

FRUIT FLY MURRAY VALLEY REGIONAL STRATEGY

2021-2025



FruitFly
MURRAY VALLEY

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The Fruit Fly Murray Valley Strategy outlines the key objectives for the management of established fruit fly and preparedness of the threat of regionally exotic fruit flies within the region over the next four years.

This strategy complements and aligns with the Victorian Fruit Fly Strategy 2021–25 (Victorian strategy) and National Fruit Fly Strategy 2020–25 (national strategy).

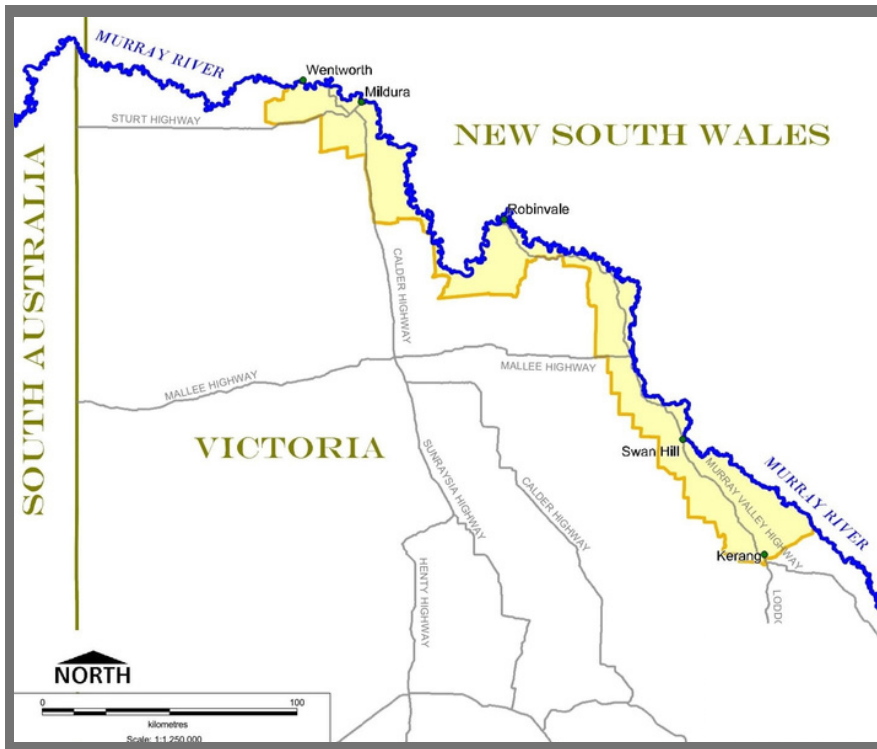


Figure 1: The Murray Valley fruit fly region borders New South Wales, extending along the Murray River from Mildura in the north west to Kerang in the south east.

