

Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2021

Dear friends,

This letter follows my letter dated 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and contains important information about our response to COVID-19. As usual, we are circulating this letter widely including to our residents and their representatives, our workforce including our volunteers and contractors, local general practices, our company members, and the wider Southern Highlands community.

### **Repeal of the public health order**

Since the start of the pandemic there have been four public health orders controlling how residential aged care providers manage the risk of COVID-19. I am pleased to confirm that the public health order has been repealed, which means we are now only subject to the latest advice from NSW Health. This advice is regularly updated and freely available using this link <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/racf-latest-advice.aspx>

The current advice requires no special restrictions for visitors or staff other than the now familiar screening routine to exclude the following:

- People with COVID-19 symptoms (fever of 37.5°C or higher, cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing, runny nose, loss of taste or smell, fatigue, blocked nose, muscle or joint pain, headache, diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting, unexplained chest pain, conjunctivitis).
- People who have been in an area of concern or increased testing in the past 14 days (there are currently some in Sydney, Brisbane and Auckland, New Zealand, as listed here <https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/case-locations-and-alerts.aspx#close>).
- People who are a close contact of a person with COVID-19 and are within their period of self-isolation or live in a household with a person who is in self-isolation, or are waiting for a COVID-19 test result.

Residents are permitted social outings and excursions provided they comply with current gathering and movement public health orders like anyone else (you can check the current restrictions using this link <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/what-you-can-and-cant-do-under-rules>) and provided that everyone at the gathering meets the screening requirements described above.

We will risk assess each outing before it happens and conduct a clinical assessment of each resident on their return and thank everyone for their continuing cooperation in this ongoing important work by our infection prevention & control teams.

### **Introduction of TIKS automated visitor screening**

We are about to implement a system known as TIKS to improve the screening for visitors. The TIKS system will check your temperature and ask you the current screening questions. You can pre-register for the system, so you simply scan a QR code on arrival to save providing your information each time you visit. We will provide more information about pre-registration soon, and staff will be on hand to help you during the first two weeks. We hope the new system improves the experience for all our visitors, and we welcome feedback so we can fine tune the process as needed.

### **COVID-19 vaccination update**

We do not know when Harbison residents and staff will be offered the COVID-19 vaccine. The schedule is controlled by government. Our immunisation team has been busy preparing for vaccination day, so we can be organised even if it is scheduled at short notice. Feedback from other providers continues to be very positive about the immunisation contractors, and we hope our turn comes sooner rather than later.

We have written to some of you about being a support person for your resident on the day, subject to the consent of your resident. This idea was suggested at our recent representatives meeting and is a good example of how your input can be used to improve care and services.

If you did not receive a letter about being a vaccine support person you may not be recorded in our system as a representative or substitute decision-maker of a resident. If you would like to provide a resident with support simply contact Sue Golightly, our Executive Assistant, by email ([sue.golightly@harbisoncare.org.au](mailto:sue.golightly@harbisoncare.org.au)) noting the name and location of your resident and your best mobile and email contact details. Sue will coordinate with our Care teams and confirm whether we can accommodate you in the program. I note that there are a limited number of support people we can include on the day for logistical reasons, and priority will be given based on resident need.

As you know, we strongly recommend the vaccine for everyone who is suitable and encourage you to take advantage of our privileged priority 1a status in the national rollout. If you have any questions about whether the vaccine is right for you, please consult your doctor. If you have any questions about the consent process please contact our Infection Prevention & Control Coordinator, Leah Willis ([leah.willis@harbisoncare.org.au](mailto:leah.willis@harbisoncare.org.au)).

### **The Final Report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety**

As reported in the media, the final report has been released. I do not pretend to have read all five volumes and will have more to say when I have had more time to consider the 148 recommendations. Of course, the key issue is the Government response to the report and, so far, the response has been minimal and misaligned to the recommendations.

My early impression is that the commission failed to deliver the roadmap we needed, and much will depend on whether the Government chooses to make the most of the momentum for change that has built up in the past two years. Instead of a roadmap the recommendations read more like a shopping list, and many of them appear to be mutually exclusive. I would also venture that the timeframes and indicative costs are unrealistic.

However, like the 20+ aged care reports in the last 20 years (including the commission's interim report and excellent background and special topic papers) there is a lot of food for thought for a high-bar organisation like Harbison, and we will be thinking hard about how we can raise the bar again while we wait for the Government to announce any reform. Watch this space.

### **Moss Vale Significant Refurbishment**

The work at Moss Vale continues. The next stage includes refurbishment of every bedroom and a new semi-private lounge area for the residents of Joadja. We appreciate the disruption for those residents who have moved out temporarily of Joadja, and we are on schedule to start moving those residents back to their rooms from early May.

