



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications

Australia's coordinated health and aviation response to COVID-19

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National cooperative approach based on basic principles, including:

- Coordination between Commonwealth, State and Territory governments
- decision making based on best available health authority advice
- working with industry to enhance effective implementation.

Managing the national response – government coordination

- Sharing of information across Australia's different tiers of government is important to ensuring an effective and coordinated national response
- Australia's state and territory governments have a major role in health matters, and
 - Work together with the Australian Government
 - Share information in order to provide the best possible care.
- The Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus outlines how key activities will operate and how the public can support the COVID-19 response.

Managing the national response – health authority advice

- Australia's peak Australian Health Protection Principle Committee (AHPPC) makes key decisions and coordinates Australia's national health response to the COVID-19 pandemic
 - AHPPC comprises Chief Health Officers from each Australian state and territory; the Chief Medical Officer, and representatives from key departments
- Information on the Australian Government response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and who the Government is working with to limit the spread of COVID-19 is available publicly through the Department of Health (Australia's national health authority) website (www.health.gov.au)
- The National Cabinet is Australia's peak intergovernmental decision-making forum, and comprises the Prime Minister and the Premiers and Chief Ministers of the states and territories
 - established to coordinate the overall national response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Australia
 - AHPPC medical advice continues to drive and support decisions by the National Cabinet, which is also briefed by border control and transport departments amongst others to inform decision making

Managing the national response – application to aviation

- Australia's national health authority website makes available a large amount of advice, guidance and explanation of distancing and hygiene requirements including for aviation publication of a dedicated advisory document on managing the health risks from COVID-19 on international flights.
- Safe Work Australia has published guidance material for industry regarding cleaning and disinfecting the workplace, which can be applied at international airports.
- Information on the Australian Government response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and who the Government is working with to limit the spread of COVID-19 is available publicly through the Department of Health (Australia's national health authority) website (www.health.gov.au)
- All travellers currently arriving in Australia by air or sea must go into government approved mandatory quarantine for 14 days from arrival, with very limited exceptions including those for airline crew.
- Australian Government has endorsed a Domestic Passenger Journey Protocol developed through an aviation industry led process aimed at keeping travellers safe as COVID-19 restrictions on domestic aviation travel ease - release of the Protocol was supported by AHPPC.

Australia's aviation challenges going forward

- One of our major States in Australia, Victoria has had to reimpose strong measures including a curfew to seek to slow the community transmission of COVID-19.
- While most other States continue to have low numbers of COVID-19 cases, there remains a range of domestic border restrictions in place throughout Australia to reduce COVID-19 risk.
- This has unfortunately negatively impacted on our domestic aviation industry just when a few “green shoots” of recovery had emerged.
- International travel remains at historically low levels and we have put in place international passenger arrival caps at our major airports due to pressures on quarantine capacity.
- Australia and New Zealand officials have done some very good work on what a trans-Tasman COVID-19 safe travel zone between the two countries without quarantine might look like.
- However the current situation in terms of community transmission in some parts of Australia clearly challenges that zone coming into effect for now.

Asia Pacific airlines and airports industry/agencies – Food for Thought

- Aircraft have been built and operated in the current manner for several decades.
- They are challenged by COVID-19 given they are operated by having close proximity of passengers, multiple passenger/crew contacts and a range of food and entertainment services.
- What might a different aircraft operating model look like so that we minimise the health risk but still provide a travel experience that people want to use?
- Airports are known for wanting to maximise the number of people that go through them.
- What might a different airport operating model look like if we need to maintain physical distancing and people not lingering or being close to each other in any one location (e.g. the retail area).
- For aircraft and airports do we make temporary infrastructure or operating procedures changes now just to get us through the COVID “crisis” period?
- Or perhaps better to make changes designed to handle second and subsequent waves of COVID-19
- And hopefully – we do see a vaccine which reduces the international transmission threat and allows some more “business as usual” activities in international aviation.
- But we should not just assume this will happen.....