

INDUSTRY BRIEF

Covid-19: Australian dairy industry risks

Wednesday 11 March 2020

OVERVIEW

This industry briefing note provides:

- Key messages for industry (page 3);
- A situation analysis of Covid-19 outbreak in Australia;
- Exploration of current and potential impacts on the Australian dairy industry, including a call for intelligence from industry participants; and
- Detail on industry response activities undertaken and planned.

BACKGROUND

The following is a snapshot of the current situation related to Covid-19, with more detailed situational analysis provided as an attachment to this document (page 4).

- **Global spread** – As at 10 March, there have been more than 113,000 confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) and more than 3,900 reported deaths.
 - The majority of cases and deaths associated with COVID-19 have been reported from mainland China.
 - There have been more than 32,000 cases, including approximately 850 deaths, reported from 108 countries and regions outside mainland China. The majority of deaths outside mainland China have been in Italy and Iran.
 - Of confirmed cases reported globally, the case fatality rate is approximately 3.9%. The case fatality rate in countries and regions outside mainland China is approximately 2.4%.
 - The majority of new cases are reported from Republic of Korea, Italy and Iran.
- **Australian cases** - As at 11:00 hrs on 10 March 2020, we have 100 confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19), including 3 deaths, in Australia. Sources of each case are outline by the [Department of Health online](#).
- **Travel advice** – Australians should consult the [Smartraveller website](#) and subscribe for updates or call the Coronavirus Health Information Line 1800 020 080 for advice.
- **Animal exposure** – The World Organisation for Animal Health and the Australian Veterinary Association have confirmed Covid-19 virus has an animal source but that the current spread is a result of human to human transmission and no evidence that livestock can contract or spread the disease. However, as of 4 March, the Australian Veterinary Association have advised that Hong Kong's Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department has identified a case of Covid-19 in a Pomeranian. It is believed that this is a case of human-to-animal (reverse zoonotic) transmission. At this stage there is no

evidence that dogs can play a role in the spread of this human disease, or that they become sick.

Bovine coronavirus (BCoV) is a recognised cause of calf scours on some Australian dairy farms. BCoV is genetically distinct from COVID-19 and there is no evidence of zoonotic transmission. Appropriate personal hygiene should always be taken when handling sick animals.

- **Reputational risk** – Given the global extent of the spread and presence in all significant dairy regions, there is no elevated risk for the Australian dairy industry or Australian products in particular.
- **Supply chain** – informal reports have indicated shortages of some goods primarily sourced from China, including herbicides and urea – possibly exacerbated by recent rainfall stimulating on farm activity – as well as packaging supplies.
- **Dairy demand** – see details in trade and markets briefing note attached (page 6). Overall, there has been only modest impact on milk demand and supply in the region, with some demand for powder and shelf stable products being stimulated by pantry stocking. Shortages of local supplies of infant powder or milk powder are unlikely to emerge due to the personal shopper or daigou services being interrupted by travel bans.
- **Export access** – Chinese ports are slowly returning to normal operations following congestion caused by internal distribution networks being disrupted and labour limitations. However, typically securing shipping space could be arranged in a matter of days, the backlog now means exporters are having to book space well in advance. It could be up to 3 months before this situation resolves assuming the situation continues to improve in China.
- **Food safety** - [FSANZ is reporting](#) that previous experience with outbreaks of illness due to MERS-CoV, SARS-CoV and other respiratory viruses (e.g. avian influenza) suggest that novel coronavirus may have been transmitted from animals to humans. However, transmission through food is unlikely and there is no evidence of this occurring with novel coronavirus to date.

Investigations to identify the source of the outbreak, the extent of spread of the infection, and mode(s) of transmission are continuing. FSANZ will continue to monitor developments and liaise with the Department of Health, the Department of Agriculture, state and territory health authorities and international counterparts to assess the possibility of foodborne transmission of the virus.