Background

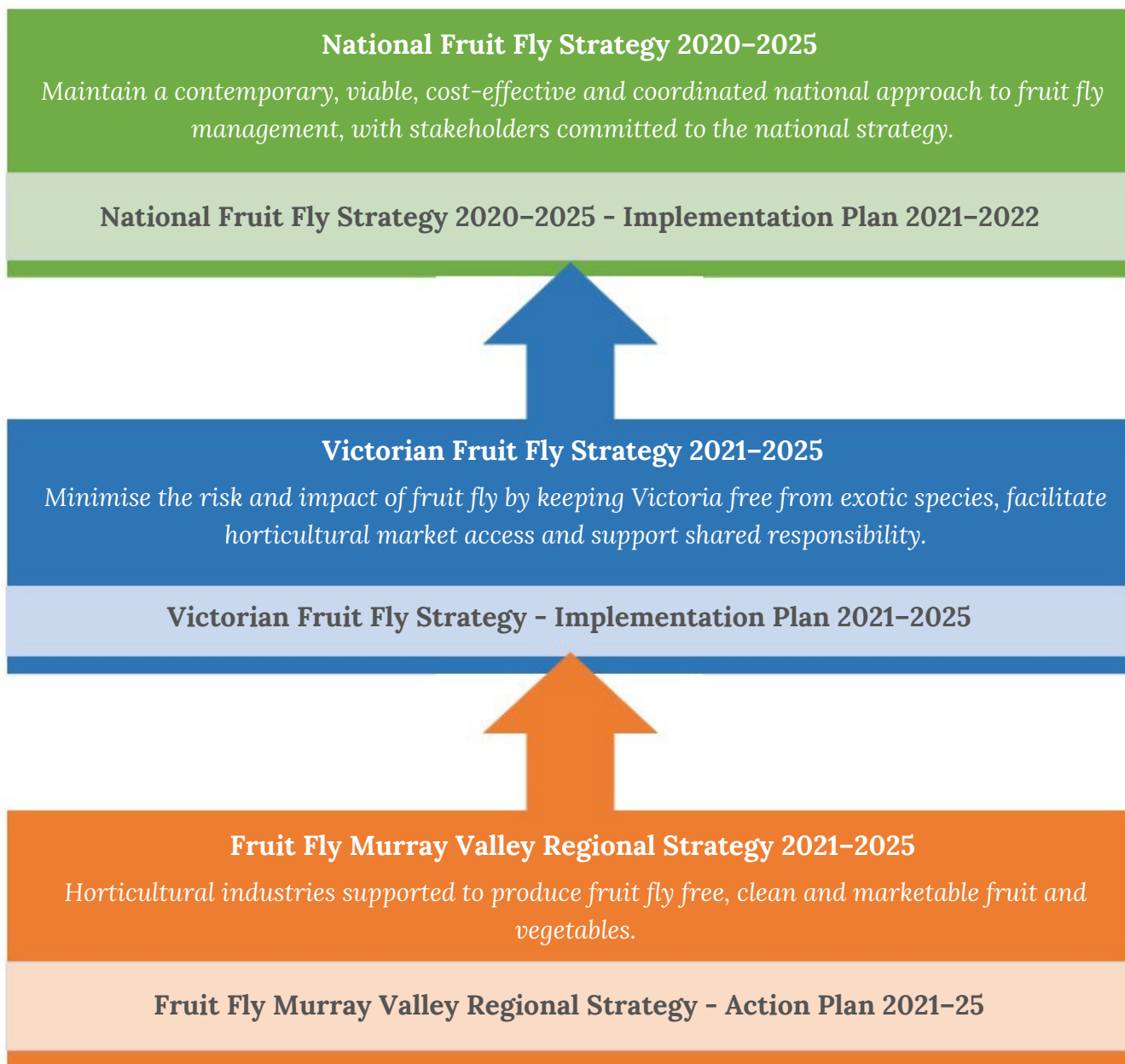
This strategy recognises and builds on the works and achievements of industry and government within the Murray Valley Fruit Fly region over the past eight years.

The Fruit Fly Murray Valley Regional Advisory Group (previously the Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area Governance Group), was established in January 2019, will guide the implementation of the strategy. The advisory group is led by both local and national industry representatives (table grapes, stone fruit citrus, dried fruits, wine grapes and vegetables) and members from local councils and the Victorian and NSW Departments of Agriculture.

The objectives and outcomes outlined in this strategy will be achieved through the development and delivery of a supporting Action Plan 2021–2025.

Fruit Fly

There are more than 4000 fruit fly species across the world, of which 350 are of economic importance. More than 50 exotic and established fruit fly species are of potential economic significance or quarantine concern to Victoria. However, Queensland fruit fly (*Bactrocera tryoni*) and Mediterranean fruit fly (*Ceratitis capitata*) are the species of primary economic concern.



Queensland fruit fly (Qfly) and Mediterranean fruit fly (Medfly) are destructive horticultural pests as they disrupt trade and timely access to international and domestic markets, increasing on-farm management costs and market access costs for horticultural industries and producers.

Qfly is now an established pest in Victoria and is widely distributed across the Murray Valley region (Figure 2). Victoria remains free from Medfly, despite its presence elsewhere in Australia.

Fruit flies have the potential to impact a broad range of horticultural crops. Fruit Fly Murray Valley's key commercial horticultural crops that dominate the export market, including stone fruit, citrus and table grapes, are impacted by fruit fly. Other crops that may be impacted in high pressure years include dried fruit, olives, wine grapes, avocados and vegetables.

Fruit flies also have the potential to impact a broad range of fruit and vegetables grown in home gardens throughout the region.

