

National Fruit Fly Council  
Annual Report  
December 2024



## SUMMARY

In this Annual Report, we present progress against the planned deliverables of the National Fruit Fly Council (NFFC, here on referred to as the Council) for the calendar year, January to December 2024.

This report demonstrates the embedding of the review of the operations and composition of the Council, which initially commenced in 2022 at the instigation of this Phase 4 project. One of the key changes to the operation of the Council has been the addition of an Executive Committee, whose role is to progress strategic activities as agreed by the Council. A comprehensive refresh of the Council and Executive Committee has been undertaken during 2024. This took the form of an open EOI process for industry representation as well as natural transition for state representation through changes of personnel in their respective organisations, with five of the six states represented having new appointments during 2024.

The Council is responsible for producing an annual priorities document for publication that the Council and Executive Committee use as a driver for work in the next calendar year. This document is created from the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP), Annual Implementation Report (AIR) and gap analysis work that the Council produces in its monitoring of the [National Fruit Fly Strategy 2020-25](#) (NFFS).

A series of new Council Working and Task Groups have been instigated including the NFFC Research Working Group (RWG) and the NFFC Economic Analysis Task Group. These have been convened to enable broad engagement across the national fruit fly system and the NFFS as well as providing access to expertise to support the work of the Council. During 2024, the NFFC Executive Committee, Council and RWG have invested significant efforts towards development of a new 'Think Tank' webinar and workshop series to facilitate the review of the current NFF Strategy 2020-25 and development of the new decadal NFF Strategy 2026-35. The 'Think Tank' approach has tapped into the wealth of expertise across the national fruit fly system and is being coupled with a series of workshops covering themes of high strategic importance.

The 2023–24 AIR for progress against the NFFS has also been finalised. This report summarises the Council's achievements from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. Progress across each of the eight key result areas from the NFFS is monitored against the strategic framework and objectives within the NFFS. The AIR is finalised in June of the previous financial year and published along with the next financial year's AIP.

The final draft of the 2024–25 AIP has been completed. It collates the key fruit fly activities that are planned and resourced by stakeholders from 1 July 2024 to 31 June 2025. This plan is used to monitor progress against the NFFS and identify gaps that need to be addressed in the national system. The AIP acknowledges the considerable ongoing contributions from the different stakeholders to fruit fly management in Australia. Importantly, it also provides an opportunity to collectively consider potential gaps in the system as guided by the Intergovernmental Agreement on Strengthening Australia's Fruit Fly Management System.



## The National Fruit Fly Council project

The National Fruit Fly Council, Phase 4, is funded by Hort Innovation, state and territory governments, the Australian Government and fruit fly impacted horticultural industries. The NFFC is a strategic body that brings together federal and state governments, growers, and research funders to oversee the implementation of the National Fruit Fly Strategy and to provide advice and leadership on the delivery of a cost-effective and sustainable approach to managing fruit flies across Australia.

The objectives of the National Fruit Fly Council, Phase 4 project, are to provide a national strategic direction for the management of fruit fly in Australia, prioritise RD&E for fruit fly in Australia, and inform a national approach to the application of fruit fly management to meet industry needs for domestic and international trade.

This fourth phase of the NFFC continues to build on a considerable platform of work in recent years which has increased national engagement and identified priorities to strengthen the national fruit fly system and Australia's trade position. As a result, the NFFC is now uniquely positioned to provide an independent and facilitatory role in bringing stakeholders together around key issues that require national coordination and cooperation to be progressed and resolved.

The project supports regular meetings of the Council, and a small project team within Plant Health Australia. This team is responsible for developing the Council's agenda, increasing connectivity with trade and research stakeholders, and communicating with fruit fly stakeholders across Australia.

The outcomes of the project include:

- the provision of national, strategic direction for the management of fruit fly in Australia, including managing the risk of exotic species, to support a robust national system for trade and production,
- prioritised R&D activities to meet the short and long-term fruit fly management needs in Australia, including endemic and exotic species, and
- communication and cooperation between governments, industries, researchers, and communities to progress strategically important national fruit fly issues.

The project contributes to the Hort Frontiers Fruit Fly Investment fund outcome of *"Maintained export markets – fruit fly as a second order issue for our trading partners"* by providing coordinated and collective consideration of national fruit fly challenges by key decision-makers and service providers, and those most affected by fruit fly. As a result of these discussions, the NFFC has provided advice and leadership on the resolution of issues that benefit horticultural production and trade.

