

# AFTRS

Australian Film Television  
and Radio School

## PANDEMIC PLAN

First approved October 2006 Reviewed and

approved by

Chief Executive Officer August 2011

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Part 1 – The Plan</b>	
1.1 Why have a Pandemic Plan?	4
1.2 Who will the Plan apply to?	4
1.3 Who approves the Plan?	5
1.4 When will this Plan be reviewed?	5
<b>Part 2 – Influenza Pandemic</b>	
2.1 What is an influenza pandemic?	6
2.2 What are the symptoms of flu?	6
2.3 How is flu transmitted?	6
<b>Part 3 – Phases</b>	
3.1 What are the key considerations of the Plan?	7
3.2 How do we assess the status of the pandemic?	7
3.3 What is the pandemic cycle?	7
<b>Part 4 – Essential Services</b>	
4.1 What essential services does AFTRS provide?	8
4.2 What are AFTRS' functions?	8
4.3 Which staff are essential for maintaining minimum levels of service?	9
4.4 Who will be responsible for implementing the Plan?	9
<b>Part 5 – AFTRS Annual Cycle</b>	11
<b>Part 6 – Communication</b>	
6.1 Internal Communication	12
6.1.1 Why?	12
6.1.2 Who?	12
6.1.3 How?	12
6.2 External Communication	13
<b>Part 7 – Prevention and Minimisation</b>	
7.1 Basis for provisions	14
7.2 What can you do to protect yourself and others?	14
7.2.1 Influenza vaccination	14
7.2.2 Coughing and sneezing	14
7.2.3 Hand Cleanliness	14
7.2.4 General Cleanliness	15
7.2.5 Personal Contact	15
7.3 What will AFTRS do to limit the spread of infection?	15
7.3.1 Cleaning and Waste	15
7.3.2 Airconditioning	15
7.3.3 Organisational Social Distancing	16
7.3.4 Alternate Premises	16
7.3.5 Managing Illness	16
7.3.6 Telecommuting and Home Based Work	16
7.3.7 Travel	16
<b>Part 8 – Workforce Planning</b>	
8.1 Why do we need to plan?	17
8.2 Impact of a serious pandemic on staff	17

8.3	Delegations	18
8.4	Access to Temporary Staff	18
8.4.1	Existing Casual Staff	18
8.4.2	Volunteers	18
8.4.3	Agencies	19
8.4.4	Ex-employees	19
8.4.5	Staff Referrals	19
8.5	Knowledge Management	19
8.5.1	Why should we bother?	19
8.5.2	Cross Training	19
8.5.3	Documentation	19
<b>Part 9 – Working from home and Technology</b>		
9.1	Why is this important during a pandemic?	20
9.2	What is the current situation?	20
9.3	How can we prepare for working at home during a pandemic?	20
9.4	Use of technology by clients	20
<b>Part 10 – Full Time Teaching Program</b>		
10.1	What is the award program?	21
10.2	How will a pandemic affect teaching the award program?	21
10.3	Productions	21
10.4	Student Issues	21
10.4.1	Student Illness	22
10.4.2	Welfare Services	22
10.5	Access to AFTRS facilities	22
10.6	Monitoring Student Illness	22
<b>Part 11 – National Professional Development Program</b>		23
<b>Part 12 – Library Services</b>		24
<b>Part 13 – Travel</b>		
13.1	Should we worry about travel?	25
13.2	International Travel – Work related	25
13.3	International Travel – Personal	26
13.4	Advice about the Pandemic	26
13.5	Domestic Travel	26
<b>Part 14 – Managing Illness</b>		
14.1	Why does illness need to be managed?	27
14.2	Changing the culture	27
14.3	Reasons for absences and types of leave available	27
14.4	Illness on the premises	27
14.5	Illness in a member of the public	27
14.6	Staff who have recovered	28
14.7	Queries about illness management	28

## **Part 1 THE PLAN**

### **1.1 Why have a Pandemic Plan?**

*“True pandemics, characterized by sharp increases in morbidity and mortality and rapid spread throughout the world, have been reliably documented since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Since then, each century has seen an average of three pandemics occurring at intervals ranging from 10 to 50 years.”*

*Avian influenza: assessing the pandemic threat  
World Health Organisation 2005*

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has activated its pandemic preparedness plan. It recommended that each government prepare.

Based on this advice and previous incidents of influenza the Australian Government required all Commonwealth agencies to develop a pandemic plan. This aligned with each Agency’s Business Continuity Plan and was an important part of responsible management irrespective of whether a pandemic occurs or not. This Plan has now been reviewed.

The purpose of this plan is to identify the services AFTRS provides and to develop methods by which these can be maintained should there be a pandemic.