INDUSTRY RESPONSE

National dairy industry organisations have been working to coordinate efforts to project, plan for and monitor impacts of the Covid-19 outbreak on the dairy industry. Actions taken or planned to date include:

- **Industry communications** – The below key messages for industry have been developed for all industry audiences. Dairy Australia will deliver these messages through a direct email to all levy payers and via social media channels. We encourage any industry participants to make use of these messages as appropriate. We have also compiled a resource list (page 8) which may be of help in directing industry participants to accurate expert information from relevant authorities.
- **Government liaison** – Dairy Australia has been participating in weekly forums with agricultural sector colleagues, DFAT and DAWE to contribute to information on industry impacts particularly related to impact on trade and export markets.
- **Trade & export briefings** – DA's Trade & Strategy team have issued a series of trade and export impact briefings. The latest edition as at 6 March 2020 is included below (page 6).

- **Processor/exporter intelligence gathering** – In advance of the Trade Reference Group Meeting next Tuesday 17 March, a survey has been circulated to export managers and processor contacts to collate industry intelligence on current and projected impacts.
- **Processor teleconference** – A teleconference open to all Australian dairy processors, hosted by ADPF, with details circulated to ADPF members, has been scheduled for Friday 13 March. This discussion will inform future response activities and information shared with government and other stakeholders.

Dairy Australia has also developed a travel policy, policy regarding international visitors and revised our flexible working policy (see page 14). A series of FAQs which may be useful to other organisations has been developed and is provided at page 9 for reference. Further, we are currently mapping staff travel plans for the remainder of 2020 to manage workload impacts.

KEY MESSAGES FOR INDUSTRY

Key messages 1: What is it?

- Coronavirus are a large family of viruses. The new strain which has emerged is being referred to by WHO as Covid-19. Common symptoms of the disease include a fever, cough and difficulty breathing. Severe cases can cause pneumonia, and even death.
- Covid-19 is spread by coughing or sneezing, or by contact with contaminated hands, surfaces or objects.
- People who might have been in contact with a confirmed case are being asked to self-isolate for 14 days, because symptoms can first appear up to 14 days after contracting the virus.
- More resources are available from the [Department of Health](#).

Key Messages 2: How do I stay updated?

- To stay up-to-date as to how to best protect yourself against Covid-19, please check-out [these resources](#) from the Department of Health.
- If you are employing people, have a look at [these resources](#) with advice for employers
- To stay up-to-date about travel restrictions, please check out the [Department of Health's website](#) or the [Smartraveller website](#)

Key Messages 3: Consider business impacts

- Consider how Covid-19 and containment measures could impact your dairy business and make contingency plans, including:
 - Protecting your staff from exposure - consider international visitors, people returning from overseas from [at risk areas](#), and [consider self-isolation](#) if staff unwell.
 - How you would operate with limited labour due to staff having to self-isolate following travel or closure of schools or childcare
 - What goods (e.g. chemicals) do you rely on to keep your business going in the coming 3-4 months and which ones are imported, particularly from China? Contact suppliers to secure goods or source alternatives.

Key Messages 4: Biosecurity Plans

- Dairy farm businesses should enact their biosecurity plan, this includes procedures around:
 - Farm visitors
 - Thorough business hygiene practices for staff
- Refresh your biosecurity plan if needed – use the DA [Biosecurity tool](#)

MEDIA

The most appropriate spokespeople for industry will be determined by the nature/subject of the inquiry.

- Where enquiries relate to the impact on processor businesses (commercial impacts), supply chain or product distribution challenges, these will be referred to **ADPF** through Janine Waller for response
- Where enquiries relate to commercial impacts on farm or other impacts from a farmer perspective, which have impact on farmer profitability, returns, viability etc. or relate to government response, these will be referred to **ADF** through Ashley Mackinnon for response
- Where enquiries relate to industry data, quantitative trade and export market impacts, demand and supply changes etc., these will be referred to **DA's trade and strategy team** through Charles McElhone for response.

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For reference, this briefing note has been sent to a broad list of national, state and regional industry stakeholders.

The content within this industry briefing is confidential. Please respect that this brief contains personal/commercial information which is not for broader circulation. Please seek permission from Dairy Australia before reproducing or communicating any of the content outside your organisation.

Please advise Georgia Nicholls of anyone you wish to add to this distribution list.

See following pages for attachments.

