



Wednesday, 11 May 2022

Dear friends

This letter contains an update about Harbison's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and other (hopefully) useful information. Because we are committed to the principle of transparency, we share these letters with our residents and their families and representatives, our workforce including our volunteers and contractors, our company members, local general practices, and the wider community.

As always, we welcome your feedback, formal or informal, and remind you that there are advocacy services like OPAN (ph. 1800 700 600) or Seniors Rights Service (ph. 1800 424 079) if you are more comfortable having someone speak to us on your behalf.

High risk exposure

At the time of writing, we are monitoring a high risk COVID-19 exposure at both sites.

We are temporarily closed to visitors except Partners-in-Care and end-of-life visits. Staff are working in extra PPE, our dining rooms are closed, residents are confined to their wings, non-essential staff are working from home, and the café is serving takeaway only. The hairdresser remains open for now, and we hope to conduct our vaccination clinics as scheduled.

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

These arrangements may change without notice over the next few days. We are planning to test our residents on Thursday, 12 May (tomorrow) and Monday, 16 May and are monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms twice a day. We strongly discourage non-essential outings by residents until at least next Tuesday, 17 May 2022.

Harbison is well organised and well supplied, and we are confident in our ability to manage this exposure risk if it develops into an outbreak. However, we are optimistic that our response today will minimise the risk of an outbreak. We will provide an update about the current situation as soon as possible, and keep families informed directly if any residents are unwell.

2022 Winter vaccination program

We are well underway with our winter vaccination program. Residents are being supported and strongly encouraged to have their annual influenza vaccination and winter COVID-19 booster dose, in accordance with the latest Public Health Advice. We are grateful to our GPs and pharmacists for supporting the program.

The flu vaccine can be safely given on the same day as the winter COVID-19 booster, but in most cases Harbison residents will be immunised at different times. The winter COVID-19 booster dose can be given four (4) months after the first (1st) booster dose, or four (4) months after a COVID-19 infection if the infection was after the first (1st) booster dose.

If you have any questions or concerns about the winter vaccination program, please speak to one of our Registered Nurses or your GP.

Since 2018, it has been a condition of employment for staff to have an annual influenza vaccination. We provide staff with the option to attend free influenza

vaccination clinics, or they can arrange their own vaccination and provide their manager with proof of vaccination. Aged care workers are also required to have a third (3rd) dose of COVID-19 vaccine but are not required to have the winter booster dose being offered to residents (which is, in effect, a fourth (4th) dose). Harbison staff are Rapid Antigen Testing prior to each shift until further notice.

Visitors are strongly encouraged to have the annual influenza vaccination and must disclose their influenza vaccination status as a condition of entry.

Unvaccinated visitors may be required to take additional precautions including additional PPE and other restrictions.

Together, we can ensure that the risks posed by COVID-19 and influenza this winter are minimised. In the event of another outbreak, remember we now have effective treatments available.

Current visitor restrictions

Aside from the temporary restrictions announced today, you might guess from the reduced frequency of these letters that there have been minimal changes to visitor restrictions in the past month.

Most importantly, the changed rules about close contacts in the community do not apply to residential aged care. If you are a close contact, or otherwise exposed to COVID-19, **you must not enter a residential aged care property** for at least seven (7) (and preferably 14) days after the exposure or the date on which the last person in your household had a positive COVID-19 test.

The exception to this rule is any asymptomatic member of staff who has been exposed but is deemed essential to the provision of safe care, in which case your manager will impose a risk management plan to permit you to continue to work.

The prohibition on entering residential aged care services until at least seven (7) days after arrival from overseas is also still in place. If you have recently arrived from overseas, you will need to have a negative test on day six (6) after entering New South Wales.

