



TALKING POINTS

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| Subject | Media Talking Points – Enhanced border control measures |
| Date | 2 February 2020 |
| Type | Agency |

ISSUE

The Prime Minister has announced enhanced border control measures that apply to people of all nationalities who were in mainland China on 1 February.

Enhanced border control measures

- The Prime Minister has announced that as of 1 February 2020, all travellers arriving from any part of mainland China, regardless of nationality, will be subject to enhanced border control measures to ensure the health, safety and well-being of the Australian community.
- This decision has been taken in response to expert advice, including from the Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer, and in the interests of public health.
- Australia will deny entry to anyone who has left or transited mainland China from 1 February, with the exception of:
 - Australian citizens
 - Permanent residents
 - Immediate family members of Australian citizens and permanent residents including spouses, minor dependents and legal guardians
 - Air and maritime crews who have taken appropriate prevention measures.
- These enhanced public safety measures will apply to those seeking to enter Australia as well as those seeking to transit through Australia en route to another country.

The ABF's role in giving effect to the Prime Minister's decision

- Australian citizens, permanent residents and the immediate family members of these people, and air crews will continue to be granted entry into Australia.
- If you have been in mainland China from 1 Feb 2020, and you are **not** an Australian citizen, permanent resident, or an immediate family member (spouse, minor dependent or legal

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guardian) of an Australian citizen or permanent resident, **do not travel to Australia at this time.**

- If you attempt to travel to Australia, either directly or indirectly, your airline will not allow you to board the flight.
- If you do arrive in Australia and it is determined you have been in mainland China from 1 Feb 2020, your visa will be cancelled and you will be immediately returned or placed in an alternative place of detention for a quarantine period.
- **Please do not attempt to travel to Australia unless you are an Australian citizen, a permanent resident or an immediate family member (spouse, minor dependent or legal guardian), until these measures are lifted.**

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- With the NSC's agreement, the Australian Border Force Commissioner has discretion to make decisions in relation to the arrival in Australia of persons who were located in or transited through China on 1 February 2020, but had departed prior to the Prime Minister's announcement.
- The ABF is working closely with international airlines and industry to ensure these measures are clearly understood, and to implement them with immediate effect.
- The ABF will work alongside other Government officials to provide information to all of those travellers from China who are permitted to enter Australia under these arrangements.

Other measures by biosecurity and health officials

- 500,000 face masks will be distributed to Australian airports to support those disembarking
- Travellers arriving from China who meet entry requirements will be counselled to self-isolate for a period of 14 days and strictly adhere to Department of Health protocols to minimise public health risks.

Messages for international travellers

- If you have been in mainland China from 1 Feb 2020, and you are not an Australian citizen, permanent resident, or an immediate family member of an Australian citizen or permanent resident, do not travel to Australia at this time.
 - If you attempt to travel to Australia, either directly or indirectly, your airline will not allow you to board the flight.
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- Permanent residents or immediate family members of Australian citizens or permanent residents, who do not hold a visa and have an urgent need to travel, should apply online and request priority processing through this address: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/departmental-forms/online-forms/australian-immigration-enquiry-form>

Implications for Australian temporary visa holders

- Australian visa holders who are ineligible for entry into Australia under these measures will have their visas cancelled on a non-prejudicial basis. The cancellation will not impact future travel or visa applications.
- Arrangements will be made to reinstate visas as appropriate following the lifting of these enhanced border control measures.
- Where these measures may mean a student will not arrive in time for commencement of their course, they should approach their provider to discuss alternative arrangements.
- As the Prime Minister announced, these measures are temporary.

Current state 02FEB2020

- Current operations with new arrangements are proceeding with no significant issues.
- No issues have been reported through the media liaison officers.
- Phone calls to our operation centre are up 146 per cent.
- We are seeing a general downward trend in passenger numbers.
- For example, in Melbourne, we were expecting 5000 scheduled passengers to arrive from China, we are now expecting 700 to arrive on four flights.
- In Brisbane, we were expecting 220, we are now only expecting 97 passengers.
- 24 passengers were denied uplift overnight.