DETAILED SITUATION ANALYSIS

The ongoing threat of Coronavirus presents and threat not only to regional trade and markets, but should the spread continue at the current pace, could impact business continuity through labour constraints and supply chain challenges.

We understand Coronavirus is already having an impact on trade – see attached brief regarding the trade and export impacts from 6 March at page 7.

There have also been some informal reports of restricted access to chemicals manufactured in China. It is supply chain impacts like these that require more consideration, as does the management of labour on farm/in factory to control risks and how to manage labour shortages which may result.

Global status

Across the world, there have been more than 113,000 confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) and more than 3,900 reported deaths.

The majority of cases and deaths associated with COVID-19 have been reported from mainland China.

There have been more than 32,000 cases, including approximately 850 deaths, reported from 108 countries and regions outside mainland China. The majority of deaths outside mainland China have been in Italy and Iran.

Of confirmed cases reported globally, the case fatality rate is approximately 3.9%. The case fatality rate in countries and regions outside mainland China is approximately 2.4%.

The majority of new cases are reported from Republic of Korea, Italy and Iran.

Australian cases

The [Australian Department of Health](#) reports that as at 11:00 hrs on 10 March 2020, we have 100 confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19), including 3 deaths, in Australia.

- 54 in New South Wales
- 12 in Queensland
- 6 in South Australia
- 2 in Tasmania
- 12 in Victoria
- 4 in Western Australia
- 10 associated with the Diamond Princess cruise ship

Of these cases:

- 15 of the initially reported cases in Australia all had a direct or indirect travel history to Wuhan, China
- 10 cases, including 1 death, are associated with the Diamond Princess cruise ship repatriation flight from Japan
- 18 cases are reported to have had a direct or indirect travel history to Iran
- 27 cases are reported to have had a travel history to countries including Singapore, the United States of America, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, Italy, Iceland, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, Cuba, Indonesia, Nepal and Taiwan
- 27 cases, including 2 deaths, do not have a reported history of overseas travel
 - 8 of these cases are associated with an aged care facility in NSW. 2 residents of this facility have sadly died
 - 2 cases are either directly or indirectly associated with attendance at a workshop
 - 14 cases are close contacts of known cases, with further details pending
 - 3 cases are under investigation, with further details pending
- The likely place of exposure for a further 3 newly reported cases is under investigation

Of the 100 Australian cases reported, 22 of these cases are reported to have recovered.

Disease status

- The Australian Department of Health updates this [‘Health Alert’ page](#) every day with the latest medical advice and official reports.
- For questions about testing or the welfare of people with the virus, contact your [state or territory health authority](#).
- The [Australian Health Protection Principal Committee](#) makes decisions on immigration and travel policies to manage international health risks on behalf of the Australian Government.
- The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has raised the level of advice for:
 - Italy
 - Iran
 - Japan

- South Korea (Daegu and Cheongdo)
 - Mainland China
 - Mongolia
- Australians travelling overseas are encouraged to regularly review the [Smartraveller website](#) and subscribe for updates.
- Coronavirus Health Information Line – call this line 24hrs, 7 days per week for information on Coronavirus 1800 020 080.

Animal exposure

- According to the Australian Veterinary Association, current evidence suggests that the COVID-19 virus has an animal source. However, the current spread of COVID-19 is a result of human to human transmission.
- However, as of 4 March, the Australian Veterinary Association have advised that Hong Kong's Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department has identified a case of Covi-19 in a Pomeranian. It is believed that this is a case of human-to-animal (reverse zoonotic) transmission. At this stage there is no evidence that dogs can play a role in the spread of this human disease, or that they become sick.
- See [FAQs](#) and [comprehensive guidance](#) on companion animal exposure.
- The Department of Agriculture has not provided Dairy Australia with specific guidance on the risk of transmission of the 2019-nCoV strain of coronavirus to or from dairy cattle.
- Please note the strain is important as there are some existing coronaviruses endemic to cattle in Australia.
- We will continue to speak with Animal Health Australia to understand more about potential livestock health impacts as more is known.

Food Safety

- The International Dairy Foods Association has confirmed that no public health authority has advised of any concern that this illness can be transmitted or has been known to be transmitted via food or drink and as such, there are no concerns as to the safety of dairy foods.

