



16th December 2021

Dear friends,

This letter follows the easing of COVID-19 restrictions in the community from today. It is important to understand the restrictions and preventative measures which remain in place for residential aged care generally, and at Harbison specifically.

As always, we share this letter with our residents and their families and representatives, our workforce including our amazing volunteers, our company members, local GPs, and the wider community.

Full vaccination is a condition of entry at Harbison

Except if you are a resident, medically contraindicated, under the age of 12, or visiting a resident at end-of-life, you must be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 and influenza to enter Harbison. This means that you must have at least two-doses of COVID-19 vaccine at least 14-days prior to your visit, and you must have a 2021 influenza vaccination.

We strongly recommend the third dose of COVID-19 vaccine as soon as you are eligible.

You must scan the Service NSW QR code when you check-in at Harbison

Except residents, everyone must check-in using our visitor kiosk when they arrive at Harbison. Check-in includes a temperature check and affirmation that you understand and comply with the current screening requirements. Everyone must scan the Service NSW QR code as a check-in step or complete the Service NSW visitor register if you do not have a smart phone.

Surgical masks are mandatory

Except residents, or during end-of-life visits in a resident's room, or if a mask impairs effective communication (e.g., dementia), everyone must wear a surgical or fit-tested N95/P2 mask at Harbison. Surgical masks are available free-of-charge. Other masks are not permitted.

Children under 12 must be accompanied by a fully vaccinated adult

Except for end-of-life visits, children under 12 must be accompanied and supervised by a fully vaccinated adult. Where possible, the visit should take place outdoors. If the visit takes place indoors, the child must wear a surgical mask.

Each resident is permitted two visitors per day (plus two children under the age of 12)

Except for end-of-life visits, only two visitors per day are permitted. At end-of-life, up to four visitors are permitted at any time.

Harbison

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www.harbisoncare.org.au

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Registered NDIS Provider

Burradoo

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Burradoo NSW 2576
F 02 4868 6476

Moss Vale

36 Yarrowa Road
Moss Vale NSW 2577
F 02 4869 3214

If you have been overseas in the past 14-days, you must not visit

If you have been overseas in the past 14-days, you must not visit unless you can show a negative PCR COVID-19 test result at least 7-days after your arrival in NSW.

Screening protocols

In addition to the above, you must not visit if:

- you have COVID-19 symptoms (temperature over 37.5°C, cough, sore throat, difficulty breathing, runny nose, loss of taste, loss of smell)
- you are a close or casual contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case during their isolation period
- you are waiting for a COVID-19 test result
- you share a household with a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case who is within their isolation period

Festive period arrangements

These conditions apply throughout the Christmas period. Enclosed is a copy of the NSW Health guidelines for the 2021 festive season for your reference. Unfortunately, we cannot permit additional visitors for e.g., Christmas lunch.

Third-dose booster clinics

COVID-19 booster clinics were conducted at Harbison last Thursday and Friday. Eligible residents and staff received their third doses, which is very timely given the dramatic increase in case numbers in the past few days.

We strongly encourage everyone to have their booster as soon as they are eligible. Vaccine is readily available from your GP, pharmacy, or NSW Health vaccination hub. More information is available using this link <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/vaccination/get-vaccinated/boosters>

Burradoo hot water system leak

Last month we had a near miss at Burradoo when a hot water system in the hostel roof had a major leak. The leak caused significant damage to three resident rooms, but fortunately nobody was hurt thanks to the quick thinking of a resident who alerted staff to the problem.

We immediately notified the families of the three affected residents and arranged to relocate them to newly refurbished rooms at Moss Vale. A structural engineer inspected the building to confirm that there was no structural damage, and our plumbers inspected the other hot water systems in the building for signs of corrosion.

Since then, we have replaced every hot water system older than five years, to reduce the risk of another failure. We have changed our planned maintenance program to ensure that we routinely replace hot water systems older than five years regardless of condition.

I am very sorry for this incident and grateful to the residents and their families for their understanding, patience, and good humour. I have visited each resident at Moss Vale and understand that they are very comfortable and happy. They have the choice to remain at Moss Vale or return to Burradoo. My thanks to the staff who were the first responders for their calm and careful response. You demonstrated Harbison values extremely well.

If you have any concerns about this incident or our response to it, please contact me or our Residential Services Manager, Danny Turner.

Urban Development Institute of Australia NSW 2021 Awards for Excellence

I am pleased to confirm that Harbison Dementia Living at Burradoo has won the 2021 Excellence in Aged-Care award.

The judges said:

“...if dementia care was required for their relatives, that Harbison in Burradoo would be the most suitable facility. The cottage community is an outstanding example of how peace and tranquillity can provide enrichment to those needing care. While many facilities that were visited provided a range of outdoor spaces, Harbison actively promotes outdoor activity for their guests, and this connection with the elements and nature generates a calm that prevails.”

My thanks to the project team for the years of dedication to deliver our award-winning design. We have applied the same design principles to the refurbishment of Moss Vale. We are grateful to the UDIA for this recognition of our leadership in aged- and dementia-friendly design.

