

## COVID-19 Update

Version 36 – 26 July 2021

### COVID-19 in Australia



Figure 1. From the Australian Department of Health accessed 26/07/21

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/coronavirus-covid-19-current-situation-and-case-numbers>

Please find a summary of the current situation in Australia in relation to COVID-19 (Corona Virus) in relation to commercial shipping.

### **NEW OR CHANGED INFORMATION:**

- [Crew Changes](#) updates to Western Australia requirements.
- State Border Status
- GAC Australia's response.

## Position of the Australian Federal Government:

Management of the COVID-19 outbreak in relation to commercial shipping at a federal level comes under the portfolio of the Australian Border Force (ABF)

In summary the current position (covering all Australian Ports) of the ABF as of March 17, 2020 remains unchanged and is as follows:

- Crew on board any vessel arriving in Australia from an overseas port will be required to self-isolate for a period of 14 days after departure from the last overseas port of call.
- Subject to local restrictions (see below) vessels will be able berth and commence cargo operations without restriction other than crew will need to remain onboard the vessel until the 14-day isolation period has passed.
- Only crew needing to carry out essential vessel functions will be permitted to disembark. When doing so they must wear full Personal Protective Equipment while conducting these functions.

### Travel Restrictions – Australian Citizens

Australia's borders are currently closed and entry to Australia remains strictly controlled to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Travel to Australia is only available if you are exempt or you have been granted an individual exemption.

More information can be found at [Travel restrictions | COVID-19 and the border \(homeaffairs.gov.au\)](https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/travel-restrictions-covid-19)

## Situation by State:

Australia is a federation of states and territories. As such each state has their own government and legislation and the response to COVID-19 varies from State to State:

### QUEENSLAND

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/health-alerts/coronavirus-covid-19/current-status/statistics>

### Vessel Operations:

14 Day restrictions for vessels entering a pilotage area other than Brisbane, Townsville, Port Alma, Bundaberg or Gladstone remain in place if

- *the ship left, or transited through a port outside Australian Territorial Waters after 2359 hours Australian Standard Time on 15 March 2020, or*
- *any crew or other person on board (a relevant person) has travelled to or transited through a country outside Australia after 2359 hours Australian Standard Time on 15 March 2020*

Exemptions from the 14-day exclusion may be granted on a case-by-case basis on application.

### Queensland Two-Port Policy:

Due to different trade patterns for the Ports of Brisbane, Townsville Port Alma, Bundaberg and Gladstone it has been deemed appropriate to adopt the federal position all vessels arriving from overseas.

The change for these ports means that vessels arriving at the Port of Brisbane, Townsville Port Alma, Bundaberg and Gladstone, will be allowed to berth and commence cargo operations provided all non-essential crew remain on board and in self-isolation. Crew essential to the operations of the vessel will be permitted to carry out essential tasks provided they observe social distancing and wear appropriate PPE. This is of course provided there is no sickness reported onboard.

## Queensland State Border Status

The Queensland State border is closed to declared hotspots being all of New South Wales, All of South Australia and All of Victoria

[Novel coronavirus \(COVID-19\) | Queensland Government \(covid19.qld.gov.au\)](https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/)

## NEW SOUTH WALES

There is a current significant outbreak of COVID-19 D variant in New South Wales.

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/find-facts-about-covid-19>

### Vessel Operations:

New South Wales is following the Federal position as outlined above. Ports in NSW will ask the Master for additional arrival information and state *“Where COVID-19 is suspected or confirmed, the Port Authority states that it will risk assess the situation and obtain further advice from the respective government agencies prior to boarding the vessel. Pilotage may be delayed until the Port Authority is satisfied that such risk can be managed”*. An exemption is required for crew to leave the vessel.

### New South Wales State Border Status:

Currently the NSW state border remains open to all states and territories.

## VICTORIA

There is a current significant outbreak of COVID-19 D variant in Victoria.

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

### Vessel Operations

Victoria is following the federal guidelines for vessel operations. Vessel can berth on arrival with crew restricted onboard requiring an exemption to leave the vessel. Local ports and terminals may require additional reporting by the Master.

### Victoria State Border Status

The Victorian domestic border is open to all states with the exception of NSW and with restrictions for South Australia.

## TASMANIA

<https://coronavirus.tas.gov.au/facts/tasmanian-government-response>

## Vessel Operations

Tasmania is following the federal guidelines for vessel operations. Vessel can berth on arrival with crew restricted onboard requiring an exemption to leave the vessel. Local ports and terminals may require additional reporting by the Master.