The project also contributes to the biosecurity outcomes of fruit fly impacted industry specific Strategic Investment Plans (SIPs) within Hort Innovation. These outcomes include industry preparedness, responsiveness, and resilience to biosecurity threats (e.g., exotic fruit flies), a national approach to fruit fly management, reduced impact of endemic pests and improved on-farm practices.



## Key deliverables

### National Fruit Fly Council meetings

The full Council met once during 2024 in August with the December meeting being deferred until early 2025. This was an in-person meeting with additional attendees from the NFFC Research Working Group involved in an afternoon Strategic Review Workshop.

- Meeting 35, PIRSA Head Office, Adelaide – 4 Aug 2024

Some of the discussions during this meeting included:

- Ongoing improvement of the NFFC structures including the new NFFC Terms of Reference (ToR), Executive Committee, Working and Task Groups.
- Progress against the 2020-25 National Fruit Fly Strategy and priority activities stemming from recommendations from the National Fruit Fly Council review.
- Finalising the DAFF funded Engagement and Extension project and its key themes:
  1. Chemicals, control, and technologies
  2. Governance, funding, and planning
- Ongoing engagement with the Riverland Fruit Fly Committee in relation to the management of the fruit fly outbreak eradication initiative as well as the respective regional Fruit Fly Governance Groups linked with Agriculture Victoria's Area Wide Management (AWM) projects.
- Continued support for the Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) program post completion of the Hort Innovation SIT Plus project and ongoing engagement with key delivery partners such as Macquarie University and Shepparton Council and the Goulburn Murray Fruit Fly Governance Group.
- Engagement (represented by Stu Burgess and Greg Chandler) with the Government Industry Agreement (GIA) New Zealand on 29 May 2024 in Sydney.
- Ongoing consideration of findings from the DAFF-funded and PwC-delivered *National Fruit Fly Resourcing Options* (Sustainable Funding) consultancy.
- Engagement with the DAFF-funded and Deloitte-delivered *Building Resilience to Manage Fruit Fly Package* scoping study.
- Exploring the threats and opportunities relating to the fruit fly system operating within a 'chemically limited future'.
- Discussion and planning for development of the 2026-2035 National Fruit Fly Strategy.
- Rolling renewal of the NFFC membership including an open Expression of Interest process held in early 2024.
- Rolling renewal of the NFFC Executive Committee post completion of the industry EOI process.

During 2024, the Council also said goodbye to several long-standing industry members including Joelene Williams, David Daniels and Tom Eastlake who didn't renominate for ongoing membership. The Council then welcomed new industry members who were appointed through the open expression of interest process. These include Tim Grieger, Alison MacGregor, Russell Fox and Jess Lye with both Steve Burdette and Dale Williams retaining their membership as two long standing contributors. Several state representatives were also welcomed to the Council including Vincent



Lanoiselet (WA), Susanna Driessen (Tas), Shane Hetherington (NSW), Michael Reid (Qld) and Nick Secomb (SA). The Hort Innovation member of the Council is now Andrea Magiafoglou.

### **NFFC Executive Committee meetings**

The NFFC Executive Committee held three meetings during 2024. Of these, two were held in person, the first in Canberra and the second in Sydney, and the third was held online:

- Executive Meeting 5 - 13 March 2024, Canberra, ACT
- Executive Meeting 6 - 24 May 2024, Sydney, NSW
- Executive Meeting 7 - 15 October 2024, online.

In addition, the Executive Committee also visited Cairns and Mareeba in October 2024, taking time to meet with key personnel from the Queensland Department of Primary Industries Research group, Peter Leach and Solomon Balagawi, and Commonwealth team leads for the Torres Strait Exotic Fruit Fly Eradication program, Isarena Schnieder and Stefanie Oberprieler. Farm visits to table grape and mango enterprises in the Mareeba region were also undertaken which provided excellent insights into the key fruit fly related issues faced by industry in our north.

