

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear friends,

This letter follows my letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and in the absence of any surprises is intended to be my final letter for 2020. It includes important information about changed visitor restrictions. As usual, it is being widely circulated to residents, their families and representatives, our workforce including our volunteers and contractors, local general practices, company members, and the wider Southern Highlands community.

### Visitor restrictions

A new NSW public health order in relation to residential aged care came into effect yesterday. The new order removes the requirement for visitors to hold a current influenza vaccination and the two-visitor limit.

Effective immediately appointments are no longer required for visitors. However, we are still required to screen visitors to exclude people who:

- have been overseas or had direct contact with a COVID-19 case during the 14 days prior to the visit, or
- have a temperature of 37.5°C or higher or symptoms of acute respiratory infection.

Visitors must consent to a temperature test, provide contact details to be recorded in our visitor register, and make a declaration in relation to overseas travel or close case contact. Even though this screening process is much streamlined it still takes time and visitors may need to wait in line for their turn at the screening desk. To ensure we can manage this process effectively we will be screening visitors from 9:30-10:30am and from 1:30-3:30pm each day. If you wish to visit without an appointment, please organise your visit to arrive between these times. If you wish to visit outside these times and do not hold approved visitor status, please make an appointment.

### Approved Visitor Scheme

We have had a very positive response to the Approved Visitor Scheme, and we are pleased to announce that the scheme is no longer restricted to residents of Wingecarribee Shire. The scheme will continue to operate and now provides approved visitors with access from 8am to 6pm each day. Approved visitors will also have a fast-track check-in to minimise waiting time on arrival. Obviously, the requirement to hold an influenza vaccination to be eligible for the scheme is now waived.

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#### Harbison

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#### Burradoo

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Burradoo NSW 2576  
F 02 4868 6476

#### Moss Vale

36 Yarrowa Road  
Moss Vale NSW 2577  
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If you would like to know more about the scheme please refer to my letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020 or contact Anne Harris ([Anne.Harris@harbisoncare.org.au](mailto:Anne.Harris@harbisoncare.org.au) for Burradoo) or Ros Gravalin ([Roslyn.Gravalin@harbisoncare.org.au](mailto:Roslyn.Gravalin@harbisoncare.org.au) for Moss Vale), or phone reception on 02 4868 6200 during office hours.

### **Surgical masks**

We have required everyone to wear surgical masks on site for some time. Effective immediately this requirement is suspended provided that a minimum 1.5m social distancing is maintained. When social distancing cannot be maintained we require non-residents to wear a surgical mask. This includes our workforce, visiting medical officers and health professional, contractors, and visitors. Surgical masks are available free of charge to anyone who needs one, and our staff will be happy to assist anyone who is unfamiliar with their use.

### **Daily COVID-19 staff updates**

We have been providing our workforce with daily updates about case locations for some time. Effective immediately updates will only be provided using Microsoft Teams if there is a salient alert. We encourage everyone to continue to monitor case location alerts provided by NSW Health at <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/case-locations-and-alerts.aspx> but we will no longer remind staff unless there is a concern.

### **Moss Vale 'Main Street' opens**

We are excited to confirm that the new 'Main Street' at Moss Vale will open tomorrow, Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020. This is a major milestone in the refurbishment of Moss Vale, and the suspension of construction work on site for 2020. A new direct entrance for Alpine will also be unveiled, providing a more homelike experience for residents and visitors.

From tomorrow residents and visitors will have access to the new Three Cows Café and the new dining room, library, treatment room, salon, and general store. The new Drawing Room will also be available for the exclusive use of residents, for example for a private family gathering or meal, or as a place to meet with representatives and advisors. We will provide more details about the Drawing Room after Christmas, but in the meantime if you would like to know more please contact Mark Jeffery or Rebecca Glover on 02 4868 6200.

In the new year, the next stage of the refurbishment will continue. The next stage includes to complete refurbishment of Joadja, installation of an additional lift to Mandemar, and construction of a new activities lounge and gym.

### **Harbison Dementia Living update**

I am pleased to announce that the second household at Harbison Dementia Living in Burradoo has opened. The opening has been delayed by COVID-19, but we look forward to providing more people living with dementia with the best available dementia care.

If you are interested in knowing more about Harbison Dementia Living please contact our Transition Nurse, Elly Alcock, on 02 4868 6200 or [admissions@harbisoncare.org.au](mailto:admissions@harbisoncare.org.au)

## **Resident outings**

Outings for small family gatherings and excursions are now permitted, subject to risk assessment by Harbison and to the limits on gatherings that apply to the community in general. Effective immediately the temporary ban on taxis is cancelled.

If you would like to plan an outing, please make your plans well in advance to allow time for the necessary information required for the risk assessment to be compiled. Hosts will need to accept responsibility for tasks like temperature checks, and your Personal Care Manager can help you meet those requirements.

Subject to a clinical assessment on return, residents who are approved for outings based on risk assessment will not be required to isolate on their return to Harbison. However, residents who wish to leave Harbison without a risk assessment may be required to isolate for 14 days on their return, which burdens everyone.

## **Increased precautions may be reimposed at short notice**

Please remember when making plans that Harbison remains on high alert for any need to increase COVID-19 precautions. We are prepared to respond to any increased risk and may reimpose precautions without notice. As always, we are committed to striking the right balance between safety and quality of life and do not make these decisions lightly.

I thank everyone for their cooperation and understanding throughout this long and challenging year, and trust that we can all enjoy a more normal Christmas if everyone plays their part by being COVID safe. Our staff cannot keep people safe unless everyone understands the shared responsibility to manage the risk of infection.

## **Changing of the guard**

By now you will know that Henk den Hertog has stepped down as Chair of the Harbison Board of Directors and will retire from the Board. Henk has volunteered more than a decade of service to our Board and has been a welcome and regular visitor to Harbison in his role as Board Chair. We hope Henk will continue to visit Harbison and follow our progress as we maintain our role as the Southern Highland's community-owned aged care provider. I have had the benefit of more than three years working closely with Henk and thank him for his generosity, humour, steady counsel, and wisdom.

Our new Chair is the remarkable Katie Constantinou, who is replaced as Deputy Chair by the tireless Dr Mark Wilson. In addition to a wealth of knowledge and experience, Katie also has valuable connections and can take credit for organising the recent visits to both sites by Mrs Claus and her talented dancing elves, Elfina and Elfis.

Thank you to Katie, Zac, and Zoe for bringing Christmas cheer to everyone at Harbison. I look forward to working with Katie and her Board as we continue our work together to make Harbison the most successful and professional community-owned aged care service in the Southern Highlands.

I wrote at the beginning of the pandemic that every day we keep everyone safe we are one day closer to a solution. I also wrote that if we do everything right, we will ultimately experience an anti-climax. I am still OK with that. I will accept criticism for perceived over-reaction knowing that no effort or expense has been spared at Harbison to keep our people safe.

A vaccine is now on the horizon, and Australia has mostly succeeded in avoiding the tragedies still unfolding overseas. We have all played a part in that success and should feel proud. However, we should not let complacency undo our privileged position. COVID-19 remains a dangerous and fast-moving threat, especially to vulnerable people like our residents. We should celebrate the opportunity to spend Christmas together and take a moment to acknowledge those who cannot.

I wish everyone a safe and happy Christmas and a better new year. Thank you for reading my letters. Keep providing me with feedback and please keep looking after each other. See you next year.

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**