



# Media Release

## Field Officers on board to help control Queensland Fruit Fly in the Goulburn Murray Valley

Field Officers have been positioned across the Goulburn Murray Valley as part of a coordinated approach to protecting the region against Queensland Fruit Fly (QFF).

The deployment of several regional Field Officers allows for the immediate management of fruit fly hot spots as they occur.

Goulburn Murray Valley Regional QFF Coordinator Ross Abberfield said the regional QFF trapping program had detected a significant upsurge in fruit fly numbers during December, and indications suggested the increase would continue through January and February.

“The appointment of Field Officers results in a considerable bolstering of existing resources and is an important element in protecting the region from fruit fly through coordinated area wide pest management,” he said.

The officers have been funded through the Victorian Government's Managing Fruit Fly Regional Grants program and were deployed at the beginning of January 2018.

Mr Abberfield said vigilance was required from the whole community in order to protect the region and its horticulture industry from the pest.

“Under laboratory conditions, each female fruit fly can lay up to 2000 eggs, which, in the field can translate to approximately half that number. Those offspring can breed another generation in less than a month if suitable host fruit and weather conditions exist, resulting in rapid population increases,” he said.

In order to prevent townships becoming breeding grounds for fruit fly, anyone who grows fruit trees and vegetables should inspect their ripening produce and correctly dispose of contaminated fruit and vegetables before the larvae turns into breeding adults.

“Any fruit and vegetable in the home garden that has been infested with fruit fly should be destroyed by placing it in the freezer or microwave, or alternatively by placing it in a sealed plastic bag and leaving it in the sun for 5-7 days to kill any maggots prior to disposal,” Mr Abberfield said.

Fruit and vegetables effected by fruit fly should only be disposed of once it has been appropriately treated in order to ensure the pest is not transferred to another location.

Home gardeners are asked to apply a range of control methods such as the use of exclusion netting or fruit bagging, traps and insecticide or bait spray where it is considered appropriate.

“Home gardeners with host fruit in their garden, yard or vegetable patch should apply a combination of control measures rather than relying on just one action,” Mr Abberfield said.



Property owners with unwanted fruit trees in residential yards have until the end of February to apply to have them removed at no cost through the Urban Fruit Tree Removal Program.

The program has been extended in response to continued high demand and has helped reduce the spread of fruit fly by eliminating potential breeding grounds found in unattended fruit trees and rotten fruit.

The free program is available in the Shires of Campaspe, Greater Shepparton, Moira and Strathbogie.

“Queensland Fruit Fly is a serious risk to the region’s multi-million dollar horticulture industry, backyard orchards and vegetable gardens and requires a community effort to stop its spread,” Mr Abberfield said.

For more information about what you can do to help reduce the spread of QFF or the free Urban Fruit Tree Removal program, go to [www.gmv-qldfuitfly.com.au](http://www.gmv-qldfuitfly.com.au) or contact your Council’s Customer Service Centre.

**Caption: (From left) Goulburn Murray Valley Regional QFF Coordinator Ross Abberfield and newly appointed Field Officer Michael Crisera.**

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