Some of the topics discussed by the Executive Committee included the:

- 2024-26 NFFC program schedule across all core functions and activities
- Ongoing development of NFFC stakeholder engagement and influence mapping
- 2025 National Fruit Fly Symposium agenda scheduled for October 2025, in Brisbane
- Development of project scope for the National Fruit Fly Economic Analysis
- Preparation and development of the National Fruit Fly Strategy Review and Development 2026-35 process being enacted through 2025
- first meeting of the recently established NFFC Research Network in July 2024
- Further development of the new specialised NFFC Task Groups including the Economic Analysis
- Executive Committee roles within the NFFC Working Group and Task Group process
- Engagement (represented by Stu Burgess and Greg Chandler) with representatives of the Government Industry Agreement (GIA) New Zealand in May 2024

### **National Fruit Fly Strategy Review and Development 2026-35**

Based on feedback received during the various Council and Executive Committee meetings held throughout 2024, a strategic review process for the development of NFFS 2026-35 was prepared (see figure 1). A key benefit identified throughout the process was in ensuring all voices from those impacted by fruit flies in Australia be heard and incorporated into any future direction. Whilst the ultimate timeframe for the development of the new strategy remains much the same (concluding in December 2025), the process continues to evolve with greater emphasis currently on ensuring the proposed National Fruit Fly Economic Analysis work is undertaken early in the process.



The key outputs proposed to be developed through the NFFS 2026-35 Review Process include:

1. NFFS 2026-35 Strategy (full version)
2. NFFS 2026-35 Strategy (2-page summary version)
3. NFFS 2026-28 3-Year Operational Plan (3-yr rolling plan)
4. NFF RD&E Plan 2026-35

Another key output requiring consideration during this process is the development of an National Fruit Fly Infrastructure Strategy.

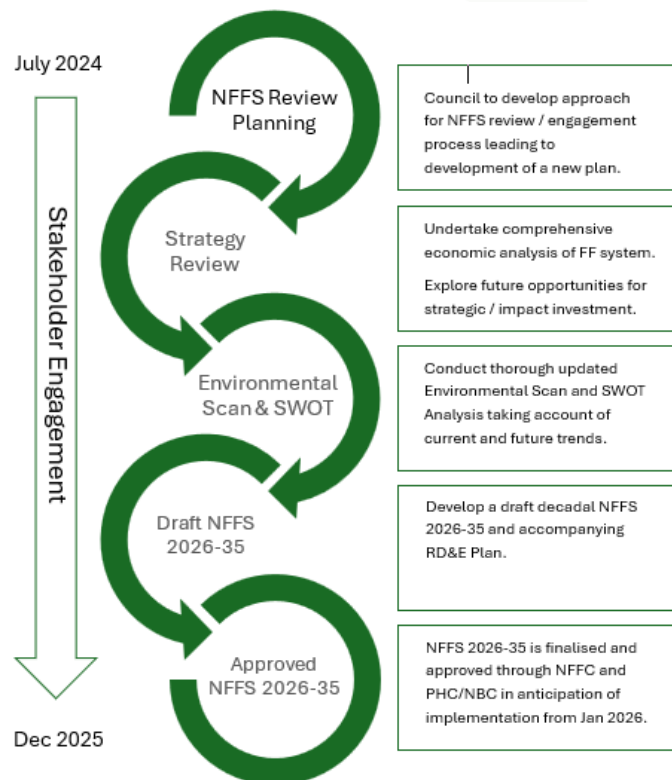


Figure 1 - Draft NFFS Strategic Review Process

### NFFC Presentation at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Biosecurity Symposium 2024

NFFC Manager, Stuart Burgess presented on behalf of the NFFC at the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Biosecurity Symposium held on the Gold Coast in August 2024 with a paper titled 'Collaboration: Adopting a Think Tank model is key to a strong and robust national fruit fly system'. The presentation focused on the 'Think Tank' model that was adopted in the lead up to the 2023 National Fruit Fly Symposium. The NFFC chose to adopt the tailored 'Think Tank' engagement model to enhance the effectiveness of our collaborative efforts throughout the symposium process. The outcomes of these 'Think Tank' style webinars informed a series of detailed strategic deep dive sessions held during the actual symposium itself, with interactive expert panels further enabling the ultimate development of the collective view of national priorities for future investment.





