



26<sup>th</sup> May, 2020

Dear Residents, Family and Friends,

### **COVID-19 UPDATE**

I am sure many of you are relieved by the continuing relaxation of community restrictions; the ability to go to a restaurant, a beauty salon, return to the office or experience an overnight break to a favourite place. While these opportunities could appear quite minor it is the effect that provides hope for the aged and retirement communities. Community spread was described in a print media source recently as the “devil” and the prohibitive factor for our community as a whole returning to the “new normal”.

Having delved a little further the “new normal” is maintaining social distancing; hand hygiene, sanitising areas touched, and healthy practices in regard to testing & self-isolating if unwell. If you are in the vulnerable age range it appears that there are some other inclusions as we move towards a COVIDSafe Australia:

- ✓ continuing to stay at home and avoid contact with others
- ✓ continuing to avoid non-essential travel
- ✓ considering having the chemist deliver your medicines
- ✓ considering having your groceries and essential items delivered to your home and
- ✓ considering having family visit you rather than you visiting them
- ✓ consider using Telehealth facilities for medical appointments

It remains clear that despite the reported progress with developing vaccines and credible treatments that until available for our elders it will be a safety first approach, an approach that requires the continuance of some limitations and a more prudent approach to lessening restrictions than is occurring in the broader community.

From this week we will be re-commencing modified communion services in Carabella House; from 1 June 2020 we will be commencing community access drives and from 9 June 2020 we will be re-opening our gymnasium, hair, and beauty salons.

As to visiting I will be reviewing access, community spread and other Dept. advice plus resourcing requirements over the next two weeks and will make an announcement on 15 June 2020.

International Nurses Day: Australia marked International Nurses Day on 12 May 2020, and I paid tribute to our staff during that week and spoke of the relevance of Florence Nightingale, whose pioneering work in the Crimean War on sanitation and the importance of handwashing could not be more relevant today.

Our sector has approximately 50,000 nurses employed to care for 1.2 million senior Australians and ensuring infection prevention and control processes are in place. Their work is, of course, vitally important at any time.

During the current pandemic, the contribution of nurses across the country, in the aged care sector and elsewhere, is greatly appreciated.

Other Aged Care News: From July, the government will publish a compliance rating for quality and safety of a residential aged care service on the My Aged Care website. The rating system was developed by the Department of Health in partnership with the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission and in consultation with stakeholders, including senior Australians, their caregivers, aged care providers, and a range of peak bodies.

- The rating will allow consumers to access and compare easy-to-understand information on the quality of residential aged care services, supporting more informed decision-making.
- The rating will reflect a service's current compliance position – i.e. whether a service has a sanction or non-compliance notice and the outcome of the most recent performance assessment by the Commission against the Aged Care Quality Standards

This initiative was birthed from the initial report from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety where the report stated that Australia's aged care system "lacks fundamental transparency". "There is very little information available to the public about the performance of service providers," the report noted. Further, "The number of complaints against them are not published. The number of assaults in their services are not published. The number of staff they employ to provide care are not published. Participation by providers in the collection of a very limited set of performance indicators only became compulsory on 1 July 2019."

At this stage we are unsure as to how we will be rated therefore I will provide more information as it becomes available over the next few weeks.

Finally thank you for your continued understand and patience. Thank you may be over used by me lately but it reflects how we feel every day. We never forget how blessed we are to be in a position to know and care for our elders, our family members and all the other stakeholders that we have the privilege to engage with daily.

Thank you and take care

*Jennifer*