This plan has been developed in line with current government guidelines and will be updated as necessary should additional guidelines be issued.

They key documents consulted are:

- a) The National Action Plan for Human Influenza Pandemic, April 2010, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet;
- b) The Australian Health Management Plan for Pandemic Influenza, December 2009, Department of Health and Ageing;
- c) The Commonwealth Government Action Plan for Influenza Pandemic, July 2006, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, and
- d) Pandemic Planning in the Workplace, May 2009, Comcare.

### **1.2 Who will the Plan apply to?**

This plan attempts to address the issues relating to:

- AFTRS staff (ongoing, fixed term, temporary and casual);
- AFTRS students (award and Open Program);
- Contractors and companies;
- Volunteers, and
- the public accessing AFTRS premises or services.

### **1.3 Who approves the Plan?**

All aspects of this plan are subject to review and approval by the AFTRS Managing Executive and Chief Executive Officer.

Any decisions regarding initiating any actions in this plan, including a decision to close premises or cease providing any services, will be made by the Chief Executive Officer or delegate.

The Chief Executive Officer or delegate has responsibility for communicating with the AFTRS Council, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, and other government bodies as appropriate in relation to this plan.

### **1.4 When will this Plan be reviewed?**

The provisions of this plan will be reviewed:

- on receipt of additional guidelines from the Australian Government;
- on receipt of additional medical information;
- if the services provided by AFTRS alter;
- if there is information or an incident that exposes deficiencies in the Plan, or
- every three (3) years.

## **PART 2      INFLUENZA PANDEMIC**

### **2.1      What is an influenza pandemic?**

Influenza is a highly contagious viral disease of the respiratory tract.

An influenza pandemic is a global outbreak of disease that occurs when:

- a new influenza virus emerges in the human population which no one has immunity to;
- the virus causes disease in humans, and
- the virus spreads easily from person to person worldwide.

### **2.2      What are the symptoms of Flu?**

- Chills, shivering and a fever (temperature > 38 degrees C).
- Onset of muscle aches and pains.
- Sore throat.
- Dry cough.
- Trouble breathing.
- Sneezing.
- Stuffy or runny nose.
- Tiredness.

Flu has an incubation period of 2 to 3 days and is infectious from the incubation period to 7 days after the resolution of fever (Health Services Australia).

### **2.3      How is Flu transmitted?**

- Droplet (respiratory) including coughing or sneezing up to 1 metre.
- Hand to mouth or hand to eye after touching a contaminated object or surface.
- Airborne among crowded populations in enclosed spaces.

## PART 3 PHASES

### 3.1 What are the key considerations of the Plan?

The implementation of the Plan is to be incremental depending on the status of the pandemic and the potential risks to the health of staff, students, volunteers, and the general public. In order to do this the following form the basis of the Plan.

- Prevention (what can AFTRS do to reduce the risk of catching the flu).
- Minimisation (what can AFTRS do to reduce the risk of spreading the flu).
- Communication (how can we keep all interest parties informed).
- Service Provision (how can AFTRS continue to meet its charter).

***It is expected that most restrictive actions in this Plan will not be initiated until the World Health Organisation declare Phase 6 or unless instructed by the Australian Government.***

### 3.2 How do we assess the status of the pandemic?

WHO has established the following 6 phases to identify the progress of any pandemic. This has been accepted by the Australian Government and the phases have been adopted in this plan.

<b>Period</b>	<b>Phase</b>	<b>Description</b>
Inter-pandemic	1	Animal infection: the risk of human infection or disease is considered low.
	2	Animal infection: substantial risk of human disease.
Pandemic alert	3	Human infection with new subtype(s) but no human to human spread or at most rare instances of spread to a close contact.
	4	Human infection: small cluster(s) consisted with limited human to human transmission, spread highly localised, suggesting the virus is not well adapted to humans
	5	Human infection: larger cluster(s) but human to human transmission still localised, suggesting the virus is becoming increasingly better adapted to humans, but may not yet be fully adapted (substantial pandemic risk).
Pandemic	6	A – localised (one area of country)
		B – widespread
		C – subsided
		D – next wave
Recovery stage		

### 3.3 What is the pandemic cycle?

Pandemics usually spread to all parts of the globe in less than a year and more than a quarter of the population is affected. Each wave is likely to last between 2 and 3 months and there will generally be a 2<sup>nd</sup> and sometimes 3<sup>rd</sup> wave.

## **PART 4      ESSENTIAL SERVICES**

### **4.1      What essential services does AFTRS provide?**

AFTRS does not provide services that would be considered essential to the community in a state of emergency and is therefore in a position where, if necessary, the facility could be closed. This would also enable staff to be transferred to deliver essential services in other government agencies should it be necessary.

