

# Living with Mosquitoes

- There are over 30 different types of mosquitoes in the Lower Hunter and Mid North Coast region, some are very common and include The Saltmarsh Mosquito, The Hexham Grey and The Common Banded Freshwater Mosquito.
- Mosquitoes are insects closely related to flies and midges.
- Mosquitoes have a head, thorax and abdomen, six legs and one pair of wings.
- Only female mosquitoes bite people as they need blood to help egg development.
- Males feed on honeydew and nectar, and remain close to their breeding site.
- Mosquitoes can lay their eggs as rafts on the water surface, or individually on moist soil or vegetation at water pools.
- The mosquito life cycle consists of egg, four larval stages, pupa and adult with adult mosquitoes living usually less than 3 weeks.
- Mosquitoes can develop from egg to adult in one week during the warmer months.
- Different mosquitoes are found in fresh, salt, clean and polluted water.
- Temporary and permanent breeding sites include: saltmarsh swamps, pools of water in creeks, tree holes, septic tanks, drainage pits, and household items such as jars, tins and pot plant saucers.
- Healthy wetlands are less likely to produce large numbers of mosquitoes as a balanced ecosystem will contain natural mosquito predators. However, mosquitoes are a natural part of most coastal ecosystems, providing food for birds, bats, fish, frogs and aquatic insects, and will be present in most wetlands.
- Some mosquitoes can travel over 20km from wetlands.
- Mosquitoes have piercing and sucking mouthparts comprised of various tiny components that allow them to suck in blood and spit out saliva that serves as an anticoagulant (stops blood from clotting).
- Mosquitoes select their host by detecting a mix of attractants including carbon dioxide, warmth, moisture and odours, and also by sight at close distances.
- Mosquitoes in the Lower Hunter and Mid North Coast region are capable of transmitting viruses including Ross River virus and Barmah Forest virus. Tropical pathogens including Malaria parasites and Dengue virus are not present in the local region.
- Ross River virus and Barmah Forest virus symptoms include joint pains, muscle tiredness, fatigue, fever and rash, and the symptoms can last from weeks to months.