

Warrigal

Inspiring communities
for older people

From the desk of
**Executive
Operations**



20 May 2022

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

The past fortnight has seen COVID cases in the community continue to remain high, with the increased risk of influenza presenting additional infection control risks to residential care homes. There have been 72,593 COVID cases in NSW in the past week, consistent with the previous week of 75,561 cases, which has been the case for the past two months in which the average number of cases continues to be close to 10,000 a day in NSW. In the ACT, there have been 6,920 positive COVID cases in the past week, compared with 7,153 the previous week, and similar to NSW, the average number of cases continues to be consistent on a daily basis, and are not reducing. As these numbers continue to remain high, we need to ensure that staff and visitors continue to be tested on a daily basis with a Rapid Antigen Test prior to entering the home.

The most recent information from the Department of Health is from 13 May 2022, indicating that 4,552 aged care homes in Australia have experienced a COVID-19 outbreak, an increase of 456 in the past fortnight. The number of care homes with an active outbreak in Australia is currently 761, which has reduced by 51 from the previous fortnight. There are currently 5,320 active cases in residential aged care homes, with 3,321 being residents and 1,999 staff. Since the beginning of the pandemic there have been over 6.4 million cases of COVID-19 reported in Australia.

I am pleased to advise that of the three care homes that were experiencing a COVID outbreak in the previous update, the outbreak at Goulburn has now been closed. In Galwell there are no longer any COVID positive residents, but in accordance with ACT Health requirements, we need to wait 14 days since the last positive case before the outbreak can be officially declared over. The outbreak in Wollongong continues, with ten residents currently positive. Unfortunately, our care home in Queanbeyan now has a COVID outbreak (which commenced on 14 May 22), and there are currently 14 residents that have tested positive. As we work closely with the Public Health Unit (PHU) with any outbreak, we have utilised their Infection Control Consultant to come into the home at Queanbeyan to undertake a review of our protocols, which reinforced that our actions were consistent with the expectations from the PHU.

In addition to the above, the Rhinovirus Outbreak at Coniston has now been closed. There is one resident with Gastro symptoms at Stirling, however we anticipate this outbreak to be finished this weekend. Warrigal Mount Terry currently has a Rhinovirus Outbreak with seven residents impacted. As indicated in the previous update, Rhinoviruses are the most common cause of the common cold, chiefly causing upper respiratory tract infections, and may also cause infection in the lower respiratory tract.

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In addition to the COVID update, I have summarised below some key points regarding activities at Warrigal:

- The relocation of residents from Warilla has been completed, with the last remaining residents moving into Albion Park Rail last Wednesday. It was an emotional day for the staff and residents that stayed until the end, and the Executive Team at Warrigal were there to recognise the efforts of everyone involved.
- Thank you to the families from Coniston that were contacted over the past fortnight to provide feedback on the quality of care and lifestyle activities. This information follows on from the contact made with families from Mount Terry previously and has helped the respective Managers develop plans for improvement. Next week, we will be commencing the same process for families at Albion Park Rail.
- This week was National Volunteer Week, which is particularly important to Warrigal as we were formed through dedicated volunteers, and they continue to be fundamental to supporting our residents/customers. Our Volunteer Coordinator arranged for a number of functions to be held this week to recognise our dedicated volunteers. I would like to acknowledge our volunteers who selflessly give their time right across Warrigal.
- The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission completed an Infection Control Review at Albion Park Rail recently, which indicated that all of the requirements reviewed were met by the home.
- In order to prepare for the implementation of the recommendations from the Aged Care Royal Commission, which will happen gradually over the coming years, Warrigal has employed a Reform Officer, who will be working closely with all areas of the organisation to ensure that these are prioritised and implemented. I will continue to keep you updated as this project progresses.

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