



# Media Release

22 July 2021

## **Ross River virus warning for Cockburn residents after Thomsons Lake detection**

Ross River virus (RRV) has been detected in mosquitoes at Thomsons Lake Nature Reserve in Beeliar prompting the City of Cockburn to issue a warning for residents to protect themselves against mosquito bites over coming months.

The virus was detected by the Department of Health in samples collected by the City's Environmental Health team in June as part of its regular mosquito monitoring program.

While the multiple detections are the first in the City for 2021, the timing is unusual, as mosquito and mosquito-borne virus activity is often reduced in the winter months.

City of Cockburn Acting Environmental Health Manager Patricia Orr said the unseasonal virus activity was likely the result of high levels of rainfall, coupled with above average temperatures which created conditions that favoured mosquito breeding.

"The only way to prevent being infected with a mosquito-borne disease like Ross River virus is to avoid being bitten in the first place, because there is currently no vaccine or specific treatment for RRV," Ms Orr said.

"People may not be thinking about protecting themselves from mosquitoes during our winter months but this is a timely reminder that we still need to be actively preventing mosquito bites.

"Mosquito management is being undertaken by the City in areas with a recognised risk of RRV activity, but it is not realistic to rely on mosquito management programs alone to control all mosquitoes.

"People living in or travelling in the City need to take their own precautions to avoid mosquito bites."

Symptoms of RRV can last for weeks to months, and include painful or swollen joints, sore muscles, skin rash, fever, fatigue and headaches.

The only way to diagnose the disease is by visiting your doctor and having a specific blood test.



# Media Release

Prevent mosquito bites with the following precautions:

- **Avoid** outdoor exposure, particularly at dawn and early evening when mosquitoes are more likely to bite
- **Cover up** with long, loose-fitting, light-coloured clothing when outdoors
- **Repel** by applying an effective personal repellent containing diethyltoluamide (DEET) or picaridin evenly to all areas of exposed skin and always follow the label instructions
- **Remove** water holding containers from around the home and garden to ensure mosquitoes do not breed in your own backyard, and
- **Screen** all household doors and windows, ensuring these screens are in good condition.

For more information about mosquito prevention visit the City's [website](#).

ENDS

For more information contact:  
Media and Communications Officer  
City of Cockburn  
T: 08 9411 3551  
E: [media@cockburn.wa.gov.au](mailto:media@cockburn.wa.gov.au)