

Thursday 9th April, 2020

Dear friends,

COVID-19 Easter Update

This letter is being circulated to our workforce, including employees and volunteers, our residents and their families and representatives, our self-care residents, our company members, and the wider community via our web site and social media.

I'd like to start by thanking everyone who has shown kindness to our residents as we approach Easter. We have been touched by the generosity of people who have donated Easter eggs, written letters (many from students) and offered to help in all sorts of creative ways. We are fortunate to belong to a caring community.

In the context of coronavirus Easter represents a time of concern, as people will be tempted to relax the social isolation rules to see friends and family, or leave their homes for what NSW Health Minister, Brad Hazzard, has described as "...a sneaky little holiday...".

We know the restrictions are working. The local COVID-19 "curve" is relatively flat, with 23 confirmed local cases reported at time of writing. Almost all these cases are "imported" i.e. related to overseas travel as opposed to "community" i.e. transmitted from one person in the community to another. This is significantly good news.

The coast however is showing hot spots including Nowra, South Nowra, and the Shoalhaven. The cases being reported in these popular holiday areas are mostly community transmitted, indicating these areas are currently higher risk than the Southern Highlands.

We have reminded our workforce that they must follow the Government directives and not travel over Easter. Your usual home is the safest place to be.

Due to the nature of the virus we will not know for at least 2 weeks whether everybody played their part on protecting our community by staying home. This will be a wait-and-see moment for all of us.

Local health care organisations are working well together. Bowral District Hospital is working closely with all local aged care services. I have had detailed discussions with the CEOs of most other regional aged care services, and we have shared our ideas and experiences to ensure every facility has the benefit of mutual knowledge.

Our GPs – especially Dr Vince Roche and Dr David Grice – and the team at Bowral District Hospital including Drs Ali and Rodda - have been working hard to help us overcome the limitations imposed on us by the COVID-19 restrictions. We are grateful to everyone for their open and unstinting support.

Harbison is as prepared as we can be should an outbreak of COVID-19 occur. We have worked hard since February to ensure we are a safe-haven, staffed by ready and willing professionals. Our focus

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remains prevention. We hope to gradually resume a more normal level of activity within our homes but do not imagine the visitor restrictions will be eased anytime soon.

I wish everyone a safe and healthy Easter and thank you for your understanding and support as we have adapted to the rapid changes of the past months. Please keep the letters and video-visits coming, and if you have any concerns about a resident please contact the Director of Nursing. We welcome and encourage your feedback.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Cochran', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Cochran
Chief Executive Officer