

Overseas Arrivals and Departures, August 2020

ABS Release: Overseas Arrivals and Departures, Australia

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ACT
Government

Chief Minister, Treasury and
Economic Development

Important Notes

Visitor arrivals are measured in the number of trips rather than the number of people. Only original data are reported as seasonally adjusted and trend data has been suspended due to the impact of COVID-19.

International travel restrictions have been in place since February 2020. The borders to Australia were closed to all non-citizens and non-residents from 9pm on the 20 March 2020¹. International students who arrived in Australia and the ACT before that date were captured in the March 2020 data. The ABS noted that most Chinese students flew to secondary countries such as Malaysia and Singapore self-isolated themselves in these countries before travelling to Australia in March 2020.

At its meeting on 12 June 2020, the National Cabinet decided to extend the current border restrictions until 17 September 2020 (with few exemptions). The National Cabinet agreed to work closely and carefully to allow for the return of international students on a small, phased scale through a series of controlled pilots. On 9 July 2020, it was announced that this plan has been delayed as a result of the outbreak in Victoria.

On 10 July 2020, the National Cabinet agreed to reduce the number of returning Australians by more than half, to ease pressure on the coronavirus quarantine system.

On 4 September 2020, the National Cabinet conducted its fortnightly review of international air arrival passenger caps and agreed to boost the capacity for international arrivals where possible, supporting more Australians to come home from overseas. All states and territories, where possible, agreed to work with the Commonwealth to increase the number of international flights to their jurisdiction to enable more Australians to return home².

Key Statistics – ACT (Original)

- In August 2020, the ACT recorded 60 short-term trips (less than 1 year) from overseas visitors. This was a decline of 25.0 per cent (or 20 trips) compared to the previous month (80 trips) and a decline of 99.2 per cent (or 7,940 trips) compared to August 2019 (8,000 trips).
- During the same period, there were 150 ACT residents returning from short-term overseas trips. This was a decline of 42.3 per cent (or 110 trips) compared to the previous month (260 trips) and a decline of 99.1 per cent (or 17,170 trips) compared to August 2020 (17,320 trips).

Key Statistics – Australia (Original)

- In August 2020, Australia recorded 3,030 short-term trips (less than 1 year) from overseas visitors. This was a decline of 14.0 per cent (or 500 trips) compared to the previous month (3,530 trips) and a decline of 99.6 per cent (or 786,170 trips) compared to August 2019 (789,200 trips).
 - The USA (450 trips) was the largest source country for short-term visitor arrivals, followed by New Zealand (370 trips) and the UK (310 trips).
 - All jurisdictions recorded a decline in short-term visitor arrivals compared to the same period last year as shown in [Table 1](#) below.
- In August 2020, there were 8,070 Australian residents returning from short-term overseas trips. This was a decline of 21.5 per cent (or 2,210 trips) compared to the previous month (10,280 trips) and a decline of 99.1 per cent (or 922,900 trips) compared to August 2019 (930,970 trips).

¹ The Australian Government placed travel restrictions on those travelling to Australia initially from mainland China commencing 1 February. Other restrictions followed as the crisis worsened around the globe. From 20 March 2020, all overseas travel was banned, with few exceptions.

² <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/national-cabinet-040920>.

- The three leading source countries for residents returning to Australia in August 2020 were the USA (1,060 trips), New Zealand (900 trips) and the UK (850 trips).
- All jurisdictions recorded a decline in Australian residents returning from short-term overseas trips compared to the same period last year as shown in [Table 2](#) below.

International Students (Original)

- In August 2020, there were 50 international student arrivals to Australia, a decline of 54,910 students (almost 100 per cent) compared to August 2019.
- During the same period, the ACT recorded fewer than 10 international student arrivals, a decline of 970 students (almost 100 per cent) compared to August 2019.

Table 1: Short-term visitor arrivals, State or territory of stay - annual change to August 2020

State or territory of stay	Aug 2019 (no.)	Aug 2020 (no.)	Aug 2019 to Aug 2020 (% change)
NSW	282,800	1,600	-99.4
Vic.	196,970	220	-99.9
Qld	194,200	600	-99.7
SA	19,450	50	-99.7
WA	72,990	460	-99.4
Tas.	5,950	10	-99.9
NT	8,820	30	-99.6
ACT	8,000	60	-99.2
Australia(a)	789,200	3,030	-99.6

(a) Includes Other Territories.

Source: ABS Release: *Overseas Arrivals and Departures, Australia*

Table 2: Short-term resident returns, State or territory of residence – annual change to August 2020

State or territory of residence	Aug 2019 (no.)	Aug 2020 (no.)	Aug 2019 to Aug 2020 (% change)
NSW	310,460	4,670	-98.5
Vic.	260,990	870	-99.7
Qld	154,380	1,220	-99.2
SA	49,130	170	-99.6
WA	119,110	820	-99.3
Tas.	11,570	70	-99.4
NT	7,890	80	-99.0
ACT	17,320	150	-99.1
Australia(a)	930,970	8,070	-99.1

(a) Includes Other Territories.

Source: ABS Release: *Overseas Arrivals and Departures, Australia*