



Coronavirus Australia live news: Proposal for special travel exemption for ACT residents; states take aim at each other over borders

By [Liam Butterworth](#) and [Sophie Meixner](#)

Posted Tue 19 May 2020 at 2:33pm, updated Wed 20 May 2020 at 5:01am



Watch ABC News live.

ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr has endorsed a suggestion Canberra residents should be granted a special exemption to travel to Queensland and South Australia for holidays.

It came after Deputy Chief Minister Paul Kelly weighed in on the domestic border debate, saying while it was up to states to decide whether to allow interstate travel, he could not see a medical reason for preventing it.

Stay up-to-date on the coronavirus outbreak

- [Download the ABC News app and subscribe to our range of news alerts for the latest on how the pandemic is impacting the world](#)

Look back at how the latest coronavirus news unfolded in our live blog.

Key events

Wed 20 May 2020 at 2:04am [Proposal for ACT residents to be allowed into Adelaide or Brisbane without quarantining](#)

Wed 20 May 2020 at [Deputy CMO says 'from a medical point of view I can't see why the borders are closed'](#)

12:39am

Tue 19 May 2020 at 11:41pm [Hydroxychloroquine to be tested on Australian health workers](#)

Tue 19 May 2020 at 11:25pm [Australia's COVID-19 infections at a glance](#)

Tue 19 May 2020 at 10:43pm [Eight new cases in Victoria today](#)

Tue 19 May 2020 at 10:29pm [Zero new cases today in WA](#)

Tue 19 May 2020 at 9:39pm [Student at St Ignatius' College Riverview tests positive, school to close](#)

Tue 19 May 2020 at 7:20pm [South Australia brings forward relaxation of coronavirus restrictions](#)

Tue 19 May 2020 at 5:32pm [A breakdown of hydroxychloroquine](#)

Live updates



Wed 20 May 2020 at 5:01am

By Sophie Meixner

Goodnight for now

We're closing the blog for the evening so I thought I'd leave you with some daydreams of where you want to go when domestic border restrictions are lifted. If you want more coronavirus news before the live blog reopens tomorrow, keep across our [coronavirus updates story](#).

Somewhere in WA, maybe spend some time in front of an open fire in a cabin in Margaret River nursing a glass of red bought from a local winery.

-Jane

Hi Sophie, In regards to travel destinations, my partner and I are really keen on Tasmania. We have actually booked and paid for all our airfares, motor home, accomodation, park passes, tours etc for October (before COVID happened), and I was feeling optimistic about it up until today and all this talk about borders being closed indefinitely!

-Jana

I want to house swap with Brenda during summer so I can relax in her well maintained pool.

-Brenda's New Friend

(I think this commenter might mean Barbara — unless there is a new well-maintained pool in the neighbourhood we need to watch out for). Goodnight!



Wed 20 May 2020 at 4:54am

By Sophie Meixner

Any update on remote communities?

Hi Sophie, Any word yet on when remote communities will reopen? I live in a remote community and we've all been waiting to find out when we will be able to get to Darwin to see friends, go shopping, and have that all-important laksa. Can you shed any light on this? P.s. Kakadu is definitely a must-see - it's spectacular all year round!

-Frances

Hi Frances, the latest word is the restrictions are planned to be lifted on **June 5**.

The restrictions were scheduled to stay in place until June 18, but this week Northern Territory Chief Minister Michael Gunner asked the [Commonwealth to lift restrictions in the NT's 76 remote Indigenous communities on June 5](#).

June 5 coincides with stage three of COVID-19 restrictions easing in the NT.

The June 5 date has support from Indigenous Affairs Minister Ken Wyatt, but [some remote community residents](#) say the Government needs to commit to the earlier date now.



Wed 20 May 2020 at 4:48am

By Sophie Meixner

Philippine police raid illegal hospital for virus patients





ABC News

Philippine police have raided a clandestine hospital and pharmacy that were secretly treating Chinese citizens suspected of being infected with coronavirus, police officials said Wednesday.

Two people were arrested and one patient was found during the raid at a residential villa that had been illegally turned into a seven-bed hospital and drugstore, police Brigadier General Rhoderick Armamento said.

More than 200 suspected coronavirus rapid test kits and syringes were recovered from trash cans at the villa.

