

Media Release

Ms Mary-Anne Thomas MP
Minister for Regional Development
Minister for Agriculture



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ON THE GROUND SUPPORT FOR FRUIT FLY MANAGEMENT

The Victorian Government is supporting key fruit production regions across the state to protect their produce from the destructive impacts of Queensland Fruit Fly.

Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas today announced \$2.9 million in *Fruit Fly Strategy* grants for the Greater Sunraysia, Goulburn Murray Valley and Yarra Valley regions. This funding will support fruit fly management programs, explore new ways to manage the pest and employ full-time regional coordinators.

Fruit flies can be a major pest, damaging a range of fruit and vegetable crops. Queensland fruit fly can impact production and markets for horticulture industries, which export more than \$1.6 billion of produce.

Under Round One of the \$5.3 million program, funding has been awarded to the following organisations to deliver region-wide programs on behalf of Regional Fruit Fly Governance groups:

- Mildura Rural City Council (Greater Sunraysia)
- Moira Shire Council (Goulburn Murray Valley)
- Agribusiness Yarra Valley (Yarra Valley).

Fruit fly management programs will plan for the long term, engage local communities to help protect neighbouring horticultural production, remove unwanted fruit trees, trial new monitoring methods and apply new crop waste management techniques on farm.

The grants are a key part of the Government's *Fruit Fly Strategy 2021-25* which has been developed in close consultation with industry and will deliver awareness programs that empower the community and growers to keep their crops free of damage from fruit fly.

This is part of the Government's \$6.4 million investment announced in the *Victorian Budget 2021/22* to manage Queensland fruit fly and protect horticultural production and jobs.

The funding is in addition to more than \$2 million invested annually by the Victorian Government in fruit fly management, including research and development and certification services to enable trade.

The Government's work to manage Queensland fruit fly will protect the 14,000 jobs supported by horticulture production across the state.

The grants also support the Labor Government's Agriculture Strategy and will help to ensure Victorian growers are well placed to respond to biosecurity risks, while promoting and building confidence in the sector for international markets and the community.

For more information visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/qff.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Agriculture Mary-Anne Thomas

"Fruit fly can build up in home gardens and unmanaged lands, leading to problems on productive farms – that's why we are empowering industry and local communities to lead the management of Queensland fruit fly."

"Our fruit fly management programs in key horticultural regions are vital and I look forward to see how these grants will support regional fruit fly coordinators to work on the ground to manage this major economic pest."

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