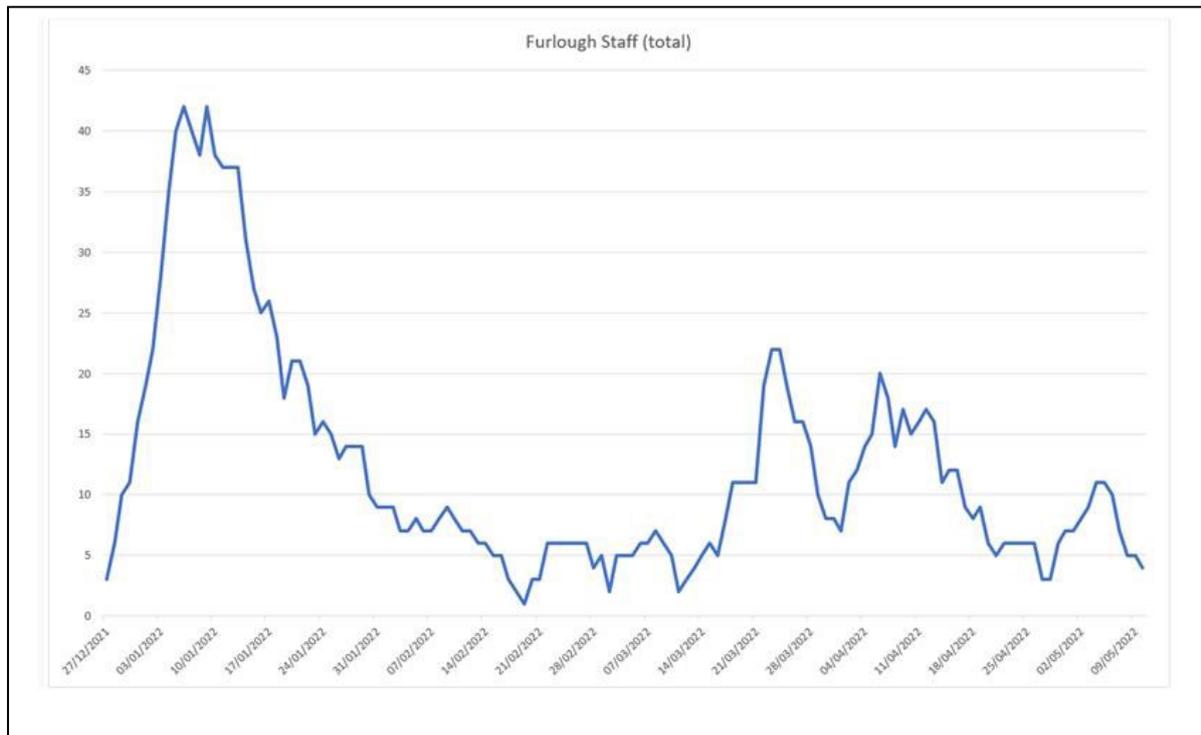
The other rules include:

- You must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 except if you are under the age of 12 or visiting at end-of-life.
- You must have a negative Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) immediately prior to entry.
- Visiting hours are from 11am to 4pm except for Partners-in-Care or by prior arrangement.
- You must wear the mask supplied by Harbison, and may only remove it to eat or drink in the café (currently take away only), or with the permission of a Registered Nurse, in which case social distance must be maintained.
- You must practice alcohol-based hand hygiene before, during, and after your visit.
- Visits must take place in resident rooms, outdoors, or in the café (currently take away only).
- You must not enter if you have COVID-19 symptoms or are waiting for a COVID-19 test result.
- Only two (2) visitors per resident per day (plus two (2) children under twelve years) are permitted.

We request you consider donating to Harbison when you visit, to offset the cost of screening, testing, and PPE. Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible and we have installed convenient tap-and-go terminals at the entry. We estimate the cost of screening, testing, and providing PPE to each visitor is at least \$10.

Rolling impact on our staff

It is important to remember that community transmission is having a rolling impact on staffing. This graph shows the number of furloughed staff since our first outbreak in December 2021.



As you can see, to date we have experienced three (3) post-outbreak peaks. Fortunately, the trend is positive, so we remain confident that the worst is behind us. Please be patient as we manage the impacts of COVID-19 leave and be kind to staff who may be working additional hours or in unfamiliar surroundings.

Resident outings & emergency leave

Residents may leave Harbison on social leave but must have a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) on days two (2) and six (6) after their return. Be mindful that regular outings will result in regular testing. Residents who develop COVID-19 symptoms after their return will be immediately isolated pending PCR testing.

Remember that COVID-19 emergency leave expires on 30 June 2022. Emergency leave is optional for residents who prefer not to use their social leave entitlement to temporarily return to the community during the pandemic.

Eliza Stankovic-Mowle AM, Harbison's 2022 Tulip Time Ambassador

As you know, we are proud to have Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC QC, Governor of New South Wales, as Patron of Harbison.

Now, I am excited to announce that inspirational Paralympian Eliza Stankovic-Mowle AM has agreed to act as our ambassador for Tulip Time 2022 (16 September to 3 October 2022). Eliza attended Chevalier College, opposite Harbison Burradoo, before pursuing a successful athletic career including the Olympics, Paralympics, and Commonwealth Games.

The power of the Paralympics to transcend sport and showcase the diversity of human ability is unique. The Paralympic values of determination, equality, inspiration, and courage are personified by Eliza and align nicely with the Harbison core values of respect, optimism, authenticity, and dedication.

It is interesting to consider that Harbison opened in 1959 - one (1) year before the first Paralympics in Rome. Based on our values, we like to think we share more than a 60+ year history. The Harbison float won the *Festival of Flowers* (forerunner to Tulip Time) parade in 1958 and we are proud to be represented 64-years later by a champion (and mum!) of Eliza's calibre, and to play our role as the 2022 *Charity Partner*.

Because of the pandemic, it has been more than two (2) years since the community could come together for Tulip Time. I look forward to sharing more about our plans as the celebration draws nearer. Meanwhile, please join me in thanking Eliza for taking on the role of our ambassador.

Thank you for reading this letter. Please help us protect our residents from COVID-19 and influenza this winter and keep supporting our staff as they juggle the ongoing, exhausting challenges of the pandemic. I look forward to relaxing rules when it is safe to do so, but for now we remain alert to the high risk to our vulnerable people represented by any complacency.

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