

*Warrigal*

Inspiring communities  
for older people

From the desk of  
**Executive  
Operations**



**7 JULY 2023**

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

We are now well into winter, and pleasingly, the number of COVID-19 outbreaks in residential aged care homes has decreased over the past month, along with the number of reported cases within the community. The number of reported cases of COVID-19 in NSW last week was 3356 compared with 13480 at the beginning of the month. The number of reported cases in ACT has also reduced considerably, from an average of 900 cases a week last month, to 260 cases.

Two hundred and sixty Residential Care Homes in Australia are currently experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak, which has decreased by 222 over the month. In the past week, there have been an additional 92 outbreaks in Residential Aged Care, indicating that outbreaks are still prevalent, but are being closed relatively quickly with fewer residents being impacted. This is also the case at Warrigal, where there are no current COVID-19 outbreaks, however there were three outbreaks that commenced in June at Bundanoon, Queanbeyan and Mt Warrigal that resulted in 22 residents testing positive.

Unfortunately, while COVID-19 outbreaks have declined, a number of care homes have been impacted by other respiratory outbreaks, which occur during the colder months. In view of this, the current protocols will remain in place at least until the end of June. These include;

- Conducting weekly surveillance testing to promptly monitor and respond to any potential cases.
- Surgical masks being worn at all times inside a care home by staff and visitors.
- Rapid Antigen Tests are to be completed on a daily basis for staff and visitors.

While the objective remains to prevent outbreaks, one of the key focus areas over the past few months has been coordinating influenza and the fifth booster vaccinations for residents. Most residents (1003) have had the influenza vaccination, while a further 312 have consented and will receive this in the coming weeks, with only 38 residents refusing the vaccination. The number of outbreaks has impacted the number of residents that have received the last booster for COVID-19, as it cannot be administered within 6 months of having COVID-19, but this continues to be a focus with management at homes liaising with Pharmacists and GPs to administer to consenting residents when they are eligible.

Warrigal is continuing to prepare for the aged care reforms that will be ongoing over the next two years. This month it became a requirement that all of our homes had to have a Registered Nurse working 24/7, and in the event that this doesn't occur due to unplanned leave that could not be replaced, a contingency plan needs to be in place. All of our homes have been meeting this requirement prior to the 1 July implementation date, and we are also preparing for the mandated care minutes that are required to be delivered by care staff and registered nurses commencing in October.

It is anticipated that the new Aged Care Act will be implemented from 1 July 2024, and this will also involve the new aged care standards being in place at some stage after 1 July 2024. These standards are being piloted over the next 5 months, and the outcomes of these reviews will assist in refining and implementing these standards once the Aged Care Act is implemented. There will be 7 standards and

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one of the projects currently being undertaken involves having a working party for each of these standards to understand the changes that will be required to policies and processes.

One of the new standards is focused on the dining experience, and we are working closely with our catering contractors, in-house catering and residents to meet their needs. These preparations included Warrigal Shell Cove hosting a three-day event in June, where Maggie Beer and her Foundation team presented to a team of cooks, chefs and carers, sharing their expertise on good food nourishment and their cooking techniques.

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission conducted a reaccreditation review at Wollongong during June. It has now been 15 months since Warrigal became the approved provider, and the assessment team provided some very positive feedback on the work that has been undertaken during this period. The assessment team have recommended that 41 of the 42 requirements were met, with some work required on care planning for lifestyle.

The Inaugural Consumer Advisory Committee Meeting took place last month where customers and their representatives met with Board Members, Executive Leaders, Management representatives and frontline staff. The purpose of this Committee is to get feedback from all areas, including residential care, home services and villages on matters relating to governance, strategy and communication, to ensure that the needs of our customers are understood and represented in our strategic planning.

This week we celebrated National NAIDOC Week throughout our care homes to recognise the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NAIDOC Week is an opportunity for us to learn about First Nations cultures and histories and participate in celebrations of their cultures.

As always, I encourage you to provide us with your feedback by contacting your local management team, calling 1800 927 744 or emailing us at [warrigal@warrigal.com.au](mailto:warrigal@warrigal.com.au). I would like to thank those families who have contacted me with feedback which is appreciated.

Yours Sincerely,

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