## Tasmanian State Border Status

The Tasmanian domestic border is open to all states however persons arriving from NSW, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia are required to quarantine for 14 days on arrival in Tasmania.

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

There is a current significant outbreak of COVID-19 D variant in South Australia.

<https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/home/dashboard>

## Vessel Operations

South Australia is following the federal guidelines for vessel operations. Vessel can berth on arrival with crew restricted onboard requiring an exemption to leave the vessel. Local ports and terminals may require additional reporting by the Master.

## South Australian State Border Status

The South Australia State Border remains open however travelling from NSW, ACT, Victoria, and Queensland is prohibited at this time.

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

<https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/department-of-the-premier-and-cabinet/covid-19-coronavirus-travel-wa>

## Vessel Operations

Western Australia is following Federal guidelines, vessels can berth on arrival except for the ports of Geraldton, Albany, Esperance, Bunbury, Dampier/Port Walcott (Rio Tinto Terminals) and Port Headland who require a 14-day quarantine period from last overseas port of departure before entering port and taking an inward pilot.

## Western Australia State Border Status

The Western Australian State is open to other states. A State Border (G2G) pass is required to enter WA. Higher scrutiny for travel approvals is required for persons arriving from NSW, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria.

## NORTHERN TERRITORY

<https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/current-status>

## Vessel Operations

The Northern Territory is following the federal guidelines for vessel operations. Vessel can berth on arrival with crew restricted onboard requiring an exemption to leave the vessel. Local ports and terminals may require additional reporting by the Master.

## Northern Territory Domestic Border Status

The Northern Territory Sate Border remains open however anyone arriving in the Northern Territory is required to apply for permission to enter. Depending on a risk assessment of their likelihood of exposure persons arriving in the NT from NSW, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia may need to quarantine on arrival for 14 days.

## Crew Changes

AMSA, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (Port State Control) are enforcing obligations under the Maritime Labour Convention. We are aware of vessels being detained in Australia if they have failed to meet their MLC obligations.

The situation in Australia remains difficult but not impossible relation to crew changes.

Whilst the Federal Government has put reasonable restrictions in place which do allow for crew changes, Australia is a federation of states and each state has their own Government and makes their own individual laws. Each state has put additional restrictions for crew changes in place (see below).

The below information is a general guide for conducting crew changes in Australia whilst COVID-19 restrictions remain in place. The situation remains fluid and the regulations can change at short notice. Requirements at each port can vary so guidance from the local agent should be checked carefully for each crew change.

## Queensland

### ON SIGNERS:

- A minimum of 7 days advance notice is required for crew changes (shorter notice may be possible but it is difficult to get approval).
- Crew require a Maritime Crew Visa (MCV) and subclass 600 or 651 visa
- Crew will require an international travel exemption to enter Australia <https://travel-exemptions.homeaffairs.gov.au/tep> An additional registration must be completed for international arrivals to Queensland at: <https://www.qld.gov.au/internationalarrivalstoqld/registration>. The code given on completion of registration must be given to Queensland Police.
- Crew can travel direct from the airport to the vessel provided a private, dedicated charter service is used. A negative COVID test (administered by the Queensland Health Authorities) is required prior to boarding the vessel if crew go into quarantine. A minimum of 5 days should be allowed for COVID testing and processing of results.

### OFF SIGNERS:

- A minimum of 7 days advance notice is required for crew changes (shorter notice may be possible but it is difficult to get approval).
- A transit VISA if not departing the country within 5 days after disembarking the Vessel.
- A travel plan, approved by the Regional Harbour Master, must be in place 36 hours prior to departing the vessel.
- The flight itinerary needs to be known well in advance for departing Australia.
- Crew may depart direct to airport / flight if using private, dedicated charter transport with an approved COVID management plan in place. However, crew must depart within four hours of leaving the vessel or will be directed into quarantine.
- If entering quarantine, the crew must undertake 14 days quarantine and return a negative COVID test (conducted with 72 hours of departing) prior to leaving quarantine.

