

*Warrigal*

Inspiring communities  
for older people

From the desk of  
**Executive  
Operations**



**3 MAY 2024**

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

I hope that you all enjoyed the festivities and events throughout April, including the ANZAC Day celebrations. As we transition into the cooler climate of May, and prepare for the special celebration of Mother's Day, we understand the importance of honouring the mothers who reside at Warrigal. We are excited to provide festivities filled with love, gratitude, and reminiscence. Mother's Day also offers an opportunity for our staff and families to express appreciation and affection for the maternal figures in their lives.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to the 90 residents who moved into Warrigal during April, with 44 moving in permanently. Thank you for choosing to live at Warrigal.

Unfortunately the number of COVID-19 outbreaks in residential care homes in Australia increased by 28 at the end of April, compared to the end of March, with 194 active outbreaks reported. Currently, there are 222 ongoing outbreaks, with 58 in NSW and 6 in ACT. Among these outbreaks in NSW, 3 occurred at Warrigal. The outbreak at Mount Terry commenced on April 11<sup>th</sup>, resulting in 32 residents testing positive. Similarly at Mt Warrigal, an outbreak commenced on April 23<sup>rd</sup>, with 2 residents testing positive. And finally an outbreak at Albion Park Rail began on April 24<sup>th</sup>, with 14 residents testing positive. All three of these outbreaks were identified through the weekly surveillance testing that is undertaken in our residential care homes.

As an aged care provider, we have a responsibility to balance the well-being and safety of the vulnerable older people who reside in our care homes, with their emotional well-being and social engagement. This involves implementing protocols to safeguard their health, which we have reviewed and refined regularly over the past few years. One such protocol was the implementation of daily rapid antigen testing (RAT) for visitors, aimed at mitigating the risk of potential transmission. While this measure has been inconvenient for many visitors, we've carefully consulted with our internal infection control experts and Managers. After thorough consideration, we've determined that daily testing may not be the most effective measure in preventing outbreaks. Therefore, effective immediately, we will no longer require daily testing when there is no outbreak at a residential care home. However, visitor protocols remain essential, and the Visitor Management System, which checks visitors' temperatures and tracks visit frequency, will continue to be used.

Ensuring that residents in aged care receive influenza vaccinations is important for safeguarding their health and well-being. Older people often have weakened immune systems, making them more susceptible to severe complications from influenza viruses. By vaccinating residents, we not only reduce their risk of contracting the flu but also mitigate the potential for outbreaks within our care homes. While vaccination remains a personal choice for each resident, we have arranged clinics at each home, ongoing from April to mid-May. The specific arrangements for each home will be communicated by the local management team.

With the Olympic Games only 85 days away, we are excited to announce plans for an Olympic event across our residential care homes. This event aims to bring a sense of community and some fun through Olympic activities for our residents. It will encourage physical activity, promote overall health

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and well-being, and provide opportunities for social interaction and friendly competition. The event celebrates the diverse talents and abilities of the older population, emphasising their continued importance and contribution to society. We are hoping that holding this Olympic event will promote inclusivity, and a sense of achievement for everyone involved. If you know of any resident that has a connection to the Olympics as either a volunteer or Olympian, please contact either myself or a representative of the local management team.

In closing, I sincerely wish to thank all residents and relatives for supporting Warrigal. As always, if you have any feedback, please contact me by emailing [warrigal@warrigal.com.au](mailto:warrigal@warrigal.com.au).

Yours Sincerely,

**Craig Smith**  
**Chief of Operations**