



Adrian Pederick MP

Member for Hammond

**House of Assembly
Thursday, 18 September 2014**

Mypolonga Fruit Fly Exclusion Zone

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (12:45): I move:

That this house calls on the state government to establish Mypolonga as a fruit fly exclusion zone and commit extra funding to biosecurity measures to protect against fruit fly threats and outbreaks in South Australia.

I rise today to speak about Mypolonga being included in the Riverland fruit fly exclusion zone. In early June I gave notice to move a private member's motion and called on the state government to improve protection for the Mypolonga horticulture area.

Mypolonga locals are very proactive and have a long history of pre-emptive hands-on solutions. The Mypolonga trapping grid was established in 1991. Traps are situated on a one-kilometre grid in the horticultural production areas and on a 400-metre grid within the township. There are 17 sites, with each site having three traps deployed: one to detect Queensland fruit fly, one to detect Mediterranean fruit fly, and one to detect exotic fruit fly.

Traps are monitored on a weekly basis during the period of November to May and fortnightly during the period June to October. A single male Queensland fruit fly was detected on Friday 26 July 2013. This detection does not constitute an outbreak as such. An outbreak is defined when one of three scenarios is observed: one gravid female fly is detected, one or more larvae are detected in locally-grown fruit, or five male flies are trapped within one kilometre, within a two-week period.

PIRSA actioned and ensured that additional traps were set up within 200 metres of the detection zone. The quick action of PIRSA and locals ensured monitoring of the incursions, and no other fruit flies were found. PIRSA worked with producers to manage market access implications to ensure that growers meet requirements and eliminated any potential for the fruit fly infestation to spread further.

During the last few years the Lower Murray Horticulture Action Committee has been assisted with a grant from Horticulture Australia Ltd to fund the Mypolonga fruit fly trapping grid as part of an industry research and development project. Due to the proactive locals, they have fortunately gained funding for a further three years.

The estimated annual cost of servicing the trapping grid is in the order of \$15,000 to \$20,000. The residents of Mypolonga have never received funding for fruit fly trapping from the government but have had an in-kind contribution. If there were a cessation of the Mypolonga fruit fly trapping grid, this would pose a number of associated risks, including:

marketing implications for local growers, particularly in accessing, processing and packaging facilities in the Riverland fruit fly exclusion zone;

exposure to host produce travelling along main arterial highways passing within 10 kilometres of the Mypolonga growing area;

increased tourist activities, including houseboats, river sports, paddleboats and general tourists;

bringing infested produce into the area;

prevailing winds potentially carrying fruit fly into the Mypolonga trapping grid, thus protecting the back door of the Riverland;

Mypolonga's itinerant population, plus approximately 70 students who travel daily from the Murray Bridge area into Mypolonga to attend the local primary school; and

some possible implications for accessing export markets.

The Queensland male fruit fly that was detected in July 2013 highlighted the impact this pest has on local growers, with many growers having issues accessing local and interstate markets following the detection. The Mypolonga fruit fly trapping grid and the in-kind PIRSA support are currently the only protective measures afforded to the area. This protection is vital, as it ensures access to processing and packing facilities in the Riverland and market accessibility.

At a community meeting, the local growers unanimously endorsed the continuation of the current trapping grid. The Mypolonga horticulture production area has diminished considerably over recent years due to drought, irrigation restrictions and lower than cost of production commodity returns.

Despite this, in the past a small group of owners have committed to a voluntary per hectare contribution in an attempt to maintain the grid. However, the required cost to fully fund the trapping grid to its current levels of protection is beyond the resources of growers who have been committed to the voluntary contribution. The Mypolonga horticulture industry will receive no funding from the Weatherill Labor government in its fight against fruit fly which was stated by the former minister for agriculture, food and fisheries (Hon. Gail Gago).

Additionally, the Mypolonga fruit growing area is seen as the back door to the Riverland and it is extremely important to protect the South Australian Riverland fruit fly exclusion zone. A fruit fly outbreak in South Australia could devastate the \$675 million fresh fruit and vegetable industry. The Mypolonga region currently does have access to all domestic Australian markets due to South Australia's fruit fly free status. However, as Mypolonga is not included in the Riverland fruit fly exclusion zone this means that the area may be excluded from export markets that place special recognition on the Riverland fruit fly free exclusion zone and that access to overseas markets for this production area is restricted due to not being in the fruit fly free exclusion zone.

I acknowledge PIRSA's in kind support for technical advice and assistance. Mypolonga is geographically important to the Riverland horticulture industry and metropolitan growers, yet the government continues to leave the local Mypolonga horticulture industry hanging. I wish to remind the parliament that we had our first outbreak of fruit fly in the Riverland in 23 years only in January this year. There was a declaration of Queensland fruit fly outbreaks at Loxton and nearby Pyap after discovering 11 male Queensland fruit flies. This caused around 60 PIRSA staff to mount a comprehensive eradication and hygiene program in the two quarantines areas.

A 1.5 kilometre quarantine area and a 15 kilometre restricted area were imposed around both outbreaks and an extensive eradication program was conducted over 12 weeks. Organic fruit fly bait was applied to all properties where isolated fruit fly had been found in traps and comprehensive spraying and fruit stripping were carried out. PIRSA coordinated field teams in both the Loxton and Pyap quarantine areas following declaration of the outbreaks. This eradication and hygiene work continued until April and was successful in controlling the outbreak.

It has been stated by many that South Australia can be proud that we are the only state or territory on mainland Australia that remains fruit fly free. If fruit fly were to break out in Mypolonga it would not only decimate the community, but it is only a short distance away from entering the fruit fly exclusion zone—one might say a short flight.

The government invests about \$5 million a year to make sure that we can maintain that fruit fly status in the fruit fly exclusion zone, and it is a status that South Australia enjoys. To clean up the Riverland

outbreak cost about \$1 million of public money. Around \$500,000 was spent at Sellicks. We all know that prevention is better than cure, so the message must be told to all South Australians travelling into the Riverland and those travelling from interstate not to bring any fruit with them.

It has been announced by Plant Health Australia that there will be a national fruit fly advisory committee established. South Australia will be committing \$65,000 to that over two years. The government has put up \$3 million to build a sterile insect technology facility at Port Augusta, as well as come up with millions of dollars of research money over five years once the plant is up and running. I continue to speak regularly with local growers who seek increased support from the state government, so I urge the government to extend the fruit fly zone and offer the same protection to the growers in Mypolonga that is extended to their near neighbours in the Riverland.

Furthermore, we request that the Lower Murray Horticulture Action Committee be recognised as a representative body and is provided the same ongoing support as the South Australian Fruit Fly Action Group. Geographically, Mypolonga is important to the Riverland fruit fly exclusion zone; however, it is only regarded as a fruit fly free area. As stated in the past, Mypolonga growers have not received the same support as that provided to Riverland growers. Local growers believe the fruit fly exclusion zone status and level of protection is important for marketing and export reasons. Recently, a pomegranate grower exporting overseas was asked to supply a fruit fly free certificate; had they been in a fruit fly-free exclusion zone, this would be automatic.

I propose that the government makes necessary legislative changes to upgrade the Mypolonga area from fruit fly free to a fruit fly exclusion zone, and provide support similar to that afforded to Riverland growers. If an outbreak happens, the entire state's horticultural industry is at risk, and the government will have no-one else to blame except themselves.