

19 March 2020

Dear Staff Member

Important Coronavirus Update

Our aim is to ensure that our aged care homes are some of the safest places in Australia while we navigate these concerning times. As we continually monitor the spread of Coronavirus we are very mindful of the need to balance our residents' and your safety with emotional care and compassion.

Following yesterday's announcement by our Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, and in line with the Australian Health Protection Committee's recommendation to "take proactive measures to protect vulnerable populations", we are now initiating a **voluntary lockdown** in our homes for a period of two weeks, effective 5.00pm Friday 20th March.

Not only does this decision help us keep the virus out of our homes, but it also gives us the opportunity to consult with our residents over this period to ensure we are meeting all their needs while continuing to provide individual and essential care.

We will reassess our position on Friday 3rd April, taking into account the feedback we collate during this period, along with the best medical and public health advice available.

During lockdown, no visitors will be allowed to enter our homes

This decision has not been made lightly and is welcomed by both staff and residents who we surveyed.

We understand that there will be some exceptional circumstances which we may grant access, such as compassionate visits. It's important that we combine empathy with common sense when discussing these special circumstances. All requests must be approved by your Home Manager or delegated authority, where he or she will need to conduct pre-screening to ensure visitors:

- can demonstrate that they are well,
- haven't been overseas in the previous 14 days and
- haven't been in direct contact with any person diagnosed with Coronavirus.

Please note that entrances will be placed on night mode and each of the homes will receive a poster to be placed at the front door, which should be the single point of entry. This will inform visitors that we are in lock-down and request they call the home manager to discuss.

Staying connected

These new restrictions may require some adjustment for many family members in the first instance. We have advised them to stay in touch by calling the home or arranging calls through the Home Manager. We will also be working through a range of digital options such as iPad, Facetime and Skype to enable residents and families to stay connected and will update you as these options are implemented.

Staying safe, well and informed

Please do continue to practice good hygiene as this is one of the most important things we can do to reduce the spread of germs.

This includes but is not limited to:

- Washing your hands with soap and warm water, for a minimum of 20 seconds. If water is not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub;
- When coughing and sneezing cover your mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue, and dispose of the tissue immediately; wash your hands afterward;
- If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing **seek medical care early** and if required share your travel history with your health care provider.

We are also looking to implement welfare checks and well-being screening for all staff at handover and will update you when this has been finalised.

Please remember **to stay home if you feel unwell.**

We appreciate the frequent communication you are receiving can be overwhelming, and in response to your feedback, we have developed a frequently asked question sheet. You will find a copy in the staff room. If you have a more specific questions or feedback, please refer them to your Home Manager.

We will continue to keep you updated and informed of any changes to the information in this letter. We want to reassure you again of **our unwavering commitment to your safety and well-being.**

Thank you in advance for your support and understanding.

Yours sincerely



Lindon Le Griffon
Chief Operations Officer