The problems caused by barking dogs are a common neighbourhood complaint reported to councils. Below are some steps to take when confronted with your neighbours barking dog.

The Companion Animals Act defines a nuisance by a dog barking as:

Makes a noise, by barking or otherwise, that persistently occurs or continues to such a degree or extent that it unreasonably interferes with the peace, comfort or convenience of any person in any other premises.

Under the Companion Animals Act, persistent barking is regarded as similar to straying or other anti-social behaviour. Where a serious or ongoing complaint is identified by a Council officer, a nuisance order can be issued. This requires the owner to stop the dog from barking persistently. If the barking continues, the owner may be liable to receive Penalty Notices.

Talk to your neighbour

Barking problems can often be solved by neighbours communicating with each other their concerns and needs. Your neighbour may not be aware of the problem.

• The dog/s may only bark excessively when the owner is not home.
• The owner may not hear the barking from various areas within their house.
• The owner may be a very sound sleeper and not be woken when the dog barks.

Prior to lodging a complaint with Council

Approach the owner of the dog as soon as the problem arises and state your case clearly and politely. 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 persists, you could contact the Community Justice Centre: (http://www.cjc.nsw.gov.au/).

This service provides free mediation which is impartial, confidential and available after hours.

If the above method does not work, or your neighbour does not wish to mediate, you should contact Council directly (ph 1300 136 833) or lodge a complaint online at: www.armidaleregional.nsw.gov.au.
When a complaint is received, Council Rangers will:

- Contact the complainant and explain the process
- Organise an appointment or visit the dog owner and verify the information in the complaint
- Confirm the animal is identified by microchip and Lifetime Registered in NSW
- Inform the dog owner of the complaint

The complainant’s details shall be strictly confidential.

The Rangers will work with the dog owner and offer suggestions which may minimize the nuisance where the complainant is satisfied. The dog owner may also wish to seek professional assistance from a private company to assist in training the dog.

If the barking persists and there is no change

Council will attempt to obtain corroborating evidence by completing a doorknock of the area to ascertain the level of disturbance, patrols by officers to substantiate periods and lengths of time the dog/s are barking, and affected residents may be asked to keep a log.

If evidence shows that residents are affected by the noise, Council will take further action. The dog owner’s address will not be disclosed.

If there is no evidence that the dog causes a disturbance with other residents not having any issues, Council will recommend mediation.

For further information and advice on barking dogs, please contact:

**Armidale Regional Council**

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Email: council@armidale.nsw.gov.au  
Fax: (02) 6772 9275  
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