

MEDIA RELEASE
March 21, 2020

Lord Howe Island Announces Travel Restrictions in Response to COVID-19 Effective Immediately

The NSW Minister for Health Mr Brad Hazzard has today made an Order under the Public Health Act to restrict travel to Lord Howe Island in a move to protect the small community from the spread of Coronavirus or COVID-19.

Under the Order, access restrictions to and from Lord Howe Island, as well as quarantine requirements will affect all movements from Saturday March 21, 2020 until further notice. Details follow below.

Situated some 600 kilometres off the NSW coast, Lord Howe Island's isolated location places it in a unique position in the current pandemic.

Lord Howe Island currently does not have any confirmed cases of COVID-19. The island has limited capacity to provide specialist medical care to patients with severe COVID-19 infections. In addition, the island has a number of vulnerable residents and would expect to welcome a significant number of older visitors over the coming months.

The Lord Howe Island Tourism Association (LHITA) considers the health and safety of both the island residents and its tourist visitors to be of the highest priority.

LHITA Executive Officer Trina Shepherd said the island's residents were concerned but largely in support of the restriction to ensure the protection of the island community.

"We appreciate many visitors booked to visit Lord Howe Island in the coming weeks will be disappointed to have their travel plans changed," Ms Shepherd said.

"We ask for our visitors' patience and understanding during these extraordinary times.

"March and April are among the best and busiest months to visit World Heritage-listed Lord Howe Island, when the waters are warm and the temperatures mild.

"For our small economy, which is based almost entirely on tourism, the operators' support for this Order shows their commitment to the wellbeing of the community for the long term.

"We would like to ask visitors to consider rebooking for later in 2020 or 2021 rather than cancelling their bookings all together."

RESTRICTIONS

Access to and from the island will be restricted to the following persons:

- residents of Lord Howe Island,
- non-residents of Lord Howe Island but only to leave the Island,
- persons required to provide, or support, health services and other essential services to persons on the Island,
- persons who are part of the crew of an airplane or ship providing supplies to the island or related to providing supporting, health care service, or essential services'
- a person with written approval from the Coordinator General.

QUARANTINE

Quarantine arrangements will apply for any person arriving at the island. Arriving persons must:

- travel from the point of arrival on the Island to premises suitable for the person to reside in during the 14-day quarantine period,
- except in exceptional circumstances, reside in the premises during the quarantine period,
- not leave the premises during the quarantine period except for the purposes of obtaining medical care or medical supplies, or because of an emergency, or in circumstances where the person is able to avoid close contact with other persons.
- not permit any other person to enter the premises during the quarantine period unless the other person
 - usually resides at the premises, or
 - is also complying with this direction for the same quarantine period, or
 - enters the premises for medical purposes or because of an emergency,
- Those who arrive will also otherwise comply with the *NSW Health Self Isolation Guidelines* <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/diseases/Documents/covid-19-self-isolation-guidelines.pdf>

FURTHER DETAILS

The current COVID -19 pandemic is creating unprecedented impacts and challenges. It is recognised that these restrictions have major impacts and implications for people and businesses. The Lord Howe Island Tourism Association will be working with the Lord Howe Island Board and NSW Health to assist with planning and managing these travel restrictions, accessing information and assistance for businesses and managing the health and wellbeing of those on the island. Further information will be provided as the situation develops.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

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