

Warrigal

Inspiring communities
for older people

From the desk of
**Executive
Operations**



8 April 2022

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

The past week has seen high case numbers continue in NSW and the ACT, with 138,753 cases in NSW and 6,626 in the ACT. These numbers continue to present a high risk to the aged care sector, and Warrigal continues to be impacted with 20 staff across our 12 care homes currently in isolation due to being COVID positive. The requirement for all staff and visitors to undertake a Rapid Antigen Test daily will continue in the foreseeable future particularly with high case numbers and winter approaching. Along with total case numbers increasing, hospital admissions have also increased with an additional 133 people being admitted to NSW hospitals with COVID in the past week, bringing the current number to 1435, while in the ACT there are 44 people in hospital with COVID, an increase of 1 over the past week.

The most recent information from the Department of Health is from 31 March 2022, indicating that 3,207 aged care homes in Australia have experienced a COVID-19 outbreak, a significant increase of 969 in the past fortnight. The number of homes with an active outbreak in Australia continues to increase each week, and there are currently 658 active outbreaks in aged care homes, which is 298 more than the previous fortnight. This includes 229 homes in NSW and 10 in the ACT. Sadly, there have been 1,017 deaths in residential aged care homes this year.

Warrigal has one home currently experiencing an outbreak, with ten residents testing positive at Warrigal Wollongong over the past week. All of the residents live in the same neighbourhood, and the numbers have increased over the course of the week with routine testing being undertaken. We continue to test residents in other home areas, and will do so while the outbreak remains in place. Fully vaccinated visitors can still enter the second level of the home which is in outbreak, wearing full PPE, while there are no restrictions to visitors on the other levels of the care home.

In order to expedite the process for staff and visitors coming into the home, the screening questions on the Visitor Management System have been modified to capture essential information that is consistent with the current requirements from NSW and ACT Health. These questions have been updated from today.

There are currently 10 care homes across Warrigal that are not in an outbreak, but have exposure to COVID 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. Suppose there is only one resident in a care home that has tested positive. In that case, this is also considered to be an exposure and this is the case at Warrigal Stirling and Calwell, where one resident is currently positive. Infection protocols are in place across the home which have been communicated to families.

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The expert Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) recommends an additional COVID-19 vaccine dose for residents in aged care facilities before winter. The recommended COVID-19 winter vaccine dose is to bolster residents' protection over the winter season. The winter vaccine dose is recommended to be administered from 4 months after receiving their initial booster dose. These doses are available from 4 April 2022, and management at our care homes are making arrangements for clinics or GPs to administer these vaccines. I have attached a fact sheet on the winter vaccine dose for your information.

The relocation of residents from Warilla has continued and there are now 47 residents at Warilla that will be moved to their new Warrigal home in the coming months. It is anticipated that a further 13 residents will move next week, which will then allow a number of the staff to transfer to their new location. A Zoom meeting was held this week for families to attend to provide us with feedback, and the Executive Team met with the staff at Warilla this week. The staff at Warilla continue to work closely with the teams at Albion Park Rail and Mount Terry to ensure that the residents are supported to settle into their new home.

We receive regular feedback from residents and relatives regarding the call bell system and response times. In some cases it is challenging to get the data from some of the systems and I am pleased to advise that we will be upgrading both our Bundanoon and Goulburn Residential Care Homes Nurse Call systems. We expect the work to commence on this over the coming weeks and be completed by the end of the month.

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,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'CS' or 'Craig Smith', written in a cursive style.

Craig Smith
Executive Leader – Service Integrated Communities