



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

# Australia Pandemic Preparedness and Response

APEC Virtual Symposium

January 2006



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

**Population of 20 million**  
**11% over the age of 65 years**  
**4 million visitors a year**





Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

- Area 7.69 million km<sup>2</sup>
- 6% arable land (UK 22%)
- 2.5 people per km<sup>2</sup>
- (UK 244/km<sup>2</sup>)



Copyright ATC 1999



**40% population live  
in either  
Sydney or  
Melbourne**



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

# Australia

- Federal System
- Six states and two territories
  - State policy
  - Operational control
- Federal Government
  - Controls taxes
  - Determines national policy in consultation
  - Determines international policy



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

# Committees advising the Government

- **National Policy** - Australian Health Disaster management and Policy Committee (AHDMPAC)
- **Operational** - Communicable Disease Network of Australia (CDNA)
- **Expert** – National Influenza Pandemic Action Committee (NIPAC)



# Governance

- In an emergency in a State or Territory that State or Territory must ask for help if needed
- A National Emergency can be declared by the Governor General
- In an national emergency a task force would be formed headed by a federal agency – usually Prime Minister and Cabinet
- The Quarantine Act of 1908 gives the Chief Medical Officer sweeping powers in the event of an epidemic



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

# Australian Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza

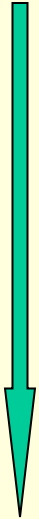
- Builds on previous plan
- Consistent with WHO phases
- Makes use of strong public health infrastructure
- Outlines border, antiviral, vaccine policies
- Released in June 2005
- Currently being revised - Gaps in detail

# Current pandemic alert level



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

Period	Phase	Description	Main strategy
Inter-pandemic	0	No animal infection (with subtype that has caused human disease in the past)	
	1	Animal infection: low human risk	
	2	Animal infection: substantial human risk	
Pandemic alert	3	<b>Human infection with novel subtype: no spread or at most rare instances</b>	
	4	Human infection with novel subtype: small clusters, limited human to human transmission	
	5	Human infection with novel subtype: larger clusters, substantial pandemic risk	
Pandemic	6	Pandemic: increased and sustained transmission in the general population	Maintenance of essential services





# Containment

## *Keeping it out*

- Border control
  - Screening to closure
- Antiviral policy
  - For prophylaxis
- Use of quarantine
  - home quarantine
  - Consideration of mass quarantine in Overseas 5 and 6



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

# Border Control Options

## Current

Pratique by  
exception

Screening baggage  
for chicken  
products

Health information  
sheet

Positive Pratique

Screening of select arrivals

Declaration forms,  
thermal scanning,  
nurse assessment,  
isolation and quarantine

Screening all arrivals

Divert flights from  
specific locations





# Containment

## *Stamping it out*

- Use of antivirals for prophylaxis
- Treatment of index case
- Use of home quarantine
- Emphasis on early detection (testing)
- May use internal border controls or ‘ring fencing’



# Maintenance of social function

## *Keep society functioning*

- Continuous antivirals
  - for health care workers
  - those at high risk of exposure
- Post exposure prophylaxis
  - for those at less risk
- Treatment if symptomatic
  - depends on effectiveness of antivirals
- Quarantine
  - Still advised, monitoring to cease
  - Ban on mass gatherings advised to continue



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

# Recovery

- Picking up the pieces
- Assisting schools and businesses back to normal
- Business Contingency plans now will help
- Mental wellbeing – use of local networks



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

# Government Response

– since 2003

- Upgrading of surveillance ability
- Upgrading of laboratory capacity
- Office of Health Protection
- Purchase of antivirals
- Development of pandemic vaccine contracts
- Development of communication packages
- Urgent research process



Australian Government  
Department of Health and Ageing

# National Incident Room (NIR)





# Surveillance

- On line secure system for notifiable diseases
  - Web based
  - Different modules
  - Ability to send documents, secure email system
- Outbreak Management System
  - Tested in food outbreaks
  - Available now – being improved
- Laboratory downloading in the next few years





Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

# Laboratory Capacity

- Improvements in security
- Training, stockpile of reagents
- Upgrading of WHO Collaborating Centre to BSL 3
- National BSL 4 high containment laboratory



# Anti-virals

- On soil stockpile for treatment of 22% of population or for prophylaxis for one million for 6 weeks
- To purchase additional 4 million courses (treat 44% of population)
- Oseltamivir (Tamiflu) and zanamivir (Relenza)
- Primary use will be for prophylaxis



# Vaccines

- Contracts with CSL Ltd (in Australia) and Sanofi Pasteur (France) to provide pandemic vaccine in the event of a pandemic
- CSL Ltd carrying out trials on H5N1 (2003 NIBSc 14) testing antigen dose – adjuvenated and non-adjuvenated
- Government will stockpile 2 million doses or sucrose stored antigen when available



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

# RESEARCH

- Diagnostic tests
- Vaccine Development and evaluation
- Anti-viral medication use and effectiveness
- Public Health Interventions
- Understanding behavioural response



# Exercises

- ‘Eleusis’ tested coordination between health and agriculture departments
  - Avian influenza outbreaks in several states
  - Several human cases
- Debriefs
  - Mainly issues with communication
  - Roles of committees
  - Tightening of some national policies needed
- Major exercise to test Pandemic Plan – late 2006



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

# Region

- 2004 – project to increase surveillance capacity particularly in agriculture through AusAID
- Discussion with countries to provide epidemiologists and planners
- Overall \$141million AUS to region
- Will provide assistance on request



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

Thank you