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Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC)

Emergency Teleconference

Novel Coronavirus (2019 – nCoV)

Monday 20 January 2020 17:30 – 18:40AEDT

Outcomes

Members attending	
Prof Brendan Murphy	Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer
Prof Paul Kelly	A/g CMO
Dr Andrew Robertson	Chief Health Officer, Western Australia
A/Prof Nicola Spurrier	Chief Health Officer, South Australia
Dr Brett Sutton	Chief Health Officer, Victoria
Dr Angie Bone	A/g Deputy Chief Health Officer, Victoria
Dr Kerry Chant	Chief Health Officer, New South Wales
Dr Jeremy McAnulty	Executive Director, Health Protection, New South Wales
Dr Jeannette Young	Chief Health Officer, Queensland
Dr Mark Veitch	Chief Health Officer, Tasmania
Dr Hugh Heggie	Chief Health Officer, Northern Territory
A/Prof Dianne Stephens	Deputy Chief Health Officer, Northern Territory Medical Director, NCCTRC
Dr Kerryn Coleman	Chief Health Officer, Australian Capital Territory
A/Prof Dianne Stephens	Deputy Chief Health Officer, Northern Territory Medical Director, NCCTRC.
Vicki Krauss	Director, Centre for Disease Control, NT Department of Health.
Invited Experts	
Dr Sonya Bennett	Chair, Communicable Disease Network Australia
Dr Ben Howden	Chair, Public Health Laboratories Network
Dr Mike Catton	VIDRL
Prof Jodie McVernon	University of Melbourne
Prof James McCaw	University of Melbourne
Department of Health	
Ms Celia Street	First Assistant Secretary, Office of Health Protection
Ms Rhonda Owen	Assistant Secretary, Health Emergency Management Branch
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Prof Allison McMillan	FAS, Chief Nurse and Midwifery
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The CMO welcomed members provided an overview of the current situation in relation to the Novel Coronavirus that originated in Wuhan, China

Item 2 – Epidemiology and WHO update.

Ms Newton provided Members with the current data from the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission. At this stage WHO has advised there is limited human-to-human contact but noted there is not enough information available to provide a full profile of the disease.

Item 3 – CDNA Update

Dr Bennett reported on the meeting of CDNA earlier in the day and reiterated the need for more evidence and data to fully understand 2019 – nCoV. She noted that while none of the suspected cases in Australia have proved positive at this stage, they are still important for gathering further information.

Dr Bennett advised Members that CDNA has formed a small working group to work on developing a SoNG for 2019 – nCoV s47C

PHLN are also developing guidelines for consistency of testing.

Item 4 – List of Human Diseases.

Ms Owen advised Members that in order to have the 2019 – nCoV to be included on the Travellers with illness checklist (TIC) it needs to be on the list of human diseases (LHD). This will enable enhanced border measures as required. Members also discussed CDNA's recommendation that it be called a LHD with pandemic potential and the need to call a RAT Panel with the virus a Communicable Disease of national significance

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Action: Members endorsed 2019 – nCoV being listed as a Human Coronavirus with pandemic potential.

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Item 5. – International Research

Drs McVernon and McCaw gave Members advice on the thinking behind the modelling WHO currently doing and ongoing international research priorities; the export risks of the virus; and the impacts of Chinese New Year which traditionally involves a lot of travel both within China and internationally. A report on travel patterns from Canada was circulated to Members with meeting papers.

Item 6. – Border measures

Prof Murphy advised that while there were over 160 flights per day from China to Australia there were only three direct flights from Wuhan to Sydney. He gave an overview on current border measures internationally, including the US. He noted that some Asian countries were doing mass screening but Australia is maintaining the view that the current border measures are reasonable and appropriate.

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Mr Willis advised that following the endorsement by AHPPC to list the virus as an LHD, the TIC would be updated overnight and circulated by Agriculture tomorrow. He advised that direct flights would be met at the airport by biosecurity officers and passengers would be handed information in Mandarin and English about symptoms and appropriate action required – if they have existing symptoms or if symptoms develop at a later time. Agriculture has advised that it will take a few days to set up arrangements but that these would be in place by the arrival of the next direct flight on Thursday.

Other ports would have electronic signage alerting arriving travellers about the virus.

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Prof Murphy asked AHPPC to endorse the message that Australia does not support mass screening at the border as there is no evidence it is effective and there is not enough information about the virus to warrant it at this time.

He also noted that direct flights from Wuhan to Sydney would be targeted to receive information handouts and other ports would have electronic signage.

Action: Endorsed messaging suggested by Prof Murphy.

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Item 8. - Communications

Prof Murphy advised that he will be holding a media conference tomorrow to provide reassurance and update on the evolving situation. He will speak to the border measures and what people should do who experience symptoms.

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Item 10. – Laboratory Testing

Dr Catton provided Members with the current testing capability in Australian public health laboratories at s47G . An initial assay for sequencing was correct as being very like SARS but a specific test for this current virus will be required.

A document is being drafted on laboratory safety and transport safety will reflect current information available from US CDC and the WHO. Standard PC2 testing and standard transport protocols will be implemented.

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Meeting Closed: 13:00

The next meeting of AHPPC scheduled for **2 April 2020 in Melbourne.**

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