

From: Darling Downs Environment Council info@ddec.org.au
Subject: Building a Liveable Future: Housing Affordability and Tree Protections Forum
Date: 16 February 2026 at 2:11 pm

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Toowoomba is growing and trees keep coming down while we wait for a overdue planning scheme or our councillors to request a Temporary Local Planning Instrument (again) to our reinvigorated team of planning staff.

Everyone knows we need more housing — but there are lies out there telling us that we cannot use smart planning to protect important habitat while efficiently building new neighbourhoods that get the balance between development and nature.

Right now, the Toowoomba Regional Council is the only local government area in South East Queensland without specific tree protections in its planning framework.

How do we deliver **housing affordability and supply** while also safeguarding urban canopy, biodiversity and community wellbeing?

Protect Trees Toowoomba and the Darling Downs Environment Council invite you to a community forum bringing together industry, local government and housing advocates to discuss practical pathways forward.

Housing & Nature: A Community Forum

Date: Wednesday, 4 March 2026

Time: 5:30pm – 7:30pm

Location: Laurel Bank Hall, Laurel Bank Park, Newtown

[RSVP your spot here!](#)

Speakers include:

- Dr Rebecca Vonhoff, Deputy Mayor, Toowoomba Regional Council
- Stephen Bowers, Developer
- Lauren Russell, Tiny House Advocate
- Julie Saunders, CEO, Community Housing Industry Association Queensland
- Fiona Cangiglia, CEO, QShelter

This is an opportunity to move beyond false choices. Other councils across South East Queensland have introduced planning mechanisms that both increase housing diversity and protect significant trees.

What can Toowoomba learn? What should the new Planning Scheme include?

We'll explore:

- How tree protections can coexist with increased housing supply
- Medium-density and diverse housing models that reduce sprawl
- The role of community housing providers
- Practical reforms Council and State Government can implement now

This forum is about constructive solutions. If you care about housing affordability, urban canopy, biodiversity, or the future character of Toowoomba — your voice matters.

Please join us and bring a friend.

Warm regards,

Ahri and the PTT Team



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