

Warrigal

Inspiring communities
for older people

From the desk of
**Executive
Operations**



6 August 2021

Dear resident representatives and relatives

The past week has been another challenging one with the areas of lockdown extended to the Local Government Areas in Newcastle and Hunter Regions. The increase in the areas under lockdown in NSW is consistent with what is happening in all of the Eastern States, with South East Queensland, Melbourne and Greater Sydney all in lockdown to try and minimise the impact of the Delta Strain.

While there are no active cases in the Shellharbour LGA, it remains linked to the Greater Sydney LGA, particularly due to the number of residents that work outside the area, including contractors that reside in the area and commute to construction sites which are now permitted under stricter guidelines. The Chief Health Officer in NSW, Dr Chant was questioned this week about whether the restrictions in Shellharbour LGA could be lifted if there continue to be no community transmissions, and while there are no immediate plans to lift the restrictions, this may be reviewed at the end of the month if the lockdown in Greater Sydney is extended.

COVID-19 Cases NSW

The number of positive cases in the past week has remained very high, with a record number of 291 cases in the past 24 hours until 8pm last night. This means that the total number of positive cases in NSW over the past week has increased by 1651, with every day recording over 200 positive cases, and an average of 235 cases each day over the past 7 days. There have now been 4610 locally acquired cases since 16 June when the first case in this current outbreak was reported.

There have been an additional two cases in the Wollongong LGA in the past week who are believed to be linked to employment in the Sydney area. This means there are now 15 community-acquired COVID-19 cases in the Illawarra Shoalhaven LHD in the past 4 weeks.

Sadly, there have now been 22 deaths linked to the current outbreak, and there remain 304 people in hospital including 50 people in the Intensive Care. These numbers are the reason that we need to remain vigilant with applying the visiting restrictions and promoting vaccinations. There have now been over 4.2million vaccine doses administered since 22 February 2021, including 24,894 in the past 24 hours.

Visitor Restrictions

There are no changes to the restrictions from last week which are again summarised below;

- All care homes in Illawarra and Bundanoon can have visitors that are providing essential care services if the resident/customer is at end-of-life, or weekly visits for residents/customers with a mental illness, advanced dementia or is socially isolated.
- At Goulburn and Queanbeyan, only two visitors are allowed each day, and the visits should be in the residents' room or in another suitable location within the care home.
- At Calwell and Stirling, there are no restrictions on visiting, but face masks still need to be worn. ACT Health have extended the areas where people cannot enter the aged care home including Wingecarribee and Campbelltown areas.



6 August 2021

- Any person visiting must sign-in using the revised screening tool and use the QR code for contact tracing.

Vaccinations

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) has now considered the parameters for workforce scope and exemptions for implementing the National Cabinet decision of mandatory vaccinations by 17 September, agreeing to national consistency across jurisdictions with minimal complexity is optimal. It is anticipated that based on this advice, there will be a limited number of circumstances where an exemption will be granted, and will only include medical exemptions and possibly a temporary exemption where the staff member can demonstrate that they have made every effort to be vaccinated but due to supply limitations they have not been able to meet the deadline, but are booked in for the vaccination.

- This week staff at Albion Park Rail attended an on-site clinic and there will be a similar clinic at Warilla next week. The staff at Bundanoon that received the first dose three weeks ago are receiving their second dose today, which will mean the vast majority of staff in the home have now been fully vaccinated. We continue to report the number of staff vaccinations to the Department on a weekly basis, and weekly meetings continue to be held to focus on strategies to ensure the maximum number of staff are to meet the timeframe of 17 September for compliance.

Preparations

Next week we will be conducting our own outbreak planning scenario, and then participating in one with the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District. Our internal planning will include the following;

- Actions being broken down over the first 24 hours and allocated to members of the Rapid Response Team.
- Staff updated on Outbreak Management Plan procedures.
- Residents isolated.
- Internal Administrator and Clinical Advisor deployed to the home.
- Resources from Administration and other homes contacted to support the home.
- Communication with various stakeholders.
- Contacting Public Health Unit.
- Ensuring sufficient supply of PPE is available.
- Additional IT resourcing to communicate with families.

There is a comprehensive plan in place that support each of the actions, and there are many more functions that would be undertaken, and we will continue to test the planning that has been undertaken. With thirteen outbreaks in Aged Care Homes in NSW, this continual review of our planning and processes is essential.

Tomorrow is Aged Care Employee Day, and while the efforts of staff have always been appreciated, over the past 18 months they have continued to turn up every day and care for your loved ones, even through a pandemic. I would like to recognise and thank them for their efforts.

Thank you for your understanding and feedback, as I indicated last week, they are encouraging and provide valuable feedback on where we can improve.

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Your feedback is always welcome and is important for us if we are going to establish trust and provide a quality service. There are many ways that you can provide this feedback including contacting your local management team, calling 1800 927 744 or by emailing us at warrigal@warrigal.com.au.

Yours Sincerely,

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

Craig Smith
Executive Leader – Service Integrated Communities