

# HIGH PATHOGENICITY AVIAN INFLUENZA

## Private veterinary practitioner preparedness toolkit

### Importance of HPAI

High Pathogenicity Avian Influenza (HPAI) is a national emergency animal disease (EAD) notifiable in all Australian states and territories. H5N1 clade 2.3.4.4b is a highly contagious variant of HPAI is circulating globally causing severe illness and mortality in a wider range of bird species, with known transfer to mammals and zoonotic risk to humans. **Australia is currently free of H5N1 HPAI** but faces an **elevated risk** of incursion via migratory and local wild birds.

First steps in a suspected case (wildlife or Pet bird/backyard poultry)

## BIRDS MUST NOT ENTER THE BUILDING

### Public Education: Phone Triage Checklist

#### For WILDLIFE

- 1. Avoid:** Do not touch or move the bird to prevent disease spread.
- 2. Record:** Note time, date, location, and clinical signs. Take photos/videos if safe, without handling.
- 3. Report:** Immediately contact the **Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) Hotline (1800 675 888) (24/7 availability)** as required under federal and state/territory legislation. **(note during an outbreak not all vets will be taking wildlife cases)**

#### For PET BIRDS and BACKYARD POULTRY

- 1. Be Aware:**  
All staff should be aware of clinical signs and practice good hygiene.
- 2. Calls from owners/ wildlife carers:**  
Discuss bird's history and clinical signs. Biosecurity and Infection Prevention Control (IPC) measures should be in place before presentation.
- 3. Isolate:**  
Inform owners to isolate any sick birds away from any others

## CLINICAL SIGNS

#### For WILDLIFE

Presence of dead birds, neurological signs (e.g. ataxia, tremors, seizures), swelling/cyanosis of head or legs, respiratory distress

#### For PET BIRDS and BACKYARD POULTRY

Sudden death, lethargy, inappetence, reduced egg production, swelling/cyanosis of head or legs, respiratory distress (e.g., nasal discharge, dyspnoea), neurological signs (e.g., tremors, ataxia, seizures), gastrointestinal issues (e.g., vomiting, diarrhoea) (note parrots may present with petechial haemorrhages)

# BIOSECURITY AND INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL MEASURES Checklist

**Preparedness is essential**, ensure robust biosecurity and IPC plans are in place to protect staff, clients, and animals.

## HOW TO PREPARE

### **Personal Protection Equipment PPE: Ensure you have in your practice**

- disposable suits
- gloves
- boot covers
- fit tested P2/N95 mask
- goggles

### **Biosecurity:** Plan for any presented cases, set up a dedicated outside/separate room isolation area (with separate ventilation). Ensure you have separate cleaning and disinfection equipment including biohazard waste bags, disposal facilities

### **Staff:** Brief all staff on protocols and procedures of a potential outbreak. Education on appropriate clinical signs, triage, biosecurity, reporting and stand down times

## WHAT TO DO IF A SUSPECT CASE IS PRESENTED

### **Call EAD Hotline (1800 675 888) (24/7 availability)**

### **PPE:** Use full PPE for all suspected cases (Practise hand hygiene, follow Don and Doff protocols)

### **Biosecurity:** Isolate outdoors or in a dedicated isolation room/area. Clean and disinfect equipment, surfaces after removing organic material. Place contaminated waste (organic and PPE) in a biohazard bag, secure with zip tie & perform hand hygiene ensure appropriate disposal. Ensure decontamination of any vehicles

### **Staff Management:** Designate staff for suspect cases, avoiding contact with other birds for 48hours post-exposure. **Seasonal flu vaccinations are recommended for staff. The vaccine does not protect against avian influenza but reduced the risk of co-infection**

**Public Education:** Instruct clients to phone before presenting birds use the phone triage checklist (Place HPAI poster up in practice)

## Resources:



Comprehensive resources are available on the **AVA HPAI webpage**.  
Use the QR code

# H5N1 BIRD FLU: HIGH PATHOGENICITY AVIAN INFLUENZA (HPAI)

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## WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE A SICK OR DEAD BIRD/GROUP OR HAVE SICK PET BIRD/POULTRY

### For WILDLIFE

**Avoid** Do not touch or move the bird to prevent disease spread.



**Record** Note time, date, location, and clinical signs. Take photos/videos if safe, without handling.



**Report** Immediately contact the **Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) Hotline (1800 675 888) (24/7 availability)** as required under federal and state/territory legislation. **(note during an outbreak not all vets will be taking wildlife cases)**



### For PET BIRDS and BACKYARD POULTRY

**Be Aware** Know the clinical signs and practice good hygiene.



**Call First** **DO NOT BRING TO THE PRACTICE** Discuss your bird's history and clinical signs with your vet before taking them to the clinic.



**Isolate** If you have any sick birds, isolate away from any others



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