

22 May 2020

Re: Latest Update on COVID-19

Dear resident representatives and relatives

I would like to once again thank everyone for their continued support of the actions being taken by Warrigal to protect our residents and customers. While restrictions are being lifted in certain areas within the community, resulting in several families requesting access to the home for a visit, we also saw the impact this virus can have with four homes in Melbourne this week responding to a positive COVID result by going into immediate lockdown.

We need to stay vigilant to protect your loved ones from this virus, and we continue to monitor staff closely for any symptoms or risks of working in the home. There has now been 111 staff tested for COVID while a further 19 staff remain in isolation before they are permitted to return to work. There have been a further 5 residents tested this week, bringing the total tested to 51, and fortunately there remain no positive results.

There have been a number of enquiries received regarding the interpretation of the industry code for visiting residential care homes, particularly in the homes where the Safe Visiting Areas are still to be constructed. The code stipulates “that where in-room or in-person visits cannot occur, and the visit is meaningful for residents (e.g. people living with dementia or sensory loss), a window visit may need to be offered. Such visits may occur in a dedicated space behind a protective screen, via a balcony, through a gate or behind a window. Additional ways to connect may be offered as an alternative to minimise the risk of COVID-19 spread”.

We are looking at options to facilitate these safe visits, particularly where the Safe Visiting Areas are still to be constructed, and where the visit is required to support the care and well-being of the resident. It is important to remember that in order to enter into a care home, you will need to provide confirmation of a flu vaccination and wear Personal Protective Equipment, and in particular face masks need to be worn.

In addition to this the following actions have also been undertaken since the previous update:

- The planning of a Special Care Unit at Warrigal progressed this week with recruitment of staff to work in the area and we have contacted other agencies that can provide clinical staff at short notice to ensure their availability in the event of an outbreak.

- A training module has been developed on COVID-19 that has been made compulsory for all staff to complete by the end of May.
- The Safe Visiting Areas at Albion Park Rail were completed this week, which means we now have them at Shell Cove, Bundanoon and Warilla. The areas at Albion Park Rail were chosen in consultation with the residents. We have also consulted with the residents at other homes regarding the preferred location and Mount Terry and Goulburn will be constructed next week, with Coniston, Mt Warrigal and Queanbeyan completed the following week.

I will continue to keep you updated regularly and again, thank you for your support and understanding. If you have any further enquiries, please call our Customer Relations Information Line on 1800 927 744, now operating seven days a week between 9am to 9pm. You can also email us at warrigal@warrigal.com.au or alternatively for more general COVID19 advice please contact the 24-hour National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "CS", written over a light grey circular watermark.

Craig Smith
Executive Leader - Service Integrated Communities