The hospital and drugstore are in a large room by a swimming pool at the back of the compound, according to Armamento and a police video.

The male Chinese patient was moved to a Philippine hospital.

Those arrested were the Chinese administrator of the hospital, which may have been operating secretly for about three months, and a compatriot who manned the drugstore, he said.

Illegal Chinese workers are likely to avoid regular Philippine hospitals because they might be identified and arrested, Brigadier General Armamento said.

The Philippines has reported more than 13,200 coronavirus infections, including 842 deaths, among the highest number in Southeast Asia.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III told an online Senate hearing Wednesday that the Philippines is

experiencing a second wave of infections after cases spiked and then eased in recent months. Senators stressed the need for coronavirus tests to be ramped up to contain infections.



Wed 20 May 2020 at 4:38am

By Sophie Meixner

University of Cambridge will be virtual for the entire upcoming academic year



Supplied

Cambridge has become the first university in Britain to cancel all face-to-face lectures for the 2020-21 academic year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The university says all lectures will be held virtually and streamed online until summer 2021.

Cambridge says it may be possible to hold tutorials and other teaching in small groups — a key part of the university's system — when the new academic year starts in October, as long as social distancing can be followed.

The pandemic has already upended student life. Cambridge moved all its teaching online in March, and exams are being held remotely.

British universities are warning they will face a financial crisis if students decide they don't want to pay tuition fees — currently £9,250 a year in England — for a virtual experience.

Lockdowns and travel restrictions imposed because of the pandemic have also cut off the flow of international students, who pay higher fees and form a major source of income for UK universities.



Wed 20 May 2020 at 4:19am

By Sophie Meixner

Where do you want to travel when we can?

Where is your first holiday destination, Sophie?

-Alan

Hi Sophie, you guys are the best. I know you're busy with press conferences but don't forget you promised us to discuss where we'll go on holiday once travel restrictions are lifted! I'm in NSW so it'll either be a snow trip to shake off the cobwebs, or a farm stay out west so the boys can pull the dirt bikes out again!

-Narelle

... or a South Coast road trip, stopping in at small fire effected towns.

-Narelle

I did promise yesterday to start a discussion on today's blog about our **dream domestic holiday destinations**. I'd love to hear yours.

For me, I've always been meaning to go to the Northern Territory, in particular Kakadu National Park. And I'd love to see Uluru.

Some friends and I are also hoping to plan a hike through Cradle Mountain National Park in Tasmania in the spring.

What about you?

