner is away from the property.

Review existing fencing to prevent the dog seeing passing disturbances.

Do not shout at the dog when it barks in an attempt to stop it, as this may have the opposite effect. Some dogs are barking because they want attention.

BARKING DOG COMPLAINTS

If an anonymous request is received, no further action will be taken by Council.

If Council receives a complaint, details will be collected for action. Council will undertake an initial investigation and;

- Issue a letter to the registered dog owner seeking compliance with the Local Law; and
- Reply to the complainant with an information pack which will include a complaint form, diary pack and statutory declaration requiring

complainants to declare that they agree to appear as a witness in Court in any action to be taken to resolve the complaint.

Barking dog investigations

Upon receipt of the complaint form, diary pack and statutory declaration an investigation will commence.

An Authorised Officer will –

- contact the customer;
- assess the documentation provided;
- determine whether a noise nuisance exists; and
- decide appropriate compliance action to resolve any detected noise nuisance.

If there is insufficient supporting evidence for an Authorised Officer to form the opinion that a nuisance noise exists, the complainant will be advised in writing and the investigation will be closed. Council will not investigate any further complaints for an animal noise nuisance at the subject property for a period of 3 months.

If there is sufficient supporting evidence for an Authorised Officer to form the opinion that a noise nuisance exists, a Compliance Notice or an Infringement Notice may be issued.

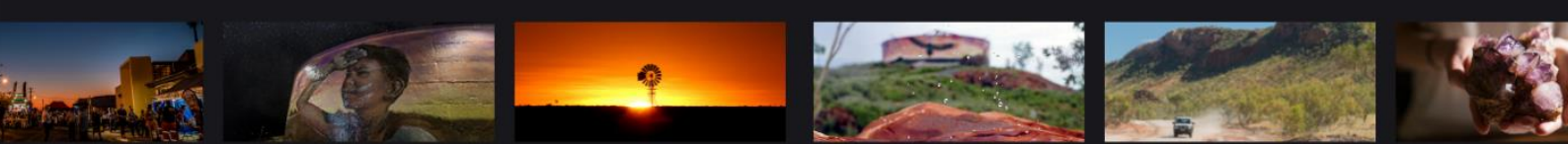
The outcome of the investigation will be provided to both the dog's owner and the customer.

Details of the investigation are not available to the dog owner or the complainant at any time while the matter is being investigated by Council in accordance with the Information Privacy Act 2009.

Complainant details are not disclosed to the dog owner at any time in accordance with the Information Privacy Act 2009.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A dog owner is responsible for ensuring that their dogs do not bark incessantly and



if they do, that appropriate steps are taken to abate the nuisance.

Complaints will not be investigated until Council receives a complaint form, diary pack and statutory declaration confirming their willingness to appear in Court as a witness to the offence.

If you require any further information about barking dogs or other responsible pet ownership issues, please contact Council.

For further information, please contact Cloncurry Shire Council:

- Phone: (07) 4742 4100
- Fax: (07) 4742 1712
- Email: council@cloncurry.qld.gov.au
- Address: Cloncurry Shire Council Administration Centre, 38-46 Daintree Street, Cloncurry QLD 4824
- Mailing Address: PO Box 3, Cloncurry QLD 4824

