

-FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-

4 MAY 2022

A TIMELY WARNING FOR BACKYARD BURNING AND FIREWOOD COLLECTION

After enjoying a very mild autumn, the chilly winter weather is upon us. With a cold snap forecast many residents will be firing up their wood burning heaters and burning leaves and rubbish in their backyards.

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

1. 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.AA
2. Prohibited items, such as tyres, plastic, treated timber, paint and solvents are not to be burnt.
3. Take into consideration alternative ways to dispose of vegetation, and the impact smoke may have on your neighbours and traffic. This includes considering the wind, weather, length of burn and material burnt.
4. Consider what you are burning - items particularly treated pine can be hazardous to health.
5. 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.

CGRC Interim Deputy General Manager and Manager of Regulatory Services Mr Glen McAtear said the collection of roadside firewood impacts the environment and poses a danger to road users.

"The regulatory 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.

Backyard fires are also subject to regulations, and residents should be aware that hefty fines are in place should a backyard fire cause air pollution or contain prohibited items.

Mr McAtear and CGRC's Environmental Health Officer Sally Atkinson said residents should show some courtesy to their neighbours and burn only dry and dead vegetation in small quantities.

"Smoking out the neighbours is not a good fit for good neighbourly relationships, keep your backyard fire small, feed materials in at a manageable amount and never burn anything that contains plastic, treated timber, rubber, paint, solvents or hazardous materials", Ms Atkinson said.

Council has a fact sheet available on Wood Smoke and Open Burning available for residents who want more information. Please call Council on 1300 459 689 or check out the CGRC website for your copy.

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