

Warrigal

Inspiring communities
for older people

From the desk of
**Executive
Operations**



1 SEPTEMBER 2023

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

Welcome to the first update for spring, which seems to have arrived early this year with some glorious weather in recent weeks. It is pleasing that we continue to see a reduction in the number of COVID-19 outbreaks in residential aged care homes and the number of reported cases within the community remains relatively low. The number of reported cases of COVID-19 in NSW last week was 2197 compared with 1949 at the beginning of the month. The number of reported cases in the ACT has reduced marginally from an average of 176 cases a week last month, to 160 cases.

There are currently 88 residential care homes in Australia experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak, which has decreased by 43 over the month. In the past week, there have been an additional 36 outbreaks in residential aged care, and 35 were closed, which indicates that while outbreaks are still occurring, the overall number remains relatively consistent. This is also the case at Warrigal, where the 2 COVID-19 outbreaks that occurred during July, at Shell Cove and Queanbeyan were closed during August, and there has been one new outbreak at Mt Warrigal that commenced on 19 August where 6 residents have tested positive.

As indicated last month, the current protocols were reviewed at the end of August. While community transmissions in NSW remain similar to last month, the impact of removing masks for visitors and staff in communal areas has been well received by residents and staff, and importantly has not resulted in an increase in outbreaks. In view of this, commencing from Monday 4 September, **masks will no longer be required to be worn by staff** when providing direct personal care. This will mean that this will be the only change from last month, and the following protocols still apply;

- Visitors will no longer be required to wear masks.
- RATs must continue to be undertaken daily by staff and visitors.
- Weekly surveillance testing of residents will continue to be undertaken.
- Staff and visitors have the option of wearing masks all the time throughout the home, even if the home is not in outbreak or had an exposure.
- If one resident tests positive, then surgical masks will be worn in all areas of the home. However, if more than one resident tests positive, this is an outbreak and N95 masks will be required for all staff and visitors.
- The Visitor Management System must be used anytime someone enters the care home.

This week, the date for the Referendum was announced, which will be 14 October 2023. All residents have completed lifestyle assessments when they commence to reside in a care home, including whether they want to continue voting. If someone no longer wants to vote, an application is sent to the Australian Electoral Office along with medical certification that they no longer have the capacity to vote. There are presently 477 residents who have expressed a desire to vote, and our staff will be facilitating this through the Australian Electoral Commission. There have been information booklets sent to the care homes, which will be distributed to residents. However, staff will not be able to assist with the voting process. There will be further communication regarding voting in the Referendum from the local management teams.

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As you would be aware, many avenues are available to provide feedback, which is regularly promoted in these updates. We undertake phone surveys where the questions are tailored to get specific feedback on key areas including meals, cultural events and communication, while resident and relative meetings are held regularly. We are always looking to improve in this area, including transparency and open communication. As a result we are excited to announce the launch of our new online Feedback form that commenced on 29 August 2023. It is an easy-to-use online tool that allows you to provide feedback on Warrigal services, including compliments, complaints or improvement suggestions.

You can find the link to this feedback tool on the homepage of our website, or by visiting:
www.warrigal.com.au/feedback

If you would like training on how to use this platform, please attend one of our Zoom sessions listed below. You should register in advance if you would like to attend either meeting, where you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Zoom Session 1: 3pm, September 4, 2023

<https://warrigal.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAsc-CvpjMsG9IKWhTa9gRS3ohFd2svS70I>

Zoom Session 2: 12:30pm, September 5, 2023

<https://warrigal.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYud-yrjgoHdW9pENPdLKNc1ilnKSHGpVf>

We will celebrate Father's Day at all of our homes with special lunches, barbeques and gifts. It is a great opportunity to recognise and honour the fathers who reside at Warrigal, and I sincerely hope that it is a special day for those who will be spending time with their fathers over the course of the weekend.

Thank you for the feedback that many of you have provided on the positive impact you have seen with masks being removed, it has been pleasing to see so many smiles throughout the homes on both staff and residents. Please continue to provide us with your feedback by contacting your local management team, calling 1800 927 744 or emailing us at warrigal@warrigal.com.au. I would like to thank those families who have contacted me with feedback which is appreciated.

Yours Sincerely,

Craig Smith
Executive Leader – Service Integrated Communities