

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2020

Dear friends,

This letter follows my letter of 13 July 2020 and is intended to provide you with information about our response to the COVID-19 case reported at Woolworths Bowral on 14 July 2020.

This letter is being distributed to our residents and their relatives and representatives, our workforce including our volunteers, our local health partners, company members and the wider community.

**Woolworths confirms a single case who last worked at the Bowral store on 12 July 2020**

Last night Woolworths announced a positive test of a worker at their Bowral store. We immediately alerted our workforce and began identifying anyone who may have visited or worked at the store in the preceding 14 days.

**We have identified staff who may have had contact with the case and are arranging for them to be tested**

We have stood down everyone in that category with instructions to get a test and self-isolate at home pending the results of the test. So far, we have identified more than 40 people who need to be tested, which means we are temporarily operating with far fewer staff than usual. This means services are temporarily reduced. I apologise for the inconvenience, but reassure you that safety is not compromised.

As always, we work very closely with public health authorities. The clinic at Bowral and District Hospital has been very supportive and as I write is arranging a fast track process for Harbison staff.

These procedures are precautionary. We understand the risk posed by the Woolworths case is low, but this is aged care, so we are very careful. We have also elevated our alert status across the organisation, so we are prepared to respond swiftly to an outbreak despite our reduced workforce. We do not believe an outbreak is likely, but we will maintain high alert until we are certain there is no risk to our residents.

**Most staff are expected to return to duty quickly**

We expect most of the stood down staff will return to duty within the next 72 hours as their test results come in. Some staff will be required to isolate for 14 days, just to be sure. Wherever possible, these people will be put to work on our remote working team.

Staff deemed to have a higher risk will need to self-isolate at home for 14 days, be symptom free, and have a negative test on day 12 before they are eligible to return to work. Our managers will inform staff who fit this category and provide them with support.

We expect to maintain high alert until at least 27 July 2020.

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### **Things are running smoothly and there is no need to be concerned**

Feedback from the floor today has been very positive. The staff on duty are working well as a team and calmly getting things done. Many of them will work extra hours and generally pitch in wherever they are needed while we work through the process of clearing people to return to work. We would not be Harbison without them, and I am very grateful for their good-natured resilience.

### **Visits and admissions are suspended**

We have suspended all non-essential visits to ease the pressure on staff and prioritise the safe delivery of care and services to residents. Only virtual visits and the Visitor Pod at Burradoo will be options until visits resume. Requests for essential visits during this time should be made in accordance with the policy that was attached to my last letter. Note that approval will only be granted in cases of genuine need.

While the next 72 hours will place a strain on everyone at Harbison, we are well organised and the situation is expected to improve quickly unless there is a serious problem with community transmission. Public health authorities stand ready to provide coordinated support to any aged care service that needs it, as we are seeing with Advantaged Care's Preston Lodge at the moment.

Please note that re-admissions and new admissions have been deferred temporarily but will resume as soon as enough staff return to work. At this stage we hope that will be from tomorrow, 16 July 2020. We will work closely with hospitals and families to minimise the impact on new residents.

### **We are contacting every visitor since 28 June 2020**

If you have visited Harbison from and including 28 June 2020 we will contact you to find out whether you or anyone in your household have visited or worked at Bowral Woolworths in the 14 days up to and including 12 July 2020.

If you have, we strongly recommend that you get tested and self-isolate at home for 14 days or seek expert medical advice.

The same applies if you have visited any of the other NSW locations subject to NSW Health alerts <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/latest-news-and-updates>

If you have visited any of these other case locations and have also visited Harbison recently please contact Director of Nursing, Harry Varvaressos, urgently.

We will use information about visitor connections to case locations in our ongoing risk assessment.

### **We planned for this**

Harbison has been working to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 since January this year. We expect clusters and outbreaks to occur, and when they appear near us we respond quickly. Our leadership group is getting very experienced at managing fast changing, challenging conditions. At every step we focus on what is best for our residents. We are optimistic that vaccines and treatments will be available in the foreseeable future. Until then, we will continue to do whatever we can to shield our residents.

If you have any concerns or complaints your feedback is welcome. It helps us improve, and to understand your needs and preferences. We need to know when things go wrong, and we like to know when things go right.

I will keep you informed as things change. Thank you for reading this letter. Stay safe.

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**