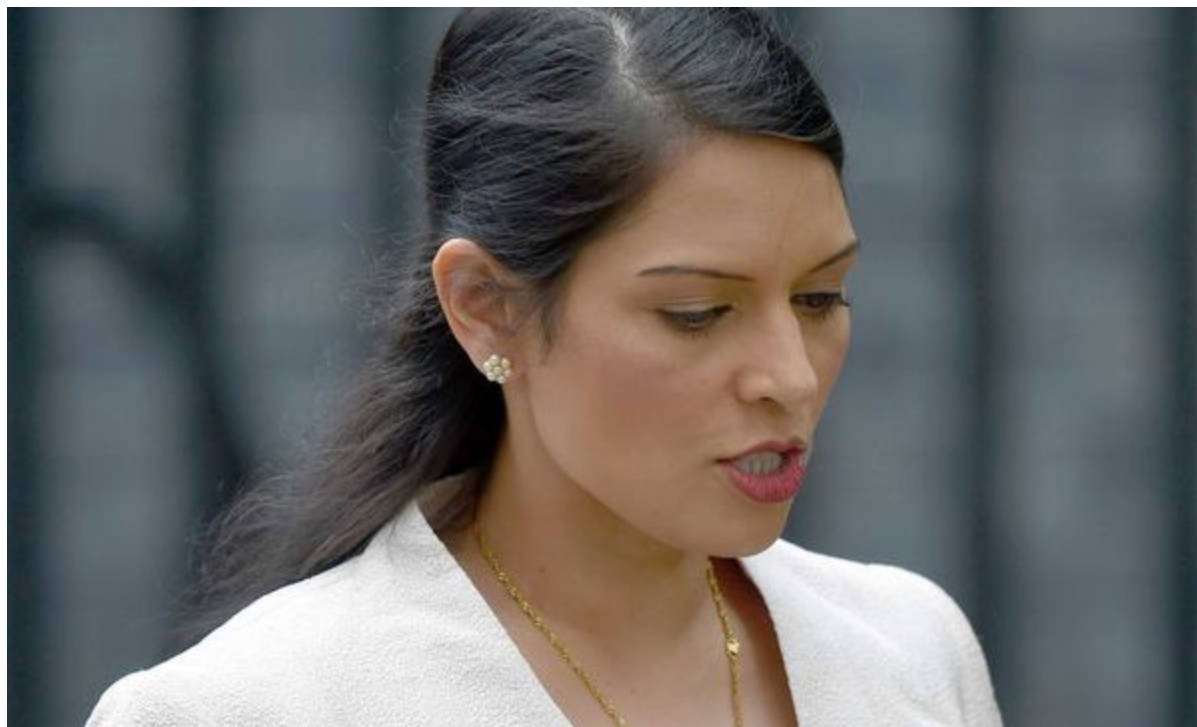


Wed 20 May 2020 at 4:04am

By Sophie Meixner

UK Government still working through quarantine options





Reuters

The British Government is still working on the details of how it will implement quarantine measures for people arriving in the country, interior minister Priti Patel said on Wednesday.

"We are still developing measures, so we are not in the position to say 'this is how it's going to work'," Patel said during an interview on LBC radio.

"In terms of how this will work, we will be announcing this shortly," she said, confirming only that the duration of quarantine would be 14 days.



Wed 20 May 2020 at 3:56am

By Sophie Meixner

Barcelona beaches reopen after almost three months





Image: Supplied. (File photo)

Beaches in the Spanish city of Barcelona reopened on Wednesday after being closed for nearly three months.

People were able to jog, swim, paddle and sunbathe under the supervision of police, who patrolled the area to prevent any mass gathering.

Spain has been one of the countries worst hit by the pandemic, with over 230,000 cases and more than 27,000 fatalities.

But the number of new cases has fallen sharply in the past couple of weeks, prompting the government to relax its restrictions.

Barcelona and the surrounding Basque region has been the epicentre of the outbreak in Spain, along with the capital Madrid.



Wed 20 May 2020 at 3:47am

By Sophie Meixner

[Charles had cancer. When he caught coronavirus, his condition went downhill](#)





Supplied

Tasmanian Charles Zerafa was one of two Tasmanians who has [died from pre-existing health conditions](#) after having caught, but then been cleared of the coronavirus.

Known as 'Charlie' to the Circular Head community in Tasmania's north-west, Mr Zerafa died on Sunday night after a battle with liver cancer, his final weeks made harder after he was diagnosed with coronavirus.

It is believed he caught the virus while receiving treatment related to his cancer diagnosis at the North-West Regional Hospital.

Mr Zerafa was diagnosed with coronavirus in April, and later cleared on May 8.

Since he got that virus he just went downhill a lot," Mr Zerafa's close friend Daniel Popowski said.

"None of us expected it to happen like this because only a couple of months ago he was a healthy, big-build person."



Wed 20 May 2020 at 3:30am

By Sophie Meixner

[Coronavirus could cause budget blowout on military projects](#)





Australia's newest military aircraft, the Joint Strike Fighter, could be delayed by months because of COVID-19. Image: ABC News

Australia's two most expensive defence projects are facing more delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A parliamentary committee has been told a key milestone on the Future Submarine program has been pushed back, and the eventual cost of building the new fleet could reach \$90 billion.

Meanwhile, Australia's next batch of Joint Strike Fighter aircraft could also be delayed after US defence company Lockheed Martin foreshadowed a production slowdown for three months due to the coronavirus impact.



Wed 20 May 2020 at 3:18am

By Sophie Meixner

Australia started a fight with China over an investigation into COVID-19. Did it go too hard?



AAP

It was the interview that sent hares running around the world.

One month ago, Foreign Minister Marise Payne told the ABC's Insiders program that Australia [would push for an independent international inquiry into the outbreak of COVID-19](#).

Prime Minister Scott Morrison went a step further two days later, suggesting that the World Health Organization (WHO) needed tough new ["weapons inspector" powers to investigate what caused the outbreak](#).