Given the potential for the community to suffer economic difficulties as a result of any pandemic it would, however, be important for AFTRS to ensure it retained the ability to pay all accounts.

### **4.2      What are AFTRS' functions?**

Part II, Section 5 of *The Australian Film, Television and Radio School Act 1973* describes the functions of the School as:

- a) to provide advanced education and training by way of the development of the knowledge and skills required in connexion with the production of programs;
- b) to conduct and encourage research in connexion with the production of programs;
- c) to conduct such seminars and courses of education or training for persons engaged, or to be engaged, directly or indirectly, in connexion with the production of programs as are approved by the Council;
- d) to co-operate and make arrangements with other institutions and persons for purposes in connexion with the production of programs or the provision of education or training of the kind referred to in paragraph (a);
- e) for purposes in connexion with the production of programs or the provision of education or training of the kind referred to in paragraph (a), to provide facilities for, and to offer the services of the staff of the School to, such other institutions or persons as are approved by the Council;
- f) to make grants of financial assistance to persons to enable or assist those persons to receive education or undergo training of the kind referred to in paragraph (a);
- g) to award such degrees, diplomas and certificates in relation to the passing of examinations or otherwise in relation to the education and training provided by the School as are specified in a determination under section 6A, and
- h) to do anything incidental or conducive to the performance of the foregoing functions.

AFTRS achieves its charter through its:

- Award program (including production);
- national Open Program;
- Industry relevant research, and
- partnerships.

#### **4.3 Which staff are essential for maintaining minimum levels of service?**

The following functions are essential for AFTRS to maintain a minimum level of service. Each Divisional Director will be responsible for identifying which staff members can best fulfil these functions. Department Heads will then be responsible for ensuring other staff are trained as “back up” or alternate arrangements are made in case of absence.

- Technology
- Payroll
- Finance
- Student Services (contact)
- Communication
- Teaching

This list is developed on the basis that as many tasks/events as possible will be deferred until the recovery stage.

#### **4.4 Who will be responsible for implementing the plan?**

The Chief Executive Officer and the Managing Executive will have ultimate responsibility for the approval, review and execution of the plan.

As the plan will be most effective if the detail is determined by those responsible for providing services a committee will be convened with representatives from all Divisions to review the plan and make recommendations for amendments. This Committee will also oversee the implementation of the plan.

There will be a number of key roles in the implementation of the plan which will need to be allocated. These may be allocated to individuals or groups, but in all cases there must be a “deputy” in case of absence.

- a) Chief Executive Officer – The Chief Executive Officer will be responsible for initiating each stage of the plan. It is extremely important that a “deputy” be nominated.
- b) Continuity Plan Manager – This person will be responsible for overseeing the further development and review of the Pandemic Plan and liaising with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet about changes as necessary.
- c) Communication Manager – This person will be responsible for ensuring staff and clients have up to date information gathered from relevant sources.
- d) Influenza Manager – This person will ensure that there are sufficient supplies of hygiene and cleaning supplies, monitor cleaning contracts, etc.

- e) Workforce Manager – This person will be responsible for monitoring illness, encouraging staff to return once well, referrals to support services, maintaining records of alternative employees etc.
- f) Technology Manager – This person will be responsible for ensuring that all reasonable measures are taken to enable staff to work remotely.
- g) Knowledge Manager – This person will be responsible for supporting staff in the collection and documentation of practices, procedures etc so that as much information as possible is available in an indexed, central store.

The Managing Executive will approve staff to fulfil these roles based on recommendations submitted by Divisional Directors.

## PART 5

AFTRS operates to an annual cycle. The stage of the cycle at which a pandemic occurs will have an impact on the functions that are viewed as essential.

The following is a broad outline.

<b>Month</b>	<b>Event</b>
December/January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student enrolment</li> </ul>
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student orientation – semester 1</li> <li>• Fulltime and part time coursework starts</li> <li>• PBS Submission</li> </ul>
March	
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show Radio</li> <li>• Budget preparation</li> </ul>
May	
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• End of Financial Year Processing</li> <li>• Graduate Diploma Productions</li> </ul>
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• End of Financial Year Processing</li> <li>• 2RS broadcast – full time and part time radio students</li> <li>• Student Orientation – Semester 2 Financial Statements</li> <li>• Annual Report</li> <li>• Governance Meeting with Minister</li> <li>• Graduate Diploma Productions</li> </ul>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduate Diploma Productions</li> <li>• Finalisation of curriculum for next academic year</li> </ul>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NextFM broadcast – full time radio students</li> <li>• Student Recruitment</li> <li>• Graduate Diploma Productions</li> </ul>
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NextFM broadcast – part time radio students</li> <li>• Student recruitment</li> <li>• Graduate Diploma Productions</li> <li>• End of academic year</li> <li>• Full time and part time radio students work attachments</li> </ul>
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Award course applications close</li> <li>• Approval for awarding of degrees</li> <li>• Student recruitment</li> </ul>
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student recruitment</li> <li>• Graduation</li> </ul>