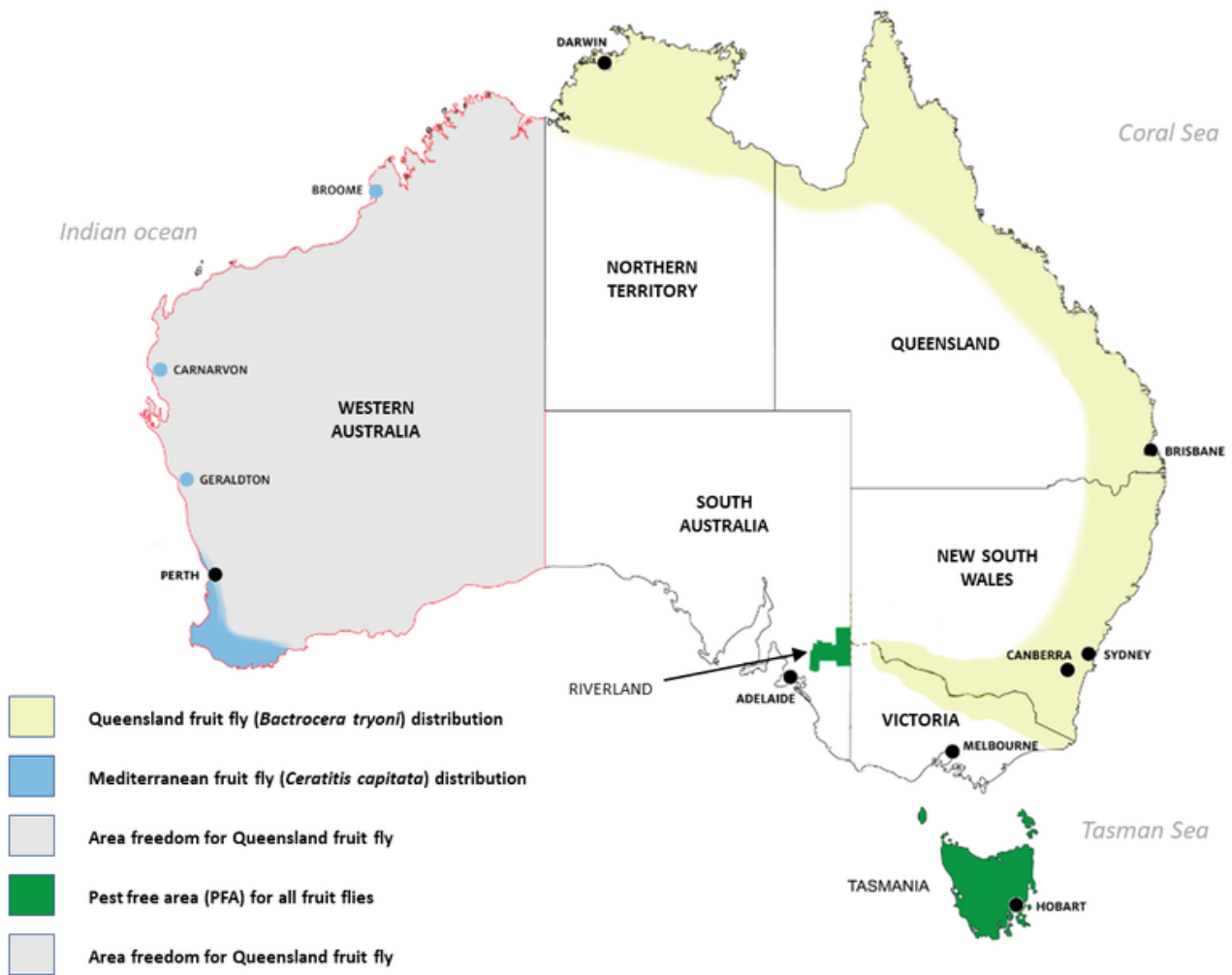


Figure 2: Queensland fruit fly and Mediterranean fruit fly distribution across Australia. Source DAWE

Queensland fruit fly in Murray Valley

Queensland fruit fly is endemic to Queensland but is now found outside its natural range, including southern Australia and is widely distributed across Victoria. From 2007 until 2014, the Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area enabled domestic and international market access for key horticultural commodity groups under pest free area certification against Qfly. Outbreaks that occurred in 2011 were initially managed under pest free area outbreak protocols.

In April 2014, Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area certification for export trade was placed into voluntary suspension. The suspension of pest free area certification had significant impacts on producers within the area. Responsibility for management of Qfly was also devolved to the region at this stage.