Also underway is stage 2 of the town square, which will deliver a new gym and activities lounge for residents. A second lift and new lift lobby to Mandemar will also be delivered by early April, and then the old lift will be refurbished by early May. Our new footpaths and arrival zones should also be complete by early May.

We have started a major upgrade of our ability to operate during a blackout. A new generator is being installed to increase our ability to run the home safely for as long as it takes for mains power to be restored. This work completes a program of improvements identified following the bushfires of 2019-2020 which ensure that our Moss Vale residents and staff remain safe during a natural disaster.

I am grateful to our Board who have approved a series of increases to the scope of our project at Moss Vale to ensure we deliver the care, services, and safety that our people expect and deserve.

### **Moss Vale Re-accreditation**

Every three years Moss Vale applies to renew its status as an approved aged care provider. As an approved provider we receive care subsidies from the Government to cover the cost of providing care to our residents. Providers who are not approved do not receive care subsidies and charge their residents for the cost of providing care. In return for receiving care subsidies, we must meet the strict Aged Care Quality Standards, or face sanction up to and including revocation of our approved provider status.

This important process involves a site audit by the regulator, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission. Like the COVID-19 vaccination we do not control the schedule for the site audit and do not know when it will happen.

Please find enclosed a copy of the site audit notice, which explains how you can provide input to the process. Harbison Moss Vale currently holds the highest Service Compliance Rating of four stars. If you have any questions about the process or would like to raise any concerns with us prior to the site audit, please contact your Quality & Care Manager on 02 4868 6200 during office hours or use the emails set out below.

### **Welcome Sarah Dayball, Quality and Care Manager Burradoo**

We are pleased to announce that Sarah Dayball ([sarah.dayball@harbisoncare.org.au](mailto:sarah.dayball@harbisoncare.org.au)) has taken up the role of Quality and Care Manager at Burradoo, overseeing the day-to-day care we provide to our Burradoo residents. Sarah joins us from Anthem Care in Bowral and has a long career in ageing support. Sarah's counterpart is Mark Jeffery ([mark.jeffery@harbisoncare.org.au](mailto:mark.jeffery@harbisoncare.org.au)) at Moss Vale, who joined us last year from HammondCare. Please join me in welcoming Sarah to our team.

### **Care About Aged Care**

The aged care sector, including residential and in-home care providers, is encouraging the Government to prioritise aged care following the Royal Commission. We strongly encourage you to consider signing a petition to show that aged care matters to you. The petition is open to anyone – residents, family, staff, or the general public.

To sign the petition visit <https://www.careaboutagedcare.org.au/> and follow the simple instructions. Our ageing population means that more electorates than ever before are facing serious problems providing the right care and services for older people, and it is important that our elected officials hear our voice in what is likely to be an election year.

Thank you for reading this letter. We welcome your feedback, positive and negative, to help us improve our care and services. Thank you to everyone who has played their part since the pandemic began more than a year ago. It has been a tough but often uplifting experience for the Harbison team. We thank the many families who have supported our staff with positive feedback and encouragement – please keep it up, because it goes a long way.

We acknowledge everyone who has suffered from COVID-19 and celebrate every day that passes without community transmission, confident in the power of community action and the safety and effectiveness of the approved vaccines - Keep up the fight.

Yours sincerely,



David Cochran  
**Chief Executive Officer**



Australian Government

Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission

## Harbison Moss Vale 0465

Quality assessors from the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission (Commission) will be visiting to check the quality of care and services at Harbison Moss Vale.

This assessment is called a site audit. The audit will be unannounced, so the service will not be aware of which day or week the audit will be conducted.

When quality assessors visit the home, you (or someone who represents you) will be given the opportunity to talk to an assessor about the quality of your care and services.

You (or someone who represents you) can also provide information *prior* to the audit. You can do this by calling the Commission on **1800 951 822 (press option 2)** or completing an online survey with the Commission.

The survey asks about your experience of quality and safety at your aged care service. You can access this survey at the following address. <https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/consumer-feedback>. To open the survey, use the code **0465**.

The Commission respects the privacy of your information and will not provide us with the details that you have discussed with them, unless you agree to this, or where they are very concerned about your care.

Your personal information and comments will be used by quality assessors when conducting the site audit, and also when they prepare their report about the quality of care and services provided here.

For information on the Commission's privacy policy and practices, please refer to the Commission's website [agedcarequality.gov.au](http://agedcarequality.gov.au) or contact the Commission on **1800 951 822**.

If you need interpreter assistance, please call Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on **131 450** and ask for Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission.