

Media release from Nicola Roxon, Minister for Health and Ageing

22 May 2009:

The Chief Medical Officer, Professor Jim Bishop, has today advised me that it is appropriate to raise Australia's pandemic alert level to CONTAIN.

This is effective immediately.

The raising of the alert level to CONTAIN recognises that Australia has a small number of swine flu cases and at least one human-to-human transmission. The aim of this phase is to contain the spread of the virus within Australia.

Steps already taken against swine flu - such as border protection measures and the identification and follow up of cases - will continue under this phase.

The CONTAIN phase assists the Government to respond appropriately as the situation evolves around the country.

Moving to CONTAIN does not mean implementing all measures in that phase under the plan.

It is important to remember that while the official alert level has been raised, there are still only a small number of confirmed cases in Australia, and the symptoms people are experiencing are relatively mild.

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. People who have the flu should not go to work or school or attend other public gatherings.

Further information call the Influenza Hotline on 180 2007 or visit www.healthemergency.gov.au