

Australian evacuees from virus-hit ship begin 2nd quarantine

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Government agencies gather beside buses to be used to take evacuees to a quarantine facility after arriving in Darwin, Australia, Thursday, Feb. 20, 2020. The evacuees have travelled from Japan after being stranded on the cruise ship Diamond Princess. (Helen Orr/AAP Image via AP)

Around 180 Australians evacuated from a virus-stricken cruise ship in Japan arrived Thursday in the city of Darwin to begin a second quarantine period.

The former [cruise ship](#) passengers will spend the next two weeks in a camp facility near the northern Australian city, health officials said.

The new coronavirus that causes the COVID-19 illness has infected more than 620 people on the Diamond Princess.

The ship has been docked at the port of Yokohama since early this month in a quarantine that was widely considered a failure. It ended Wednesday and about 500 passengers who tested negative for the virus left the ship.

The group of Australian evacuees was flown from Japan early Thursday on a Qantas plane chartered by the Australian government.

Not evacuated were 46 Australians from the Diamond Princess who tested positive for the coronavirus. They will be treated in the Japanese health system, Australian [health officials](#) said.

More than 200 people are already quarantined at the Howard Springs facility after being evacuated from Wuhan, the central Chinese city that is the center of the viral outbreak. The new group will be kept separate from the Wuhan evacuees, who remain in good health, Di Stephens, acting chief [health](#) officer of the Northern Territory, of which Darwin is the capital, said before the flight left Japan.



Evacuees wear masks and wave as they are bussed to a quarantine facility after arriving in Darwin, Australia, Thursday, Feb. 20, 2020. The evacuees have travelled from Japan after being stranded on the cruise ship Diamond Princess. (Helen Orr/AAP Image via AP)

"These people need to go into quarantine because we are not entirely convinced that the quarantine procedures on that ship were 100% effective," Stephens said. "They'll be completely separated at the facility, they'll have separate medical staff looking after them and separate support staff in that quarantine zone."

Australia, meanwhile, extended its 14-day China-related travel ban for another week until Feb. 29.

Under the ban, foreign nationals who have been in mainland China are not permitted into Australia for two weeks from the time they left China.

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