

# COVID-19 Impact and Recovery Report: Australia

Updated: August 4, 2020

This report provides a snapshot of the situation in Australia. It includes the following sections:

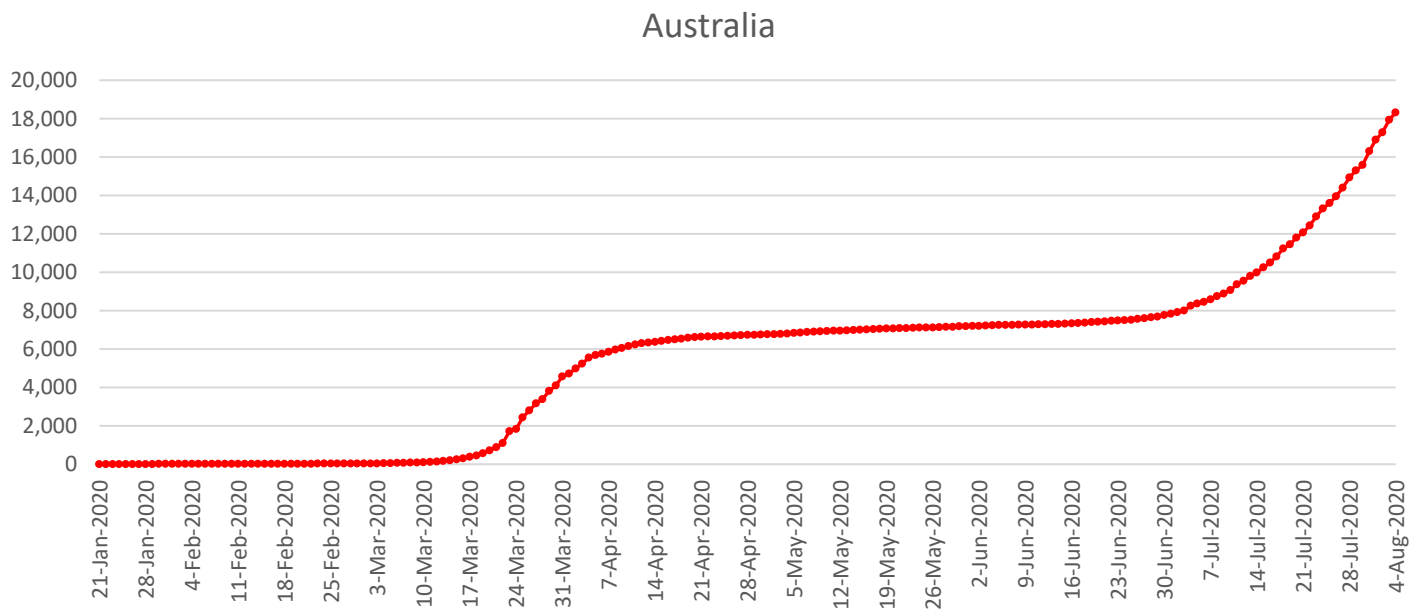
1. **COVID-19 Cases and Related Restrictions:** The number and growth rate of cases as of a certain date. Given the fluidity of the situation, these numbers may be out of date very quickly, but the intent is to provide context for analysis, as well as a sense of the scale. It also provides the known travel bans and restrictions in the country.
2. **Estimated Impacts on Travel to Canada:** The effects of COVID-19 on tourism revenue in Canada. This includes estimated spend inside the country, but excludes spending on transportation to get to Canada.
3. **Recovery Signals:** The comprehensive approach to understanding when the market is recovering from a travel perspective based on data and analysis in partnership with Google, Expedia, International Air Transport Association (IATA) and more. Destination Canada uses this information to estimate the stage of recovery of the market.
4. **Methodological Notes:** An explanation of the methodologies in the different sections and relevant sources.

