



From the Chief Operating Officer

**Craig Smith**

*Warrigal*

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

**5 June 2026**

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

Welcome to the June update, the first month of winter, where traditionally outbreaks become more prevalent, a trend which we have seen both across the sector and Warrigal over the past month. In the month of June, we recognise World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15, where the awareness is raised on the need to protect older people from harm, promote their dignity and rights and ensure they receive safe, respectful and compassionate care.

## **Welcome to Warrigal**

I would like to begin by extending a warm welcome to the 47 residents who moved into Warrigal during May. I hope that the transition into your new home was warm and welcoming. We do understand that moving into a care home has an impact on the resident and extended family, and we welcome any feedback on your experience.

## **Outbreak Response Protocols**

As we enter the winter season, respiratory illnesses tend to become more prominent. This makes it a timely opportunity to remind residents and their families of the protocols we follow to help protect everyone in our care.

In the past month, three Warrigal homes have experienced Acute Respiratory Outbreaks, including a COVID-19 outbreak at Goulburn and Rhinovirus outbreaks at Albion Park Rail and Stirling.

To ensure the safety of all residents, staff, and visitors, the following measures will be implemented in the event of a respiratory illness outbreak within a care home.

- **Initial Response**-If a resident develops respiratory symptoms, a COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Test will be conducted immediately.
- **Outbreak**-An outbreak is declared when two or more residents test positive within a 72-hour period.
- **Testing Requirements:**
  - In the event of a confirmed COVID-19 outbreak, daily RAT testing will be required for all staff, visitors, contractors, and volunteers.
  - Visitors who decline testing may have their visitation arrangements modified to reduce the risk.
- **Infection Control Measures:**



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- For **non-COVID-19 outbreaks**, surgical masks must be worn within the affected community or neighbourhood.
- For **COVID-19 outbreaks**, N95 respirator masks are mandatory in affected areas.

- **Escalation Measures**

If the outbreak escalates, additional precautions may be introduced, including:

- Residents dining in their rooms
- Reduced movement within affected areas
- Limiting group activities
- Reviewing and adjusting events based on risk assessment

These protocols are in place to minimise the risk of transmission while maintaining the wellbeing of all residents. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in helping us keep our community safe during the winter months.

## **National Volunteer Week**

National Volunteer Week was celebrated from 18-24 May. This is particularly important at Warrigal, where we were founded by a group of committed volunteers who believed in making a difference, and we now have over 600 dedicated volunteers. During Volunteer Week, we held a luncheon in the Southern and Northern Regions, where we recognised years of service for volunteers and awarded a volunteer in each region the “Norm Rowland Award”, named in honour of Warrigals founder and former Chairman. The winner in the Southern Region was Janice Grimson from Bundanoon and in the Northern Region it was Pauline Baxter from Mount Warrigal.

## **Pharmacy Update**

As previously communicated, we have recently completed an extensive process to select a preferred pharmacy partner to support all 13 of our homes. While I was hoping to advise the outcome of this process, we are currently finalising contractual arrangements and will share further details, including the successful Pharmacy in the next update. Planning is already underway to ensure a smooth transition.

A dedicated project manager has been appointed, and a transition plan is in place, with all homes expected to transition by the end of the year. The first home is



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anticipated to transition by the end of July, and we will continue to provide updates as progress is made.

We are confident this decision will deliver positive outcomes for our residents, families, and care teams, and we look forward to sharing more information soon.

## Vaccinations

Vaccination against influenza (flu) and COVID-19 remains one of the most effective ways to protect individuals and communities, particularly vulnerable populations such as older adults.

Older people often have weaker immune systems, making it harder for them to fight infections and increasing the likelihood of complications such as pneumonia or worsening of underlying conditions. Even when vaccines do not completely prevent infection, they are highly effective at reducing the severity of illness, meaning people are less likely to experience serious outcomes.

Importantly, vaccination is not just about individual protection. As more people are vaccinated, community protection increases, helping all residents in our care homes. The table below shows that 83% of our residents have received the influenza vaccine so far this year and we will continue to work with new residents to provide the vaccine.

Home	Number of Residents	Number of Residents Vaccinated	Residents that have Refused or Not Yet Vaccinated
APR	138	126	9
BUN	88	77	1
CAL	146	101	4
CON	55	14	1
GLB	155	114	13
HUG	171	156	11
MTT	147	121	18
MTW	40	36	4
WMV	96	92	13
QBY	124	112	0
SHC	130	124	6



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STI	143	114	0
WOL	150	123	28

The COVID-19 vaccination rates are lower at 42%, with the eligibility for the vaccine being determined by age, with individuals born in 1949 or earlier eligible every 6 months, while those born after 1950 are eligible every 12 months. The Infection Protection Leads that are based in all our homes will work with eligible residents over the next month to determine if they want to receive the vaccine. We will be in contact to arrange consent, however, if you wish for your loved one to receive the vaccination, please contact the staff in the home.

## **Better Homes and Gardens**

Warrigal Bundanoon was proudly featured on *Better Homes and Gardens* last week, highlighting the home's welcoming environment and vibrant community. The segment included a special appearance by Hephner the Alpaca, providing a lovely way to showcase the residents, lifestyle, and unique spirit of the home.

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**