Figure 3: Queensland fruit fly. Source Applied Horticultural Research

Growers supported the establishment of the Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area Industry Development Committee for a term of four years – from December 2014 until it ceased operations in December 2018. Area wide management for Qfly continued within the Victorian section of the pest free area with funding from the Victorian Government Managing Fruit fly regional grant program.

Qfly can cause direct crop loss, with infestation of fruit. However, much of the cost to commercial production is associated with producing uninfested fruit, meeting domestic and international trade agreements and loss of market access.

Regionally exotic fruit flies

The occurrence of any exotic fruit fly in the Murray Valley fruit fly region would have a significant detrimental impact on the local horticulture industries.

The Victorian international trade protocols are based on the freedom from several fruit fly species that are present elsewhere in Australia. These include Mediterranean fruit fly (*Ceratitis capitata*), North-Australian fruit fly (*Bactrocera aquilonis*), Jarvis fruit fly (*Bactrocera jarvisii*), Lesser Queensland fruit fly (*Bactrocera neohumeralis*) and Island fruit fly (*Dirioxa pornia*).

These species are not considered exotic from a national perspective under the Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed and thus are not covered under the agreed management and funding arrangements for the response to an emergency plant pest incident. These species have been included in this strategy as regionally exotic species as any incursion into the region would have a significant detrimental impact on local horticulture industries.

True "exotic" species from a national perspective, which Victoria maintains freedom from include, Oriental fruit fly (*Bactrocera dorsalis*), Carambola fruit fly (*Bactrocera carambolae*), Mexican fruit fly (*Anastrepha ludens*), and Spotted wing drosophila (*Drosophila suzukii*). These species are the charter of state and federal government biosecurity programs.



Figure 4: Mediterranean fruit fly. Source Andrew Jessup

Strategic framework

Vision

Murray Valley horticultural industries are able to effectively manage Queensland fruit fly and area freedom is maintained from exotic fruit fly

- *These industries will be supported by a wider community (both on and off farm) that is well placed in understanding and implementing effective management actions to minimise the impact of established fruit fly species on the region's horticulture industries, irrespective of the availability of ongoing government support.*
- *Government and industry will have robust preparedness plans in place for any incursions of regionally exotic fruit flies.*
- *Local councils and Agriculture Victoria will support industries through their regulatory roles.*

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITY AREAS

Five interdependent priority areas have been identified for the strategy.

1. COOPERATION

Facilitate cooperation on fruit fly management between federal, state and local governments, with stakeholders, industry, growers and community, to ensure state and federal objectives maximise their alignment with the unique characteristics of the region.

2. MANAGEMENT OF ESTABLISHED FRUIT FLY

Coordinate the implementation of an area-wide management program with industry and the community to reduce pest pressure from established fruit fly across the region.

3. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

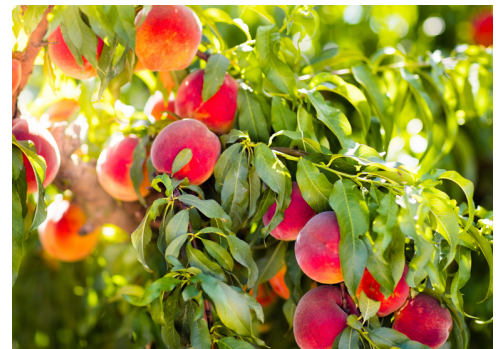
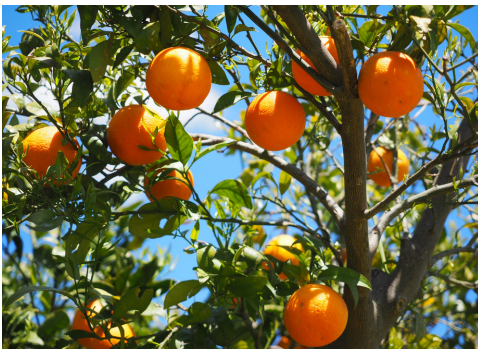
Collaborate with state, national and international research and development organisations to communicate regional needs and facilitate local delivery of research and development outcomes within the community.

4. PREPAREDNESS FOR REGIONALLY EXOTIC FRUIT FLIES

Increase the industry's awareness of the threat of regionally exotic fruit flies to the region and support government and industry to have robust preparedness plans for any incursions.

