

Warrigal

Inspiring communities
for older people

From the desk of
**Executive
Operations**



6 May 2022

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

The past fortnight has seen cases in the community continue to remain high, with a number of celebrations around ANZAC Day, and the improved weather in many locations resulting in social outings increasing. This poses an increased risk of an outbreak in a care home, including COVID, Gastro or others. There have been 74,841 COVID cases in NSW in the past week, consistent with the previous week where there were 79,127 cases. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the total number of cases in NSW is 2,344,967. In the ACT, there have been 6,824 positive COVID cases in the past week, with 108,830 in total since the pandemic began. While we continue to ensure that we are vigilant with screening staff and visitors, unfortunately the continued high rates of community transmission have had an impact on Warrigal with three care homes currently experiencing a COVID outbreak, and three others having an exposure with only one resident testing positive in the past fortnight.

The most recent information from the Department of Health is from 28 April 2022, indicating that 4,096 aged care homes in Australia have experienced a COVID-19 outbreak, an increase of 452 in the past fortnight. The number of homes with an active outbreak in Australia is currently 812, which has reduced by 34 from the previous fortnight, but still represents approximately 30% of the aged care homes in Australia. Sadly, there have been 1,264 deaths in residential aged care homes this year.

The two homes experiencing an outbreak in the previous update, Warrigal Wollongong and Goulburn, continue to have residents test positive in different sections of the home. Every time this occurs, the seven day period is reset. The overall number of positive cases has reduced at each home, with seven current cases in Wollongong and nineteen at Goulburn. We will continue to regularly conduct PCR and Rapid Antigen tests to monitor for new cases. Warrigal Calwell is also experiencing an outbreak commencing on 26 April, and to date this has been restricted to one section of the home with four residents being impacted.

Unfortunately, the number of staff that have either been positive or had to isolate as a close contact at Goulburn has meant that there have been up to twenty one staff at any point in time that have not been able to work in the care home. While the vast majority of staff have now returned, there were days when we were relying on agency staff, existing staff working many additional hours and support from staff in support services. We have also been able to secure personnel from the Australian Defence Force who will be working for seven days in the home providing 24 hour coverage. We are hoping that they will commence over the weekend to provide support with visiting on Mother's Day.

In addition to the COVID outbreaks, Warrigal Coniston has a Rhinovirus Outbreak, and Warrigal Stirling has a Gastro Outbreak. Rhinoviruses are the most common cause of the common cold. They chiefly cause upper respiratory tract infections, and may also cause infection in the lower respiratory tract. While there is always a risk of transmission to visitors, with appropriate PPE, this would be a lower risk than the Gastro Outbreak which is in all of the home communities in Stirling. We

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understand that Mother's Day is a special occasion, and many of you will want to send gifts, visit or speak to your mother on Sunday. Warrigal Stirling will be communicating the visiting arrangements directly with families, however with the current outbreak just commencing, these will be minimal, and we will look to celebrate the special day with families and residents once the outbreak has finished. All other homes will be facilitating visits. The hours available for visits at each home will be uploaded in the Visitor Management System and need to be booked. It is still a requirement for visitors to be vaccinated, have evidence or undertake a RAT at the home and wear PPE consistent with the status of the outbreak at the home.

An update was provided to Goulburn families yesterday on the current status of the COVID Outbreak, and a further one will be provided early next week, which will confirm a date and time for a Zoom Meeting to be held next week to be able to respond to any questions from families.

In addition to the COVID update, I have summarised below some key points regarding activities at Warrigal:

- The relocation of residents from Warilla has continued. There have 13 residents remaining in the home. They will be transferred once the upgrade of the home at Albion Park Rail is completed. This is expected to be within the next two weeks. We will then look at using the offices at Warilla for the team that coordinate group social services for customers.
- Thank you to the families from Mount Terry that were contacted over the past fortnight and provided feedback on the quality of care and lifestyle activities. This information has been provided to the management of the home and together we will be looking at areas for improvement and will provide feedback through meetings and communication. Next week, we will be going through the same process for families at Coniston.
- We understand that quality meals are important to residents, and regular food forums are held with residents and the team responsible for catering and management. In order to look at how we can improve the dining experience, I will be working with a number of Managers on the dining room ambience, food quality and presentation and sharing meals with residents. This has commenced at Albion Park Rail, and will continue across all care homes.

I continue to welcome your feedback and would encourage you to continue to do this by contacting your local management team, calling 1800 927 744 or by emailing us at warrigal@warrigal.com.au

Yours Sincerely,

Craig Smith
Executive Leader – Service Integrated Communities