Inaugural Harbison Golf Day “Par-tee”

The weather gods were very unkind to the golfers who came out to support Harbison and community mental health at the inaugural Harbison Golf Day at the Highlands Golf Club in Mittagong last Friday.

Despite raining cats-and-dogs our intrepid golfers raised \$15,000 for community mental health programs. Thank you to everyone who sponsored, volunteered, and participated. We are lucky to belong to such a supportive community. I hope to see you all again next year, when I trust the weather will be kinder.

2021 Bowral Classic – residents compete!

Last Sunday, Harbison was represented at all levels in the 2021 Bowral Classic. This was the second time our Cycling Without Age trishaws were entered in the 35km social ride, but the first time (and possibly a world-first) that residents entered the competition. If you don't believe me, visit our Facebook page www.facebook.com/harbisoncare

Congratulations to residents Dot (of Motiview fame), Tom, Ken, and Anne for completing the 35km course in relay, and thanks to Zac Hulm and Roger Farrar for volunteering to pilot our trishaws. Thanks also to all the riders who wore Harbison colours in the various events – your support is greatly appreciated.

It was a privilege to see our team in action last Sunday, and I am extremely impressed with the seamless organisation behind the scenes to make it all happen. Special thanks to Darleen, Keeden, David, Sam, Mick, and Jill and to all the staff who supported our residents to get to the starting line on time.

Our Cycling Without Age plans have been frustrated by the pandemic, but we hope to expand access to the program through 2022 and I think we can field an even larger team of residents at next year's Classic. If you would like to volunteer for Cycling Without Age (or our sister-program, Motiview) please contact Zac Hulm or Jill Wall. You will find both programs very rewarding.

Patron of Harbison

I am pleased to confirm that Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of New South Wales, has accepted the honorary position as Patron of Harbison for 2022. As you know, Her Excellency officially opened Harbison Dementia Living at Burradoo in 2020 and has been a keen supporter of our Road Worlds for Seniors teams in 2021.

It has been a vice-regal year for Harbison, with former Governor-General of Australia, General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK CVO MC (Retd), officially re-opening Moss Vale, and the amazing Margaret Armstrong, who lives at Burradoo, receiving her OAM two-weeks ago.

New handbooks

A new edition of the Harbison Handbook has just been published. Copies are available from Reception at Burradoo and the General Store at Moss Vale. Staff can access the Handbook on the Harbison Hub, and it is also available for download at www.harbison.org.au

We welcome feedback and suggestions about the Handbook so we can improve each edition. Please note that the digital version of the Handbook will be updated between print editions, so the digital edition will always be the most current.

If you live at Harbison and would like a copy, please simply visit Reception or the General Store or ask a member of our team to deliver a copy to you.

Account payments

If you pay your account by electronic funds transfer, please ensure you include a reference (resident's name or invoice number) with the payment so we can allocate it to your account. We have recently received some payments without any reference. If you have any questions, please contact our Finance team.

Thank you

This may not be my last letter of the year, but I take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support of Harbison in 2021. It takes a big team effort to manage constant adaptive change. We have drawn on our values – respect, authenticity, optimism, and dedication – constantly this year. We appreciate the hardships experienced by residents and families during the lockdowns and thank everyone for collaborating with us to ensure everyone remains safe.

I am only as good as my team, and my team is better than ever. Thank you to the Executive Leadership Team for your quiet, clever, determined work this year. I get all the glory, but you deserve the credit. Your own teams are a credit to you, and I have never worked with a more inspiring group.

Thank you to our Board who have worked harder than ever (which is saying something!) to support Harbison to overcome the challenges of the pandemic and changing aged care landscape. Thank you to the Residents' Advisory Committee and our Volunteers for working so closely with us – you have very, very big hearts!

Thank you to all the residents who have thrown themselves into so many new experiences this year to make as much lemonade as possible from the 2021 lemons – you are our motivation and inspiration! And thank you to the hundreds of staff – and their families who have supported them – for turning up every day with the singular goal of optimising the quality of life of others. We would not be Harbison without you.

Finally, a special thanks to Sue Golightly, our Executive Assistant, and my friend, who leaves us at the end of the month to begin a well-earned retirement. You have helped so many people in the past three-years and we would not have achieved anything without your behind-the-scenes coordination.

I am confident that the worst is behind us, but the work to prevent the introduction of COVID-19 to Harbison is ongoing. The next few months are likely to be bumpy as general restrictions ease in the community and case numbers increase. Now is not the time for complacency. I wish everyone a happy, safe, and peaceful Christmas and New Year but please be smart about COVID-19 safety.

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

Guidance for residential aged care facilities

COVID-19 safe festive season 2021



Purpose

The COVID-19 outbreak in NSW in 2021 has been a difficult and challenging time for all in our community, but particularly for our older residents in aged care facilities.

This guidance provides some tips and reminders for residential aged care providers when hosting festive events and activities in their facility.

Being prepared means your facility and residents can enjoy this time, while remaining COVID-Safe.

Important!

This advice may be subject to change at short notice. Currently, NSW Health is closely monitoring the evolving situation in relation to the Omicron variant and will continue to issue regular guidance to residential aged care facilities when required.

