

Shire of Broome  
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## **MEDIA RELEASE**



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For immediate release

## **Shire urges community to protect against mosquitoes**

Broome has recorded significantly higher numbers of human cases of Ross River Virus compared with the same period last year.

Mosquitoes now abundant in the Broome area have been confirmed as possible carriers of Ross River Virus, Barmah Forest Virus and Murray Valley Encephalitis.

Shire Broome Manager Health Services, Dimity Hargrave says the increased mosquito activity is believed to be caused by the recent heavy rain and high tides.

“Mosquitoes require ‘pools’ of water to go through their lifecycle. The recent wet weather is providing an abundance of naturally occurring pools around the fringe of town and recent high tides have inundated salt marsh mosquito breeding sites,” Dimity said.

“The Shire is monitoring all known breeding sites in and around town and treating these with larvicide. However, most of the mosquitoes we are encountering at the moment are breeding in wetland and tidal areas outside of the townsite. These mosquitoes are also capable of travelling up to 50km.

“This large breeding area and the inaccessibility of the environment means that treatment of the breeding sites is not possible. We expect the increased activity to last for some time, until the ‘pools’ of water naturally evaporate.

“The Shire is encouraging everyone to be alert and take measures to protect themselves against mosquito bites while mosquito activity is high.”

The following measures can be taken to protect yourself and your family:

### Personal Protection:

- Avoid outdoor exposure at dawn and dusk.
- Wear long, loose fitting, light coloured clothing when outdoors.
- Use personal repellents containing DEET or picaridin. Gels and lotions are the most effective. Natural products aren't as effective and need to be applied more frequently.

### Prevent further breeding in your backyard:

- Remove pooling water from areas such as play pools, pot plant drip trays, tarps, boats, tyres etc.
- Fill depressions to prevent water pooling.
- Keep ornamental ponds stocked with mosquito-eating fish eg goldfish, and keep margins free of vegetation.
- Keep swimming pools well chlorinated, filtered and free of dead leaves.

- Vent pipes on septic tank systems must be fitted with mosquito proof mesh. Seal all gaps and ensure leach drains are completely covered.
- Screen rainwater tanks with insect proof mesh, including inlet, overflow and inspection ports. Ensure any guttering does not hold water.
- Screen all doors and windows. If possible doors should be self-closing and open outwards.

More information on how to protect against possible infection can be obtained from the Shire's website at [www.broome.wa.gov.au](http://www.broome.wa.gov.au) or the Department of Health website: [www.public.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.public.health.wa.gov.au)

Information sheets and flyers are also available from the Shire's Administration building or by contacting the Environmental Health Officer at the Shire of Broome on 9191 3456.

**Ends**

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