

What will Council do about nuisance barking?

If you are certain the barking constitutes nuisance behaviour and you are certain the owner will do nothing to rectify the problem, you should call the Hawkesbury Companion Animal Controllers on (02) 4560 4644.

The operating hours are listed overleaf.

Initially, the Animal Controller may require the owner to address the dog's behaviour.

The Community Enforcement Officer may ask the complainant to fill in a daily diary to record the frequency of the barking problem.

If the Community Enforcement Officer believes that the problem has not been rectified, the officer can issue an order to the owner of the dog requiring the owner to prevent the behaviour that is alleged to be the nuisance.

The order will specify the behaviour that is required to be prevented, in this case barking. The order can specify more than one kind of behaviour and remains in force for six months after it has been issued.

The maximum penalty for a breach of a "Nuisance order" is \$880 for a first offence and \$1,500 for a second or subsequent offence. An on-the-spot penalty of \$275 may be issued for each offence.

Begging for attention

Dogs are usually kept by themselves these days, and isolation is foreign to many dogs. Dogs are social animals created for pack life - that is why they make such enthusiastic family members!

To preserve the wellbeing of the community, pet owners have a responsibility to ensure they choose a breed of dog compatible with their lifestyle, to care for and provide it with:

- Companionship
- Regular exercise, training and socialisation
- Adequate shelter
- A suitable diet and fresh water



Hawkesbury City Council

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Barking Dogs a Nuisance?



Is a barking dog bothering you?

Other than traffic noise, barking dog complaints are the world's number one noise complaint.

The NSW Companion Animal Act empowers councils to effectively address nuisance barking problems.

Hawkesbury City Council understands that the victims of nuisance barking endure enormous irritation; but experience has shown that remedial training is the only proven way of resolving nuisance dog complaints.

It is also the happiest resolution for all parties concerned - including the dog.

Is the barking nuisance behaviour?

Does the barking you hear constitute nuisance behaviour?

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".

As most nuisance barking occurs when owners are absent, it's quite possible that the owner isn't aware of the problem.

Why do dogs continually bark?

Nuisance barking has become an increasing problem over the past decade, and the main cause of the problem is absentee ownership.

A common occurrence is mum and dad both work, the kids are at school and the dog is home alone. Put yourself in their position and imagine being on your own for eight hours a day with no-one to talk to.

Lonely dogs pine for their families. Dogs in this situation that are not managed correctly, will soon tell the world that they are unhappy by barking.

As irritating as constant barking is, what the poor animal is repeating is, "Come home; come home; come home!"

A dog will also constantly bark if it:

- Is kept permanently in the backyard
- Receives no company or control
- Is bored
- Receives proper company, but has been spoilt and objects by barking if left alone
- Receives no exercise (this is an offence under the protection of cruelty to animals act)
- Is hot, cold, sick or injured

Some breeds are also more prone to barking than others, such as some toy or hound breeds. Pick a breed that suits your lifestyle and the situation that the animal will be living in.

The Absentee Owner

As most nuisance barking occurs when owners are absent, it is quite possible that the owners have no idea that their dog is constantly barking.

The majority of barking dog complaints can be resolved simply by making the owners aware that a problem exists, as most dog owners will address the problem once they are aware of it.

Every owner is entitled to an opportunity to address the matter voluntarily before being subject to legal proceedings.

In some cases this may not be possible, but as the first step in resolving the problem, you should speak to your neighbour about the matter.

A polite, conciliatory and patient approach, while difficult, is recommended.

If you can see the dog or what it is barking at, tell the owners.

If you are aware that any person is responsible for causing the dog to bark, report it to the owner.

Make them aware of when the dog barks, and how it is affecting you and your family.

Healthy communities need happy dogs