Cleaning standards

Please find below some information on cleaning standards for Coronavirus provided by the Australian Government Department of Health in response to a member query on what is expected of retailers if there is a direction by a health department to close and clean a store (e.g. if a virus carrier was identified as attending a store, and the advice was to close the store).

- The length of time that SARS-COV-2 (which causes COVID-19) survives on inanimate surfaces will vary depending on many factors including the amount of body fluid associated the contamination plus the ambient temperature and humidity of the environment. In general, coronaviruses in droplets do not survive very long on dry surfaces when the droplet of mucus produced by coughing or sneezing dries out.
- Because people who sneeze and cough may be present throughout the opening times of the store, frequent cleaning, especially of surfaces and items frequently touched is important. Alcohol-based hand rub stations should be placed liberally around shopping aisles, especially in areas where food stuffs are on display and where frequent touching of produce occurs.
- Signs should be considered to ask shoppers to only touch what they intend to purchase. Training staff to encourage use of alcohol-based hand rub as well as coughing and sneezing etiquette should be instituted by company WHS advisors.
- The risk when cleaning is not the same as the risk when face to face with a sick person who may be coughing or sneezing.
- Cleaning staff should be informed to avoid touching their face, especially their mouth, nose, and eyes when cleaning. Cleaning staff should wear impermeable disposable gloves and a surgical mask plus eye protection while cleaning. Cleaners should use alcohol-based hand rub before and after wearing gloves. Alcohol-based hand rub should also be used after removing the surgical mask and eye protection. The reason for the surgical mask and eye protection, is because even though the virus will not usually become airborne from cleaning, the surgical mask and eye protection acts as a barrier when people inadvertently touch their face with contaminated hands and fingers whether gloved or not.
- Simple disinfectants with label claims noting action against viruses can kill the virus making it no longer possible to infect people.
- If there is visible body fluid contamination the cleaner should also wear a full-length disposable gown in addition to the surgical mask, eye protection, and gloves. Advice should be sought from your WHS consultants on correct procedures for wearing PPE.

Overview

- The Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) started spreading internationally in January 2020. It originates from the Chinese province of Hubei and as of the 5th of February 95,333 cases of the virus has been confirmed. 85% of the cases are located in China, with 14,768 cases confirmed outside the country, 66 in Australia.
- The virus causes viral pneumonia and hence antibiotics are of no use. The majority of people who have died were in already poor health with weak immune systems.
- As of the 1st of February, visitors travelling from mainland China are not allowed to enter Australia. Exceptions are made for Australian citizens, permanent residents and their immediate families. Travel restrictions are also in place for travellers from Iran, South Korea and Italy. Additionally, the Australian government has raised the travel advise for travel to China, Iran, South Korea, Japan, Italy and Mongolia.

Impact on the Australian dairy industry

It is still too early to speculate on the full effect the Coronavirus will have on export markets; some impacts have already been reported:

- **Impact on global commodity prices**

Dairy commodity prices have fallen at the past three GDT events (253, 254, 255), down 4.7%, 2.9% and 1.2% respectively. Prices fell for all products amid fears that the virus will stifle demand for dairy out of China. These price revisions are driven by market sentiment, rather than substantiated shifts to demand, and prices have not fallen as much as previously expected. While total volume sold decreased at the latter two events (#254, #255), reports suggest buyers have limited coverage too far ahead at the moment and will need to keep buying products unless demand falls at a consumer level.

- **Impact on food service**

With over half of the Chinese population under some form of quarantine restriction, many restaurants and stores have closed as people are avoiding crowded spaces. Yum Brands (owner of KFC and Pizza hut) has allegedly closed 30% of their stores in China which is likely to impact demand for cheese. The food service sector is the most affected so far and the length of the disruption will be key when determining the full impact of the virus for the dairy industry.

