



CURRENT SYDNEY RESTRICTIONS AVERT 4000 CASES, BUT MORE WORK NEEDED TO AVOID 1000+ CASES PER DAY

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MODELLING released by the Burnet Institute estimates that current restrictions in Sydney have averted over 4000 cases of COVID-19, but more work is needed to avoid 1000 plus cases per day four weeks from now.

Despite increasingly tough restrictions in parts of Greater Sydney, the number of COVID-19 cases has trended steadily upwards over recent weeks. However, the good news is that the restrictions implemented in Sydney so far “have avoided 4000 cases, over and above the many prevented by contact tracing and subsequent isolation”, wrote the authors, led by Dr Allan Saul from the Burnet Institute.

“Over the past 6 weeks, cases have doubled every 9 days on average,” they wrote.

“When we ran [our modelling] using trends in individual Local Health Authorities, it predicted that by this Friday, 5 August, Sydney will record about 570 cases per day.

“This is the result of stable or falling daily cases in south west Sydney Local Health District (LHD) being exceeded by rising cases elsewhere.

“It takes about a week before new controls have an effect, so we don’t expect new restrictions announced on 30 July to kick in until at least 7 August.

“Furthermore, unless new controls introduced on 28 July or in the future (eg. LGAs that develop large case numbers are included in the tighter controls) have a major impact, our model projects that Sydney will have about 7700 cases per day 4 weeks from now.”

Hellard and colleagues recommended implementing more consistent stringent restrictions, “akin to those announced for the 8 high-priority LGAs, uniformly across Sydney”.

“Not only is this the equitable approach, but epidemiologically sound. Importantly, our modelling shows even with these enhanced restrictions it is going to take until the end of September to reduce case numbers to below a 7-day average of five per day,” they wrote.



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“Two things are likely to significantly reduce the time to the end of lockdown: first, that everyone follows the current restrictions in place and where necessary receive the appropriate supports to help them do so.

“Second, that people get vaccinated as soon as a vaccine is available.

“There is a lot at stake: saving lives, the health and economic well-being of the residents of Sydney and NSW and diminishing the threat of SARS-CoV-19 export to the rest of the Australian population.”

The article is free to access in *InSight+*, the *MJA*'s weekly online news magazine, at:

<https://insightplus.mja.com.au/2021/28/sydney-avoids-4000-cases-but-lockdown-must-be-broadened/>

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