



From the Chief Operating Officer

Craig Smith

Warrigal

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

3 July 2026

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

Welcome to the July update, which means we have reached the halfway mark of the calendar year and the beginning of a new financial year. We are also seeing several respiratory outbreaks occurring, with RSV outbreaks at Shell Cove and Stirling and a COVID-19 outbreak at Albion Park Rail.

Welcome to Warrigal

I would like to begin by extending a warm welcome to the residents who moved into Warrigal during June. I hope that the transition into your new home was warm and welcoming.

Sector Overview

KPMG do an annual report into the aged care sector that provides critical insights that align well with our strategic pillars and support how we shape our future. They recently presented a summary of the review to Warrigal, which reinforced our decision to review our Home Care operating model, and the need to include a new strategic pillar on Stewardship to manage financial challenges with the new legislative framework.

Demand continues to outstrip supply

- Home care demand is growing rapidly, with a 6.3% increase in people receiving support and a 41% increase in people waiting for a package at their approved level. Residential aged care demand also grew, with permanent resident numbers increasing by 3.4%.

The market is continuing to consolidate

- Provider numbers are shifting as smaller operators face increasing regulatory and financial pressures. The residential sector saw a decline in provider numbers, while larger organisations continue to strengthen their market position through scale and consolidation.

Consumer expectations are changing

- Older Australians increasingly want personalised, seamless, technology-enabled care delivered at home. In residential care, demand is growing for more home-like, privacy-focused and dementia-friendly environments.

Support at Home is the major strategic area

- The transition to the new **Support at Home Program** is reshaping the home care market. Providers need to adapt operating models, workforce planning, pricing, service offerings and technology platforms to succeed in the new environment.



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Pharmacy Update

I am pleased to advise that we have appointed **Pharmacy Express** to be our preferred pharmacy partner. Pharmacy Express is a trusted and experienced provider with a strong track record in the aged care sector, including being the current pharmacy partner at Warrigal Wollongong. Their values, person-centred approach, and commitment to supporting older people closely align with our own. This partnership reflects our focus on delivering consistent, high-quality care and services for residents across all our homes. By building this relationship across our organisation, we can ensure the same dependable pharmacy support, expertise and continuity of service is available to everyone in our care.

As part of the staged transition, Pharmacy Express will also commence services at Bundanoon at the end of July, with further homes transitioning progressively over the following months. The transition across all Warrigal homes will take place over the next six months, allowing for a smooth and carefully managed changeover for residents, families and staff. Importantly, Pharmacy Express will establish a presence in the Southern Region to complement its existing Pharmacy in the Illawarra region.

There is one practical change in how resident medication accounts will be managed. Under the new arrangement, Pharmacy Express will invoice residents directly for their medications rather than billing through Warrigal. This change relates only to the administration of accounts and payment processes and will not affect the cost of medications.

Medication Management System Update

I have previously shared that Warrigal has been working through changes to the electronic system we use to manage medications across our care homes. There has been a recent development I want to share with you, and what it means.

On Friday, the 26th of June, Telstra Health advised us that a synchronisation issue had occurred in the current electronic medication system. This meant that on certain dates, some changes made to residents' medications by their doctor may not have been correctly reflected in the records our care staff and pharmacies rely on. As soon as we were advised, our clinical team began reviewing the medications involved.

We are continuing to work through the data carefully to determine exactly which residents have been affected and how. At present, we understand that a limited number of residents may have been impacted and if a resident has been directly affected, we'll be in contact with each of them and their families to discuss.



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This development is also part of the reason we are moving all our homes to a new electronic medication system, BestMed. This system is designed to provide greater accuracy, safety and transparency in how medications are prescribed, dispensed and administered. Warrigal Calwell and Warrigal Stirling are already using it, and that transition is now underway across our remaining homes, a process that will be completed by the end of the year.

The ability to use the BestMed medication system was one of the criteria that was used in determining our preferred Pharmacy Partner, and the implementation of this medication system will be done concurrently with the change of Pharmacies at each home over the next 6 months.

The safety of our residents is our highest priority, and we are treating this with the seriousness it deserves. If you have any questions in the meantime, please speak with your local leadership team or email me at warrigal@warrigal.com.au.

Vaccination Rates

Current vaccination data from our records shows strong influenza vaccination coverage across our care homes, with **90% uptake** for the 2026 season. A total of **1,353 of 1,493 eligible residents** have been vaccinated, which excludes residents who have declined vaccination or are recorded as exempt.

COVID-19 vaccination uptake continues to vary due to the current 6–12 month booster recommendations, which differ according to resident age and eligibility. Encouragingly, coverage has increased from **42% to 57%**, with **865 of 1,493 eligible residents** having received a COVID-19 vaccination. Several homes have COVID-19 vaccination clinics scheduled in the coming week, which are expected to further improve uptake.

Over the coming weeks, our Infection Protection Control Coordinator will be contacting all homes to provide feedback on their current vaccination rates, with a particular focus on those with lower uptake. The aim is to work collaboratively to identify barriers, support improvement strategies, and continue increasing vaccination coverage across the organisation.

National NAIDOC Week

National NAIDOC Week 2026 will be held from **5–12 July 2026** and marks a significant milestone with the theme “**50 Years of Deadly.**” The theme celebrates



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five decades of NAIDOC Week as a national movement that recognises and honours the histories, cultures, achievements and ongoing contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. It reflects on the strength, resilience and leadership of First Nations communities while celebrating the Elders, activists, artists and community leaders who have shaped the movement over generations.

As an aged care provider, National NAIDOC Week presents a valuable opportunity to foster meaningful connection, cultural understanding and celebration among residents, families, staff and the wider community. It is a chance to acknowledge and honour the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, whose knowledge, stories and cultural traditions enrich the lives of all Australians. Activities during the week are aimed at strengthening social connections. These activities will include;

- Visiting art exhibitions
- Dream time storytelling and a yarning circle facilitated by some of our indigenous residents.
- Painting and decorating of stones and boomerangs, along with art therapy focusing on Aboriginal art.
- Local Elders will be visiting some homes to share music, stories and art with residents.

There will be movies and trivia that focus with indigenous themes.

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