H5 Bird Flu – Communications Pack

Updated: 19 October



VICTORIA State Government | Energy, Environment and Climate Action

What’s included in this pack:

- Introduction
- Social media content
- Web content
- Signage
- Fact sheets and translated materials
- Frequently asked questions



Introduction

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) is coordinating Victoria's response to H5 bird flu.

Victoria is supporting national efforts to monitor and respond to this significant biosecurity threat.

This pack contains the most up-to-date information on the H5 bird flu response. Please use this content to ensure your content reflects the current situation in Victoria.

Updates are being provided as the situation evolves.

For the latest information about H5 bird flu visit **agriculture.vic.gov.au/birdflu**

We would greatly appreciate your help in sharing the available H5 bird flu information and resources with your communities and networks.

We have developed this communications pack to assist you in this process.

Please delete previous versions to make sure you have the most up-to-date content.

Social media content

Social media content:
- About H5 bird flu
- How to report H5 bird flu
- What happens when you make a report
- Seals and marine mammals
- Looking after your mental health
- Keeping your pets safe
- Boating and fishing
- Bushwalking
- Bird baths

Poultry biosecurity content:
- Keep pests away
- Sudden death
- Wild birds
- Cleaning boots
- Sharing eggs

Video content:
- What is H5 bird flu
- Human risk
- Risk to pets
- What is the response to sick birds
- Community reports



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About H5 bird flu

Suggested copy:

H5 bird flu has now been confirmed in wild birds along much of Victoria's coastline and some inland locations.

There have been no detections in poultry in Australia.

Avoid. Record. Report. If you see sick or dead birds or wildlife:

✅ avoid direct contact

✅ record the exact location and what you observed

✅ report it online

While injured wildlife may still need rescue and care, if birds or wildlife appear sick or dead, avoid contact and report it so trained responders can safely assess the situation.

Your report could help detect disease early and support our wildlife.

agriculture.vic.gov.au/birdflu



How to report H5 bird flu

Suggested copy:

H5 bird flu is present in wild birds in Victoria.

Every report helps us to understand where the H5 bird flu is in our state and monitor the spread.

Avoid. Record. Report. is a simple way you can help.

If you see sick or dead birds or wildlife:

✅ avoid direct contact
✅ record the exact location and what you observed
✅ report it online

Report:

✅ Clusters of five or more sick or dead birds anywhere in Victoria

✅ Even one dead or sick wild seabird, waterbird, shorebird, bird of prey or marine mammal

Injured wildlife may still need rescue and care. However, if a bird or wildlife appears sick or is found dead, avoid contact and report it so trained responders can assess the situation.

Your report could help detect disease early and support our wildlife.

🔗 agriculture.vic.gov.au/birdflu



What happens when you make a report

Suggested copy:

Reported sick or dead birds or wildlife? Here's what happens next 👇

Community reports play an important role in helping us monitor for signs of disease.

Each report we receive is reviewed and assessed using information such as the species, number of birds affected, location and disease risk.

Not all reports will lead to an investigation, collection or testing.

In areas such as the southwest coast, where the presence of H5 bird flu in crested terns is known, not every reported dead or sick crested tern will be sampled as we prioritise other species and regions where disease status is unknown.

Where further action is needed, we may contact you for more information or arrange collection and testing.

If you see sick or dead birds or wildlife, avoid contact, record its exact location and report it online.

You can also view reports on our online map and see where H5 bird flu has been detected.

Learn more and view the map: 🔗 agriculture.vic.gov.au/birdflu



Seals and marine mammals

Suggested copy:

Seals are an important part of Victoria's coastal landscape and our communities.

With H5 bird flu detected in seals in Victoria, it’s important not to touch sick, injured or dead seals and other marine mammals.

If you see a marine mammal that appears unwell:

✅ Stay at least 30 metres away. Keep children and pets clear.

✅ Do not touch, handle or attempt to move the animal

✅ Avoid disturbing groups of seals resting on beaches or rocks

✅ Report sick or dead wildlife

Limiting contact with potentially infected wildlife helps protect people, pets, livestock and other wildlife.

