

Trapping mozzies at home to detect disease

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Credit: University of South Australia

Householders and school children are being urged to get behind a University of South Australia campaign to help keep the State free from nasty viruses and diseases.

UniSA is launching its [Mozzie Monitor project](#), asking people to take on the role of citizen scientists by capturing mosquitoes in a plastic trap each week so experts can identify the breeds and potential diseases they carry.

UniSA Associate Professor in Biology, Craig Williams, says the project is a great opportunity for people – young and old – to help keep South Australia free from viruses such as Dengue, Barmah Forest, Ross River and Zika.

"You may think that mosquitoes are annoying and itchy – and they are – but they also transmit diseases to people and animals, which is why surveillance of mosquitoes is vital for managing these risks," he says.

South Australia's current surveillance network is limited by costs, geography and resources, hence the call to recruit [citizen scientists](#) across the State for a worthy cause.

Mozzie Monitors who donate \$50 towards the project will be equipped with a simple, plastic trap that can be set up in any backyard, school or outdoor area to capture mosquitoes. Each week they will be asked to tip the collected [mosquitoes](#) onto a piece of paper, photograph them and email UniSA's experts the image for identification.

"If any new breeds are found we will send this information to the relevant authorities to investigate further. Some breeds of mosquito hitch a ride on planes and ships and we need your help with detecting these exotic intruders!" Assoc Prof Williams says.

The Mozzie Monitor project is being piloted in South Australia but the University aims to expand it across Australia.

For those itching to become a Mozzie Monitor and help keep South Australia free of disease, go to chuffed.org/project/mozzie-monitors for all the information.

Provided by University of South Australia

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