

GMV Fruit Fly Area Wide Management Program Outlook February 2026

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Summary

Weather forecasts for the GMV suggest that Qff buildup may be reduced due to high maximum temperatures and low humidity for the week commencing 8 February 2026 although some rain is predicted at this time. Rainfall and associated increases in humidity is forecast for the week commencing 19 February. If this occurs, surviving Qff will mate and infest existing ripening and ripe fruit. Removal of fruit (or the whole plant if it is not wanted) now is an important measure in reducing future fruit fly problems. Longer term forecasts reveal a considerable chance of higher than normal maximum and minimum temperatures but no change in rainfall from the norm for late February and March. These weather conditions will not impact Qff survival and subsequent buildup significantly.

Trapping data reveal a slight slowing of Qff population buildup from December 2025 to early February 2026 in line with how weather impacts on the propensity of adult Qff to enter traps. If Qff population trends go the same way as the previous decade there will be an increase in Qff numbers during late February through to early May – unless appropriate Qff management strategies are put in place.

Qff numbers are still relatively high in some areas of the GMV especially in the towns of **Numurkah, Yarrawonga, Congupna, Strathmerton and Koonoomoo**. Currently mid-range populations are present in **Kaarimba, Tungamah, Cobram and Shepparton**.

Population reduction can be achieved by increasing fruit fly management that commenced in spring. Continued active management is necessary to avoid population build up in late summer and autumn when most of the GMV's crop ripen.

New trapping grid

A new Queensland fruit fly (Qff) trapping grid was installed throughout the Goulburn Murray Valley (GMV) around 18 December 2025. Trap inspectors deployed 249 new Lynfield traps charged with the Qff attractant, cue-lure, and the toxicant, malathion across 39 towns in 13 postcode areas. The area covered spreads from Cooma in the southwest to Koonoomoo in the northwest, across to Yarrawonga and through Tungamah and down to Shepparton, Toolamba and Mooropna.

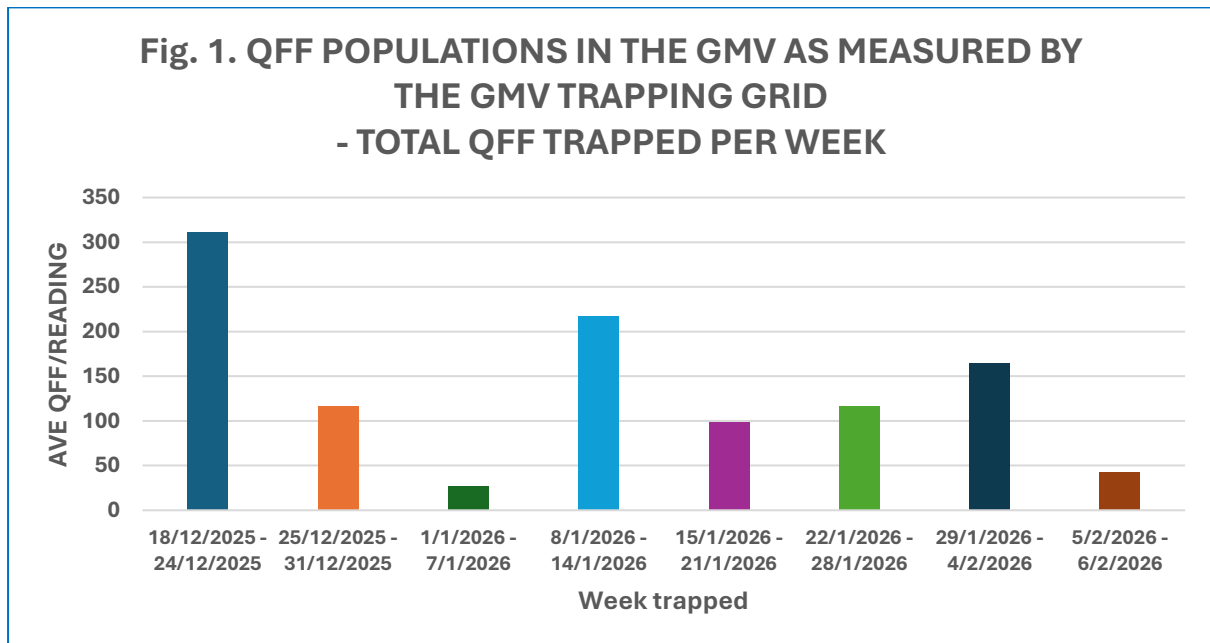
Traps were placed in rural (141 traps), peri-urban (56 traps) and urban (52 traps) locations.

