

Warrigal

Inspiring communities
for older people

From the desk of
**Executive
Operations**



12 November 2021

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

The past week has seen vaccination rates again increase slowly, with 94.1% of people aged over 16 in NSW having received one dose of the vaccine. In comparison, those fully vaccinated is now over 90%, with 90.6% fully vaccinated. In the ACT, the percentage of the population over the age of 12 fully vaccinated is now 96.0%. The number of positive cases in NSW increased from the previous week by 223, with 1,694 cases in the past seven days, and in the ACT, there were 95 positive cases in the past week.

A revised Industry Code for Visiting Aged Care Homes has been developed to balance reasonable safety measures in aged care while respecting the rights of older Australians and their emotional wellbeing. Warrigal has participated in the consultation process for the sixth revision of this Code, proposing that homes be classified into one of three categories, each with its own infection prevention and control measures. The Code also includes an "Essential Visitor" policy which allows residents/customers to designate one person who will always be permitted to visit them to provide essential physical and emotional care, regardless of outbreak status. Once the Code is finalised, a further update will be provided.

Since increasing the number of visits to three a week, the overall number of visits across Warrigal for the past two weeks has increased to 3,267. Each of these visits are still required to be screened in, which is a manual process with the exception of Albion Park Rail where there is an automated Visitor Management System. These will be gradually implemented at all homes, which requires staff to be trained, and data needs to be entered by visitors on the initial visit, including proof of vaccination status. I appreciate the patience of family and friends as we have cautiously increased the number of visits each week, and I am pleased to advise that commencing from next week, the number of visits will increase to five a week. Given the large number of families and friends currently visiting, it is still important that all visits are booked with the staff at the home.

The booster vaccine program that the Australian Government recently announced for residents/customers who completed their primary course of double COVID-19 vaccination more than six months ago has now commenced. If your family member or loved one living in a Warrigal care home has only received one of the COVID-19 vaccinations, they are also eligible to attend these vaccination clinics to receive their second dose to become fully vaccinated. While we are still in the process of confirming dates for all of the clinics, they commenced yesterday at Goulburn, and we will continue to provide updates through the weekly communication as dates are known.

Aged care residents/customers who have had two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine can be reassured that they are fully vaccinated, and are well protected. However, a booster dose will increase the immune response and provide an additional layer to further reduce the risk of breakthrough infection (when a fully vaccinated person gets COVID-19 and is at risk of transmitting the virus to others).

The following dates have been confirmed:

Home	Date
Queanbeyan	16 & 19 November 2021
Calwell	17 November 2021
Stirling	19 November 2021
Coniston	26 November 2021

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As indicated last week, residents/customers are now permitted to have two fully vaccinated visitors aged 12 years and over and two children under 12 years of age. To clarify, this does not increase the number of visitors to four adults if there are no children attending., The Health Advice is that children under 12 years of age, where possible need to wear a mask and have a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) prior to the visit. I understand that for very young children, wearing a mask and having a Rapid Antigen Test can be challenging. Where possible, visits that include young children should be outside and with social distancing. Visits that take place outside, will not require a RAT nor a mask. These additional precautions would not be required for very young children under the age of 6.

If the visit is going to be in the room of the resident/customer, a risk assessment would need to be undertaken, and if a Rapid Antigen Test were required, you would be encouraged to purchase these from the Supermarket and bring them with you where the test would be administered.

I appreciate that families are now looking at making arrangements for Christmas, and in order for us to understand the number of residents/customers that may be leaving the care home, could you please advise the staff at the local home if you intend to take your loved one home for Christmas. A risk assessment would then be undertaken including the number of people in attendance, vaccination status, size of the area being used and the visit duration.

Thank you for taking the time to send your suggestions and comments, and your understanding of the staged approach we have taken. Please continue to provide feedback by 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' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

Craig Smith
Executive Leader – Service Integrated Communities