

Warrigal

Inspiring communities
for older people

From the desk of
**Executive
Operations**



3 NOVEMBER 2023

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

Firstly, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all the new residents and their families who have joined the Warrigal community in October. We've been pleased to welcome 66 respite residents and 32 permanent residents to their new home at Warrigal.

As summer approaches, I had hoped for a continued decrease in COVID-19 cases. Unfortunately over the past month, we've observed an increase in COVID-19 cases in the community. It is no longer possible to quantify the number of cases in NSW, as it is now considered that the best indicators of COVID-19 in the community are Emergency Department presentations and sewage surveillance. Both these indicators are showing an increase in cases in NSW, while in the ACT, the average number of cases has increased from an average of 178 to 370 cases a week.

There are currently 226 residential care homes in Australia experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak, marking an increase of 64 since the end of September. In the past week, 106 outbreaks have been reported in residential aged care, resulting in 1,717 active cases associated with the 226 outbreaks. At the beginning of the month, we had one outbreak at Warrigal Goulburn which has been closed. However during the month, an additional five outbreaks have emerged;

Warrigal Coniston-Commenced on 20 October and closed on 30 October 2023.

Warrigal Calwell-Commenced on 23 October 2023.

Warrigal Mt Warrigal-Commenced on 23 October 2023.

Warrigal Queanbeyan-Commenced on 24 October 2023.

Warrigal Stirling-Commenced on 27 October 2023.

In addition to the COVID-19 outbreaks, there has also been a number of homes where residents have experienced acute respiratory infections (Influenza and Rhinovirus), and as a result it is timely to remind all visitors of the need to remain vigilant with infection control protocols, particularly the following;

- Stay home if you have cold or flu symptoms.
- Complete a Rapid Antigen Test if you have symptoms and every time you come into the care home.
- Follow any requirements for mask wearing that are in place at the home. These are implemented based on the risk and exposures within the communities in each home.
- With the increase in cases, now is a good time to consider getting a COVID-19 booster vaccination.

Our protocols undergo monthly review in collaboration with the Infection Protection Coordinator at Warrigal. Changes are considered in response to the varying risk levels and cases within the community. Consideration was given to again making surgical masks mandatory, however, instead masks will only be mandatory if there is at least one resident within the home that tests positive to COVID-19. It is recognised that there will be different levels of transmission across the locations where Warrigal has care homes, and the risk to residents will vary, and Managers of the care homes may

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determine that surgical masks are to be worn based on these factors. This will be communicated at a local level.

Warrigal's Annual General Meeting was held on 31 October, and the Annual Report was distributed, which included a summary of the previous 12 months. Some of the key milestones included;

- Warrigal supported 4,262 older people including 2,106 in residential care.
- There are 397 dedicated volunteers who dedicate over 37,000 hours in supporting our residents and customers.
- We welcomed Warrigal Multicultural Village into the Warrigal family including 100 residents and 100 staff.
- Five residential care homes went through a full reaccreditation audit, while 8 additional reviews were undertaken at our residential care homes. At the end of the year we had 20 unmet requirements that compared to 38 the previous year. This represents 4% of all the requirements we are assessed against, and we continue to work hard on addressing these with the homes involved.
- Warrigal submitted 48 COVID recovery grants.

For those interested, the complete report can be accessed on our website.

Over the past month, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission conducted reaccreditation audits at Warrigal Calwell and St Andrews Village, where the bed licences will be transferred to Warrigal next week, making it an integral part of the Warrigal family. While the formal reports from the audits have not been received, the feedback from both assessment teams was very encouraging. This feedback primarily stems from residents' responses, highlighting the importance of how they are treated with dignity and respect, while still enjoying independence and choice. These audits also require that we can demonstrate how feedback provided to Warrigal is used to drive improvements within the homes, and it's important that you take this opportunity through various avenues including attending meetings, contacting the management team at the home, or by emailing warrigal@warrigal.com.au.

Yours Sincerely,

Craig Smith
Executive Leader – Service Integrated Communities