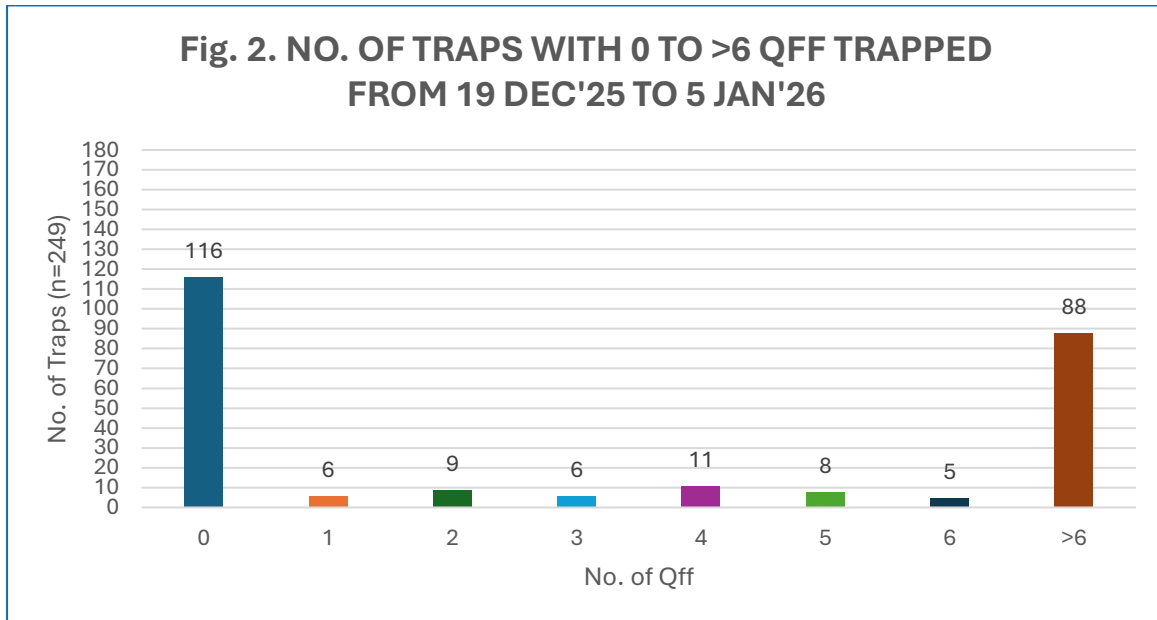
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Results

Traps were inspected between 19 December 2025 and 6 February 2026 – i.e. a period of just over 7 weeks. Qff populations fluctuated in that time (Fig. 1), probably due to weather impacts and, hopefully, the successful continuation and implementation of Qff control options.

A total of 1,094 adult Qff was trapped from a maximum of 249 traps in the 7 weeks since 19 December 2025. However, 116 of these traps (i.e. about 47% of available traps) did not trap any Qff (Fig. 2). This figure is down from last month (172 traps of 69% of available traps) suggesting that Qff are now spreading out further into the region. The number of traps with more than 6 Qff in them rose from 20 (8%) a month ago to the current 88 (35%). This implies that, currently, Qff has spread more widely across the GMV since January. Qff populations are now no longer concentrated in a relatively few locations.





Trends

Fig. 1 shows that, in total, Qff numbers trapped are on a downward trend in the 7 weeks from 18 December 2025. This trend has been apparent in most of the previous 10 years and is most likely due to adverse weather conditions (hot and dry). Unless there is significant impact on community led Qff management programs in the GMC this trend will reverse as the weather becomes milder, more humid and when more local fruit, especially those on commercial blocks, become ripe. The general trend from late February to early May is an upward trend resulting in Qff populations that are higher than those seen at present in early February.

