

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS as at 1 May 2020.**General**

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

A: [On 2 March 2020, the WHO characterised the coronavirus a pandemic](#). This was based on the rapid increase in cases of the virus outside of China; the expectation that the number of cases, deaths and affected countries would rise; concern about the alarming levels of spread and severity of the virus; and the inaction by certain countries in responding to the outbreak.

Q: What does the pandemic announcement mean for Australia?

A: Australia has a world-class health care system and is well-equipped to manage the coronavirus. Australia activated its 'pandemic plan' on 27 February 2020, which put in place measures aimed at protecting Australians and visitors. The Australian Government continues to monitor and test for the coronavirus and update public health measures to protect the Australian community and travellers; either returning from, or in transit from overseas.

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

A: There are numerous resources available about the coronavirus:

- For the latest information about the coronavirus in Australia visit [Australia.gov.au](https://australia.gov.au).
- You can also visit the Australian [Department of Health](#); download the [Australian Government's Coronavirus App](#) or subscribe to its [WhatsApp Channel](#).
- The [SmartTraveller](#) website provides advice to people who are considering returning from overseas or leaving Australia.
- Detailed information about Australia's temporary national 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
 - Western Australia: 08 9328 0553
- The Australian Government has established a business hotline to help small and medium businesses impacted by the coronavirus. The hotline is open seven days a week from 7am to 11pm AEST and can be reached on: 13 28 46.
- For free financial counselling contact the [National Debt Helpline](#) on 1800 007 007.
- For the latest health and travel advice issued by the World Health Organisation visit [here](#).

Travel from Australia

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

A: Australian citizens and permanent residents [are not permitted to travel overseas](#).

- All travellers arriving in Australia must undertake a mandatory 14-day quarantine at a designated facility (for example, a hotel), in their port of arrival.
- International cruise ships are not permitted to sail in or out of Australian ports.
- For details visit the Australian Border Force [website](#).
- Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade continues to adjust its travel advice as new information becomes available.
- Visit the [Smartraveller](#) website for the most up-to-date information and 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.

Travel to Australia

Q: What is the advice for foreign visitors considering travel to and from Australia?

A: [Only Australian citizens, residents and immediate family members can travel to Australia](#).

[All international visitors are encouraged to depart Australia](#) if it is possible to do so. For details visit the [Australian Border Force website](#).

Travel within Australia

Q: What about travel within Australia?

A: As a result of the coronavirus pandemic, the Australian Government currently advises against all non-essential travel within Australia.

Australian states and territories have also introduced their own restrictions; including in some cases, closing their borders, restricting inter and intrastate travel, and mandating self-isolation of returning travellers.

While some of these restrictions are beginning to ease, as Australia appears to contain the spread of the coronavirus, we strongly advise you consult your travel agent and Australian Government websites before you undertake travel to, from, or within Australia.

You can find out more here:

- **Australian Capital Territory:** [ACT Government](#)
- **New South Wales:** [NSW Government](#)
- **Northern Territory:** [Northern Territory Government](#)
- **Queensland:** [Queensland Government](#)
- **South Australia:** [Government of South Australia](#)
- **Tasmania:** [Tasmanian Government](#)
- **Victoria:** [Victoria Department of Health and Human Services](#)
- **Western Australia:** [Government of Western Australia](#)

Q. What about restaurants, cafes, hotels, bars and clubs and other indoor venues – are they still open?

- A: At the national level, the following facilities are currently restricted from opening:
- Pubs, registered and licenced clubs (excluding bottle shops attached to these venues), hotels (excluding accommodation)
 - Gyms and indoor sporting venues
 - Cinemas, entertainment venues, casinos, and night clubs
 - Restaurants and cafes will be restricted to takeaway and/or home delivery
 - Food courts (except for take away and home delivery)
 - Personal services (beauty, nail, tanning, waxing and tattoo salons)
 - Spa and massage parlours, excluding health related services such as physiotherapy
 - Amusement parks, arcades and play centres (indoor and outdoor)
 - Galleries, national institutions, historic sites and museums
 - Health clubs, fitness centres, yoga, barre and spin facilities, saunas, bathhouses and wellness centres and swimming pools
 - Gaming and gambling venues

Hotels, hostels, bed and breakfast, campsites, caravan parks and boarding houses remain open at the discretion of each state and territory.

Q. Can I visit Australian parks and nature reserves?

- A: Some **Queensland** national parks and state forests will re-open from midnight 1 May 2020. Camping areas, barbecues and some swimming areas will remain closed for public safety. For more information visit [Queensland Parks and Forests](#).

[A number of Northern Territory parks and reserves will reopen](#) from midday on 1 May 2020. Areas that will be re-opened, including swimming spots, will depend on safety and environmental checks. Find out more [here](#).

The [Kakadu and Uluru-Kata Tjuta national parks](#), which are managed by the Federal Government will stay closed to visitors and other non-essential travellers until 11:59 pm on 18 June 2020.

Industry

Q: What measures can businesses put in place to protect their employees and guests against the 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](#).

In **Western Australia**, hospitality venues must ensure all staff members complete a specialised COVID-19 hygiene training course before they can reopen. For more information visit [here](#).

Q: What are the restrictions around indoor gatherings?

A: On 29 March 2020, Australia's National Cabinet agreed to further limit most indoor and outdoor non-essential gathering to 2 people. Rules on essential gatherings are also in place. For more information visit [here](#).

States and territories have also adopted their own restrictions. Restrictions in some states and territories are less strict than the national requirement.

