

HEFTY FINES FOR ILLEGAL FIREWOOD COLLECTION.

Residents who rely on wood heaters for warmth may collect firewood on private property with permission or purchase wood from a merchant. Wood cutting and firewood collection, other than government authorised safety or development works is illegal on all roadsides, reserves and public lands in Snowy Valleys Council LGA.

Roadsides and nature strips. Council takes great pride in conserving the native vegetation and habitats that make up roadside reserves across the region. People found to be collecting wood or other materials or cutting down or damaging trees within a Council road reserve may be issued a fine of \$220 for every offence. More substantial fines apply should the



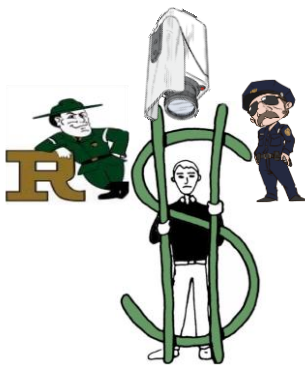
offender be damaging an endangered or roadside community or ecological conservation asset in the road corridor.

Public lands. Collection of firewood on public lands is also illegal and offenders may find themselves subject to heavy fines. Fines are especially heavy in areas such as state conservation areas such as the area commonly known as the Tumut Common which includes lands belonging to Crown Lands, Forests NSW, Snowy Valleys Council, and the Werboldera State Conservation area of National Parks

Habitat protection. Old dead trees, fallen trees, logs, small branches and deadwood may look like ideal unused waste wood, however; cutting and removal of these items destroys important habitat for native fauna. "Fallen trees, logs and small branches are an essential part of the natural ecosystem and provide shelter and homes to many small ground-dwelling animals and ground feeding birds, frogs and lizards, bats and smaller insects. In addition there are several roadside areas which host endangered species or are listed as endangered ecological communities.



Penalties apply. One case of illegal cutting and firewood collecting in a State Conservation area resulted in successful prosecution of three men recorded on surveillance cameras for cutting and removing vegetation. They were convicted in court in separate offences. The fines totalled \$12,000 (twelve thousand dollars). The potential of such heavy fines should serve as a deterrent, but unfortunately it does not and many risk such penalties.



Active patrolling and enforcement. In addition to surveillance cameras, regular patrols are conducted by Council Rangers, National Parks Rangers, Forests NSW Authorised Officers and Police. It is important to understand that a \$220 on-the-spot fines plus a legal direction to transport and unload wood at an authorized location applies, but also very large fines can be handed out by the NSW Land and Environment Court. A \$30,000 fine

handed out by the NSW Land and Environment Court in a conservation area reinforces how important it is that people follow the rules

How can you help? Report incidents of illegal firewood collection to Snowy Valleys Council on 1-300 ask SVC (1 300 275 782) to NPWS on 1300 072 757 or Crime Stoppers 1800 333 000.

Firewood collection is permitted in many State Forests; however those wishing to collect firewood **must obtain a permit** before doing so and ensure that they follow the associated permit conditions. State forest firewood permits are available online at Forestry Corporation of NSW.

<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-firewood-permit>