

Why does my dog bark?



Mission Australia Housing understands people love their pets and how happy animals make people feel. We often allow tenants to have pets including dogs where homes are suitable.

However, dogs that bark a lot can begin to annoy neighbours and others in the community and lead to tensions and complaints. This fact sheet provides some useful information to dog owners about what they can do to stop their dogs barking.

If your dog is barking it may be because he or she:

- is bored
- needs exercise
- wants attention
- may suffer from separation anxiety
- lacks shelter, water, food
- has noticed movement in or near property
- may need the vet

Lonely Dogs

We know our tenants lead busy lives and will regularly need to leave their dogs alone and often outside when they are away from their homes.

Can you imagine sitting in your backyard on your own for eight hours a day with nothing to do?

The only way they know how to complain about being left alone is to bark.

What can I do to help?

We understand that our tenants lead busy lives and are often away from their homes for periods of time with family, friends and work commitments. When this occurs, dogs will need to be left alone and often outside.

To help keep your dog busy and reduce the amount of "boredom barking" there are a number of simple things you can do:

- Walk your dog for at least 15 minutes each day, and if possible twice a day – morning and afternoon;
- Leave toys out for your dog to play with when you are not there;
- Make sure your dog has plenty of water, food and shelter from both the sun and rain – and check them regularly;
- Play with your dog when you are home; and
- Make sure your dog is regularly wormed, vaccinated and receives regular vet checks.

Did you know excessive barking and noise from animals is a breach of your tenancy? It is important you follow this handy guide to help you keep your dog quiet and make sure it is not bothering your neighbours

Neighbourhood help

Neighbours can help each other to solve barking problems by talking to each other about any problems or concerns they have.

Neighbours may help you work out the reasons for constant barking. **A neighbour may also be happy to offer to walk your dog when you cannot due to work, illness or other reasons.**

If you live next to a dog, why not offer to walk the dog yourself? You will get to know the dog better and may be able to help it quiet down when the owner is out.

Visitors and noises

Another reason why dogs often bark is when visitors approach the property or people are walking past. This isn't just related to human visitors and dogs may bark when they see a cat, possum or bird nearby.

We understand that some people may keep dogs to warn them of an intruder but owners need to train the dog not to bark at everyday things such as people walking past the house or possums, cats or birds in the yard.

What can you do to help?

Don't yell at your dog – to your dog, this is you barking back at them and may encourage more barking. Stay calm when trying to stop your dog barking.

Training

Dogs are very smart and can be trained to speak (bark) on command and also can be trained to not bark or only bark at certain events. Take the time to learn what triggers your dog's barking so you can use this to help train them to only bark at appropriate times.

Introduce the word 'quiet!' or 'stop!' while your dog is barking on command, and give it a toy or food treat as soon as it stops barking. Save praise and rewards for times when the dog has barked only after having heard the command to speak.

Where else can I get help?

The internet

There are many useful websites that provide hints and tricks to help stop your dog barking - you could check out www.barkbusters.com.au to find some answers.

Your local vet

Your vet has advice on how to train your dog and stop them from barking. Your local council can also be a good source of advice.

Your local pet store

Pet stores have a range of devices such as citronella sprays and anti-barking collars that can be used to stop your dog barking. Your local vet can also help you with these.

If you are already doing all of the above and your dog is still barking you may need to help from an animal behaviour specialist.

Contact us

If you would like more information or if you have any concerns about your dog or your neighbour's dog, call us on the number below

 **1800 269 672**

 **missionaustralia.com.au**