

Warrigal

Inspiring communities
for older people

From the desk of
**Executive
Operations**



11 February 2022

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

The past week has seen a significant reduction in COVID-19 case numbers, and while they remain high with 62,809 cases recorded in NSW, this is 28,088 less than the previous week. In the ACT, the number of cases reduced by 623 cases with a total of 2,953 recorded for the week. This trend is also reflected in the number of hospital admissions, with 1,716 people currently in NSW hospitals and 50 in ACT hospitals, which is a reduction of 621 and 13 respectively in the past week.

The most recent information from the Department of Health is from 4 February 2022, which indicates that 1,998 aged care homes in Australia have experienced a COVID-19 outbreak, with 1,176 care homes remaining in outbreak, including 525 in NSW and 19 in the ACT. Sadly there have been 533 deaths in residential aged care homes this year.

Warrigal currently has five care homes that are still considered to be in outbreak. This includes Warrigal Stirling which has not had a positive case for the past 13 days, and if that remains to be the case the outbreak will be declared over tomorrow. The requirement to wait 14 days before declaring a care home out of outbreak (since its last positive case) comes from NSW and ACT Health. Residents in the home that have not tested positive to COVID continue to be tested regularly during the 14 day period, to ensure that when the outbreak is over, there is a high degree of confidence that there are no positive cases in the home.

With the remaining four homes, it is likely that Warrigal Queanbeyan will be out of outbreak early next week, while the situation at Warrigal Calwell, Albion Park Rail and Mount Terry continues to improve. There are currently 16 residents in these homes that are testing positive (a reduction of 54 from the previous week), and regular testing of all residents that have not tested positive is continuing in all areas of the four homes. This trend is also reflected with staff numbers, with only 4 staff across Warrigal now unable to work in the care homes due to being positive with COVID-19, while 292 staff have recovered and have now returned to work.

The impact on aged care providers in maintaining adequate staffing levels with so many staff unable to work meant that we were relying on staff from our Support Services Team, Agency Staff, Commonwealth Surge Staff and Partners in Care to ensure that care and services were maintained. This impact on the industry has now also seen the Australian Defence Force (ADF) being deployed to support aged care homes. While we only have four staff currently being furloughed, we have requested the support from the ADF at Warrigal Mount Terry from next week, and we are expecting five personnel to assist for a week as they provide support to the team with making phone calls, managing PPE, and other general duties within the home.

This past week, Zoom meetings were arranged for relatives at Warrigal Albion Park Rail and Mount Terry with representatives from the Executive Team, the Local Management Team and our Infection Protection Control Coordinator in attendance. A meeting was also held for relatives at Warrigal Stirling which was coordinated by the General Manager of the home. These meetings are a great opportunity to explain what is currently being undertaken at the home, and to get feedback on what has been managed well and what could be improved. The subject that created the most discussion was seeking clarification on when visiting could be resumed, and while homes remain in outbreak, we are looking to commence visiting to the sections of the home where there are no positive cases. This will be communicated by the Management Team of the home, however, all visits will need to be scheduled through the electronic Visitor Management System, with masks and face shields mandatory, and a minimum of two COVID-19 vaccinations. I am pleased that from next week all of our homes will be able to facilitate some form of visiting which has not been possible for a while.

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The Booster Program continues to occur with a further 61 residents receiving their third dose of the vaccine in the past week, with 875 residents having now received their third shot. The numbers are still low at Warrigal Mount Terry and Albion Park Rail due to the number of residents that have tested positive in the past month, however, arrangements are being made to have these administered as soon as practical. A summary by care home is provided below:

| Residential Care Home | No. of Residents who have received the Booster Vaccine (as of 11 February) |
|-----------------------|--|
| Albion Park Rail | 89 |
| Bundanoon | 73 |
| Calwell | 100 |
| Coniston | 45 |
| Goulburn | 140 |
| Mount Terry | 49 |
| Mt Warrigal | 37 |
| Queanbeyan | 80 |
| Shell Cove | 126 |
| Stirling | 94 |
| Warilla | 42 |
| Total | 875 |

I understand how challenging the past month has been and would like to extend my gratitude to Lachlan McDonald and the team for their efforts in managing the outbreaks, and to all residents and relatives for their understanding and patience. Please continue to provide feedback 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