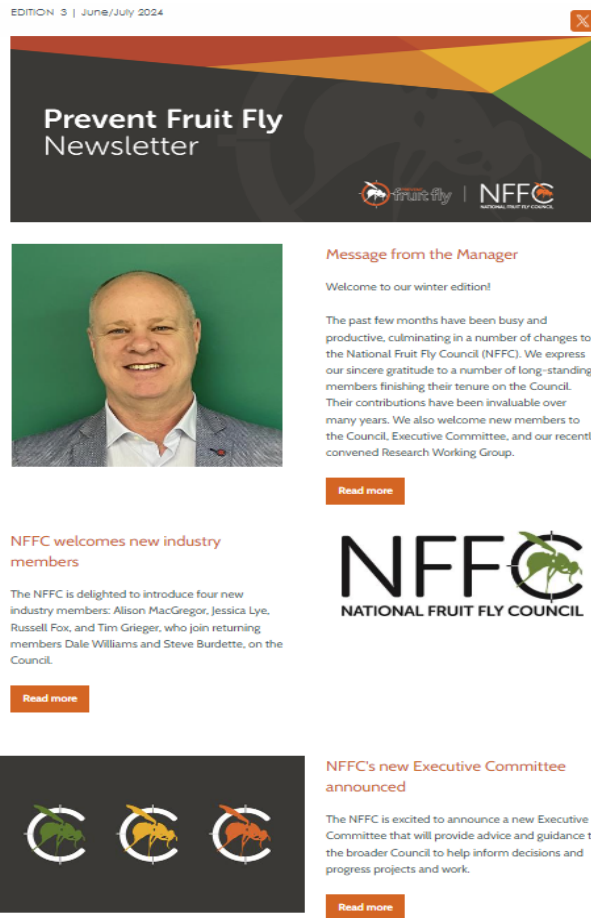
**Prevent Fruit Fly E-Newsletter**

Throughout 2024, four Prevent Fruit Fly e-newsletters were distributed and in this year the number of newsletter subscribers increased by 4% to 1,012, compared to 976 at the commencement of the year. A promising statistic relating to the newsletters is the opening rates for each, with an average of 43% of those delivered. Past editions of the newsletter can be found [here](#).



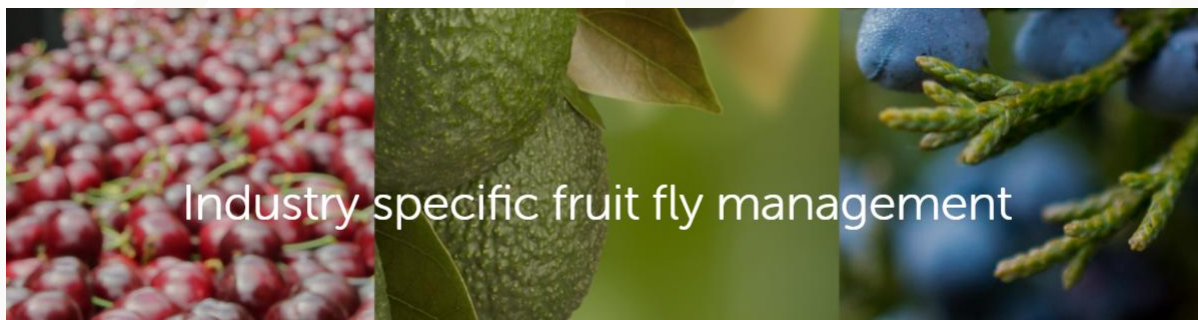
*Examples from recent Prevent Fruit Fly E-Newsletters*





### Prevent Fruit Fly Website

The website has continued to undergo improvements throughout 2024 as we seek to ensure its effectiveness.



Website ([preventfruitfly.com.au](http://preventfruitfly.com.au))





Area wide management and trapping

[READ MORE](#)



Bait spraying and male annihilation

[READ MORE](#)



Cold treatment

[READ MORE](#)



Industry specific fruit fly management

[READ MORE](#)



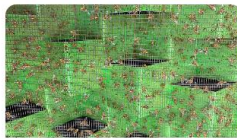
Orchard hygiene

[READ MORE](#)



Resources

[READ MORE](#)



Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) – a tool to benefit Australian horticulture

[READ MORE](#)

Website image showing new grower-based tools in toolbox [Producers | National Fruit Fly Council \(preventfruitfly.com.au\)](#)



Website image showing new [Sterile Insect Technique \(SIT\)](#) tool

### Prevent Fruit Fly Social Media - X account

Between January and December 2024, 50 social media posts and 75 re-posts were shared on the Prevent Fruit Fly social media feed. During the 2024 year, the number of social media followers increased to 494 followers by years end.

Through the Prevent Fruit Fly 'X', formerly known as Twitter, account the NFFC continues to run campaigns with information targeted at specific audiences. The use of hashtags (#) enables us to group these messages together allowing users to quickly find information in the related topic. Example of the use of hashtags includes the use of #biosecurity, #planthealth #fruitfly #preventfruitfly. The use of these platform assists us in amplifying any fruit fly related messaging of our members and other key stakeholders.





