

07 August 2020

## Re: Latest Update on COVID-19

Dear resident representatives and relatives

I am pleased to confirm that there are still currently no confirmed cases of COVID-19 at Warrigal.

The outbreak in Victoria has resulted in Stage 4 restrictions being introduced, while the aged care sector has seen over 90 homes now impacted. One of the responses to this has been additional government funding provided to support employees to only work at one site and to increase the number of staff to be available where the outbreaks are occurring. Warrigal have already implemented these steps in our preparation and since the beginning of March, an additional 277 staff have been employed, and we have made it a requirement that staff are only permitted to work in one of our aged care homes. These initiatives have been without government assistance but considered essential by us for a safe environment,

As the virus that causes COVID-19 is mainly transmitted through droplets generated when an infected person coughs, sneezes or exhales, you can be infected by breathing in the virus if you are within close proximity of someone who has COVID-19, or by touching a contaminated surface, and then touching your face. In view of this, and the spread of cases in NSW with an additional 77 positive cases this week, it has now been made compulsory for all Warrigal staff working in residential care or community care to wear face masks.

The Infection Control reviews of our residential aged care homes by the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District commenced this week at Coniston and Warilla. The four remaining homes in the Illawarra region will be reviewed next week. We have received the first report for Coniston which stated that "the facility has a robust outbreak management plan and good infection control strategies in place that consider the safety of staff, residents and visitors". These reviews are voluntary but we are pleased to have them consider when any infected residents might be able to promptly transfer to hospital in an outbreak.

The reviews by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission on our COVID-19 preparedness continue to be undertaken, and this week two assessors spent Wednesday reviewing our Shell Cove Care Home. This included the outbreak management plan, communication with customers and relatives, and how the screening tool is updated to reflect community hotspots. The assessment team indicated that they were pleased with the systems and processes that have been implemented.

We continue to ensure that any resident that shows any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 is tested, and we have now tested 120 residents, with 12 of these being tested in the past week. While we are still waiting on the results for 5 residents, all of those tested have been negative and don't have the virus.

Today is Aged Care Employee Day 2020, and I would like recognise the commitment, strength and dedication of all the Warrigal staff who have been instrumental in keeping all of our residents and customers safe during this very difficult time.

I will continue to keep you updated regularly and again, thank you for your continued support and understanding during these unprecedented times. You can call our Customer Relations Information Line on 1800 927 744, operating seven days a week between 9am to 9pm, if you have any further enquiries. You can also email us at [warrigal@warrigal.com.au](mailto:warrigal@warrigal.com.au) with any feedback you might have or alternatively for more general COVID19 advice please contact the 24-hour National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080.

Yours Sincerely,



**Craig Smith**  
**Executive Leader - Service Integrated Communities**