RACS Annual Scientific Congress - Coronavirus (COVID-19) FAQs

1. Is the RACS 89th Annual Scientific Congress still happening?

The Annual Scientific Congress will take place from 11 to 15 May 2020 at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. RACS is closely monitoring the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19) and we will provide delegates with updates on how it may impact the Congress. Our priority is the health and safety of all Congress delegates and we will comply with any advice or instruction from our government.

2. If the event is cancelled or sessions cancelled due to coronavirus (COVID-19), will participants receive a refund or compensation?

Our standard cancellation policy still applies. A cancellation fee of 20% of the appropriate registration fee will be charged. Please note there will be no refunds after Sunday 15 March 2020.

3. Will I receive compensation if my scheduled flight is cancelled due to coronavirus (COVID-19), causing me to miss the Congress?

Please note that flight schedules are subject to change based on government travel warnings and individual airline decisions. Please contact your travel agent or the airline for clarification on any cancelled flights.

4. Will I be able to get travel insurance for the Congress, and will my insurance cover the cancellation of the Congress?

Please check your insurance cover carefully. Many insurers have exclusions for infectious diseases and pandemics, but the policies are different for each insurer.

RACS cannot take out insurance for visitors and delegates. Please ensure you have the appropriate cover for personal and travel insurance for the duration of your visit.

5. What health precautions are being taken by RACS to ensure the health and safety of participants?

Our priority is the health and safety of all Congress delegates, and we will comply with any advice or instruction from our government. The Congress venue, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, will provide hand sanitisers for use at their customer service desks, retail kiosks and cafes. Please see the attached MCEC frequently asked questions for more information.

6. Will there be doctors or medical assistance available at the venue?

If you are feeling unwell, please let us know and we will help you seek medical assistance.
7. What do I do if I’m feeling unwell outside of the Congress hours?

Stay at home/in your accommodation if you are sick. If you are feeling unwell leave the Congress and remain at home/in your accommodation until advised otherwise by a medical practitioner.

Here are some General Practitioners located near the Congress venue and within Melbourne’s CBD; please make an appointment:

**CBD Doctors Melbourne**
10/53 Queen Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
T 03 9077 9912

**Collins Street Medical Centre**
Level 7 / 267 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
T 03 9654 6088

**Southgate Medical Centre**
3 Southgate Avenue
Southbank VIC 3006
T 03 9690 1433

8. Will you be providing face masks?

Smartraveller advises the use of face masks only if you are unwell. Surgical masks in the community are only helpful in preventing people who are infected with coronavirus from spreading it to others.

If you are feeling unwell, please see a doctor.

**More information:**

- World Health Organisation - [https://www.who.int/](https://www.who.int/)
- Smart traveller - [https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/](https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/)
Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) External FAQs – as at 28 February 2020

MCEC statement

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre is closely monitoring the outbreak of COVID-19 and following advice issued by official authorities. If required, we will work with the relevant authorities to put in place an appropriate response plan.

Should the current situation change, further updates will be provided. For the most up to date information, please visit: https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus

Q&As

What is happening?

- There has been a global outbreak of COVID-19.
- There are currently four confirmed cases in Victoria.
- This is a rapidly changing situation, so updates will be provided as any new information becomes available.

What is COVID-19?

- The novel coronavirus identified in this outbreak has never before been identified in people. However, coronaviruses are not new and cause infections like the common cold, and rarer infections like Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV). The term coronavirus refers to a big group of viruses that cause a wide range of illness.
- Experience tells us that people with compromised immune systems, the very old and young and those with diagnosed heart and lung conditions are most at risk of developing complications if they contract an infection like this.
- More information is coming to light as people are identified with this new infection, so advice may change over time. People with COVID-19 are most likely to have a fever, and may have respiratory symptoms like a sore throat, runny nose, cough or shortness of breath.

What preventative measures is Australia putting in place?

- The Australian Health Sector Emergency Response Plan for Novel Coronavirus (the COVID-19 Plan) was endorsed by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee on 17 February 2020.
- The Australian Government will continue to monitor the emerging information and evidence closely.
- It will work with jurisdictions, through key committees and other relevant experts, to adapt the COVID-19 Plan as new information becomes available.
What preventative measures are MCEC putting in place?

- We have added government standard hygiene awareness posters in all front-of-house and back-of-house bathrooms, in both English and Chinese.
- Hand sanitisers are available at our customer service desks, retail kiosks and cafes.
- We are monitoring the situation closely and will continue to follow health guidelines as advised by the relevant authorities.

Would our event get cancelled due to public health concern? What are the procedures?

- At this stage, only a small number of events have been impacted. We are working closely with those customers affected.
- We are monitoring the situation closely and following local and national travel and health guidelines.
- We will continue to keep you informed if the situation changes.

Should I postpone my event?

- We are monitoring the situation closely and following local and national travel and health guidelines.
- We will continue to keep you informed if the situation changes.

What is the financial implication, should our event be cancelled?

- Where this may occur, we work closely with each organiser on a case-by-case basis, with a focus on finding alternative arrangements where possible.

What events have been impacted?

- In the interest of customer privacy, we do not discuss the arrangements of our bookings, including changes that may have occurred.

What travel restrictions and advice is currently in place in Australia?

- The Australian Government has applied the following travel restrictions to people entering Australia having left mainland China on or after 1 February 2020:
  - Foreign nationals (excluding permanent residents of Australia) who are in mainland China, will not be allowed to enter Australia until 14 days after they have left or transited through mainland China.
  - Australian citizens, permanent residents and their immediate family will still be able to enter Australia, as well as airline crews who have been using appropriate personal protective equipment.
- The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) advise there is a heightened risk of sustained local transmission or significant outbreaks of coronavirus (COVID-19) in:
  - Northern Italy (several regions, including Lombardia and Veneto)
  - Iran
  - Japan
  - South Korea (Daegu and Cheongdo)
  - Mongolia

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MELBOURNE CONVENTION EXHIBITION CENTRE

Not for printed distribution
Where can I get further information?

- For Victorian updates: dhhs.vic.gov.au/novelcoronavirus
- For international updates: who.int/westernpacific/emergencies/novel-coronavirus
- World Health Organisation resources: who.int/health-topics/coronavirus