

## Media Release

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## Mosquito expert buzzing into Ballina

Did you know only female mosquitoes bite? It turns out not all mosquitoes are hunting you down for a drink, just the females. In fact, our blood is essential for them to lay eggs.

The reason we know this is because of Medical Entomologists like Dr Cameron Webb who spend much of their summers studying the mosquitoes found in Australia's wetlands.

As more people are living and visiting coastal regions, the impact of mosquitoes is being carefully considered by local authorities.

"Mosquitoes are a natural part of coastal wetlands. There are dozens of different species but only a few pose serious health concerns. Some are actually useful to the local environment, they're food for birds, bats, fish, and frogs but when mozzies are abundant, they can be a serious problem for residents and holiday makers to the region," said Dr Webb.

Ballina Shire Council has engaged Dr Webb to collaborate with their Public and Environmental Health Team to review and update the mosquito management provisions in Chapter 2 of the Ballina Shire Development Control Plan.

Dr Webb will visit the shire next week to study local mosquitoes and their habitats. The upto-date information he expects to gather will assist Council's current mosquito management options for new urban developments.

This review will ensure Council's mosquito management program is informed by best practice and leading science to minimise pest and public health risks associated with mosquitoes. Importantly, the review will provide guidance for Council Officers, planning consultants, entomologists and landscape architects on how the requirements can be met to achieve the best outcomes for our community.

Dr Webb is looking forward to the project. "It's exciting to be involved with the innovative work of Ballina Shire Council in developing strategic long-term approaches to minimising the impact of mosquitoes on the growing community in the region," he said.

Dr Webb is a Medical Entomologist at NSW Health Pathology. He specialises in the management of mosquitoes and mosquito-borne disease risk associated with natural, constructed, and rehabilitated wetlands. With over 20 years studying Australia's mosquitoes, his research has been widely published and presented at local and international scientific conferences.

During the warmer months, Council's Environmental Health Officers are actively involved in the NSW Health mosquito and arbovirus monitoring program. Data on local mosquitoes is provided to local health authorities to assist in managing mosquito borne risk.

Additionally, Council works with developers to ensure new residential areas are designed to minimise the exposure of residents to mosquitoes.

For more information on Dr Cameron Webb's research visit his Facebook page (search Dr Cameron Webb) or Council's Facebook page (search Ballina Shire Council).

For information on Council's mosquito monitoring program visit *ballina.nsw.gov.au* (search mosquito).

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