



The Hon. Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister

Senator The Hon. Marise Payne
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Minister for Women

The Hon. Peter Dutton MP
Minister for Home Affairs

The Hon. Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Saturday 1 February 2020

UPDATED TRAVEL ADVICE TO PROTECT AUSTRALIANS FROM THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS

The National Security Committee of Cabinet met again today to consider new and urgent information regarding the novel coronavirus situation.

Based on updated health advice from the Commonwealth's Chief Medical Officer and the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee and the increased risk posed by the spread of novel coronavirus, we have decided to introduce strict new travel restrictions and new travel advice.

Effective immediately, foreign nationals (excluding permanent residents) who are in mainland China from today forward, will not be allowed to enter Australia for 14 days from the time they have left or transited through mainland China.

Australian citizens and permanent residents will still be able to enter, as will their immediate family members (spouses, legal guardians or dependants only). This exemption will be extended to airline crews who have been using appropriate personal protective equipment.

I want to assure Australians that we are doing everything we can, through these increased actions, to protect Australians and keep them safe from what is an escalating threat.

This is a temporary measure, which will be reviewed in 14 days.

Any foreign nationals who do arrive in Australia notwithstanding the prohibition, and who choose not to immediately return to their port of origin, will be subject to mandatory quarantine.

We will also be requiring Australian citizens, permanent residents and their families who do enter Australia and who have been in mainland China to self-isolate for 14 days from the time they left mainland China.

Further, enhanced screening arrangements will be effected at ports of entry. The Government will make 500,000 masks available for airport and port staff and arriving passengers and handheld thermometers will be made available at impacted ports.

We will also raise the travel advice to Australians for all of mainland China to Level Four – “Do not travel.”

We have not taken any of these decisions lightly. Over the past month we have consistently relied on expert advice, including from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee, based on the advice of the Communicable Diseases Network Australia. Their advice has guided the decision to announce these new measures today.

In particular, the changing epidemiology of the coronavirus in China and the uncertainty that remains around its transmission and virulence, mean the utmost precaution is warranted.

There is no basis for alarm. It is important to remember the risk to Australians is currently very low. We need to keep it that way.

Australia is well-prepared to respond to these challenges. We have been assessed by the World Health Organization as a world leader in preparedness for pandemics.

The Australian Government continues to monitor and respond to the coronavirus outbreak as it evolves.

We will work in close cooperation with state Government authorities and our international partners to coordinate our response and keep Australians safe.

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