

Warrigal

Inspiring communities
for older people

From the desk of
**Executive
Operations**



5 JANUARY 2024

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

Welcome to 2024, and I hope that you were able to spend some quality time with family and friends over the festive season. There was a significant increase in the number of visitors that came into our care homes on Christmas Day, with 891 people registering their visits through the Visitor Management System, compared to the average of 450 a day on most weekends. Many residents spent the day at private family functions, while others enjoyed Christmas lunch within the care homes. I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to all of the staff who worked tirelessly over the festive season to support residents, families and friends.

I had hoped that we could start the New Year without an update on COVID-19; however, there are currently 350 residential care homes in Australia experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak, marking an increase of 49 since the end of November. In the past week alone, there have been 162 outbreaks in residential aged care, with a total of 2,278 active cases associated with these 350 outbreaks. Unfortunately, the increase in cases was also reflected at Warrigal, where there were no outbreaks at the end of November, and we now face two outbreaks in our care homes. Albion Park Rail outbreak commenced on 1 December 2023 and since this time there have been 32 residents that have tested positive, with 21 that have recovered. Warrawong Multicultural Village also has an outbreak that commenced on 28 December 2023, with 5 residents that have tested positive and 3 of them have now recovered.

There are many avenues available to provide feedback, and at Warrigal, we value your input to enhance the care and services we offer. This month, we extend an invitation to residents to share their perspectives by completing the **Resident Experience Survey 2023**. This survey aims to capture their insights into life at their Warrigal aged care home over the past year. While we know residents are being asked several times a year through Government surveys about their quality of life and experience, these surveys don't offer Warrigal-specific information on how the residential services are perceived by your loved ones. This survey covers aspects such as culture & lifestyle, assessment care & planning, meals & dining experience, medical & therapy services, cleaning & laundry, accommodation & living areas and staff performance. Importantly we are also seeking feedback on important customer sentiments such as Trust, Connection and Respect.

The survey is totally confidential and the individuals will not be identified. There are two options for completing the survey, the first is with an online survey link, which can be undertaken through the QR Code that is displayed throughout the home, and the second is a paper version which is available at the front reception or through a Lifestyle Team Member. It would be appreciated if you get an opportunity to complete the survey.

One of the changes that will occur this year will be the implementation of the Quality Care Advisory Body which came from the Aged Care Royal Commission recommendations. Warrigal currently has a Care Governance Committee, which is a Board Subcommittee that will continue to meet each quarter. The new advisory body will meet at the same time as the already established Consumer Advisory Body, but with a focus on quality indicators. If you would like to be involved in this Advisory Body, please advise the local management team, or contact me on the email address below.

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In July this year, the New Aged Care Act will be implemented along with the New Aged Care Standards. Warrigal has been planning for the implementation of the new standards with working parties established for each of the seven new standards, and I am pleased that we will be able to assess our progress with the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission requesting that we participate in an audit against the new standards. These reviews will take place in February at both Shell Cove and Stirling, which is a great opportunity for Warrigal and our residents and customers to assess our progress in preparation for July.

Warrigal has grown significantly over the past five years, particularly in residential care with the acquisition of a number of care homes. We now have 1638 residential aged care beds and are the largest provider in Illawarra and Canberra. Our strategic plan has 4 pillars and growth is one of these, so it's important that we have a structure that supports this growth and ensures that we remain focused on our purpose that older people live their best lives on their terms. To support the management and staff in the care homes, we will be establishing Regional Hubs, commencing with a trial for the homes in Southern Highlands, Queanbeyan and Canberra, where the General Manager at Stirling, Kim Bradshaw, has been seconded into the Regional Manager position for 6 months as we refine the role and responsibilities.

I sincerely wish all residents and relatives the very best for the New Year. Thank you for supporting Warrigal, and as always if you have any feedback, please contact me by emailing warrigal@warrigal.com.au.

Yours Sincerely,

Craig Smith
Executive Leader – Service Integrated Communities