Australia's Omicron outbreak strains testing clinics as cases hit records

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Sydney, December 30 (RHC)-- Australia's COVID-19 infections surged to a new record on Wednesday, due to the rapid spread of the Omicron coronavirus variant, and overwhelmed testing facilities in the country's most populous state.
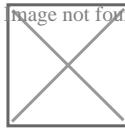
The crush at testing facilities in New South Wales, home to Australia's largest city, Sydney, has been partly blamed on neighbouring state Queensland requiring interstate tourists to return a negative PCR test result before arriving.

Queensland's so-called "tourism tests" came under severe criticism from New South Wales after holiday travellers crowded its testing hubs, causing delays in results of several days.

Australia is in the grip of an Omicron-led COVID-19 outbreak but authorities have so far ruled out lockdowns.

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