



THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP
Minister for Health and Ageing

MEDIA RELEASE

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H1N1 MEDICAL RESEARCH PROJECTS FAST-TRACKED

Today approval and funding was given to 41 Australian medical research projects that will help ensure the Australian Government's response to the evolving threat of H1N1 is based on the most up-to-date information available. The research will help the Government tailor its response to the spread and nature of the disease, and better equip the Government to help those most at risk from the disease.

\$7 million has been provided for these projects from the Government's peak health and medical research agency, the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

The projects cover research from the laboratory to the bedside, from patients to community health, with an emphasis on rapid results to benefit Australians and the rest of the world. The successful applicants are based throughout Australia.

Some of the research to be supported includes:

- understanding why some people get more severe flu than others;
- strategies for containment in rural, remote and Indigenous communities;
- improving the detection of swine flu;
- the best strategies for anti viral use;
- the prospects for swine flu to interact with other flu strains; and
- risks to children in hospitals.

NHMRC has fast-tracked a robust international peer review of applications for medical research grants to identify the critical projects that would best shed more light on H1N1.

The peer review process, which can typically take many months, was completed in little more than a week thanks to the involvement of highly-experienced researchers not only in Australia but also from countries including Singapore, New Zealand and the United States.

The quick, collaborative international response seeks to take advantage of the current Australian flu season to learn much more about the virus. The results will be shared internationally, and will be particularly valuable for those countries who are currently preparing for their coming flu season.

Researchers will report their findings at a symposium in December 2009 attended by the Chief Medical Officers of Australia and each state and territory, as well as public health experts.

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