

Community Safety

Responsible pet ownership

Barking dogs



opportunity » growth » lifestyle



Introduction

Dogs are an important part of our local community but dogs that bark excessively day or night can become a source of irritation for neighbours. If our 'best friend' barks continually it can become an intrusion and create friction between neighbours.

Dogs bark for many reasons, sometimes it's a warning, a sign of excitement and affection or due to unhappiness. Whatever the reason, sometimes it can be a nuisance.

Dog owners must ensure their dogs do not annoy neighbours by barking excessively, it's one of the duties of being a responsible pet owner.

Frankston City Council receives numerous complaints regarding nuisance and barking dogs. Approaching the dog owner in a neighbourly manner and discussing any concerns with them can sometimes easily resolve this type of complaint.

Why dogs bark

A dog may appear to be barking for no reason but is usually trying to communicate something to their owner, like:

- I need some exercise
- There is not enough room in this yard for me
- I'm bored
- I miss my human family
- I need shelter from the sun/rain
- I'm hungry or thirsty
- I don't feel well, I may need to see my vet
- There's movement outside my fence
- There is an intruder in my property
- There's a strange dog/cat/possum in my yard
- I really want to catch that possum

- You love your new house but I'm not sure about my new yard
- Provocation
- Disturbances
- Fear – thunder, fireworks or other loud noises

Dogs also bark to alert their owners of possible danger such as intruders or perhaps a fire. While 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, cat, birds etc.

Barking at normal movement and noise from adjoining properties should be considered unacceptable behaviour.





Talking to your neighbour

Neighbours can help each other to solve barking problems by communicating their concerns and needs. Neighbours can assist by identifying the reasons for excessive barking and noting what is happening in the area when the dog is barking.

The owner of the barking dog may not know the animal is causing a nuisance. The dog might only bark excessively when the owner is not at home.

The following steps may assist in resolving the issue:

- Approach the dog owner when the problem arises and state your case clearly and politely, keeping in mind your neighbour might not be aware of the barking situation
- If the neighbour is not approachable or you are not comfortable approaching them, try placing a polite note in their letterbox

Court orders

Council acts independently and treats all parties fairly. Council will only start prosecution proceedings once a thorough investigation has been conducted and it believes it is appropriate to do so. Every case is different and so are the circumstances.

Council will commence court action if:

- The owner of the dog is not responding adequately to Council's request
- The dog continues to cause a nuisance

In the event that an Order has been made with the Magistrates' Court it is an offence not to comply and the offender may incur further penalties.

The success of any court action relies on the support and assistance of the complainant and other neighbours supporting the complainant.

If relevant information is not provided then Council may not be able to pursue the matter.

Dispute resolution

A final step is to contact the Department of Justice and Regulation which funds a dispute resolution service for people who are in a situation of dispute/conflict with another person. The service uses mediation as a way of settling disputes without expensive legal action and is a private and free service.

Council Contact

Contact Community Safety at Frankston City Council during business hours, phone **1300 322 322** or visit frankston.vic.gov.au

Relevant Links

Domestic Animals Act 1994
legislation.vic.gov.au

Dispute Settle Centre Victoria
disputes.vic.gov.au

Frankston City Council's General Local Law 2016 No.8
frankston.vic.gov.au



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