All dogs bark – it’s natural. Unfortunately, it’s also annoying for the surrounding community.

There is a range of simple, effective solutions that may stop your dog barking. There are also steps you can take if a neighbour’s pet is causing you problems.

# Why do dogs bark?

Dogs bark because they are:

* Seeking attention
* Bored
* Lonely
* Anxious
* Protecting their territory
* Social Isolation

Scolding your dog for barking is not the answer. This will teach the dog that the more the dog barks, the more attention it will receive, even if this attention is unpleasant.

**Tips for when you’re at home**

* **The ‘bad-dog- good-dog’ technique**

To train a puppy, place it in a comfortable room. When it barks, walk quietly to the closed door and sternly tell it to be ‘QUIET’. Do not open the door. The pup will usually stop barking at the sound of your voice. Wait 15 to 20 seconds and if it does not bark again, open the door and praise and cuddle the dog. This is not a reward for barking but for being quiet as a result of your command and still gives the dog the attention it wants.

If you observe that your dog is about to bark, a firm reprimand in a stern voice ‘NO – BAD DOG’ should prevent this. Now, using a friendly tone, you should command the dog to ‘COME, SIT’, and ‘STAY’. Reward it for obeying. This contrast between reprimand and reward gives the dog a clear message about the effects of its good and bad behaviour.

**Tips for when you’re not at home**

* **A confined room**

Make your dog happy and relaxed by confining it to a small room - laundry, bathroom or any small room would be suitable. You must make the dog happy about being confined to this room while you are out but balance this with extra exercise when you return home.

1. Make the room comfortable – not too hot, not in direct sun and with soft bedding provided.
2. Place the dog’s water bowl inside its room and nowhere else – so that even when you are home it has to go to the confined area voluntarily for a drink.
3. The most important step is to lock the dog in its room for 15 minutes whenever you feed it. The dog will then associate being confined with the happiness and contentment of being fed. Leave the dog in the room for 15 minutes, then release and praise it.
4. When you leave for work, lock the dog in the room and give it food to make it happy. A large bone will help to do this and keep the dog occupied for some time. The dog will remain quiet because it is happy.

**Tips if your neighbour’s dog is barking**

Approach the owner of the dog as soon as the problem arises and state your case clearly and politely. They may not be aware of the problem. Give the owner a copy of this material. If the problem persists after a week or two, speak to the owner again to provide feedback on his or her training efforts.

If the owner is unapproachable or does not agree that a problem exists, you could contact the Community Justice Centre or the Chambers of Magistrate (details listed below). This service provides free mediation, which is impartial, confidential and available after hours.

# Where to go for help

If these techniques do not work, you can contact the following organisations for help

* **Bark Busters**

Ph: 1800 067 710

* **The NSW Animal Welfare League**

1605 Elizabeth Dr, Kemps Creek

Ph: 98899 3333

* **NSW RSPCA**

201 Rookwood Road, Yagoona

Ph: 9770 7555

* **Dog Tech**,

Sydney Head Office

Ph: 1300 650 739

* **DogWise**

Ph: 0400 819 330

* **Werriwa All Breeds Dog Training Club**

Ph: 0439 677 753

* **Community Justice Centre**

Ph: 1800 990 777

If these methods do not work you should contact Liverpool City Council. After a complaint is received, Council will contact the dog owner/s and ask them to deal with the issue. If the problem persists, Council can only take further action if sufficient evidence is collected. This evidence will need to be recorded in diary form by each of the two complainants. It will need to show: the time of the barking, how long the dog barks, which dog is barking on what property.

Based on the information in these diaries Council can take action under current Local Laws. As a last resort, Council may take the matter to court, subject to witness reports from the complainants.

**Note:** **Citronella (Anti-barking) collars are available for hire from Liverpool City Council.**

For further information please contact **Liverpool City Council** on **1300 36 210**