

February 13, 5.51 pm

All staff email from the Vice Chancellor, Professor David Lloyd

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to update you on the University's response to the COVID-19 outbreak particularly in light of the Australian Government's decision this evening to extend the current border restrictions by a further week from Saturday 15th February, and with weekly reviews thereafter.

This is a difficult time for our students impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak, particularly for those who haven't yet been able to arrive on campus due to ongoing travel restrictions. We fully understand and appreciate the frustration of those whose study plans have been disrupted as infection controls and health measures are implemented, but as a University community we are very much looking forward to welcoming all of our students to our campuses as soon as possible.

As I have reported previously, the University has a dedicated response team working on issues related to COVID-19 and we remain in regular and direct contact with our students who are still in mainland China to work with each of them individually on their options for continuing engagement with their studies. In terms of response, there are a number of online study options available and currently our academic staff are working with the affected students to provide them with the best path forward, in every case tailored to their individual circumstances. We also maintaining ongoing contact with the Chinese Embassy and with our international university partners in China and liaising with the Federal Government to work through visa issues and other logistic considerations for our students.

Our Student Engagement Unit, and UniSA Health Clinics have put together a range of specific supports for those students who are impacted by requirements to self-isolate or who have other health related concerns. Our clinics are also able to support any staff member who might have concerns.

I want to once again thank our students for their patience and for maintaining ongoing contact with us, and commend our academic and professional staff who are working diligently and innovatively to make alternative arrangements to support our affected students during this difficult time.

UniSA's academic year will still commence as planned, with Orientation Week on the 24th February when we will welcome more than 9,000 commencing students from 75 countries onto our campus.

We may be starting our academic year as planned, but of course it is under a different set of circumstances than we might otherwise have anticipated. I am extremely proud of the collegiality, tolerance and sense of community that I have seen evidenced across our institution at this time, and I know that will continue to be on show in the coming weeks.

I will continue to update you on the situation as it unfolds.