



AMBASSADOR

**AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY
TOKYO**

9 April 2020

To Australians in Japan

By now you will have seen that Japanese Prime Minister Abe has announced a state of emergency in Tokyo, Kanagawa, Chiba, Saitama in Kanto, Osaka and Hyogo in Kansai and Fukuoka in Kyushu. This state of emergency will be in place until the end of Golden Week on 6 May.

When declaring the state of emergency, the Prime Minister described the current situation as Japan's "biggest crisis since World War II". As in Australia, the spread of COVID-19 in Japan is putting great strain on the health system, and will it continue to do so until the spread of the virus can be stopped. The measures implemented by the Japanese authorities to address the COVID-19 outbreak will vary between prefectures as Prefectural and Local Governments tailor their responses to local needs.

As Australians in Japan, we are part of the local community and need to adjust our daily lives to adhere to the Japanese Government's instructions. This means doing our bit to "flatten the curve" by limiting movement outside the house to the absolute minimum, reducing people-to-people contact and staying away from crowded places. A number of Australians in Japan have contracted COVID-19 and the Embassy is supporting them while they are being treated in local hospitals.

The economic impact of COVID-19 has also been widespread. Just as the outbreak has triggered job losses in Australia, it is likely we will also witness an increase in unemployment in Japan. In assessing whether you stay in Japan or return to Australia, I encourage you to take into account a broad range of considerations including access to finances, adequate health insurance and accommodation. If you have any doubts, you should return to Australia while flights are still available.

As many of you are aware, the number of flights between Japan and Australia has drastically reduced and currently ANA operates the only flight to Australia. This service to Sydney has also been reduced to three times per week and could be suspended at any time at short notice. At this stage it is uncertain if there will be any further flights to Australia after 24 April 2020, and flights could end sooner than this.

If you decide to stay in Japan, you should prepare to stay for an extended period of time. The declaration of the state of emergency means that you need to closely monitor the Japanese media and follow the instructions from the Japanese authorities. The Australian Embassy's social media will continue to provide updated information relevant to Australians in Japan, and Smartraveller will be updated regularly.



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I am conscious that this is a challenging and stressful time to be away from friends and family in Australia. I can assure you that throughout the state of emergency period, the Embassy will continue to provide consular services to Australians who require assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Richard Court AC', with a large, stylized flourish extending to the right.

Richard Court AC
Australian Ambassador to Japan