Arafura Games gets tick of approval from health experts

The organisers of the Arafura Games have been given the all clear with health experts confident the event will not be affected by the occurrence of the Human Swine Influenza A strain in Mexico, North America and some other countries.

The Arafura Games, to be held in Darwin from 9-17 May 2009, is expected to attract a total of 5,000 attendees (competitors and officials) with 3000 of them from within Australia.

The Minister for Health, Kon Vatskalis, said the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) has been liaising closely with Arafura Games organisers and will continue to do so in the lead-up period and throughout the Games.

“The Northern Territory is well prepared to detect and treat any suspected cases of human swine flu,” said Mr Vatskalis.

“The CDC has been monitoring swine flu developments at the local, national and international levels and the NT is yet to have any confirmed cases.”

Arafura Games participants will be given specific information from the Department of Health on flu prevention tips and contacts for the Arafura Games Sports Medicine Clinic and the CDC.

Appropriate monitoring procedures are in place at all Australian entry points, including Darwin International Airport, to ensure that anyone who has been to an affected country and is experiencing flu-like symptoms will undergo a health check.

All NT hospital Emergency Departments and GPs have been alerted to notify of any patients who show flu-like symptoms and have travelled recently from the affected countries.

In the past week, three Darwin residents who had visited the USA and presented with flu-like symptoms after returning home have tested negative to Influenza A testing. Their health status is now clear.

For further information on Human Swine Influenza visit the link on the Department of Health and Families website at http://www.health.nt.gov.au/index.aspx

The Commonwealth Government’s Human Swine Flu telephone information line is 180 2007.

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