
Travel Advisory

Te Marae Ora Cook Islands Ministry of Health hereby issues this travel advisory in response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak in China that has now been reported in over 45 countries around the world.

The past week has seen an acceleration in the number of reported cases in many countries with evidence of community transmission in some, reflecting the critical role of global travel in virus propagation.

To date there are over 80,000 cases reported globally and almost 3,000 deaths. While 80% of cases are mild, 5% of cases are critical and require Intensive Care Unit (ICU) capability.

The Cook Islands is anticipating the arrival of COVID-19 but lacks advanced respiratory services i.e. ICU, to manage critical cases. COVID-19 would place additional strain on the health system which is already burdened by the high volume of people with chronic conditions including non-communicable diseases. With at least 15% of the population aged over 60 years, there are valid concerns about the welfare of our vulnerable populations, as data shows they are most severely affected.

The Cook Islands has established COVID-19 as a notifiable and dangerous condition under Schedule 2, of the Public Health Act (2004).

The Cook Islands now places additional travel restrictions in order to further distance the Cook Islands population from the COVID-19 epicentre and other areas of concern. This strategy attempts to flatten the epidemic curve and help lessen the impact of COVID-19 on the health system and population health.

Pursuant to s9A of the Entry Residence and Departure Act 1972 the following travel restriction is in place:

Persons intending to travel to the Cook Islands who have been in – Peoples Republic of China (including Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau) Japan, Singapore, South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Italy and Iran, within the last 14 days prior to travel, will be denied entry into the Cook Islands.

In addition, all Cook Islanders and residents of the Cook Islands should avoid non-essential travel to these countries named above.

These restrictions will come into force immediately, and will be reviewed weekly.

27 February 2020