

MEDIA RELEASE

Shire of Esperance

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MOSQUITO WARNING FOR ESPERANCE

Recent rainfall and the onset of warmer weather are likely to trigger more mosquito activity and therefore a greater risk of mosquito-borne disease in Esperance. Mosquito traps have been set around Esperance and preliminary results have identified potentially harmful mosquitoes already breeding in the area.

Shire environmental health officers have been setting mosquito traps and conducting larvae sampling to collect baseline data. The traps will be set at dusk on a monthly basis for seven months to investigate mosquito numbers and the species that have the potential to carry viruses.

Preliminary results indicate the presence of *Aedes. Camptorhynchus*, a mosquito with the potential to infect people with Ross River Virus and Barmah Virus. This species in Esperance mainly breeds in the Lake Warden system but can travel up to 5 kms when assisted with spring northerly winds.

Esperance residents are encouraged to be alert and to take precautions to avoid being bitten by mosquitoes over the coming spring and summer months until water logging recedes. Esperance also lost some natural buffer following the bushfires last year which might affect some residents North East of the town and in rural areas.

The Shire is drafting a Mosquito Management Plan which will provide operational guidance on the control and management of seasonal mosquitoes and reduce the risk of mosquito-borne disease.

CEO Matthew Scott said "Not all mosquitoes are harmful, but now that we know there are some in the area with the potential to carry disease, it's important for us to be aware of greater mosquito activity as the weather warms up. There are several precautions we can take to minimise the risk including avoiding outdoor exposure at dusk and dawn, wearing protective clothing and removing any standing water around the house."

More information on mosquito borne diseases and precautionary measures can be found at: <http://www.healthywa.wa.gov.au/fightthebite>

Ends

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