

Coronavirus: A summary in - Australia

Australia never officially moved into a 'complete lockdown' of the country, unlike many other European countries such as England, France, Spain and Italy. Less extreme measures were taken by the Australian Government at an earlier point in time, therefore limiting the number of Coronavirus cases in the country. Any person who is tested positive is forced to quarantine themselves from everyone for 14 days. Additionally, everyone they have had contact with is required to quarantine until they are tested themselves.

In a stage 3 Lockdown (we have just moved out of this stage), people could exercise as much as they wished, in any location, as long as groups were restricted to a 2-person minimum and social distancing of 1.5m was upheld. Shopping for most goods remained legal although there had to be a genuine reason for needing to buy the good at that time. For example, buying a bed is not always deemed essential but if your bed breaks and you need one, it is permitted. In summary, self-isolation was recommended by the government unless one required otherwise.

In this way, we have been very lucky that most sports that don't require contact or teams have been able to continue as normal – with the exclusion of gyms and yoga studios which of course are completely unhygienic. Many personal trainers and other sport teachers have moved classes online, using Zoom as a platform to keep clients happy. Others have been uploading daily videos on YouTube – many of which are free and a great recourse.

Schools did close initially, but, the timing of the coronavirus and the school holidays coincided nicely, therefore students only missed 1 week of school. Two weeks ago, the school holidays finished and public schools, and the respective teachers and children were encouraged to return. This is because if children remain at home, parents are unable to work as they are at home taking care of them. Often parents are working in the healthcare sector which is desperate for help at the moment. Alternatively, if children remain home, their grandparents will take care of them, therefore putting the elderly population at risk.

Private schools on the other hand, have mostly decided to resume school on a solely online basis, using skype, emails, zoom and facetime. Exams have been made 'open-book' and are all online and times. Students need to turn their camera and microphone on during exams to mitigate potential cheating. A similar approach has been taken by most universities, which will probably only resume face-to-face learning in mid-August.

Now, the country has entered a stage-2 lockdown which sees changing restrictions on a weekly basis. Currently, all restrictions remain the same as aforementioned, although, groups of 3 are permitted to visit others house's (next week, groups of 10), and groups of 10 are allowed in restaurants. The government has also increased testing dramatically at this time, as the number of cases in the country is so low. By increasing testing, the hope is that a more informed decision can be executed regarding re-opening the economy.

Worksheet

1. Please make sure you understand all the underlined words above, as they key words to use when discussing the current covid-19 pandemic.
2. What similarities and differences can you think of between Spain and Australia's laws during the lockdown?
3. What do you predict, the Australian government will 'unlock' next for its citizens?
4. Do you think it is too early to be allowing people to go to restaurants again? Why?
5. Why do you think private schools have decided not to resume but public school (government run) have?
6. Do you have trust or confidence in the Spanish government after seeing the way they have handled the pandemic?

NOTE: There is no 1 correct answer for many of these questions. I would like you to understand the information above, and use it to inform your arguments and strengthen your opinions, whatever they may be.