

Warrigal

Inspiring communities
for older people

From the desk of the
**Chief of
Operations**



4 October 2024

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

The warmer weather has seen community transmissions of COVID-19 continue to trend downwards, and as we do every month, our protocols have been reviewed. In view of our geographical spread, there may be times when a particular area has a spike in transmissions and additional precautions may be implemented which will be communicated by the local management team, however, this is not the case at the moment. While there have been no additional precautions implemented, there have been some changes to the protocols that are effective immediately and are summarised below:

- Residents will continue to be tested with a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) on a weekly basis and this remains our primary method of identifying outbreaks. This protocol will be reviewed at the end of October and the review will take into consideration the number of positive cases detected throughout the month.
- Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) are no longer required by staff, visitors or contractors on a weekly basis. There will still be RATs available at the entrance to all of our homes which will be optional, but anyone feeling symptomatic should complete one prior to entering the home.
- In the event of a COVID-19 outbreak, daily RATs will be required for anyone going into the care home.
- The Visitor Management System must continue to be used when entering a home. This system not only takes the temperature of the visitor, but allows us to review any resident that has not had a visitor and may require additional emotional support.

The number of COVID-19 outbreaks in residential care homes in Australia decreased by 5 during September, with 135 current outbreaks. The total number of residents impacted by these outbreaks is 723. The number of new outbreaks that commenced in the past week was 35, indicating a consistent downward trend throughout the month. At Warrigal, we had four care homes experience a COVID-19 outbreak during the month, however, all of them were closed within a short timeframe. We currently have one current outbreak at Warrigal Wollongong which commenced yesterday and there are 4 residents that have tested positive.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to the 42 permanent residents who moved into Warrigal during September. There were also 61 residents that came in for respite, with many choosing to stay on permanently. Thank you for choosing to make Warrigal your home, and if you have any feedback on the journey into Warrigal please share it with myself or the local management team. We did receive some great feedback from a family member last month on the positive interactions they had experienced with the staff in the months that her father had been in care, and she also provided some ideas on areas for improvement, particularly on the admission process and the information provided specific to the particular home.

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Aged Care Act

The 12th of September marked a historic day in our sector, with the Aged Care Bill 2024 being submitted to Parliament. Once it proceeds through the Senate Inquiry, it will be enacted as the new Aged Care Act. The Aged Care Bill emphasises the critical importance of aged care to the Australian community and the need for continued progress in the sector. Once passed, the new Act will take effect on July 1, 2025.

The new Act reflects the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and guarantees that high-quality care is both a standard and a right for every older Australian. The government is making a significant investment in aged care reform, aimed at improving the quality and sustainability of our sector. The focal point of the new Act is 'person-centred', and focuses on the rights of all older Australians, not only in this generation but for generations to come.

At Warrigal, our objective is to provide the highest-quality care to our residents and customers, and we do so by providing our staff with the right tools to deliver this care. Our mission is to help older people live their best lives, on their terms. The new Aged Care Act will bring the Warrigal approach to the sector in its entirety, and the changes will help create a more sustainable and equitable system that benefits everyone involved, including providers, staff and, most importantly, the residents and customers.

Illawarra Business Awards

On 13 September, the Illawarra Business Awards were held, and I am very pleased to share that Warrigal was successful in winning three awards on the night:

- Excellence in Workplace Culture
- Excellence in Large Business
- Business of the Year

This achievement reflects how staff embrace the values of our Organisation in providing care and support, and the feedback from residents and customers on the life they are living at Warrigal. As a result of winning these awards, Warrigal is now a finalist in the Excellence in Large Business and Excellence in Workplace Culture categories at the NSW State Awards on 30 October.

Cultural Celebrations

We are proud to have a workforce from many different cultures, which not only brings diversity to the workplace but also provides opportunities to celebrate different cultures with residents. During September, there was a ceremony held at Bundanoon to welcome the staff employed under the Pacific Labour Scheme to their community. It was a great opportunity to showcase different Islands in the Pacific with costumes and dancing.

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Throughout October, many of our Nepalese staff will be celebrating the Dashain festival, which is a time for honouring family bonds and paying homage to deities; a practice that resonates deeply with the values of respect and care intrinsic to their work here at Warrigal. Participating in this festival not only strengthens the ties to their heritage but also enhances their emotional well-being and allows them to bring warmth and joy into their work environments. Ultimately, Dashain enriches workplace culture and promotes a spirit of compassion and unity that benefits both staff and residents.

I sincerely wish to thank all residents and relatives for supporting Warrigal, and as always if you have any feedback, please contact me by emailing warrigal@warrigal.com.au.

Yours Sincerely,

Craig Smith
Chief of Operations