

# Stable flies plague residents

RESIDENTS in West Bullsbrook are calling on the City of Swan to take a more pro-active approach to monitoring and controlling stable flies, after what they claim is one of the worst outbreaks of the biting pests in years.

The flies are pestering stock, pets and people and there have been reports of people being bitten in Bullsbrook townsites for the first time.

As well as concerns about the number and distribution of the flies, there are allegations that local market gardeners have illegally transported and dumped raw poultry manure, which is banned for most of the year to prevent the breeding of the flies.

City of Swan chief executive officer Mike Foley said the allegations were being investigated.

If proven there would be prosecutions.

However, no firm evidence had been found to support the claims.

"The city has prosecuted a farming business in the past for using raw poultry manure and issued two warnings to farmers in recent weeks," he said.

"There are high numbers of all

types of flies around this year, not just stable flies. People are rightly concerned if there is an aggravating reason for the high numbers of stable flies, because when the flies are biting horses and other stock they tend to lose condition. People only occasionally get bitten."

However, the residents who are mostly affected disagree.

One of those residents, Kate Goh, said her young children could not play outside because the flies bit them constantly.

"The flies are very bad this year ... at times they are thick on the windows and hang around the doors. They are at their worst in the late afternoon and evening," Ms Goh said.

She said the Stable Fly Action Group in Gingin had approached the City of Swan and offered to meet with it to make a presentation on stable flies, but the offer had been declined.

"It would be great if the city would work closer with the action group on this problem," Ms Goh said.

"Much more progress would be made."

The group said poultry manures could be used by gardeners only for three months of the year – June, July and August.