## **PART 6 – COMMUNICATION**

### **6.1 Internal Communication**

#### **6.1.1 Why?**

The importance of keeping staff fully and accurately informed during all stages of a pandemic cannot be overstated. The benefits include:

- minimising rumours;
- maintaining morale;
- encouraging behaviour that will minimise the spread and impact of disease, and
- keeping staff informed of:
  - entitlements;
  - procedures relating to the Pandemic Plan;
  - government announcements re: the progress of the pandemic, and
  - levels of service to be provided by AFTRS.

#### **6.1.2 Who?**

It is essential that staff are able to rely on the information provided. To ensure accuracy and consistency all information must go through the central point of the Communication Manager.

The Communication Manager will be responsible for:

- Collecting information from key staff e.g. Divisional Director, Head of Human Resources , Continuity Plan Manager, Office of the Chief Executive etc;
- Collecting information from external parties e.g. government notifications, travel advice, medical advice etc, and
- Distributing the information.

#### **6.1.3 How?**

The methods of distribution of information will include but not be limited to:

- intranet;
- newsletters;
- posters
- logon messages;
- internet, and
- emails.

In addition an email address, dedicated phone line and question and answer section on the Intranet will be established.

## 6.2 External Communication

As a pandemic progresses there will be an increasing need to inform the School's clients and other stakeholders of any potential impact.

This information will need to be closely monitored and will only be issued on the approval of a member of the Managing Executive and through the Communication Manager.

The types of information which may be released include:

- advice to clients re: training and events;
- advice to students re: changes to curriculum;
- advice to the public re: limited services and physical access to premises;
- advice to Library members re: changes to service delivery;
- advice to creditors re: continuation of payments, and
- any advice or responses to government.

Methods of distributing this information will vary depending on the target group and urgency but may include:

- media releases;
- advertisements;
- internet advices;
- individualised written correspondence;
- individual phone contact, and
- newsletters (electronic or print).

In order to further disseminate this information relationships will be maintained with:

- other cultural and government organisations;
- professional guilds and associations;
- tertiary institutions;
- agents and Industry agencies, and
- government organisations.

## **PART 7 PREVENTION AND MINIMISATION**

### **7.1 Basis of provisions**

Under occupational health and safety legislation AFTRS has a responsibility to maintain a healthy and safe environment for all staff and visitors. The legislation also places a responsibility on staff to adhere to related guidelines and procedures, and to use whatever protective equipment is provided.

This section of the Plan has been developed on the basis of these principles and will be implemented incrementally depending on the phase of the pandemic and government and medical advice.

### **7.2 What can you do to protect yourself and others?**

#### **7.2.1 Influenza vaccination**

Staff are encouraged to maintain their typical influenza strain vaccination regime as suffering from the “normal” flu will weaken staff and place them in greater risk from any pandemic variety.

#### **7.2.2 Coughing and Sneezing**

Coughing and sneezing are the most common methods of spreading influenza. Mouths and noses should be covered when coughing or sneezing and hands should be thoroughly cleaned afterwards. Staff are encouraged to use tissues rather than handkerchiefs and to dispose of them appropriately immediately after use. It is suggested that staff keep tissues at their desk, on their person and in their car.

#### **7.2.3 Hand Cleanliness**

It is very important that hands are regularly cleaned to reduce the likelihood of spreading infection.

Hands should be washed thoroughly with soap and hot water (up to 60 seconds), fingernails scrubbed, and hands dried on a disposable towel:

- after using toilet facilities;
- after coughing or sneezing;
- after contact with other people;
- after removing a mask or gloves, and
- before eating.

It is also good practice to use disposable towels to turn off taps, hold wash room door handles etc.

#### **7.2.4 General Cleanliness**

Desks, phones, filing drawer handles, door handles etc all represent ideal disease transfer sites. Regular cleaning of these areas with alcohol based wipes will minimise the spread of infection and is particularly important in public access areas.

Staff are also reminded not to share utensils e.g. cups, dishes and cutlery and to thoroughly wash them with hot water and detergent before use.

