

Australia's New South Wales sets daily COVID case record

December 17 2021



Diners are seen at Bondi Beach in Sydney on Dec. 15, 2021. The premier of Australia's most populous state said he is not considering lockdowns or other restrictions as a record new COVID-19 cases were reported on Friday, Dec. 17, 2021, the highest number since the pandemic began. Credit: Bianca De Marchi/AAP Image via AP

The premier of Australia's most populous state said he is not considering lockdowns or other restrictions as a record 2,213 new COVID-19 cases were reported on Friday, the highest number since the pandemic began.

The new peak followed the 1,742 cases reported in New South Wales state on Thursday, which had topped the previous record set in September.

One new death was reported Friday and 215 people were in the hospital, well below the peak of 1,266 in September.

Premier Dominic Perrottet said he will not return to the lockdowns and restrictions that previously were used to check the spread of COVID-19 in New South Wales, now that 93.3 percent of the eligible population is vaccinated.

The state government is using hospital admissions, particularly the [number](#) of patients in intensive care, as a gauge of the pandemic's severity. There were 24 people in ICUs on Friday.

New South Wales on Wednesday eased rules on mask-wearing and the need to provide proof of vaccination at some venues, allowing the unvaccinated to participate more fully in [social events](#).

Victoria state on Friday reported 1,510 cases and seven deaths.

State premier Daniel Andrews tested negative for the virus and was able to leave isolation after he was potentially exposed to a COVID-19 case.



Members of the public are seen at Bondi Beach in Sydney on Dec. 15, 2021. The premier of Australia's most populous state said he is not considering lockdowns or other restrictions as a record new COVID-19 cases were reported on Friday, Dec. 17, 2021, the highest number since the pandemic began. Credit: Bianca De Marchi/AAP Image via AP

Australia Defense Minister Peter Dutton described the latest case numbers as "confronting" but said lockdowns are not the answer.

"Omicron will overtake delta and I think we are going to see many thousands of cases each day—tens of thousands of cases," Dutton said. "But we can't [lockdown](#). If we go into lockdown, we might as well be in lockdown for the next couple of years because we just won't deal with it."

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