



**THE HON PETER DUTTON MP  
MINISTER FOR HEALTH  
MINISTER FOR SPORT**

**STATEMENT**

11 September 2014

**Australia's World Class Preparedness Against Ebola**

Emergency and health workers on the Gold Coast should be praised for their professionalism in dealing with a suspected case of Ebola virus disease today.

Their actions showed Australia's preparedness and ability to deal with a health threat such as Ebola.

Queensland Health was quick to institute well-established protocols and processes to deal with the threat. The patient who had previously travelled to an Ebola affected country was isolated, overseen by infectious disease experts with necessary tests quickly initiated.

Queensland Health is awaiting the results of those tests, the patient remains isolated, with initial clinical assessments that it is exceedingly unlikely the patient has Ebola.

Today's incident though shows that our emergency services and hospitals are well trained, prepared and equipped to deal with such threats.

I want to commend the health workers on the Gold Coast for their professional approach.

I have been receiving regular updates from the Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer since the outbreak of Ebola in Africa.

I want to assure the Australian public that while the threat to Australia is low, we have contingencies in place and response plans in each of the States and Territories.

All States are working closely with the Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Professor Chris Baggoley who is coordinating Australia's preparedness for a case of Ebola.

Professor Baggoley is also a member of various World Health Organisation (WHO) emergency committees dealing with the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

As chair of the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) Professor Baggoley convenes weekly teleconferences with the States to discuss the Ebola outbreak and any current and specific local and national response arrangements.

State and Territory Chief Health Officers have issued specific guidance to their designated hospitals, paramedic and ambulance workforces, general practice, and state-based quarantine and medical staff so they can effectively isolate, test and treat a case of Ebola.

While Ebola is a very serious disease, it is not highly contagious. Ebola is not influenza. It is not caught through coughing or sneezing. It is only transmitted through contact with the bodily fluids of a symptomatic infected person or animal.

To assist the WHO effort to contain this disease in Western Africa the Australian Government is contributing \$1 million. This assistance is in addition to more than \$20 million Australia will contribute to the WHO in 2014-15 and another \$20 million Australia provides annually to support WHO's global health activities, including to respond to disease threats.

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