

Migration Newsflash

19 January 2021



Updated Travel Requirements into Australia

Australia has strengthened measures for International aviation in response to COVID-19 and its emerging variants

The National Cabinet has instituted additional international aviation measures to ensure the protection of Australians from COVID-19. These measures have been undertaken to help mitigate further spread of COVID-19 in Australia and the new variants of the virus found overseas, which have clear higher transmissibility and are fast becoming the dominant strain in overseas jurisdictions.

International Passenger Caps

International passenger caps in New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia will be halved temporarily from no later than 15 January 2021 onwards to control the flow of returning Australians and other travelers who have been potentially exposed to the new variants of the virus.

Current international passenger caps in Victoria and South Australia and existing arrangements in the Northern Territory are considered appropriate and will remain as they are.

These measures on international passenger caps will be reviewed by National Cabinet again in early February.

The reduction on international passenger caps will likely lead to increased scrutiny of all travel exemption applications across all exemption categories with a predicted increase in the refusal rate as the Australian Government restricts the entry numbers to meet the set quotas. Whilst there is no formal ban on particular countries, we may start to see fewer exemptions being granted from high COVID-19 countries where community transmission of the virus is high (e.g. United States, United Kingdom and Brazil).

In-Flight and In-Airport Measures

The National Cabinet has also adopted a series of recommendations from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee with regards to in-flight and in-airport measures for international travel. The following measures will also be applied to government facilitated commercial flights which already have strong mitigating controls in place for passengers and facilities.

With regards to COVID-19 testing protocol:

- Prior to departure, returning Australians and other travelers to Australia must return a negative COVID-19 test. Exemptions to this condition will only be applied in extenuating circumstances, such as with seasonal workers where there is limited access to testing.
- Air crew must take a COVID-19 test every 7 days or upon arrival in Australia, quarantine in dedicated quarantine facilities between international flights or for 14 days. They must also not reposition for an outgoing international flight unless it is on a crew-only flight.

With regards to infection prevention measures:

- All passengers and air crew must wear masks on flights and in airports
- Airlines will continue to adopt appropriate infection prevention and control measures on board aircraft, this includes crew wearing personal protective equipment where required.

Given the above increased measures, we recommend that HR Business Partners and Global Mobility Professionals ensure that increased lead-times are built into any planned assignments to Australia to accommodate the requirement for COVID-19 testing prior to travelling to Australia.

Contact us

KPMG can provide further advice to employers and employees navigating international aviation changes amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

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