For more information, visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/birdflu



Looking after your mental health

Suggested copy:

It is normal for people to have strong emotional or physical reactions to distressing events.

Animal disease outbreaks affect different community members in different ways.

Seeing a sick, injured or dead animal may be a distressing event.

If you feel overwhelmed, it is important to ask for help. Encourage friends and family to seek help too, if needed.

Where to get help:

- talk to your general practitioner (GP)
- contact your local Mental Health & Wellbeing Hub
- contact your mental health specialist, such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, counsellor or social worker.

In an emergency where there is immediate risk of harm to a person, call Triple Zero (000). For 24-hour crisis support, call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

More information and resources (in English and 35 other languages) is available on the Better Health Channel Trauma - help for your reaction and recovery | Better Health Channel.



Keeping pets safe

Suggested copy:

While the risk of H5 bird flu in pets is extremely low, it's best to take precautions.

If you're out walking your dog or spending time outdoors:

✅Keep dogs on a lead in areas with native wildlife

✅ Don't allow pets to investigate or eat dead animals

✅Stop cats from roaming and hunting wildlife

These simple actions help protect pets, wildlife and curbs the spread of disease.

If you suspect H5 bird flu in birds, mammals, poultry or other captive birds, report it immediately by calling the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888 or to DEECA online.

Find out more at agriculture.vic.gov.au/birdflu

More information about responsible pet ownership and legal requirements: agriculture.vic.gov.au/animalwelfare



Boating and fishing

Suggested copy:

H5 bird flu has been detected in some Victorian wetlands.

Boating and fishing can continue as normal in most areas.

If dead wildlife has been found in the area recently, avoid activities that could expose you to contaminated water, including swimming, wading, fishing and boating.

✅ Avoid direct contact with sick or dead birds

✅ Wash your hands thoroughly after visiting areas where wild birds gather

✅ Supervise children and pets around affected areas

For more information, visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/birdflu



Bushwalking

Suggested copy:

Exploring Victoria's parks, forests and beaches? Help stop the spread of H5 bird flu and other pests and diseases.

Before and after your walk:

- ✅ Check your boots, clothing and gear for soil, seeds and plant material
- ✅ Clean equipment before visiting a new area
- ✅ Stay on designated tracks where possible
- ✅ Be on the lookout for sick wildlife or signs of disease
- ✅ Report sick or dead birds of any species in Victoria

Bushwalkers are often among the first people to spot changes in the environment, and are an important part of Victoria's biosecurity system.

By taking a few simple steps before you leave the trail or beach, you can help keep Victoria's natural places healthy and limit the spread of pests and diseases.

Report suspected H5 bird flu cases immediately to the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888 or to DEECA online.

For more information, visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/birdflu



Bird baths

Suggested copy:

If you have a bird bath in your backyard, you can help reduce the risk of spreading H5 bird flu by keeping it clean. 🐓

Regularly clean and disinfect bird baths, refresh the water often and wash your hands after handling them.

Where possible, keep pets away from bird baths and other places where wildlife gathers. 🐾

If you see sick or dead birds or wildlife:

✅ avoid direct contact
✅ record the exact location and what you observed
✅ report it online

🔗 agriculture.vic.gov.au/birdflu



Poultry biosecurity content



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Poultry biosecurity – keep pests away

Suggested copy:

Keep pests away from bird feed and housing 🐭 🐔

Reduce the risk by:

✅ Storing poultry feed in sealed containers

✅ Cleaning up feed spills promptly

✅ Keeping grass and weeds short around coops and runs

✅ Removing rubbish, unused equipment and other hiding places

✅ Checking regularly for signs of rodents or other pests

✅ Using safe pest control where needed

Less food and shelter for pests means less opportunity for disease to spread.

Find more practical biosecurity measures online:

agriculture.vic.gov.au/birdflu



Poultry biosecurity – sudden death

Suggested copy:

The most concerning bird flu sign? Sudden death ⚠️

Know your birds and trust your instincts.

If you notice:
🐔 Increased illness
🐔 Unusual deaths
🐔 Changes in behaviour
🐔 Signs that don't seem normal for your flock

Don't wait.

Early reporting helps protect your birds, neighbouring properties and Victoria's poultry industry.

