Public health urges vigilance as first case of Zika virus in Queensland reported in Townsville

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A Kirwan resident has tested positive for Zika virus, an illness spread by mosquitoes.

Townsville Public Health Unit environmental health manager Damien Farrington said the resident acquired the illness in the Cook Islands where there is currently a known outbreak.

“Zika virus is similar to dengue and is spread by mosquitoes, including Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus, infected with the virus,” he said.

“The virus is a Flavivirus and is closely related to dengue and causes a similar illness,” he said.

“My messages to the community today are that people need to reduce breeding sites for mosquitoes in and around their homes and anyone with symptoms of this virus should see their GP.”

Mr Farrington said symptoms of Zika virus may include fever, headache, red eyes, rash, muscle aches, and joint pains.

Mr Farrington this was the first reported case of Zika virus in Queensland and only the second in Australia.

“We are alerting GPs and would ask for the community’s co-operation in cleaning up their homes and yards and removing potential mosquito-breeding sites.

“We have activated our normal vector-control protocols and we would encourage residents to continue to use measures to kill mosquitoes including coils, mozzie zappers and surface spray,” he said.

“Anyone who has returned from overseas and becomes ill is urged to see their GP,” he said.

Ends…

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