## New South Wales

### ON SIGNERS:

- A minimum of 14 days advance notice is required for crew changes (shorter notice may be possible but it is difficult to get approval).
- Crew require a Maritime Crew Visa (MCV) and subclass 600 or 651 visa
- Crew will require an international travel exemption to enter Australia <https://travel-exemptions.homeaffairs.gov.au/tep>
- 14-day quarantine is mandatory on arrival and a negative COVID test result is required prior to joining the vessel
- If crew do not join the vessel directly from leaving quarantine a 16-day COVID test is required to be undertaken

### OFF SIGNERS:

- A minimum of 5 days advance notice is required for crew changes (shorter notice may be possible but it is difficult to get approval).

- A transit VISA if not departing the country within 5 days after disembarking the Vessel.
- Travel approval from NSW Health / NSW Police is requested 72 hrs prior to travel as a minimum however approval is not normally issued until 24 hrs prior to time of travel.
- Flight details must be provided in advance of the travel approval request being made to the authorities prior to travel approval request is made.
- Crew may depart from the vessel direct to their departing flight using a dedicated private charter vehicle.
- Crew may stay in a quarantine hotel for up to around 48 hrs and then transit direct to the departure flight. Crew remaining longer may be required to complete the full 14 day quarantine.
- Advice from the airline is required to confirm if a negative Covid Test is required prior to boarding.
- If a negative COVID test is required, please note that COVID testers cannot board the vessel and crew transport cannot deviate when transferring crew to the quarantine hotel. Therefore minimum 30 hours should be allowed between disembarking the vessel and the departure flight if a negative COVID test is required by the airline. Note crew staying in the quarantine hotel longer than 48 hrs may be required to remain for the full 14-day quarantine.

## Victoria

### ON SIGNERS

- A minimum of 96 hours advance notice is required for crew changes (shorter notice may be possible but it is difficult to get approval).
- Crew require a Maritime Crew Visa (MCV) and subclass 600 or 651 visa
- Crew will require an international travel exemption to enter Australia <https://travel-exemptions.homeaffairs.gov.au/tep>
- Crew will require a negative COVID test result prior to arriving in Australia.
- **If the next port of call is an Australian port**, all international on signing crew must complete 14 days mandatory hotel quarantine prior to joining a vessel in Victoria
- **If the vessel is departing Australian waters**, international on signing crew can join vessel directly on arrival provided the vessel will sail within 48 hours of crew joining

### OFF SIGNERS:

- A minimum of 96 hours advance notice is required for crew changes
- A transit VISA if not departing the country within 5 days after disembarking the Vessel.
- COVID PCR testing is mandatory for all off signing crew in Victoria. There are two options for off signers:
  - Option 1 – If a PCR test is required by the airline / destination country – Crew will need to depart the Vessel at least 48 hours prior to their flights. Crew will undergo a PCR test and remain in Quarantine HQ until the time of the flights.
  - Option 2 – When a PCR test is NOT required by the airline / destination country prior to flying Crew will need to depart the vessel at least 24 hours prior to the flight to undergo PCR testing at the quarantine hotel.
- The health authorities arrange all transport and Hotel quarantine requirements whilst the crew are waiting for their flights.

## Tasmania

There are no International flights arriving / departing Tasmania at this time.

## South Australia

### ON SIGNERS

- 20 days advance notice is preferred for crew changes. Shorter notice periods are possible but may impact the ability to get approvals in place from the authorities.
- Crew require a Maritime Crew Visa (MCV) and subclass 600 or 651 visa
- Crew will require an international travel exemption to enter Australia <https://travel-exemptions.homeaffairs.gov.au/tep>
- A South Australia State Border Pass is required if transiting from another Australian Port / Airport outside of South Australia
- Negative COVID Test is needed before boarding flight to come to Australia.
- All crew will be required to complete 14 days in quarantine on arrival (note first 24 hrs are not counted).
- A COVID test will be conducted on day 2 and day 12 whilst crew are in quarantine and must return negative before crew are released.

### OFF SIGNERS

- 20 days advance notice is preferred for crew changes. Shorter notice periods are possible but may impact the ability to get approvals in place from the authorities.
- A transit VISA if not departing the country within 5 days after disembarking the Vessel.
- Travel approvals must be in place 36 hrs prior to departure from the vessel
- Confirmed flight details are required in advance for approvals to be granted.
- A negative COVID test may be required 48 hrs prior to departure.
- Crew will be taken to a quarantine hotel until departure, if they are not able to travel direct to the airport for an immediate departure.