Assisted return of Australians from Hubei province

- The Australian Border Force continues to work with whole of Government partners including the Departments of Health, Agriculture, Foreign Affairs and Trade, Defence, the Australian Federal Police and our providers to facilitate the safe reception of those repatriated, and ensure the safety of the broader community.
- DFAT is managing liaison with Chinese authorities and all flight arrangements from China to Australia.
- Advice is Wuhan flight is on track

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- The decision to use Christmas Island as a quarantine facility is a matter for the Government and the National Security Committee of Cabinet.
- The facility on Christmas Island is well suited to minimising the threat of the virus spreading.
 - Engagement with the Christmas Island community is an important part of planning for these arrangements. The ABF has a dedicated liaison team to support communication between Christmas Island community members and Government agencies assisting in this effort.
 - The Australians quarantined at the facility will have no contact with the Christmas Island community. The quarantine facility is some distance from the township and local residents.
 - Government officers and contractors working in the quarantine facility will use personal protection equipment and strictly adhere to Department of Health protocols to minimise the risk of contracting or transmitting the virus.
 - A clear infection control plan has been developed by the Department of Health.
 - As well as providing safe and comfortable accommodation for the Australians returning from China, the safety of the community, our deployed officers from every agency and any service providers is our top priority.
 - Personal protective equipment has been provided to ABF staff working in border environments, along with information about the Novel Coronavirus.

Has the Sri Lankan Tamil family been briefed?

- I can assure you the health and well-being of the family remains a key consideration for the ABF.
- Should the planning for the quarantine facility, or health advice see a need to change the current accommodation arrangements, the family will be provided that advice.

Are you providing the Sri Lankan family with any protective equipment against the virus just in case?

- The family will remain in accommodation separate from the quarantine facility.
- By following the general safety guidelines issued by the Department of Health for the rest of the community, such as basic hand washing and the use of hand sanitizers, the chances of infection are assessed as very low. Hand sanitizer is a standard item available at all immigration detention centres.

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- Should the Department of Health issue updated advice on additional protective measures for the community, any further protective equipment will be made available.
- The family will continue to have access to the on-site medical clinic which is staffed from 7am to 9pm, 7 days a week, including daily attendance as part of the ongoing management of their health and welfare.
- Medical professionals will continue to be located on site at Phosphate Hill each day and they have access to health advice related to the virus.

Isn't it still risky to have the family on the island^{547F}

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- The ABF is committed to ensuring the health and wellbeing of the family, and since March 2018 has provided access to nurses, doctors, public hospitals and specialists for all members of the family.
- On Christmas Island there is an on-site medical clinic which is staffed from 7am to 9pm, 7 days a week. Medical professionals are also located on site at Phosphate Hill each day.
- The family attend the medical clinic each morning as part of the ongoing management of their health and welfare

Did you provide a recommendation to the Government to use Christmas Island?

- The decision to use Christmas Island as a quarantine facility is a matter for the Government and the National Security Committee of Cabinet.
- As you have heard from the Minister, there is no other location where we can house up to 600 people and keep the broader Australian community safe.

What engagement has occurred with Chinese authorities to date?

- The Australian Government has been engaging with Chinese authorities through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and through our embassy in Beijing.

The Chinese Government has been very cooperative and transparent in working to find options for the departure of Australian citizens from Hubei Province.

What is the legal basis for holding these returning Australians in quarantine?

- The *Biosecurity Act 2015* has provisions which allow for various orders or measures to prevent the spread of disease.

What will happen if those in the facility try to leave before they are medically cleared?

- Prior to their departure from China, the Australians who are quarantined on Christmas Island will have consented to a 14 day quarantine period following their departure from China.

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- After the 14 day period, those who have been quarantined will be allowed back into the community if they have been medically cleared as not being symptomatic or infectious.

What measures are in place to protect the Christmas Island community?

- The Australians quarantined at North West Point will have no contact with the Christmas Island community. The quarantine centre is some distance from the township and local residents.
- Government officers and contractors working in the quarantine facility will use personal protection equipment and strictly adhere to Department of Health protocols to minimise the risk of contracting the virus.
- A clear infection control plan has been developed by the Department of Health.

Will Government employees and service providers be moving between the facility and the Christmas Island community?

- Government officers and contractors working in the quarantine facility will use personal protection equipment and strictly adhere to health protocols to minimise the risk of contracting the virus.

What conditions will the quarantined Australians have on Christmas Island? What facilities will be available to them?

- The North West Point facility has medical and dental facilities, internet access, a canteen, gym, sporting facilities and a prayer room. There is a mixture of room types to accommodate families or groups, or individuals should they need to be isolated. All rooms have ensuite bathrooms.

Will children and family groups be included in the uplift from China to Australia?

- The flight from Hubei will depart with those Australians who have nominated to return and are eligible to do so.

What if Australia-based family members want to visit / join their loved ones on Christmas Island. Will they be allowed into the facility?

- The North West Point facility is being set up as a quarantine centre to safeguard individuals and the broader Australia community. Those in the centre have consented to 14 days' isolation. They will have access to communications to contact loved ones.

What if someone dies in the facility?