Please ensure to stay up to date with the latest health advice, particularly over the festive period. The most up to date information can be found: www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/covid-19/Pages/aged-care.aspx

All advice outlined in this document must be followed in line with NSW Public Health Orders. As always, if a resident or staff member has symptoms of COVID-19 over the festive season, they should get tested immediately and self-isolate until a negative result is received.

Stay COVID safe over the festive season

Residents who received their second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine at least five months ago are eligible to receive a booster dose. A booster dose can be received in a Commonwealth in-reach clinic or through their GP. Facilities are encouraged to ensure residents receive a third dose as soon as they are eligible.

Mask recommendations

Regardless of the requirement for mask wearing in NSW public health orders, public health advice will continue to strongly recommend that staff and visitors wear masks while indoors in aged care facilities.

Entering the facility and screening requirements

All visitors must adhere to the usual entry and screening requirements. **Exclude** any visitors who:

- Are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 at least 14 days prior to visiting, except for children under 12 years.
- Have COVID-19 symptoms.
- Have had a COVID-19 test and are waiting on the test result.
- Are a close or casual contact of a person with confirmed COVID-19 unless they have completed their self-isolation and testing requirements.

- Are under a self-isolation order
- Have been to a [country of concern in the last 14 days](#)
- Have been to any other countries in the last 14 days, unless they are:
Fully vaccinated and at least 7 days have passed since their arrival in NSW and they have received a result from their day 6 test.

Records of all guests, staff and volunteers entering your facility must be kept, through the QR Code check-in process.

Remember:

- Loved ones are not limited in the time that they spend with their spouse/relative, unless the activity is in a communal area of the facility (refer to the Industry Code advice in these instances).
- Visitation numbers must be in line with the requirements under the current Public Health Order.
- Up to two children under 12 years of age can enter a residential aged care facility, provided they are accompanied by a fully vaccinated adult. Children should have a negative rapid antigen test on the day the visit takes place where possible.

Physical distancing

Physical distancing is important to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Residential aged care facilities should have a plan for physical distancing during a festive season event. It is important to reduce the potential for crowding and the risk of environmental contamination in the facility.

Facilities should ensure that visitors stay within their groups, limit physical movement around the facility, and that there is at least 1.5 metres (minimum) between groups. Facilities should also avoid activities that require queuing (or consider using floor markers).

Where physical distancing is not possible, facilities should make plans to spread the event over more than one occasion, reduce the number of visitors to the event, and utilise outdoor locations of the premises.

Hygiene and infection control

As with usual entry requirements, all visitors must follow hand hygiene processes.

It is especially important during the festive season to ensure that hand sanitizing stations are located at appropriate locations, that you have adequate stocks of hand sanitizers, soap, hot water, paper towels, and signage is displayed.

If your facility plans on holding an event please ensure:

- High touch surfaces are regularly wiped down other shared spaces (e.g. toilets) are regularly cleaned
- Consider games and activities that involve use of a person's own equipment to minimise cross-contamination
- Plan for enhanced cleaning after the event.

Holding an event


Facilities may hold an event like a musical performance such as choirs, carol singers or musicians. Facilities must ensure that:

- All performers are fully vaccinated
- Performers must complete a rapid antigen test on the day and prior to entry (this could be a home test)
- Performers are subject to entry and screening requirements, and physical distancing requirements, and these are communicated to them in advance
- Masks are strongly recommended
- Allow your staff enough time to effectively undertake the entry and screening process
- Where possible events should be held outside but in the event of an indoor event this should be in a well ventilated space that supports physical distancing
- Consider holding several smaller events for safe physical distancing or offer alternative options for residents to participate such as video streaming from a residents' rooms.

Meals

Facilities need to take steps to reduce cross-contamination during meal times. These include:

- Minimising shared implements, utensils or condiments

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- Avoiding shared platters, and using plated or boxed meals instead
 - Ensure physical distancing between groups in communal areas – prioritise outdoor dining options and consider holding the event on different days and times
 - Consider minimising groups from different households seated together.

Individual outings and group excursions

Residents can leave the facility and attend family gatherings or for other reasons such as group excursions organised by the facility, but must abide by the Public Health (COVID-19 General Order) 2021 as outlined in existing NSW Health advice:

- Facilities are to ensure that residents are provided with appropriate personal protective equipment, infection control and mask wearing advice when they leave the facility.
- Residents are to be guided about COVID safe behaviours, including physical distancing and hand hygiene.
- The event complies with the current Public Health (COVID-19 19 General Order) 2021.
- Families of residents must also consider advice here when taking their loved ones out of the facility to attend family gatherings. Families may wish to voluntarily have a test (e.g. rapid antigen test) prior to the event

There is no requirement for COVID-19 testing or self-isolation for residents on return to the facility from an outing, unless they develop signs or symptoms of COVID-19. However, testing (e.g. rapid antigen testing) may be considered for any resident returning from a large family gathering 5-7 days after the event.

We wish
you a
safe and
enjoyable
festive
period

