



Media Statement

Friday, 17 April 2020

Actions taken to protect the Warrigal community from COVID-19

Warrigal appreciates the growing community anxiety as the COVID-19 pandemic develops. They recognise that an outbreak in the general population poses huge risks to older Australians, which is why Warrigal has taken this health issue very seriously.

Continuing to follow advice from the Australian Department of Health and regularly reviewing government guidelines, Warrigal has established a COVID-19 Prevention and Response team that meets multiple times a week. The team have developed robust procedures to protect the Warrigal community from COVID19, and to deal with a possible infection or outbreak.

On Wednesday 25 March, Warrigal suspended access to its residential aged care homes to non-essential visitors, which included putting a hold on all volunteers and entertainers from entering. Given the increased risk of the spread of COVID-19 within the community, Warrigal have taken this decisive step and consider it necessary.

Other measures taken to protect those in their care include: implementing a strict protocol for residents and staff at the beginning of each shift which involves having their temperature taken, having hand hygiene practices observed, and eliminating unnecessary travel of staff between sites and services to prevent cross-contamination risks. Additional Personal Protective Equipment has been purchased and numbers are being monitored daily.

Across all homes within Warrigal, dining rooms have been reconfigured to comply with social distancing rules during meals. All Home Care Clients are receiving telephone welfare checks prior to visits in order to assess any risks.

Warrigal has continued to regularly communicate these new measures to their community of staff, clients, residents, family members and contractors. At present, there is still no immediate threat, however they remain vigilant and despite this are keenly aware of the need to balance safety and prevention measures with emotional and social support.

Warrigal knows how important lifestyle activities and engagement are for well-being, and continue to work on ideas to maintain these within each service. As with all their homes, the residents at Warrigal Goulburn have been able to participate in their usual exercise classes, by working with much smaller groups and maintaining social distancing.

Warrigal CEO, Mark Sewell said "I commend the team at Warrigal Goulburn for their creativity and efforts at being able to continue to provide unique opportunities for social interaction with our residents. They not only work hard to deliver essential residential care and home care services to the community but are willing to think outside the box, ensuring continuity of care."

Warrigal continue to work through how they can achieve better social connection with their residents but in the interim encourage families to reach out to their loved ones through

technology with staff on hand to assist coordinate communication. The response has been overwhelmingly positive so far with residents receiving very welcome messages of love and support.

Warrigal has also expanded their dedicated 1800 Warrigal Information Line to support families and carers. The information line now operates 7 days a week from 9am – 9pm. If you would like further information you can contact Warrigal on 1800 927 744. Alternatively for more general COVID19 advice please contact the 24-hour National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080.

*Please note Warrigal Care has changed its name to **Warrigal** and should be referred to as **Warrigal**. Thank you.*

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