

*Warrigal*

Inspiring communities  
for older people

From the desk of  
**Executive  
Operations**



**25 February 2022**

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

The past week has seen the continued trend of case numbers reducing in NSW, with the total case numbers being 51,650, a reduction of 7,305. In the ACT, the number of cases increased by 1,134 cases, with 4,542 recorded for the week. The number of hospital admissions reduced in both NSW and the ACT, with 1,144 people currently in NSW hospitals and 41 in ACT hospitals, a reduction of 237 and 9 respectively in the past week.

The most recent information from the Department of Health from 18 February 2022 indicates that 2,063 aged care homes in Australia have experienced a COVID-19 outbreak, with 645 care homes remaining in an outbreak, including 308 in NSW and 13 in the ACT. The number of care homes that have experienced an outbreak has increased by 30 in the past week, and pleasingly the number of homes with active outbreaks has decreased by 195 in NSW and 5 in ACT. While the number of active outbreaks is reducing, sadly the number of residents in residential care that have passed away with COVID-19 increased by 90 in the past week, with 742 deaths this year.

The national trend of care homes with an active outbreak reduction is also reflected at Warrigal, with only one care home, Mount Terry still considered to be in an outbreak. There are currently two residents who have tested positive to COVID-19 at Mount Terry. All residents who have not tested positive will be PCR tested tomorrow, and pending these results being negative, the home will be out of outbreak next week. This will mark an end to the outbreaks that commenced on 29 December 2021, which resulted in 276 residents across 10 care homes testing positive to COVID-19. Our focus in the coming weeks will be on reviewing how we responded to each outbreak, identifying areas for improvement, including an independent external review of the management of the outbreak. This will be important as we prepare for the impact of overseas travellers now returning combined with the increased risk with winter approaching.

The number of cases within the community remains high. Each week, there continues to be staff or visitors testing positive on a Rapid Antigen Test, which is being identified prior to them entering the home. While the cases remain at such high levels, we will be continuing to require testing to be undertaken daily.

This week the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission conducted a review of the Outbreak Management Plan at Warrigal Queanbeyan and reviewed how the recent outbreak was managed. They provided some positive feedback and offered suggestions on some minor improvements. As a result of the review, the Outbreak Management Plans at all Warrigal Care Homes are being reviewed to ensure they are current and reflect the actions from the recent outbreak.

Last week it was communicated that we aimed to work towards consistency with visiting, which was dependent on a number of factors, including the impact of the outbreak and the capacity of the home to manage based on the resources available. To achieve this consistency, the following will apply at all Care Homes from Monday:

- *There will be no restrictions on the number of visits at any home; however, each home will have a maximum number that they can accommodate each hour based on the resources and areas within the home.*
- *Visitors aged 12 years and over must have received a second dose of a COVID vaccination at least 14 days prior to their visit.*

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- *Visitors are strongly encouraged to get a booster vaccine if they are eligible for one, and must have a negative Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) prior to each visit.*
- *Warrigal will supply the RAT kits, and these can be undertaken at home prior to the visit. A number of kits will be provided if requested at the next visit.*
- *Photographic evidence of the negative result including the date it was done will need to be provided on arrival.*
- *If this is not provided, a test will need to be undertaken prior to the visit proceeding.*
- *The electronic Visitor Management System must be used to schedule the visit. This is required to manage the number of visitors entering the home, and if you have trouble using the system, the local team will be able to support you with arranging bookings.*
- *Wherever possible, the visit should be in an outdoor area. Visits should not be in any inside communal areas, unless specifically designed for this purpose. All visitors must wear a mask over their nose and mouth while visiting indoors.*
- *Face shields and goggles are no longer required for any visits.*

I hope that this provides clarity on the current visiting arrangements. The main purpose of the weekly communication has been to provide information from the organisation on outbreaks, vaccinations, visiting arrangements, audits and our planning. It is important that we continue to communicate, however, unless there is a significant change, the frequency of the updates will change to fortnightly.

Please continue to provide feedback by contacting your local management team, calling 1800 927 744 or by emailing us at [warrigal@warrigal.com.au](mailto:warrigal@warrigal.com.au)

Yours Sincerely,

Craig Smith  
Executive Leader – Service Integrated Communities