

# How you can become a citizen scientist right here in Ipswich

Jodie Richter August 22, 2019



Ecologist John Gooderham leads a training workshop for the National Waterbug Blitz.

Ipswich residents could be at the forefront of discovery as the National Waterbug Blitz invites you to become a citizen scientist.

Scientists are asking locals to come along and help collect, identify and share data about waterbugs.

National Waterbug Blitz uses citizen science to collect information through waterbug surveys which can determine the health of the waterway.

Lead scientist and freshwater ecologist, John Gooderham said aquatic macro-invertebrates – known as “waterbugs” are good biological indicators of the state of freshwater systems.

“Some species, such as stoneflies and mayflies, are highly sensitive to pollution while others, including beetles and bloodworms, are more tolerant,” he said.

“The greater number and variety of the more sensitive bugs, the healthier the water is.”



*Dragonfly nymph – Telephlebiidae*



*Catching bugs in a waterway for the National Waterbug Blitz using a net.*

Project leader and Research Fellow from the Centre for e-Research and Digital Innovation (CeRDI) at Federation University Dr Birgita Hansen said not only is this type of research important, it's fun too.

"Anyone can put on a hat, sunscreen and a pair of gumboots, take a net and a bucket to their local creek and get scooping," Dr Hansen said.

“The Blitz is great for your health and it’s safe for the creatures involved as well. The method is non-harmful to the waterbugs; they all get to go back into the water safe and sound.”

After each National Waterbug Blitz, an interpretive annual report and map of river health across the nation will be created by freshwater ecology specialists

Springfield Lakes Nature Care received funding from Ipswich City Council to host a Waterbug Training Workshop for volunteers to learn the skills required to monitor local waterways using macro-invertebrates (waterbugs).

Participants will use a mix of basic tools (hand lens, ice-cube tray and plastic spoon) and The Waterbug App, to identify live waterbugs, and upload the information to a national waterbug database.

The free one day workshop is being held on Sunday, 25 August from 10am to 3pm.

[Register here.](#)

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