

Warrigal

Inspiring communities
for older people

From the desk of
**Executive
Operations**



23 July 2021

Dear resident representatives and relatives

It has been another significant week with additional restrictions implemented in the Greater Sydney Area, which has now included ceasing work on construction projects. Workers being permitted to only leave Local Government Areas for essential work purposes, including aged care staff, has been extended. This means that any staff that are travelling more than 50km to an aged care home would need to be COVID tested regularly depending on the location where they reside. Warrigal has reviewed the residential addresses of all staff, and there are no staff that work in the high risk areas that require third daily testing.

COVID-19 Cases

The number of positive cases in the past week has remained very high, along with the total number of tests being conducted. In the past 24 hours until 8pm last night, there were a further 136 positive cases including 53 that were infectious while in the community. This means that the total number of positive cases in the past week has increased by 777, now including several cases in the Wollongong area. This number has resulted in the NSW Government declaring the current situation a 'National Emergency', and will be seeking to significantly increase the number of vaccinations to people who live in the Greater Sydney Area over the next week. The total number of cases in NSW since the pandemic commenced is now 7357.

Goulburn

The restrictions that were implemented in Goulburn last week were lifted on Monday following confirmation that there were no community transmissions from the contractors working in the area. Unfortunately, the Southern NSW Local Health District notified us today that they are currently reviewing two exposure sites in the Goulburn and Marulan areas, and have requested that all aged care homes in the Goulburn area restrict all visitors for 72 hours.

Visitor Restrictions

The change in Goulburn means that we currently have four levels of visiting limitations across Warrigal.

- The only visitors permitted in Goulburn would be to see a resident who is receiving palliative care.
- All care homes in Illawarra and Bundanoon can have visitors that are providing essential care services or if the resident/customer are at end-of-life. With the extension of the lockdown and in anticipation of a further extension, the criteria now allows essential care visits to include weekly visits for residents/customers with a mental illness, advanced dementia or are socially isolated. This has commenced at most of the homes this week. It is still important to arrange these with the local home, as the visits need to be undertaken in the residents' or customers' rooms.
- There are no changes in 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.

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- At Calwell and Stirling, there are no restrictions on visiting, but face masks still need to be worn.
- Any person visiting must sign-in using the revised screening tool and use the QR code for contact tracing.

Staff Vaccinations

There still has not been any clarification provided on the exemptions that apply for staff with a Public Health Order, but we are continuing to prioritise staff vaccinations. We have been able to utilise a GP with support from the Primary Health Network to schedule appointments in all of the Illawarra homes in the coming weeks, commencing at Mount Terry today and Shell Cove next week. The Local Health District will be organising a clinic in Goulburn, while we are arranging staff in Queanbeyan and Canberra to attend local clinics. With the majority of residents now vaccinated, the focus on staff vaccinations is critical in our preparations to protect residents.

Preparations

While vaccinations will continue to be a priority, we will continue to review our risk register given the additional risks presented by the current Delta strain. To assist in these preparations, Warrigal will be participating in a scenario planning exercise with the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, along with representatives from the Commonwealth Department of Health and other aged care providers to review and improve our processes.

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

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,

Craig Smith
Executive Leader – Service Integrated Communities