## 1. COVID-19 CASES AND TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS IN AUSTRALIA

As of August 4, 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic is on an **upward** trajectory again in Australia in terms of the reported number of confirmed cases and deaths. Current numbers:<sup>1</sup>

- Total Confirmed: 18,733 (+23% compared to the previous week)
- Total Deaths: 232
- Total Recovered: 10,797

### Confirmed COVID-19 Cases



Source: European CDC (as of August 4, 2020)

Effective March 18, 2020, Canada closed its borders to non-Canadian citizens/permanent residents.<sup>2</sup> All outbound overseas travel from Australia is currently banned, with few exceptions.<sup>3</sup> All travellers arriving in Australia must complete a mandatory 14-day quarantine at designated facilities, in their port of arrival. With few exceptions, non-Australian citizens/permanent residents are not permitted to travel to Australia at this time.<sup>4,5</sup>

On May 8, 2020, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced a three-step plan to reopen the country's economy by July, as the government began gradually lifting social distancing measures. There was no strict timeline for the new measures to be implemented, and states and territories were allowed to enact them at their own pace<sup>6</sup>.

On July 8, 2020, following a regional spike in cases, the metropolitan Melbourne area resumed lockdown restrictions for an initial six-week period.<sup>7</sup> As of July 14, 2020, some restrictions were also imposed in New South Wales due to a rise in cases, while South Australia cancelled plans to reopen its border to New South Wales on July 20, 2020, and Queensland introduced a mandatory two-week quarantine for people who visited two areas in Sydney's western suburbs.<sup>8</sup>

On August 2, 2020, the premier of the state of Victoria declared a "state of disaster" and announced stricter lockdown measures for another six weeks, with Stage 4 restrictions in the metropolitan Melbourne area and Stage 3 restrictions in regional Victoria (further details on these restrictions may be found in the sources at the end of this document).<sup>9,10</sup>

## 2. ESTIMATED IMPACTS ON TRAVEL TO CANADA

As of August 2, 2020, based on data from payment cards, Statistics Canada, cancellations of previously planned trips, new bookings and forward-looking scheduled air capacity, Destination Canada estimates the economic impact from COVID-19 on Canada to be as outlined below.

### Estimated Change in Tourism Export Revenue Compared to 2019 by Quarter (\$M)

	JAN	FEB	MAR	Total Q1	APR	MAY	JUN	Total Q1+Q2	JUL	AUG	SEP	Total Q1+Q2+Q3
<b>\$ change compared to 2019 (\$M)</b>	\$0.1	\$3.2	-\$17.3	-\$14.1	-\$42.0	-\$68.8	-\$79.0	-\$203.8	-\$97.9	-\$85.0	-\$88.1	-\$474.9
<b>% change</b>	0.1%	8.3%	-55.9%		-91.2%	-100.0%	-100.0%		-100.0%	-100.0%	-100.0%	

Source: Destination Canada Estimates (data as of August 2, 2020)

