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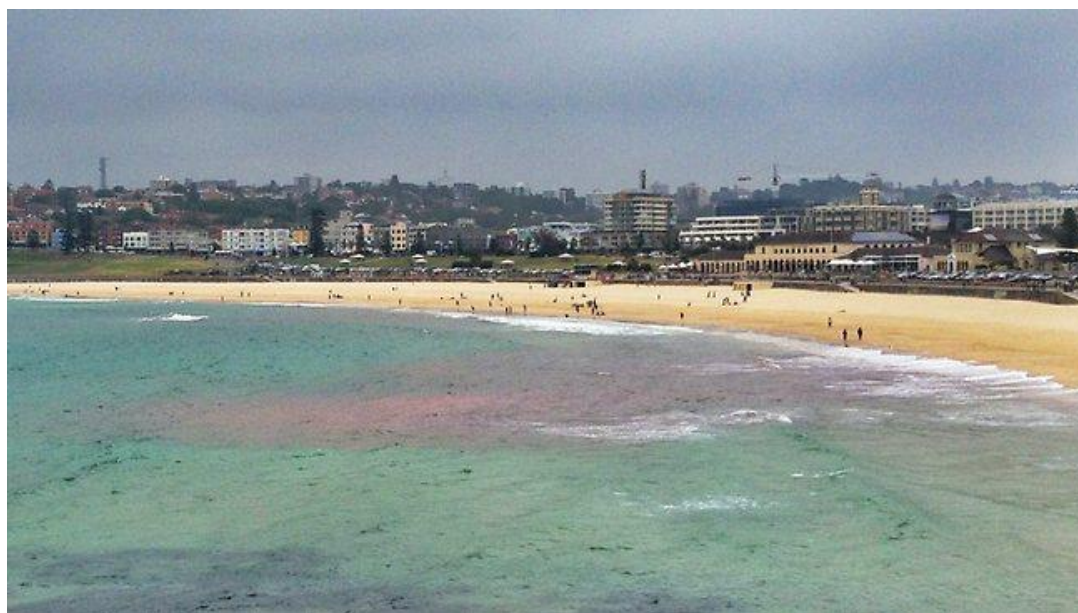
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## Bondi and Clovelly beaches close as red algae moves in

SEVERAL popular Sydney beaches resembled scenes out of a apocalyptic film today after an algae bloom turned the water blood red.

**Emma Schiller, Chloe Longhetti & AAP**

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Bondi algae

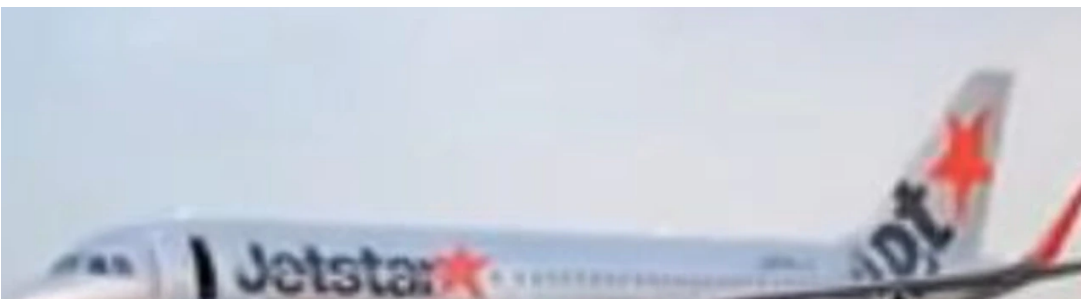
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SEVERAL popular Sydney beaches, including the iconic Bondi, resembled scenes out of a apocalyptic film today after an algae bloom turned the water blood red.

Patches of the red algae, a natural phenomenon that can be exacerbated by certain weather conditions, were sighted between Bondi Beach and Maroubra Beach this morning.

Both Bondi Beach and Clovelly Beach were closed while authorities conduct tests in the water.

Gordon's Bay was also closed due to the algal bloom, with Beachwatch posting a photograph on Twitter showing water the colour of tomato juice.

Waverley head lifeguard Bruce Hopkins said the bloom was spotted drifting off the north side of Bondi Beach at around 6.30am.

"It has got quite a fishy smell to it," Mr Hopkins told AAP.

"It can irritate some people's skin but generally not much more than that."

Mr Hopkins said the bloom has a "reddy-purple" tinge and sits on the surface like oil sheen.

The bloom was dissipating off Bondi, with hopes the beach might be reopened by this afternoon, he said.

Red algae was uncommon but not unheard of at Bondi, Mr Hopkins added.





Algae bloom

At just before 12.30pm Beachwatch NSW announced that Clovelly Beach had also been closed because of the bloom.

The closures will come as a blow to tourists and other beachgoers if they continue throughout a week which is forecast to have soaring temperatures peaking at more than 40C on Saturday.

A Randwick Council spokesman said red algae can potentially be dangerous to humans exposed to it.

"There are some possible risks to human health from red algae including skin rashes and eye irritation, and for this reason the beach will remain closed until the algae dissipates," the spokesman said.

"Signage has been installed at Clovelly Beach, and council lifeguards are advising people not to swim."



### Algal bloom

A spokesman for the NSW Office of Water said testing was being done to discover what caused the bloom.

One cause, he said was an upwelling of colder nutrient-rich water.

He said algal blooms, sometime referred to as "red tides", are more common around spring and autumn when there are higher water temperatures and greater movements in ocean currents.

The NSW Office of Water expects the test results some time on this afternoon but could not confirm the beaches would be opened by the end of the day.

It comes after toxic algal bloom was detected in Botany Bay, south of Bondi on Friday.

That particular species of algae produced paralytic shellfish poisoning toxins, the NSW Department of Primary Industries said.

The NSW Office of Water spokesman said the two blooms were "probably not related", but were unable to confirm further details until test results on the algae at Bondi became available.

While many locals have been deterred by the phenomenon, many people - believed to be tourists - are still swimming in the water.



Algal bloom

Bondi local Michael Strum said the algae had stopped him swimming in the water.

"It looks like pink sludge, it's disgusting," he said.

"You can even see it on the sand."

Irene Eristian, 33, said the colour of the water was "quite intense".

"I wasn't sure if I should let my daughter into the water as I wasn't sure what it was," she said.

Some, like 18-year-old Bondi woman Josie Capel, said she was curious to find out what the effects are and "what the risks are, if there are any".

Late this afternoon Bondi beach was reopened after the algae bloom broke up sufficiently to allow swimmers to safely return to the water.

A spokeswoman for Waverley Council said most of the algae had either washed up, or broken up in the water.

Further south, Clovelly beach remains shut.

It is believed the red algae will continue to break up overnight, with Waverley Council not expecting to need to close beaches again tomorrow.



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