#### **7.2.5 Personal Contact**

As a pandemic progresses it will become more important for staff to distance themselves from personal contact with others. Measures may include:

- avoiding unnecessary mingling e.g. in the Café or other common areas;
- bringing lunch and eating it at your desk;
- refraining from personal contact such as handshakes;
- conducting business wherever possible without personal contact e.g. by phone, email etc even if within the same building;
- maintaining a distance of 1 metre between people wherever possible, and
- avoiding public transport or travelling early or late to avoid the crowds of peak hour.

### **7.3 What will AFTRS do to limit the spread of infection?**

#### **7.3.1 Cleaning and Waste**

AFTRS will:

- make antiseptic cleaner available throughout the premises;
- issue phone wipes and encourage staff to use them at least daily;
- make “no touch” waste receptacles available as required;
- provide personal protective equipment e.g. face masks, available as appropriate, particularly to staff dealing with the public, and
- clean workspaces should a staff member be required to absent themselves due to symptoms related to the pandemic.

#### **7.3.2 Airconditioning**

There is scientific and medical evidence to suggest that influenza can spread in internal spaces that are not adequately ventilated. Influenza survives longer, and is more easily transmitted, in conditions of low temperature and low humidity.

The Influenza Manager will be responsible for ensuring that ventilation is adequate by:

- liaising with the landlord of the AFTRS facility to ensure the airconditioning systems are maintained in accordance with Australian Standard AS 1668 Part 2, and

- determining when it is appropriate and possible to ventilate with fresh air through opening doors and windows, and advising staff.

### **7.3.3 Organisational Social Distancing**

Depending on the phase of the pandemic AFTRS may:

- remove magazines, newspapers etc from common areas;
- discourage or ban meetings being held in closed areas;
- require meetings to be held in open air;
- cancel or postpone non-essential meetings, gatherings, workshops etc.;
- only permit pre-approved essential meetings to occur;
- prohibit public access to facilities, and/or
- close the premises.

It should be noted that only the Chief Executive Officer, or a member of the Managing Executive if the Chief Executive Officer is unavailable, has the authority to close the premises to the public, staff or students.

### **7.3.4 Alternate Premises**

AFTRS will consider what services can reasonably be relocated to alternate premises.

### **7.3.5 Managing Illness**

The Workforce Manager will be responsible for this area which is addressed separately in Part 14.

### **7.3.6 Telecommuting and Home Based Work**

AFTRS does, and will continue to, encourage home based work where appropriate. This is addressed in relation to the occurrence of a pandemic in Part 9.

### **7.3.7 Travel**

Travel will be limited during a pandemic both on the basis of health and government instructions. This is outlined in Part 13.

## **PART 8      WORKFORCE PLANNING**

### **8.1      Why do we need to plan?**

Pandemics generally affect between 25 and 30% of the population. In a serious pandemic staff may be absent due to:

- their own illness;
- caring for others within their household;
- caring for relatives or friends;
- death of relatives or friends;
- closure of schools and child care facilities;
- redistribution of staff based on government requirements, or
- assisting emergency or medical services.

AFTRS has a responsibility to maintain services while ever it is reasonable, practical and safe to do so. This means that a plan for ensuring sufficient staffing is necessary.

The Workforce Manager will have overall responsibility with the Knowledge Manager being responsible for coordinating the provisions of 8.5.

### **8.2      Impact of a serious pandemic on staff**

The onset of a pandemic may have an impact on the emotional wellbeing of staff and affect their work attendance and performance. Previous pandemics have resulted in:

- fear of disease and death;
- fear for the wellbeing of family and friends;
- fear of people;
- fear of travelling;
- financial concerns;
- difficulty in concentrating and making inappropriate decisions;
- depression;
- stress resulting from carrying additional workloads and having to learn new skills quickly;
- hostility towards other staff who are perceived to be spreading infection if they sneeze or cough;
- fear of returning to work after illness, and
- grief relating to bereavement.

Although AFTRS cannot be required to alleviate all concerns the following steps will be taken to assist staff.

- Pandemic and medical related information will be provided to staff.
- Staff will be kept up to date about how AFTRS is managing the impact of the pandemic.

- Supervisors will be made aware of the types of behaviour they might expect from staff and required to report any such behaviour to the Workforce Manager.
- Staff will be made aware of the leave options available to them.
- Supervisors will be required to report any non-attendance to the Workforce Manager who will contact the staff member directly.
- Contact details for staff and their emergency/next of kin will be updated.
- Staff will be advised of the Employee Assistance Program details and encouraged to contact them for assistance. Contact details will be placed on the intranet and posters around the premises.
- The Workforce Manager will maintain contact with absent staff and encourage them to return to work as soon as they are well.

