Media Release

High demand for free Urban Fruit Tree Removal Program

**Program extended until the end of November in response to high take-up**

Demand for the free Urban Fruit Tree Removal Program continues, with more than 600 applications received to have unwanted fruit trees removed from residential yards across the Goulburn Murray Valley.

High demand for the program has led to a further extension of its closing date. Property owners with unwanted fruit trees in residential urban yards now have until the end of November to apply to have them removed at no cost, after the program was extended for an additional month.

Goulburn Murray Valley Regional Fruit Fly Coordinator Ross Abberfield said property owners who had taken part in the program had played an active role in protecting the region against the spread of Queensland Fruit Fly (QFF) through the elimination of potential breeding grounds.

“There has been strong demand for the program and a steady flow of applications received to have unwanted fruit trees removed, as the community becomes more aware of the role they play in helping to reduce the spread of QFF,” he said.

“It is great to see that home gardeners are getting the message that if you are unable to take the necessary simple fruit fly management actions, or you have an unwanted fruit tree, removal of unmanaged fruit trees is recommended and available free of charge until the end of November,” Mr Abberfield said.

The Urban Fruit Tree Removal Program is available in the Shires of Campaspe, Greater Shepparton, Strathbogie, Moira and Berrigan as part of a regional approach to the management and control of QFF.

The program has led to the successful reduction in potential breeding grounds found in unattended urban fruit trees and rotten fruit left on the ground or on trees.

Mr Abberfield said QFF is a serious risk to the region’s multi-million dollar horticulture industry, backyard orchards and vegetable gardens.

“An area wide management strategy is essential in reducing QFF numbers, with the program just one component of this strategy,” Mr Abberfield said

“Fruit fly are generally relatively dormant during winter when the weather is too cold for them to be active, however start to become more active in Spring, so now is the time to take action,” he said.

A combination of management measures should be applied by home gardeners with host plants or trees, such as the use of traps, netting, baiting and spraying where appropriate.

In addition to these steps, people should harvest early and prune trees to ensure

they are kept to a manageable size. It is also important home gardeners practice

good garden hygiene by collecting and destroying rotting or infected fruit by solarising

it in sealed plastic bags for several days prior to disposal.

“Reducing the spread of QFF is a community effort and requires vigilance and a

high level of community awareness,” Mr Abberfield said.

The program is one of several actions identified and implemented by the Goulburn Murray Valley Regional Fruit Fly Group, which consists of members from local and state government, horticultural producers, industry representatives and community members.

Trees are removed and disposed of by a fully insured private contractor at no cost to the property owner.

Applications to have fruit trees removed through the program are available from participating Councils.

For more information about the Free Urban Fruit Tree Removal Program contact the Customer Service Centre at participating Councils or visit [www.gmv-qldfruitfly.com.au](http://www.gmv-qldfruitfly.com.au)

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For more information

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