## Western Australia

### ON SIGNERS

- State authorities have advised there will be stricter scrutiny for crew arriving from overseas or other Australian States
- A copy of the vessels safe manning certificate is now required and evidence to show the crew member is needed to meet the safe manning requirements of the vessel.
- A minimum of 21 days advance notice is required for crew changes (shorter notice may be possible but it is difficult to get approval).
- Crew require a Maritime Crew Visa (MCV) and subclass 600 or 651 visa
- Crew will require an international travel exemption to enter Australia <https://travel-exemptions.homeaffairs.gov.au/tep>
- A State Border Pass (G2G Pass) must be applied for and approved before boarding the first flight
- Crew will enter mandatory 14 quarantine on arrival in Perth



- A negative COVID test result is required. A test will be conducted on day 3 and day 11 of quarantine.

## OFF SIGNERS

- 7-10 days advance notice is required for crew changes. Shorter notice periods are possible but may impact the ability to get approvals in place from the authorities.
- A transit VISA if not departing the country within 5 days after disembarking the Vessel.
- A State Border Pass (G2G Pass) & 'Maritime Off signing Information Sheet' to be submitted and obtain an approval 36 hrs before disembarkation.
- Crew may depart direct from the airport if their flight leaves within 8 hours of them departing the vessel.
- Crew not departing direct will be directed to a quarantine hotel to await their departure flight.
- If required by Airlines, a Negative COVID Test Result takes up to 3 days. The off signers will have to stay at a Quarantine hotel until the results are issued (results valid for 72hrs). In regional ports the COVID test is conducted on board the vessel or at the wharf. Crew may not depart the vessel if the test result has not been received.
- If crew depart from regional ports dedicated private charter transport to Perth is required. A Police escort may also be required for road transfers.
- A private charter flight is required from remote ports. Off-signing crew are not permitted on domestic airlines.

## Northern Territory

### ON SIGNERS

- A minimum of 96 hours advance notice is preferred for crew changes (shorter notice may be possible but it is difficult to get approval).
- Crew require a Maritime Crew Visa (MCV) and subclass 600 or 651 visa
- Crew will require an international travel exemption to enter Australia <https://travel-exemptions.homeaffairs.gov.au/tep>
- There are no International flight arriving to or departing from Darwin
- Crew arriving within 14 days from last overseas country will be required to quarantine in Darwin for 14 days before been permitted to join the vessel in Darwin.
- Crew arriving in other states from overseas must spend 14 days in quarantine in the city of arrival before travelling to Darwin there is no need to quarantine again in Darwin (provided state borders are open).

### OFF SIGNERS

- Off-signing crew can leave the vessel within 14 days after departure from the last overseas port of call and quarantine in government run facility to complete balance of 14-day quarantine.
- Off-signing crew complete 14 days quarantine in Darwin prior to travelling on to other cities for flights out the country, this includes time spent at sea since last port/crew change.
- Approvals from local authorities are required to be in place prior to crew disembarking the vessel.
- As there are no international flights out of Darwin crew will need to depart Australia from another state and there may be additional requirements for that state.

## GAC Australia Measures

GAC Australia is working as normal with all of our offices fully manned with the exception of Sydney Melbourne and Adelaide where staff are working from home where able inline with the Governments requirements. Our COVID-19 contingency and management plan is being followed. All State and Federal requirements for social distancing and management of the workplace are being followed.

### BOARDING VESSELS:

Due to COVID-19 we have adopted the following approach in relation to boarding vessels:

- GAC Staff will only board vessels where there is a definite operational reason to do so
- A definite operational reason is one where there is no other way to carry out the required task without boarding the vessel
- Examples would be to deliver Mail, Spares, CTM where it is not possible to arrange same via a third party or where documentation needs to be presented and signed and there is no option to do this but on the vessel.
- Where a Master requests our attendance onboard we will attend the vessel provided there is an operational need to do so, and the local terminal / port allows same.

Where GAC does attend the vessel:

- Time on board will be limited as much as possible and no longer than 15 minutes.
- Meetings will be conducted on deck where possible or in an area that has natural ventilation.
- Social distancing protocols will be followed at all times
- Appropriate PPE will be worn at all times
- Meetings at the gangway to hand over goods etc. will be conducted where possible if it means boarding the vessel can be avoided.
- As much preparation will be done in advance by phone / email in order to minimise the time spent on board the vessel.

In some Ports local restrictions have been put in place which limit agents from accessing the vessel. Where these restrictions are in place GAC will observe them and not attend the vessel.

As restrictions ease and where we are able to comply with relevant social distancing protocols and Port / Terminal requirements we will return to normal operations.