

23 October 2020

## Re: Latest Update on COVID-19

Dear resident representatives and relatives

I am pleased to confirm that there are still currently no confirmed cases of COVID-19 at Warrigal.

The past week has seen the number of cases reduce in NSW, and pleasingly the cases have all been from known sources. This included two cases in Goulburn and after 100 days of no cases in the ACT, they now have a positive case. The reduction in numbers is encouraging, however, we know from the past few months how quickly things can change, and while we will be continuing with our cautious approach, there has been an increase in the number of compassionate visits undertaken in the past week which we monitor closely as a key risk to Warrigal.

I am pleased that we have commenced the process of utilising volunteers to support with facilitating these compassionate in-room visits or safe outdoor visits. The willingness of the volunteers to undertake infection control training has been well received, and this will ensure that we are able to support residents and relatives with more visits. While the Safe Visiting Areas will continue to be utilised, many of these visits can now be held outdoors which has happened over the past week.

There have been a number of families requesting that they take their loved one out of the care home to spend time with family members. Under the Charter of Aged Care Rights, a person has the right to have control over and make choices about the care they receive as well as their personal and social life. Where these choices, involve personal risk, it is also important to understand this right applies to other residents as well. The health and well-being of all residents are considered and we will be seeking clarification on the number of people that will be present, the location, whether social distancing can be observed and the personal hygiene requirements. In the past week there were seven residents/customers that went out with families for a social visit.

We will continue to host Zoom meetings as a way of communicating and interacting with relatives. It is important to attend these meetings as they not only provide us with an opportunity to explain the strategies we have implemented, they also serve as a way for you to get your questions answered, providing us with some key learnings. Most importantly, Zoom will be used to facilitate meetings with you in the event of an outbreak. This week the meeting was held at 12.30pm to allow families that work to join during a lunch break, but this time may not be suitable for the majority of families. We will be seeking your feedback through messages and calls on the time that would be most convenient for most to attend.

We received very positive feedback on the current protocols in place and how they are being monitored from the Quality and Safety Commission after another infection control audit was held this week at our Coniston home. There is another audit happening today at our Goulburn home, and the feedback on infection control and customer engagement has been encouraging. In addition to this audit, each home that has been audited by a Local Health District has prepared an action plan that is being implemented and monitored.

After more than 2 years of hearings, counsel has submitted 124 recommendations to the Royal Commission this week, which will likely result in a lot of media attention in the coming days regarding these recommendations. They include improving remuneration for aged care workers, minimum staff time for workers to spend with residents daily including at least 36 minutes provided by a Registered Nurse, a new Aged Care Act and an Aged Care Commission. There are many other recommendations including an Inspector General of aged care to implement the recommendations of the Royal Commission. While the full report from the Royal Commission is not due to be released until next February, we are pleased and excited at the opportunities that they will present for our residents.

I will continue to keep you updated regularly and again thank you for your support, which is communicated through our social media and emails sent each week.

You can call our Customer Relations Information Line on 1800 927 744, operating seven days a week between 9am to 9pm, if you have any further enquiries. You can also email us at [warrigal@warrigal.com.au](mailto:warrigal@warrigal.com.au) with any feedback you might have or for more general advice you may want to contact the Older Persons Advocacy Network on 1800 700 600.

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**