



From the Chief Operating Officer

**Craig Smith**

*Warrigal*

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

**2 May 2025**

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

Welcome to the May update, a month where the weather is noticeably cooler, and outbreaks become more prevalent. In the past month we have experienced Whooping Cough and Gastroenteritis outbreaks in addition to COVID-19 outbreaks, emphasising the need for strong infection control procedures to be in place and the need for vaccinations where staff and residents provide consent.

## **Welcome to Warrigal**

I would like to begin by extending a warm welcome to the 45 permanent residents who moved into Warrigal during April. There were also 28 residents who came in for respite, some of whom may also stay with us permanently. I hope that the transition into your new home has been warm and welcoming. Thank you for choosing to make Warrigal your home.

## **Infection Protection and Control (IPC)**

As indicated above, with the cooler months we need to be more vigilant with infection control as outbreaks are increasing. One of the requirements during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic was that each residential care home had a staff member dedicate time to reviewing infection protection controls and provide leadership during any outbreaks. Warrigal appointed a Coordinator to oversee all the Prevention and Control (IPC) leads in the care homes, and this has continued to ensure we maintain a strong focus on this area for our residents.

On 1 April, all Warrigal site IPC leads attended a networking day lead by our IPC Coordinator to discuss current infection control protocols, share best practices, review current products, and reflect on the future direction of infection control in our homes. A large portion of the discussions included the upcoming strengthened standards that come into effect on 1 July 2025, along with waste management and preparedness for outbreaks.

Our comprehensive IPC plans at each care home prioritise accessible hand hygiene stations, adequate protective equipment, robust immunisation programs, and preparedness for potential Acute Respiratory Illnesses. We're constantly refining our outbreak management strategies to stay ahead of health challenges. Moving forward, our IPC Lead Coordinator will implement an enhanced auditing system aligned with Australia's National Hand Hygiene Initiative while maintaining our core commitment—



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balancing rigorous infection control with creating exceptional experiences for our residents, their visitors, and our dedicated staff.

## **COVID-19**

At the end of April, 416 active COVID-19 cases were reported in 76 active outbreaks across Australia, which has increased from the previous month. Two outbreaks occurred at Warrigal during April, Warrigal Calwell has a current outbreak that commenced on 19 April, and 17 residents have tested positive, while Warrigal Multicultural Village had an outbreak that commenced on 15 April, and 6 residents tested positive, who have all recovered.

We have reviewed our protocols, and while there is a slight increase in outbreaks, there will be no changes to the current arrangements of undertaking weekly surveillance testing of residents who provide consent. As always, these protocols will again be reviewed at the end of the month.

## **Federal Election**

The Federal Election will be held this Saturday 3 May, and we respect the rights of each resident who may want to vote. Most residents in care homes have exercised their choice to be removed from the electoral roll, however, for those who want to continue to vote, some homes have organised for voting stations over the past few weeks, while postal voting has also been facilitated for residents.

## **April Falls Month**

As mentioned in our previous update, Warrigal proudly celebrated April Falls Month across our organisation. Falls prevention is truly a shared responsibility, and throughout the past month, we've focused on collaborating with both staff and residents to enhance awareness of contributing factors to falls and their potential impacts.

It has been wonderful to witness the diverse range of initiatives implemented throughout Warrigal to create a safer, stronger and more connected community. Our homes have hosted walker 'car washes' where residents' mobility aids were thoroughly checked and cleaned, shoe fashion parades to educate residents about



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safe footwear choices, therapeutic dance sessions, and specialised education workshops led by our Physiotherapists.

Additionally, we've established cleaning stations for glasses, conducted hearing aid checks, and introduced numerous other preventative measures across the organisation—all with the central aim of reducing falls among our residents.

I'm particularly pleased with the enthusiasm and participation from everyone involved, and I look forward to sharing progress on the results in future updates.

## **Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission**

The new Strengthened Standards commence on 1 July 2025. In preparation Warrigal has an established Steering Committee to ensure we're thoroughly ready for implementation.

Many of the upcoming changes are relatively modest, primarily involving updates to our policies and procedures to align with the new requirements. The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission will assess Warrigal against these enhanced standards, with six of our residential care homes scheduled for reaccreditation within the next 12 months.

I'm delighted to share that our final reaccreditation review under the current standards was recently completed at Warrigal Coniston, with the home achieving full compliance across all 42 outcomes. This outstanding result reflects the dedication of our staff and the valuable input from residents and their families during the assessment process. I extend my sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed to this significant achievement.

## **General Manager, Hotel Services**

Following on from our Strengthened Standards update mentioned earlier, one key area of focus for Warrigal is enhancing our Food and Dining Experience to meet the new requirements.

To lead this important initiative, we're currently recruiting a General Manager of Hotel Services who will collaborate with each home to elevate all aspects of the dining



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experience. This specialist role will ensure we not only comply with the new strengthened standards, but truly excel in providing exceptional food services for our residents.

As part of this process, we've invited several homes to participate in a comprehensive survey. This feedback will help us better understand your dining preferences and the diverse culinary options our residents enjoy. Your input is invaluable in shaping our approach to food services under the new framework.

We appreciate your participation as we work together to create dining experiences that are compliant with regulatory requirements and, more importantly, thoroughly enjoyable for everyone in our care.

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**