

## **Coronavirus – FAQs – as at 29 February 2020 AEDT**

**Q: The Australian Government is talking about a coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, what does this mean for Australian tourism?**

A: At this stage, a pandemic has not been declared. However, the Australian Government is heightening its level of preparedness for such an occurrence and yesterday (27 February 2020), the Prime Minister [announced](#) the activation of the '[Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)'. The plan focuses on strengthening and boosting Australia's health care systems.

The Australian Government also announced it would extend for a further week (to 7 March 2020) the entry restrictions on foreign nationals who have recently been in mainland China. The plan focuses on strengthening and boosting Australia's health care systems.

Tourism Australia is working with the Department of Health, Austrade, and the Department of Foreign Affairs to ensure a coordinated response to the virus. Our primary concern is to ensure that Australians travelling overseas and those coming to Australia are aware of and can take the best possible precautions to protect themselves from the coronavirus.

Without knowing how long the coronavirus outbreak is likely to last, it's impossible to predict the full tourism impact - but it is likely to be significant. Australian tourism operators are experiencing widespread cancellations and a downturn in forward bookings as people around the world reconsider their travel plans and airlines adjust their schedules.

**Q: What is the latest update on the coronavirus outbreak globally?**

A.

The World Health Organisation continues to monitor the situation and to advise against any restrictions on international travel or trade. International governments have enhanced border control checks at airports, including requesting arriving passengers to report symptoms. Airports Council International, the global association representing the interests of airports, is providing ongoing guidance for airports.

**Q: What is the latest update on the coronavirus outbreak globally?**

A: As at 29 February 2020, a total of 84,117 cases of COVID-19 have been reported globally, including 2,872 deaths. The majority of cases have been reported from mainland China (78,824), with 5,923 cases reported from 55 countries and regions outside of mainland China.

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**Q: What is the latest update on the coronavirus outbreak in Australia?**

A: There have been a total of 25 confirmed cases of coronavirus in Australia. Of the initial 15 cases all have had an indirect or direct link with Wuhan, China. All cases are reported to have cleared their infections. Nine cases are associated with the Diamond Princess repatriation flight from Japan to the Northern Territory. All patients have been repatriated to their home states for care and isolation.

**Q: What can I tell customers who are planning to travel to Australia?**

A: Australia has only had a small number of cases of the coronavirus and all have had a link to Wuhan, China or the Diamond Princess cruise ship. Most cases have already recovered and those that have not, are recovering in isolation. There have been no reported cases of person to person transmission. Australia also has a world class health care system and is very well equipped to handle any further outbreaks.

The Australian Government has extended the temporary border restrictions introduced to curb the spread of the coronavirus. The restrictions will be reviewed every 7 days. The following arrangements remain in place:

- Australia will deny entry to anyone who has left or transited through mainland China in the last 14 days with the exception of Australian citizens, permanent residents, and immediate family members of Australian citizens and permanent residents including spouses, minor dependants and legal guardians.
- Australian citizens who have left or transited through mainland China in the last 14 days must isolate themselves for 14 days from the date of leaving mainland China.
- People who have had close contact with a proven case of novel coronavirus must isolate themselves for 14 days from the date of last contact.

All international airports are open. However, most airlines have suspended flights to and from China. All other international air services into Australia are operating as normal.

Sydney Airport is the only Australian airport that has direct flights from Wuhan, and those flights remain suspended. As with other countries, precautionary measures have been put in place in Australia, including:

- enhanced ill-traveller screening processes;
- pre-recorded announcements (in English and Chinese) in arrivals areas at international air and seaports; and
- informing travellers of the symptoms of the virus and what to do if they experience symptoms.

If you have current or future plans to travel to Australia from China, please speak to your travel agent or airline before travelling. You can keep up-to-date with the latest news on the coronavirus from the Australian Government's [Department of Health](#), including updated health warnings.

