

2 March 2022

Dear friends

This letter follows my correspondence of 16 February 2022 and provides important updates about our COVID-19 precautions at Harbison. As usual, we share this communication with our residents and their representatives, our workforce including our amazing volunteers and contractors, local GPs, our company members, and the wider community.

### **Burradoo Hostel is closed to visitors**

We have a member of our workforce who has tested positive for COVID-19 and is deemed a low-risk exposure for the residents living in the Burradoo Hostel. However, out of caution we have closed the Hostel to visitors for seven (7) days.

During this time, Partners in Care may continue to support their Hostel resident in accordance with the agreed Care Plan.

Hostel residents are not permitted to have social outings during this time, but essential medical appointments will be supported.

### **Third dose COVID-19 vaccination is now mandatory for aged care workers**

Yesterday the NSW Government made it mandatory for aged care workers to have a third COVID-19 vaccine dose, in accordance with the National Cabinet decision announced on 10 February 2022. Workers have until **Tuesday, 12 April 2022** to provide us with evidence of their third dose.

Newer workers must have their third dose within six (6) weeks of their third dose due date, which is currently 13 weeks after the second dose. If in doubt, check with your manager.

In addition, there is a new medical contraindication form (IM011). Earlier contraindication forms are invalid, which means if you are contraindicated for COVID-19 vaccination you must obtain a new form from your GP or specialist and provide it to us.

### **Reminder – social and emergency leave**

We recently surveyed residents and found that many residents did not understand their rights in relation to social and emergency leave. We have previously provided information about emergency leave with these letters, but here is a summary of how each type of leave works.

1. **Hospital Leave** – if you need to go to hospital you are entitled to unlimited days of Hospital Leave. You are required to pay your agreed aged care fees while you are in hospital, but your place is secure until your return from hospital.

2. **Social Leave** – you are entitled to 52 days of social leave each financial year (ie, from July to June). You must pay your agreed aged care fees while you are on social leave, but your place is secure until you return from leave. You may take your social leave in blocks or just a day here and there.
3. **Emergency Leave** – you are entitled to unlimited emergency leave during declared emergencies, like pandemics or natural disasters. Currently, emergency leave is available until 30 June 2022. If you take emergency leave, your social leave entitlement is not affected. Emergency leave is for non-hospital reasons. If you need to go to hospital during an emergency, you should use Hospital Leave. You must pay your agreed aged care fees while on Emergency Leave, but your place is secure until you return from Emergency Leave. You are entitled to limited in-home care support while on Emergency Leave, which can be organised directly with My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 or with the help of Older Persons Advocacy Network (**OPAN**) on 1800 700 600.

If you need help understanding your rights in relation to leave, please ask a member of staff. If you prefer, we can help you arrange an advocate from OPAN or Seniors Rights Service to speak to us on your behalf.

We encourage residents to use their social leave if they are able and encourage families to understand how leave works to ensure residents enjoy all the opportunities which are available to them.

If you are concerned about ongoing access during the pandemic, we encourage you to consider emergency leave while it is available, however we also encourage participation in the Partnerships in Care program as an alternative or complimentary strategy.

I am sorry for the need to isolate the Burradoo Hostel but rolling exposures and outbreaks should be expected due to ongoing community transmission.

Our thoughts go out to everyone affected by the current flood emergency, and the war in Ukraine. Every member of our workforce, and their families, are entitled to use the free and confidential Access Employee Assistance Program (**EAP**) if they would like some extra support at this time. The number for Access EAP is 1800 818 728.

Thank you for reading this letter. I will update you again soon.

Yours sincerely



David Cochran  
**Chief Executive Officer**