

Sent: Wednesday, 18 March 2020 4:57 PM

Subject: Tourism Australia Update 18-3-20

Dear Industry Colleagues,

Today our Governor-General accepted the Commonwealth Government's recommendation that he declare a "human biosecurity emergency" under the Biosecurity Act 2015, given the risks the coronavirus poses to human health and the need to control its spread in Australia.

As a result, a raft of new measures have been announced. These measures, designed to protect the Australian community from the coronavirus, are expected to last for six months or more and will have an enormous impact on our industry. And they are constantly under review, so we will continue to update you with new information as it occurs.

In light of the new restrictions, we have regrettably taken the decision to cancel our Australian Tourism Exchange event due to take place in Melbourne in May. Tourism Australia will be providing a full refund of registration fees to all buyer and seller delegates. We continue to review all future events on an ongoing basis, including talking to relevant partners and will share updates as relevant.

Whilst we are scaling back our marketing activities in the current environment, we are busy preparing our recovery plans to ensure that Australia is on the front foot from a domestic and international perspective as the world starts to travel again – and they will.

A summary of the latest restrictions is below. You can view the full communique from the Australian Government [here](#). The National Cabinet has outlined that it will consider further social distancing arrangements at its next meeting on Friday (20 March 2020). We will keep you posted as new information becomes available.

Once again, I want to reiterate that our thoughts are with the entire industry at such a difficult and confronting time. So many of you are having to face the grim business realities and very tough decisions ahead.

Regards
Pip

5 steps businesses can take

In the midst of managing the business impacts of the crisis, here are 5 things you might want to think about.

1. Make sure you are following health and safety guidance from the [Department of Health](#).
2. Communicate what health and safety measures you are taking in your business to your customers and partners.
3. The Department of Health has launched a national campaign to inform all Australians about the coronavirus. They have developed a range of resources for businesses to use, find out more [here](#).
4. The Australian, State and Territory Governments have announced a series of measures to support businesses and individuals during this difficult time. Find out more [here](#).
5. Look after your mental health and reach out if you need [help](#).

Australians advised not to travel overseas and to return home as soon as possible

The National Security Committee of Cabinet has today decided to raise the advice for all overseas travel to the highest level. Its advice to all Australians - regardless of destination, age or health - is 'do not travel overseas at this time'. This is the highest travel advice setting – Level 4 of 4 and has never before been activated. In addition, Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has advised Australians who are overseas and who wish to return to Australia, to do so as soon as possible by commercial means as these may soon become limited. A number of commercial carriers have shut down or reduced their international flight schedules, including Qantas and Virgin Australia. Anyone arriving in Australia from overseas, including Australian citizens and permanent residents, will be required to self-isolate for 14 days from the date of arrival.

Aviation Industry Support

The Commonwealth Government has also today announced an aviation package for the refunding and ongoing waiving of a range of Government charges, including aviation fuel excise, air services charges on domestic airline operations and domestic and regional aviation security charges. These measures are in response to the unprecedented and likely sustained period of falling international and domestic aviation demand related to the impact of the coronavirus. The total cost of the measures is estimated to be \$715 million, with an upfront estimated benefit of \$159 million to our airlines for reimbursement of applicable charges paid by domestic airlines since 1 February 2020.

Further restrictions on large indoor gatherings are now in place

As part of its efforts to slow the spread of the coronavirus in Australia, the National Cabinet has accepted further restrictions on gatherings. Non-essential indoor gatherings of greater than 100 people will no longer be permitted from today (Wednesday 18 March 2020). An indoor gathering refers to a gathering within a single enclosed area (i.e. an area, room or premises that is or are substantially enclosed by a roof and walls, regardless of whether the roof or walls or any part of them are permanent, temporary, open or closed). This does not apply to essential activities such as public transportation facilities, medical and health care facilities, pharmacies, emergency service facilities, correctional facilities, youth justice centres or other places of custody, courts or tribunals, Parliaments, food markets, supermarkets and grocery stores, shopping centres, office buildings, factories, construction sites, and mining sites, where it is necessary for their normal operation (although other social distancing and hygiene practices may be required in these settings).

The states and territories will give further consideration to practical guidance and rules for non-essential indoor gatherings of fewer than 100 people such as cinemas, theatres, restaurants/cafes, pubs, clubs, weddings and funerals. This will be considered at the next National Cabinet meeting on Friday 20 March 2020. In the meantime, these venues should continue to apply social distancing and hygiene practices, including:

- Being able to maintain a distance of 1.5 metres between patrons; and
- Hand hygiene products and suitable waste receptacles being made available, with frequent cleaning and waste disposal.

This may require significant changes to the operation of some venues, such as reducing the maximum capacity or increasing the space available.

Settings like gyms, indoor fitness centres and swimming pools are not required to close at this time providing they meet these requirements for social distancing and hand hygiene. Such venues should take actions to ensure regular high standards of environmental cleaning take place.

New advice on large outdoor events

As of this morning, the National Cabinet has extended the restrictions on outdoor gatherings of fewer than 500 people and has provided additional advice regarding how to manage these.

There are now general measures that all events should follow:

- In a given occupied space, there must be no more than one person per four square metres of ground space.
- Availability of hand hygiene products and suitable waste receptacles, with frequent cleaning and waste disposal.

Food markets are exempt from the 500 person limit, however must undertake additional measures, such as control of patronage level numbers or stall density reduction to decrease the risk of coronavirus transmission. There may be other gatherings that are considered essential and it is at the discretion of the individual state and territory Chief Medical Officers or equivalent to assess each on their merits, and determine whether they can continue if mitigated by social distancing measures.

Domestic transport remains operational and is low risk

National Cabinet agreed that all Australians should only consider travelling when it is essential. If unwell, people must stay at home, unless seeking medical care. National Cabinet agreed that public transport is essential and that AHPPC advice should apply in relation to public transport (trains, trams, buses, ferries), taxi and ride share vehicles and transport of vulnerable populations, with particular attention given to cleaning and hygiene.

National Cabinet agreed that domestic air travel is low risk. The issue of where people are travelling to and sensitive locations where travel should be restricted, will be developed with advice of states and territories. The National Cabinet will further consider social distancing arrangements for domestic transport at its next meeting on Friday 20 March 2020. In all cases, appropriate social distancing and hygiene practices should be applied.

Protecting Indigenous and NDIS Australia

Further work will be progressed by Friday 20 March 2020 and will include additional support for vulnerable Australians including indigenous communities and NDIS participants. The Department of Social Services (DSS), National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission) are working together to respond to COVID-19 and its impact on the NDIS.

Additional Support for International Student Nurses

The Commonwealth Government will relax international student nurse visa work conditions to provide workforce continuity for aged care facilities, home care providers and other health care workers. This will allow international student nurses and other aged care workers to work more than the 40 hours a fortnight that they are currently. This measure will be examined on an ongoing basis.

Phillipa Harrison
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