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Unlike Japan`s state of emergency, which empowers governors in affected regions to call for restrictions on movement and commerce but offers little in the way of enforcement, strict lockdown measures have been enforced in Australia since late March 2020 with the government openly stating “if you can state home, you must stay home”.

The first case of Covid-19 was recorded in Australia on January 25, after a man came back from travelling to Wuhan. The government tells all Australians not to travel to China. As the global situation become more serious, social distancing rules become strictly enforced. Bans of non-essential gatherings of over 500 people on March 15 quickly led to closing schools nationally and enforcing the lockdown of restaurants, cafes, food courts etc. by March 26. Non-citizens/non-residents are banned from entering Australia, while incoming citizens/residence must self-quarantine for 14 days.

Until early May, citizens were only permitted to leave their homes to shop for food and necessary goods and services, accessing medical services or providing caregiving (for elderly, disabled people etc.) attending work and education facilities that cannot be done from home or exercising. Any other reason risked a severe fine, and in the worst case scenario even potentially facing jail time.

Selected shops, supermarkets and banks were among the few businesses that remained open under restricted conditions. Of these premises, social distancing tapes are placed on the floors 1.5 meters apart of all shops where people line up, and the number of customers are limited to 30 people at a time. All staff handling food and/or money must wear disposable gloves. Pubs, cafes and restaurants were all closed with the exception of takeaway.

However, Australian government has already begun a three-stage plan to ease coronavirus restrictions across the country, with the goal of reaching stage 3 by July 2020. These policies include allowing gatherings of more people, the reopening of more shops and restaurants, gyms etc.

The lockdowns have proven successful in preventing the spread of the pandemic. As of May 27 Australia ranks 62th in total recorded cases of Covid-19 - there have been 7,139 cases and 103 deaths, with 6,566 people recovered. While Australia has a population of only 25 million people, more than 1,300,000 people have been tested for the virus as opposed to Japan, which has officially tested less than 300,000 people despite having a population approximately 5

times greater than that of Australia.

Preventing the spread of the coronavirus cannot be achieved by a single country alone. We can only hope the nations of the world can work together to win the battle against this horrible virus.