Vision and audio available for download below

Friday 18 December 2020

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) UPDATE

NSW Health can advise there are now 28 cases associated with the Avalon cluster, with 25 are linked to either the Avalon RSL, the Avalon Bowlo, or both.

The links of two cases are under urgent investigation, and one case linked to the Avalon cluster has been reported in a NSW resident whose COVID-19 infection was diagnosed in Queensland. This case is reported as part of the Queensland numbers.

NSW recorded 15 locally acquired cases of COVID-19 in the 24 hours to 8pm last night, plus one case in a returned traveller in hotel quarantine.

This brings the total number of cases in NSW to 4,493 since the beginning of the pandemic.

Confirmed cases (incl. interstate residents in NSW health care facilities)	4,493
Deaths (in NSW from confirmed cases)	55
Total tests carried out	3,652,163

Ten new cases of COVID-19 have also been reported since 8pm, and will be reported in tomorrow's numbers. NSW Health can report one additional case has been reported since 8pm last night in a NSW resident whose COVID-19 infection was diagnosed in Queensland. This case is reported as part of the Queensland numbers. The person is now in self-isolation on the Northern Beaches.

NSW Health can now confirm the viral genome sequencing of the Avalon COVID-19 cluster does not match the virus strains seen in recent clusters in Australia. The virus is likely of overseas origin. The source of infection is still being investigated.

The viral genome sequencing of the recent COVID-19 case who works as a driver transporting air crew from the airport to hotels also does not match the virus strains seen in recent clusters in Australia. This virus may be of United States origin and linked to international aircrew, however investigations are continuing. No confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been linked to this case.

Of the new cases to 8pm last night:
- 15 were locally acquired, and the source of their infections are under investigation.
- One was acquired overseas and is in hotel quarantine

All 15 of the local cases to 8pm last night are Northern Beaches residents announced yesterday, and NSW Health is undertaking urgent investigation and contact tracing to identify potential links and the sources of the infections.

Since 8pm last night, NSW Health has recorded a total of ten new locally acquired cases who will be included in tomorrow's numbers. Of these new cases:

- Eight are from Northern Beaches, and all are linked to the Avalon cluster
- Two are residents of South East Sydney and linked to the Avalon cluster

Including the Queensland case, there are now 28 cases associated with the Avalon cluster, and 26 are linked to either the Avalon RSL, the Avalon Bowlo, or both. Two cases were close contacts of people who attended these venues.

To assist with contact tracing and reducing the spread of the virus, Northern Beaches residents have been asked to stay home as much as possible today and over the weekend.

This includes working from home where possible, not visiting friends or family in aged care facilities or hospitals unless essential, avoiding unnecessary gatherings and high-risk venues such as clubs, restaurants, places or worships and gyms, and avoiding unnecessary travel outside of or to the Northern Beaches area.

Businesses are urged to ensure full compliance with their COVID-Safe plans, including ensuring appropriate electronic recording of patrons' contact details.

Many Northern Beaches locations have been added to the list of venues of concern visited by confirmed cases in recent days. The complete list of these venues are available on the NSW Health website www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19

There were 7,531 tests reported to 8pm last night, compared with 10,583 in the previous 24 hours.

NSW Health has already seen an excellent response from the Northern Beaches community for testing, but it is absolutely vital everyone comes forward for testing isolates immediately if they have even the slightest of symptoms, such as headache, fatigue, fever, sore throat or runny nose.

To increase testing options for the Northern Beaches community, three new pop-up clinics opened yesterday, and a new drive-through opened this morning at the Avalon Bowling Club car park. NSW Health has also increased staffing and extended hours at other Northern Beaches testing locations, including Mona Vale.

Pop-up clinics:
- Avalon Recreation Centre, 59 Old Barrenjoey Rd, Avalon. Open seven days a week, 8am-10pm.
- Newport Community Centre, 11-13 The Boulevard, Newport. Open seven days a week, 8am-10pm.
- Warringah Aquatic Centre Drive-through, 1 Aquatic Dr, Frenchs Forest. Open seven days a week, 8am-10pm.

Please note, the pop-up clinics are operational until 10pm, but if needed they will continue past 10pm to continue providing testing to the community.

New drive-through clinic:
- Avalon Laverty drive-through pathology, Avalon Bowling Club Car Park, Avalon Parade, Avalon Beach NSW 2107. Open seven days, 8am to 4pm.

Other Northern Beaches testing centres:
- Mona Vale Hospital, Gate 3 Coronation Street, Mona Vale. Open seven days a week, 7.30am-5.30pm.
- Brookvale Community Health Centre, 612-624 Pittwater Road, Brookvale. Open seven days a week, 8am-6pm.
- Northern Beaches Hospital, 105 Frenchs Forest Road (West), Frenchs Forest, (rear of

Emergency Department). Open seven days, 8am-5pm.

There are more than 300 COVID-19 testing locations across NSW, many of which are open seven days a week. To find your nearest clinic visit https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/how-to-protect-yourself-and-others/clinics or contact your GP.

To help stop the spread of COVID-19:
- If you are unwell, get tested and isolate right away – don't delay.
- Wash your hands regularly. Take hand sanitiser with you when you go out.
- Keep your distance. Leave 1.5 metres between yourself and others.
- Wear a mask when using public transport, rideshares and taxis, and in shops, places of worship and other places where you can't physically distance. When taking taxis or rideshares, commuters should also sit in the back.

NSW Health is treating 64 COVID-19 cases, none of whom are in intensive care. Most cases (95 per cent) are being treated in non-acute, out-of-hospital care, including returned travellers in the Special Health Accommodation.

Likely source of confirmed COVID-19 cases in NSW:

Likely source of infection	Cases past 24 hours*	Cases past 7 days**	All cases
Overseas	1	28	2,515
Interstate	0	0	90
Locally acquired – linked to known case or cluster	0	0	1,437
Locally acquired – no links to known case or cluster	0	0	433
Locally acquired – investigation ongoing	15	18	18
Under initial investigation	0	0	0
Total	**16**	**46**	**4,493**

Note: Case counts reported for a particular day may vary over time due to ongoing investigations and case review.
*notified from 8pm 16 December 2020 to 8pm 17 December 2020
**from 8pm 11 December 2020 to 8pm 17 December 2020

Returned travellers in hotel quarantine to date:

Since 29 March 2020:	Count
Symptomatic travellers tested	7,998
Found positive	166
Since 30 June 2020:	**Count**
Asymptomatic travellers screened at day 2	59,062
Found positive	343
Since 15 May 2020:	**Count**
Asymptomatic travellers screened at day 10	71,216
Found positive	163

Today's press conference will be uploaded here:
https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/press-conferences.aspx