

*Warrigal*

Inspiring communities  
for older people

From the desk of  
**Executive  
Operations**



**1 July 2022**

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

The past fortnight has seen COVID-19 cases in the community increase from previous weeks, which is concerning particularly with residents continuing to go into the community with an average of 2,671 visitors coming into our homes each week during June. There have been 64,713 COVID-19 cases in NSW in the past week, which is close to an average of 9,200 a day, compared to 6,500 in the previous update. In the ACT, there have been 7,898 positive COVID-19 cases in the past week, compared with 5,504 in the last update. As these numbers remain high, we need to ensure that staff and visitors continue to be tested daily with a Rapid Antigen Test before entering the home, and importantly, wear face masks at all times inside the care home. Goggles or face shields must also be worn at all times in any home experiencing an outbreak.

The most recent information from the Department of Health is from 24 June 2022, indicating that 5,704 aged care homes in Australia have experienced a COVID-19 outbreak, an increase of 370 in the past fortnight. The number of care homes with an active outbreak in Australia is currently 622, which has decreased by 24 from the previous fortnight. The number of active resident cases associated with the current outbreaks is 3,361, consistent with the previous fortnight, which is an average of just over 5 residents for each outbreak.

Since the previous update, the outbreaks at Albion Park Rail, Calwell, Stirling and Coniston have been declared over by the Public Health Units and ACT Health, as there have been no active cases in the last 7 days. While these outbreaks have been finalised, unfortunately, we have new COVID-19 outbreaks at Mt Warrigal, Mount Terry and Goulburn.

The latest advice from NSW Health is that the Omicron variant (B.11.529) is currently the dominant COVID-19 variant circulating in the NSW community. The proportion of specimens likely to be the new variants BA.4 and BA.5 strain has increased to 35% in the past week, and it is expected that it will become the dominant strain with an increase in infections in the coming weeks. We don't fully understand the impact of this strain; however, we will continue to work closely with the respective local health districts in the coming weeks.

A summary of all current outbreaks is provided below:

**Mt Warrigal:** The outbreak commenced on 27 June 2022, with two residents in adjoining rooms testing positive. Two rounds of PCR testing have been undertaken in the past week, and a further round is scheduled for tomorrow. If no further cases are identified, one final round of testing will be completed at the end of next week.

**Mount Terry:** The outbreak commenced on 29 June 2022, and 4 residents (3% of the home) have tested positive in one section of the home. As the outbreak commenced three days ago, the second round of PCR testing is being undertaken today and then again on Monday.

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**Goulburn:** Similar to Mount Terry, the outbreak only commenced on 29 June 2022, and 9 residents (6% of the home) in three sections of the home have tested positive through Rapid Antigen Tests. We have arranged for PCR testing to be undertaken on all residents who have not have COVID in the past 12 weeks.

**Shell Cove:** The outbreak at Shell Cove commenced on 15 June 2022; 16 residents (13% of the home) have tested positive in three sections of the home. There are 3 residents in one section of the home that remains active with 13 recovered. The most recent cases mean that PCR testing will continue over the coming week before the outbreak can be declared over.

In addition to the COVID update, I have summarised below some key points regarding what is happening at Warrigal and the industry:

- The latest Census data reveals some interesting data that supports aged care providers in developing and adjusting their Strategic Plans. The most recent census data includes;
  - The number of those aged 65 and over has increased by more than 700,000 since the 2016 Census, bringing the total to approximately 4.4 million older Australians.
  - Overall the number of older people needing assistance has jumped from about 642,822 to around 963,048, an increase of 49.8% since the last census.
  - The number of people who need assistance in their day-to-day lives with self-care, mobility and communication has seen increases across age brackets for people over 65. These are up 10% for people 65-74, 23% for people 75-84, and then 55% for people 85+.
  - There are about 190,000 people with dementia, the vast majority of whom are over 65. Dementia is also a long-term health condition most commonly associated with a need for assistance.
- The winter booster vaccination program continues to be a focus with Queanbeyan and Goulburn clinics, with Shell Cove, Bundanoon and Stirling having received their fourth dose. Coniston and Mount Terry are scheduled for next week, and with the outbreaks at Albion Park Rail and Calwell over, clinics will be arranged in the next fortnight.
- Workforce challenges remain a priority within the aged care sector that need to operate aged care homes 24 hours a day. I am pleased to advise that we have recently recruited 20 staff from Fiji through the Pacific Labour Scheme, who will be employed for a period of three years. These staff will work in Goulburn and Bundanoon, while we will also use this scheme for homes in the Illawarra Region.

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- In the previous update, the importance of dignity and risk being understood and demonstrated for each resident was highlighted as a key focus of Standard One of the Aged Care Standards. I am pleased to advise that the most recent reviews by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission indicated that this Standard was met.
- Standard Two describes what organisations need to do to plan care and services with residents. The planned care and services should meet each resident's needs, goals and preferences and optimise their health and well-being. While a consumer might have some challenges with their health and abilities, they still have goals they want to achieve, and similar to Standard One, please liaise with staff if you want to provide feedback on goals that you want to achieve.

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](mailto:warrigal@warrigal.com.au).

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CS' or similar initials.

**Craig Smith**  
Executive Leader – Service Integrated Communities