

## MEDIA RELEASE | Japanese Encephalitis (JE) found in pig at St Pauls, Moa

Torres Strait Island Regional Council are encouraging all community members to follow animal management disease prevention strategies following the recent identification of Japanese Encephalitis (JE) in a pig at St Pauls, Moa.

Keeping **pigs 3km away** from the family home reduces health risks for family and community.

Queensland Health released a Media Statement stating *“This is the first detection of JE in an animal in the Torres Strait that we are aware of in recent years, which confirms there remains a low-level risk of human infection.”*

*“The JE virus is spread through mosquito bites. The mosquitoes pick up the virus from animals, especially pigs, and then go on to bite and infect humans.”*

To ensure community health and safety TSIRC are urging everyone (who hasn't already done so) to get their **JE vaccination** at their community health centre. Everyone can **avoid being bitten by mosquitos** by wearing clothing covering arms and legs and using mosquito repellent.

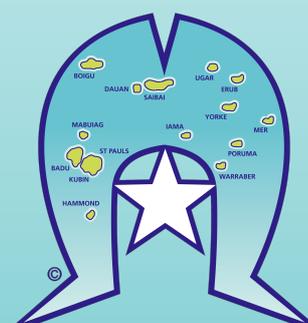
Mayor Fred Gela has questioned that “after the JE outbreak years ago, which claimed two lives and left a young man permanently disabled, why Queensland Health never provided a full on vaccination program to prevent JE. Knee-jerk reaction seems to be becoming the norm for this organisation.”

TSIRC and Queensland Health met with St Pauls community last Friday 24 June. Cr John Levi of St Pauls said “Our community are working with Council to relocate pigs. Another meeting is being held in two weeks, with St Pauls community, to develop a strategy to remove pigs and improve animal management practices for the community.”

Queensland Health have advised TSIRC that all residents and non residents ( age 12 months or over) who will be living or working on the outer islands of the Torres Strait for a cumulative total of 30 days or more during the wet season (Dec to May), are eligible for the vaccine through their local health centre.

Community members can speak directly with their local Environmental Health Worker about how to apply for a permit for their animals, to ensure community safety and wellbeing.

Dania Ahwang  
Chief Executive Office



**Torres Strait Island**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

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