

Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker

Regional report -East Asia and Pacific



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This report summarises the major changes in the region for the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker's [Containment and Health Index](#), providing a high level overview of shifts in government policies.

OxCGRT is created by the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford. For more information visit www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/covidtracker.

REGION	East Asia and Pacific
Date range	01 February - 01 March
Reported by	Thomas Benson and Randy Taufik

Brief summary of major changes:

February was characterised by tentative shifts toward normality in major East Asian countries such as China, Australia, and Japan, while significant restrictions remained in place in countries like South Korea, Indonesia, and Hong Kong SAR. In an attempt to control outbreaks while maintaining normal functioning of business, many countries have resorted to snap lockdowns of five days to two weeks, although such lockdown measures are often extended beyond the end of the scheduled time period. Several countries have already launched their vaccination program and have attempted to open schools and places of work.

C1: School Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australia: in Victoria, restrictions have been gradually loosened following a five-day snap lockdown from 12 to 17 February. Schools in Victoria are required to follow a density quotient for staff, but masks are no longer necessary. Schools in Western Australia reopened on 14 February.• Cambodia: on 22 February, all public and private schools in Phnom Penh and Kandal province were temporarily closed for two weeks.• China: schools and universities across China are starting the new term in late February and early March under strict safety measures.• Hong Kong SAR: on 3 February the government announced that the majority of face-to-face classes and school activities would be suspended after Chinese New Year Holidays.• Indonesia: some schools are opened, depending upon the regulations of the regional government, but reverting to online learning if an outbreak is detected.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Korea: under Level 2.5 restrictions in the Greater Seoul area, schools remain closed. • New Zealand: since mid-February, there is no restriction for school. Previously there is a changing condition from Alert 3 to 1, due to the improvement of the condition.
C2: Workplace Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia: all businesses in Western Australia reopened on 14 February. In Victoria all businesses reopened on 17 February. Nightclubs remain prohibited from operating in New South Wales. • Brunei: Cinemas are only allowed to operate at 80% capacity. Restaurants and cafes are open. • Cambodia: Authorities have closed certain businesses, buildings, and schools as a result of a new outbreak on 20 February. • China: from 22 February, all areas on the mainland are low-risk. Workplaces are not required to close by the central government. However, a number of local authorities of individual cities, such as Harbin and Shijiazhuang, require working places, including but not limited to, cinemas, libraries, bars, and gyms, in previously high/mid-risk areas to keep closing until further notice. • Guam: as of 24 February almost all businesses are operating with caps usually around 50% capacity. • Hong Kong SAR: on 18 February, the HK government fully resumed normal public services and restaurants were able to open until 10pm. • Indonesia: previous restrictions are gradually being eased and shops, bars and restaurants are resuming business, operating at 50% of their normal capacity. • Japan: the government passed a new law strengthening enforcement of its virus restrictions on 3 February, allowing authorities to issue fines to bars and restaurants that defy closure requests. Bars and restaurants in areas under emergency restrictions have been asked to close by 8pm. • South Korea: under Level 2.5 restrictions workplaces are advised to close. The Greater Seoul area was downgraded from 2.5 to 2 as of 15 February, • New Zealand: the office starting to open on mid-February without restriction. • Philippines: There are guidelines provided by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to prevent COVID-19 spread at the work place • Papua New Guinea: The National Pandemic Controller imposed a 10pm-5am daily curfew • Singapore: The move to open nightclubs and karaoke bars has been put on hold, but 3 bars which were previously opened as

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	part of the pilot scheme
C3: Cancel Public Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia: in Victoria, under the loosening of restrictions on 26 February, indoor and outdoor seated entertainment venues can fill up to 75 per cent of seating capacity, up to a maximum of 1000 people per space. In New South Wales, no more than 50 people can gather outside in a public place which includes public parks, reserves, beaches, public gardens and spaces. A maximum of 300 people may attend a wedding or a funeral. • Cambodia: public events remain cancelled: Khmer New Year, which usually takes place in April, was officially rescheduled for 17-21 August. • China: the last high/mid-risk area, Tonghua, was lowered to low-risk on 22 February. Public events are not restricted by the central government. However, a number of local authorities such as Harbin and Shijiazhuang, keep forbidding public exhibitions in previously high/mid-risk areas. • Hong Kong SAR: the prohibition on group gatherings of more than two persons in public places will continue for 14 days from 4 February to 17 February. • Japan: national guidelines continue to allow events with a maximum of 5000 attendees. • South Korea: the Greater Seoul area was downgraded from Level 2.5 to Level 2 restrictions. At level 2, gatherings over 100 are banned; for level 2.5, gatherings over 50 are banned.
C4: Restrictions on Gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia: from 26 February in Victoria, you can have up to 30 visitors per day to your home. • China: from 22 February, private gatherings face no restrictions from the central government. • Hong Kong SAR: from 24 February, the restriction on public gatherings was loosened from 2 to 4 people. • Indonesia: in areas under PSBB 'red' restrictions, gatherings are limited to 3 people. PSBB restrictions, originally scheduled to be lifted on 22 February, have been extended. • South Korea: a nationwide ban on social gatherings of more than 5 people remains in effect. • Philippines: To curtail the coronavirus outbreak, the government has implemented non-pharmaceutical interventions, including school closures, community quarantines, and postponement of large-scale public events. • Singapore: Social gatherings will be allowed to comprise up to 8 persons, an increase from 5 persons today. Households may also receive up to 8 visitors at any point in time.

