

SSBA NEWSLETTER

Issue 25 - December 2015

Close of Consultation for the *Review of Biological Agents of Security Concern.*

The Department of Health has recently completed a review to assess the security risk and health impacts of biological agents of security concern with a view to determining if any changes are required to the List of Security Sensitive Biological Agents (SSBAs).

A *Consultation Report on the Review of Biological Agents of Security Concern* was released for comment on 9 October 2015 and the consultation period will close on **18 December 2015**.

The Consultation Report recommends:

- the removal of *Salmonella Typhi* and *Vibrio cholerae* from the List of SSBAs as these are deemed to no longer be a security concern to Australia;
- that nomenclature for the SSBA listing for Influenza viruses is altered to '*highly virulent*

Influenza virus, infecting humans' to reflect the commonly used terminology when referring to influenza viruses infecting humans; and

- alterations to the notes at the end of the List of SSBAs to increase clarity about when a highly virulent influenza strain is regulated

Health would like to thank everyone who has provided comment so far on the Consultation Report and recommendations. If you have not yet commented and would like to do so, you can download the Consultation Form from the SSBA website (www.health.gov.au/ssba) and email the completed form to ssba@health.gov.au.

Completed Consultation Forms must be received by close of business on **18 December 2015** for your comments to be considered prior to finalisation of the Report and recommendations.

Check out our web site: www.health.gov.au/SSBA
For enquires, please e-mail: ssba@health.gov.au

Inside this issue:

Close of consultations	1
Next Steps	1
Reminder—NHS	2
Check forms	
Christmas close	2
National Threat Advisory System	2
SSBA Mailing List	2

Consultation Report — what happens next?

The Minister for Health has the final authority to make changes to the List of SSBAs. Following consultations, a final report with recommendations will be presented to the Minister for her decision. If the Minister accepts the recommendations then Health will draft a new List of SSBAs removing *S. Typhi* and *V. cholerae*, altering the name for influenza and altering the notes associated with the List of SSBAs.

Once the new List of SSBAs is determined, the Department will publish the updated list on the Department of Health website at www.health.gov.au/ssba. A timeframe for when the new List of SSBAs will come into effect will also be published. For entities directly affected by any changes, Health will contact the Responsible or Contact Officers to discuss the changes and implementation timeframes.

If the Minister rejects some or all of the recommendations, then the rejected recommendations will not be implemented and the current regulatory requirements will remain in place.

SSBA Mailing List

Don't forget to update your contact details for the SSBA Mailing List.

The SSBA Regulatory Scheme uses this list to mail out the SSBA newsletter and other information about the scheme.

If you have any changes, or would like to be added to this list, please email your details to ssba@health.gov.au

Christmas Shut Down

The SSBA Regulatory Scheme team would like to wish everyone a safe and enjoyable Christmas and New Year.

The SSBA Regulatory Scheme staff will be unavailable to assist with inquiries from close of business on 24 December 2015 to 8.30 am (Canberra time) on 4 January 2016.

The Data Collection System will be operational during this period for reporting SSBA

handlings. DCS passwords can be reset at the DCS log in screen if necessary, with the new password sent to the nominated responsible or contact officer.

If you have an **emergency involving SSBA**s during the shutdown period, please call your local emergency services as appropriate or the National Security Hotline on 1800 123 400.

SSBA Helpdesk will be closed between 24 December 2015 and 4 January 2016

National Terrorism Threat Advisory System

The National Terrorism Threat Level is a scale of five levels that informs the public about the likelihood of an act of terrorism occurring in Australia.

On 26 November 2015, a new National Terrorism Threat Advisory System was introduced to replace the current National Terrorism Public Alert System.

The National Terrorism Threat Advisory System will inform Australians about the likelihood of an act of terrorism occurring in Australia and enable authorities, businesses and individuals to take appropriate measures for in regards to safety and security. The National Terrorism Threat Level also provides an indicator to government agencies enabling them to respond appropriately with national threat preparedness and response planning.

Any change to the National Terrorism Threat Level will be announced by the Prime Minister, the Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on Counter-Terrorism, the Director-General of ASIO, or the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator.

The new Advisory system:

- comprises a five tier, colour coded, National Terrorism Threat scale to inform the public about

the level of the terrorist threat facing the nation;

- includes public advice on the nature of the threat faced and what it means for them;
- will help inform the public so they can decide on what measures they can take to protect themselves, families and friends;
- guides national preparation and planning to protect against the threat of a terrorist incident; and
- rebalances the threat levels to reflect the current security environment that the country is facing.

Information about the new system and the current level can be found at <http://www.nationalsecurity.gov.au/threatlevel>.

Australia's current threat level is Probable.



NHS Checks

National Health Security Checks (NHS Checks) are conducted through AusCheck.

To request an NHS Check you will need to contact AusCheck directly, as the application form is not available on the AusCheck website.

AusCheck can be contacted on (02) 6141 2000 or AusCheck@ag.gov.au

Completed forms should be emailed to AusCheck for processing.

We welcome your feedback. If you would like to provide feedback or discuss any aspect of the SSBA Regulatory Scheme, please contact us at ssba@health.gov.au