

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING CORONAVIRUS

As at 20 March 2020

General

Q: Why has the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the coronavirus a pandemic?

A: On 11 March 2020, the WHO characterised the coronavirus as a pandemic. In a Press Conference announcing its decision, the WHO Director General cited the rapid increase in cases of the coronavirus outside of China; its expectation that the number of cases, deaths and affected countries will climb higher; and concern about the alarming levels of spread and severity of the virus; and the inaction by certain countries in responding to the outbreak as the reasons for its decision.

Q: What does the WHO pandemic announcement mean for Australia?

A: Australia is advanced in its preparedness having activated the Government's 'pandemic plan' on 27 February 2020, to put in place measures aimed at protecting Australians and visitors to our country. Australia has a world-class health care system and is well-equipped to handle the coronavirus. The Government has committed \$2.4 billion to a National Health Plan \$30 million of which has been allocated towards an Australia-wide [public health campaign](#). The campaign aims to reduce the risk to individuals and families by enabling them to make informed decisions and to take up health recommendations.

Q: Where can I get more information about the coronavirus?

A: For the latest information about the coronavirus visit the Australian Government's [Department of Health](#). DFAT's [Smartraveller](#) website also provides advice to Australians considering overseas travel or who have returned from travel feeling unwell. If you have questions about the virus you can contact your state or territory public health agency or the national virus hotline:

- Coronavirus Health Information Line: 1800 020 080
- 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

Consumer

Q: What is the latest advice for Australians considering travel overseas?

A: All Australians, regardless of health, age or destination, have been advised not to travel overseas at this time.

- Australians already abroad who wish to come home have been told to return as soon as possible as commercial transport options are becoming limited.
- All passengers arriving in Australia (including Australian citizens) are required to self-isolate for 14 days from the date of their arrival.
- Cruise ships from foreign ports are temporarily banned from arriving at Australian ports.
- For details visit the Australian Border Force [website](#).
- Guidance on self-isolation is available here and specifically for guests staying in hotels here.
- Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) continues to adjust its travel advice as new information becomes available.
- You should contact your airline, travel agent or insurance company to discuss your travel plans and options for cancelling or postponing current bookings or to arrange flights back to Australia; and visit the Australian [Smartraveller](#) website for the most up-to-date information.

Q: What is the advice for foreign travellers to Australia?

A: From 9pm, 21 March 2020, only Australian citizens, residents and immediate family members can travel to Australia. New Zealand citizens who live in Australia as Australian residents are also exempt, as are New Zealanders transiting to New Zealand. Exemptions for Pacific Islanders transiting to their home countries will continue to apply. For details visit the [Australian Border Force website](#).

Q: What should I do if I have been in close contact with someone who has a confirmed case of the coronavirus?

A: Australia has strict quarantine requirements in place for any travellers who have been in close contact with someone who has a confirmed case of the coronavirus. That is, self-quarantine for 14 days from the date of last contact with that person.

Q: What precautions should I take to protect myself and others?

A: Everyone should take steps to protect against infections. These measures include:

- [Good hygiene](#);
- [Social distancing](#); and
- [Self-isolation](#).

If you have a confirmed case of the coronavirus you need to isolate yourself to prevent it spreading to others. More information on how to protect yourself and others is available [here](#).

Q: What symptoms should I watch out for?

A: Coronavirus can cause a range of symptoms, ranging from mild illness to pneumonia. People with the coronavirus may experience:

- Fever;
- Flu-like symptoms such as coughing, sore throat and headaches;
- Difficulty breathing in some cases.

If you are concerned you may have the coronavirus, use the symptom checker on [healthdirect](#). If you become unwell and suspect you may have symptoms of the coronavirus, you should seek medical attention. To seek medical help from a doctor or hospital, call ahead of time to book an appointment. You will be asked to take precautions when you attend for treatment. Follow the instructions you are given.

If you want to talk to someone about your symptoms first, call the Coronavirus Health Information Line for advice. The line operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can reach it on 1800 020 080.

Q Where can I get more information about the coronavirus?

A There are a number of resources available for more information about the coronavirus.

- For the latest health and travel advice issued by WHO visit [here](#).
- For the latest information about the coronavirus in Australia visit the [Department of Health](#) website.
- The Australian Government's [Smartraveller](#) website also provides advice to Australians considering overseas travel or who are considering returning from overseas.
- Detailed information about current border restrictions is available from the [Australian Border Force website](#).
- If you have questions about the coronavirus you can contact your state or territory public health agency or the national hotline:
 - Coronavirus Health Information Line: 1800 020 080
 - Australian Capital Territory: 02 5124 9213
 - New South Wales: 1300 066 055
 - Northern Territory: 08 8922 8044
 - Queensland: 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84)
 - South Australia: 1300 232 272
 - Tasmania: 1800 671
 - Victoria: 1300 651 160

Industry

Q: What Tourism Australia resources are available?

A: Tourism Australia has a [Coronavirus Information](#) page on Australia.com which provides information for international and domestic travellers on what announcements have been made by the Australian Government regarding the virus and answers frequently asked health and safety questions about coronavirus.

Tourism Australia also has a page on their [corporate site](#) which provides information about Government funding and relief assistance for businesses impacted by coronavirus.

Both pages are being updated regularly.

Q: Is the Government advising against domestic travel?

A: The Australian Government is currently advising that all Australians should reconsider the need for unnecessary travel. Find more information [here](#).

