



Australian Government
Department of Health

Chief Medical Officer

3 February 2020

Dear hotel and tourism operators,

Following previous correspondence, I am providing updated medical advice regarding the novel coronavirus infection (2019-nCoV). I do understand the significant impact on the tourism industry of the recent decisions to protect the Australian population from this virus, which appears to be rapidly spreading in mainland China.

Previously, as you know, we considered that the risk of transmission of the virus was only from people who had come from the Hubei province of China.

Given the recent spread of this outbreak to other provinces of China, there is now considered to be a small risk of transmission from anyone who has left (or transited through) mainland China on or after 1 February 2020. This means that we will be requiring self-isolation for anyone coming to Australia, if they have been in China on or after 1 February 2020. People who have left China (other than Hubei province) **before** 1 February 2020, whenever they come to Australia, are **not** required to isolate. If, for example, someone left Shanghai on the 28 January 2020 arriving in Australia on 3 February 2020, we would not require them to isolate.

Clearly this isolation requirement would be almost impossible to implement for the large numbers of people who usually come to Australia from China. In response to this, the Australian Government has now implemented new temporary border measures to deny entry to those who are not Australian Citizens or Permanent residents and who would otherwise be subject to quarantine (i.e., they have been in mainland China on or after 1 February 2020).

This should substantially avoid the requirements for hotel guests to be subject to isolation, as only Australian Citizens and permanent residents (and their immediate family) can now enter Australia from China after 1 February 2020 and these people are generally able to isolate in their homes.

The previously outlined requirements for isolation for people from Hubei Province or close contacts of proven cases remains in place.

To summarise the current requirements for self-isolation:

- Any person who left Hubei province less than 14 days ago (isolate until 14 days after they left Hubei).
- Any identified close contacts of proven cases of novel coronavirus (isolate until 14 days after last contact with the proven case).
- Any person who left, or transited through, mainland China on or after 1 February 2020 (isolate until 14 days after leaving China).

It is important to note that the risk of transmission of the virus from people who are well is very low, as most people are likely to only be infectious when they develop symptoms. It is as a precautionary measure that we are isolating people who remain well.

Hotels should provide patrons with information about novel coronavirus to prevent spread upon their arrival to the hotel. The decision to have guests that require isolation in your hotel, is a commercial decision for individual hotels. If you do chose to do so, we have updated factsheets for [hotel management and staff](#) and [hotel guests](#) with the latest health advice and details on what actions to take. These are available to download and distribute from health.gov.au. We hope that these fact sheets will reassure staff and guests that the risks imposed by self-isolation of well people are very low.

These fact sheets outline some simple steps to take to ensure staff safety. In summary the recommendations are:

- Where possible, staff should stay one metre or more away from ill guests unless wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). There is no need to wear PPE if staying more than one metre away. Staff should wear gloves when handling guests' items or touching potentially contaminated surfaces. Cleaning staff who are in the room for an extended period may also wear a surgical mask for added protection.
- If PPE is used it should be used correctly. Surgical masks should be properly fitted and changed if damp or soiled. Gloves and masks should be removed carefully without touching the front of the mask or outside of the gloves and alcohol-based hand rub used after removal.
- In the unlikely event that a person under the isolation requirements becomes ill, avoid all contact with them and seek medical advice about how to get help for the person. Most unwell people who are investigated for potential novel coronavirus infection are shown to be negative (they have other infections such as influenza) but it is important to treat an unwell person under isolation requirements as a potential case.

If you or your staff are aware of someone who should be in isolation and is not following health advice or have other public health concerns, contact your state or territory Public Health authority on the below numbers:

- ACT call 02 5124 9213 during business hours or (02) 9962 4155 after hours
- NSW call 1300 066 055
- NT call 08 8922 8044
- Qld call 13HEALTH (13 43 25 84)
- SA call 1300 232 272
- Tas call 1800 671 738
- Vic call 1300 651 160
- WA call 08 9328 0553

We will continue to provide regular updates on this emerging situation at www.health.gov.au.

Kind regards

Professor Brendan Murphy
Chief Medical Officer