Find out more about the rules in your State or Territory here:

- **Australian Capital Territory:** [ACT Government](#)
- **New South Wales:** [NSW Government](#)
- **Northern Territory:** [Northern Territory Government](#)
- **Queensland:** [Queensland Government](#)
- **South Australia:** [Government of South Australia](#)
- **Tasmania:** [Tasmanian Government](#)
- **Victoria:** [Victoria Department of Health and Human Services](#)
- **Western Australia:** [Government of Western Australia](#)

Q: I'm unsure as to whether I can open my business or not?

A: The Australian Government has prohibited certain activities and venues from opening, listed [here](#). Unless your business type is specifically listed, then you may open. However, all businesses are required to ensure four square metres of floor space per person. Restrictions are changing daily and vary by state and territory so we recommend you consult official sources.

You can find out more from your State or Territory here:

- **Australian Capital Territory:** [ACT Government](#)
- **New South Wales:** [NSW Government](#)
- **Northern Territory:** [Northern Territory Government](#)
- **Queensland:** [Queensland Government](#)
- **South Australia:** [Government of South Australia SA Health](#)
- **Tasmania:** [Tasmanian Government](#)
- **Victoria:** [Victoria Department of Health and Human Services](#)
- **Western Australia:** [Government of Western Australia](#)

Q: Are there any rules around re-opening my business?

A: The Government of Western Australia has introduced a mandatory coronavirus hygiene training program to protect the public and venue staff in preparation of return to business when coronavirus protections are eased. The specialised training course will need to be successfully completed by every staff member employed at a hospitality venue - with businesses only able to reopen when the requirements are met. More information is available [here](#).

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 immediate medical attention. More information can be found [here](#). You can also contact the Australian Government's Coronavirus Health Information Line on: 1800 020 080.

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.

Support for industry

Q: What resources does Tourism Australia have 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, as well as answers to frequently asked health and safety questions about coronavirus. Tourism Australia also has a page on its [corporate website](#) which provides information about Government funding and relief assistance for businesses impacted by coronavirus. Both pages are being updated regularly. However, advice from Government is also being updated frequently so we strongly advise you visit Government resources at first instance.

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

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

A: The Australian Government has launched an [Economic Response](#) to support households and businesses and address the significant economic consequences of coronavirus. Eligibility and timing for support can be found on [business.gov.au](#).

The Australian Government has also established a business hotline to help small and medium businesses impacted by the coronavirus. The hotline is open seven days a week and from 7am to 11pm AEST and can be reached on: **13 28 46**.

To learn more about coronavirus support from the Australian Government including financial support and advice for businesses and employees as well as advice on domestic and international travel visit [Australia.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 a [\\$1 billion Relief and Recovery Fund](#) 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 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](#) as well as [support for zoos and aquariums](#) and support for [Regional Art](#) and [Indigenous Visual Arts](#). More information about the Relief and Recovery Fund can be found [here](#). Information about the programs supported to date under the Fund can be found [here](#).

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

A: If you employ staff, you may be eligible for temporary cash flow support to help cover the costs of your employees' wages. As part of the *Boosting Cash Flow for Employers* measure, the Australian Government will provide eligible businesses that employ staff with temporary tax-free cash flow boosts from \$20,000 to \$100,000. 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. For more details click [here](#).

The Australian Government has established a business hotline to help small and medium businesses impacted by the coronavirus. The hotline is open seven days a week and from 7am to 11pm AEST and can be reached on: 13 28 46.

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

A: Casual employees who 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 the coronavirus, 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 [here](#).

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. The Government has also announced a series of measures designed to support the [flow of credit](#) including the Coronavirus SME Guarantee Scheme, which will provide a guarantee of 50 per cent to small and medium enterprise lenders for new unsecured loans to be used for working capital. The Government has also granted an exemption from responsible lending obligations for lenders providing credit to existing small business customers. More information about support for sole traders and small businesses can be found [here](#).

Q: What support is available in my state or territory?

A: Tourism Australia has made available a list of key links to the relevant state and territory government coronavirus pages. You can access these resources [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 the coronavirus for six months. Find out more [here](#).

Q: Where can I get business mentoring advice?

A: [Business Australia](#) has set up free advice lines for businesses to help them navigate this difficult time. In addition, there are a number of organisations offering online training and mentoring, some examples include:

- [Tourism Tribe](#)
- [Tourism eSchool](#)
- [Tourism Accelerator](#)
- [Travel Bootcamp](#)

Q: What support is there for the cultural or creative arts industry?

A: The Australian Government has announced a \$27 million targeted support package for the cultural and creative sector, with dedicated financial support immediately available to Indigenous art centres, regional arts and the live music and performance industry. Find out more [here](#).

In addition, The Australia Council's \$5 million [Resilience Fund](#) provides immediate relief to the Australian arts sector through three funding streams – Survive, Adapt and Create.

Free and confidential counselling support and advice is available for individuals in the music or performing arts industries through Support Act on 1300 731 303 or by contacting their Wellbeing Helpline on 1800 959 500. For more information visit the [Support Act website](#).

Q: What support is there for zoos and aquariums?

A: Eligible Australian zoos, aquariums and animal sanctuaries can access a \$94.6 million support package to help them get through the coronavirus. The funding which is part of the government's \$1 billion Relief and Recovery Fund, will assist exhibiting zoos and aquariums with the fixed operational costs associated with the caring of their animals, while also helping to ensure Australian zoos and aquariums can remain viable and ready to welcome visitors when restrictions are eased. More information is available [here](#).