



Member Newsletter

March 2006

NATIONAL TOURISM INDUSTRY RESPONSE PLAN

After a joint NTA/Government sponsored seminar last December on the impact of Avian Bird Flu, the Government agreed to undertake testing of the National Tourism Incident Response Plan (NTIRP). The NTIRP sets out a response framework and actions for the Australian, and State and Territory Governments to pursue in cooperation with industry to ensure detailed and targeted responses can be put in place quickly. In doing so, the Plan covers three main elements: monitoring the incident, day to day management of the incident and ways of considering possible remedies for recovery.

The Plan recognizes the importance of close collaboration between government and industry when responding to major incidents. In developing the Plan, the Government has made a commitment to work closely with industry to ensure the best possible outcome for the Australian tourism industry.

On 8 and 9 March, the Government conducted a simulated activation of the NTIRP—called Exercise Polo—to test readiness for an outbreak of Avian Flu. This was a particularly pertinent exercise, given the forthcoming Commonwealth Games in Melbourne.

The simulation scenario was that a tourist visiting Australia from 'Ambrosia' (a mythical country to Australia's north west) had been diagnosed with possible Avian Influenza by Australian medical experts. The tourist had arrived at Sydney Airport on Friday 3 March, travelled by air to a regional airport and then by coach to a 5 star hotel in a wine producing region. From 3 March to 7 March, the tourist visited a number of local attractions and facilities, including wineries and restaurants.

Evaluation of the success of the plan is currently being carried out. A PDF copy of the NTIRP is available by clicking [here...](#)

Key issues raised were:

* The effect on International arrivals and expenditure if tourist access to Australia was suspended for tourists from a certain country for a period of: (a) 3 months and (b) 12 months;

* The downturn faced by Australia from its other international markets;

* The potential impact on domestic and regional tourism both in terms of visitation and its impact on tourism businesses and employment.

The simulation exercise was primarily undertaken to test communication channels between State/Commonwealth Governments and key industry groups.

BUSINESS PREPAREDNESS FOR AVIAN FLU

Another outcome of the joint NTA/Government sponsored industry seminar last year on Avian Flu was the commitment by the Government to develop a set of information and planning tools for small businesses in our industry in case of an outbreak of Avian Flu.

An industry stakeholders group meeting was held in Canberra on 8 March to assess the existing tools and provide feedback to Government on their effectiveness for our industry. Further work on the tools will be undertaken in the next few months.

IMPORTANT DATES

NTA Members' Meetings

- **Thursday, 6 April 2006**
- **Thursday, 10 August 2006**
- **Thursday, 7 December 2006 (with AGM to follow)**

AUSTRALIAN TOURISM AWARDS

The NTA was proud to have sponsored and managed the 2005 ATAs, called by many as "the best ever". We are hoping to continue our success in 2007 in NSW.

As part of our responsibilities, we have commenced a process of reviewing the award categories and the entry criteria. Some industry has been keen to see their own awards integrated more closely with the ATAs, now that they are back in the hands of the industry.

Stakeholder consultation will commence shortly, and members will be asked their views on a wide range of issues. A presentation of the issues will be given at the next NTA Members' Meeting in April.

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DIAGEO



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