

8 August 2023

Dear Residential Care residents, families and visitors

We are now in our 4<sup>th</sup> year of COVID-19 and you will have noticed for some time now a decreasing emphasis in the broader community as the focus shifts toward *'living with COVID'* as we would many other respiratory viruses such as influenza and RSV.

In May, the UN World Health Organization (WHO) declared an end to COVID-19 as a public health emergency while stressing that it does not mean the disease is no longer a threat.

In late June, NSW Health revised their advice to Aged Care facilities in relation to visitor entry. These changes support facilities in taking a more flexible and risk-based approach to entry requirements, particularly those related to Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) of visitors prior to entry.

We continue to closely monitor the rates of community transmission of COVID-19 and though cases of COVID-19 are still occurring the rates are at low levels. As a result, we have made the decision to remove the requirement for Visitors to complete a RAT prior to entry.

Please be assured that this change is in alignment with the current health advice and our Staff continue to test daily prior to every shift for now.

This change will commence on Friday 11 August with a RAT no longer routinely required prior to entry. All other entry conditions remain. These including **not entering** if you:

- a) Have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 7 days.
- b) Have had close contact with someone who has COVID-19 in the last 7 days
- c) Are unwell in any way, including with cold or flu symptoms or any other illness such as vomiting or diarrhea.

While this is a positive change we must be prepared for those periods when more stringent entry requirements are needed, for example when community transmission is at high levels or during an outbreak.

Our aim is to limit those periods to as short a time as possible and for that we need your help and support.

Please remember that even the common cold and stomach bug can have significant health impacts for those who live in aged care. If you are unwell we ask that come back when you are feeling better.

Kind regards

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

Michael Penhey  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**