



# MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Health and Ageing

## Tony Abbott MHR

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### **Government fast tracks pandemic flu vaccine**

The Commonwealth Government is providing Australian pharmaceutical company CSL Ltd with \$4.93 million to fast track production of a pandemic influenza vaccine for Australia.

The funds will enable CSL to make necessary alterations to existing manufacturing capacity at its Melbourne plant and to register a pandemic vaccine regulatory dossier with the Therapeutic Goods Administration as soon as possible.

With this funding, CSL will be able to begin clinical trials of a prototype pandemic vaccine for the current H5N1 avian influenza strain in September this year, eight months earlier than currently planned. This will bring forward the completion of the entire development program by 18 months, with a proposed registration date of August 2006.

Australia is as ready as any country in the world to cope with an influenza pandemic. So far, the Commonwealth Government has provided funding of \$156.8 million over five years to protect Australians from potential outbreaks of human pandemic influenza and from the entry of bird flu into the country.

Australia has acquired one of world's largest stockpiles (on a per capita basis) of antiviral treatments for influenza. In the 2005-06 Federal Budget, the government provided \$23.2 million to establish an independent World Health Organisation Collaborating Centre on influenza.

**For more information call Mr Abbott's office on ph 02 6277 7220.**