- **Logistic and distribution challenges**

Currently, there hasn't been a significant reported impact on underlying Chinese demand for dairy, however, a real challenge is getting products to the right place. The Chinese government has taken significant action to contain the spread of the virus and quarantined part of the population, which has kept firms and factories closed. Whilst ports remain open there is allegedly a backlog of containers and combined with some road closures, delays in getting products to consumers have been reported. With people returning to work in China over the past few days, some of the containers are allegedly being cleared. Some containers are also being diverted into less crowded ports which could add charges. Availability of containers is also an issue for some exporters. Additionally, reports suggest some are finding it challenging to get access to ships bound for China, as shipping lines struggle to fill vessels for the return trip, this has seen an increase in blank sailings.

- **Supply chain challenges for the local industry**

With factory closures in China, quarantine measures and supply chain disruptions, manufacturing of chemicals, fertilisers and rural supplies may get delayed. This could see the cost increase and also delay supply of key agricultural inputs to Australia in the lead-up to the winter crop planting season.

Furthermore, the Australian Government has announced additional boarder measures for vessels that have been to or transition through affected countries. This might impact interrupt the distribution and supply of ag chemicals

- **Employment impacts**

Since the outbreak, Coronavirus has been detected in close to 80 countries. With some quarantine measures in place, and heightened concerns around travel, international air traffic has been impacted. Major airlines have cancelled connections as people are reportedly more hesitant to travel. This is likely to affect tourism in Australia but could potentially also impact availability of overseas workers.

- **Longer term impacts in China**

China is the world's largest importer of dairy products and any significant impact on the Chinese economy is likely to have flow-on effect on import demand for all types of products. As the virus continues to be centred around the Hubei province, other regions are reportedly slowly and unevenly returning to normal. This is encouraging as it could minimise the overall impact on the Chinese economy. The quicker the outbreak can be contained, the smaller the impact on overall trade is likely to be.

Reports suggest processing and producing milk in China has been impacted by the disruption caused by the Coronavirus. Small-to-medium size farms have apparently been seen dumping some milk due to logistical challenges in getting the milk to the factories. This is not suggested to be a problem for larger farms. Additionally, an increase in drying of raw milk has started in many regions as a response to disruption and lower demand in retail channels. If continued, this could increase China's availability of powder later in the season and impact import demand.

RESOURCES AND ADVICE

World Health Organisation

- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) advice for the public: When and how to use masks](#)
- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) advice for the public](#)
- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) advice for the public: Myth busters](#)
- [Q&As](#) re Animal Health

Australia Department of Health

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) – what you need to know](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information on the use of surgical masks](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information for hotel guests](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information for casual contacts of a confirmed case](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) isolation guidance](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information about home isolation when unwell \(suspected or confirmed cases\)](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information about returning to your community](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information for travellers arriving from mainland China or Iran](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information for people with a suspected case \(疑似病例患者须知\)](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information for schools and early childhood centres, students and parents](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information for employers](#)

US Centre for Disease Control (CDC)

- [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\), February 2020](#), US Centre for Disease Control (CDC), includes:
 - Recommended strategies for employers to use now
 - Important Considerations for Creating an Infectious Disease Outbreak Response Plan
 - Planning considerations for employers
- [Travel: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers](#) (for individuals), CDC
- [CDC Videos](#)

Miscellaneous

- [COVID-19: guidance for employers and businesses](#), Gov.UK
- [8 Questions Employers Should Ask About Coronavirus](#), Harvard Business Review
- [Guide on Business Continuity Planning for 2019 novel coronavirus](#), Enterprise Singapore

What is Coronavirus/Covid-19?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause illness from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

Initial human infections of the novel type of coronaviruses were acquired from exposure to animals at a live animal market in Wuhan.

The disease caused by the novel coronavirus has been named Covid-19 by the World Health Organization.

Common symptoms of the disease include a fever, cough and difficulty breathing. Severe cases can cause pneumonia, and even death.

More resources are available from the [Department of Health](#).

How does Coronavirus spread?

Covid-19 is spread from someone with confirmed coronavirus to other close contacts with that person through contaminated droplets spread by coughing or sneezing, or by contact with contaminated hands, surfaces or objects.

The time between when a person is exposed to the virus and when symptoms first appear is typically 5 to 6 days, although may range from 2 to 14 days. For this reason, people who might have been in contact with a confirmed case are being asked to self-isolate for 14 days.

It is important to note that no public health authority has advised of any concern that this illness can be transmitted or has been known to be transmitted via food or drink.

