



Wednesday 5th May 2021

Dear friends,

This letter follows my letter dated 21st April 2021 and includes updates about COVID-19 and influenza vaccination at Harbison. As usual, it is being widely distributed to our residents and their representatives, our workforce, our company members, our local general practices, and the wider Southern Highlands community.

Vaccination program – resident update

I am pleased to report that 95% of eligible Burradoo residents have now been vaccinated against COVID-19. Moss Vale residents will receive their final dose on 15th May 2021.

We plan to begin vaccinating residents against influenza from the beginning of June, which is later than usual because of the need to administer COVID-19 and influenza vaccinations at least 2-weeks apart.

COVID-19 vaccinations – staff update

As you know, the Government has cancelled the plan to vaccinate residential aged care workers at work. The expectation now is that aged care workers will take advantage of their phase 1a status and arrange their vaccinations, usually on their own time, from NSW Health vaccination hubs or (if over-50) from their own GP or local clinic.

We were able to arrange the vaccination of some staff last week at the Liverpool Ngarra Vaccination Hub. Feedback about the hub was very positive, and other hubs are being established by NSW Health e.g., Campbelltown and Oran Park.

To register for a priority 1a vaccination from NSW Health use this link <https://nswhealthcheckin.powerappsportals.com/> and follow the instructions. Your staff name badge will be sufficient proof of your priority status when you attend the hub.

If you are over-50, you will have access to the AstraZeneca (AZ) vaccine. If you do not want to register with NSW Health, you can receive the AZ vaccine from your GP, or vaccination clinics like the Mittagong Respiratory Clinic (02 4800 9032). I understand that supply of the AstraZeneca vaccine is currently good.

If you are under-50, you will be offered the Pfizer vaccine which is only available from NSW Health hubs, using the registration link above.

We have been advised that priority vaccine access will cease soon for aged care workers, because the rollout will shift focus to other groups e.g., disability workers. If you want to be vaccinated against COVID-19 (and we strongly recommend you do), now is the time. Remember, if you arrange your own vaccination, you must notify People & Culture Manager, Samantha Evison, so we can update our immunisation register.

I expect that at some point the Government will gradually reopen international borders, at which time the risk of community transmission will increase. We simply cannot remain isolated forever. While we have avoided the emergency experienced in other countries, we do not have any herd immunity or extensive experience treating COVID-19, and will be more reliant than most countries on high vaccination rates when borders reopen.

If you have been sitting on the fence, you might be interested in research about real-world vaccination in the UK, published in *The Lancet* last week.¹ The study concluded that AZ and Pfizer vaccines had less side effects than predicted by clinical trial data (i.e., they are safer than expected), and both were effective against COVID-19.

Visitor restrictions – update

Vaccination against influenza is mandatory for our workforce and will be mandatory for visitors from 1 June 2021. Please arrange your influenza vaccination as soon as possible and bring a copy of your proof of vaccination when you visit. We will keep a copy of your vaccination on file.

Visitors who do not have proof of a current vaccination from 1 June 2021 will be required to wear a surgical mask during their visit or may be excluded from the premises. If you are contraindicated for influenza vaccination, or do not reasonably have access to the influenza vaccine, please contact our Infection Prevention & Control Coordinator, Leah Willis. Leah will advise you about the options we can provide for a visit.

We are regularly reviewing our policy on visitor COVID-19 vaccination, and in future are likely to require visitors to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

Thank you for reading this short update. As usual, we welcome feedback about your experience of Harbison.

Yours sincerely,



David Cochran
Chief Executive Officer

¹ Menni C et al., 2021, "Vaccine Side-effects and SARS-COV-2 Infection After Vaccination in Users of the COVID Symptom Study app in the UK: A Prospective Observational Study", *The Lancet*, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099\(21\)00224-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1473-3099(21)00224-3)