

# MEDIA STATEMENT

7 February 2020

## **Tougher virus control measures for foreign ships**

Queenslanders can be confident Maritime Safety Queensland (MSQ) is monitoring the state's ports to prevent the entry of novel coronavirus on foreign vessels with tougher border controls now in effect.

Maritime Safety Queensland General Manager Angus Mitchell said MSQ was committed to keeping the ports open, while staying in close contact with inbound foreign vessels to monitor for signs of any crew members potentially affected by the virus.

"MSQ is leading the way to protect our ports, the people who work there and all Queenslanders from the potential spread of this virus," Mr Mitchell said.

"As of midday yesterday, ships must not enter a Queensland pilotage area if they left, or transited through, mainland China on or after 1 February 2020. The ship must not enter a Queensland pilotage area until 14 days have elapsed since its departure from mainland China.

"I have issued this directive in the interests of public health.

"MSQ is doing this while ensuring daily port operations, from coal exports to cruise ship movements, are not impacted by border control measures designed to stop any potential spread of this virus.

"It is vital to the Queensland economy that our ports remain fully operational.

"In addition to yesterday's directive, since 31 January, MSQ and Queensland's Vessel Tracking Services (VTS) have worked around the clock with our ports, foreign trading vessels, the cruise ship industry, Queensland Health and other authorities to closely monitor all inbound foreign vessels and cruise ships.

"All foreign trading ships scheduled to arrive in Queensland ports are required to provide information before arriving about whether any crew or passengers have visited Hubei Province, in China, in the past 14 days, or visited mainland China since 1 February.

"In addition, they must report if any crew or passenger has shown signs of the novel coronavirus, including fever, flu-like symptoms, cough, sore throat, headache or difficulty breathing.

"If any ship answers yes to any of these questions, isolation guidelines for crew have been developed by MSQ which have been broadly circulated to the maritime industry and must be adhered to."

Mr Mitchell reassured the public MSQ was implementing every precautionary measure available to stop the spread of novel coronavirus, with all foreign ships thoroughly vetted before any port worker or harbour personnel boarded a ship.

He said about 240 vessels had entered Queensland ports and Reef Vessel Traffic Services since border restrictions were enacted by the Federal Government on 1 February.

"We remain in daily contact with the extended Queensland maritime industry to update them on all measures currently in place and will continue to do so into the future," Mr Mitchell said.

"The public can have every confidence Queensland ports, being just one entry point to our state and country, are being closely monitored."

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