

Coronavirus FAQs – as at 4 March 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 global pandemic has not been declared. However, the Australian Government is heightening its level of preparedness for such an occurrence. On 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 world class health care systems.

The Australian Government has extended its restrictions on foreign nationals who have recently been in mainland China until 6 March 2020.

On 29 February, Australia also applied a ban on foreign nationals arriving from [Iran](#).

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.

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

A: As at 4 March 2020, over 92,000 cases of COVID-19 have been reported globally, including more than 3,100 deaths. The majority of cases have been reported from mainland China (approximately 80,000), however the number of confirmed cases of the virus in other countries continues to increase: there are now over 8,000 cases of the coronavirus confirmed outside mainland China (the vast majority of which have been reported in South Korea, Italy and Iran). In total, 73 countries (including mainland China, Hong Kong, SARS, and Taiwan) have confirmed cases of the virus.

The [World Health Organisation](#) has raised its global risk assessment to 'Very High' and is monitoring the situation. It continues to advise against the application of travel or trade restrictions to countries experiencing coronavirus outbreaks. The WHO's latest travel advice is available [here](#).

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 in Australia?

A: There have been a total of 41 confirmed cases of coronavirus in Australia. Of the initial 15 cases all had an indirect or direct link with Wuhan, China and all have cleared their infections. 10 cases have been associated with the Diamond Princess repatriation flight from Japan to the Northern Territory. 10 cases of the virus have been reported with a direct or indirect travel history to Iran. 4 cases are reported to have a recent history of overseas travel to countries including Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, South Korea and Japan. 1 case of the coronavirus has been reported in a health care worker with no recent history of overseas travel. The likely source of infection for this patient is under investigation.

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

A: Australia has a world class health care system and is very well equipped to handle the coronavirus. Compared to other countries, Australia has had a relatively small number of confirmed cases of the virus. The majority of these have had a direct or indirect link to travel to Wuhan, China, Iran or the Diamond Princess cruise ship. On 2 March 2020, a health care worker with no history of overseas travel tested positive for the virus. The likely source of infection is currently under investigation by health authorities.

In light of these developments, the Australian Government has recently extended the temporary border restrictions introduced to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

Australia's temporary border restrictions are being reviewed every 7 days. The following arrangements remain in place and will be reviewed by 6 March:

- 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.

On 29 February 2020, the Australian Government raised its travel warning for Iran to the same level as China:

- Foreign nationals who have left Iran (excluding permanent residents) on or after 1 March, will not be allowed to enter Australia until 14 days after they have left or transited through Iran.
- Australian citizens, permanent residents and their immediate family will still be able to enter Australia but will be required to self-isolate for 14 days after the date they left China or Iran.
- Health and aged-care workers returning from South Korea or Italy must also self-isolate for 14 days before returning to work.

All international airports are open. However, most airlines have suspended flights to and from China. Airlines are also stopping flights into and out of Iran. Other international air services into Australia are operating as normal however some airlines have reduced or cancelled flights in response to a drop in demand for those services.

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 or Iran, 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. For the most up-to-date travel advisories visit the [Smartraveller website](#).

Q: What advice is there for Australians travelling overseas or returning to Australia from overseas?

A: The Australian Government's [Smartraveller website](#) provides the most up-to-date advice to Australians travelling overseas or returning home from a destination with reported cases of the coronavirus or feeling unwell. If you are planning to travel, we strongly advise you visit the Smartraveller site and also contact your travel agent and airline before departure.

At the time of writing:

- The Australian Government's current advice for travel to China and Iran is Level 4 – Do not travel.
- The Australian Government's advice for travel to Japan, South Korea, Mongolia and several regions in Northern Italy has been increased to 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.

For the latest travel advice from the World Health Organisation visit [here](#).

For more information about the coronavirus call the National 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.

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 continues to update [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's upcoming Destination Australia Conference and 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 both events can be delivered safely for all those taking part. All registered delegates will be kept fully up to date on any developments and given sufficient advanced warning to amend their travel plans.