

## Australia officially declares itself H7 avian influenza free

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The Australian Government ensures a strong biosecurity system, and has officially declared the country free of high pathogenicity avian influenza (HPAI) in accordance with the World Organisation for Animal Health. In Victoria, New South Wales, and the Australian Capital Territory, the H7 HPAI outbreaks that occurred in 2024 have now been eradicated.

The full resumption of trade is dependent on regaining Australia's freedom from HPAI, where restrictions may remain in place after last year's outbreaks.

Australia's biosecurity system will receive more than \$1 billion in funding over four years from the Government. The funding will ensure that the agriculture industry and natural environment are protected from biosecurity threats.

The H7 HPAI has been contained and eradicated several times in Australia over the past 50 years. In spite of no new detections since July last year, this most recent eradication highlights the effectiveness of our national emergency animal disease response plans.

The eradication response highlights the importance of the partnership approach to biosecurity across all governments, industry, and other stakeholders, as this was Australia's largest avian disease incident to date.

A highly contagious and serious strain of H5 HPAI (known as H5 bird flu) is rapidly spreading globally through the movement of migratory wild birds. Australia does not have this strain.

Due to the increased threat of H5 bird flu, the Government is investing more than \$100 million to enhance national preparedness. In addition to strengthening surveillance, preparedness, and response capabilities, this will mitigate the impacts of a potential bird flu outbreak on Australian agriculture, the environment, and human health.

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Julie Collins MP says "Australia's national emergency animal disease response arrangements have contained and eradicated the recent outbreaks of H7 HPAI, allowing us to self-declare disease freedom to the World Organisation for Animal Health. In response to emergency animal disease outbreaks, governments and industry are really tuned in to the risks. All previous H7 HPAI outbreaks over the past 50 years have been successfully eradicated, illustrating the strength of our biosecurity system."

"But the rapid spread abroad of a highly contagious and serious H5 bird flu strain, which has killed not only birds but also mammal species across the globe, means we cannot be complacent. Hence we grant more than \$100 million to strengthen our surveillance, preparedness and response capability. Agriculture, environment and health sectors are working in partnership to collaboratively manage national biosecurity threats that impact all Australians" added Minister Julie Collins.