### **8.3 Delegations**

As a Statutory Authority AFTRS has responsibilities relating to appropriate approval of its actions, particularly in terms of commitments and expenditure. It is important that staff absences do not result in delegations not being able to be exercised. For this reason all “back ups” to the key positions nominated as a result of the provisions of 4.2 will be granted the delegations of the identified positions to take effect should the occupant of the identified position be absent.

### **8.4 Access to Temporary Staff**

#### **8.4.1 Existing Casual Staff**

AFTRS is in the fortunate position of relying on a large pool of expert staff who are already familiar with the School, its processes and teaching. These people will form the core of a temporary staff pool should the impact of a pandemic make it necessary.

Heads of Department will be responsible for providing and updating the Workforce Manager with the following details:

- Name
- Specialty
- Experience
- Contact details

#### **8.4.2 Volunteers**

AFTRS already utilises the services of hundreds of volunteers each year. Currently separate records are kept by a number of different departments. It will be the responsibility of Heads of Department to ensure that all volunteer contact details are provided to the Workforce Manager and that these are updated as necessary.

### **8.4.3 Agencies**

Human Resources maintains a register of temporary recruitment agencies in relation to administrative, support and some specialist staff. Registers of agencies who provide staff in relation to other areas such as productions, teaching and technology have been maintained by other departments. The relevant Heads of Department will be responsible for ensuring these details are provided to the Workforce Manager.

### **8.4.4 Ex-employees**

It is possible that temporary staffing needs may be partly met through ex-employees. Contact and employment history details are available through Human Resources. The Workforce Manager will be given access to these details.

### **8.4.5 Staff Referrals**

Staff at AFTRS have extensive personal and professional networks. The Workforce Manager will actively encourage staff to suggest individuals who may be interested in working temporarily at AFTRS should a pandemic make this necessary.

## **8.5 Knowledge Management**

### **8.5.1 Why should we bother?**

A serious pandemic may impact on absences very quickly and it cannot be predicted which staff will be affected. In addition the infectious nature of influenza may require staff to absent themselves with little or no warning. It is important that AFTRS still be able to provide services under these circumstances.

A key component is ensuring that each essential duty is able to be performed. This can only be achieved by gathering and sharing information related to how to perform those duties.

### **8.5.2 Cross Training**

Both in preparation for and during a pandemic outbreak all staff will be encouraged to multi-skill and share information. Those staff performing duties deemed to be essential will be responsible for taking steps to train their identified replacement in how to perform at least the crucial functions of their role. The Knowledge Manager will be required to report to the Executive on progress regularly.

### **8.5.3 Documentation**

A process of documentation of policies, procedures and methods is already underway within AFTRS. It will be the responsibility of the Knowledge Manager, to monitor and encourage this process.

## **PART 9 WORKING FROM HOME AND TECHNOLOGY**

### **9.1 Why is this important during a pandemic?**

As influenza is transmitted through close or direct personal contact it is important during a pandemic to reduce the number of situations where this could happen. Enabling staff to work from home is a key factor in achieving this. It may also prevent AFTRS from having to completely cease operations.

### **9.2 What is the current situation?**

Currently a number of staff work at home on an ad hoc basis on a variety of projects. These may include research, policy development, recruitment preparation, curriculum development etc. There are, however, many staff whose duties do not allow them to work from home.

The use of technology is key to enabling more staff to work at home, although some, such as maintenance and staging staff, will never be in a position to do so.

The ICT & Services Department continue to investigate and implement ways of giving staff more remote web access to the network and databases.

### **9.3 How can we prepare for working at home during a pandemic?**

Heads of Department should identify the types of ongoing and project work that can be undertaken remotely by their staff, while acknowledging that this will be affected by the timing of an outbreak in relation to the School's calendar.

While compiling this information Heads of Department should consider what additional resources would be necessary to enable their staff to work effectively from home for a limited period. This might include making computers available for loan for temporary home use, bulk purchase of internet access, arrangements to reimburse business related phone expenses, arranging conference calls, expanding technology access etc.

An additional issue which must be considered in staff working from home even for a limited period is the occupational health and safety aspects. While a guide already exists on the requirements for safety in a home office this will need to be revised, expanded and disseminated. This responsibility will rest with the Head of Human Resources.

### **9.4 Use of technology by clients**

In preparation for a pandemic clients should be encouraged to utilise email and phone contacts for queries rather than entering the premises. It is also important to continue to facilitate registration and payment options through the website to reduce the need for clients to enter premises to make payments.

Curriculum should continue to be reviewed for modules that are appropriate to teach online or through other distance related methods.

## **PART 10      AWARD TEACHING PROGRAM**

### **10.1    What is the award program?**

The full time program runs from February until October each year and is critical to the School meeting its charter. It consists of coursework, research, productions, small group work and individual mentoring. It is intensive and emphasis collaboration.