### Estimated Change in Tourism Export Revenue Compared to 2019 by Province (in \$M)

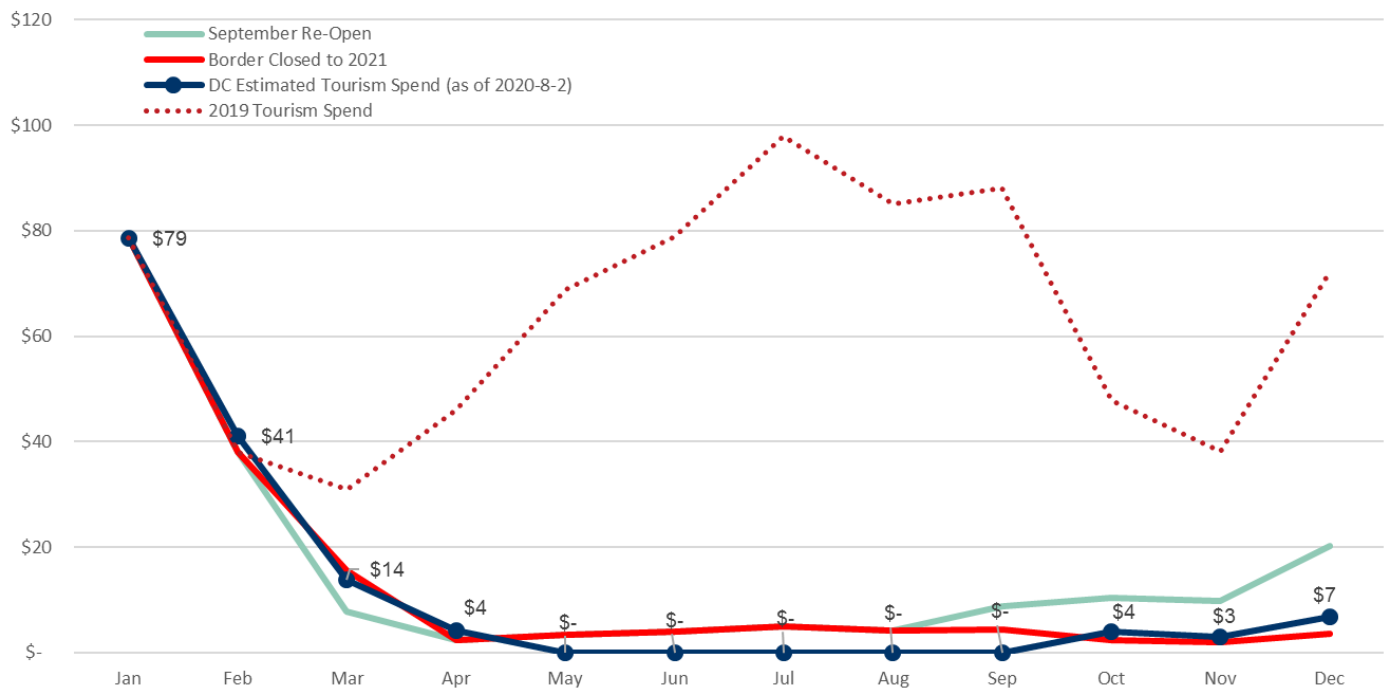
	CAN	BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	NB	NS	PEI	NL	NORTH
<b>Jan - Jun</b>	-\$203.8	-\$103.0	-\$35.9	-\$2.0	-\$2.5	-\$33.2	-\$15.8	-\$1.9	-\$2.9	-\$1.5	-\$1.9	-\$3.2
<b>Jan - Sep</b>	-\$474.9	-\$216.2	-\$94.1	-\$6.4	-\$6.3	-\$77.9	-\$42.6	-\$4.4	-\$8.3	-\$4.0	-\$5.0	-\$9.7

Source: Destination Canada Estimates (data as of August 2, 2020)

In March of 2020, Destination Canada commissioned Tourism Economics,<sup>11</sup> to develop a series of models to estimate the impact of COVID-19 on the Canadian economy and travel. This initial analysis considered two scenarios: where international travel was possible in July and August, and where it was not possible until September. Given the ongoing travel environment, Destination Canada has updated these scenarios: **September Re-Open** (where non-essential travel into Canada begins in September), and **Borders Closed to 2021** (where non-essential travel into Canada is not possible or encouraged until 2021).

Assessing the current trajectory of COVID-19 against these models will allow Destination Canada and its partners to understand the speed and scale of recovery. The chart below compares the current estimates of tourism spend in Canada against these models.

# Estimated Tourism Spend versus September Re-Open and Border Closed to 2021 Models, as of August 2, 2020 (\$M)



Source: Destination Canada Estimates, Tourism Economics Estimates

As Australian travellers generally book their travel to Canada several months in advance, we are currently able to assess the impacts until the end of 2020.

Destination Canada currently assesses that Australian tourism spend from May through September is on track to fall below both scenarios. This trend is in line with the current ban on international departures from Australia, and the related reduction in air capacity between Australia and Canada. From October onward, the data currently indicates that Australian tourism spend is on track to follow the “Borders closed to 2021” scenario.

### 3. RECOVERY SIGNALS

In response to COVID-19, Destination Canada has established a framework and analytical approach to identify signals from consumer and industry behaviour to understand when, where and at what pace travel and tourism will resume. Destination Canada collaborated with partners in destination marketing, media, technology and travel to identify these indicators and signals. The framework has identified multiple phases of recovery, which aligns with user sentiment and intent to travel. The summary of the methodology and terms can be found in Section 4. Methodological Notes.

The framework below provides analysis on when travellers may be considering, planning and reserving travel.

