



Thursday 19th August, 2021

Dear friends,

Visitor restrictions - update

This letter follows my letter dated 13th August 2021, in which I announced a snap increase of visitor restrictions based on our assessment of local COVID-19 risk. The following day the NSW Government announced a regional lockdown. Today the NSW Government has announced that the regional lockdown will be extended until at least 28 August 2021, which aligns to the current Greater Sydney lockdown.

While the extension is probably not a surprise to anyone who is following the daily NSW Health press conferences, I know that some people are concerned about what this means for residents at Harbison.

In accordance with public health advice, current restrictions do not permit any visitors to Harbison and residents may only go out for essential medical appointments. Exceptions are available for end-of-life visits or on compassionate grounds for visitors who have been providing frequent and regular essential care e.g., to a resident who is living with advanced dementia. Exceptions will only be granted after screening and risk assessment, and in most cases, families will need to nominate a single representative to make each visit.

To apply for an exemption please contact us during office hours. The process can be quite time consuming because of the need to collect enough information to make an effective risk assessment, so please allow enough time for the work which is involved.

Meanwhile, we are working hard to support virtual visits e.g., by Facetime. I know that sometimes virtual visits have not proceeded according to plan, and I am sorry to anyone who has not had a good experience. We have increased resources and encourage you to work with us to overcome technical and other issues to keep our residents as connected as possible with their families and community.

We have no control over the length of the lockdown, and we expect that staffing will be impacted each day as our workforce complies with single site arrangements and people are required to meet testing and vaccination requirements. We are sorry if this causes any inconvenience but assure you that safety is being maintained. The entire healthcare system is short of workers now.

Mandatory workforce vaccination

COVID-19 vaccination will be mandatory for Australian aged care workers from 17th September 2021. We estimate that more than 80% of our workforce has had at least one dose of vaccine, and more than 90% of our residents are vaccinated. The public health order to implement the mandatory requirement in NSW has not been released but is expected to closely follow the national framework.

Harbison

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Staff who live in high-risk areas can book priority vaccination appointments until 22 August 2021. Details were provided to staff earlier this week.

Rapid antigen testing

Harbison has commenced using rapid antigen tests to increase screening against COVID-19 cases which do not present symptoms. Staff who are already subject to mandatory PCR testing are exempt from rapid antigen testing. Results are available within minutes, and any positive results will trigger self-isolation pending a PCR test for confirmation. Sincere thanks to everyone for taking the new testing requirements in their stride.

Moss Vale Refurbishment

The refurbishment of Moss Vale is proceeding well despite the lockdown, and subject to any further restrictions we expect to take delivery of the last stage of the project at the end of September 2021. The new lift has been commissioned, and the old lift is being refurbished. When both are operating Mandemar will enjoy safer and more convenient access.

Burradoo nursing home refurbishment

We will be installing a new nurse call system in the Burradoo nursing home from next month, to replace the system which was installed when the home opened in 2014. We hope to minimise disruption from this essential work and expect significant improvements from the new system when it is commissioned later this year.

Thank you for reading this letter. I expect I will be writing to you again soon as the COVID-19 situation in NSW continues to develop. As always, if you have any concerns, please contact us during office hours or our afterhours nurses in an emergency.

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