

*Warrigal*

Inspiring communities  
for older people

From the desk of  
**Executive  
Operations**



**15 July 2022**

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

The past fortnight has seen COVID-19 cases in the community increase from previous weeks, with concerns expressed by the Australian Medical Association that the current strains are more infectious than previous strains and could peak at similar levels to what was seen in the community in January. There have been 75,581 COVID-19 cases in NSW in the past week, an increase of 10,868 from the previous update, which is close to an average of 10,800 cases daily. (compared to 9,200 in the last update and 6,500 before that, showing the escalation in the past month.) In the ACT, there have been 8,302 positive COVID-19 cases in the past week, compared with 7,898 in the last update, and 5,504 prior to that. As these numbers continue to escalate, we need to ensure that staff and visitors continue to be tested daily with a Rapid Antigen Test before entering the home, and importantly, wear face masks at all times inside the care home. Goggles or face shields must be worn at all times in any home experiencing an outbreak.

The most recent information from the Department of Health (from 8 July 2022), indicates that 6,190 aged care homes in Australia have experienced a COVID-19 outbreak, an increase of 486 in the past fortnight. The number of care homes with an active outbreak in Australia is currently 737, which has increased by 115 from the previous fortnight. The number of active resident cases associated with the current outbreaks is 3,816, which has increased by 455 in the past fortnight. The total number of resident cases related to the recent outbreaks is 8,633 which is an average of 12 residents for each outbreak.

Amendments have been made to the NSW Public Health Order effective from 18 July 2022. These changes are consistent with the current arrangements with ACT Health, being visitors no longer need to be vaccinated to enter an aged care facility. The current compulsory daily visitor limits of two adults and two children will revert to a recommendation, and vaccination to remain mandatory for aged care workers. Whilst we understand the changes made by the NSW/ACT Health, given the current advice that the rising case numbers will peak in the first two weeks of August which could rival earlier peaks in the pandemic, Warrigal has taken the approach to maintain the current visiting arrangements. Visitors will need to have had the two doses of the vaccine, and visits will continue to be restricted to one visit per day for two adults and two children. Exceptions will be for end-of-life visits, or higher numbers for visits would be risk assessed for significant milestones or celebrations.

The reinfection period in the national guidelines has been reduced from 12 weeks to 28 days. This means that if a person who recently had COVID-19 develops new COVID-19 symptoms, and more than 28 days have passed since they were cleared from isolation, they should be tested for COVID-19, and regarded as a new case if they return a positive result.

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Since the previous update, the outbreak at Shell Cove has been finalised, but unfortunately there have been additional outbreaks at Bundanoon, Calwell and Stirling.

**A summary of all current outbreaks is provided below:**

**Mt Warrigal:** The outbreak commenced on 27 June 2022, with two residents in adjoining rooms testing positive. It was hoped that with low cases previously, this outbreak may have been finalised, but unfortunately there have been an additional 4 cases in the past week, with a total of 7 residents that have tested positive (18% of the home).

**Mount Terry:** The outbreak commenced on 29 June 2022, and 22 residents (15% of the home) have tested positive across two sections of the home. PCR testing was conducted yesterday with one additional resident testing positive. There are currently 15 active cases, with further PCR testing scheduled for early next week.

**Goulburn:** The outbreak also commenced on 29 June 2022, and over the past fortnight the number of cases increased from 9 to 28 residents (20% of the home) in three sections of the home. There are currently 7 active cases with further testing scheduled for next week.

**Calwell:** The latest outbreak commenced on 5 July 2022, and we are seeing the impact of the latest strain, with 28 residents testing positive (22% of the home), including 4 that have tested positive to previous strains.

**Bundanoon:** The outbreak at Bundanoon commenced on 6 July 2022, 24 residents (28% of the home) have tested positive in two sections of the home. This includes the memory support area where it is challenging to minimise the interactions between residents, and there have been 15 cases in this area in the past 4 days.

**Stirling:** There have been 2 positive cases in one section of the home this week, with a third resident showing symptoms. We are waiting on the latest PCR results given that two residents have tested positive in the past week, this is still considered an outbreak.

**Overall, there are 6 residential care homes with a current COVID outbreak, with an average of 18 residents at each home testing positive throughout the duration of the outbreak.**

In addition to the COVID update, I have summarised below some key points regarding what is happening at Warrigal and the industry:

- The free RATs for pensioners are due to cease at the end of the month, however there is a National Cabinet Meeting on Monday and this may be reviewed. Given the current transmissions in the community, if you are eligible to receive these, please be aware that this may stop on 31 July.

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- Last week, we celebrated NAIDOC Week with a number of activities and cultural events in our homes. I have attached some photos showing the celebrations at Calwell, Mount Terry and Stirling.



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- With the recent arrival of staff from Fiji to support Warrigal with workforce challenges, our next theme for cultural celebrations will be a Pacific Island theme. It is intended that these will continue over the course of the year so that our residents will get to participate and share their own experiences.
- The winter booster vaccination program continues to be a focus with Mt Warrigal and Albion Park Rail the last two homes to commence the rollout of the vaccine. Clinics have now been arranged, while residents at other homes continue to receive the vaccine as they become eligible.

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](mailto:warrigal@warrigal.com.au).

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CS' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

Craig Smith  
Executive Leader – Service Integrated Communities