

Thursday 26th November, 2020

Dear friends,

This letter follows my letter dated 16th November, 2020 and provides an update about our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As usual, it is being widely circulated to provide as many interested people as possible with the same information at the same time.

Visitor restrictions

Following the recent COVID-19 cases confirmed in Moss Vale, NSW Health advises that additional precautions are still required for residential aged care services with staff in or from Wingecarribee. This obviously applies to Harbison. As you know, when the cases were identified we escalated our precautions including by imposing additional restrictions on visitors. Last week we eased these extra restrictions by reopening our dedicated visitor spaces, and from 24 November 2020 we have resumed regular visits by appointment at both sites. To make an appointment simply contact reception during office hours on 02 4868 6200.

We still require visitors to pass screening, including a temperature check, proving a current influenza vaccination, and making a binding declaration about likely COVID-19 risk. We also require all staff and visitors to wear a surgical mask and practice hand and cough hygiene while on the premises.

We encourage everyone to avoid using taxis and public transport while the additional precautions advice is current and reserve the right to refuse entry to anyone who arrives by taxi at Harbison. Harbison is supporting residents to make other transport arrangements for essential medical appointments.

Approved Visitor Scheme

I am pleased to announce we are trialling an Approved Visitor Scheme designed to provide regular visitors with more flexibility. The scheme is open to anyone who resides in Wingecarribee Shire¹ and provides visitor access without an appointment from 8am to 6pm weekdays, and 8am to 2pm on weekends and public holidays. Screening requirements still apply to each visit.

¹ Includes Hill Top, Yerrinbool, Colo Vale, Mittagong, Bowral, Berrima, Moss Vale, Robertson, Burrawang, Exeter, Bundanoon, Penrose, and Wingello

Harbison

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T 02 4868 6300 – Moss Vale

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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

To qualify for the scheme, we require you to complete specified eLearning courses provided by the Department of Health. These courses are designed to provide you with the necessary knowledge about COVID-19 infection prevention and control to designate you as a lower risk visitor. You can complete the courses in your own time from home, or if you prefer you can make an appointment to complete them at Harbison with the support of one of our staff. We estimate a maximum of 1.5 hours is required to complete the training, although most people will be able to do it more quickly.

Following completion of the online training a member of staff will complete the qualification process by providing you with additional information specific to Harbison and assessing your competency with e.g. PPE and hand hygiene. Approved Visitors will also be approved to host small family gatherings for residents.

To find out more about the scheme simply contact Anne Harris (Anne.Harris@harbisoncare.org.au for Burradoo) or Ros Gravalin (Roslyn.Gravalin@harbisoncare.org.au for Moss Vale), or phone reception on 02 4868 6200 during office hours. You can register to complete the free eLearning modules at <https://covid-19training.gov.au/login> and on completion of each course you can download a certificate as proof of completion. The required modules are:

1. Aged Care Module 1 – Personal Safety
2. Aged Care Module 2 (parts 1 & 2) – Residential and In-home Care
3. Aged Care Module 3 – COVID-19 and Aged Care
4. Aged Care Module 5 – Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
5. Aged Care Module 8 – If you suspect a person has coronavirus COVID-19
6. Aged Care Module 9 (parts 1 & 2) – Supporting Older Australians
7. Infection Control Training – COVID 19

We hope this option provides regular visitors with a fast track pathway for more frequent and flexible visits. The regular by-appointment and end-of-life pathways remains in place, so simply choose the option that is right for you.

The need to restrict visitors from time to time will be ongoing for the foreseeable future. To date these decisions have been based predominantly on rolling risk assessments and public health advice. The Government has this month published updated visitation guidelines to assist aged care providers to consistently determine escalation points and proportionate responses, and the *Industry Code for Visiting Residential Aged Care Homes During COVID-19* (<https://www.cota.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Industry-Code-File-20112020.pdf>) has been updated to reflect the new guidelines. Our recent management of the Moss Vale cases is consistent with the new guidelines, and our top priority remains balancing the physical and emotional needs of our residents with the need to keep everyone safe by preventing the introduction of COVID-19 to Harbison.

Moss Vale refurbishment update

We expect to commission the new dining room, café, salon, general store, resident Drawing Room, treatment room, and library in mid-December and residents will be invited to celebrate the opening of the new 'main street' with special activities.

We take this opportunity to remind you that Christmas celebrations should be planned across December and January because we do not have the capacity to host the usual number of visitors on Christmas Day. A new option at Moss Vale will be the Drawing Room, which is a multi-function meeting space for residents that can be booked for small private meetings. We will provide more information about how to book the space and the catering options available soon, but it will be suitable for small family gatherings and we can provide a meal to suit the occasion.

The next stage of the refurbishment will commence after Christmas, to minimise disturbance during the festive period. This stage involves the refurbishment of Joadja, delivery of the second lift to service Mandemar, and establishment of a new, independent entry to Alpine to provide a more homelike experience for residents and guests.

Christmas planning

As mentioned in an earlier letter, Christmas planning is difficult because the current public health order expires on 17 December 2020, which means we do not know what rules will apply at Christmas. As explained above, there will be limited capacity to host visitors on Christmas Day and other public holidays, and we will not be able to welcome as many guests for Christmas lunch as usual.

Please plan any Christmas visits well in advance and be prepared to be flexible if there are any further local cases, or if lockdowns are triggered because residents are unwell with COVID-like symptoms. We will provide specific Christmas information in our next update. Meanwhile please feel free to discuss your preferences with our Personal Care Managers, Bec Glover (Moss Vale) and Rabin Joshi (Burradoo).

Pastoral Care update

Our Pastoral Care Facilitator, Peter Davis, is taking a short sabbatical in December and January. Our Diversional Therapist, Keeden Ellis, will be acting in Peter's place, supported by the dynamic duo of Jill Wall, Volunteer Coordinator, and Julie Hyland, Pastoral Care, and our lifestyle team. Keeden will report to Mark Jeffery day-to-day.

Representatives Virtual Meeting – 2 December 2020 at 6pm by Zoom Meetings

Our next virtual meeting of resident representatives will take place from 6pm to 7pm on Wednesday 2 December 2020. To RSVP please contact Sue Golightly by 5pm on Monday 30 November 2020. Sue will send out instructions and the meeting link on Tuesday 1 December 2020. If you would like to ask questions on notice, please forward them to Sue. Sue can be

contacted by email sue.golightly@harbisoncare.org.au or phone 02 4868 6291 Monday to Thursday. We look forward to seeing as many representatives as possible.

Thank you for reading this letter. As always, we welcome feedback and are continuously seeking to improve the care and services we provide. Compared to other countries, Australia is in a very positive position in relation to the pandemic and we are confident that 2021 will be better than 2020 provided everyone continues to work together by practicing hand and cough hygiene, maintaining social distance, isolating and testing at the mildest signs or symptoms of COVID-19, and wearing a mask.

The staff of Harbison have worked relentlessly to overcome the challenges of 2020 and deserve recognition for their successful and selfless work, and for their resilience and adaptability. Likewise, the residents and their loved ones have demonstrated grace under difficult circumstances, and we are grateful for their patience, good humour, encouragement, and support. An effective vaccine is on the horizon, with the potential to change the game. Please remain patient as we work together towards COVID-safe aged care.

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