It was political dynamite.

[Read the full analysis by political reporter Stephen Dziedzic here.](#)



Wed 20 May 2020 at 3:05am

By Sophie Meixner

WA chief health officer weighs into border debate



ABC News

After WA Premier Mark McGowan's comments this afternoon [hitting back at claims by the NSW Premier](#), WA's Chief Health Officer has weighed in.

In a statement, Western Australia's Chief Health Officer cited the state's low number of COVID-19 cases as evidence of the success the border closure.

Andrew Robertson said while the Commonwealth provided no specific advice, the measure has been effective.

Dr Robertson recommended against opening the interstate border until community spread is eliminated in other jurisdictions.



Wed 20 May 2020 at 2:44am

By Sophie Meixner

Brazil and USA world's only two countries reporting 1,000 daily deaths



Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro. Image: Reuters

Brazil and the US are the only countries to record more than a thousand deaths in the past 24 hours from COVID-19.

Since the virus has hit Brazil, almost 18,000 people have died.

That number is increasing fast, as President Jair Bolsonaro continues to be criticised for his handling of the virus.

He's sacked his Health Minister twice, and seen his Justice Minister resign during the pandemic.

The only country recording more daily deaths is the US, which has seen more than 90,000 people killed by the virus.

Both President Donald Trump and Mr Bolsonaro have praised the anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine, despite health officials cautioning against its use.



Wed 20 May 2020 at 2:31am

By Sophie Meixner

Women operating suburban massage parlour charged over coronavirus breach



Four women have been arrested for allegedly operating an active suburban massage parlour in Adelaide, in breach of coronavirus business closure requirements.

SA Police said three massage therapists and the operator of the business were arrested after Licensing Enforcement Officers attended the Croydon Park premises, just north of Adelaide's CBD, at 4pm on Monday.

Members of the public had complained to police that the business continued operating despite the restrictions.



Wed 20 May 2020 at 2:24am

By Sophie Meixner

Extra \$12 million for free childcare package



ABC News

The Federal Government has announced more funding for its free childcare program to help centres not covered by the JobKeeper wage subsidy.

A [review of the \\$1.6 billion dollar scheme](#) found it was achieving its aim of keeping the majority of services open during the coronavirus pandemic.

However Federal Education Minister Dan Tehan announced an extra \$12 million dollars would be spent to support centres where more than 30 per cent of the full-time equivalent staff were not eligible for JobKeeper.

\$800,000 would also go towards increasing the level of funding for in-home care providers.

"The Government continues to review and assess the relief package in light of our success at flattening the curve and other issues raised by the new system," Mr Tehan said.

"We need to consider how the package can best support economic recovery, help parents to get back to work and study, and ensure children's early childhood education and wellbeing."

The current scheme is due to expire on June 28, with Mr Tehan promising to announce any new model four weeks before it is implemented.

By political reporter Jade Macmillan



Wed 20 May 2020 at 2:18am

By Sophie Meixner

Judge hands out death sentence via Zoom



Supplied

A Singapore judge has delivered a death sentence by a Zoom video call – the first time capital punishment has been handed out online.

The 37-year old man will go to the gallows for his role in a drug deal.

His lawyer says the judge gave his verdict via a Zoom video call.

Singapore courts have resorted to video conferencing since the country went into lockdown to curb the spread of coronavirus.

Human Rights Watch has slammed the practice saying the death penalty is already cruel and inhumane, and the use of remote technology to issue a death sentence makes it more so.

Though the man's lawyer says in this case it was only for the verdict, and he didn't object. The man is considering an appeal.



Wed 20 May 2020 at 2:04am

By Sophie Meixner

KEY EVENT

[Proposal for ACT residents to be allowed into Adelaide or Brisbane without quarantining](#)



ABC News

ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr has endorsed a suggestion Canberra residents should be granted a special exemption to travel to Queensland and South Australia for holidays.

Canberra Airport has asked the governments of Queensland and South Australia to consider special exemptions for ACT residents to travel into both states.

The proposal would allow anyone who can prove their ACT residency to fly from Canberra to Adelaide or Brisbane, and skip the quarantine rules in place in both states.

It would begin once the ACT and either Queensland or South Australia reach stage two in the national re-opening framework.

