

# Australian Medical Association Limited

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**Transcript:** AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, *Sunrise*, Wednesday, 29 January 2020

**Subject:** Coronavirus precautions

**DAVID KOCH:** More now on our special coverage of the coronavirus. Australians intending to travel to China are now being advised to reconsider their plans as the outbreak spreads and the death toll rises. In China, the number of cases has doubled in 24 hours. There are now more than 4500 confirmed cases; the death toll in China has also passed 100. It's spreading throughout Asia, but cases are also emerging in the United States and Europe. In Australia, there are still four confirmed cases in New South Wales, one in Victoria, as tests continue in every State.

Joining me now is Dr Tony Bartone from the Australian Medical Association. Doctor, thanks for joining us. Good advice from the Australian Government for Australians to reconsider travelling to anywhere in China?

**TONY BARTONE:** So this advice by the Australian Government would have been taken in view of the numbers and the spread of the virus through the population of China, beyond the original city of Wuhan and the province of Hubei, and has been made with the aim of ensuring that we keep our Australian public as best protected as possible. And that advice will always be updated, and has been made overnight.

**DAVID KOCH:** Now, Wuhan is building two hospitals just to cope with the rising number of infected patients. In fact, they opened the first 1000-bed hospital, which took them just nine days to build, this morning. Just extraordinary the measures they're taking. How prepared are we here?

**TONY BARTONE:** So, if you look at the World Health Organisation, it has rated in previous years our preparedness for such an epidemic, a pandemic, as being equal to other countries in the world, if not superior. So, we are prepared, we have got the information being circulated as we speak in a constant, real-time manner to the various State and Territory authorities. Our doctors are across the symptomatology to look out for and how to deal with the cases, and what to do if they have - suspect a patient with that.

It's important that the public be reassured that we are prepared for this, we are managing this, and if they have concerns, if they've travelled to China or they've come into close contact with someone who has travelled to China with the coronavirus, and they've got symptoms, they need to make contact with their doctor, ring ahead before attending either the clinic or the hospital so that the necessary preparations can be made for their arrival.

**DAVID KOCH:** Great advice, and fabulous to know we are one of the best prepared countries in the world. Doctor, thanks for your time.

29 January 2020

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