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## HORTICULTURE RESEARCH TO BOOST BUSHFIRE RECOVERY

Hort Innovation is announcing the start of a new national project focusing on delivering practical management options to horticultural industries recovering from bushfires.

Funded by Hort Innovation in partnership with the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries, the five-year project - *Developing management strategies to enhance the recovery of horticulture from bushfires* – will assess short and long-term effects of bushfires in apple orchards and other tree crops in New South Wales and South Australia.

Hort Innovation Research and Development Manager Adrian Hunt said, “The project is about equipping growers to deal with bushfire impacts on their crops. Researchers are examining fire damage to trees and fruit quality. We want to ensure growers can confidently and effectively respond to future fire events. It’s about the ability of businesses to bounce back, address any direct effect from fire damage and return to production of quality fruit as soon as possible.”

Research and demonstration sites will be established in Batlow, Bilpin and the Adelaide Hills orchards, which were directly affected by bushfire in the summer of 2019-2020.

NSW Department of Primary Industries Project Leader Bruno Holzapfel said understanding responses of fruit and trees to fire is essential to inform decisions on the best recovery options.

“Findings from these studies will be used to develop management options which are applicable to a full range of perennial horticultural crops.

“We aim to develop guidelines growers can use to apply the right management options to achieve full production levels and meet quality standards, as soon as possible after fire.”

The SA Research and Development Institute is focusing on work in the Adelaide Hills area and it’s Research Scientist Tim Pitt said, “Growers know that the decision to retain, renovate or replant can have long lasting impacts on their production efficiencies.”

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