Report suspected bird flu in poultry to the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888.

Read more about poultry biosecurity and disease reporting:
agriculture.vic.gov.au/birdflu



Poultry biosecurity – wild birds

Suggested copy:

Are wild birds sharing more than your feed and water? 🦆 🐔

Wild birds are a biosecurity risk for poultry owners.

Simple steps that can help reduce contact include:
✅ Keep poultry feed and water under cover
✅ Repair holes in sheds and bird housing
✅ Limit access of poultry to dams, ponds and waterways
✅ Clean up spilled feed promptly
✅ Ensure water supplies are clean and appropriately sanitised

Reducing wild bird access helps reduce disease risk.

Read more: agriculture.vic.gov.au/birdflu



Poultry biosecurity – clean boots

Suggested copy:

Your boots might be carrying more than dirt 🥾

Poultry diseases can spread on footwear, clothing and equipment.

Before going near your birds:
✅ Wear clean shoes or boots
✅ Wash or sanitise hands
✅ Use clean clothing if you've been around other birds
✅ Clean equipment before and after use
✅ Keep a separate pair of shoes or boots for your poultry area, if you can

Small habits can help reduce the risk of disease entering your flock.

Read more poultry biosecurity tips: agriculture.vic.gov.au/birdflu



Poultry biosecurity – sharing eggs

Suggested copy:

🥚 Sharing eggs with family and friends?

If you keep backyard chickens and give eggs to family, friends or neighbours, a few simple steps can help reduce the risk of spreading disease.

✅ Clean your coop regularly
✅ Discard cracked or heavily soiled eggs
✅ Cook eggs thoroughly before eating
✅ Keep a record of who you give eggs to and when

If you reuse egg cartons, keep them away from your birds. Using new cartons is best where possible.

Read more practical tips: agriculture.vic.gov.au/birdflu



Website content

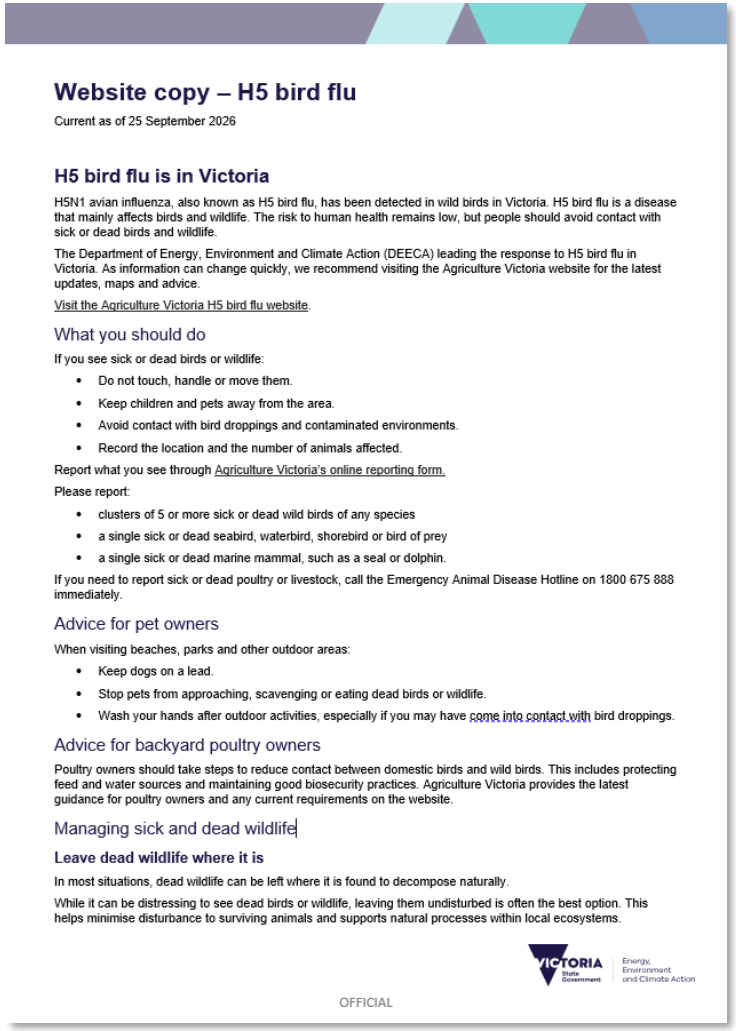


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Website content

The Agriculture Victoria website is the key source of information for H5 bird flu information in Victoria.

