

Warrigal

Inspiring communities
for older people

From the desk of
**Executive
Operations**



1 MARCH 2024

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

Welcome to autumn, a season bringing cooler weather and a host of celebrations such as Easter, St Patricks Day and Canberra Day on 11 March for our friends in the capital. I would like to extend a warm welcome to the 102 new residents who moved into Warrigal in February, with 41 new permanent residents, including 34 who initially began with respite care.

As we navigate the ongoing presence of COVID-19, our protocols remain under constant review to minimise the risk of outbreaks within our care homes. This includes all visitors continuing to use the Visitor Management System which includes a temperature check, and a declaration that a Rapid Antigen Test has been undertaken. At the end of February, there were 269 residential care homes in Australia experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak, marking a decrease of 78 since the end of January. In the past week, there have been 106 outbreaks in residential aged care, with a total of 1,636 active cases associated with these outbreaks.

There were 4 outbreaks at Warrigal during February, the first was at Bundanoon where 11 residents tested positive, then Stirling where 3 residents tested positive and Coniston with 5 residents also testing positive. All of these outbreaks were closed within the month, while Goulburn had two residents test positive on 28 February.

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission is funded by the Australian Government and they review the quality of residential care by undertaking audits in our care homes against the Aged Care Quality Standards. These audits review all aspects of the care and services provided, and rely on feedback from residents and families, as well as reviewing documentation, governance and interviews with staff. The Commission conducted a review at Warrigal Bundanoon from 12-14 February, and I am pleased to advise that they found all 42 of the requirements were met. Thank you to all of the residents and families that took the opportunity to meet with the assessment team and provide feedback.

One of the recommendations from the Aged Care Royal Commission was that the sector required a new Aged Care Act, one that was more focused on the resident or customer, which will also involve new Standards being implemented to reflect these changes that are due to be implemented on 1 July 2024. There is still a lot to be done prior to the Act being legislated, and we have taken the opportunity to provide a submission to the Department on the Draft Act, predominantly supporting the proposed changes, and suggesting some areas where improvements could be made. Over the past month, we volunteered to participate in a trial with the Commission where they audited two of our homes, Warrigal Shell Cove and Warrigal Stirling, against the new strengthened standards. This provided valuable insights into how we have prepared for these standards to be introduced, and I am pleased that we received some positive feedback from the Commission.

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This past week marked an important milestone with the transition of Warrigal Hughes into the overall operations of Warrigal with the Clinical Management System, Telstra Health now being utilised. This required extensive planning, careful installation and comprehensive training. With this work now complete, the staff that were working on the integration will return to their substantive positions and Warrigal Hughes along with Stirling, Calwell, Queanbeyan, Goulburn and Bundanoon will become part of the Southern Regional Hub.

Warrigal was founded by volunteers which resulted in our first home at Mt Warrigal being opened in 1967. One of those original volunteers was Norm Rowland, who served as a volunteer with Warrigal over 5 decades, including being Chairman of the Board. We are proud to honour his legacy with the 'Volunteer of the Year' Award named in his honour. It is important that we recognise the contributions of our volunteers, and if you would like to nominate a volunteer or a volunteer group, please let staff in the care home know who will be able to assist.

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. In order to support management and staff in the care homes, we have now established the second Regional Hub, where the General Manager at Shell Cove, Melissa Irish has been seconded into the Regional Manager role for 6 months, working closely with the Southern Regional Manager, Kim Bradshaw and myself to meet the goals within our strategic plan.

I sincerely wish to thank all residents and relatives for supporting Warrigal, and as always if you have any feedback, please contact me by emailing warrigal@warrigal.com.au.

Yours Sincerely,

Craig Smith
Chief of Operations