



THE ADMINISTRATION OF NORFOLK ISLAND

MEDIA RELEASE

Norfolk remains on alert for Human Swine Influenza

The Norfolk Island Government Human Swine Influenza Task Force has met to consider the implications of the decision of Australian public health authorities to lower the alert level in mainland Australian states and territories regarding Human Swine 'Flu (Influenza A H1N1) to "Protect". As a consequence of that decision, there will be a reduction in measures to screen incoming passengers and an easing of quarantine arrangements. Details of the changed arrangements and answers to frequently asked questions are available from the Australian Government Health Emergency website at <http://www.healthemergency.gov.au/internet/healthemergency/publishing.nsf>

In considering how Norfolk Island should respond, the Task Force took into account that there has not been a single case of Influenza A (H1N1) 09 identified in Norfolk Island. In fact, pathology testing at the Norfolk Island Hospital since the first Swine 'Flu outbreak in Mexico has not identified a single case of Influenza A or B in Norfolk Island. In the event that such testing does identify Influenza A or B, samples will be sent for testing in Australia to determine whether there is a confirmed case of Human Swine Influenza.

The Task Force noted that there were only two avenues for persons to enter Norfolk Island – by air or by sea. It therefore decided to retain the existing measures for advising incoming passengers on what action to take if they exhibit flu-like symptoms, requiring the reporting of such passengers by incoming airline or ship operators and maintaining the agreed protocols for treatment and quarantine of persons with suspected or confirmed Human Swine Influenza.

The Task Force reiterated that everyone in the community should remain alert to the symptoms, which are similar to those of the regular 'flu including fever, cough, sore throat, aching body, headache, chills, fatigue, diarrhoea and vomiting. Anyone experiencing these symptoms should contact the Norfolk Island Hospital **by telephone** on 22091 in the first instance for further advice. Appointments will be arranged for anyone requiring further assessment or treatment. After assessment by a medical officer, antiviral treatments will be provided on prescription only where required. People with flu-like symptoms, especially fever and aching limbs, are requested to telephone first and **not to go straight to the hospital** as this could spread the infection to other persons.

The Norfolk Island Central School will continue to apply the policy recommended by the New South Wales Department of Education and Training. This means that students or staff who have travelled to an area where there have been confirmed cases of swine 'flu and have flu-like symptoms will be asked to remain in voluntary quarantine for a period of seven days after their return to Norfolk Island.

Further information on the Human Swine Flu is available on the Australian Government's national influenza hotline on ph 08- 84028833 which Norfolk Island residents can call free of charge, with regular information updates and reports available from the national health emergency website at www.healthemergency.gov.au.

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