



From the Chief Operating Officer

## Craig Smith

*Warrigal*

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

**6 March 2026**

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

Welcome to the March update, the start of autumn, when temperatures begin to cool and, for many care homes, football tipping competitions commence as we welcome the return of the football codes. There are a number of events that will be celebrated during March, including St Patrick's Day, Harmony Week - which celebrates cultural diversity, inclusion and respect - and International Women's Day.

### **This month:**

- Welcome to Warrigal - new residents joining our community
- Resident Vaccinations
- International Women's Day
- Pharmacy Review
- Assistant Care Employee (ACE) Support Program
- Higher Everyday Living Fee (HELF)
- Supporters and Advocacy

### **Welcome to Warrigal**

I would like to extend a warm welcome to the 64 permanent residents who moved into Warrigal during February. I hope the transition into your new home was warm and welcoming, and thank you for choosing to make Warrigal your home.

### **Resident Vaccinations**

We are committed to safeguarding the health and wellbeing of our residents, and vaccination remains one of the most effective ways to provide protection against serious illness. As we head into influenza season, we continue to prioritise resident safety through our comprehensive immunisation program.

In accordance with the latest guidance from the Australian Government Department of Health, Disability and Ageing, as well as NSW and ACT Health, we are reinforcing the importance of recommended vaccinations. Our homes are currently seeking consent for residents to receive their annual influenza vaccination and any COVID-19 booster doses that may be due.



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To further strengthen protection for those most at risk, we are also working closely with GPs and pharmacists to support access to pneumococcal and shingles vaccinations where clinically appropriate. These vaccines play a vital role in reducing the likelihood of severe illness, supporting resident wellbeing, and maintaining a safe and healthy environment across our homes.

If you have any questions, please contact a representative from your local leadership team.

## **International Women's Day**

International Women's Day, celebrated globally on 8 March, is an opportunity to acknowledge the remarkable achievements of women. This year celebrates 115 years of International Women's Day and the theme '#GiveToGain' encourages a mindset of generosity and collaboration. The aged care sector is largely supported by the dedication and compassion of women, and I would like to acknowledge the incredible women who work and volunteer at Warrigal. Their commitment makes a profound difference every day and supports our residents in feeling known, loved and connected.

## **Pharmacy Review**

We are currently reviewing the pharmacies that partner with Warrigal to ensure residents receive the highest standard of medication management. This review aims to improve service quality, achieve efficiencies, and expand the clinical services available to residents and families. As part of this process, all pharmacy providers supporting our homes will be required to supply medications through BestMed, which will be our electronic medication management system. Using BestMed supports greater accuracy, safety, and transparency in how medications are dispensed and administered.

Importantly, residents will always retain the choice of which pharmacy they wish to use. Our role is to ensure that any pharmacy providing services to our homes can meet the clinical, safety, and system requirements needed to support high-quality care.

We are also exploring improved offerings such as Aged Care Onsite Pharmacist (ACOP) services. These services can bring valuable clinical expertise directly into our homes, including medication reviews, safety monitoring, education for residents and



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families, and closer collaboration with our care teams and GPs. By partnering with pharmacies capable of offering these strengthened services, we aim to further enhance resident wellbeing, streamline processes, and maintain a safe, efficient, and high-quality medication system across all our homes.

It is anticipated that a decision will be made by the end of this month, and this will be communicated to all residents and relatives, along with the transition plan for any homes required to change.

## **Assistant Care Employee (ACE) Support Program**

Workforce development is a key pillar of our strategic plan, and one of the ways we are investing in the future of aged care is by creating meaningful pathways for young people who are considering a career in the sector. Our Assistant Care Employee (ACE) Support role is designed as an entry point that allows young workers to build confidence and experience while contributing to safe, high-quality care.

The ACE role focuses on providing non-personal care support to residents and customers, working under the guidance of our experienced staff. ACE team members support daily living by engaging residents in lifestyle activities, helping with phone or video calls to families, assisting visitors, and providing general support to both care staff and residents, including light housekeeping tasks. This role not only strengthens our workforce but also helps young people develop valuable skills and a sense of purpose as they begin their aged care careers. We have recently recruited an additional 59 ACE employees, and have expanded the program to four new homes at Multicultural Village, Queanbeyan, Calwell and Hughes.

## **Higher Everyday Living Fee (HELFF)**

We are currently finalising the structure of our **Higher Everyday Living Fee (HELFF)** packages following feedback received from our homes over recent months. These packages cover upgraded everyday living services including having a choice of meals, bus outings and other non-essential services that go beyond the basic services that must be provided.



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Since 1 November 2025, residents who have joined Warrigal have been part of a trial period while we refined the inclusions and approach. We appreciate the valuable feedback provided during this time, which has helped shape the final offering. Over the coming weeks, our Customer Relations team will be in touch with residents who joined from 1 November onwards to confirm their interest and participation moving forward and arrange the necessary documentation.

From **April 2026**, we will also introduce a new internal system developed by our staff to assist in identifying who has opted into HELF, helping ensure the services and experiences included in the package are delivered consistently across all homes.

## **Supporters and Advocacy Services**

The Aged Care Act introduced a strong rights-based framework that ensures older people have more control, support and protection in their care. A resident may choose to have a Power of Attorney which is a legal appointment who can make decisions on behalf of the person. The Act introduced a Registered Supporter which allows for a resident to choose someone they trust to help make decisions about their care. This role assists in explaining information and communicating preferences but does not make decisions for the resident.

It is important to understand that for residents that do not have Registered Supporters, the Act includes their right to advocacy and supported decision making with access to independent aged care advocacy. The Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) is an organisation that provides free, independent aged care advocacy along with Seniors Rights Service. As a resident, we never want you to feel alone, and you can ask for an advocate anytime which we can facilitate on your behalf.

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**