

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2021

Dear friends,

This letter follows my letter of 16<sup>th</sup> September 2021 although I have also written to families about rapid antigen testing in the interim. As usual, we share this information with residents and their families and representatives, our workforce including our volunteers and contractors, our company members, local general practices and other community health organisations, and the wider Southern Highlands Community.

The main purpose of this edition is to update you about plans to relax visitor restrictions, but first I'd like to bring you up to date with our inspirational Road Worlds warriors.

### **2021 Road Worlds for Seniors – update**

*"...it feels like I was on holidays travelling all over the world and I was cycling along... It makes me feel like I have a life. I can join in and be a part of something wonderful. I am proud of myself that I have a purpose again and I can achieve wonderful things, and not be disadvantaged because of my amputation. I feel brighter, lighter and happier than I have in a long, long time."*

*"...feeling of exhilaration when I finish its good for my mind, I sleep better, and my legs are not as sore... Motiview gives me hope..."*

*"The enjoyment of traveling all over the world and it doesn't cost me a cent! With COVID I was limited with what we could do going out enjoying bus trips, but Motiview has given me a sense of freedom and inspiration and a new lease of life trying to cycle as far as I can go. I can't wait for my brother's phone calls each week to tell him how far I have gone, never in my life would I thought I would be able to cycle over 500km in one month! I feel great within myself plus my doctor is amazed and proud of how far I have come. Motiview settles by mind, my tremors are less, and I am sleeping better. Motiview is for me!"*

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#### **Harbison**

Gundungurra Country  
T 02 4868 6200  
reception@harbisoncare.org.au  
www.harbisoncare.org.au

PO Box 349  
Bowral NSW 2576  
ABN 23 001 507 624  
Registered NDIS Provider

#### **Burradoo**

2 Charlotte Street  
Burradoo NSW 2576  
F 02 4868 6476

#### **Moss Vale**

36 Yarrawa Road  
Moss Vale NSW 2577  
F 02 4869 3214

It has become a daily ritual for me to visit our Road Worlds teams. The way they have taken ownership of Motiview is inspiring, and the positive effect for everyone involved is uplifting. With two race-days left in the competition our teams hold 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> places, *in the world!* Today, they should fly past the 8,000km milestone (remember, last year we achieved 900km!) which makes the 3,000km target I set for the teams look like a lack of faith on my part.

Even more exciting, one of our Moss Vale women holds 2<sup>nd</sup> place on the individual ranking, holding a slim lead from Norwegian and Canadian competitors. I understand she did not intend to participate in the race but offered to act as substitute if required. After being called up for a 15-minute stint on her first day, our champion quickly increased her sessions to up to 2-hours at a time, and I may have seen her putting in some miles on a rest day. Reminds me of a childhood neighbour of mine called Greg Bennett (you can look him up), except our champion only has one leg!

One of our Burradoo men holds 7<sup>th</sup> place in another tightly ranked individual field. I expect he will single-handedly exceed the team distance from last year! All up we have 18 competitors in the top-100, and I note that this year you need to ride more than 100km to be included in that elite group.

Remember, our champions are competing against 250 teams from 11 countries. Regardless of results, their achievement this year means they are all true champions. Many have overcome their doubts about ability, and I think all of them have surprised and enjoyed themselves.

The Moss Vale Team has been handicapped by only having two bikes compared to Burradoo's three. Those bikes were purchased with funds generously donated after last year's event, and we are fundraising to buy at least another bike for Moss Vale to ensure Motiview is equally accessible to our Moss Vale residents.

We use special THERA therapy bikes from Germany, which cost about \$8,000.00 each. These bikes make it possible for almost anyone, regardless of physical or cognitive ability, to participate. We have already received some very generous donations this year and are well on our way to funding that extra bike, but we can use more help. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation, or volunteer to be a part of the ongoing Motiview program, please contact our Partnership Manager, Zac Hulm, by email [zac.hulm@harbisoncare.org.au](mailto:zac.hulm@harbisoncare.org.au) or ph. 0410 435 148.

### **Visitor restrictions – update**

As you know, we are mindful of the physical, psychological, and social burdens which visitor restrictions place on everyone – residents, families, and staff – and we constantly weigh these harms against the risks of COVID-19. We do not impose visitor restrictions lightly.

Yesterday, the Premier announced that from 11 October 2021 fully vaccinated visitors will be permitted to visit fully vaccinated residents, limited to two visitors per day and subject to a minimum age of 12 years. The details have not been released, so please be patient and we will provide you with more information as soon as it becomes available.

Based on a briefing I attended yesterday prior to the announcement, I understand that visitor restrictions will be eased in three stages between October and December. The current exemptions for end-of-life and compassionate grounds will remain in place throughout the transition.

At the beginning of this month there were 27 homes with a COVID-19 outbreak in Australia. 90% of Australian residential aged care services have so far avoided COVID-19 outbreaks, which is an outstanding achievement and evidence of the sector's expertise in infection prevention and control and safety.

Fortunately, compared to pre-vaccination outbreaks the rate of death has been low this year, but it is sobering to note that more staff than residents have been infected with COVID-19 during the pandemic. Many of these will suffer long-term effects.

Providers are mindful of the homes which are currently experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks in Sydney and all providers will be expected to continue to make their own risk assessments and impose controls to reduce the risk of infection and maintain safe workplaces.

The Government has indicated that the system to manage proof of vaccination will not be ready by 11 October 2021, so that will be the first bump in the road. We are working to improve our own technology to make managing vaccination status a routine process, and I will have more to say about this issue soon.

### **Visitor restrictions – rapid antigen testing**

We recently surveyed 100 family members and representatives about the use of rapid antigen testing, which has been proven to effectively reduce the risk of infection, and 76% supported making the test a condition of entry. It is highly likely that we will require all visitors to pass a rapid antigen test before they enter the building.

We estimate the cost of each rapid antigen test at \$15. We asked our survey participants whether they would support a visitor fee to cover this cost, and 58% supported a fee. This issue is still under consideration, and the sector is asking the Government to consider the issue of funding for rapid antigen tests and preventative measures more broadly. In the absence of additional taxpayer funding or visitor fees, then in effect the cost reduces the care and services available to residents in an already under-resourced system.

### **Annual representatives' survey – reminder**

We have had some high-quality responses to the annual representatives' survey. We use information from the survey to plan improvements. The survey closes soon, so please take this opportunity to have your say in the way we provide care and services.

For Burradoo use this link to the survey

<https://app.personcentredfeedback.com.au/survey/9/2/O8UIGFH>

For Moss Vale use this link to the survey

<https://app.personcentredfeedback.com.au/survey/9/2/1FQ1O2X6>

If you are a substitute decision maker for a resident who cannot easily express their own goals, needs, and preferences we strongly urge you to complete the survey, so they have a voice. The survey is 36 simple questions requiring you to rate a statement on scale of 1-to-5. It should only take a few minutes to complete. There is also an opportunity to provide us with a comment if you wish. The survey is anonymous.

If you prefer not to complete an online survey, please contact Zac Hulm, who is our current Complaints Officer, on ph. 02 4868 6200 during office hours (if you are happy to complete a survey by phone) or [zac.hulm@harbisoncare.org.au](mailto:zac.hulm@harbisoncare.org.au) (if you would prefer to have a form sent to you).

Thank you for reading this letter. I expect to write again soon, and as always welcome your feedback.

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