

48-hour Review of Travel Restrictions

Purpose

- To provide health advice on continued requirements for travel restrictions. This is the **sixth** such review and is current at **1400 on 16 February 2020**.

Key messages

- The Ministry recommends that the current travel restrictions **remain in place** due to:
 - no evidence of a sustained decrease in the number of confirmed cases and deaths
 - no softening of risk assessment levels or lifting of travel restrictions in other countries.

Further information

- On 16 February it is recommended that current travel restrictions **remain in place** due to:
 - the continuing rising number of cases in mainland China. (24 hour increase of **1,506** confirmed cases),
 - the increasing number of deaths in mainland China. (24 hour increase of **121** deaths)
 - a number of cases in Australia and the wider Western Pacific Region suggesting risk in the Pacific region remains high.
- Our case definition is broad and adopts a cautious, pre-emptive approach due to the severity of the illness.
- There have been no confirmed cases in New Zealand. Since becoming a notifiable disease on 31 January 2020
- The international picture has not significantly shifted from when the travel restrictions were announced. The risk remains high and there is no evidence of a sustained decrease in the number of reported cases in mainland China and internationally; and there is no suggestion that the overall risk profile is reducing.

- Our assessment against the high-level review criteria is:

#	High-level criteria	Ministry comment
1	Evolving epidemiology of the outbreak	<p>There is no evidence of sustained decrease in the daily number of confirmed cases or deaths. There have now been 1,524 deaths recorded in China and 2 outside of China. Note, China is now reporting case numbers based on both lab testing <i>and</i> clinical diagnosis. This will mean its numbers will be higher than WHO's for example, which count only lab confirmed cases.</p> <p>More positively, the number of recovered cases is steadily increasing, including in China.</p>
2	Emerging evidence about transmissibility	No new evidence has emerged that conclusively shows a reduction in the risk of transmission.
3	Emerging evidence about severity of illness	No new evidence has emerged that conclusively shows a reduction in the severity of illness. The latest WHO report classifies around 18.3% of cases as severe and mortality rates remain largely static at ~3%.
4	WHO advice on travel restrictions	WHO continues to advise that no travel restrictions are required.
5	Public health measures in other countries	Multiple countries continue to enforce travel restrictions and international risk assessments remain high.

- *This advice has been reviewed by the Ministry's and Prime Minister's Chief Science Advisors, Dr Ian Town and Professor Juliet Gerrard.*