How do I learn more about the virus and containment measures?

World Health Organisation

- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) advice for the public: When and how to use masks](#)
- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) advice for the public](#)
- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) advice for the public: Myth busters](#)
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Australia Department of Health

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- [Guide on Business Continuity Planning for 2019 novel coronavirus](#), Enterprise Singapore

What do I do if I suspect I have Coronavirus?

If you develop symptoms while travelling or within 14 days of returning to Australia, see a doctor for urgent assessment. Call the doctor's clinic or hospital before you arrive and advise them of your travel history.

[Guidelines from the Department of Health](#) recommend Australian doctors consider testing people with a clinically compatible illness who have travelled to certain countries in the 14 days before onset of symptoms.

How can I best protect myself against the virus?

- Practice coughing and sneezing hygiene – always cover your mouth and nose when sneezing
- Wash your hands regularly – always before eating – count to 20 seconds and wash hands all over – 20-seconds is much longer than one thinks
- Keep your hands away from your mouth, nose and eyes – that's how most people get the virus – not by breathing it – the virus appears not to infect in airborne aerosol fashion very well
- When in public, including on public transportation, practice common sense separation and distancing
- Take up the opportunity to get the flu vaccine. Sick people are more susceptible, so even if the seasonal flu vaccine is only 30 – 40% effective, it's worth getting.

What do I do if I live with or care for people who would be particularly vulnerable if they were exposed to Coronavirus?

Respiratory illnesses have most serious health consequences for the elderly, children, adults with conditions which have compromised their immune system or are currently taking medication which does the same. Fortunately, analysis of the spread and impacts to date have shown children are far less vulnerable to suffering severe symptoms than would typically be expected. Nonetheless, schools, aged care facilities and health care facilities require the highest level of caution to avoid severe illness and death.

If you have, care for or live with someone who is particularly vulnerable,

Can DA supply facemasks and antiviral hand wash?

Both suitably accredited facemasks and antiviral hand wash are in drastically short supply internationally and international authorities are asking that everyone support efforts to prioritise access for health care workers and those working in care settings.

From a practical perspective, if you're not trained and they're not properly fitted (no facial hair) and you have clean hands when you put them on and take them off, they are ineffective.

Are we overreacting given the current level of threat in Australia?

The Australian Government acted early, and attracted some criticism, for enacting the national emergency response plan which means we are operating on the basis the virus is a pandemic.

Whilst this may seem like a disproportionate response given the threat posed by Covid-19 but it has the advantage of offering clear and direct advice to the community, limiting fear and speculation.

It is important that DA as an organisation supports the Australian government efforts to act as responsible corporate citizens and align our policies and recommendations to available expert advice from national authorities. Our approach is also consistent with corporate actors internationally.

Further, the downside of adopting a conservative approach is far less problematic than failure to take action soon enough.

This is a dynamic and fluid situation. Having established a formal issue management plan and team, we are equipped to proactively address concerns and uncertainty as the event unfolds over the coming months.

What do I do if I feel unwell but have no reason to conclude it is Coronavirus?

If you have any concerns about your health or that of your family, work from home.

Refer to flexibility guidelines around remote working.

The policy regarding the requirement for medical certificates remains unchanged. We do ask that in the event staff work from home for 2 or more consecutive days due to even mild symptoms of concern, a medical certificate is required to support their health and wellbeing and return to work.

What if I need to work from home and don't have my laptop or other materials I need from the office?

If any staff member requires their laptop or other materials to be retrieved from the office to permit them to work from home, DA will arrange for a courier to remove the need to travel into the office.

What does self-isolation mean?

If you are required to self-isolate following travel or due to illness in your family, you should stay home — in your room, your apartment, or your house. Do not go to work, classes, athletic events, or other social gatherings for 14 days after returning from travel or potential exposure. In addition to the standard hygiene practices listed above, you should:

- Limit contact with other people as much as possible. This includes isolating yourself as much as possible from anyone living in your residence.
- Avoid sharing household items. Do not share drinking glasses, towels, eating utensils, bedding, or any other items until you are no longer asked to self-quarantine.
- Keep your surroundings clean.

