Reminder not to handle sick or injured bats

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service’s public health unit is reminding residents not to handle sick or injured bats.

Public health physician Dr Andrew Langley said the expected extreme temperatures over the weekend could result in bats suffering heat stress, falling from trees and dying.

“Some bats may appear to be dead but they’re not, and when people attempt to remove them they can be bitten or scratched,” Dr Langley said.

Australian bat lyssavirus (ABLV) is a virus that can be transmitted from bats to humans.

Dr Langley said ABLV infection in humans caused serious illness but could be prevented with appropriate treatment.

“The majority of exposures occur when people attempt to handle injured, sick or trapped bats,” he said.

“During the upcoming extreme heat conditions, if you find a bat it is very important not to touch the bat because of the risk of infection with ABLV.

“If anyone has handled a sick or dying bat and been bitten, scratched or had their eyes, nose or mouth exposed to bat saliva please contact the Sunshine Coast Public Health Unit on 5409 6600 during normal working hours; or 13 Health (13 43 25 84) after hours immediately for advice on treatment.

“If you have found a sick or injured bat, contact a local bat care organisation (search ‘bat care Sunshine Coast’),” Dr Langley said.

More information can be found in these fact sheets:

- Australian Bat Lyssavirus fact sheet
- Information For People Who Have Found A Sick Or Injured Bat