

WHY HAVE I BEEN GIVEN THIS BROCHURE?

You are receiving this brochure because there has been a complaint about barking in your neighbourhood. One of the routine complaints made by residents in suburban areas is about barking dogs.

Orange City Council understands that barking dogs can be a serious problem and it has a system in place to try to deal with complaints.

This procedure is designed to receive complaints from a neighbour, but also give the dog owner a reasonable opportunity to change their dog's barking behaviour or deal with the problem.

If you believe there has been a misunderstanding and you don't have a dog that's barking excessively, please contact the council to correct this matter.

DO I HAVE A NOISY DOG THAT IS CAUSING 'NUISANCE BARKING'?

The majority of dogs that cause nuisance barking for neighbours are actually making that noise when their owners are away from the house. Many dogs are pack animals and they are happiest when they have company and their pack (i.e. family members) is at home. Dog owners may not be aware their pets are causing noise problems when are away.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN A COMPLAINT IS GIVEN TO COUNCIL.

The complaints system gives residents in your neighbourhood the option of making further complaints. If there has been no change in the barking behaviour, and there is a further complaint, this will be followed up in person by council rangers. The ranger will be looking for signs that you have tried to deal with your dog's barking.

While you will be given time to make genuine attempts to change the dog's behaviour, council rangers will systematically respond to further complaints and gather evidence. Legal options such as a formal 'Nuisance Order' a may be considered. If a complaint is substantiated, the council officer can issue a nuisance order. If the owner does not comply with the order, the offender is liable for a fine of up to \$880 for the first offence and \$1650 for the second and each subsequent offence.

As well as complaining to the council, you should also be aware that neighbours may also explore the option of taking action in the civil courts such as noise abatement orders.

You can find out more about nuisance orders and noise abatement orders on this NSW Government website:
<http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/noise/barkingdogs.htm>



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Noisy Dogs and Nuisance Barking

WHAT IS NUISANCE BARKING?

Nuisance barking is happening when your dog is making persistent and excessive noise that interferes with the comfort, peace and quality-of-life of neighbours. Realistically, any dog can cause nuisance barking for many different reasons for short periods of time. It is important however to make sure any barking is not excessive.

HOW CAN I STOP MY DOG FROM BEING NOISY?

As the owner of the dog, it is your responsibility to ensure that your dog doesn't interfere unreasonably with the comfort, peace and quality-of-life of any neighbours.

Some owners may be aware of the noise their dog makes but just can't seem to work out how to stop it. To begin, you should try to find out what is causing the nuisance barking.



WHY IS MY DOG BARKING?

Dogs bark for many different reasons and use both barking and other behaviours as signs of their distress or attracting attention.

Some of these reasons are :

- Boredom e.g. large or working dog breeds kept in small yards
- Kept in circumstances that are unsuitable for that particular breed.
- A provocation by sound and movement e.g. cars, postman, pedestrians
- Noises that scare the dog e.g. sirens, thunder
- A poor diet and lack of exercise
- Non-desexed animals in-season
- From missing its owners or separation anxiety
- The dog reacting to other animals it can hear e.g. other dogs, cats, possums or birds.
- Mistreatment e.g. lack of food and water, chained up, minimal shelter or lack attention from owner.
- Habitual barking : Once a dog has learned a routine of barking, for example during a period in a pound, it can be difficult to break that habit

I'VE DISCOVERED MY DOG IS A SOURCE OF NUISANCE BARKING: WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW?

If you've now learnt that your dog is disturbing residents in your neighbourhood with its barking, Orange City Council strongly encourages you to try strategies to change your dog's behaviour.

The strategies you choose to try could be shaped by the reasons behind the barking or the triggers that set it off.

Here are some strategies to try :

- Placing a radio near the dog or turning on a TV in the house to help the dog feel it is not alone.
- Installing shade-cloth to partially obscure and reduce what the dog can see.
- Looking for activities to keep your dog busy while you are away. Using toys including hiding food-toys around your yard as a distraction, or burying raw chicken wings in a sandpit.
- Regular exercise.
- Monitoring the dog more closely.
- Keeping your dog inside a sound proof enclosure or a suitable room of your house at night. Making sure your dog has adequate shelter and blankets especially in winter
- Relocate your dog to another part of your yard, so that the dog can't see children walking past in the street
- Talking with your neighbours, asking if your efforts to produce a change is changing the dog's behaviour.
- Behavioural Training : Engage an animal trainer to view the dog at home and provide advice. This is often very successful. Consider further training e.g. puppy school.

There are also a number of resources available online.