

**29<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

**Dear Staff, Residents & Families**

I am pleased to report that we have been out of outbreak for almost one week now. However, we have remained very cautious about how quickly we return to normal business operations due to the number of COVID cases in the community and the predictions of a third wave of COVID affecting our health system. We are also still feeling the impact of staff shortages due to the winter months and the general increase in illness that this creates.

Whilst the media has been very generous in its reporting of the freedom that visitors have in accessing aged care homes, the health authorities are still insisting that the management of each home has the responsibility for managing the risk of COVID at the home. This is a matter we take seriously as our primary function is to protect residents and staff from unnecessary exposure to COVID.

The number of cases in the community and the increased risk of reinfection of the new COVID variants have meant that we will still be maintaining some level of control over visits to the home.

These have been summarised below:

- We will be limiting visitor numbers to 2 adults and 2 children per resident within a 24 hour period. All visitors and children over the age of 12 will be required to always wear an N95 mask whilst visiting within the home.
- We will consider increased visitor numbers for special occasions such as a birthday or for visitors who have travelled long distances but please check with reception that this can be accommodated safely before making such arrangements.
- All visitors will need to have an RA test prior to entry to the home, including children.
- Visitors and staff should maintain social distances and limit interactions wherever possible.
- Visitors should not move between different areas of the home and should only visit their loved one in their room or in an outdoor setting.
- It is no longer a requirement for visitors to be vaccinated; however, as the managers of the home with responsibility for managing risk, we still have the discretion to refuse entry to anybody who we think poses a high risk to the residents and to the staff.
- Visits will still need to be booked in via our visitor booking system. I am sure you will appreciate that this is necessary due to the additional workload that managing visitor access places on our staff. In this time where our staffing levels are being challenged, we want our staff to spend their time with your loved ones rather than attending to visitor COVID administration requirements.
- Visiting times will continue to be restricted to:
  - Weekdays 9am to 4pm
  - Weekends 10am to 2pm

I trust that you will appreciate the need for MACI to maintain the above visitor arrangements as we struggle through the last couple of months of winter. I do appreciate everybody's cooperation with

our requirements...I think we are all looking forward to warmer times and a time when COVID is not so intrusive on our lives.

Please call us on the dedicated COVID phone line if you have any questions about COVID. Our dedicated line is **0488 100 105**.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Beard', written in a cursive style.

Stephen Beard  
Chief Executive Officer  
Multicultural Aged Care Illawarra (MACI)