*Prevent Fruit Fly social post August 2024*



*Prevent Fruit Fly X channel page*



## Media

PHA / Tendrils - [Exercise Motus: preparing for Oriental fruit fly threat | Plant Health Australia](#) - distributed to 1878 subscribers

NFFC / PFF Website - [FASTA Symposium unites experts to advance fruit fly strategy | National Fruit Fly Council](#) - Distributed to 2016 users

NFFC / PFF website - [NFFC welcomes new industry members | National Fruit Fly Council](#) - Distributed to 2016 users

NFFC / PFF website - [NFFC introduces new Research Working Group | National Fruit Fly Council](#) - Distributed to 2016 users

NFFC / PFF website - [NFFC's new Executive Committee announced | National Fruit Fly Council](#) - Distributed to 2016 users

Prevent Fruit Fly - [Prevent Fruit Fly Newsletter - June/July 2024 | Campaign Monitor](#) - distributed to 998 subscribers.

Fruit Fly ID - [Fruit Fly ID Australia](#) - viewed by 11,788 users



**Other NFFC Phase 4 activities**



*Members of Exec Committee met with mango growers in Mareeba, Qld in October 2024.*



*Members of Exec Committee met with table grape growers in Mareeba, Qld in October 2024.*



### **Research and trade focused exchange**

The NFFC Research Working Group held a planning meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at the Hort Innovation offices in North Sydney and included key stakeholders from state, territory and national government departments and major fruit fly research institutions. The key outcomes from this meeting included input into the National Fruit Fly Strategic Review process along with the NFFS Research Implementation Plan.

PHA (through the NFFC) has continued its involvement with the Australian Fruit Fly Technical Advisory Committee (AFFTAC) with Stuart Burgess attending as an observer. These meetings not only provide an invaluable link to the technical experts leading the broader state, territory and Commonwealth fruit fly related workplans but also ensure two-way sharing of key initiatives in the fruit fly strategic space.

Multiple additional meetings have been held between the NFFC and leading fruit fly research agencies and groups throughout 2024. These included meetings with:

- the Macquarie University fruit fly research group.
- the QDAF fruit fly team in Cairns.
- the QDAF Horticulture Research facility with a site tour in Cairns.
- the Commonwealth Torres Strait Exotic Flies Eradication Program team based out of Cairns.
- the Oriental Fruit Fly Working Group (FF18001) including involvement in the DAFF-funded National Action Plan for Exotic Fruit Flies project.
- the Port Augusta SIT program with site visit in August 2024.
- the Kangaroo Island Blowfly SIT Pilot research program in August 2024.



## Membership

The Council is comprised of:

Name		Title	Industry / Organisation
John	Webster	Independent Chair	National Fruit Fly Council
Andrea	Magiafoglou	R&D Manager for Market Access	Horticulture Innovation Australia Ltd
Shane	Hetherington	Chief Plant Protection Officer	NSW Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development
Nick	Secomb	Director (Plant and Invasive Species Biosecurity)	Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA
Michael	Reid	General Manager (Plant Biosecurity and Product Integrity)	Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
Susanna	Driessen	Chief Plant Protection Officer (Tasmania)	Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania
Vincent	Lanoiselet	Chief Plant Biosecurity Officer	WA Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
Susie	Collins	Assistant Secretary (Plant Health Policy)	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Rosa	Crnov	Chief Plant Health Officer	Agriculture Victoria
Steve	Burdette	Owner	Steve Burdette & Associates
Jess	Lye	General Manager (Market Development)	Citrus Australia
Russell	Fox	Insense Consultancy	Southern Australia Temperate Fruit
Dale	Williams	Mango Grower	Euri Gold Farms
Alison	MacGregor	Industry Development Manager	Australia Table Grape Association
Tim	Grieger	Executive Officer	Summerfruit SA
Stuart	Burgess	Manager, NFFC	Plant Health Australia



The NFFC Executive Committee is comprised of:

Name		Title	Industry / Organisation
John	Webster	Independent Chair	National Fruit Fly Council
Andrea	Magiafoglou	R&D Manager for Market Access	Horticulture Innovation Australia Ltd
Michael	Reid	General Manager (Plant Biosecurity and Product Integrity)	Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
Susie	Collins	Assistant Secretary (Plant Health Policy)	Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Nick	Secomb	Chief Plant Health Officer	Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA
Steve	Burdette	Owner	Steve Burdette & Associates
Alison	MacGregor	Industry Development Manager	Australian Table Grape Association
Stuart	Burgess	Manager, NFFC	Plant Health Australia

#### Chairperson

The Council and the Executive Committee are chaired by an independent chair, Mr John Webster. Meetings are convened by the Chair and supported by the NFFC Manager.