Executives from Canberra Airport have put the proposal to the offices of both Premier Steven Marshall, and Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk.

The letter notes the ACT has not had a new case of COVID-19 for more than a fortnight. It's described as an "incremental first step" in reopening tourism.

Mr Barr says as they consider re-opening their borders, they should look to the ACT first.

"What has been proposed is that perhaps as a first step, they do so with other jurisdictions that have very low or no COVID-19 cases. So I think it's a very sensible approach," he said.



Wed 20 May 2020 at 1:58am

By Sophie Meixner

Uni deal for academics to take pay cuts inches closer



AAP

National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) chiefs have endorsed a plan that could see academics take a **pay cut of 5-15 per cent** to save jobs.

80 per cent of 107 NTEU councillors from every university voted in favour of the deal after a debate insiders labelled 'robust'.

NTEU National President Dr Alison Barnes said the deal could save **12,000 jobs** in the tertiary sector.

The next step will be a vote of union members which will take place late next week.

However it remains unclear how many of Australia's 39 public universities will sign on to the deal with a number already indicating they don't want to be part of it.

“University Vice Chancellors must support the jobs protection framework because it is the best opportunity we have to protect our campuses and the livelihoods of university staff,” Dr Barnes said.

By national education reporter Conor Duffy



Wed 20 May 2020 at 1:51 am

By Sophie Meixner

Power offers to refund fans' membership fees ahead of AFL resumption



AAP

The Port Adelaide football club has confirmed it will offer both full and partial refunds of fees to its members, who will likely be locked out of AFL games for the rest of the season.

"What we're saying to our members is that we'd love you to stay, but everyone's circumstances are different, we understand that," chief executive Keith Thomas said, at the club's Alberton headquarters.

"The season that we'll be delivering will be different and so they need to make their decision around that."

The Adelaide Crows will release a comprehensive plan tomorrow, including refund options for those members who paid upfront in full before the season began.



Wed 20 May 2020 at 1:39am

By Sophie Meixner

Questions update

Ahh... more of the same travel q & a's, Sophie must be in da house! I know you've explained that they are easy questions which you know the answers to but isn't the whole point in having a blog, that you answer the questions we can't find answers through Google or the abc news feed? In fact isn't that the distinction between a "news feed" and an actual blog?

-Tired of the Repeated Travel Questions

Hi Sophie, I thought the whole idea of journalism is to SEEK answers to tough questions. Not answer the easy ones that you have already answered... Isn't time you got your abc jorno mates to start asking some of these unanswered questions in those long and monotonous press conferences we see them at all the time?

-Not knowing the answer us no answer at all

Hi guys, I am doing my best but you have to understand **this blog is for posting breaking news updates**, usually with a frequency of 5-15 minutes between posts.

If I could find the answers to some of your very intelligent and well-informed questions in the space of 5-15 minutes, I don't know why ABC would be paying a team of investigative journalists to do their jobs.

Although some of you might be tired of the travel questions, it seems like many other people are very interested in unravelling the restrictions in each state and how they apply to them and their plans.

The fact is **some questions are beyond my capability to answer while I'm pressed for time** on the blogging shift and having to monitor for breaking news at the same time.

Luckily there's [a whole world of ABC content out there](#), and a whole team of journalists around the country doing their best to dig for answers to the tough questions.

Even if I can't answer the question instantly, comments and questions we get into this blog do help to shape ABC's coronavirus coverage, so they may be passed on elsewhere or noted down for follow-up.

Please keep sending your questions through — I love reading them! — and I'll answer every one I can.



Wed 20 May 2020 at 1:24am

By Sophie Meixner

NSW Health say app data same as already obtained contact tracing data



ABC News

NSW Health has disputed claims there are technical issues with the COVIDSafe app that made it redundant in contact-tracing efforts.

But the authority said it already had a team of 150 people across on a “sophisticated” contact-tracing system, which was separate to the national app data collection.

“NSW Health can confirm the COVIDSafe app is working, however data from it has reflected details already obtained by our own dedicated contact tracing team,” a spokesman said.

It added that recent positive cases emerging from people in hotel quarantine would not have generated any community contacts and therefore tracing efforts were unnecessary.

It said it would continue to work on “enhancements” to the app while an evaluation of the app was under way.

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