



Written by [James Murphy](#) on August 12, 2021

Australians Urged to Stop Being Friendly to Each Other Over COVID-19 Fears

Dr. Kerry Chant, the chief health officer of New South Wales in Australia, is urging citizens to limit their movement and to cease being “friendly” to other citizens due to an outbreak of the Chinese virus in the region.

New South Wales, a state on Australia’s southeast coast that includes Sydney, the nation’s most populous city, remains under a strict lockdown as public health officials scramble to contain the so-called Delta variant of the virus.

“We all need to work together. We need to limit our movements. We need to consider whenever we leave our house that anyone with us and anyone we come into contact with could convey the virus,” Dr. Chant told reporters. “So whilst it is in human nature to engage in conversation with others to be friendly. Unfortunately, this is not the time to do that.”

Chant went on: “So even if you run into your next-door neighbor in the shopping center ... don’t start up the conversation. Now is the time for minimizing your interactions with others, even if you’ve got a mask do not think that affords total protection. We want to be absolutely sure, that as we go about our daily lives. We do not come into contact with anyone else that would pose a risk.”

Stay-at-home orders were first issued in the state on June 25. Public health officials blame much of the outbreak on a birthday party that occurred on June 19 in the Sydney suburb of West Hoxton. Apparently some of the attendees had been infected with the Delta strain of the Chinese virus and the virus spread to 27 of the party’s 30 attendees.

The stay-at-home orders for the state have since evolved into a “martial law” situation with even the Australian military being called in to assist with lock-down efforts in Sydney. Citizen movement is limited to going out to get food or exercise or to work if the job is deemed essential and can not be done from home.

Dr. Eric Feigl-Ding, a Harvard trained epidemiologist, sounded a [dire warning](#) for Australians hoping to escape lockdown any time soon. According to Dr. Feigl-Ding, even a vaccination rate of 90 percent — 10 percent higher than the government’s 80 percent threshold to reopen — wouldn’t be enough to quell the highly contagious Delta variant of the virus. Feigl-Ding suggested that a perpetual state of restrictions is needed in order to live with the Delta variant.

“Even for highly vaccinated countries, relying on vaccines alone is not a panacea to stop Delta,” Feigl-



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Ding told the Nine Network's *A Current Affair*.

"What that means is just relying on that single vaccine approach is very, very narrow minded," Feigl-Ding said.

The epidemiologist suggested that a layer of restrictions between complete lock-down and opening the state all the way back up needs to be instituted.

"We must do other layers in addition to waiting around for vaccines," he said.

Officials in New South Wales expect the lockdowns to last into at least September.

The Chinese virus has become the ultimate example of how government officials in a crisis tend to act. When in doubt, they tend toward authoritarianism first, limiting the movement of citizens and, in this case, even admonishing them against being friendly to one another.



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