

Thursday 9th July 2020

Dear friends,

This letter follows my letter of 23 June, 2020 and is intended to keep you informed of any changes to our COVID-19 precautions.

It is being circulated to residents and their families and representatives, our workforce including our volunteers, our company members, local general practices, and the wider community.

Increased visitor restrictions in response to increased community transmission risk

Effective immediately we are increasing visitor restrictions in response to the current situation in Victoria. This will take the form of a reduced number of visitors, and in some cases shorter visits. This is because we have assessed that there is an increased risk of community transmission.

We will monitor the situation closely and if the outbreak in Victoria does not spread to New South Wales, we will relax our restrictions as soon as possible.

Some people who have made appointments to visit Harbison will have their appointments cancelled. I apologise for the inconvenience and invite you to rebook your appointment at an alternate time.

For visitors to Burradoo the availability of the Visitor Pod is unchanged, and we encourage you to consider this safe alternative.

To book an appointment online visit <https://harbison.org.au/visit-harbison/>

Until further notice, anyone who returns from Victoria is not permitted to work at or visit Harbison for 14 days from the date they leave Victoria.

We are also screening visitors and our workforce to exclude people who live, or have second jobs, in areas of New South Wales with active cases of community transmission.

Harbison

PO Box 349
Bowral NSW 2576
T 02 4868 6200 - Burradoo
T 02 4868 6300 - Moss Vale

ACN 001 507 642
ABN 23 001 507 624
admin@harbisoncare.org.au
www.harbisoncare.org.au

Burradoo

2 Charlotte Street
Burradoo NSW 2576
F 02 4868 6476

Moss Vale

36 Yarrowa Road
Moss Vale NSW 2577
F 02 4869 3214

If the situation deteriorates in New South Wales, we are prepared to increase restrictions further.

Suspension of visits by residents to small family gatherings

Effective immediately we are suspending all visits by residents to small family gatherings. I apologise for the inconvenience and disappointment this might cause, but the risk posed by residents returning from gatherings is no longer acceptable.

Shielding our residents from the pandemic

Why are we concerned about community transmission?

There are three classifications for cases of COVID-19: overseas acquired, locally acquired, and community transmission.

Overseas acquired cases are nowadays associated with returned travellers in hotel quarantine. In the early stage of the pandemic these accounted for most cases in Australia.

Locally acquired cases are infections that have been acquired in Australia from an identified source.

Community transmission cases have been acquired in Australia, but the source of the infection has not been identified. The “missing link” is also infected and may keep infecting other people because they cannot be contact traced.

These cases are most concerning because they tend to pop up unexpectedly, which indicates there could be more undetected cases in the community.

If we cannot contact trace the case and identify the source, it is difficult to take steps to contain the outbreak and reimpose infection prevention and control.

By the time one person infects other people who each infect other people we have what is known as sustained community transmission, which is a dangerous situation.

This is what we are seeing in Victoria right now. The border closure and six-week lockdown of Melbourne is designed to contain the cluster. It will be several weeks until we know whether it works.

Why is Harbison increasing restrictions before the New South Wales Government reimposes community restrictions?

Because our residents are more vulnerable than most people.

A staggering 80% of deaths from COVID-19 in Europe have been people over the age of 75. There is an understandable reluctance to shut down New South Wales until there is evidence of community transmission in our state. Shielding our residents so the community can continue to recover from the lockdown, hopefully avoiding any spread from Victoria, is a responsible strategy.

Our shielding strategy employs scalable precautions, which range from simply screening and monitoring visitors and our workforce to a full lockdown that excludes all non-essential personnel and reduces services to a bare minimum.

Our goal is to maximise shielding and minimise precautions. To achieve this goal it is essential that those of us in close contact with our shielded residents observe the strictest hand and cough hygiene, avoid as much as practicable contact with others, and test for infection at the first sign or symptom.

If you are not prepared to do this you should not be visiting any residential aged care service, or any vulnerable person for that matter.

Meanwhile...

I am pleased to announce that the new kitchen at Moss Vale will be commissioned in the next few days. Thank you to our catering team who have been working under very difficult circumstances, and to our residents for their patience and understanding during this phase of the refurbishment. The kitchen follows the new laundry as the second key element of the upgrade.

The next stage of the project will deliver most of the new common areas, including a new dining room. This stage will be disruptive, for which I apologise in advance. A temporary entrance will be established through Joadja. Alpine will have a new entrance, avoiding the need to enter through the main entrance. We expect this stage will be completed in four months.

The kiosk at Burradoo has had a makeover and will be offering an expanded range for our residents. We hope this goes some way to easing the burden on residents who would otherwise visit the shops. Please feel free to contact our Residential Services Manager, Danny Turner, if there are specific items you would like to see stocked in the kiosk. Moss Vale will have its own shopping experience once the new common areas open later this year.

Our annual resident and representative surveys are under way. If you have not received a survey form or would like some help with the survey please contact your Personal Care Manager, Bec Glover (Moss Vale) or Rabin Joshi (Burradoo). We value your input, which informs our planning to improve future care and services. This year our staff achieved a record response rate for the annual staff survey – thank you for this amazing achievement amid significant challenges.

Finally, I am pleased to welcome Mark Jeffrey to the new role of Director of Operations, Moss Vale. Mark commenced on 6 July 2020 and brings significant experience earned at HammondCare, who like Harbison are a not-for-profit organisation with a deep commitment to dementia and palliative care. If you are visiting, living, or working at Moss Vale please introduce yourself to Mark. He is an impressive young man and a great addition to our team.

Thank you for reading this letter. If you have any questions about the contents please contact your Personal Care Manager, Bec Glover (Moss Vale) or Rabin Joshi (Burradoo), in the first instance. If you have any concerns about clinical care please contact your Deputy Director of Nursing, Edsalyn Soon (Moss Vale), or Leah O'Regan (Burradoo). If you would like to discuss anything with me do not hesitate to call or send me an email.

I am confident that the response to the outbreak in Victoria will be successful. There is no need to be concerned. We are merely applying our normal cautious approach until we can be sure that there is no community spread to New South Wales. As you know, due to the incubation period of the virus this means it will be up to 14 days from the date of the border closures before we know more.

I am sorry that it is necessary to impose restrictions, but our commitment to keep everyone safe is stronger than ever. If you are working at or visiting Harbison please follow strict precautions to ensure you do not bring the virus to Harbison.

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