



NEW SOUTH WALES

MEDIA RELEASE

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Ian Macdonald

Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Energy,
Minister for Mineral Resources, Minister for State Development

LOCUSTS PLAGUED BY HEAT WAVE

One of the country's most resilient pests, the Australian Plague Locust, is suffering under scorching NSW temperatures in the State's central and south-western regions making it hard for authorities and farmers to control them.

Minister for Primary Industries, Ian Macdonald, today said control efforts had almost ground to a halt in many parts as locusts sought refuge from 40 degree plus temperatures.

"Long, hot dry days are forcing locusts into the shade under trees and off the hot ground onto fence posts and stumps where it's impossible for farmers and authorities to treat them," Minister Macdonald.

"Like humans, the locusts are after some relief, but its making our job of controlling them very difficult at the moment.

"There are currently five control posts set up across the State including Forward Command Posts in the Wagga Wagga, Hume, Lachlan and Riverina districts.

"We have fixed wing aircraft and farmers with spray rigs on standby, waiting for the temperatures to fall and the locusts to band out in the open where they can be treated easily and effectively.

"The control campaign is now about treating this generation to protect the 2009 winter crop which would be threatened if the current generation is left untouched to lay millions of eggs."

Minister Macdonald said the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) had calculated that one square kilometre of medium to heavy density locusts could cause about \$850 damage per day eating through crops and pastures.

"So far there have been about 1100 reports of locusts as part of this second generation. We have treated about 21,000 hectares since the second generation hatched in mid December," he said.

"Vigilant reporting remains crucial to our success because we need to know where locusts are located and the impact of hot temperatures. Landholders are asked to report locusts to their local Livestock Health and Pest Authority."

Plague locust hot spots include Condobolin, Young, Molong, Gundagai, Forbes, Narrandera, Finley, Deniliquin and Griffith.