

Australia tells citizens to reconsider all foreign travel amid coronavirus pandemic



The Australian government had previously advised against travel to regional epicentres in China, Italy, South Korea and Iran. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

SYDNEY (AFP) - Australia on Friday (March 13) warned citizens the coronavirus pandemic is now so widespread that they should reconsider all foreign travel, as the government stepped up measures to slow the spread of the disease.

“We now advise all Australians to reconsider your need to travel overseas at this time, regardless of your destination, age or health,” Prime Minister Scott Morrison said.

The government had previously advised against travel to regional epicenters in China, Italy, South Korea, and Iran.

After some reluctance, Mr. Morrison said a growing number of examples of community transmission within Australia also meant that the government would soon move to halt events of more than 500 people.

“By Monday,” he said, “we will be advising against organized non-essential gatherings of persons of 500 people or greater.”

Just hours earlier, Mr. Morrison had urged Australians to go to sports matches and boasted he would do the same over the weekend.

His comments came even as the Formula One Grand Prix in Melbourne was canceled and an international cricket fixture against New Zealand in Sydney was played behind closed doors.

Mr. Morrison said the measures were precautionary and insisted he would still go to a rugby league match on Saturday as planned.

“The fact that I would still be going on Saturday speaks not just to my passion for my beloved Sharks, it might be the last game I get to go to for a long time. That’s fine,” he said.

Australia has 184 confirmed cases of Covid-19, a number that has been increasing daily, and has seen three deaths.

Source:<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/australianz/australia-tells-citizens-to-reconsider-all-foreign-travel-amid-coronavirus-pandemic>

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