Towns

Some towns have already shown high numbers of trapped Qff while others are still minimal. Table 1 shows that Qff populations are relatively high in Numurkah and Yarrawonga with 2 or more Qff per trap over the 7 week period from 19 December 2025 to 6 February 2026.

Of the 39 towns and nearby areas trapped for Qff, 9 towns trapped zero Qff by early February. This is lower than for the period up to early January where 21 towns trapped zero Qff. This is another indication of the spread of Qff from areas where Qff survive the winter and then, as the weather warms up, throughout the GMV. The next phase of Qff movement will be from urban and peri-urban areas into nearby areas with commercial horticulture.

Table 1. GMV towns ranked in descending order of Qff prevalence (data from traps (n=249) monitored from 19 Dec 2025 to 6 February 2026).

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RANK	AVE QFF/TRAP	TOWN
1	4.78	NUMURKAH
2	2.17	YARRAWONGA
3	1.38	CONGUPNA
4	1.24	STRATHMERTON
5	1.24	KOONOOMOO
6	1.00	KAARIMBA
7	1.00	TUNGAMAH
8	0.98	SHEPPARTON
9	0.98	COBRAM
10	0.79	KATAMATITE
11	0.67	MOORoopNA
12	0.51	MERRIGUM
13	0.46	KATUNGA
14	0.45	LEMNOS
15	0.34	TATURA
16	0.29	MUCKATAH
17	0.29	ZEERUST
18	0.28	INVERGORDON
19	0.22	WUNGHNU
20	0.13	BUNBARTHA
21	0.10	TATURA EAST
22	0.08	COBRAM EAST
23	0.07	ARDMONA
24	0.05	KIALLA
25	0.04	YARROWEYAH
26	0.04	TOOLAMBA
27	0.03	ORRVALE
28	0.03	COOMBOONA
29	0.02	SHEPPARTON EAST
30	0.01	GRAHAMVALE
31	0.00	COOMA
32	0.00	KIALLA EAST
33	0.00	MOORoopNA NORTH
34	0.00	MOORoopNA NORTH WEST
35	0.00	MUNDOONA
36	0.00	SHEPPARTON NORTH
37	0.00	TALLYGARoopNA
38	0.00	TOOLAMBA WEST
39	0.00	UNDERA

Hot spots

There are two methods of describing hot spots used here. They are based on:

1. Threat to home gardens and nearby commercial horticulture and
2. Threat to commercial crops

Threats to home gardens and nearby cropping were labelled as urgent (7 sites over 5 towns) or, worse, critical (0 sites) (Table 2).

Based on the Risk Matrix employed by Agriculture Victoria for the designation of Qff hot spots eleven trap sites satisfied high (10 sites over 6 towns) or, worse, very high (1 site) risks of Qff to commercial production (Table 3).

NOTE - Definition of a Qff Hotspot: Under current Qff populations, this early in the Qff season for the GMV, a trap site where more than 2 Qff are trapped per week is considered a Qff hotspot

Table 2. Urban hot spots (In alphabetical order)

COBRAM
CONGUPNA
MOORoopNA
NUMURKAH
SHEPPARTON

Table 3. Hot spots potentially affecting commercial crops

LOCATION	THREAT LEVEL
COBRAM	VERY HIGH
KAARIMBA	HIGH
KOONOOMOO	HIGH
LEMNOS	HIGH
MERRIGUM	HIGH
MOORoopNA	HIGH
SHEPPARTON	HIGH

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Table 2 shows that by early February 2026 some towns had larger Qff populations than others. This is reflected by the volume and type of Qff host plants in each location as well as the level of fruit fly management being employed there.

People living in all areas, especially those listed in Tables 2 and 3, should be vigilant in checking traps and for fruit infestation.

Tip: make sure your traps are charged with new lures and are not damaged. Otherwise replace. Also make sure that the traps are clear of foliage and branches and out of the sun in the hottest part of the day.

Tip: Make a habit of checking any nearby fruit for sting marks and/or infestation with maggots – even if the fruit is a roadside feral plant. If there are signs of infestation remove the fruit or the entire plant if you can.