How do I make an informed decision about personal travel?

The following sources of information are a good starting point to informed decisions about personal travel:

- [Department of Home Affairs](#) immigration restrictions (including returning citizens)
- [Department of Health](#) daily alerts
- [Smartraveler.gov.au](#) Coronavirus travel advice
- World Health Organisation [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) technical guidance](#)

You should also investigate what coverage you have under your travel insurance as this is often limited in the case of epidemics or pandemics and could leave you vulnerable to medical costs in event you contract the virus overseas.

What do I do if I hear racist or discriminatory comments about Coronavirus at work?

There have been reports in Australian media of prejudice towards those with Chinese heritage or family members. We know all DA staff will embrace and be ambassadors for a zero-tolerance policy on any negative or hostile comments.

No longer confined

Do I need to worry about shortages of household goods like toilet paper?

No, the Australian Government has plans in place to ensure access to critical supplies in the event of emergencies.

If you are concerned about the potential to have to self-isolate and how you would access food and household supplies, consider stocking up on extra non-perishable food.

If you take any medications, consider securing an extra week to four weeks of supplies in case of the need to self-isolate.

Unlike other emergencies, there's no reason that a pandemic will take out your electricity, gas, or water, so you should be able to cook as usual.

When will a vaccine be available?

Despite hype from heads of state and media, academic institutions feverishly working on a Covid-19 vaccine have clearly stated that clinical trials to ensure safety and efficacy will mean even if an approach is identified quickly, it will be a further 12-18 months before it becomes available on the market.

Why is New Zealand classified as a domestic travel destination for the purposes of this situation?

New Zealand are employing the immigration controls and containment measures consistent with Australia's and therefore have a comparable risk profile for the purposes of travel.

Temporary travel policy

Domestic travel

- Domestic travel is permitted and there is no restriction on staff travelling to and between regions or states.
- New Zealand is also considered a domestic destination for the purposes of this policy.

International travel

- International travel is currently permitted, however there are restrictions.
- No staff member is expected or will be required to travel internationally if they are not comfortable doing so.
- Consider alternative approaches to achieving the objective of travel and the value of travel to the organisation.

Non-permitted travel:

- No work travel is permitted to countries rated as 'do not travel', 'reconsider your need to travel' or 'exercise a high degree of caution' by [Smartraveller.gov.au](https://www.smartraveller.gov.au).
- For personal travel to the above categories of destinations, staff would be required to self-isolate and work from home for 14 days.

Permitted travel – work and personal (based on the above requirements):

- International flights with a stop-over in Asia should be re-routed to the Middle East or alternative.
- In the instance that flights cannot be re-routed, staff would be required to self-isolate and work from home for 14 days.

Approvals and other considerations

- The Issues Response Team (lead by Georgia Nicholls) will monitor Smartraveller information daily and will communicate any updates and changes to policy.
- As MD, I am required to approve all international travel and will review any approved travel 7 days prior to departure.
- Travel arrangements should be made with the greatest possible degree of flexibility to modify or cancel travel to minimise losses in the event the situation changes.

Reducing risk to staff

Managing health

- If you have any concerns about your health or that of your family, work from home.
- Refer to flexibility guidelines around remote working.
- The policy regarding the requirement for medical certificates remains unchanged. We do ask that in the event staff work from home for 2 or more consecutive days due to even mild symptoms of concern, a medical certificate is required to support their health and wellbeing and return to work.
- If any staff member requires their laptop or other materials to be retrieved from the office to permit them to work from home, DA will arrange for a courier to remove the need to travel into the office.

Identifying vulnerabilities

- If you, someone you care for or live with has a health condition which means immunity is compromised or are more vulnerable to the effects of viral infection, please make this known to your manager so we can arrange an appropriate way to manage the risks based on your individual circumstances.
- We ask staff not to accept any visitors to the building who have been travelling internationally within the past fortnight from a destination excluded by Smartraveler. Staff are expected to ask external stakeholders prior to confirming meetings about their recent movements.
- All staff will receive a brief survey on Tuesday, designed to collate information about planned work and personal travel, potential impacts on work commitments or deliverables, and offer an opportunity to raise other matters that require consideration.