Nuisance Barking Dog Kit
Introduction

This kit has been developed to assist residents in resolving barking dog issues.

Approaching the dog’s owner in a neighbourly manner and discussing your concerns with them can sometimes easily resolve this type of complaint. The dog’s owner may not realise that the barking is causing an annoyance to other people or the dog may only bark excessively when the owner is not home.

To assist you in approaching your neighbour, we recommend that you use the letter template enclosed in this booklet. If this does not resolve the issue log sheets are included that you can complete and forward to us. Once the log sheets are received, an Animal Management Officer will contact you and explain the process involved in resolving the issue.

Why dogs bark

Dogs bark for many reasons, and even though they appear to be barking for no reason they are in fact trying to communicate something to their owner or anyone who is willing to pay attention.

The following list provides some of the main reasons why dogs bark:

- out of boredom, loneliness or frustration
- to seek attention
- to alert or warn others if it thinks a threat is present
- out of fear
- not enough human companionship
- disturbances
- change to family structure or territory
- medical reasons (having fleas, allergy or illness)
- physical reasons (feeling hot, cold, hungry or thirsty)

Dogs also bark to alert their owners of trouble, such as an intruder entering the property or perhaps a fire. A dog’s idea of an intruder may differ from that of the owner. It could include cats, possums, other dogs, or even birds flying across the property. Whilst it is acceptable for a dog to bark to warn its owners of an intruder, it is the owner’s responsibility to train the dog not to bark at ‘normal’ occurrences such as possums, cats, or birds. Barking at normal movement/noises from adjoining properties should be considered as unacceptable behaviour.

Talking to your neighbour

If your neighbour’s dog is barking excessively, you can try approaching them.

The owner may not realise the barking is an issue, as:

- the dog may only bark a lot when the owner is not home
- the owner may not hear the barking from areas inside the house
- the barking may not bother the owner
Council has a brochure on the causes and ways to reduce excessive barking. There is also a ‘letter to neighbour’ you can use if you would like to let the dog owner know about the problem.

If the owner agrees to do something about the barking, wait a few weeks to see if they have been successful in their efforts. Your support and ongoing feedback about the dog’s behaviour can assist the dog owner in resolving the problem.

Other steps to take if you have a problem with nuisance barking

1. The Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria provides free legal advice to assist with resolving neighbourhood complaints.

   Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria
   4th floor, 456 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000
   Phone: 9603 8370 Fax: 9603 8355
   Email: dscv@justice.vic.gov.au
   Web: justice.vic.gov.au

2. If you are unable to resolve the issue with your neighbour the following steps must be taken:
   a. Complete the times when the dog barks and for how long on the Barking dog log sheet. The log needs to be maintained for 14 days so that the Animal Management Officer can investigate the complaint.
   b. If the problem is ongoing please forward your completed log sheets to us for investigation. You will need to provide your contact details and the address where the dog lives.
   c. Continue to keep the log for a further month while the investigation is carried out.

   The above details can then be sent to Moonee Valley City Council, PO Box 126, Moonee Ponds Victoria 3039, emailed to council@mvcc.vic.gov.au or faxed to 9377 2100.

   Council action
   On receipt of a barking dog complaint, Council will appoint an Animal Management Officer to investigate. Please note council will not get involved in any unrelated dispute between you and your neighbour.
   The officer will review the barking dog log to establish patterns to help determine:
   • the reason for the dog’s barking
   • confirm if other residents are being affected by the dog’s barking
   • advise the dog owner of the complaint, discuss possible solutions and inform them of their responsibilities.

   If the officer believes that there is an issue with the dog and is satisfied, further action will be taken.

   Legal requirements for court action
   The primary method available to Council to abate the noise completely is to go to court and obtain a court order under the provisions of The Domestic Animal Act 1994.
   In order for Council to take a barking dog complaint to court you will be required to give evidence. All evidence will be critical in a Magistrate declaring that the dog is causing a nuisance.

   It is important you keep comprehensive log sheets over a period of time that shows the pattern of the dog’s barking behaviour.

   Council will consider taking the matter to court if it is fully established that there is a case to answer and all avenues for reconciliation have been exhausted.

   In the event that an order has been made by the Magistrates’ Court it must be complied with. Failure to do so is an offence, and a Magistrate may impose further penalties.

Dear Neighbour,

You may not be aware that your dog is currently causing a noise nuisance by barking.

Council has provided me with a kit to help us resolve this issue. I would like to express my concern without recording an official complaint with Council.

Please find included on the back of this letter some information that may assist us in resolving the issue.

Your cooperation at this stage would be much appreciated.

Kind regards,
Your Neighbour

Some recent examples of your dog barking:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date/time</th>
<th>Reasons for barking (if known):</th>
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Letter to Neighbour
Tips for reducing barking

• walk your dog frequently
• exercise your dog with other dogs
• make sure your dog is in good health and has fresh water, a balanced diet and dog toys
• adequate shelter from weather extremes (hot, cold, windy or wet conditions)
• take your dog to obedience classes and practice what you learn regularly
• block the view from your property with solid fencing, shade cloth or hedging

Dogs bark for many reasons and, if these simple tips do not help you, seek further advice or visit mvcc.vic.gov.au/animals

Useful contacts

Keilor Obedience Dog Club
Phone: 9311 1894 (7pm to 9pm only)
Web: kodtc.com.au

Northern Obedience Dog Club Inc.
Phone: 9375 1410
Web: northernobedience.com

Canine Innovations
Phone: 0403 164 232
Web: canineinnovations.com.au

Bark Busters
Phone: 1800 067 710
Web: barkbusters.com.au

Anti-Bark Spray Collar
Phone: 9360 9382
Web: absaustralia.com

Any organisation listed does not constitute an endorsement by the City of Moonee Valley.
## Barking dog log week 1

Name .......................................................................................................................................  Contact number ....................................................
Address .................................................................................................................................................................................................................................
Address of barking dog(s) .............................................................................................................................................................................................

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time barking started</th>
<th>Time barking stopped</th>
<th>Duration of barking</th>
<th>Number of Barks per hour</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1/1/2014 | 9.15pm               | 11.30pm              | 2hrs 15mins         | 30 barks                 | • owner left for work  
• couldn’t hear TV  
• woke me up/couldn’t get to sleep |

Forward completed Barking dog complaint form and Barking dog log by:
- email to council@mvcc.vic.gov.au
- mail to PO Box 126, Moonee Ponds VIC 3039
- fax to 9377 2100
- in person at 9 Kellaway Avenue, Moonee Ponds
## Barking dog log week 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time barking started</th>
<th>Time barking stopped</th>
<th>Duration of barking</th>
<th>Number of Barks per hour</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/1/2014</td>
<td>9.15pm</td>
<td>11.30pm</td>
<td>2hrs 15mins</td>
<td>30 barks</td>
<td>• owner left for work</td>
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<td>• couldn’t hear TV</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• woke me up couldn’t get to sleep</td>
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