

20 November 2020

Re: Latest Update on COVID-19

Dear resident representatives and relatives

I am pleased to confirm that there are still currently no confirmed cases of COVID-19 at Warrigal.

This week has brought with it a strong reminder that COVID-19 presents us with an ongoing challenge as we look at the community transmissions in South Australia and the lockdown that has been implemented. This lockdown includes Aged Care Homes, which the SA Government has undertaken to get on top of community transmission, which will hopefully prove successful in preventing the devastation we have seen COVID-19 cause elsewhere.

In NSW, the number of positive cases from people returning overseas continues to increase, while community transmissions remain low. The South Western Sydney Local Health District has the highest number of community transmissions in NSW over the past 4 weeks, with 18 positive cases, which is the reason that it remains mandatory for staff that live in the Wingecarribee area to wear face masks at work.

While it is no longer mandatory for staff that do not reside in an area with increased testing to wear face masks, this week, in our weekly meeting that includes regularly reviewing our protocols, the Managers of our Care Homes discussed whether all staff would be required to continue to wear face masks. It was determined that with the increased social connections that will be occurring over the coming weeks, maintaining a high standard for the community and the situation in South Australia of how quickly things can change, that our staff will continue to wear face masks in the foreseeable future.

This week we held the Zoom meeting for relatives at Mt Warrigal, and on Tuesday, a Zoom meeting will continue for Mount Terry relatives. Each of these meetings provides us with valuable feedback, and there are differences at each home, so any feedback that you can provide, please take the opportunity to participate in the meetings.

Each of the care homes have now identified who will be the lead for Infection Protection Control within the respective homes, and the next stage will be for these staff to complete an 80 hour course prior to the 28 February 2021. Similar to the impact of PPE and the COVID Marshalls, there will be a considerable cost for this training and the replacement of the staff, but it is important that Warrigal has the staff trained to not only comply with the mandated requirements, but that we use this training to implement best practice for Infection Protection and Control.

The number of outdoor visits across Warrigal over the past week increased to 324, with a number of homes able to accommodate multiple visits at the one time. I spoke to a number of families this week who were outside visiting their loved ones, who provided positive feedback, in particular with the improved communication without a face mask or a screen between them.

The number of families taking their loved one out for a social outing has also increased from 35 to 42 residents/customers leaving the home for an outing.

The bus outings have continued in the past week, with 81 residents leaving the home for these social trips. The numbers will begin to increase in the coming weeks, with a focus on residents/customers that live in the same neighbourhoods going on the outings, with the aim of the buses being full for the much anticipated Christmas lights trips.

I will continue to keep you updated regularly and again, thank you for your support, which is communicated through our social media and emails sent each week.

You can call our Customer Relations Information Line on 1800 927 744, operating seven days a week between 9am to 9pm, if you have any further enquiries. You can also email us at warrigal@warrigal.com.au with any feedback you might have or for more general advice you may want to contact the Older Persons Advocacy Network on 1800 700 600.

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