

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

20 April 2021:

BACKYARD BURNING AND FIREWOOD COLLECTION WARNING

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council (CGRC) is reminding residents of their obligations and responsibilities regarding backyard burning, firepits and roadside firewood collection.

The collection of firewood from the regions roadsides and Travelling Stock Reserves (TSRs) is prohibited and can attract hefty fines. Anyone caught removing timber or disturbing vegetation (dead or alive) from a TSR can be fined up to \$5,500 under the *Local Land Services Act 2013*.

CGRC Manager of Regulatory Services Mr Glen McAtear said "these measures are in place to protect our unique environment and prevent the further degradation of roadside vegetation and to preserve rare plant and animal species within our Shire."

"Dead timber, including standing dead trees, fallen logs, branches and stumps, play an important role by providing habitat for a diverse range of native fauna species at various times throughout the year," Mr McAtear added.

Council would like to make residents aware that the following activities are prohibited without prior authorisation in any roadside reserve area:

Collection of firewood.

Collection of rock, sand, gravel, dirt or any vegetative material.

Burning, clearing, grading, ploughing or any disturbance to soil or vegetation.

Trimming or lopping of trees or other vegetation.

If residents are unsure if their planned roadside activities are prohibited, they are advised to check with Council by calling 1300 459 689.

It is the time of year that see many small backyard fires being lit around the region. With leaves falling and pruning of dead wood from garden trees and shrubs. Backyard clean ups bring on the temptation to burn the material. Sitting by a crackling wood fire is a great way to keep warm and enjoy the outdoors during winter but get ready for a fine if your backyard blaze is smoking out your neighbours or you have used prohibited materials in the fire pit.

Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council (CGRC) is advising residents that although there is no need for an approval at this time of year to burn off. Prohibited items, such as tyres, plastic, treated timber, paint and solvents are not to be burnt.

CGRC asks residents to take into consideration alternative ways to dispose of vegetation, and the impact smoke may have on neighbours and traffic. This includes considering the wind, weather, length of burn and material. Only dead and dry vegetation can be burnt as other items particularly treated pine can be hazardous to health.

CGRC mayor Cr Abb McAlister urged residents to think of their neighbours and the effects of smoke when lighting up a backyard fire.

"Please show some courtesy and respect to your neighbours when burning vegetation around the home, check with them before lighting up," Cr McAlister said.

Council does have the ability to regulate fires under the provisions of the *Clean Air Regulations (under the Protection of the Environment Operations Act, 1997)*, should a fire cause air pollution or contain prohibited items.

Picture and caption: Resist the urge to cut firewood from roadsides, TSRs and Crown Land Reserves large fines can result in illegal firewood cutting from these areas.

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Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council
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