Media Release

Goulburn Murray Valley Fruit Fly Project crowned cream of the crop at state-wide achievement awards

**Project receives top gongs at 2019 Victorian Regional Achievement and**

**Community Awards**

The Goulburn Murray Valley (GMV) Regional Fruit Fly Project has not only taken out

first place in the Prime Super Agricultural Innovation Awardsat the 2019 Victoria Regional Achievement and Community Awards, it was also voted overall winner of the Victorian Regional Achiever of the Year Award by an independent panel of expert judges.

The awards were presented at a Gala Presentation Dinner on Friday 11 October and recognised the GMV Fruit Fly Project as a leader in the Area Wide Management (AWM) of Queensland Fruit Fly (QFF).

GMV Regional Fruit Fly Coordinator Ross Abberfield attributed the project’s success to the continued commitment of project partners to come together and take a fresh and innovative approach to combating fruit fly through AWM.

“The cohesive nature of the project’s core objectives to limit the effects of the pest, coupled with the community’s willingness to get behind the ‘No Flies On Us’ message has resulted in gains on a number of fronts in the fight against fruit fly,” Mr Abberfield said

“Each of our project partners has played a pivotal role in raising awareness and creating engagement concerning the risks posed by QFF, to not only home gardeners but the region’s multi-million horticultural industry and the local economy. I would like to thank and acknowledged them for the role they have played in the project’s success so far,” he said.

“We are fortunate that we have been able to work collaboratively with Agriculture

Victoria, Cobram and District Fruit Growers Association, Fruit Growers Victoria Ltd,

Lions International, Rotary International, Shepparton Preserving Company, Goulburn

Murray Water and I.K. Caldwell in addition to our partner councils to increase

awareness, implement control measures and reduce fruit fly numbers in the region,”

Mr Abberfield said.

The GVM Regional Fruit Fly project was up against four finalists in the Prime Super

Agricultural Innovation Award and nine Award Winners in the overall Victorian

Regional Achiever Award.

Initially, the project was selected from a field of several hundred nominees throughout Victoria to become a semi-finalist. It then underwent further

independent assessment by expert judges who voted the project the winner of

the Prime Agricultural Innovation Award and overall winner of the Victorian Regional Achiever of the Year Award.

“We would like to thank the award sponsors and organisers for their expertise and commitment to showcasing excellence, which I believe is particularly important to our regional communities,” Mr Abberfield said.

The GMV Regional Fruit Fly project was established in 2017 to encourage the community, industry and government to take ownership in managing fruit fly in our region. This unified approach not only protects our economy and lifestyle, but also promotes quality horticulture, product exports, rural investment and tourism.

“Under the guidance and direction of the project’s governance group the project has highlighted what can be achieved through working collectively toward a common cause.

“When reflecting on the impact the project has had on reducing the effects of fruit fly on the region we are buoyed by the fact that there has been a reduction of more than 50 per cent in fruit fly numbers in the region in the last two years and nearly a 40 per cent increase in Australian stone fruit exports in the last 12 months,” Mr Abberfield said.

Taking in the Council areas of, Moira Greater Shepparton, Campaspe Strathbogie,

and Berrigan, the project is funded through the Managing Fruit Fly in Victoria

Regional Grants Program and auspiced by Moira Shire Council.

The project will continue to improve its AWM strategy to reduce the spread of the pest, by monitoring fruit fly numbers whilst refining its regional trapping grid, deploying Field Officers to manage hotspot areas and reduce QFF numbers, removing unmanaged breeding habitat to reduce populations and promotion of community awareness, education and engagement throughout the GMV.

For more information on the GMV Regional Fruit Fly Project and QFF Area Wide

Management visit www.gmv-qldfruitfly.com.au

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