

Australia's virus epicentre records second day with no cases

October 27 2020



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Melbourne on Tuesday recorded its second consecutive day with no new coronavirus cases, as bars and restaurants in the epicentre of Australia's second-wave outbreak prepared to reopen after a lengthy lockdown.

The milestone—the first time since early March that no new cases have been confirmed for 48 hours—comes as the city's five million residents await a partial lifting of virus restrictions at midnight.

The landmark for Melbourne and the surrounding Victoria state follows strict measures—including an overnight curfew, stay-at-home orders and the closure of non-essential businesses—to contain an outbreak that peaked at more than 700 daily cases in August.

There are now just 87 active [coronavirus](#) cases across the state.

State Premier Daniel Andrews said high testing rates in recent weeks had been "nothing short of stunning".

"It gives us great confidence that these numbers are an accurate picture of how much virus is out there," he told a press conference.

Visiting other people's homes will finally be allowed from midnight, he added, though it will be strictly limited to two adults and any children travelling within a 25-kilometre (15-mile) radius of their houses.

Australia had largely curbed the spread of COVID-19 when the virus leaked into the community from Melbourne hotels used to quarantine travellers from overseas.

As the rest of the country was lifting restrictions and returning to a semblance of normality, its vibrant second-largest city was almost completely shut down.

Fabrizio Succi, who jointly owns Italian eatery Tiamo, said his team was now scrambling to reopen after being given the [green light](#) on Monday.

But between cooking pasta and sauces, dusting the store and staff

meetings, it will take until Thursday morning for the restaurant to be ready.

"We had to man the phones—everybody all of sudden had all this freedom and wanted to book, which was wonderful," he told AFP.

Beauty salons and [retail stores](#) will also be permitted to welcome back customers from midnight, but gyms will be forced to wait until November 8.

Restrictions on travel between Melbourne and regional parts of the state will also be lifted from November 8, with a 25-kilometre (15-mile) travel radius for city residents set to be removed the same day.

But for now, the state remains cut off from the rest of Australia, which overall has recorded about 27,500 cases and 905 deaths in a population of 25 million.

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