

## Information for Trade Partners

### H1N1 Influenza 09 Outbreak – Update 25/06/2009

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The Australian Government has introduced a number of significant measures in light of the emergence of the H1N1 virus internationally.

#### Travel to Australia

Australia is 'open for business and it is 'business as usual'.

Without a doubt Australia, including Victoria, is a very safe place to visit. There are no travel restrictions in place within Australia.

Australia has one of the best health systems in the world to manage this new disease, which, fortunately is mild in most cases.

The Australian tourism industry is also well prepared to respond to H1N1 09 Influenza. The industry has implemented preventative and risk reduction strategies and visitors should feel confident about visiting Australia.

Measures that have been place at airports in response to the H1N1 outbreak internationally, including health declaration cards and thermal temperature screenings, will CEASE under the PROTECT phase.

In addition, health authorities advise there is no need to wear face masks in Australia and that one of the most effective ways to protect you, your friends and family from the flu (whether seasonal or pandemic) is to practise good personal hygiene. That includes regular washing of hands, covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing and staying at least one metre from anyone who is unwell.

The Australian Government has robust plans in place to deal with influenza outbreaks. Australia also has a large stockpile of anti-viral medications that can be used if needed. More information on these measures is available at [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au).

A hotline is also available for the public to receive health information about the outbreak of the H1N1 virus. **The number is 180 2007.**

#### About H1N1 in Australia

As of 25 June 2009, there are 3,000 confirmed cases of H1N1 Influenza in Australia since the first case was confirmed more than a month ago. This includes people who have been infected with the virus and have since recovered.



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To date there have been three fatalities, involving people who had serious underlying medical conditions and tested positive to H1N1 Influenza 09.

A 50-year-old woman suffering from life-threatening bone marrow cancer died in Melbourne yesterday (24 June) after being admitted with flu-like symptoms on Saturday. A test on Monday revealed she had the H1N1 virus.

A 35-year-old Western Victorian man died on 20 June in hospital with H1N1 Influenza 09. The man had a range of significant underlying medical problems, and is believed to have died from respiratory failure.

This follows the announcement last Friday (19 June) that a 26-year-old Indigenous man, who had a number of serious medical conditions and had tested positive to H1N1 Influenza 09, had died.

It is important to remember that in the vast majority of cases, H1N1 Influenza 09 is a mild illness which many people recover from without any medical treatment. However, for people with chronic medical conditions, influenza can be severe.

The national response to H1N1 09 is to now target and treat those most vulnerable to severe complications from this disease. It is important to remember that H1N1 Influenza 09 remains mild in the vast majority of cases, and most people make a rapid and full recovery.

All governments are focusing their efforts on minimising these cases as much as possible.

Australia has moved to a PROTECT phase to manage the outbreak of H1N1 Influenza 09 (Human Swine Influenza). The new phase recognises that the infection with H1N1 Influenza 09 is not as severe as originally envisaged when the Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza (AHMPPI) was written in 2008 and that this new disease is mild in most cases, severe in some and moderate overall.

PROTECT sits alongside CONTAIN and SUSTAIN phases with a greater focus on treating and caring for people in whom the disease may be severe including pregnant women and those with respiratory disease (asthma, COAD), heart disease, diabetes, renal disease, morbid obesity, and immunosuppression.

Other key elements of the PROTECT phase include:

- Widespread school closures or school exclusion for students who have travelled to areas of high prevalence are no longer appropriate and will not be continued on a national basis.
- Voluntary home isolation for those with mild disease with supportive treatment only, such as over the counter medication.
- Antivirals from the national or state medical stockpiles will be provided to those people with moderate or severe disease or whose underlying conditions, after appropriate clinical assessment, could make them vulnerable to severe infection. It is not appropriate to provide antivirals to their otherwise healthy household contacts, nor will those contacts be placed into quarantine.



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