



2nd November, 2021

Dear friends,

This letter follows my letter dated 25th October, 2021 and includes important updates about COVID-19 precautions. As usual, we are sharing this information with residents and their families or representatives, our staff, contractors, and volunteers, local GP practices, and the wider Southern Highlands Community.

You may have seen reports today about bringing forward freedoms for fully vaccinated people and deferring freedoms for unvaccinated people. Please do not confuse those announcements with information which relates to residential aged care in NSW generally, and Harbison specifically.

Existing visitor restrictions - reminder

Please refer to my last letter for details of visitor restrictions. By way of reminder, fully vaccinated means receiving your 2nd dose at least 14-days prior to your visit. Surgical masks remain mandatory for everyone except residents, and the screening requirements have been simplified to exclude anyone with COVID-19 signs or symptoms and anyone who are a close or casual contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case while they are in their isolation period.

International travel – staff and visitors

Now that international borders have reopened, you must not visit Harbison within 7-days of arrival from overseas and you must return a negative COVID-19 test on or after the 7th day. Otherwise, a 14-day exclusion period applies.

Visitors under the age of 12

In addition to two fully vaccinated visitors per resident per day, a resident may receive up to two children under the age of 12 per day, provided they are accompanied by a fully vaccinated adult visitor.

Where possible, visits including children under the age of 12 should occur outdoors, and visitors should arrange a rapid antigen test prior to the visit. Rapid antigen tests are now available in supermarkets and pharmacies.

New visitor management system

Our new visitor management system is now operating. We hope it improves the experience of checking-in to Harbison.

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 Yarrowa Road
Moss Vale NSW 2577
F 02 4869 3214

We require all visitors to provide proof of vaccination for influenza and COVID-19. You can upload your vaccination evidence using our website <https://harbison.org.au/proof-of-vaccination/> prior to your visit. You only need to register once, and the system will then recognise you when you visit. We will notify you when it is time to renew vaccination evidence each year.

If you have previously provided evidence of vaccination, you need to re-register to ensure your evidence is current. If you are not vaccinated for influenza and/or COVID-19 you will need special permission to visit. If you are medically contraindicated, you are required to provide proof of contraindication in the prescribed form.

It is still a requirement to also use the Service NSW app at check-in, or to complete the Service NSW form if you do not have a smart phone. I know it sounds like duplication, but we do not have access to the Service NSW system and are required to maintain our own visitor register.

For convenience, all staff will be offered a key tag to speed check-in. The key tag makes it quick and simple to check-in.

We will also issue key tags on request to family members who have registered in the new system. There is no charge for the key tag, but it must be returned when no longer required or a fee will apply.

Visiting hours – reminder

From today, visiting hours are from 8am to 6pm or by appointment. Checking-in correctly and wearing a surgical mask are conditions of entry. Visits must not occur in communal areas, which means they are limited to resident rooms or outdoors. Please remember to check-out when you depart.

Unvaccinated visitors – update

Except for end-of-life, people who are not fully vaccinated are excluded from residential aged care in NSW. We do not know what public health advice will apply when lockdown restrictions for unvaccinated people are removed on 15th December 2021 or when 95% of the eligible population is fully vaccinated (whichever is earlier).

There is a clear incentive for everyone to be vaccinated if they choose, and it is possible that restrictions will continue to apply in residential aged care after the general restrictions are eased. If you are not vaccinated and have a resident at Harbison, we urge you to reconsider your decision so you can have vital contact with your resident as soon as possible.

Resident Advisory Committee

The Resident Advisory Committee provides advice to the CEO about issues which impact safe and quality care at Harbison. It provides residents and their representatives with an alternative to providing direct feedback and oversees the schedule of resident and representative meetings. We created the committee in late 2018 to improve our feedback system and provide residents with ownership of their meetings.

I am very pleased to announce that Glennis Noble has agreed to take up the Chair of the Resident Advisory Committee. Glennis has been part of the Harbison family since her husband, Jim, took up residence here in 2018. Glennis has not only been a devoted advocate for Jim, but she has worked tirelessly as a volunteer to help other residents. Unfortunately, Jim died last year but Glennis has continued as a volunteer at Harbison and has served on the committee as a residents' representative since 2019.

I am grateful to Glennis for her amazing dedication to Harbison and for the role she has played as an advocate. I am pleased that she is the first residents' representative to chair the committee, and we look forward to supporting her and the committee in their work. I also thank the current members of the committee – Jennifer, Harold, Pam, Jill, Shan, and Jane – for their service.

If you are interested in joining the committee or would like to discuss something with a member of the committee, simply let a member of staff know.

Moss Vale Refurbishment – update

I am pleased to confirm that the significant refurbishment project at Moss Vale is almost complete. We are very happy with the new lease of life the renovation has given to the home. If you have not seen the result, we invite you to take a virtual tour on our website <https://harbison.org.au/life-at-harbison/> or drop in for a coffee (Maddie's coffee is the best in the Highlands!).

Thank you to the residents and staff who have shown remarkable resilience during the project, which has taken longer than originally planned because of the pandemic. The final touches include new suites which offer additional living room for residents, and new carpet and paint in Berrima. I am grateful to KELA, who also built Harbison Dementia Living at Burradoo, for their flexibility and focus on safety throughout the program – renovating a home while 120+ people are living in it is not an easy job; doing it during a pandemic is heroic.

Thank you for reading this letter. We look forward to welcoming visitors from Sydney and further afield but remind everyone that the risk of COVID-19 transmission into aged care is high, and it only takes one mistake or careless step to trigger an outbreak. Please continue to work with our staff to keep everyone at Harbison safe, and to ensure we can all enjoy each other's company this Summer.

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