

Regarding the Swine Flu (from the University of Notre Dame Australia)

On 17 June 2009, the Federal Minister for Health and Ageing, Nicola Roxon, after consultation with State and Territory governments, announced that Australia has developed a new response phase to manage the outbreak of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 called PROTECT.

On the advice of the Chief Medical Officer, Professor Jim Bishop, and the Australian Health Protection Committee, a new pandemic phase has been created to guide the ongoing Australian response to the disease.

The new phase recognises that the infection with Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 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.

PROTECT is a measured, reasonable and proportionate health response to the risk that the infection poses to the Australian community. It is consistent with the message from the WHO when it lifted its Pandemic Alert to 6, that countries will need to adjust their responses to accommodate the knowledge we now have that this disease is moderate in most cases.

The PROTECT phase remains the government policy at this stage.