

# Novel Coronavirus

## What are the travel restrictions & how do they affect me?

*On 12 March 2020 the Tasmanian Government released advice relating to travel restrictions for all staff. Following further developments, this updated advice is provided to supersede the previous infosheet.*

All overseas travel from Australia has now been banned.

In addition to this, Tasmania has implemented restrictions regarding domestic travel. Anyone that travels domestically within Australia must enter isolation for 14 days upon their return.

### Work-related travel

Following the ban, official international work travel cannot occur. Non-essential domestic work travel is to be avoided. Essential domestic work travel will require approval from the Head of the State Service, in consultation with the relevant Head of Agency.

It is important for people to note that these matters are changing rapidly and they should discuss any concerns regarding travel with their line manager. You should keep up to date with this information via the [DPAC website](#) and at [Smartraveller.gov.au](http://Smartraveller.gov.au).

### Leave Arrangements for Official Travel

While travel has been comprehensively restricted, it is understood that there may be employees that are either currently undertaking approved travel, or that may have future travel approved in exceptional circumstances. Should an employee on approved travel be advised by the Australian Government or the Tasmanian Department of Health that they are required to enter isolation on their return, they are to be paid their normal salary (including regular allowances) for the duration of their absence.

If the employee is able to work from home, this would be encouraged, however if this is not possible the employee will be paid without the need to apply for any leave regardless.

Should an employee be infected with COVID-19 when undertaking approved official travel the employee will be entitled to use personal (sick) leave for the period they are unwell.

Should an employee on approved official travel be unable to return to Australia due to travel bans, they will be paid their normal salary (including regular allowances) for the duration of the absence. Accommodation and travel-related expenses will continue to be met by the relevant Agency.

### Leave Arrangements for Private Travel

It is recommended employees check the Smart Traveller website prior to travel to stay up to date with travel information, noting that currently all overseas travel is currently banned, and that any domestic travel will require an isolation period upon return.

If you do choose to undertake any travel at this time, you must follow national and state isolation requirements on your return.

Employees should be aware that, depending on circumstances at the time, these requirements may include the need to undertake 14 days of isolation.

Should an employee choose to travel for private reasons to a restricted location (including both overseas and domestic travel), where it was reasonably known prior to travel that they would be required to enter isolation on their return, and arrangements cannot be made to safely work from home, the employee will be entitled to utilise their existing accrued leave entitlements (such as recreation or long service leave) or take leave without pay during the isolation period.

## Other Matters

- The Department of Education will continue to manage travel decisions for school students with its Minister. Employees from the Department will be managed in accordance with the Tasmanian State Service restrictions outlined by the Premier.
- Employees that are healthcare workers within the Department of Health that undertake approved official travel to a restricted location may have additional isolation requirements. Employees in these circumstances are to be paid their normal salary (including regular allowances) for the duration of the absence. If the employee is able to work from home, this would be encouraged however if this is not possible the employee will be paid without the need to apply for any leave regardless.
- The Secretary of the Department of Communities Tasmania will continue to manage travel decisions for children under their care as the statutory guardian.

## Where can I get more general information on COVID-19?

Advice is changing frequently as the COVID-19 situation evolves in Tasmania. Please refer to the following websites for the latest information:

- Australian Government Department of Health – [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)
- Tasmanian Government Coronavirus website – [www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au](http://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au)
- Official public health information - [www.health.tas.gov.au/coronavirus](http://www.health.tas.gov.au/coronavirus)

General information about travel is available from [Smartraveller.gov.au](http://Smartraveller.gov.au)

**You can also call the following numbers if you need help or more information:**

Tasmanian Public Health Hotline - 1800 671 738

National Coronavirus Health Information Line - 1800 020 080

# Frequently asked questions

## Official work travel

**Q: Can I undertake official work travel, either overseas or domestically?**

A: All overseas travel has now been banned. Non-essential domestic work travel should be avoided. Essential domestic work travel will require approval from the Head of the State Service, in consultation with the relevant Head of Agency.

