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The Hon. Scott Morrison MP

Prime Minister

Senator The Hon. Marise Payne

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Minister for Women

The Hon. Peter Dutton MP

Minister for Home Affairs

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 19 March 2020

BORDER RESTRICTIONS

Australia is closing its borders to all non-citizens and non-residents.

The entry ban takes effect from 9pm AEDT Friday, 20 March 2020, with exemptions only for Australian citizens, permanent residents and their immediate family, including spouses, legal guardians and dependants.

New Zealand citizens who live in Australia as Australian residents are also exempt, as are New Zealanders transiting to New Zealand. Exemptions for Pacific Islanders transiting to their home countries will continue to apply.

Australian citizens and permanent residents and those exempt from our entry restrictions will continue to be subject to a strict 14 days self-isolation.

Our number one priority is to slow the spread of coronavirus to save lives.

Our government has taken this unprecedented step because around 80 per cent of coronavirus cases in Australia are people who caught the virus overseas before entering Australia, or people who have had a direct contact with someone who has returned from overseas.

Our previous travel and entry restrictions have already meant that daily travel to Australia by non-citizens has been reduced to about one third of what it was this time last year.

We also strongly urge Australians looking to return home to do so as soon as possible. This follows our upgraded **travel advice for all Australians not to travel overseas, at all.**

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will provide consular advice and assistance, but the capacity for DFAT to provide consular services may be limited by local restrictions on movement, as well as the full scale of the challenges posed by coronavirus.

Australians who cannot, or do not want to, return home should follow the advice of local authorities and minimise their risk of coronavirus exposure by self-isolating.

The government is in discussions with airlines about the continuance of some international flights for the purpose of bringing Australians home and continuing the movement of goods and freight.

These challenges vary and the situation is changing rapidly.

Our government will continue to act on the best available information to keep Australians safe.

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Media Contacts:

Prime Minister's office: Press Office, (02) 6277 7744

Minister Payne's office: David Wroe, 0429 531 143

Minister Dutton's office: Nicole Chant, 0419 850 222

The Hon. Scott Morrison MP, Sydney