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

A: The Australian Department of Health recommends that everyone should practise good hygiene and social distancing to protect against infections. Good hygiene includes:

- covering your coughs and sneezes with your elbow or a tissue,
- disposing of tissues properly,
- washing your hands often with soap and water, including before and after eating and after going to the toilet,
- using alcohol-based hand sanitisers,
- cleaning and disinfecting surfaces, and
- if you are sick, avoiding contact with others and staying more than 1.5 metres away from people.

Social distancing includes ways to stop or slow the spread of infectious diseases. It means less contact between you and other people. More information on how to do this is available [here](#).

Specific advice for hotels and hotel staff is available [here](#).

Q: What are the restrictions around indoor gatherings?

A: With regard to non-essential indoor gatherings of fewer than 100 people, specific measures announced on 20 March 2020 seek to reduce the density of people in indoor venues to no more than one person per four square metres of floor space. These arrangements for venues will come into effect from 20 March 2020 and will be mandated through state and territory regulatory arrangements. For example, there can be 25 people in a 100 square metre room, who should maintain a physical healthy distance between each other of 1.5 metres. In addition, cinemas and theatres will decrease density of patrons, which could include alternate seating, staggered seating and alternate rows, except for family groups who may be seated together. Seated restaurants may need to undertake a capacity reduction in order to meet the new density requirements.

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: Where can I get more advice about travel restrictions or support in my State or Territory?

A: State or Territory Tourism Organisations are providing regular updates about coronavirus. Links to these are below:

- [Destination NSW](#)
- [South Australian Tourism Commission](#)
- [Tourism and Events Queensland](#)
- [Tourism NT](#)
- [Tourism Tasmania](#)
- [Tourism WA](#)
- [Visit Canberra](#)
- [Visit Victoria](#)

Q: Are there any support materials available to use when communicating to my guests about coronavirus?

A: The Australian Government has developed a [public health campaign](#) to help protect all Australians from coronavirus. You can download the campaign materials here and use them in your business and in your communications.

Q: My business is being impacted as a result of coronavirus, what support is available from the Australian Government?

A: On 12 March 2020, the Australian Government [announced](#) an [Economic Response](#) to coronavirus totalling \$17.6 billion. Specific information on financial assistance, eligibility and timing for the new government support can be found on [business.gov.au](#).

Q: As part of the Australian Government's Economic Response, what are the specific measures in place for tourism businesses?

A: The Economic Response includes \$1 billion in funds to support sectors, regions and communities that have been disproportionately affected by the economic impacts of coronavirus, including those heavily reliant on industries such as tourism, agriculture and education. Some of the of tourism specific measures include the waiver of fees and charges for tourism businesses that operate in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and [Commonwealth National Parks](#). Click [here](#) for more information.

Q: I am a small tourism business with employees, what support is available to help with my cashflow?

A: If you employ staff, you may be eligible for temporary cash flow support to help cover the costs of your employee's wages. As part of the Boosting Cash Flow for Employers measure up to \$25,000 back to business, with a minimum payment of \$2,000 for eligible businesses. The tax-free payment will provide temporary cash flow support to small and medium businesses that employ staff. For more details click [here](#).

If you have apprentices or trainees you may be able to get assistance to help pay their wages, including a wage subsidy of 50 per cent of their wage paid from 1 January 2020 to 30 September 2020. You can [register](#) for the subsidy from early April 2020. For more details click [here](#)

Q: My tourism business employs casual staff, what support is available?

A: If you employ a casual employee and they can't work because they become sick or need to self-isolate, or their income has been otherwise impacted by the economic downturn caused by coronavirus, they may be eligible for income support payments. The Government is making these payments quicker to access by waiving the usual waiting period in certain circumstances. Information on income support is available on the [Services Australia](#) website or by phone on [180 22 66](#).

Q: I have a tourism business, but I am a sole trader and don't employ any staff, what support is available?

A: If you are a sole trader and do not employ any staff you may be eligible for the [increased instant asset write-off](#) measures and/or the [accelerated depreciation deduction](#) arrangements.

If your business is in a severely impacted region, community or industry, you may benefit from [various measures](#) that will be put in place using the \$1 billion the Government has made available for this purpose.

In addition, the Australian Tax Office (ATO) is providing [relief for some tax obligations for businesses](#) affected by the outbreak, on a case-by-case basis. For more information or to request this help, contact the ATO's Emergency Support Infoline for businesses on [1800 806 218](#).

More information about support for sole traders and small businesses can be found [here](#).

Q: What other support is available?

A: The Australian Banking Association has announced a small business relief package from Australia's banks. Australian Banks will defer loan repayments for small businesses affected by coronavirus for six months. Find out more [here](#).

Q: Are my customers entitled to a refund if my business is required to cancel their tourism experience or event due to Government restrictions around coronavirus?

A: The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has issued advice for consumers [here](#). Businesses should [contact the ACCC](#) for specific advice, however:

- If the tourism experience or event is cancelled, the ACCC expects that customers will receive a refund or other remedy, such as a credit note or voucher, in most circumstances.
- However, if the tourism experience or event is cancelled due to government restrictions, this impacts their rights under the consumer guarantees.
- They may still be entitled to a refund under the terms and conditions of the ticket.
- If you are not offering a refund, advise your customers to see if they are able to seek reimbursement under their travel insurance policy.

Q: My customers wish to cancel their travel booking due to health and safety concerns about coronavirus. Are they entitled to a refund?

A: The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) has issued advice for consumers [here](#). Businesses should [contact the ACCC](#) for specific advice, however:

- If the customer no longer wishes to travel due to concerns about coronavirus, this may be treated as a 'change of mind'.
- Given the exceptional circumstances, the ACCC encourages all businesses to treat consumers fairly.