

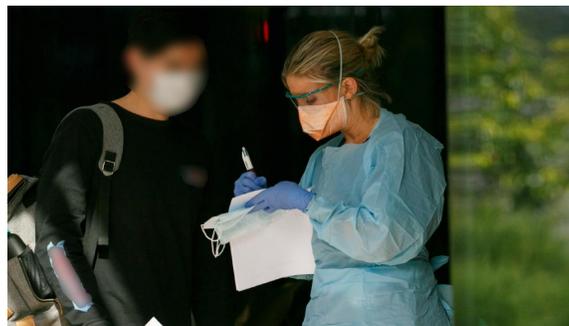
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# Coronavirus: Northern beaches named a COVID-19 hotspot

The northern beaches has been added to a list of coronavirus hot spots following a worrying number of locally acquired cases. It comes after Freshwater Beach was closed at the weekend with crowds failing to adhere to social distancing.

Jim O'Rourke, Manly Daily

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 The Northern Beaches Hospital's COVID-19 clinic. Health authorities are urging people, with even mild symptoms, to come forward and be tested. Picture: Tim Pascoe

Health authorities have named the northern beaches as a COVID-19 “hotspot” where they want to ramp up the number of people being tested for the virus.

NSW Health confirmed it had added the Northern Beaches local government area to locations where it encouraged people with symptoms to come forward and be tested.



 Northern Beaches Hospital has a COVID-19 testing centre. Picture: AAP/Julian Andrews

“This is particularly important in several new areas (including the northern beaches) following a small number of locally acquired cases,” NSW Health said in a statement on Monday.

The call for people, with even mild symptoms, to be tested comes as authorities closed Freshwater Beach on Sunday afternoon after police said social distancing rules were being ignored.



📷 People swimming and surfing at Freshwater Beach on Anzac Day. Picture: Damian Shaw

Manly, Queenscliff, North Steyne, Shelly and Dee Why beaches have already been closed by Northern Beaches Council to help stop the spread of coronavirus.

“NSW Health is urging people with symptoms, including mild symptoms, to be tested to ensure as many cases of COVID-19 in the community are identified as quickly as possible,” the NSW Health statement said.

“This is particularly important in several new areas following a small number of locally acquired cases.”

There are 155 confirmed COVID-19 cases on the northern beaches.

At a press briefing on Monday NSW’s Chief Medical Officer Kerry Chant said NSW Health was aiming to prioritise testing in the hot spots of Lithgow, Blue Mountains, Hornsby, Lane Cove as well as the northern beaches.



📷 Police check on beachgoers as social distancing regulations continued at Dee Why Beach on the weekend. Picture: Jeremy Piper

The number of tests for the virus in NSW has also more than tripled in the past week.

“We have identified a number of hot spots for testing,” Dr Chant said.

“While anyone across the state is urged to come forward with respiratory symptoms, we will also be naming those hot spots on a weekly basis where we want to have particularly enhanced testing.”

At the briefing NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian said there only two more positive COVID-19 results in the previous 24 hours.

Ms Berejiklian said the numbers were pleasing but warned people not to get complacent.

“We need to stress the more people that get tested, the more people that come forward means we can control what the virus is doing in NSW.

“We can identify the contacts of the people who might have the virus and make sure everybody stays safe.

“We want to get those testing rates up, not just during the weekdays but also on weekends and out of the 4400 people who got tested, only two were positive for COVID-19, which is again a good result.”