



WoAG Travel Advice 2020/05

13 March 2020

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Dear Entity Travel Managers

This Advice:

- provides guidance on treating the evolving impacts of COVID-19 on your entity's travel program;
- clarifies the roles of entities, QBT, airlines and WoAG Travel; and
- includes a list of useful resources.

The information outlined in this Advice is current as at 12 March. As this is a rapidly developing situation, we recommend that Travel Managers stay up to date using the resources discussed below, and frequently re-evaluate their entity's approach to managing the situation.

Key Points

The [Smartraveller](#) portal is the primary source of information and recommendations relating to COVID-19 for Australians travelling overseas. At this time, the key advice from Smartraveller is as follows:

- do not travel to China and Iran;
- reconsider your need to travel to Italy and South Korea;
- exercise a high degree of caution for travel to Japan, India, Turkey, Nepal and Mongolia; and
- Countries are regularly introducing and adjusting entry restrictions. If you plan to travel to a destination that may be affected by COVID-19, check Smartraveller for the latest advice for that specific location.

At the time of publication (of this Advice), domestic travel (i.e. travel within Australia) can continue as normal. However, this may change. Please also note that airlines are rapidly changing their inventory, services, routes and capacity in response to declining demand for air travel and the imposition of entry restrictions. Travellers should frequently check airline websites to confirm the status of booked flights.

Responsibilities

Entities

Entities retain the authority to limit or suspend travel for their officials. Before enforcing travel restrictions, Travel Managers should consult with relevant officials in their entity, such as the Human Resources and Security teams, and consider the specialist advice available through the [Resources and Helpful Links](#) listed below.



QBT

QBT will continue to:

- provide general information and updates to entities on COVID-19; and
- facilitate new travel bookings and process cancellations and changes at the direction of entities or as a consequence of route or schedule changes by airlines.

QBT is not, though, an authority on whether or not officials can or should travel. As noted above, entities are responsible for determining whether to limit or suspend travel for their officials.

QBT will use its best endeavours to keep entities informed about flights affected by COVID-19. However, QBT do not always receive notification from airlines or relevant authorities about impacted flights. It is recommended that entities access up to date information from official sources and not rely on QBT as the authority or only source of truth to support your entity's decisions regarding travel and duty of care obligations; particularly considering the rapidly evolving nature of the situation.

Please note that QBT is currently experiencing a higher than normal volume of calls and as a consequence, entities may experience extended wait times. QBT's regular transaction fees apply to all bookings changed or cancelled.

Airlines

As demand for air travel declines, and in response to travel restrictions and bans enforced by affected countries, airlines are rapidly changing their inventory, services, routes and capacity. At this time, these changes are mostly impacting international services.

WoAG Travel Team

Our team, as the custodians of the WoAG Travel Arrangements, do not have a role in determining whether or not entity officials should travel internationally or domestically in the current climate. In addition to content in this Advice, we will continue to post updates on the WoAG Travel Arrangements GovTEAMS community. Entities can also use this GovTEAMS community to engage with Travel Teams in other entities and discuss how the COVID-19 situation is being managed.

Resources and Helpful Links

[Smartraveller](#);

[International SOS](#) (for COMCOVER member entities);

[Department of Health](#);

[Australian Health Protection Principal Committee](#);

[Department of Home Affairs](#); and

National Coronavirus Health Information Line - 1800 020 080

☎ 02 6215 2447

@ woagtravel@finance.gov.au

📄 One Canberra Ave FORREST ACT