Recommended content for your website is included in the attachment which can be modified to include local information.



Website copy – H5 bird flu

Current as of 25 September 2026

H5 bird flu is in Victoria

H5N1 avian influenza, also known as H5 bird flu, has been detected in wild birds in Victoria. H5 bird flu is a disease that mainly affects birds and wildlife. The risk to human health remains low, but people should avoid contact with sick or dead birds and wildlife.

The Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) leading the response to H5 bird flu in Victoria. As information can change quickly, we recommend visiting the Agriculture Victoria website for the latest updates, maps and advice.

Visit the Agriculture Victoria H5 bird flu website.

What you should do

If you see sick or dead birds or wildlife:

- Do not touch, handle or move them.
- Keep children and pets away from the area.
- Avoid contact with bird droppings and contaminated environments.
- Record the location and the number of animals affected.

Report what you see through Agriculture Victoria's online reporting form.

Please report:

- clusters of 5 or more sick or dead wild birds of any species
- a single sick or dead seabird, waterbird, shorebird or bird of prey
- a single sick or dead marine mammal, such as a seal or dolphin.

If you need to report sick or dead poultry or livestock, call the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 888 immediately.

Advice for pet owners

When visiting beaches, parks and other outdoor areas:

- Keep dogs on a lead.
- Stop pets from approaching, scavenging or eating dead birds or wildlife.
- Wash your hands after outdoor activities, especially if you may have come into contact with bird droppings.

Advice for backyard poultry owners

Poultry owners should take steps to reduce contact between domestic birds and wild birds. This includes protecting feed and water sources and maintaining good biosecurity practices. Agriculture Victoria provides the latest guidance for poultry owners and any current requirements on the website.

Managing sick and dead wildlife

Leave dead wildlife where it is

In most situations, dead wildlife can be left where it is found to decompose naturally.

While it can be distressing to see dead birds or wildlife, leaving them undisturbed is often the best option. This helps minimise disturbance to surviving animals and supports natural processes within local ecosystems.

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Signage



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Print ready signs

Print ready signage files are included in the attachment which you can use in public spaces to encourage awareness in the community.

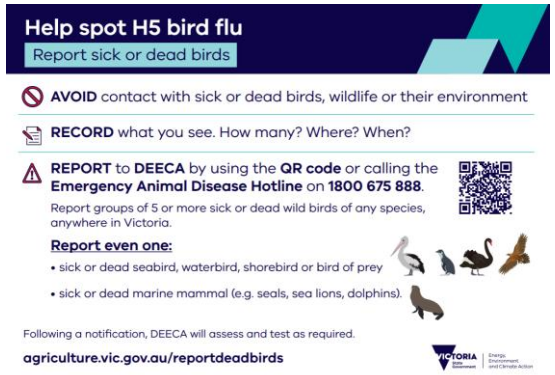
If you would prefer to use your own branding, you can copy the text and adjust the layout to suit your style guide.

We recommend keeping a log of where signage is installed.

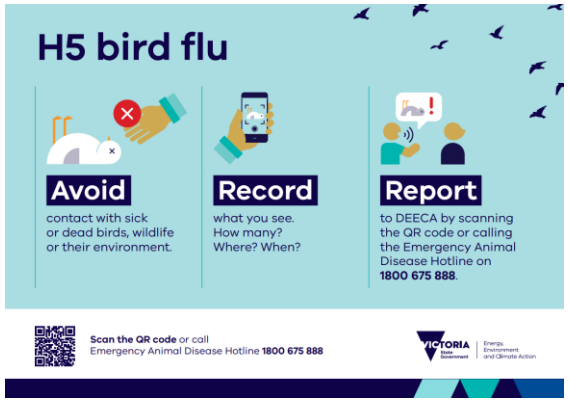
A note on public land closure:

Public land access is not routinely restricted when H5 bird flu is detected in wildlife, as closures are unlikely to prevent its spread.

