



**THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP
MINISTER FOR HEALTH AND AGEING**

Dear General Practitioner,

The general practice community continues to play a vital role in the national response to pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza.

As the national response to the pandemic has unfolded through the DELAY, CONTAIN and now PROTECT phases, I have appreciated the critical role of general practice in this response. This role has not only included provision of expert care to your patients but also participation in state and national forums, including the GP Roundtable chaired by the Chief Medical Officer which have helped to ensure that the National response has been able to respond flexibly to the concerns and practical issues that have arisen.

We do not know what lies ahead in terms of the evolution of the pandemic, in particular as the Northern Hemisphere enters their flu season. The Chief Medical Officer, infectious disease experts and the view of the World Health Organisation, is unequivocal – vaccination is the best defence against the morbidity and mortality of this illness.

We are fortunate in Australia to have a world leader in influenza vaccine production, CSL Limited who has produced this vaccine in the same way as they have been producing Australia's seasonal influenza vaccines for over 40 years.

General practice is ideally placed to take a leading role in the rollout of the pandemic (H1N1) 2009 vaccination program.

I know general practitioners and practice nurses have participated very actively in the planning stages of the rollout, in particular through your peak bodies, and that you will provide clinical advice and vaccination services to Australians; those in the priority groups for vaccination and the population more broadly, over the coming months.

The Chief Medical Officer and my department will continue to work with you in this important public health initiative and will keep you informed on developments.

I want to thank you for your contribution to the national response to date. I am confident that together we are ensuring that the best possible health care, based on the best possible scientific advice, is being provided to the Australian public.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicola'.

NICOLA ROXON
30 September 2009