



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

**THE HON. TONY ABBOTT MP, PRIME MINISTER
THE HON. PETER DUTTON MP, MINISTER FOR HEALTH**

NEW MEASURES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST EBOLA

The Commonwealth Government will increase Australia's \$18 million contribution to the response to Ebola in West Africa and strengthen preparations to detect and respond to a possible Ebola case in Australia.

A health service provider will be contracted to manage and run a 100-bed Ebola treatment facility in Sierra Leone, as part of the United Kingdom-led international efforts in that country. Discussions are underway with Aspen Medical, an Australian company, in this regard.

The Ebola treatment facility will be staffed mainly by local health care workers, supported by a contingent of international staff, including some Australian volunteers.

The Government will contribute up to \$20 million over the next eight months for this treatment facility.

The Government has said consistently that it would not deploy Australians to Ebola-affected countries without a credible plan for their treatment or medical evacuation.

In recent weeks, the Government has discussed the evolving situation, including measures to treat health workers, with the United Kingdom, the United States and others.

Australia has now received credible assurances for in-country treatment and medical evacuation for Australian volunteers who provide health care in West Africa.

It is only right that, as these measures become operational, we now make a further prudent and proportionate contribution.

In addition to this facility, Australia will provide \$2 million to RedR Australia to fund the deployment of technical experts to non-frontline roles in the United Nations Ebola response.

Consistent with the Government's long-standing priority to keep our country and our region safe from Ebola, we will also provide an initial package of up to \$2 million to train health officials in Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and the Pacific Islands to prepare for a potential Ebola outbreak.

Australia will also contribute to the development of a World Health Organisation regional response plan and a study on the risks and possible impacts of an Ebola outbreak in the region.

The Government will further enhance our border procedures to ensure the public is protected against the arrival of a possible case of Ebola.

New measures will include:

- updating inflight public health announcements and providing Ebola-specific advice to all travellers to Australia;
- requesting all travellers to Australia to provide 21-day traveller history declarations;
- strengthening screening procedures at our borders, including additional questioning and reprogramming of Smartgates;
- requiring passengers of concern to undertake new targeted temperature checking arrangements at the border; and
- ensuring Human Quarantine Officers are on-call at all times to attend airports to assess any travellers who present with a raised temperature.

The new domestic measures will be in place over the coming fortnight.

While Ebola is a serious disease, it is not highly contagious. The risk of an outbreak of Ebola in Australia remains low, including from returning aid workers.

The Commonwealth Government will continue to monitor the Ebola situation to ensure we are well prepared both overseas and at home.

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