



From the Chief Operations Officer

Craig Smith

Warrigal

Inspiring communities
for older people

1 November 2024

Dear resident representatives and relatives,

The end of the year is fast approaching, which is not just an opportunity to plan the Christmas festivities across Warrigal but also to reflect on 2024 and plan for next year. A Board Planning Workshop was held during the month of October, where we looked at the Vision for Warrigal, future design models and how technology will support the care and services we provide in the years ahead. In 2024, Warrigal appointed its first Chief Information Officer (CIO). This new leadership role will focus on leveraging technology to help staff better monitor and care for residents and customers – a key priority identified during the Board Planning Workshop.

The number of COVID-19 outbreaks in residential care homes in Australia has remained steady throughout the month, increasing by 7 during October, with 142 current outbreaks. The total number of residents impacted by these outbreaks is 653, which is less than the previous month. At Warrigal, we had three care homes experience a COVID-19 outbreak during the month, at Wollongong, Multicultural Village and Mount Terry. Only one remains open at Warrigal Mount Terry. There have also been a number of gastro outbreaks throughout the month, and unlike a COVID 19 outbreak which is spread by respiratory droplets or small airborne particles requiring masks to be worn to restrict transmission, gastro outbreaks require stringent hand hygiene and cleaning regimes. There are currently two homes with a gastro outbreak, at Wollongong and Mount Warrigal.

- 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 November and the review will take into consideration the number of positive cases detected throughout the month. As the number of positive cases remained consistent during October, the most recent review determined it needed to remain in place.
- 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.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to the 40 permanent residents who moved into Warrigal during October. There were also 44 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. I have met with a number of residents throughout the month who have provided feedback on all aspects of living in a Warrigal home which has been valuable.



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Annual General Meeting

Warrigal's Annual General Meeting was held on 28 October, where our Annual Report was distributed with a summary of the previous 12 months. Some of the key milestones included:

- Warrigal supported 4,525 older people, including 2,332 in residential care.
- There were 302 respite residents with an average stay of 26 days, and 2,030 permanent residents with an average stay of 865 days.
- We launched our first Diversity Action Plan, reinforcing our commitment to fostering an inclusive environment.
- Our Staff Survey returned a 76% response rate, leading to actionable plans that further enhanced engagement across all portfolios.
- We introduced our Employee Value Proposition, a program that celebrates the contributions of our staff and fosters a supportive workplace culture.
- We welcomed Warrigal Hughes into the Warrigal family, formerly known as St Andrew's Village, which was operated by the ACT Presbyterian Church Congregation.
- A Professor of Dementia Care was employed to drive innovation and research to help Warrigal become a sector leader in dementia care.
- 421 dedicated volunteers contributed over 30,000 hours in support of our residents and customers, providing not just assistance but meaningful connections.

If you would like to read a digital copy of the [2024 Annual Report](#), please scan the QR code at the bottom of this letter.

Emergency Management Planning

In recent months, Warrigal has been preparing for potential emergencies that may require decisions on whether to remain in the home or evacuate. As part of this preparation, a Critical Incident Team has been established, chaired by the CEO, and with representatives present from all areas of our organisation.

While we hope that an emergency situation will not arise in the coming months, please know that the Critical Incident Team has carefully planned to cover all aspects of operations should one take place. This includes ongoing communications, IT support, property services, and proactive safety measures. Additionally, we have established strong partnerships with external agencies such as the State Emergency Services and the Rural Fire Service, to support our preparedness efforts.

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission has appointed an external organisation, Plena Healthcare, to undertake a Menu and Mealtime Review Program at aged care homes as we prepare



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to implement the new strengthened standards. The review is undertaken by an Accredited Practising Dietitian, who will complete the following;

- Evaluation of the menu.
- Assessment of the dining environment and mealtime experience including how well it supports residents to eat and drink safely and the enjoyment of the meal.
- A review of our documentation describing the delivery of good food, nutrition and overall dining experience.

The first review was undertaken at Warrigal Stirling this week, and we have received notification of future reviews at Bundanoon, Queanbeyan and Hughes. The feedback from the two-day review undertaken this week was very positive.

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



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Annual Report, please
scan the QR code.