



AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

7 July 2020

LETTER TO AUSTRALIANS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR

G'day everyone.

The COVID-19 crisis continues, which is unfortunately not news to any of us! The Argentine Government continues its implementation of a national quarantine and borders remain closed until 17 July inclusive. Scheduled international and domestic flights have been suspended until September, although limited charter flights to Europe (including Amsterdam, Paris and Madrid) and the USA are possibilities. The Paraguayan and Uruguayan Governments have also closed their borders, however there are periodic flights from Montevideo, including a scheduled Iberia flight to Madrid in August.

Argentina has reimposed phase one restrictions in Buenos Aires city and province. So what does that mean for you in the capital region? People movements will only be permitted for shopping of food, cleaning/hygiene/medical supplies, and hardware items in nearby retail stores. During this time I urge you to follow the advice of local authorities and abide by local regulations, which can and will be enforced by the police. Please follow DFAT's advice for [sheltering](#) until you are able to leave.

Our staffing at the Embassy is severely reduced, but we will do what we can to continue to keep in touch with you and provide consular advice and services as best we can, particularly for Australians who may have chronic health conditions or who are particularly vulnerable in other ways. Please contact the Embassy on consular.buenosaires@dfat.gov.au or 54 11 4779 3500 if you are requiring assistance.

I know that many of you have already provided to the Embassy details of your current location and contact numbers. We have registered these. While we are in lockdown it is vital that the Embassy knows where you all are located and the team is able to communicate with you as best we can. It will allow us to provide you updates on local situations.

Register: If you have not already done so could you please register with DFAT online through our Traveller Registrations System (TRS) <https://covid19.dfat.gov.au>. Those of you who have already provided our Embassy your information by email do not need to register online again.

Medical: If you have a condition for which you take regular medication it's vital that you have ample supplies to see you through. Australian prescriptions cannot be filled in Argentina, Paraguay or Uruguay.

Doctors and pharmacies will remain open during the lockdown. I recommend you visit a GP rather than going to a hospital at this time, unless of course you have an emergency.

Visas: We've heard from several Australians concerned about the issue of overstaying their visas if they go into lockdown. Argentine authorities have advised that they will roll over extensions for temporary and transit visas for 30 days if they expire after 17 March.

As you can understand, the situation is changing regularly and we encourage you to continually monitor our social media platforms – Twitter, Facebook and Instagram- for further updates.

Please also continue to monitor advice on the government's Smartraveller website – there is a general COVID bulletin on the main page of the site, and individual Travel Advice for each country on the website www.smartraveller.gov.au.

Very importantly please follow the advice given by the authorities in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay, particularly in relation to lockdown procedures and restrictions in place. For the latest health information (in Spanish):

- Argentine Ministry of Health at <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/salud>
- Uruguayan Ministry of Public Health at <https://www.gub.uy/ministerio-salud-publica/>
- Paraguayan Ministry of Public Health and Social Welfare <https://www.mspbs.gov.py/>

Travel: There are a limited number of charter flights being operated from Argentina – usually to Europe or North America – and Australians are able to purchase tickets on these. Please check carefully that you are able to transit the countries en route to return home given restrictions in each country. If you are able to secure an airline ticket that will get you home, you are allowed to travel within the country to the airport to catch this flight. However, conditions are strict - you must have a confirmed onward flight ticket, cannot arrive in Buenos Aires more than 24 hours before the plane departs, must not have any symptoms of covid-19 and must seek prior authorisation to travel with at least 24 hours' notice. Many provincial governments have implemented movement restrictions as well.

Please contact the Embassy on consular.buenosaires@dfat.gov.au if you have an onward flight and need to travel to meet it. We can help you obtain the necessary approvals. These restrictions apply to all internal travel - including buses, planes and travel by car.

Arrival in Australia: Fourteen (14) days mandatory quarantine will apply at your arrival port, however all Australian States and Territories are continuously reviewing their arrival policies. Please check with your airlines and the relevant State or Territory government website for the latest advice. We will also do our best to keep you informed of these changes, including through social media.

Safety: While movements will be heavily restricted during the lockdown it is still important to consider your personal safety and security.

- Information on security concerns can be found in the “Safety” section of our travel advice at www.smartraveller.gov.au – just type Argentina or the country you are in into the destination box and follow the prompts.
- It's important to be vigilant about your safety even when in lock down – the basics are crucial: if you do go out make sure you are back at your accommodation before it gets dark; make sure you watch your wallet, mobile phone and other valuables, and ensure your passport is secure. All those normal common sense precautions but it's easy to be complacent. We want you to be safe.

I would be very grateful if you could pass this letter on to other Australians that you are aware of currently in Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Warm regards
Brett
Brett Hackett
Australian Ambassador