- Sufficient medical personnel are on hand to prevent a critical deterioration of individuals. The quarantine facility will be staffed with highly trained medical specialists including AUSMAT experts to ensure those who have elected to go into quarantine receive the highest care and early symptoms are diagnosed and treated.

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- The World Health Organisation says only 20 per cent of patients infected require hospitalisation. We have clear and developed pathways for medivacs from Christmas Island.

What would a death mean for the other people quarantined? Would the clock reset?

- Throughout the quarantine period we will communicate clearly and concisely on the process to our citizens so that their time in quarantine results in a positive outcome. This group will be closely monitored and any deterioration will be diagnosed early and the necessary supportive counter-measures provided. We will take advice from the Department of Health on the necessary quarantine protocols if there is a change in an individual's medical status.

Is this a new role for the ABF?

- The ABF's mission is to protect Australia's border and enable legitimate travel and trade, in support of a safe, secure and prosperous Australia.
- The ABF regularly works with whole of government partners to safeguard the interests of Australians both at home and abroad.

What's the cost of all this?

- The Government's clear priority is the safety of Australians both at home and abroad, resulting in the decision to offer Australians in Hubei Province the opportunity to fly home, while keeping the community safe.

What's the cost to the travellers who are unable to board their flights or detained?

- If you are not eligible to board your flight to Australia the airline will be responsible for covering the cost.
- If you are detained in Australia and/or returned, the Australian Government will bear the costs involved, this includes if you are detained at the airport.

Why Christmas Island and not mainland Australia?

- The Christmas Island facility has more than 600 beds and has been in hot contingency for almost a year. It has medical facilities and is well suited to minimising the threat of the virus spreading to the broader Australian community.

Will the individuals on Christmas Island be allowed / enabled to communicate freely with people in Australia?

- North West Point facility has internet access and those in quarantine will have full access to communications.

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Enhanced border control measures

- The Prime Minister has announced that as of 1 February 2020, all travellers arriving from any part of mainland China, regardless of nationality, will be subject to enhanced border control measures to ensure the health, safety and well-being of the Australian community.
- This decision has been taken in response to expert advice, including from the Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer, and in the interests of public health.
- Australia is well placed to respond to ill travellers and passengers that may be at risk of contracting infection, with border, isolation, surveillance and contact tracing mechanisms and arrangements already in place.
 - The ABF is responding based on the most up to date expert medical advice, and will continue to work with other Government agencies including the Department of Health.
- Australia will deny entry to anyone who was in or transited through mainland China on or since 1 February, with the exception of:
 - Australian citizens
 - Permanent residents
 - Immediate family members of Australian citizens and permanent residents including spouses, minor dependents and legal guardians
 - Air and maritime crews for whom we are satisfied have taken appropriate prevention measures.
- These enhanced public safety measures will apply to those people.

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- Australia is well placed to respond to ill travellers and passengers that may be at risk of contracting infection, with border, isolation, surveillance and contact tracing mechanisms and arrangements already in place.
 - The ABF is responding based on the most up to date expert medical advice, and will continue to work with other Government agencies including the Department of Health.

Messages for international travellers

- At 9.30pm 1 Feb 2020, I issues a direction to airlines and industries. The effect of that direction is:
 - If you have been in mainland China from 1 Feb 2020, and you are not an Australian citizen, permanent resident, or an immediate family member of an Australian citizen or permanent resident, do not travel to Australia at this time.
 - If you attempt to travel to Australia, either directly or indirectly, your airline will not allow you to board the flight.
 - If you do arrive in Australia and it is determined you have been in mainland China from 1 Feb 2020, your visa will be cancelled and you will be placed in an alternative place of detention for a quarantine period
 - Please do not attempt to travel to Australia unless you are an Australian citizen, a permanent resident or an immediate family member, until these measures are lifted.
- Permanent residents or immediate family members of Australian citizens or permanent residents, who do not hold a visa and have an urgent need to travel, should apply online and request priority processing through this address: <https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/help-support/departmental-forms/online-forms/australian-immigration-enquiry-form>

Current state 02FEB2020

- We are seeing a general downward trend in passenger numbers.
- For example, in Melbourne, we were expecting 5000 scheduled passengers to arrive from China, we are now expecting 700 to arrive on four flights.
- In Brisbane, we were expecting 220, we are now only expecting 97 passengers.
- 71 passengers were denied uplift overnight and up to 12 flights have been cancelled today. 80 flights have proceeded.

Q&As**FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**

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How will the ABF know which people arriving in Australia are subject to these measures?

- The ABF has established advanced screening and reception arrangements to facilitate identification of those individuals to whom these measures apply.
- In most circumstances, if a traveller does not meet Australian entry conditions they will not be permitted to board a plane destined for Australia.

