

Australia swine flu count soars near 900: official

June 4 2009

Australia's swine flu tally rocketed by more than a third on Thursday to nearly 900 as officials scrambled to contain the rapidly spreading virus.

The latest official figures revealed 876 confirmed cases of A(H1N1) [influenza](#) in the world's fourth most affected country -- up from 633 a day earlier and single figures just a fortnight ago.

Other Australian states ordered children returning from [flu](#) hotspot Victoria to be quarantined, earning the wrath of Melbourne officials.

"Swine flu is an international and national phenomenon and that's the fact of the matter," Victoria premier John Brumby said.

"Frankly I thought the statements made by particularly the New South Wales government were just silly and extreme."

The island state of Tasmania on Wednesday joined Queensland, New South Wales and South [Australia](#) in ordering that children arriving from Victoria be quarantined for up to seven days to reduce the threat of swine flu.

"The exclusion will apply for seven days from departure from Victoria," said Tasmania's Director of Public Health Chrissie Pickin.

"It applies to all children returning from Victoria and other affected areas, whether or not they have a flu-like illness," she said.

Victoria, which has 752 cases or about 86 percent of the national total, raised its alert level on Wednesday and has shuttered 14 schools.

State Health Minister Daniel Andrews insisted his government's moves to limit the spread of the disease were working, despite the large number of infections.

"There is no doubt, and the experts have told us, that without the things already put in place, many, many more people -- much faster -- would have had H1N1," he said.

Swine flu has now spread to 66 countries with 19,273 people known to have been infected since the disease was first uncovered in April, the [World Health Organization](#) said Wednesday.

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