

ACU Announcements

Wednesday 18 March 2020

Dear staff and students

We have a range of new updates for you today following the Australian Government press conference this morning and our latest meeting of the ACU Critical Incident Response Group.

Latest Australian Government advice

This morning Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced a ban on non-essential indoor gatherings of more than 100 people, effective immediately. This comes after the ban on outdoor events of more than 500.

Education facilities including universities, schools and childcare facilities however are classified as essential gatherings and are exempt from this ban. As are offices and public transport.

Australia's Chief Medical Officer, Brendan Murphy, said there were no plans for a two to four-week lockdown, and said that any measures Australia takes need to be sustainable and last for at least six months. The university remains open, albeit with the Easter break bought forward to next week, and we will continue to operate in accordance with government and health authority directions.

International travel

The government also raised the travel advisory for the entire world to a Level 4 – **Do Not Travel**, and Australians travelling overseas have been told by DFAT to return home as soon as possible. ACU is asking all students and staff who are overseas to return to Australia as soon as possible.

Domestic travel

We have made the decision to suspend all university-related domestic travel and new travel bookings by staff and students until 31 July 2020. ACU is monitoring the situation closely, and we will continue to review this guidance. Exceptions will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the relevant member of the Senior Executive Group.

Protocols for ACU events and meetings

ACU campuses remain open to students and staff, and we are increasing our ability to deliver teaching online to provide flexibility for our students.

The university has developed protocols on the running of, and attendance at, events and meetings scheduled by ACU, on and off campus, in line with the university's directive and protocols for management of the spread of COVID-19. The protocols can be found [here](#).

Keeping calm

We know that this is an anxious time for many of you, but I will ask that you keep calm and respond with the resilience, openness and empathy of which I know we are all capable. Treat each other kindly and with patience as we all work hard to meet the challenges ahead.

This morning Mr Morrison urged Australians to stop hoarding and panic-buying groceries, and mentioned the many hoaxes being spread on the internet and via chain text messages about an 'upcoming lockdown'. Please make sure you keep up to date through official sources and the ACU [FAQs](#) which will be updated to reflect this announcement by the end of today.

On behalf of Dr Stephen Weller and the Critical Incident Response Group

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[Australia Catholic University Critical Incident Management Policy.](#)