Land use type

Urban trap sites are the main source for higher populations of Qff when compared to peri-urban and rural location (Fig. 3). As urban fruit ripens and drops, is harvested or is eaten by birds Qff will migrate from urban areas into peri-urban sites and then into commercial crops. This is currently occurring in the GMV as evidenced by the high Qff population pressure in peri-urban trap sites.

Peri-urban crops are now at higher risk of infestation. This means that nearby commercial horticulture is at an elevated risk of future infestation.

Table 3 shows several towns some whose peri-urbans trapping sites show elevated Qff presence. People managing gardens and orchards close to these areas should exercise Qff monitoring and control. These areas act as conduits to nearby commercial horticulture.

Table 3. Towns where peri-urban locations have significant Qff presence.

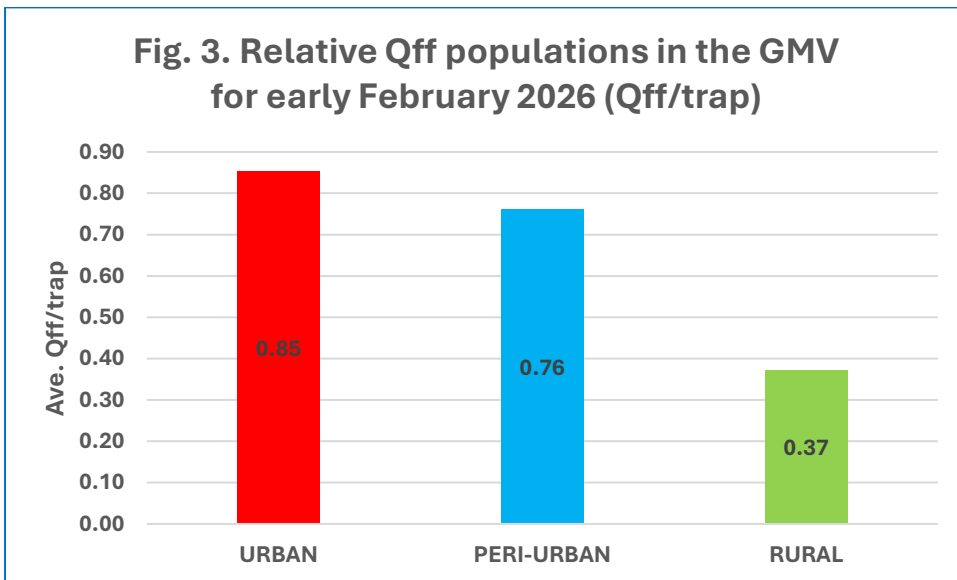
COBRAM
NUMURKAH
YARRAWONGA
CONGUPNA
KATAMATITE
MERRIGUM

Unusually high levels of Qff have also emerged in some rural locations (Table 4). These should be of high concern to growers in these areas. Growers should have implemented regular Qff monitoring and control.

Table 4. Towns where rural locations have significant Qff presence.

COBRAM
SHEPPARTON
MOOROOPNA

Tip: Urban gardeners should feel a responsibility to reduce Qff populations in their yards not only to produce good quality fruit in their own gardens but also to reduce the influx of Qff into other areas – especially commercial orchards.



Forecast

In the GMV, fruit fly numbers generally increase in severity from late November and peak in December with a second peak in the autumn. Qff builds up very rapidly in urban and peri-urban sites with a mixture of high amounts of untended fruit, garden irrigation and evergreen refuges while rural sites remain quite low as there is still not much ripe fruit around. Rural

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sites with high Qff numbers at this time are likely to have persistent Qff populations surviving in untended home gardens and untended non-commercial fruit trees on the block.

Tip: Even if your commercial crop is well-managed with respect to Qff you must ensure that all other fruiting plants in and near your orchard are well-managed (or removed), too. Qff will move from the old apricot tree in the fowl yard into the next ripening crop nearby.

As urban crops decline with harvest and bird predation in the summer Qff populations also decrease while peri-urban and rural increase. This reflects the movement of Qff from urban, through peri-urban and into rural areas from mid-summer to autumn. This occurs due to the “pull” of large volumes of commercial crops ripening in rural areas at this time.