What support are airlines being provided to identify people who will be refused entry if they travel to Australia?

- The ABF is working closely with international airlines and industry to ensure these measures are clearly understood, and to implement them with immediate effect.
- The ABF's cooperation with international airlines means that in most circumstances, if a traveller does not meet entry conditions they will be denied uplift.

What will happen to people who arrive at the border and don't meet exemption criteria?

- Non-citizens who do not meet the exemption criteria will have their visa cancelled and be expected to return home on the next available flight.
- If a non-citizen does not return home they will be placed into immigration detention.

Where will people be held if they are detained after arrival (i.e. where will the APODs be)?

- Where circumstances allow, non-citizens will be removed via the next available flight. Accommodation arrangements are in place for their detention, pending removal.

What if people on aircraft bound for Australia or at Australian airports demonstrate signs or symptoms of illness?

- Passengers who demonstrate signs or symptoms of illness will be subject to referral to biosecurity/health measures.

What will happen to people who are ineligible for entry into Australia, and who attempt to transit Australia? Will they be detained as well?

- Non-citizens who do not meet the exemption criteria, including those in transit, will be placed in an alternate place of detention pending their removal.

How will the crew of merchant vessels be affected?

- The ABF is working with industry to ensure these measures are clearly understood.
- It will be expected that non-citizens remain on their vessels while in Australia.

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What will happen to crew on cargo ships who are now ineligible to enter Australia?

- It will be expected that non-citizens remain on their vessels while in Australia.

What will happen to cargo on these ships?

- The ABF is working with industry to minimise any impact to commercial shipping arrangements.

Does this apply to NZ citizens eligible for a Subclass 444 Special Category visas?

- NZ citizens are not exempt from these measures but individual circumstances will be considered in the determination of whether visas are cancelled.

What will happen to people who have visas to enter Australia?

- Non-citizens who do not meet the exemption criteria will have their visa cancelled on arrival and placed in an alternate place of detention pending their removal.

What happened to passengers in the air at the time of the announcement?

- All passengers who departed to Australia on 1 February 2020 prior to the Prime Minister's announcement will be subject to enhanced screening but, pending clearance, will be granted entry to Australia.

When did we last close the border/cancel visas? (clue – Ebola virus)

- X

Assisted return of Australians from Hubei province

- The Australian Border Force continues to work with whole of Government partners including the Departments of Health, Agriculture, Foreign Affairs and Trade, Defence, the Australian Federal Police and our providers to facilitate the safe reception of those repatriated, and ensure the safety of the broader community.
- DFAT is managing liaison with Chinese authorities and all flight arrangements from China to Australia.
- Advice is Wuhan flight is on track
- The decision to use Christmas Island as a quarantine facility is a matter for the Government and the National Security Committee of Cabinet.
- The facility on Christmas Island is well suited to minimising the threat of the virus spreading.
 - Engagement with the Christmas Island community is an important part of planning for these arrangements. The ABF has a dedicated liaison team

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to support communication between Christmas Island community members and Government agencies assisting in this effort.

- The Australians quarantined at the facility will have no contact with the Christmas Island community. The quarantine facility is some distance from the township and local residents.
- Government officers and contractors working in the quarantine facility will use personal protection equipment and strictly adhere to Department of Health protocols to minimise the risk of contracting or transmitting the virus.
- A clear infection control plan has been developed by the Department of Health.
- As well as providing safe and comfortable accommodation for the Australians returning from China, the safety of the community, our deployed officers from every agency and any service providers is our top priority.
- Personal protective equipment has been provided to ABF staff working in border environments, along with information about the Novel Coronavirus.

Has the Sri Lankan Tamil family been briefed?

- I can assure you the health and well-being of the family remains a key consideration for the ABF.
- Should the planning for the quarantine facility, or health advice see a need to change the current accommodation arrangements, the family will be provided that advice.

Are you providing the Sri Lankan family with any protective equipment against the virus just in case?

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Isn't it still risky to have the family on the island^{s47F}

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What engagement has occurred with Chinese authorities to date?

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What is the legal basis for holding these returning Australians in quarantine?

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What will happen if those in the facility try to leave before they are medically cleared?

- Prior to their departure from China, the Australians who are quarantined on Christmas Island will have consented to a 14 day quarantine period following their departure from China.
- After the 14 day period, those who have been quarantined will be allowed back into the community if they have been medically cleared as not being symptomatic or infectious.

What measures are in place to protect the Christmas Island community?

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Will Government employees and service providers be moving between the facility and the Christmas Island community?

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