

Australia's third-largest city of Brisbane enters COVID lockdown



In the 'strictest lockdown' the city has enforced, residents will only be allowed to leave their homes for essential reasons including buying groceries and exercising [File: Patrick Hamilton/AFP]

Sydney, August 1 (RHC)-- Australia's third-largest city of Brisbane and other parts of Queensland state will enter a snap COVID lockdown from Saturday, as authorities race to contain an emerging outbreak of

the Delta strain.

Millions of residents in the city and several other areas will be placed under stay-at-home orders from Saturday afternoon for three days, state Deputy Premier Steven Miles said.

“We have seen from the experience in other states that the only way to beat the Delta strain is to move quickly, to be fast and to be strong,” Miles said. “That is now the nationally agreed approach.”

There were now seven cases of the Delta variant of the coronavirus in Queensland mainly linked to a school student, her family and a tutor, but authorities were still trying to trace the source of the outbreak, Miles said.

In the “strictest lockdown” the city has enforced, residents will only be allowed to leave their homes for essential reasons including buying groceries and exercising.

Brisbane’s snap lockdown came as Australia’s largest city of Sydney and its surroundings completed its fifth week of lockdown with authorities struggling to stop the spread of a Delta-variant outbreak. “We cannot afford to be complacent just because we have done so well so far. We all have to comply with these restrictions,” Miles said.

Meanwhile, New South Wales, Australia’s most populous state, reported 210 locally acquired cases of COVID-19 on Saturday, as police cordoned off downtown Sydney with multiple checkpoints to prevent a planned anti-lockdown protest.

Sydney and its vicinities have been under a weeks-long strict lockdown that is to last at least until the end of August while battling an outbreak of the highly infectious Delta variant.

Saturday’s numbers bring the outbreak to 3,190 cases. In Sydney, there are 198 people in the hospital, 53 of them in intensive care and 27 requiring ventilation, NSW Health Minister Brad Hazzard said. There was also one death reported, bringing the total number of deaths in the outbreak to 14.

Despite its struggle with spikes of infections, mostly of the Delta variant, Australia has managed to keep its epidemic largely under control with a total of just over 34,000 cases and 924 deaths.

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