**Q: I have an upcoming work trip, what travel restrictions do I need to be aware of?**

A: DFAT travel advice is continually being updated and should be monitored. Currently, all overseas travel is banned, while domestic travellers are also required to observe an isolation period upon their return. To avoid confusion, please ensure you are viewing up to date information as provided by the [DPAC website](http://DPAC website) and at [Smartraveller.gov.au](http://Smartraveller.gov.au).

**Q: I have an existing work booking for overseas travel, what should I do?**

A: The bans apply to travel that has been approved but not yet taken. You should discuss this trip with your Head of Agency and make the necessary arrangements to cancel the booking.

**Q: Does this apply to domestic travel?**

A: Non-essential domestic work travel is to be avoided, noting that Tasmania has implemented restrictions regarding domestic travel. If you had an existing work booking for interstate travel, you should discuss this with your Head of Agency.

Anyone that travels domestically within Australia must enter isolation for 14 days upon their return to Tasmania. It is noted that other states and territories may also require an isolation period upon arrival.

## Private travel

**Q: If a private holiday or trip is coming up soon, what should I be aware of from a work perspective?**

A: Employees who undertake private travel and where it was reasonably known prior to the commencement of that travel, that the travel will include a restricted location, should be aware that any isolation period will need to be covered by existing accrued leave entitlements (such as recreation or long service leave) if they are unable to work from home. Personal leave will not be available unless the employee is unwell or for caring purposes.

# Frequently asked questions

To this end, advice is based on the following principles:

- Check the Smart Traveller website to stay up to date with travel information;
- Travel to locations is subject to DFAT advice including “do not travel”, “reconsider your need to travel” or “exercise a high degree of caution”, as well as Tasmanian Government advice relating to domestic travel. You must follow any national and state requirements on return.
- Depending on circumstances at the time, these requirements may include the need to undertake 14 days of isolation or for persons who work in a specialised occupation such as Health or Education not attending work (or being required to work under particular conditions) for 14 days upon return to Australia/Tasmania. As specified above, where it was reasonably known prior to departure that personal travel would incorporate such locations, and if not ill, private leave is not available and workplace absences would need to be covered by an alternative form of leave.

## Arrangements for Isolation

**Q: I have travelled overseas in the past 14 days, what should I do?**

A: If you have travelled overseas in the past 14 days, refer to the [Self-Assessment Tool for coronavirus in the resources section of the \[www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au\]\(http://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au\)](#) website for advice about what you should do.

**Q: I've travelled to a restricted location, I'm not sick but am now required to isolate and will be unable to work from home. What leave do I apply for?**

A: Where your travel included a restricted location, and this was reasonably known prior to travel, you will need to utilise your existing accrued leave entitlements (such as recreation or long service leave) or take leave without pay during the isolation period where you cannot work from home.

## Department of Health Travel Arrangements

**Q: I am a doctor on approved CPD or sabbatical leave and am now required to isolate on my return to Tasmania. What leave do I need to take for the isolation period?**

A: If you are able to work from home for the 14 day period, this should be arranged with your Manager. If not, you would continue to receive your normal salary for the period of the absence.

**Q: I am a doctor on approved CPD leave and have self-funded my travel. If I am unable to return to Australia due to unforeseen travel restrictions, do I need to fund additional accommodation and travel expenses?**

A: Yes. If the travel is self-funded and you are unable to return to Australia due to DFAT-advised travel restrictions, you will be required to fund the additional accommodation or travel related expenses.

**Q: I am a doctor on approved sabbatical leave, which has benefits including the Department funding actual costs of travel expenses, up to the value of an around the world air fare at economy rates; and a daily living allowance at the specified rate up to 65 days. I am not able to return to Australia due to DFAT advised travel restrictions. Am I required to fund the additional accommodation and travel-related expenses?**

A: No. The Department will fund additional accommodation and travel-related expenses to the limit approved (any top-up paid by staff will need to be self-funded).