

One in Two Australians Change Travel Plans because of Bird Flu Fear

April 4, 2006

One in two Australians say fear of Avian or bird flu has affected their travel plans, a new survey has found. The survey, by leading destination site totaltravel.com, also found more than 20% of Australian holiday makers or one in five are refusing to travel overseas because of fears of catching the disease.

The survey was conducted over the previous weekend with more than 400 respondents.

Paul Fisher, spokesman for totaltravel.com - ranked the number one site for Australian's seeking information about destinations - said he was surprised by the strong level of concern about bird flu.

"With one in five Australians saying they won't even travel overseas because of fears about the disease this must be having an impact on the outbound travel industry," Mr Fisher said.

"In the lead-up to the Easter school holiday break these concerns may also mean the domestic tourism industry is receiving a boost from fears about bird flu."

The survey asked visitors to the totaltravel.com site the impact of Avian or bird flu on their travel plans. Excluding those who responded "don't know", 50% said it had had no impact, 28% said it had some impact on where they traveled overseas and 22% said they would only travel domestically because of the disease.

The Australian Government is currently advising Australians travelling overseas to inform themselves about the risks of avian influenza, be prepared to take personal responsibility for their own safety and put appropriate contingency plans in place.

totaltravel.com currently has up to 40,000 visitors a day and is now bigger than Lonely Planet, AAA Tourism and all the State Tourism Authority sites such as Tourism Qld for Australians seeking information about destinations.

Launched in 2002, totaltravel.com delivers both a travel guide and a place to find accommodation, activities, transport, restaurants and other visitor information.

Users can seek information about a destination and then be directed to a local business in the area.

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The site now offers more than 250,000 pages with contact details for more than 100,000 Australian businesses.

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