

22 April 2022



Dear Residential Care residents and families

On Wednesday 20 April the NSW Government announced an easing of COVID-19 isolation requirements for the general community to close contacts of people who test positive for COVID-19. As has been the case throughout this pandemic, aged care health advice has been different from that of the community due to the identified vulnerable nature of our residents.

This is again the case in this instance, with close contact rules remaining in place for aged care. Therefore, if you are identified as a close contact in the community you still cannot visit an aged care facility for 14 days from the date of initial contact. This will of course continue to have implications for our staffing, although we remain committed to doing all we can to minimise the impact on residents.

Understandably, these differences can be confusing for our stakeholders. Particularly when many of the precautions of COVID-19, such as mask wearing, is now limited to only a few settings.

These long awaited changes are very positive steps forward for us all and yet we remain tasked with the role of keeping our residents and clients safe. In doing so, we must continue to monitor and assess the risk presented by these community changes whilst looking for ways to gradually and safely return to 'normal' Crowley life.

It is with this in mind we are pleased to advise that **effective Wednesday 27 April** we will be winding back resident and staff cohorting within the facility. This will mean that all residents will be free to move throughout the building accessing all of the facilities, activities and spaces.

Visiting

We are continuing with our strategy of hosting visits outdoors, although we are removing the limit on the number of visitors who can attend. Outdoor visits continue to be in line with the NSW Health recommendations that visits should occur where possible outdoors. We know that the risk of transmission outdoors is significantly lower than indoors. We believe that this strategy combined with our infection control processes have been effective in keeping our residential care resident cases to a minimum, despite a number of visitors reporting they tested positive shortly after a visit.

We have also had some requests from families to visit their loved one in their room to assist with resetting their wardrobe, in line with the change of season. We are pleased to be able to facilitate these one-off internal visits by request.

If you wish to organise a visit please email communications@crowley.org.au and one of our team will be back in touch to make the arrangements. Please remember that COVID-19 rules for entering an aged care facility still apply, which include; returning a negative Rapid Antigen Test on the day of the visit, wearing a mask at all times, remaining in the resident's room throughout and only having contact with the resident being visited.

Barney's in the Plaza

At Crowley we know how much our residents enjoy the Café and that is why when COVID-19 closed our internal café we created Barney's in the Plaza. The outdoor café has proven so popular with residents and visitors from across the site that we are extending it's opening to 7 days per week. This may continue to be impacted by severe weather events or unexpected staff absence but we will do all we can to open each day.

You will have noticed that we have now installed a roof over the outdoor café pergola and added some new umbrellas. We also have some further enhancements planned, with the view of making Barney's in the Plaza an even more pleasant visiting experience.

Visiting times

Visiting times remain unchanged.

- Monday to Friday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm
- Weekends and Public Holidays 10:00 am to 2:00 pm

Whilst we are looking forward to these changes and moving ahead with fewer restrictions, we will continue to do so with caution. The risk of further outbreaks and significant case numbers remains and with winter approaching we must also consider the risk posed by an outbreak of Influenza.

As we have done throughout this pandemic, we ask that all residents and families when visiting or leaving the facility be cognisant of these risks and take all necessary precautions to protect themselves and the entire resident population.

Once again, thank you for working with us through these various challenges, your support of Crowley and our team remains a great encouragement as we all fight COVID-19 fatigue.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Penhey".

Michael Penhey
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER