



From the Chief Operating Officer

Craig Smith

Warrigal

A world where older people
feel known, loved,
and connected.

4 April 2025

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

Welcome to April, a month when daylight savings ends, where the temperature becomes even cooler. With that cooler weather, the focus on commencing influenza vaccinations begins. In our care homes, management teams have been working closely with the General Practitioners to undertake the vaccinations for residents that provide consent. April is also a month when we celebrate Easter, Orthodox Easter and ANZAC Day.

Welcome to Warrigal

I would like to extend a warm welcome to the 59 permanent residents who moved into Warrigal during March. There were also 59 residents who came in for respite and these residents may also stay with us permanently. I hope that the transition into your new home was warm and welcoming. Thank you for choosing to make Warrigal your home.

April Falls Month

For several years, Warrigal's Wellness Team has championed April as "April Falls Month" by raising awareness and educating our communities to prevent falls. Our Wellness Team has been spending time preparing a host of activities that promote a culture where all staff, residents, and representatives understand and prioritise falls prevention, with a measurable reduction in falls. This includes.

- Looking at appropriate shoe selection.
- Tips for proper use of walking aids.
- Keeping a safe environment in the room.
- The need for good foot care.
- The role of nutrition and hydration.

This will be delivered through both education and some fun activities that demonstrate the importance of reducing falls.



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Recognising Goals

As we move towards the new Aged Care Act, setting goals and reviewing care plans needs to have a higher focus on collaboration and goal setting. This year, we have introduced a quarterly awards process to recognise and honour the achievements and contributions of our residents. Our physiotherapy teams in the care homes run a 12-week program with individual goals set in collaboration with the resident. The first 12-week program has been completed, and during April, there will be an awards ceremony held at each care home recognising those who achieved their goals and others who demonstrated resilience in overcoming challenges, shared their skills and wisdom with others or simply inspired those around them. The recipients of these awards will be shared in the Quarterly Newsletter sent out from each residential care home.

New Aged Care Act

The new Aged Care Act is set to come into effect on 1 July 2025 and aims to improve how services are delivered. The new Act responds to recommendations from the Royal Commission, ensuring that older people have better access to safe care. It includes a Statement of Rights that encompasses key themes such as independence, autonomy and respect for privacy. Under the Act, residents can appoint one or more trusted individuals to support them in decision-making. These “supporters” have a responsibility to respect the person’s ability to make their own choices. The Act also requires providers to meet staffing requirements that include qualifications, skills and experience. In preparation for these requirements, Warrigal has invested in the recruitment of Registered Nurses, including Internationally Qualified Nurses, and since 1 July 2024, we have increased the number by 34, with 297 Registered Nurses now employed at Warrigal.

COVID-19

At the end of March, 333 active COVID-19 cases were reported in 67 active outbreaks across Australia. Two outbreaks occurred at Warrigal during March, both with significant numbers. Warrigal Queanbeyan has a current outbreak that commenced on 30 March, and 6 residents have tested positive, while Mt Warrigal had an outbreak that commenced on 21 March, and 15 residents tested positive, who have all recovered.



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We are heading into a period when outbreaks are more prevalent, and one factor contributing to the high numbers in recent outbreaks is that residents are only being tested if they are symptomatic. In view of this, we will once again undertake weekly surveillance testing of residents who provide consent. As always, these protocols will again be reviewed at the end of April.

Residential Aged Care Costing Collection

Warrigal was invited to participate in a study that aims to gather data from residential care homes across Australia. The study is being conducted by the Independent Health and Ageing Authority, and its objective is to look at the amount of time different staffing classifications spend with residents over the course of 30 days. There is no personal information collected, the data is all de-identified and is collected through staff and residents wearing a small card that will use Bluetooth technology to record when staff spend time with residents.

It is important to note that there is no personal information that is required; all residents in the care homes involved, including Warrigal Queanbeyan, will be asked to wear or carry a small card that will use Bluetooth technology to record when staff spend time with you. The study will commence in April at Wollongong, Mount Terry, Queanbeyan and Hughes. At the completion of the 30 days, a summary of the data will be provided, hopefully supporting additional funding to the sector by demonstrating the amount of time required to provide care and services to residents.

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.

Yours Sincerely,

Craig Smith
Chief of Operations