<b>Destination Canada’s Assessment of the Australian market:</b>	<b>I COVID-19 Response</b>	Australia was previously in the Domestic phase but has reverted to the COVID-19 Response phase. Due to an increase in the number of new cases in some areas, some states have re-implemented restrictions.
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## Assessment Summary:

	Phase				Analysis
	I COVID-19 Response	II Domestic	III Tentative Int'l	IV Regularized Int'l	
Travel Search Index		●	○	○	After declining since early March, YOY domestic travel searches had been trending up since mid-April, 2020, but began trending down again after a peak in the week ending June 21, 2020, as movement restrictions were reintroduced in some regions. Destination Canada assesses that while this metric is declining, Australians are still searching for domestic travel.
Accommodation Searches	●	○	○	○	After declining since the week ending March 1, 2020, YOY domestic accommodation searching had been trending upward since the end of April. With restrictions being reintroduced in some regions, there has now been a downward trend again since the week ending June 21, 2020. Destination Canada assesses that Australians have returned to a COVID-19 Response phase.
Rate of Hotel Booking	●	○	○	○	After declining since early March, 2020, YOY domestic accommodation bookings had been trending up since early May. With restrictions being reintroduced in some regions, there has now been a downward trend again since the week ending June 21, 2020. Destination Canada assesses that Australians have returned to a COVID-19 Response phase.
Rate of Air Travel		○	○	○	Not applicable at this stage.
New COVID Cases	●	○			The number of weekly new cases in Australia has been sharply increasing again since mid-June, 2020, with 3,332 new cases in the week ending August 2, 2020 - surpassing the previous peak of 2,711 new cases in the week ending March 29, 2020. Weekly cases had previously plateaued at a low level for several weeks, with a low of 47 new cases in the week ending June 14, 2020.
Dining Search Index		●	○	○	After declining from mid-February until reaching a plateau in the week ending March 29, 2020, YOY domestic dining searches had been trending up since mid-May, in line with the gradual lifting of movement restrictions. However, searches have been trending downward again since the week ending June 21, 2020, as movement restrictions were reintroduced in some regions. Destination Canada assesses that while this metric is declining, Australians are still searching for domestic dining.
Activities Search Index	●	○	○	○	After declining since early March, YOY domestic destination activities search had been trending up since the end of April, but have been trending downward again since the week ending June 21, 2020, as movement restrictions were reintroduced in some regions. Destination Canada assesses that Australians have returned to a COVID-19 Response phase.

Legend: Current phase ● Not there yet ○ Signal not applicable □

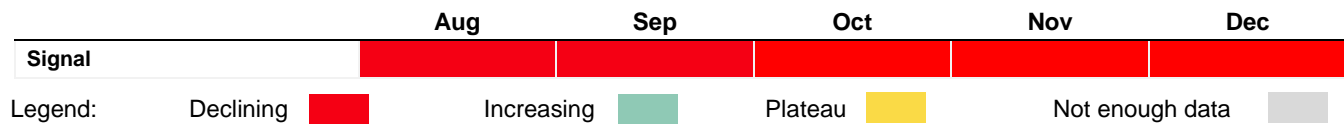
## Future Planned Travel

The chart below provides an assessment of when travellers are booking travel to Canada. This assessment is based on changes to net planned travel (new bookings, less cancellations) from the country to Canada, compared to past travel behaviour.

- A 'declining' signal indicates that the year-over year net planned travel is falling week over week and is likely not a period currently being considered for travel.
- A 'plateau' signal indicates no change week over week.
- An 'increasing' signal indicates there is an increase in year-over-year net planned booking, week over week and that this time period is being considered for travel to Canada.

A 'not enough data' signal indicates that travellers do not normally book that far in advance so we cannot assess the signal at this time.

## Planned Travel for Australia to Canada compared to 2019, as of August 2, 2020



### 4. METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

**I. COVID-19 Cases:** The intention for this section is to provide context on impact and recovery analysis by providing a snapshot in time of the state of the pandemic and government restrictions. For the most current information on COVID-19 in that country, readers are encouraged to seek information from official government sources.

**II. Estimated Impacts:** The estimates are based on data from spending on credit and debit cards in Canada for January, February and March 2020, normalized against Statistics Canada data. For April 2020 onwards, forward-looking air booking and cancellation data for return tickets from IATA accredited travel agencies is used. Destination Canada estimates that these IATA bookings account for 52% of the air travel market from Australia to Canada in 2019.

Also used in the analysis is the forward-looking scheduled air capacity. These impacts are based on modelled estimates from 2018 spending data, adjusted for travel growth, and using payment card data from 2019 and 2020 wherever possible. The analysis should be taken as indicative only.

