

29th July 2020

Dear Japara Residents and Family Members

Update regarding COVID-19 Cases in Japara Homes and Other COVID-19 Matters

Further to our last communication on 20th July 2020, we are writing to provide you with an update in relation to the COVID-19 cases in our aged care homes in Melbourne. We acknowledge the deeply concerning escalation of outbreaks across the sector and the tremendous impact this has on residents, their families and staff working in affected homes. Our highest priority is to keep our residents and our staff safe, supported and well. We are also focused on providing regular and informative communication to all our residents, their families and our staff.

Update on Affected Homes

Japara has four homes in Metropolitan Melbourne with confirmed COVID-19 cases. There are no other Japara homes currently with a confirmed case. The impacted homes are:

- Millward (Doncaster East) – with nine staff and twelve resident cases.
- Central Park (St Kilda) – with six staff cases and one resident case.
- Yarra West (Yarraville) – is in a precautionary lockdown following one staff member testing positive for COVID-19. The staff member had not worked in the home during their infectious period. Testing of residents and most staff was recently undertaken and we are very pleased to advise that all results have come back negative. Testing of the remaining staff is in progress.
- Bayview (Carrum Downs) – is similarly in a precautionary lockdown following a staff member testing positive for COVID-19. The staff member was also not working during their infectious period. Results from recent testing of residents and staff are pending.

Confirming our Steps to Protect Residents and Staff at Affected Homes

Japara has a comprehensive emergency management plan that is enacted immediately at a home where a resident or staff member of that home has tested positive to COVID-19. The Emergency Management Committee that oversees the plan's implementation is very experienced having dealt with emergencies at homes impacted by bushfires and floods earlier this year and more recently the COVID-19 cases. Japara also has an Infection Control Expert who is a critical member of that Committee.

Stringent infection control measures remain in place at impacted homes and are closely monitored by our quality management team, Commonwealth and State health authorities and the aged care regulator. Contact tracing is immediately initiated following a confirmed case and identified close contacts are notified and are

required to isolate. Infected residents are transferred to hospital where this is deemed necessary following consultation with the relevant health authorities. Testing on residents and staff is conducted regularly as directed by the health authorities to detect new cases as early as possible.

Regular communication updates are provided to all staff, residents and resident families of the affected home including following testing and any other major developments. Staff are available to answer individual queries by phone and regular contact and support is provided to those isolating.

Numerous other health and safety precautions are enacted in line with our own strict protocols and the Government directives and guidelines as outlined in our last update.

Please be reassured that support is provided to all affected residents, staff and families. This is an anxious time and everyone is impacted differently. Our response is tailored to the circumstances and the preferences of the individuals concerned.

Primary Worksite Principles

The Government has recently announced its plan to encourage aged care staff, working at multiple homes across Melbourne metro and Mitchell shire, to elect to work at one home only. This measure will assist in preventing the spread of COVID-19 across multiple homes and support efforts to contain the virus. As COVID-19 is infectious prior to the onset of symptoms, and sometimes even without symptoms appearing, these measures are important to protect our residents and staff from infection.

Our impacted homes are actively engaging with affected staff to ascertain their preferences and work through the process of identifying their primary worksite.

COVID-19 Mobile Testing Clinics in Victoria

The Department of Health has commenced rolling out testing through mobile clinics across Victoria. This provides the health authorities with an opportunity to find positive cases who are living or working in aged care settings and identify community transmission before COVID-19 outbreaks occur. The tests are voluntary but Japara highly encourages all staff to be tested.

Updates to Visitation

All Japara homes in **Victoria, New South Wales and now Queensland** remain closed to visitors other than for compassionate or essential reasons. All staff in our Victorian and New South Wales homes are required to wear masks as directed by the health authorities.

General support visitors and external providers such as volunteers, hairdressers, library book services and entertainers cannot enter those homes until further notice. Essential services contractors are still being permitted for scheduled and reactive essential works and are required to wear Personal Protective Equipment including full face masks and undertake pre-entry screening.

Using a Face Mask

Japara has produced a video to support staff and visitors with the donning and doffing of face masks. Please click on the following link to view this video: <https://japara.info/ppe-mask>

Stay Alert to Symptoms

Visitors to our homes can help protect the residents and staff from contracting the COVID-19 virus. If you feel even mildly unwell and/or experience any of these symptoms, please **do not visit a Japara home**. Symptoms may include the following:

- fever above 37.5°C
- headaches
- chills or sweats
- cough
- sore throat
- shortness of breath
- runny nose
- loss of sense of smell or taste
- muscle soreness
- stuffy nose
- nausea
- vomiting
- diarrhoea
- lethargy


If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, seek immediate health advice from your GP/doctor or contact the National Coronavirus Hotline 1800 020 080.

If you are being tested for COVID-19, even if you have no symptoms, we request that you do not visit a Japara home until a negative result is confirmed.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your on-going support and to acknowledge all our dedicated staff for their work and support during these difficult and uncertain times. Japara is proud of the tremendous efforts made by all staff in keeping residents safe and their commitment to working together in these trying times. We acknowledge our residents and staff in isolation and wish that all our COVID-19 positive residents and staff make a speedy recovery.

Finally, if you have any questions at all about any of the contents in this letter, please don't hesitate to contact your Home Manager.

Take care and stay safe.



Chris Price
Chief Executive Officer