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C5: Close Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China: the last high/mid-risk area, Tonghua, was lowered to low-risk on 22 February. Public transport in previously high/mid-risk areas such as Harbin and Tonghua began to gradually resume with strict safety measures in place. • Indonesia: PSBB measures remained in effect until 22 February in Jakarta, including limitations on public transport. • Philippines: Public transportation is allowed to operate at reduced capacity and wearing of face masks, face shields, and social distancing are implemented in public places. • Thailand: Public transport available, providing people social distance and wear masks
C6: Stay at Home requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia: from 12 to 17 February Victoria was subject to a stay-at-home order. • China: from 22 February, residents across China are not required to stay at home. • South Korea: the Greater Seoul area was under Level 2.5 restrictions until 15 February. Under Level 2.5 restrictions, citizens are recommended to stay at home.
C7: Restrictions on Internal movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia: each Australian State and Territory has different border restrictions in place. Western Australia continues to declare Victoria an area of 'low risk' while Queensland has designated areas of Victoria to be hotspots. Border restrictions apply to anyone who has been in a hotspot in the previous 14 days. Tasmania has declared the Auckland region to be high risk. • China: as of 22 February, internal movement is not restricted but residents are suggested to avoid non-essential movement. • Hong Kong SAR: restrictions on travel between Hong Kong, Guangdong Province and Macao remain in place. • Indonesia: public health measures by the Indonesian authorities include some restrictions on in-country air travel. • Papua New Guinea: the National Pandemic Controller suspended the travel of aircraft, vehicles, and sea-going vessels • Thailand: Additional restrictions are in place in different provinces and in Bangkok. Restrictions vary from province to province and may change at any time.
C8: International Travel Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia: from 25 February any traveller from New Zealand who has been in Auckland over the previous 14-days is not eligible to travel on a quarantine-free flight. Any travellers from New Zealand who have not been in Auckland for any period over the previous 14-days are still eligible to travel on a quarantine-free

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	<p>flight.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brunei: foreign visitors seeking to enter Brunei must receive prior approval from the Brunei Department of Immigration and National Registration. • Cambodia: entry applications are only accepted for diplomatic, official, and sponsored business visas, and a two-week quarantine is mandated. • Fiji: Fiji has border closure only with New Zealand. • Hong Kong SAR: from 2 February, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates are designated as very high-risk Group B places. • Indonesia: all non-Indonesian travellers are prohibited from entering Indonesia. • South Korea: the temporary suspension of direct flights from the UK to South Korea has been extended throughout February.
H2: Testing Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia: There remains some variation between states and territories as to who is eligible to receive a COVID-19 test. However, eligibility criteria do apply across all states and territories. • Hong Kong SAR: on 17 February mandatory testing was expanded to cover all staff of residential care homes and nursing homes. On 23 February, all people within San Po Kong were required to undergo compulsory testing for COVID-19. • Indonesia: testing capacity has been significantly upgraded with rapid-testing facilities at train stations. • Singapore: Singapore plans to tap the private sector to significantly ramp up its capacity to test for Covid-19 infections. This will enable it to carry out more than 21,000 tests daily in dormitories and regional screening centres, amid ongoing efforts to vaccinate the country's population
H3: Contact Tracing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brunei: the contact-tracing app <i>BruHealth</i> has been widely implemented. • Philippines: The government is responding across sectors, including through enhanced community engagement, targeted isolation and quarantine measures, expansion of contact tracing and continuous increase in laboratory capacity.
H6: Facial Coverings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia: as part of a statewide lockdown from 12 to 17 February, all residents of Victoria were required to wear a mask at all times outside the home. • China: as of 22 February, face masks are only required in some public areas across the whole of mainland China. • Laos: as of 3 February the government has made the wearing of

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	<p>masks compulsory in all public places.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Myanmar: Wearing masks are compulsory and enforced by the government• Papua New Guinea: Residents in the National Capital District (NCD) must wear facemasks in indoor public areas and on public transport• Solomon Island: Wear a mask to keep your nose and mouth covered when you are in shared spaces outside of your home, including when using public transportation. Wear a mask and ask any household members who did not travel with you to wear masks in shared spaces inside your home.
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Cases vs Containment and Health Index:

