

Bondi Beach virus testing targets backpackers

April 1 2020

Australian health officials set up a coronavirus testing clinic on Sydney's Bondi Beach Wednesday, as concern grew that COVID-19 was spreading among backpackers in the popular tourist destination.

More than 100 cases of coronavirus have reportedly been identified in the area—many linked to two massive club parties held in mid-March before the country shut down bars, pubs and other non-essential services.

Photos shared online last week also showed mostly young beachgoers packed together on the sand after outdoor gatherings were curtailed, drawing howls of protest.

That led to sunbathers, surfers and tourists being banned from the beach, with police enforcing the prohibition.

New South Wales Health said the Waverley Council area, which encompasses Bondi, had the highest number of confirmed cases in Sydney.

"A plausible explanation is they have come in contact with an infected backpacker before that backpacker was aware they had COVID-19," said chief [health](#) officer Kerry Chant.

Australia has recorded almost 5,000 [coronavirus](#) infections and 20 deaths, with almost half of those in New South Wales.

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