



3 March 2023

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

We are now into autumn, which is the season when we prepare for influenza and the colder winter months ahead. This preparation includes facilitating vaccination clinics within the care homes for influenza and the COVID-19 vaccine booster. ATAGI has recommended a 2023 booster dose for adults if their last COVID-19 vaccine dose or confirmed infection was six months ago or longer, this includes all adults aged over 65 years of age.

The number of individuals with COVID-19 cases within the community has remained consistent over the past month, with 7,160 cases in NSW and 525 in ACT over the past week. The number of Residential Aged Care Homes experiencing an outbreak has reduced to 160; unfortunately, this includes an outbreak at Warrigal Shell Cove that commenced in the Memory Support Area on 25 February and over the week, 24 residents in the one neighbourhood have tested positive.

While we regularly review the protocols for staff and visitors regarding masks and Rapid Antigen Testing, the number of cases still in the community and the potential impact that an outbreak can have on our residents will require the current measures to remain in place for at least the next month. Therefore, all staff, visitors and contractors must complete a Rapid Antigen Test within 72 hours before entering the care home, and masks are required to be worn at all times. These can be surgical masks unless the care home is experiencing an outbreak, in which case a N95 mask must be worn.

Changes are being gradually implemented to ensure we put older Australians first by improving quality, safety and choice within the aged care sector. Implementing the reforms through the Aged Care Royal Commission remains a focus. The star rating system was introduced in December last year, and the overall rating is based on compliance results, quality measures, resident experience from independent interviews and staffing minutes. The measurement of the staffing minutes is based on the needs of the residents, which is determined by external reviewers, and providers have until 1 October 2023 to achieve these staffing levels. The ratings can change daily through the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission undertaking compliance reviews and resident interviews being facilitated regularly.

A rating of 3 means that the provider is meeting the requirements of the area being measured. Over the past month, the overall rating for Albion Park Rail increased; improvements were required and implemented, raising the rating to a three. Unfortunately, we still require an overall rating for Wollongong, as it has not been 12



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Months since we acquired the home; we anticipate this will be updated later this month as Warrigal commenced operating there on 21 March 2022.

The reforms also include a new Aged Care Act and updated Quality Standards that are designed to be;

- Person-centred; Care and services orientated around the individual
- Inclusive; Focused on governance, diversity, dementia, food and clinical care
- Measurable; Clear and easily implemented expectations
- Relevant; Applied based on service delivery types
- Coordinated; Aligns with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

One of the most significant changes to the new standards will be that food and nutrition will now be one of the standards which will incorporate all aspects of food delivery and preparation, including the dining experience. There is yet to be a clear timeframe for implementing the new standards; however, the Commission will be looking for providers to participate in trials where the new standards will be assessed over the year.

This week the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission conducted a three-day unannounced reaccreditation audit at Goulburn. This follows on from the audit at Queanbeyan the previous month, and I am pleased to advise that the assessment team's feedback in reviewing all aspects of care and services being provided was very positive. Thank you to all of the residents and relatives that made themselves available to give feedback to the assessors from the Commission.

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.

Yours Sincerely,

Craig Smith
Executive Leader – Service Integrated Communities