



## Dengue carrying mosquito could threaten the Cape

Researchers have warned that outbreaks of dengue fever could strike throughout the Cape and as far south as Melbourne if the Asian Tiger Mosquito invades Australia.

The mosquito is capable of transmitting up to 22 viruses, and Darwin's Menzies School of Health Research says there is growing concern that it will infiltrate the mainland.

Researcher Bart Currie, part of the Northern Territory's surveillance team for emerging diseases, told the ABC the pest has been established on the Torres Strait Islands for about two years and a national strategy is needed to ensure it does not reach the mainland.

"The time is now to deal with that, and prevent it getting to the mainland,"

he told the national broadcaster.

"From the experience that's happened in the Americas and in other parts of the world, this mosquito once it gets a foothold, it's going to be incredibly hard, if not impossible, to eradicate."

George Hapgood, who heads a Queensland Health program that is trying to eradicate the species from the Torres Strait Islands, says a long term funding commitment is needed.

"This is one of these things where the whole issues of Commonwealth versus state responsibility is possibly leading to less activity than may be ideal in order to prevent the potential future problem which will be unable to be dealt with once it gets out of hand," Mr Currie told the ABC.