

BREAKING NEWS

Australia has surpassed 2,000 cases of coronavirus, with SA reporting 36 more and WA another 35.

Spanish nursing homes abandoned, residents found dead in beds as coronavirus worsens

Posted 4h ago



Spanish soldiers have been brought in to disinfect streets and buildings. (AP: Alvaro Barrientos)

Residents of Spanish nursing homes have been found abandoned or dead in their beds as the country's coronavirus outbreak worsens, according to the nation's Defence Minister.

Key points:

Spain is the second hardest-hit country in Europe after Italy

Madrid is struggling to cope, with the highest number of cases

City authorities have used an ice rink as a makeshift morgue

The Spanish military has been brought in to help disinfect areas, including nursing homes, as the disease spreads in one of Europe's worst-hit countries.

"The army, during certain visits, found some older people completely abandoned, sometimes even dead in their beds," Defence Minister Margarita Robles told broadcaster Telecinco, according to the BBC.

She did not say what had caused the deaths.

[Coronavirus update: Follow all the latest news in our daily wrap](#)

Spain is the second hardest-hit country in Europe after Italy, with the country's death toll at more than 2,300, according to figures by the Johns Hopkins University.

A Spanish official in charge of the health emergency said 87 per cent of those who had died were aged 70 or older.

People who are aged 70 or older are most at risk. (AP: Alvaro Barrientos)

Spain's capital Madrid is struggling with the number of cases and its municipal funeral home said it would stop collecting bodies due to a shortage of equipment. Private funeral homes will still be operating.

City authorities also decided to use an Olympic-sized ice rink as a morgue, near a conference centre which has been kitted out with hospital beds.

Stay up-to-date on the coronavirus outbreak

[Download the ABC News app and subscribe to our range of news alerts for the latest on how the pandemic is impacting the world](#)

The worsening coronavirus outbreak in the country has infected nearly 4,000 health workers, who account for approximately 11 per cent of Spain's total 35,136 registered cases.

Nurses, doctors and other health workers have echoed the complaints of their counterparts in other countries, saying they lack protective equipment like masks.

The national health service was "demonstrating a great capacity to respond in an exceptional situation", Health Minister Salvador Illa told a news conference.

He warned the epidemic could reach its peak in Spain in the coming days.

Soldiers were also deployed to Barcelona to help build a temporary homeless shelter at the city's Fira event centre.

The shelter, to be managed by the Red Cross, will allow up to 1,000 homeless people to isolate themselves in hygienic conditions, Barcelona's Mayor Ada Colau said.

Deputy Prime Minister Carmen Calvo, who has born in 1957, was hospitalised over the weekend with a respiratory infection, the Government said. She is now awaiting coronavirus test results.

Your questions on coronavirus answered:

[What are the symptoms of coronavirus?](#)

[How do I get tested for coronavirus?](#)

[How long can coronavirus survive on a surface?](#)

Two other ministers and the wife of Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez have tested positive for the virus over the past weeks.

Economy Minister Nadia Calvino said a nationwide lockdown, which has kept most Spaniards confined to their homes, was beginning to take a heavy toll on the economy.

"Economic activity, which was dynamic until February slowed significantly last week," she said, adding that the food, electricity and telecoms industries had continued to function normally.

Reuters/ABC

WATCH

3m 42s

Q+A: Coronavirus testing criteria slammed

Posted 4h ago

Share

Top Stories

Live: 110 high school students go into self-isolation as Australian cases surpass 2,000

A million people expected to lose their jobs as coronavirus pandemic spreads

Coronavirus got you facing Centrelink for the first time? Here's how to apply for the Jobseeker Payment

Woman who was passenger on cruise ship dies from coronavirus

Coles, Woolies, IGA can now 'collaborate' as shoppers report price gouging

Linny and Taylor have a message for those stockpiling inhalers: 'You're endangering lives'

Just In

'Do I pay rent or do I buy food': Renters desperate for relief as jobs disappear

Posted 1h ago

SA's border restrictions are now in force, but what does that mean?

Posted 1h ago / Updated 47m ago

Competition watchdog says Qantas's comments about Virgin's plight amid pandemic 'unhelpful'

Posted 1h ago / Updated 1h ago

Christine Lyons appeals 30-year jail term for murdering mother to take her children

Posted 1h ago / Updated 1h ago

New crackdown on travel within WA as massive queues of travellers form ahead of border closure

Posted 2h ago / Updated 19m ago

Linny and Taylor have a message for those stockpiling inhalers: 'You're endangering lives'

Posted 2h ago / Updated 31m ago

More Just In →