

# MEDIA STATEMENT



Thursday, 22 September 2016

## **Residents urged to fight the bite**

Residents are being urged to play their part in reducing the risk of mosquito-borne disease with higher mosquito numbers expected this spring and summer.

Substantial rainfall, combined with increasing temperatures and high tides, are likely to favour increased breeding of mosquitoes, however the City of Bunbury, surrounding shires and the Department of Health are already working to reduce the risk.

The Leschenault CLAG (Contiguous Local Authority Group), a mosquito control partnership between the City and Shires of Harvey and Dardanup, has been granted \$37,400 in State funding that will allow for a runnels project to be carried out at Blunders in the Leschenault Inlet.

The project, which has Department of Environmental Regulation approval, will involve the clearing of sand and silt from runnels to allow better drainage and prevent the creation of an ideal mosquito breeding ground.

In past years, water was being trapped in runnels that are designed to move water from the mangroves area with normal tidal patterns, which in turn removes the mosquito breeding environment.

The funding will also go towards a new trailer, work bench and tools for the three local governments to use and the chemicals for treatments throughout the season.

A range of other strategies to monitor mosquito numbers, including trapping at key sites, water monitoring and the application of larvicides when required, will be carried out by City officers as in previous years.

City of Bunbury Environmental Health Manager Sarah Upton urged the public to heed the "Fight the Bite" message by taking precautions against mosquitoes during dusk and dawn, using insect repellent and wearing loose fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible.

"Last season was well below average for mosquitoes and mosquito-borne diseases due to lower than average tides and very little rainfall through spring and summer," Ms Upton said.

"This year, however, conditions are expected to favour breeding conditions and residents are urged to play their part in preventing mosquito bites."

Ms Upton said City officers would constantly monitor tidal movements and weather patterns and visit known breeding sites at least weekly to ensure a quick response to any spike in numbers.

"These measures are carried out regularly throughout the warmer months and they play a significant role in keeping mosquito numbers down," Ms Upton said.

Jamie Tatham, Communications Officer

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For more information on “Fight the Bite” and how to prevent mosquito bites visit <http://healthywa.wa.gov.au/Healthy-living/Prevent-mosquito-bites>

**ENDS**

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