It is expected that similar trends will occur during 2025/26. The size of the peaks and their timing will depend on weather and fruit fly management measures implemented during the spring and early summer.

Weather

Bureau of Meteorology <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/overview/summary/> - accessed 8 February 2026:

Long-range forecast overview

Issued: 5 February 2026

The long-range forecast for March to May shows:

- **Rainfall** is likely to be below average for much of the south.
- **Daytime temperatures** are very likely to be above average across Australia.
- **Overnight temperatures** are likely to very likely to be above average across much of Australia.

Forecast weather conditions for Shepparton for February/March 2026

(<https://www.visualcrossing.com/weather/weather-data-services> - accessed 8 February 2026) indicate less severe conditions experienced during January 2026. During February there will be slightly lower max. and min. temperatures, more rain and higher relative humidity than for the previous month. These are close to ideal conditions for Qff survival and population spread. This is especially problematic as commercial crops, in the main, are now beginning to ripen and therefore will become highly attractive to Qff infestation and consequent crop loss.

Surviving adult and immature Qff will welcome rainfall, lower temperatures and higher relative humidity in late February and into March. This cohort of Qff will serve as the

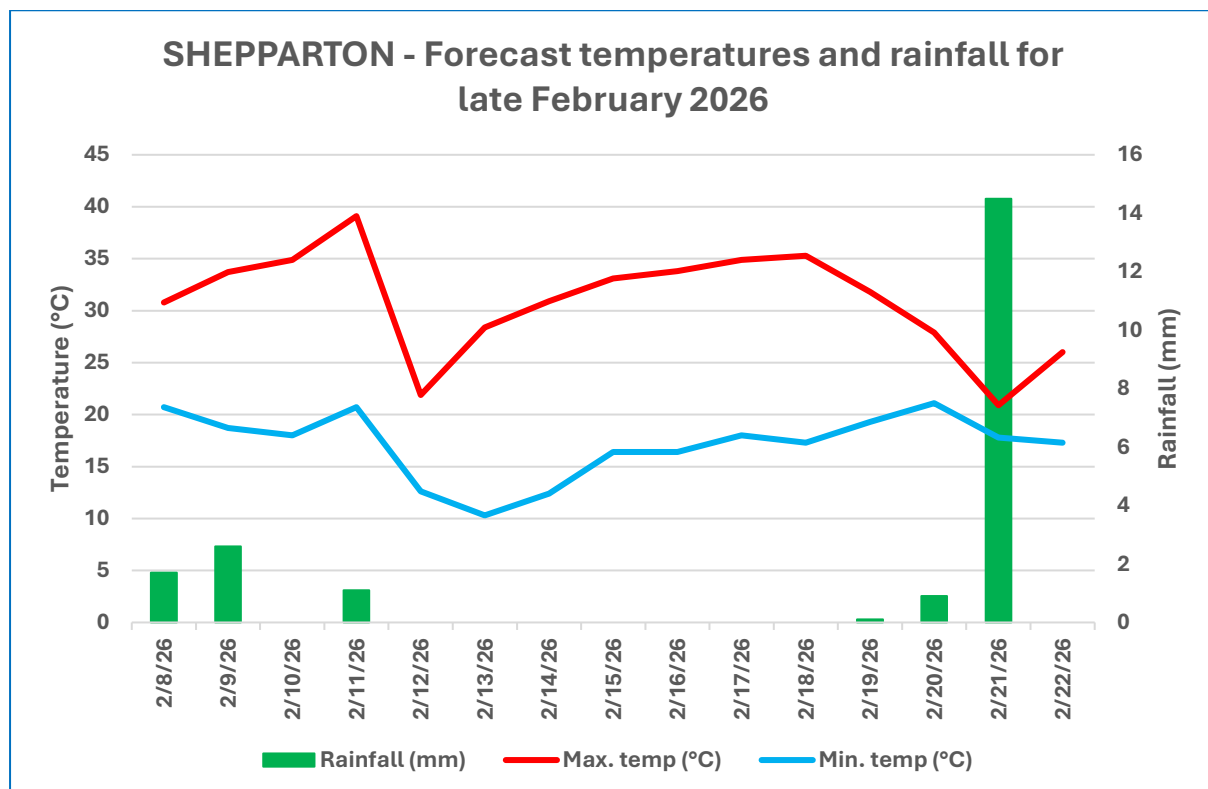
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inoculum for the next wave of Qff-based problems leading into autumn when much of the GMV's commercial horticulture ripens.

