Bad buzz over fever

Worries of mosquito egg boom

HEALTH REPORTER
Sasha Petrova

TENNANT Creek is ramping up its dengue mosquito elimination program after concerns that recent rain could have created a favourable environment for remaining eggs to hatch.

But the Northern Territory’s Department of Health says this is no cause for alarm as it is unlikely someone could locally acquire dengue fever.

While the dengue mosquito is present in the Territory, it can only transmit the fever from someone already infected with dengue.

“We have to make it clear that there is currently no dengue but this mosquito in Tennant Creek could potentially pick up the virus if a person from overseas or Queensland with dengue was to come to Tennant Creek,” she said.

“Our concern is that there are still a few receptacles around that might have eggs and with the rain, those eggs could potentially hatch.”

Since the dengue mosquito was detected in Tennant Creek in November 2011, the Health Department has rolled out a vigorous elimination program with an excess of 1200 properties visited and treated over six times.

“When the project began in early 2012, we found 146 properties in Tennant Creek with the dengue mosquito but by June 2013, we got it down to only one property,” said Ms Kurucz.

The current string of treatments will be the seventh in the program and Ms Kurucz said if no more mosquitoes are detected in round eight, the dengue mosquito will be declared as eliminated from Tennant Creek.

Dengue fever is characterised by high temperatures lasting five to seven days, severe frontal headaches, pain behind the eyes and muscle and joint pains. Other symptoms may include loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea, a blanching rash and sometimes minor bleeding.

Between 2002 and 2012 there have been 397 cases of dengue notified in the NT but these were acquired mostly in Indonesia or East Timor.

Anyone who finds water-filled containers with mosquito wrigglers is urged to contact the Department of Health team on 89624349 or 0427800043 so that an officer can get a sample to determine if the larvae are from the dengue mosquito.

Turf chief to greener pastures

AFTER four years of service as the chief executive of Alice Springs Turf Club, Terry Hooton is vacating the position.

He will be replaced by the highly experienced racing administrator Des Friedrich, who previously worked as CEO of Thoroughbred Racing NT and the Darwin Turf Club.

Prior to that, Friedrich held senior administrative roles in New Zealand racing, including head of the Hawkes Bay Racing Club.

For the past two years, he has served as a member of the Board of New Zealand Thoroughbred Racing.

He will assume his new role on January 27 next year, taking over from Mr Hooton.

“I am delighted to be appointed to the role and am looking forward to being involved with NT racing once again. My first Alice Springs Cup Carnival will come around in no time and I am relishing the challenge,” said Friedrich.

The Alice Springs Turf Club Committee extended thanks to Mr Hooton and wife Meg for their service.

Little Marven was born nine weeks early and it looks like he and loving mother Deanne will be spending Christmas in the neonatal ward of Alice Springs Hospital. The neonatal ward was the winner in this year’s Christmas decorations competition. Staff say they didn’t do it for the win but to make the place special for patients like Deanne and Marven.

Read the full story on this year’s colourful contest on Page 41.

Picture: JUSTIN BRIERTY

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