It should only be considered where there is a clear operational need, with decisions based on evidence, risk and the effectiveness of less restrictive measures such as public information and community education.









Fact sheets and translated materials



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Fact sheets, post cards and translated materials

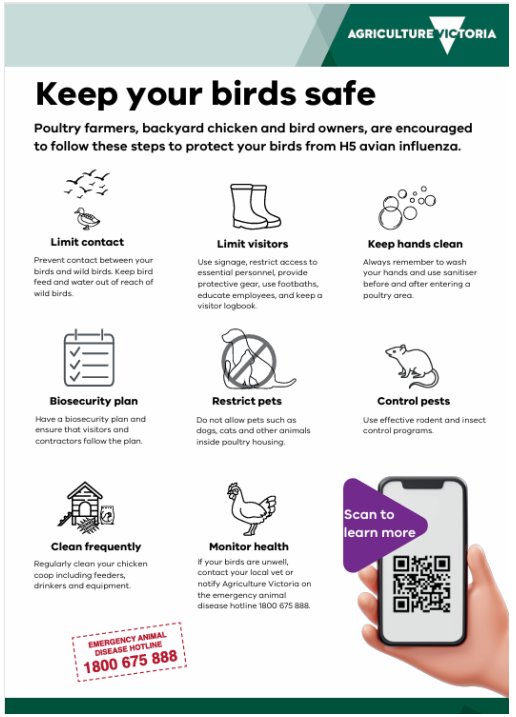
Fact sheets and post cards on a range of topics are included in the attachment.

You can also find translated information on the Australian Government's Bird Flu website.



This postcard is also available in Chinese, Greek, Punjabi and Vietnamese.





Frequently asked questions about H5 bird flu



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Frequently asked questions

Please share the latest FAQs with your customer service team members or anyone who works in a community-facing role to help with any queries.

Current situation

Has H5 bird flu been detected in Victoria?
Yes. H5 bird flu has been detected in wild birds in Victoria. The Agriculture Victoria website provides the latest information on detections and an interactive map showing reported cases.

What to do when you see sick or dead birds

What should I do if I find a dead bird?
Avoid touching or handling the bird. Keep children and pets away from the area, note the location and report it if it meets the reporting criteria.

For the latest reporting requirements, residents should visit the Agriculture Victoria website or contact the Emergency Animal Disease Hotline on 1800 675 88

What should I do if I see a sick bird?
Avoid contact with the bird and keep pets away from the area. If possible, note the location and any visible signs of illness, then report it through Agriculture Victoria's online form at agriculture.vic.gov.au/birdflu.

Should I try to rescue a sick bird?
No. People should avoid handling sick wildlife. Although it can be upsetting to see an animal in distress, reducing contact helps minimise stress on the animal and reduces the risk of spreading disease.

Why aren't sick birds being euthanised?
Government veterinarians do not routinely euthanise sick wild birds. Some birds may recover from infection, which can contribute to population recovery. Minimising disturbance to wildlife can also help reduce the spread of disease.

Can I remove a dead bird from my property?
If removal is necessary, you can do so after you have reported the bird to Agriculture Victoria and received a text message confirming that no further action is required. Avoid direct contact and wear appropriate protective equipment such as gloves, a mask and eye protection. The bird should be double-bagged and disposed of in a general household waste bin. There is detailed guidance on the Agriculture Victoria website.

Can I still feed wild birds?
Feeding wild birds and other wildlife can cause serious health issues. Native animals have adapted to a particular diet and altering or supplementing their diets with foods that they wouldn't otherwise eat can make them sick.

You can help local wildlife by planting a mix of local native trees and shrubs in your garden. Native plants provide food, shelter, and breeding opportunities for birds.

Why aren't dead birds being removed?
While seeing dead birds can be upsetting, they are not routinely removed from public spaces. Removing dead birds can disturb surviving wildlife, create additional stress for bird colonies and risk spreading the disease further through fly-offs. In most situations, leaving wildlife undisturbed is the best approach. Authorities monitor reports and will take action where needed, while residents can help by avoiding contact, keeping pets away and reporting sick or dead wildlife

Frequently asked questions

H5 bird flu in the community

Is it safe to visit beaches, parks and public spaces?
Yes. Beaches, parks and public spaces remain open unless otherwise advised by authorities. People can continue to enjoy these areas while taking sensible precautions around wildlife.

