

# National Fruit Fly Council

## Annual Summary 2019

The National Fruit Fly Council brings together state government representatives, the Australian Government, horticultural industry representatives, and Hort Innovation to ensure Australia maintains a strategic outlook on managing fruit flies that threaten Australian horticultural production.

Over the last 12 months there has been a significant focus on ensuring national coordination of fruit fly management following concerns over Queensland fruit fly outbreaks in Tasmania and the Riverland Pest Free Areas. In November 2018 the Australian Government announced an investment package of \$16.9M to address these concerns and an *Intergovernmental Agreement on Strengthening Australia's Fruit Fly Management System* has been established to provide the agreed basis for national and state funding and cooperation.

The Council is encouraged by this renewed investment and has contributed to planning for its application, providing strategic advice on the research component and other measures in the package to enhance the national system. This also signals an opportunity for the Council to reinvigorate its work program to complement, guide and advocate these national initiatives. An important tool for this work will be finalising the revised National Fruit Fly Strategy and associated action plan and this is a priority for the Council in the next six months.

The Council has also taken steps to strengthen its links with regulatory decision-makers, incorporating an observer from the National Biosecurity Committee on the Council and formal reporting to Plant Health Committee on each meetings outcomes. A series of changes to Council membership and to Council communications strategies are also being made to improve its capability to add value and credibility to national fruit fly activities.

Since October 2018 the Council has held four meetings. In progressing the 2008 National Fruit Fly Strategy, topical issues have included: fruit fly research priorities; review of interstate quarantine; development of the National Fruit Fly Management Protocols; management of abandoned orchards; Medfly eradication and the future of the Medfly SIT facility in Western Australia; and opportunities to increase national fruit fly cost-sharing.



Over the past year the Council has delivered upon a range of activities, including:

- **Revision of the National Fruit Fly Strategy** – development of a new draft Strategy and Program Logic and initial consideration by Council members. This draft reflects the renewed focus on national fruit fly coordination and seeks to provide a high-level framework that will be complemented by practical implementation plans. The Council has agreed to this draft being used for consultation with industry and other stakeholders during early 2020.
- **Prioritisation for RD&E investment** – the Council reviewed the Department of Agriculture’s proposed priorities and process for the investment in fruit fly research and development program. The Council supported the nominated priority areas and will have an ongoing role in evaluating potential projects for investment.
- **Regional fruit fly workshops** - a proposal for a series of regional fruit fly workshops has been developed. The proposal seeks to target key growing regions, fruit fly topics of local interest, and opportunities for collaboration with regional groups. The Council Manager is also actively involved in the planning of the South Australian Fruit Fly Summit, proposed for late March 2020.
- **Communications** - the Prevent Fruit Fly website, Twitter account and e-newsletter continued to supply information and links on fruit fly activities across Australia. Several website changes have been made to better promote the work of the Council and this will be an ongoing theme into 2020. Linkages to Plant Health Committee are being strengthened with efforts to better align agendas and formally exchange fruit fly information.
- **Council governance** - Terms of Reference for the Council were finalised and endorsed in September 2019. The Council has also agreed to expand industry membership by an additional two members in 2020 to bolster the range and availability of industry representation at future Council meetings. This reflects the value industry members bring to the discussions and the difficulty industry members have balancing business demands and Council commitments.

There has also been substantial work undertaken by individual jurisdictions and members of the Council which is relevant to the National Fruit Fly Strategy. While these activities are not directed by the Council, they are of substantial benefit in meeting the needs of different regions and in progressing the national agenda.