AFTRS is obliged to deliver training to meet the learning objectives outlined in the curriculum.

### **10.2    How will a pandemic affect teaching the full time program?**

The award program places a heavy emphasis on personal contact. In planning for a pandemic it is necessary for teaching staff to review the curriculum and identify topics which can be taught in a different way, such as online or remotely, or by research, and to consider ways in which mentoring can be achieved through phone contact, email or online.

It is also important that the teaching timetable be sufficiently flexible to enable these components to replace other less flexible elements should the pandemic reach a more serious phase.

Projects which are entirely research based should be identified for students to undertake should there be a pandemic.

Once identified by teaching staff proposals for continuing the teaching function should be submitted to and approved by the Academic Board to come into effect on the declaration of the Chief Executive Officer.

Components of teaching which must remain face-to-face can continue to be taught but, where possible, should be taught outside or in sufficiently large areas that participants can remain at least 1 metre apart and participant numbers should be limited as far as possible.

In the case of the School premises being closed by the Chief Executive Officer no face-to-face meetings, mentoring or teaching will occur.

### **10.3    Productions**

Productions, while being in both pre- and post-production for considerable periods, are usually only in production for short periods. They are closely planned and scheduled and are usually difficult, or in the case of ShowRadio impossible, to defer. Should a pandemic become serious every effort should be made to reschedule productions. If they are identified as completely inflexible involved students, volunteers and staff must adhere, as far as possible, to guidelines for social distance and use of personal protective equipment.

It is unlikely that AFTRS will close until the pandemic has reached a stage where large numbers of businesses and locations within the surrounding area would

also have closed. In these situations productions will be postponed. Students will suffer no disadvantage in terms of qualifying for the course as a result of any such postponement and AFTRS will assume responsibility for any additional production costs relating directly to the postponement of the project.

#### **10.4 Student Issues**

##### **10.4.1 Student Illness**

Students, like staff, are likely to be affected by a pandemic in terms of absences related to their own illness or responsibilities towards others. As much flexibility as possible will be provided by the School for completion of assignments etc under these circumstances. Should absences be prolonged the approved methods of assessment for student absences will be implemented.

##### **10.4.2 Welfare Services**

Students may suffer from many of the same concerns as staff. Students will be able to access the existing student welfare services during this time.

#### **10.5 Access to AFTRS facilities**

In the case of a serious pandemic and to reduce the risk of spreading infection students will be encouraged to stagger their attendance at the facilities so as to reduce the number of students present at any one time. Under no circumstances is this to be seen as an opportunity for students to extend the number of hours they spend at the School each day.

Heads of Department will be responsible for overseeing this.

#### **10.6 Monitoring Student Illness**

The Heads of Department, in conjunction with student services, will be responsible for monitoring student illness including ensuring students presenting with influenza symptoms depart the School until they receive medical certification that they can return and contacting students who do not attend without prior notice.

## **PART 11      OPEN PROGRAM**

The Open Program is key to the School meeting its charter to provide professional training for Industry practitioners on a national basis. It is short term or modular training usually provided by local experts. Training is offered at the Sydney campus and arrangements are made for regional training as required.

As the pandemic may not affect all areas of Australia simultaneously decisions as to whether each course will continue to be offered will be made on a case by case basis by the Chief Executive Officer or the Director, Open Program.

Should a pandemic reach a serious stage all Industry training and other Open Program events will be postponed.

## **PART 12      LIBRARY SERVICES**

The Library offers services to staff, students, subscription members, and the general public. In addition it has reciprocal arrangements with other tertiary institution libraries.

Technology currently allows access for the catalogue to be reviewed, reservations made for identified items, notice of availability to be received, and electronic notification of overdue items.

Should there be a serious pandemic library services will be restricted incrementally as follows.

1.      Personal Protective Equipment to be utilised by library staff.
2.      Public access to be denied.  
         All research requests to be by phone or email.
3.      No non-library staff to enter the Library and reserved items to be delivered by post.
4.      Library to be closed.

As in all cases only the Chief Executive Officer can deny public access or close the Library.

## **PART 13 TRAVEL**

### **13.1 Should we worry about travel?**

Travel represents a high risk for acquiring influenza. Itineraries may include areas with outbreaks or where a pandemic is being transmitted. Planes, lounges, other public transport and hotel lobbies are all high risk areas for infection. As a result official travel during a pandemic will be restricted.

### **13.2 International Travel – Work Related**

13.2.1 Should there be a pandemic travel to affected areas will only be permitted if essential.

13.2.2 All staff planning to travel overseas will be encouraged to be vaccinated against the influenza virus.

13.2.3 Ticketing should be as flexible as possible, even if the cost is greater, to allow a fast return should there be an outbreak in the region. Travel insurance should contain an evacuation component.

