

Tips for dog owners

Identifying the cause of your dog's barking will help you work out the best way to address it.

You could try:

- Checking with nearby neighbours to establish when and how often the barking occurs to identify patterns.
- Leave home and return without your dog noticing a number of times to help confirm or refute the claim, or establish a pattern to the barking.
- Have an independent neighbour keep a diary of your dog's barking and observe and report any triggers. These observations and recordings may help establish the duration, time and nature of the barking, or confirm if there is a problem that needs to be addressed.
- Determine if other factors (neighbours, noise and other stimuli, pedestrians) are causing the barking to occur.
- Try covering gaps in fencing to prevent the dog from seeing distractions.
- Regularly exercise and socialise your dog.
- Seek help from a veterinarian or an animal behaviourist.

You should **never use physical punishment to train your dog**. Physical punishment can make your dog stressed, fearful and confused.

It can even encourage bad behaviour for attention and have unwanted consequences such as aggression from your dog.

Contemporary studies show dogs learn best through positive reinforcement, habit building and teaching alternative behaviours.



Barking dogs



23 Dundobar Road, Wanneroo, WA 6065

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wanneroo.wa.gov.au   

This flyer is available in alternative formats upon request.

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What is a nuisance dog?

In accordance with the *Dog Act 1976*, possible nuisance noise or barking includes:

- Persistent barking or noise to such an extent that it interferes with the peace, comfort or convenience of people.
- Barking, whining and/or howling regularly for more than 10 minutes at a time.



What can I do?

Owners might not even be aware their dog is a nuisance to neighbours, so the first step is to contact the owner in a polite manner.

If you are not comfortable approaching the owner, you can download a Barking Dog Card from the City's website (cards can be posted if requested), fill it out and provide it to the dog's owner.

Often these matters are easily resolved just by bringing the issue to the owner's attention, however, if the owner fails to accept there is a problem, a complaint can be lodged with the City.



The complaint process

After you make a complaint, the City will send you a copy of our Barking Dog Procedure and a seven day barking dog diary. To better assess a case of nuisance barking, we suggest that two or more neighbours record a diary.

Complainants have 28 days to complete and return the seven day diary to the City by:

Mail Locked Bag 1, Wanneroo, WA, 6946
Email enquiries@wanneroo.wa.gov.au
In person Wanneroo Civic Centre, 23 Dundobar Road, Wanneroo or Clarkson library

If the diary is not completed correctly or does not sufficiently demonstrate nuisance barking, the City will not be able to progress the complaint.

If the diary supports the complaint of nuisance barking, the City will contact the dog owner to discuss the complaint.

The City will provide a letter to the dog owner detailing the times the nuisance barking is allegedly occurring. This will be the first opportunity for the dog owner to address the nuisance.

If the barking subsides to an acceptable level after two weeks, no further action will be taken and the complaint will be closed.

If the barking continues to be unreasonable after two weeks, the complainant will need to complete a second barking dog diary for 14 days and submit the completed diary to the City for assessment.

Depending on the outcome of the diary assessment, appropriate action will be taken.

If a diary provides evidence of nuisance barking, the dog owner is given three opportunities to decrease the nuisance. Each time, complainants must complete a 14-day diary.

After the second opportunity, the City will serve an order against the owner of the dog. If the noise has not decreased and the barking continues, the City may issue an infringement in accordance with the *Dog Act 1976*.

If the nuisance barking persists after an infringement has been issued, the City can take court action against the dog owner.

The completion of the diaries is necessary to provide sufficient evidence for the City to act on.

For more information on the City's procedure or to get a dog barking diary, please call Community Safety and Emergency Management on 9405 5000.

Tips for effective dog diaries

- Have two or more neighbours keep a dog diary.
- When logging long periods of barking, be sure to include whether the noise is constant or intermittent.
- Avoid comments on the dog diary that identify who the complainants are.
- Try to clearly show when the nuisance barking is at its worst.

