



Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January, 2021

Dear friends,

This letter follows my letter dated 7<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and provides you with important preliminary information about current plans to vaccinate residential aged care workers and residents against COVID-19.

As usual this letter is being widely distributed to our workforce, including volunteers and contractors, residents and their families and representatives, local general practices, company members, and the broader Southern Highlands community.

Please note that much of the information is subject to further planning and final decision-making, so we will provide updates as more information becomes available.

**National COVID-19 vaccination of residential aged care workforce and residents from mid-February 2021**

The Australian Government has published a roadmap for a national COVID-19 vaccination strategy. NSW Health has responsibility for implementing the strategy. Residential aged care workers and residents have been prioritised for the first phase of the vaccination strategy, which is expected to commence mid-February subject to regulatory approval of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.

The Government is planning to vaccinate 21 million people over 245 days from March to October, using at least two different vaccines. More than 8,000 trained vaccinators are estimated to be required to administer the vaccines.

Your vaccination is expected to be administered in two doses three weeks apart. Your vaccination record will be entered into the Australian Immunisation Record (AIR). If you are a member of our workforce and not eligible for Medicare, or wish to update your AIR details prior to vaccination, please contact the AIR by phoning 1800 653 809 between 8am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

Harbison will be given more information about vaccination dates and rollout plans soon. The vaccination is expected to be administered at Harbison by government-contracted vaccinators. Vaccination will be free. While vaccination is expected to be voluntary for the general population, we expect vaccination will be mandatory for the residential aged care sector (subject to contraindications).

Prior to administration of the vaccine there will be a pre-screening process. We are waiting for more detail but expect that at least part of that process will be completed before our vaccination dates.

### **2021 Influenza vaccination**

We have commenced planning to administer the 2021 Influenza vaccine to our residents and workforce. The vaccine will be mandatory for our workforce as it has been since 2018. We will provide you with details about the 2021 'flu vaccination schedule when we receive advice from NSW Health.

### **Current visitor restrictions**

We expect updated advice from NSW Health soon, but since my last letter local government areas in Queensland have been added to our visitor exclusion zones. Visitors and staff who have been in one of these areas since 2 January 2021 are excluded from Harbison until 16 January 2021 regardless of their test results. A 2-visitor-per-resident-per-day limit is currently in force. Please refer to my last letter for other restriction details. Until the current restrictions ease, we remind you that virtual visits can be arranged on our website.

### **Person Centred Software**

Our staff are preparing to introduce a new software system to manage resident care. The system is called Person Centred Software, or PCS. As the name suggests the system is designed to better support individualised care plans and we believe it will provide significant benefits to staff, residents and their representatives, and visiting medical officers. We are providing user training prior to a progressive launch of PCS, so please be patient as everyone adapts to the new system.

Thank you for reading this letter. I know many of you have questions following the early media reports about the Australian vaccination plan. I hope this information answers some of those questions, and request that you wait until more information is provided by government before raising any concerns.

This will be the biggest vaccination program in Australian history and is particularly important for the protection of vulnerable populations like our residents. While the vaccine is not expected to be a 'silver bullet' against COVID-19, it is expected to significantly reduce the risk and allow us to return to a more normal life by the end of this year.

Yours sincerely



David Cochran

**Chief Executive Officer**