Dear neighbour,

You may not be aware, but your dog/s are causing a noise nuisance by barking excessively.

Cardinia Shire Council has suggested that the first step should be to let you know about the problem, as this gives you the opportunity to fix the issue.

Your co-operation would be appreciated, so that there is no need for me to make a formal complaint to Council.

The information below may help you to better understand the problem.

Your dog/s appears to bark at the following times:

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For the following reason(s): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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I have included some more information (provided by Council) that may be helpful to you.

Regards,

Your neighbour

# Advice for owners of barking dogs

Dogs bark for a variety of reasons. When dogs bark excessively, this usually suggests there is an underlying problem.

The first step is to work out why your dog is barking too much. Once you find out what is causing the barking, you can make some positive changes that will hopefully fix the issue.

## Reasons why your dog may bark

* **Boredom or loneliness:** You dog may be bored or lonely due to a lack of company, exercise or mental stimulation. If left in the backyard for long periods, barking may be an enjoyable way for dogs to pass the time. Dogs are also social, pack animals, and may suffer from anxiety when alone.
* **To get attention**: Even though their barking may result in being reprimanded, dogs may still prefer negative attention to no attention at all, especially if they are bored or lonely.
* **To alert or warn of possible threats:** This could include barking at animals, the postman, noises, or the movement of people or vehicles outside the property.
* **Breed:** Some dog breeds may be more inclined to bark.
* **Fear:** Fears may include thunder, fireworks, or other loud noises.
* **Medical reasons:** These may include fleas, allergy or illness.
* **Physical reasons:** Your dog might be hot, cold, hungry or thirsty.

## Tips for reducing barking

Depending on why your dog is barking, the following tips may help:

* **Take your dog on more walks.** Go on more walks (once or twice a day is ideal) and include your dog in family outings. Even if you have a large yard, dogs still need to socialise and experience the sounds and smells of walks outside.
* **Head to an off-leash area.** Run your dog regularly in one of Cardinia Shire’s [designated off- leash parks](https://www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/info/20003/pets_and_animals/84/find_a_dog_park).
* **Provide toys and entertainment**. Make your backyard more interesting by leaving toys and a large raw marrow bone for your dog to chew. Rotate the toys so they stay interesting for the dog. You can also try putting some food into a Kong toy or treat ball so they have to work to get food rewards. Try hiding toys and treats around the garden, or providing a sandpit for digging.
* **Check food, water and shelter**: Make sure your dog has fresh water, a balanced diet, and adequate shelter from bad weather. If possible, give it access to the house through a dog door.
* **Take your dog to obedience classes/dog training**. Training can teach your dog what is OK to bark at, and what isn't. Different training techniques will be used to treat different barking problems. For advice, ask a dog trainer, dog behaviourist or your vet.

Practice what you learn regularly to provide mental stimulation for the dog. It is important to remember that training takes time and persistence, and that you should never hit your dog.

* **Block the view.** If the dog is barking at passers-by, block its view of movement outside the property with solid fencing, shade cloth or hedging.
* **Visit the vet:** Make sure your dog is in good health by taking it to the vet for a check-up. Your vet can also give you behaviour advice that can help.