The Bureau of Meteorology forecasts (Figs 6, 7 & 8), for the GMV, higher than average maximum temperatures (65% to 70% chance of being higher than the average of 27°C to 30°C) and higher than average minimum temperatures (65% to 70% chance of being higher than the average of 12°C to 15°C) for March 2026. Rainfall is likely to be average (5mm to 10mm for February).

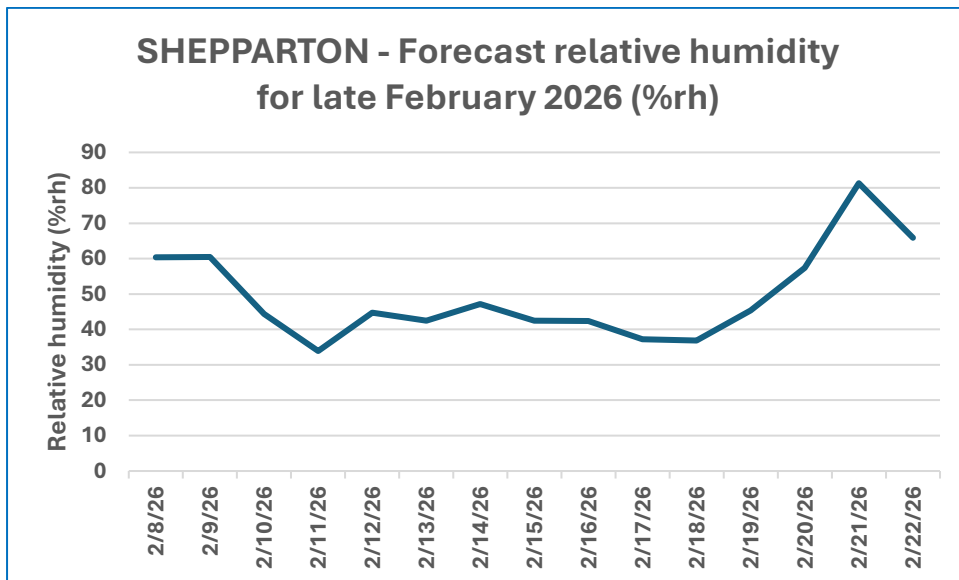
Vigorous area-wide management programs will enhance Qff control significantly if set in place.

Fig. 4. Actual and forecast temperatures for Shepparton for late February 2026
 (<https://www.visualcrossing.com/weather/weather-data-services> - accessed 8 February 2026).



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Fig. 5. Actual and forecast relative humidity and rainfall for Shepparton for January 2026 (<https://www.visualcrossing.com/weather/weather-data-services> - accessed 8 February 2026).



