

28 April 2020

Dear Residents and Families,

Thank you for your ongoing understanding and support as we work together to protect our community from COVID-19.

Positively, we are continuing to read optimistic and good progression of COVID-19 strategies and the likely de-escalation of public isolation and restrictions. I also note the Prime Minister's comments regarding visitation in aged care facilities last week. I have strongly suggested for the last 7 weeks that visiting not occur unless residents or families were really longing for their loved one given the terrible and sad impact of the virus in aged care services.

The risk of COVID transmission remains, particularly in the older population but we have more recently seen low levels of infection rates in our region.

I am most thankful for your support as we continue to review and evaluate our precautions. Consistent with previous correspondence and increasing evidence we have moved through the peak of infections we are facilitating resident and family visits. The planned visiting arrangement to minimise the risk to residents and allow for social distancing includes:

- A limit of 2 people for a 15 minute time period Monday to Friday commencing at 10.30am;
- Visiting time will be held in the community centre and you will need to be screened at our reception area;
- Contact our reception to make an appointment for visiting so that social distancing principles can apply.

Please also remember that influenza vaccination will be a requirement to enter an aged care service from 1 May 2020.

All other precautions remain in place, including:

- All residents, new or existing, and following a hospital admission are required to self-isolate for 14 days;

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- Staff, residents and contractors that have travelled overseas; or travelled inter or intrastate by air are required to isolate for 14 days;
- Cafés remain open but for takeaway service only;
- All gates remain closed with PIN access only. We have locked Gate 1 as too many children and other pedestrians were accessing this area when the gate opened;
- Staff wear cloth masks at all times in an aged care service. It is just not practical or possible for single use surgical masks to be used in these circumstances, noting the number of interactions and the large number of masks required daily; and
- All visitors to the retirement village are to enter via the main reception for screening during reception hours (Mon- Fri 8.30am- 5.00pm and Weekends 8.30am- 3.30pm).

We also continue to screen via temperature checking and questionnaire all staff and contractors daily and prior to entry into the Village to reduce the risk of entry of the virus to as low as possible.

We will likely see a relaxation of community isolation rules by the Federal and NSW governments in the next 2-3 weeks and we may also see some small increases in infection as more people move around the community. Aged care will likely to be one of the last services to be unrestricted given the terrible impact of the virus in aged care services and I do not anticipate our services will be included in this relaxation of policy for some months.

I also continue to encourage the use of technology to communicate and we have all seen the wonderful effects this provides to everyone involved. Please contact one of our many RAO's to arrange some 'Face Time' with your loved one.

There are also many positives that will likely come from this unique period. For Garden Village it certainly brings an increased ability for technology to be used in the future whether between family and friends or between resident and doctor. The way we enhance resident's lifestyle through recreation is also an area that will see enhancements and innovation in both our aged care and retirement living environments.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions and I look forward to again writing to you and updating you on this situation next week.

Yours sincerely,



Craig Wearne
Chief Executive Officer