

# RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP



**Murrindindi**  
Shire Council

## GET THE FACTS ON BARKING DOGS

Barking is a natural form of communication in dogs. However, ongoing barking is often a symptom of another problem and taking the time to understand what makes your or your neighbour's dog bark, is the first step towards solving the problem.

### WHY DO DOGS BARK?

- Dogs are social animals and often bark when they are lonely
- Separation from an owner may cause anxiety
- Barking may occur as a result of boredom and frustration
- Barking might be a way for a dog to seek attention from its owner
- Dogs can bark out of fear of people, objects, noise, weather conditions or other dogs
- Dogs will bark when they feel a threat to themselves or their territory
- Dogs may also bark or howl if they are sick or injured
- Some dogs bark during play with their owners or other dogs
- Certain breeds have a reputation for barking



### WORKING TOWARDS MANAGING A BARKING PROBLEM

The first step is to work out why your dog is barking. Once you know the cause you can start working on the cure. This might require the help of a professional dog trainer or veterinary behaviourist, depending on the problem.

Barking may be minimised through making some positive changes around the house and to your dog's routine. Walking your dog twice a day may help to relieve boredom. Providing your dog with distractions such as chew toys and raw hides/bones or feeding toys to keep them occupied while you are away may also be helpful. Be sure to rotate these toys each day to prevent your dog from becoming bored. It might be useful to speak to your local vet to discuss the best options for your dog.

Leaving a radio on may be comforting as well as leaving something that belongs to you, such as an old shoe or an item of clothing, so your dog is reassured by your scent. Try giving your dog a treat and/or feeding your dog just as you are leaving the house. This can help to make your daily departure a positive experience rather than a negative one.

Fencing designed to reduce your dog's field of vision may also help reduce barking at passers-by and other distractions.

Make sure that your dog is comfortable when left outside. Your dog should have adequate shade during warmer months, and shelter from the wind and rain during cooler months. Of course, your dog always needs fresh water available.

Regular dog training, reinforcing good manners and providing guidance are also very important when trying to stop a barking problem. Together with regular exercise, these can help curb a barking habit.



## **MY NEIGHBOUR'S DOG BARKS... WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS?**

Talk to your neighbour as soon as the problem arises. Yelling at the barking dog or banging on the fence will only exacerbate the problem. Your neighbour's absence might trigger the dog's barking, so your neighbour might not know that their dog is barking or that the barking is bothering you.

Give your neighbour this information and if the barking persists after a week or two, have another talk with your neighbour to update them on any changes to the dog's behaviour.

If your neighbour is unapproachable, or does not agree that a problem exists, you should contact Council for further advice.

## **PERSISTENT BARKING**

Council will initially respond to reported barking problems by visiting the dog owner to alert them to the complaint, provide advice and recommend effective solutions.

Persistent barking is an offence. If Council's recommendations are ignored and further complaints are received, Council may escalate matters which could include issuing infringements, notices to comply and in serious cases, legal action.

## **PETS IN OUR SHIRE**

Murrindindi Shire Council understands the importance of the human/companion animal bond and is committed to supporting responsible pet ownership to benefit the entire community.

Enjoy being a considerate and responsible companion animal owner (and a good neighbour).

## **CONTACTING COUNCIL**

If you would like any further information about this or about being a responsible pet owner, please call Murrindindi Shire Council on 5772 0333.

Further information on responsible pet ownership is also available on the Murrindindi Shire Council website at [www.murrindindi.vic.gov.au](http://www.murrindindi.vic.gov.au)