13.2.4 Prior to travelling staff should ensure they are aware of where they can access medical assistance and have information on how to manage a flu-like illness while travelling. Staff should also be provided with access to additional funds should there be an outbreak while they are travelling. They should be aware that if there is a pandemic in the region they are travelling to the local Australia Missions may also be affected and unable to provide normal consular services.

13.2.5 If staff are travelling in an affected area they should wear a mask and ensure they regularly wash their hands. As most countries will have a method of assessing whether travellers are at a high level of risk of infection staff who are ill should be aware they may not be accepted onto flights.

13.2.6 Most governments will restrict travel or close their borders should there be a pandemic outbreak in the country. It is also possible that the Australian Government will close the Australian borders or impose a quarantine period on passengers returning to Australia from affected areas. Quarantines may also be reported to and monitored by Public Health Authorities and be extended to household members.

13.2.7 On return to Australia from a pandemic affected region staff may not be permitted to return to duty at AFTRS until they present a medical clearance or 7 days have elapsed since their return and they have no flu-like symptoms. Full salary will be paid for the required quarantine period.

13.2.8 If staff are on official travel and are unable to return to Australia due to a pandemic outbreak or personal illness AFTRS will continue to pay their salary and reasonable expenses until they are able to return to Australia.

### **13.3 International Travel – Personal**

Staff are discouraged from travelling to affected regions for any reason. If they do travel to affected areas and are unable to leave due to an outbreak they may access personal or recreation leave to cover the period. The quarantine period outlined 13.2.7 will apply upon their return to Australia. Personal leave may be accessed for this period.

### **13.4 Advice about the Pandemic**

The following websites provide information on affected regions and travel advisories.

[www.who.int/influenza/en/](http://www.who.int/influenza/en/) (World Health Organisation)

[www.flupandemic.gov.au](http://www.flupandemic.gov.au) (Department of Health and Ageing)

### **13.5 Domestic Travel**

During a serious pandemic outbreak domestic travel will be severely limited and only essential travel will be permitted. If more than one staff member is travelling to the same destination they will be encouraged to travel on different flights to reduce the chance of multiple infections.

## **PART 14      MANAGING ILLNESS**

### **14.1    Why does illness need to be “managed”?**

Influenza is highly infectious and, as part of its duty of care, AFTRS should establish ways of identifying those who have potentially been infected, to arrange for them to leave the premises, and to ensure they do not return until they are either medically cleared or have recovered. This is for the protection of all staff, students and visitors.

### **14.2    Changing the culture**

AFTRS staff are highly committed and, as such, may tend to work beyond the point where they should absent themselves due to illness. It is important that, in the case of a pandemic, this attitude be changed to reflect the potential danger of spreading infection that it might allow.

To achieve this every opportunity will be taken to communicate to staff that during a pandemic it is their responsibility not to come to work if they are sick.

### **14.3    Reasons for absences and types of leave available**

Staff may be absent due to their own illness, to care for others, to care for children if schools and childcare are closed, for bereavement or if the premises are shut down.

Staff will be able to access paid personal leave credits, the personal leave pool and any other type of paid leave credits they have accrued. In the case of a shut down staff will continue to receive salary.

It should be noted that these provisions are subject to change on the basis of government advice.

### **14.4    Illness on the premises**

In the case of a staff member becoming ill at work during a serious pandemic the supervisor will require them to wear a mask to protect others from infection, and absent themselves from work until they are medically cleared or recover. Staff will be required to wait in an isolated room until arrangements can be made for them to go travel to their home. The supervisor will then be required to advise the Workforce Manager that they have required the staff member to absent themselves from the workplace.

Supervisors will receive information on how to recognise influenza symptoms.

### **14.5    Illness in a member of the public**

Should a staff member believe that a member of the public is unwell they should ask them to leave the premises and suggest that they seek medical advice. If

the member of the public refuses to leave the premises the Influenza Manager should be contacted.

#### **14.6 Staff who have recovered**

It is the responsibility of the Workforce Manager to maintain contact with a staff member who has proceeded on leave, although phone contact from their supervisor is also good management practice and is encouraged.

The Workforce Manager will monitor the staff member's situation, provide any assistance or information possible, and ensure they are absent for the required period.

As indications are that people who have suffered from influenza and then recover develop an immunity that protects them from further attacks, these staff should be encouraged to return to work and may be considered for essential roles.

#### **14.7 Queries about illness management**

Any queries relating to managing illness should be referred to the Workforce Manager or Human Resources.