

BARKING DOGS

(Owners and Complainants)

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.

What should I do if I receive a complaint about my dog(s) barking?

Communicate with your neighbours. In most cases your dog(s) bark when you are at work, out or away on holidays. Often meaning you are unaware of any barking nuisances. Barking can be a contentious issue for both dog owners and the complainant. The focus of this fact sheet is to provide you with resources for an amicable outcome.

What If I don't want to approach the dog(s) owner?

The WTA encourages you to speak directly with your neighbour. In most cases dog owners are unaware that their dog(s) are barking or creating a noise nuisance.

If you are unable to speak with your neighbours face-to-face, it is recommended to place a note in their letter box to alert them of your concerns.

For example;

Dear Neighbour,
You may not be aware that your dog(s) begins to bark after you leave in the morning. This barking continues frequently throughout the day whenever someone walks past your house, another dog barks, a cat wanders by, or sometimes at nothing.

This is becoming a concern for me as I am home most days and the barking is quite loud and disrupts my daily activities. I am happy to discuss this further –you can call me on XXXX XXXX or I'm just next door at number XX.

What can I do if my dog(s) is barking?

Firstly you need to identify why your dog(s) are barking. The best way to find answers is to speak with your neighbours.

Dogs bark for numerous reasons. By asking your neighbours you may be able to quickly identify and resolve barking issues.

Barking dogs result from four main factors;

- 1.Environmental
- 2.Illness or injury
- 3.Stress/Anxiety
- 4.Training

Other things to consider while trying to identify why your dog is barking are;

- 1.Have I provided basic health and welfare?
- 2.Is the shelter adequate?
- 3.Have I provided daily exercise?
- 4.Consult with Veterinarian re: check-ups, immunisations, anti bark collars or to identify any other underlining medical issues.
- 5.Is the environment I house my pet Interesting?
- 6.What training should I consider and who do I ask? Council and or your local Vet.
- 7.Should I consider sight barriers?

Other information

For additional information on resolving barking issues you may like to contact the following services:

R.S.P.C.A – the RSPCA has a range of information available on their website www.rspca.org.au to assist with training and caring for your dog.

The WTA's website – visit our website for more information on dog ownership in Weipa. You can explore our website for information on responsible pet ownership at www.weipatownauthority.com.au or by contacting the customer service centre on 07 4030 9400.

Library – you can contact your library for books on caring for and controlling barking.

Vets – your local vet can be contacted to assist in diagnosing any medical conditions that may be resulting in your dog barking.

What is the WTA process for investigating noise nuisance complaints?

The WTA will record all complaints on the customer service register.

The customer service officers will ask a series of questions relating to your complaint. This information will be recorded and the customer service officer will provide you with feedback relating to the process for dealing with a noise nuisance complaint.

The WTA prefer that you speak with your neighbours regarding your issues. If you choose not to speak with the dog owner about their dog(s) barking you will be requested to supply the WTA with a diary (collected from admin) outlining the barking nuisance. The WTA will only proceed with an investigation into a barking nuisance if you provide evidence about the barking for a duration of 14 days eg:

Date	Time	Barking	Duration
2/5/24	0830	Cat walked by	3 minutes
2/5/24	0845	Kids walking to school	15 minutes

Once the WTA has assessed the diary sheet contact will be made with the dog owner.

The WTA will assess the key issues:

- 1.Environmental
- 2.Illness or injury
- 3.Stress/Anxiety
- 4.Training

The WTA will work with the dog owners to resolve the barking nuisance. The WTA office will also keep the complainant abreast of progress and success along the way.

Residents need to recognise that it is natural for dogs to bark. It is acceptable for dogs to bark at other dogs wandering or barking, a person walking by or kids heading off to school. Nuisance barking is when a dog barks non-stop or howls.

Dogs consider themselves part of the family or pack, so time spent with your pet reduces any unwanted issues and keeps you, your neighbours and your dog(s) happy.

For any further information relating to this fact sheet, contact the WTA on 4030 9400.