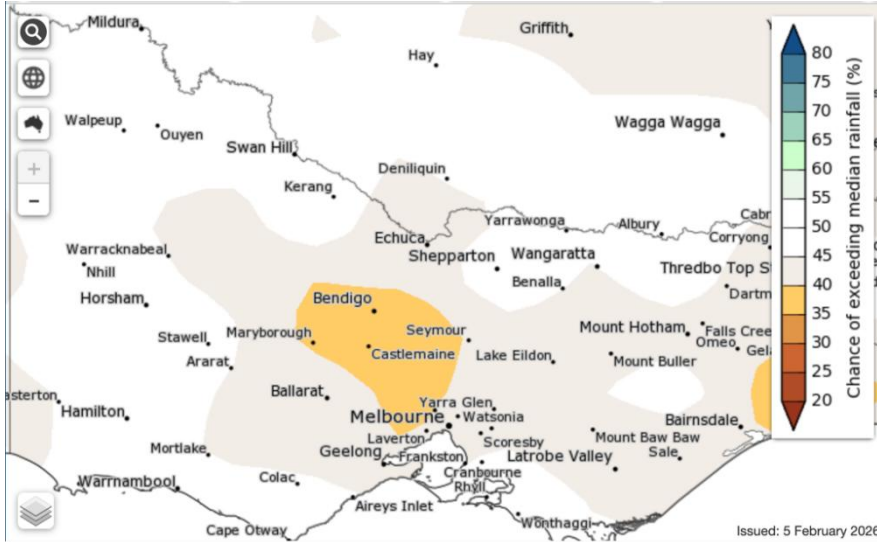


Fig. 6. Chance of above median rainfall for March 2026

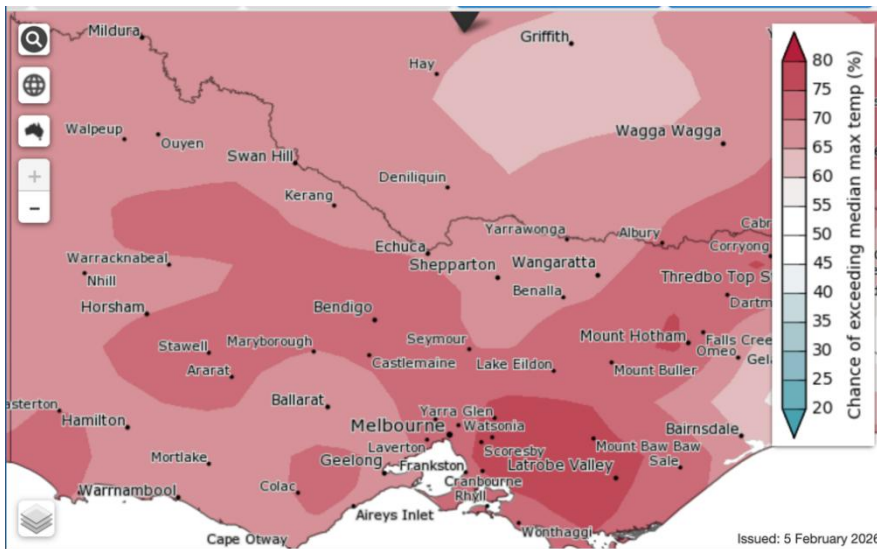


Fig. 7. Chance of above median maximum daily temperature for March 2026

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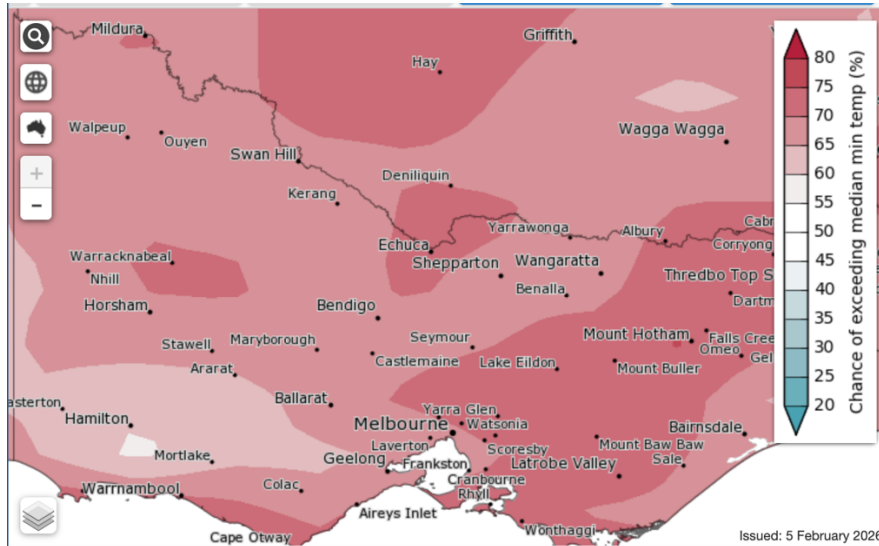


Fig. 8. Chance of above median minimum daily temperature for March 2026

For more information on fruit fly control and Area Wide Management strategies, visit www.fruitflycontrol.com.au or scan the QR code below.

