

*Warrigal*

Inspiring communities  
for older people

From the desk of  
**Executive  
Operations**



**4 AUGUST 2023**

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

It is pleasing that as we approach spring, we are seeing a reduction in the number of COVID-19 outbreaks in residential aged care homes and the number of reported cases within the community. The number of reported cases of COVID-19 in NSW last week was 1949 compared with 3356 at the beginning of the month. The number of reported cases in the ACT has also reduced, from an average of 260 cases a week last month, to 176 cases.

There are currently 131 residential care homes in Australia experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak, which has decreased by 129 over the month. In the past week, there have been an additional 53 outbreaks in residential aged care, which indicates that outbreaks are still occurring, but are being closed relatively quickly with smaller number of residents being impacted. This is also the case at Warrigal, where there were 2 COVID-19 outbreaks during July, the first was at Shell Cove which commenced on 13 July where 23 residents tested positive, and there is currently 1 resident still positive. The second was at Queanbeyan which commenced on 20 July, where 5 residents tested positive, and all have now recovered.

We will continue to review the relevant data when determining the appropriate restrictions, including outbreaks in residential age care homes, community transmissions and each of the Local Health District cases where we are based. Where the reduction in community COVID-19 cases and those in individual Health Districts reduce by 50% on average over 2 consecutive months, this will determine if any of the current restrictions can be eased.

In view of the significant reduction in all areas over the past 2 months, commencing on Monday 7 August, the following protocols will be implemented;

- Visitors will no longer be required to wear masks.
- Staff will now only be required to wear masks when providing direct personal care, and masks will no longer be required in group activities, dining rooms or corridors.
- RATs must continue to be undertaken daily by staff and visitors.
- Weekly surveillance testing of residents will continue to be undertaken.
- Staff and visitors have the option of wearing masks all the time throughout the home, even if the home is not in outbreak or had an exposure.
- If one resident tests positive, then surgical masks will be worn in all areas of the home. However, if more than one resident tests positive, this is an outbreak and N95 masks will be required for all staff and visitors.
- The Visitor Management System must be used anytime someone enters the care home.

These changes have been made after considering the relevant data, and the impact on staff and residents, many of whom have difficulty communicating when wearing masks. We will review this again at the end of the month.

*Warrigal*

Inspiring communities  
for older people

From the desk of  
**Executive  
Operations**



**4 AUGUST 2023**

Warrigal is continuing to prepare for the aged care reforms that will be ongoing over the next two years. As indicated last month, the next critical requirement will be to meet the mandated care minutes, including having enough Registered Nurses to meet the criteria of 40 minutes a day for each resident. This will require a significant increase in resources, and over the past month we have been working on programs to recruit, develop our own staff through undergraduate programs and having an agreement with an agency to recruit qualified and experienced nurses from overseas. The combination of these strategies will support Warrigal in meeting the required minutes and provide a stable workforce for a number of years.

In December this year, aged care providers will be required to have a Quality Care Advisory Body, including one of the organisation's key personnel, someone directly involved in the delivery of clinical care and a member who represents the interests of consumers. The person representing consumers could also be a member of the Consumer Advisory Committee. Warrigal began inviting consumers and representatives to be involved in the Consumer Advisory Committee last year, which plays an important role in ensuring that we partner with consumers, families and the community in the planning, delivery and improvement of our services. The current committee includes representatives from residential care, home services and our retirement villages. The first meeting was held in June this year. We are looking to have more representation from residential care in future meetings, and if you are interested please contact our Customer Experience Manager, Catherine Miller at [cmiller@warrigal.com.au](mailto:cmiller@warrigal.com.au).

On Monday 7 August, we will be celebrating Aged Care Employee Day, which gives us the opportunity to thank and acknowledge our staff's work in contributing to the happiness, safety and well-being of our residents and customers. I am fortunate to see this contribution first-hand from all different staffing classifications, and on Monday members from the Executive Team will be visiting all of our homes and services to thank the staff for the difference they make to the lives of our residents and customers.

As always, I encourage you to provide us with your feedback by contacting your local management team, calling 1800 927 744 or emailing us at [warrigal@warrigal.com.au](mailto:warrigal@warrigal.com.au). I would like to thank those families who have contacted me with feedback which is appreciated.

Yours Sincerely,

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