5. SURVEILLANCE AND MONITORING

Provide regional context to surveillance activities for regionally exotic and established fruit flies and support regional surveillance capability.



1. Cooperation

Facilitate cooperation on fruit fly management between federal, state and local governments, with stakeholders, industry, growers and community, to ensure state and federal objectives maximise their alignment with the unique characteristics of the region.

Cooperation between all stakeholders is critical to effectively achieve the regional, state and national goals of fruit fly management. The management of fruit fly to support industry to produce fruit fly-free, clean and marketable fruit and vegetables requires complex interactions between growers, peak industry bodies, local, state and federal governments, the National Fruit Fly Council, local community, researchers, and other key horticulture regions of Victoria.

The Fruit Fly Murray Valley group will facilitate cooperation and links between all stakeholders to enable the effective and efficient implementation of fruit fly management systems, which incorporate the unique regional characteristics of Sunraysia, at a regional, state and national level.

The objectives under this priority area are to:

- Provide an effective mechanism for peak industry bodies, growers, the community and federal, state and local governments for discussion and cooperation on the management of exotic and established fruit fly
- Provide an avenue for industry, growers and federal and state governments to discuss market access protocol improvements
- Support cooperation between industry, growers and federal and state governments to make an informed decision relating to the regulatory future of the Greater Sunraysia Pest Free Area
- Support the development of a sustainable fruit fly management model for the region beyond 2025
- Strengthen the partnership between the Fruit Fly Murray Valley Advisory Group and National Fruit Fly Council
- Strengthen partnerships between the Fruit Fly Murray Valley and the two key horticulture areas of the Goulburn Murray Valley and the Yarra Valley to enhance efficiencies of program delivery.





2. Management of established fruit fly

Coordinate the implementation of an area-wide management program with industry and the community to reduce pest pressure from established fruit fly across the region.

An area-wide management approach has been elected as the most appropriate approach for the management of Qfly within the Murray Valley fruit fly region.

Area wide management is a system for managing the fruit fly population in an area so that economic damage from the pest is reduced. Area wide management is the only effective measure to reduce impact from urban areas on production/ horticultural areas, coordinating actions of numerous stakeholders.

The Fruit Fly Murray Valley Group will coordinate the implementation of an area wide management program through the delivery of the following objectives:

- Increase the adoption of effective management tools to reduce off-farm pressure of fruit fly populations on production areas
- Facilitate partnerships with local and state governments to convey the responsibilities of land managers for the management of fruit fly and constructively implement the enforcement of appropriate biosecurity protocols and local laws to suppress established fruit fly pressure
- Facilitate the development and implementation of specific action plans for sub regions of the greater Sunraysia fruit fly area where Qfly impact on agricultural properties is high and is influenced by specific local community dynamics
- Collaborate with industry to identify and promote best practice and controls for established fruit fly on farm that are based on current and emerging research and consistent with domestic and export protocol requirements.



3. Research and development

Collaborate with state, national and international research and development organisations to communicate regional needs and facilitate local delivery of research and development outcomes within the community.

Research and development provides practical strategies and innovative solutions for the management of fruit fly. The national fruit fly strategy outlines the national objective to “maintain and enhance fruit fly research capability, capacity and resources, pursuing research and extension that focuses on nationally agreed priorities”.

The Fruit Fly Murray Valley Group will provide links between regional needs and research and development through the delivery of the following objectives:

- Foster strong partnerships with scientific and technical experts and research and development agencies to facilitate the delivery of research and development within the greater Sunraysia fruit fly area.
- Facilitate the extension and sharing of new research and development outcomes at a local level with end users.
- Establish partnerships with research and development funders to funnel regional perspectives on the current and future gaps and needs of end users within the greater Sunraysia fruit fly area.
- Support modelling of established fruit fly species' population dynamics to support industry application of effective and efficient management options.



4. Preparedness for regionally exotic fruit flies

Increase the industry's awareness of the threat of regionally exotic fruit flies to the region and support government and industry to have robust preparedness plans for any incursions.