**Q: What advice is there for Australians returning from overseas?**

A: The Australian Government's [Smartraveller website](#) also provides advice to Australians returning home from a destination with reported cases of the coronavirus or feeling unwell.

The latest travel advice being provided by the World Health Organization can be read [here](#).

For more information about the coronavirus call the Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080 or contact your state or territory public health agency:

- ACT - 02 5124 9213
- NSW - 1300 066 055
- NT - 08 8922 8044
- QLD - 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84)
- SA - 1300 232 272
- TAS - 1800 671 738

- VIC - 1300 651 160

Tourism Australia will continue to provide updated information as it becomes available.

- The Australian Government's current advice for travel to China is Level 4 – Do not travel
- The Australian Government's advice for travel to Iran, Japan, South Korea, Mongolia and several regions in Northern Italy has been increased Level 2 – Exercise a high degree of caution (due to a heightened risk of sustained local transmission).
- In addition, Australian travellers have been advised to reconsider their need to travel to the South Korean cities of Daegu and Cheongdo.

**Q: What measures can I put in place to protect guests against coronavirus?**

A: The [Australian Government's Department of Health](#) recommend taking the following precautions:

- Everyone should practise good hygiene to protect against infections. Good hygiene includes:
  - washing your hands often with soap and water
  - using a tissue and cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze
  - avoiding close contact with others, such as touching.
- The Department of Health does not recommend surgical masks for healthy members of the public. A surgical mask will not protect you against the virus. Information on how and when to use a mask can be found [here](#).
- If you have a confirmed case of coronavirus, you need to isolate yourself to prevent it spreading to other people.

Read more about [protective measures against coronavirus](#) on the World Health Organization website.

**Q: Where should I report concerns about myself or my guests?**

A: If you or your guests become unwell and suspect you may have symptoms of coronavirus, you should seek medical attention. More information can be found [here](#). To speak to a registered nurse about your health concerns contact the Australian Government's Coronavirus Health Information Line 1800 020 080.

**Q: What actions is Tourism Australia taking to support travellers and industry?**

A: Tourism Australia is continuing to monitor the situation very closely, following the health advice provided by the World Health Organisation and Australia's Department of Health, but it's a complex and fast evolving situation.

We also continue to stay very connected with the federal government to get the latest information and advice and providing industry with as much accurate and up-to-date information as it can do to help share with their customers.

Tourism Australia has updated [Australia.com](#) with information on the outbreak and links to relevant websites where travellers can access the latest health and travel advice.

Tourism Australia is actively recalibrating ongoing marketing activities and moving ahead with the development of a new international marketing campaign to reinforce to the world that Australia is open for business and is a welcoming and safe destination for travellers. We remain committed to China. When the current travel restrictions lift, Chinese travellers will return.

Tourism Australia is already planning what support we can provide to ensure Australia quickly re-positions itself as a welcoming and safe destination for Chinese visitors.

**Q: Will Tourism Australia attend ITB Berlin?**

A: Tourism Australia has been advised ITB Berlin 2020 has been cancelled. The organisers Messe Berlin have made the decision due to the increasing spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) following advice from Germany's Federal Ministry of Health and Federal Ministry of Economics. Further information can be found on the ITB Berlin website [here](#). As per previous correspondence please check your travel insurance details and refer to the Australian Government's [Smartraveller website](#). The current travel advice for Germany is '[exercise normal safety precautions](#)' (current at 0600 29 February AEDT). Further details regarding stand partner participation fees will be communicated as soon as possible.

**Q: Will Tourism Australia's upcoming Destination Australia Conference still go ahead?**

A: Yes, Destination Australia is still going ahead.

**Q: Will the Australian Tourism Exchange (ATE) still go ahead?**

A: Tourism Australia will continue to monitor the situation and will put in place additional health and safety measures if they are required. At this stage, Tourism Australia is satisfied that this year's event in Melbourne can be delivered safely for all those taking part. All registered delegates will be kept fully up to date on any developments.