Is it safe for children to play outside?
Yes. Children can continue normal outdoor activities. Parents and carers should encourage children to avoid touching sick or dead birds and remind them to wash their hands after playing outside.

Is it safe to walk my dog on the beach or the local park?
Yes. People can continue to walk their dogs on beaches and in public areas. Dogs should be kept on a lead and prevented from approaching, scavenging or eating dead birds and wildlife.

Can I go fishing?
Yes. Recreational fishing can continue as normal. As a precaution, avoid contact with sick or dead birds and wildlife, practise good hand hygiene and report any sick or dead wildlife you encounter.

Information for pet owners

How can I protect my pets?
Keep pets away from sick or dead birds ands wildlife, keep dogs on a lead in public spaces, and prevent pets from scavenging for deceased birds. If your pet becomes unwell after contact with wildlife, contact your veterinarian for advice.

H5 bird flu and your health

Is H5 bird flu a risk to people?
The risk to the general public is considered low. Human infections are rare and are generally associated with close contact with infected birds, their droppings or contaminated environments.

Is it safe to eat chicken and eggs?
Yes. There is no food safety concern with properly handled and cooked poultry products. Residents should continue to follow normal food safety practices when handling and preparing food.

Is my drinking water safe?
There is currently no advice that H5 bird flu affects treated drinking water supplies. Residents should continue to follow normal health and hygiene practices and refer to health authorities for the latest information.

Can I get H5 bird flu from walking near birds?
Simply being near birds does not generally pose a risk. The main concern is direct contact with infected birds, their droppings or contaminated environments. People should avoid touching sick or dead birds and should wash their hands after outdoor activities.

Where can I get health advice?
For information about bird flu and human health, visit the Victorian Department of Health website or speak with their GP.

Frequently asked questions

Information for poultry and bird owners

H5 bird flu has not been detected in poultry in Australia.

Should I be concerned about H5 bird flu and my chickens?
H5 bird flu mainly affects birds, including backyard poultry. If you keep birds, now is a good time to review your biosecurity practices and take steps to reduce contact between your birds and wild birds. For the latest advice, visit the Agriculture Victoria website.

Is there a poultry control order in Victoria?

No. Temporary requirements for poultry producers in metropolitan Melbourne and specified coastal and adjacent areas ended on 16 October 2026. Forecast hotter than average summer temperatures, together with animal welfare considerations support ending the temporary requirements.

All poultry producers are strongly encouraged to continue using practical measures to prevent and minimise contact between poultry and wild birds. There have been no detections of H5 bird flu in Australian poultry or livestock, however the risk remains as detections occur in wildlife across the state.

Do I need a Property Identification Code (PIC)?
If you keep 50 or more poultry, you must have a Property Identification Code (PIC).A PIC helps Agriculture Victoria contact livestock owners during animal disease outbreaks and other emergencies.

How can I protect my birds?
The best way to protect your birds is to keep them away from wild birds and follow good biosecurity practices.

You can:

- keep feed and water covered
- stop wild birds accessing bird enclosures
- keep sheds, aviaries and equipment clean
- keep pets out of poultry areas
- wash your hands after handling birds or eggs
- clean your footwear before entering bird enclosures.

For more Information, visit the Agriculture Victoria website.

Can I still give eggs to family and friends?
Yes. If you share eggs, it's a good idea to keep a record of who received them and when. You should also collect eggs daily, discard any that are cracked or heavily soiled, refrigerate them promptly and cook them thoroughly before eating.

Can I still sell eggs?
Yes, but anyone selling eggs for human consumption must comply with the Victorian egg production standards and any additional Agriculture Victoria requirements that may apply.

Thank you for your support

For more information about H5 bird flu, visit agriculture.vic.gov.au/bird flu

For further information or feedback on this communications pack, contact SBOC.publicinformation@agriculture.vic.gov.au

For any media enquiries, please contact SBOC.media@agriculture.vic.gov.au