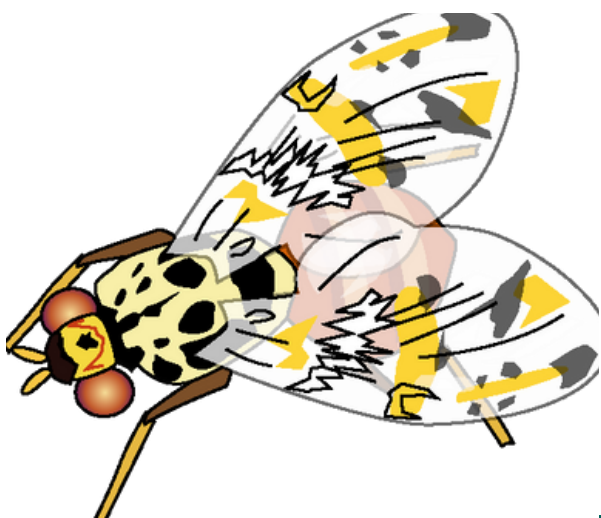
The federal and state governments are responsible for the prevention, preparedness and response to exotic fruit flies.

Under this strategy the Fruit Fly Murray Valley Group aims to complement both the state and national objectives through increasing the industry's awareness of the threat from regionally exotic fruit flies and supporting government and industry to have robust preparedness plans for any incursions.

At present, Victoria and the Murray Valley fruit fly region remain free from Medfly, despite its presence in some areas of Western Australia and recent outbreaks in South Australia. The economic and social connection that Sunraysia shares with South Australia make the recent incursions of Medfly within the state a concern and strengthens the need for the region to have robust a preparedness plan in place. Agriculture Victoria has considered Medfly as an exotic for the purpose of the Victorian Fruit Fly Strategy. However, as MedFly is not included under the EPPRD as an exotic pest (as it is found elsewhere within Australia) it is critical that within this region industries are prepared to enable business continuity in the face of outbreaks.

The Fruit Fly Murray Valley Group will:

- Increase the region's awareness of and preparedness to the threat from fruit flies exotic to the region.
- Assist local industries, growers and community to provide regional context in the Agriculture Victoria-agreed response strategy for fruit flies exotic to the region.
- Support industry to have mechanisms that will enable business continuity in the face of regionally exotic fruit fly outbreaks.



5. Surveillance and monitoring

Provide regional context to surveillance activities for established fruit flies and those exotic to the region and support regional surveillance capability.

Surveillance and monitoring systems provide valuable information for understanding pest pressure in an area, allowing early detection of exotic species and facilitating targeted on-ground response of established species.

The Fruit Fly Murray Valley group aims to provide regional context to surveillance activities and support regional surveillance capability through the delivery of the following objectives:

- Facilitate the dissemination of new surveillance tools available for established fruit fly on farm or for industry and community needs
- Ensure the effective implementation of a targeted area-wide management program by supporting a monitoring network for established fruit fly and providing data on the pest pressure and population distribution across the greater Sunraysia fruit fly area
- Collaborate with state government to provide the regional context of surveillance needs for early detection of fruit flies exotic to the region
- Support regional surveillance capability and identify ways to capture data from growers and community to support this capability.



An implementation plan will be developed to ensure funding is utilised effectively and efficiently to meet agreed outcomes specified in the Victorian strategy and this strategy.

This strategy has been developed through consultation with the following stakeholders:

- New South Wales Government – Local Land Services
- Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions – Agriculture Victoria – North West Biosecurity
- Mildura Rural City Council
- Swan Hill Rural City Council
- Gannawarra Shire Council
- Australian Table Grape Association
- Sunraysia Citrus Growers
- Citrus Australia.
- AusVeg
- Swan Hill Summer Fruit Development Association
- Summerfruit Australia
- Dried Fruits Australia
- Murray Valley Winegrowers Inc
- SuniTAFE
- Swan Hill Chemicals
- National Ag
- EEMuir
- National Fruit Fly Council – CEO and local members

Related strategies and policies

- National Fruit Fly Strategy 2020-25, National Fruit Fly Council (2020), Plant Health Australia
- Victoria's Fruit Fly Strategy 2021-2025, Agriculture Victoria, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (2021) (Draft)
- Emergency Plant Pest Response Deed, Government and Plant Industry Cost Sharing Deed in respect of Emergency Plant Pest Responses 2020 www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/biosecurity/emergency-plant-pest-response-deed/



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The Fruit Fly Murray Valley program is supported by the Victorian Government