

Warrigal

Inspiring communities
for older people

From the desk of
**Executive
Operations**



25 March 2022

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

The past week has seen high case numbers in NSW and the ACT, with 144,423 cases in NSW and 7,674 in the ACT. The increase is considerable and concerning, and Warrigal has been impacted with both staff and residents/customers testing positive in the past week, which we have been able to identify quickly through the continued vigilance of undertaking Rapid Antigen Tests daily. While total case numbers have been increasing, hospital admissions have also increased with an additional 184 people being admitted to NSW hospitals with COVID, bringing the total current number to 1,182, while in the ACT there are 42 people in hospital with COVID, an increase of 11 over the past week.

The most recent information from the Department of Health from 17 March 2022 indicates that 2,238 aged care homes in Australia have experienced a COVID-19 outbreak, an increase of 124 in the past fortnight. Unfortunately, the increased community transmissions have also been reflected in the number of homes with an active outbreak, leaving 360 aged care homes remaining in an outbreak, an increase of 150 since the previous update. This includes 133 homes in NSW, and 9 in the ACT. Sadly, there have been 906 deaths in residential aged care homes this year as a result of COVID.

Warrigal Shell Cove experienced an outbreak in the past fortnight, with five residents/customers testing positive, and two staff members. All infection control protocols were immediately implemented, and all of the residents/customers in the care home were Rapid Antigen Tested and PCR tested on a number of occasions since the date of the outbreak on 15 March. The outbreak at Warrigal Shell Cove was limited to the five residents/customers and two staff that tested positive in the first few days, and I am pleased that it is now over and all restrictions have been lifted. We also permitted fully vaccinated visitors to enter the home for a daily visit during the outbreak wearing full PPE, which is the first time this has occurred as we recognise the need for emotional support and social connections to be maintained.

While we hope that our protocols for staff and visitors will prevent any outbreaks occurring, this is very unlikely in the current climate, and our focus is on containment. We will continue to work on establishing a set of principles that will be applied during an outbreak, which will include;

- Residents/customers that have not tested positive will not be isolated in their rooms.
- Visits will still be able to continue in full PPE for up to two hours, but not in communal areas.
- Residents/customers will be limited to their own neighbourhoods.
- Outings will be cancelled during the outbreaks.
- Volunteers will still be permitted to support residents/customers.

In addition to the outbreak at Warrigal Shell Cove, our newest home Warrigal Wollongong has also experienced an outbreak in the past fortnight. The care home (formerly known as IRT Links Seaside) was officially transferred to Warrigal on 21 March 2022, and while the outbreak involved 5 residents/customers, fortunately it did not escalate during the week and has now been declared over.

There are also exposures at 8 care homes across Warrigal due to staff that work in these homes testing positive. As the number of staff is less than five at each location, this does not constitute an outbreak, however, the Department of Health has still been notified and in some cases additional infection control measures are implemented (such as staff wearing eye protection). It is also important to note that if any visitor tests positive within 48 hours of being in the care home they must notify us immediately, as it may result in an outbreak being declared if there are 5 staff and visitors combined who have tested positive within 7 days.



25 March 2022

With the influenza season approaching, we will be looking to commence vaccination clinics in May. Our focus over the next month will be on maximising the number of residents/customers and staff who have received the third dose of the COVID vaccine. It has now been made mandatory for staff to have received their third dose to continue working, and we are encouraging residents/customers to also receive their third dose, particularly with the large number of cases in the community. The table below shows the number of residents/customers in each of the care homes that have received two or three doses of the vaccine.

	Received a third dose	Two doses
Albion Park Rail	118	118
Bundanoon	68	82
Calwell	103	125
Coniston	48	51
Goulburn	136	137
Mount Terry	89	110
Mt Warrigal	40	40
Queanbeyan	83	116
Shell Cove	124	125
Stirling	115	119
Warilla	53	53

In the last update I advised of the decision regarding the closure of Warilla. Since this announcement, our priority has been to contact all resident family representatives to discuss the individual options available for them. The majority of residents and families were comfortable that a suitable option was offered. Overall Warrigal Albion Park Rail and Mount Terry will take on the majority of residents with a small number choosing an alternate Warrigal location closer to family support.

Given that many of the residents and families were quick to select their next home, we were quickly able to begin our transfer process. The first resident transfer occurred on Monday 21 March 2022 and there have been 5 others this week. A further 6 to 8 are expected to occur next week and we expect that between 5 and 10 residents will move each week over the following 2 months.

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

Yours Sincerely,

Craig Smith
Executive Leader – Service Integrated Communities