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NEWS RELEASE

Growers vote supports Citrus Board

A growers' poll has approved another four-year term for the Murray Valley Citrus Board. Almost 260 of the eligible 362 citrus growers in the Murray Valley voted in the poll, with 58 per cent supporting another term.

Citrus growers in the region are required to vote every four years on whether the statutory provisions under which the board functions should be continued. The current term expires at the end of June and a vote on the board's future was conducted between May 28 and June 8.

Grower levies paid to the board fund a range of projects, including fruit fly awareness, eradication and market access programs.

Murray Valley Citrus Board Chair Jan Denham says the result is a vote of confidence in the board's activities, the relevance and value of which had been questioned by the national body Citrus Australia. Citrus Australia had been campaigning for the board to be abolished.

"It's now time for Murray Valley Citrus Board and Citrus Australia to work in close cooperation for the good of all citrus growers," said Jan Denham.

"I'm sure that growers want to see both bodies working constructively together to provide the best possible operating environment for the Australian citrus industry to prosper.

"The board is a strong supporter of the need for a national body, but equally it sees the need for growers to be represented at the regional level and to provide local services and programs that are funded from grower levies.

"The programs and services delivered by the board to Murray Valley citrus growers are valued by the majority of growers. They appreciate the work done on the ground and behind the scenes by the board's staff."

Ms Denham says the Murray Valley Citrus Board and Citrus Australia should meet soon to discuss future activities and respective functions.

A formal announcement on the poll is expected soon from Agriculture Minister Peter Walsh; the poll results are available on the website of the Victorian Electoral Commission.

ENQUIRIES:

Jan Denham 5027 9249 / 0429 331 396

Hugh Flett, CEO, 5051 0500 / 0428 283 348