

New partners keep home fires burning

A NEW partnership between CALM and the Tourist Bureaus of Mandurah, Jarrahdale, Pinjarra and Rockingham is providing members of the public with firewood in a way that has minimal impact on State forests and reduces the risk of spreading dieback.

This means people can get approvals to remove wood from designated areas any day of the week, and often from locations more convenient than travelling all the way to the forest-based CALM offices.

People wishing to take advantage of the new system are being encouraged to stock up their wood supplies in the summer rather than in winter, and although, officially, it is now autumn, there are still a few weeks in which to take advantage of summer firewood gathering.

However, before taking off to collect it, there are a few requirements that must be met.

First, you'll need an authorisation. This, and directions to the firewood areas, can now be obtained seven days a week between 9.30 am and 4.00 pm at Mandurah, Jarrahdale, Pinjarra or Rockingham Tourist Bureaus, as well as from CALM offices, Monday to Friday, between 8.00 am and 4.30 pm.

The authorisation, which is also your receipt for payment for the wood, must be produced if requested by a CALM officer.

As it is illegal for the members of the public to fell trees within State forest, even if the trees are already dead, all firewood is carefully selected and felled by CALM.

by Tammie Reid

There is a CALM legal enforcement team that moves around the wood collection areas to ensure the regulations are being observed.

Because dieback needs moist soil conditions in

order to survive, people are encouraged to collect their firewood in summer, and as an incentive designed to minimise the risk of spreading the disease, removal authorisations obtained in summer cost half as much as they do in winter.

Firewood is sold at half

price in summer. For example, one tonne of firewood costing \$14 in winter, costs only \$7 to collect from a designated area in summer.

You still need to bring a wheelbarrow, chainsaw, trailer or ute, safety gear, such as boots, ear plugs and first aid kit.

A 6' x 4' trailer or a stand-ard ute will carry approximately half a tonne.

There are other advantages to collecting wood in summer; dry wood burns cleaner than when it is damp.

Also, CALM has changed the regulation that once limited people to collecting one tonne every 60 days. It is now possible to pay for and collect more than one tonne every 60 days, as long as you have a receipt for the wood, it is for your own use, and the wood is not sold.

You can remove multiple loads daily, provided each load is signed for, and dated, by the person taking the load, and it is not more than one tonne per load.

So, the time to stock up and get a good deal is now, before the winter rains arrive.

The big picture

As part of the bigger picture, CALM integrates commercial harvesting of firewood with other timber harvesting activities, a policy designed to limit the number of operations in the bush. This, in turn, limits the risk of introducing dieback disease.

Commercial firewood operations are administered via a contract system, designed to ensure the equitable and orderly marketing of firewood. This also provides good quality firewood at a reasonable price.

Commercial outlets for firewood include wood yards, CALM-contracted firewood operators, and offcuts from sawmills.

Last winter, there were no free public firewood gathering areas anywhere in the Swan Region State forests, a situation expected to continue.



CALM forester Ralph Smith has been the driving force behind the CALM's increasingly user-friendly firewood system. Here, Ralph helps Pinjarra Tourist Centre manager Jennifer Smith to stoke up the hearth at the Edenvale historic complex, in readiness for the first winter chill. Pinjarra is the latest tourist centre to be trained to issue firewood authorisations. Photo by Tammie Reid

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