Based on in-market intelligence, we know that travel agents and operators have prioritized repatriation of clients in areas with outright travel bans (e.g. Middle East, India, Peru) and are not processing cancellations normally. Different airlines also use various systems to re-book travel, some of which are incenting late rebooking (i.e. closer to the original date of travel). As such, the forward booking data may over-represent the amount of travel that will happen and should be taken as an upper bound.

**III. Recovery Signals:** The Recovery Measures are listed in their order of importance in understanding travel behaviour, with the primary measures in black and supporting measures in dark gray. A brief description of each measure is provided below.

Destination Canada has developed a framework to understand the phases of recovery of the travel market. These phases are:

- I. **COVID-19 Response:** Governments are responding with measures such as shelter-in-place orders and mandatory quarantines. Movement is restricted and travel is either not possible, desirable or encouraged.
- II. **Domestic Travel:** Travel by multiple means (air, car, trains, etc.) within the country, across provincial/territorial/state boundaries.
- III. **Tentative International Travel:** Some international travel, likely only required travel such as family-related or urgent business. There may be some leisure travel as some less risk-averse travellers seek to capitalize on reduced prices or increases availability. Airlines may not have restored international routes beyond major hubs.
- IV. **Regularized International Travel:** Regular international travel. Some business meetings and events are re-introduced and attended, and leisure travel is closer to pre-COVID-19 levels.

A filled-in dot in the Assessment Summary table signifies that Destination Canada assesses we are in that phase of travel. An empty dot means we have not yet reached that indicator and the crossed off box would signify that the measure does not apply for that phase of recovery. Some measures are currently being developed and will be updated as progress is made.

#### Description of the Measures

- **Travel Intent Search Index:** Google search engine queries for travel-related keywords in 2020 compared to 2019 searches, broken down by week (i.e. week of April 19, 2020 vs week of April 19, 2019). Available for each market's domestic, international and Canada-specific travel search terms.
- **Rate of Accommodation Searches:** Weekly searches in 2020 for accommodation on a major online travel agency (OTA) against a rate of 2019 weekly searches, broken down by week. Available for each market's domestic, international and Canada-specific accommodation searches. This is provided as a rate rather than a volume of searches.

- **Rate of Accommodation Bookings:** Accommodation bookings in 2020 on a major OTA against a rate of 2019 bookings, broken down by week. Available for each market's domestic, international and Canada accommodation bookings. This is provided as a rate rather than a volume of bookings.
- **Rate of Air Travel:** The volume of forward-looking 2020 air bookings by month to Canada versus 2019 air bookings, broken down by week. By comparing against the 2019 average of when travel was booked for and when it was booked, this establishes the amount of impact against each month of travel. When appropriate, this assessment is supplemented by analysis of the forward-looking planned air seat capacity within a country and to other countries.
- **Weekly New COVID-19 Confirmed Cases:** The weekly total of new confirmed COVID-19 cases, as provided by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. Number of cases in the market and within Canada will likely be a determining factor for both governments allowing phased return of travel, as well as consumer confidence in traveling to a market.
- **Dining, Attractions & Events Search Index:** Google searches for dining, attraction and event-related keywords in 2020 compared to 2019 searches, broken down by week. Available for each market's domestic, international and Canada-specific dining, attraction, and event-related search terms. This is provided as an index rather than a volume of searches.

**Sources:**

<sup>1</sup> Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center, June 9, 2020 5 pm (PST) <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/trudeau-travel-restrictions-ban-coronavirus-covid19-canada>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/news-and-updates/coronavirus-covid-19>

<sup>4</sup> <https://covid19.homeaffairs.gov.au/coming-australia>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.smartraveller.gov.au>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/08/australia/australia-coronavirus-reopen-intl-hnk/index.html>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.smh.com.au/national/covid-19-what-are-the-public-health-rules-now-20200511-p54rux.html>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/australia-coronavirus-states-movement-restrictions-1.5648568>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/australia-s-victoria-declares-state-of-disaster-locking-down-millions-in-melbourne-as-virus-cases-soar-1.5048662>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/business-industry-stage-4-restrictions-covid-19>

<sup>11</sup> Tourism Economics, COVID-19's Impact on Canadian Tourism, March 23, 2020

<https://www.destinationcanada.com/en/coronavirus-updates/covid-19-research>