

MEDIA RELEASE

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Spraying blackberries? Protecting native vegetation critical

Towong Shire Council encourages landholders who undertake blackberry treatment programs to ensure that the method used will not endanger native vegetation. Native vegetation is protected under specific Towong Planning Scheme provisions.

"We understand how important blackberry and weed control is, and how the spread of these pests can impact farm productivity," explained Towong Shire Mayor, Cr David Wortmann, "however we do urge landholders to carefully consider whether a particular treatment method could harm native vegetation."

Aerial spray techniques are of particular concern to Council due to unpredictable winds, the local terrain and vast tracts of native bushland throughout the Shire.

"Council is aware of instances in the Shire where aerial spraying of blackberries has taken place, and unfortunately the spray has drifted and resulted in areas of native vegetation being destroyed," said Cr Wortmann.

In most instances a planning permit would be required to destroy native vegetation. Council is obliged to investigate possible breaches of the Towong Planning Scheme and penalties as well as biodiversity offset arrangements can apply.

"The consequences of inappropriate spray techniques can be significant for both the environment and the individual," said Cr Wortmann. "If you are unsure about the right approach for blackberry control, your local Landcare Group can be a good source of information,"

Council's planning staff are available to speak with landholders about native vegetation issues and the types of situations where a planning permit is required to remove or destroy native vegetation.