

## Mosquitoes - Information Sheet

### Introduction

The Town's Mosquito Control Program is focused on locating and treating mosquito breeding sites in and around residential areas. Mosquitoes breed in stagnant water and can carry debilitating diseases such as Ross River virus. Health Services conduct routine trapping using dry ice (carbon dioxide) and light traps between October and March. Health Services also respond to enquiries and requests regarding increase of mosquito numbers in residential areas. Traps can be set in these areas to establish numbers and species which can provide information as to specific types of water bodies (natural or man-made) that should be further investigated.

### Breeding sites

While the main aim of the Mosquito Control Program is to treat areas such as natural bodies of water, tidal river pools, wet lands, swamp lands and road gullies, it has been established that some of the major sources of breeding around suburban areas are located on our own properties including:

- Gutters
- Swimming pools
- Ponds
- Septic Tanks
- Rain water Tanks
- Pot plant drip trays and
- Any other container that holds water.

### Check your property for potential breeding sources:

- Empty pot plant bases weekly or fill the base with sand to absorb water;
- Bromeliads and other water holding plants should be washed out weekly;
- Clean roof gutters out regularly and trim back trees which can block gutters;
- Ensure rainwater tank overflow pipes are screened and access covers fitted securely;
- Keep swimming pools maintained;
- Ensure plumbing and vents to septic tanks are screened;
- Birdbaths and ornamental ponds should be washed out weekly.
- Keep mosquito-eating fish, like gold fish and pygmy perch, in garden ponds and eliminate vegetation around the edges of the pond.

### Why do Health Services monitor mosquito numbers and species?

Although most mosquitoes will be considered a nuisance, entering houses and buzzing in your ear whilst searching for a blood meal, some species are known vectors of Ross River Virus (RRV) and Barmah Forest Virus (BFV). RRV and BFV can impact significantly on an infected persons lifestyle. Symptoms can vary between people, but can include painful and/or swollen joints, sore muscles, aching tendons, skin rashes, fever, tiredness, headaches and swollen lymph nodes. It

is Health Services aim to reduce annual reported cases of RRV and BFV within the Town by introducing sound management principles and practices.

### **Why do mosquitoes need a blood meal?**

It is only the adult female mosquito that requires a blood meal (protein) to produce eggs. Some mosquito species can fly up to 50km in search of a blood meal, most species average up to 2-5km. Mosquitoes are attracted to carbon dioxide (exhaled air), warmth, body odour, perspiration and light.

### **Our Mosquito Control Program**

The Town of Bassendean is vigilant in the management of mosquito breeding and has a monitoring and control program in place. This program includes:

- Routine monitoring of known salt marsh mosquito breeding sites;
- Regular trapping of adult mosquitoes to gauge numbers;
- Identification of mosquito species;
- Treatment of mosquito breeding on public land;
- Enforcement of local laws in relation to breeding on private property;
- Investigation of complaints about excessive breeding;
- Follow up questionnaires with residents who contract mosquito-borne diseases; and
- Health promotion activities.

### **Do Health Services spray?**

The Town's Health Service **does not** use sprays (adulticides) to control adult mosquito populations.

### **What can I do to protect myself and stop mosquitoes breeding around my home?**

- Reduce outdoor activities during high mosquito activity periods (dawn and dusk);
- Cover up by wearing light coloured long sleeve shirts and long pants that are loose fitting;
- Apply personal insect repellent containing DEET or Picaridin if possible;
- Ensure fly screens to doors and windows are fitted and maintained.

### **Do you need further information?**

If you require further information please contact the Town's Health Services on 9377 8000.