

# Chapter 1

## Introduction and background

### Conduct of inquiry

1.1 On 12 December 2013, the Senate referred the following matter to the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee for inquiry and report by 25 June 2014:

The implications of the restriction on the use of Fenthion on Australia's horticultural industry, including:

- (a) the roles and responsibilities of relevant departments and agencies of Commonwealth, state and territory governments in relation to the regulation of pesticides and veterinary chemicals;
- (b) the short- and long-term impact of the decision on stakeholders;
- (c) the effectiveness and sustainability of chemicals other than Fenthion to manage fruit fly;
- (d) transition arrangements following the restriction on the use of Fenthion, including Area Wide Management; and
- (e) any related matters.

1.2 The inquiry was advertised in *The Australian* on 5 February 2014. The committee also wrote to key stakeholder groups, relevant government departments, organisations and individuals to invite submissions.

1.3 The committee received 30 submissions which are listed at Appendix 1. The submissions are also published on the committee's website.

1.4 The committee held two public hearings – in Perth on 3 February 2014 and in Loxton on 16 April 2014. The committee took evidence from a number of stakeholders, including industry bodies, state government representatives, agricultural businesses, local government bodies and individual growers. A list of witnesses who appeared at the hearings is at Appendix 2.

1.5 Prior to the Perth hearing, on 3 February 2014, the committee undertook a number of site visits in the Perth Hills including Roleystone, Karragullen, Pickering Brook and Carmel. The committee visited four orchards, and spoke to a number of growers, some of whom were using fenthion and others who were trialling the use of other chemicals and alternative methods to control fruit fly.

## **Structure of the report**

1.6 Chapter 2 outlines the roles and responsibilities of those departments and agencies (both Commonwealth and state) that play a part in the regulation of pesticides and veterinary chemicals in Australia.

1.7 Chapter 3 describes the current uses for fenthion and outlines the review process undertaken by the APVMA. Chapter 3 also outlines the evidence provided to the committee by stakeholders on the potential impacts of restricting (or banning) the use of fenthion, both on individual businesses and the horticultural industry as a whole.

1.8 Chapter 4 considers some of the possible alternatives to fenthion, and outlines stakeholders' views regarding their effectiveness and sustainability. The chapter also outlines possible transition arrangements to be put in place following the restriction (or complete ban) on the use of fenthion.

1.9 In addition to stakeholder's suggestions for possible transition arrangements, Chapter 4 also outlines stakeholders' views regarding the use of Area Wide Management (AWM) techniques, Sterile Insect Technology (SIT) and the implementation of the National Fruit Fly Strategy (NFFS).

## **Acknowledgements**

1.10 The committee acknowledges the many individuals and organisations that made contributions to the inquiry, both through providing submissions and appearing as witnesses to the inquiry.

## **Note on references**

1.11 References in this report are to individual submissions as received by the committee. The *Hansard* transcripts of the committee's hearings are available on the Parliament's website at [www.aph.gov.au](http://www.aph.gov.au). References to the *Hansard* throughout the report are to the proof transcript. Page numbers may vary between the proof and the official transcript.