

19 March 2020

Dear residents of our retirement living communities: St Brigid's Green, Maroubra; St Patrick's Green, Kogarah; and St Luke's Green, Woolloongabba

RE: Update on COVID-19 Response

I would like to provide a further update following our recent communications.

As you are aware, the World Health Organisation has declared the COVID-19 situation a pandemic. Subsequently, our Australian Government has made several strategy and action recommendations specific to the way we interact socially with each other, and in particular how we can best care for our elderly community.

In order to stay abreast of the pandemic, Greengate has formed a COVID-19 Steering Committee which meets every morning to review and discuss the latest medical advice and to prepare appropriate response plans. The situation is fluid and we are committed to ensuring we have appropriate plans in place at all times.

On 18 March 2020, the Prime Minister released an update on Coronavirus measures that has specific recommendations for aged care; we have attached an extract for your information. The Department of Health also released updated guidance, which we have also attached for your information. Whilst not all of this information applies directly to retirement villages, we believe it includes some helpful information and advice that may be of interest to you.

Yesterday I issued a letter to all residents and families of our aged care homes, informing them of the strict new rules we have put in place in relation to access around our villages, and severely restricted visiting rights – these new rules have been made in accordance with the government's guidance. This letter sets out plans for the retirement village residents in Greengate Villages.

Whilst we recognise that Retirement Living Residents do not fall into the category of 'aged care,' we are just as concerned about your safety and wellbeing as that of our aged care residents. We cannot enforce any measures upon you, but we ask you to consider your role as a member of a community full of people who may be classed as a 'high risk,' and to treat the recommended measures seriously to ensure the whole village remains safe during this time of uncertainty. Globally, there are increased measures being adopted which recommend self-isolation for those over 70 years old. We are monitoring these events and considering how we can be ready to support the further needs of our communities in such circumstances.

To minimise the risk of external environments entering our villages, and to protect our residents, we have enacted the following:

All visitors to the village (aged care or retirement living) are **REQUIRED TO ATTEND THE FRONT RECEPTION** before entering at **EVERY VISIT**.

- All visitors will continue to be asked to sign a declaration regarding their recent travel and health, and will also be subject to a proximity temperature check. Should anyone present with a temperature higher than 37.5°C they will not be permitted to enter the village.

- Visiting hours are restricted to times when our Reception area is open, which is Monday through Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm and on weekends from 9.00am to 1.00pm. Visitors will not be able to enter the village outside of these hours while this pandemic continues.
- Clear signage has been placed at every alternative entranceway to remind visitors of the necessity of attending reception immediately on arrival. This will be monitored and visitors who are found to be within our village without having being screened at reception first may have their fob access cards or pin codes disabled while this pandemic continues.
- We have placed restrictions on visits to aged care residents.
- Under guidance by the Prime Minister, children under the age of 16 are not allowed within aged care or common areas unless by exception. We do not recommend any visits by children under the age of 16 to our communities and recommend the increased use of video technology to maintain contact. Should you wish to be visited by a child under 16 then alternate arrangement for direct access to your unit must be considered.

Once within our villages all visitors are reminded of basic precautions, maintaining where possible a comfortable social distance of 1.5m, regular and thorough hand cleansing, respiratory hygiene and walking directly to the person they are visiting. A brochure for visitors has been provided to be displayed at reception to advise on how to reduce the likelihood of carrying the virus.

If a visitor or employee develops respiratory symptoms while in the village, they are to be provided a surgical mask and asked to leave the village and seek medical attention.

All contractors and Greengate corporate office team members have been asked to cease non-essential visits to our villages.

We have increased the frequency of our cleaning program to be in line with or exceed the Department of Health recommendations.

From 1 May 2020, the Prime Minister has noted access will not be allowed into aged care facilities for any employees or visitors who are not vaccinated against influenza. We expect that the influenza vaccination will be available soon and encourage all retirement living residents to obtain a free vaccination which Greengate will facilitate at our villages.

We are asking that groups of residents within our common areas be limited to no more than five (5) people. NSW Health guidance states the risk of infection increases with close contact (touch or proximity of less than 1.5m) and for periods of over 15 minutes. Please be mindful of these risks in all your activities within the community.

We are monitoring further potential and required changes in relation to access into our villages, as well as the separation of use of any shared lifts or spaces that could lead to cross-contamination between aged care and retirement living residents.

Should you wish to have your temperature checked, please come down to reception during business hours. If you feel you have a temperature, then please request this to be done in the isolation of your home.

Symptomatic residents are to self-isolate and contact their doctor, and if having shortness of breath or other serious respiratory symptoms, hospital transfer is recommended via ambulance by using the safety link button in the apartments.

Self-isolation means:

- Stay in your apartment until the doctor says you are no longer contagious. There is a minimum 14 days isolation required after contact with a person known to be infected with COVID-19.
- Do not go out into common areas of the village.
- Do not have unnecessary visitors, other than community nurse/support or essential family support. The community nurse needs to be informed so that they can take precautions when visiting. The visitors must go directly to visit you and not linger in common areas.
- If you do have to travel outside your apartment, for example to attend the doctor, wear a surgical mask. When you put it on, press around the nose piece to mould it to your face. Use cough etiquette.
- Look after yourself, drink plenty of fluids, eat nutritional food that has been stored and heated correctly. Keep your environment clean by wiping surfaces you touch often, at least daily if you are able.
- Keep in touch with the Village Manager by phone so that you can have the support you need with things such as ordering groceries or meals (as available).
- Use your Safety Link if you develop any shortness of breath, or have any medical emergencies after hours.

To support our retirement living residents, we are investigating how Greengate's supply chain can support access to supplies or food – we want to work with you to understand how we can help.

We are looking at how Greengate can provide more options for support within your retirement apartments, and potential additional options for meals to be prepared and provided to residents.

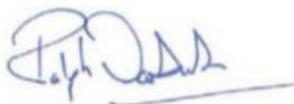
In short, we are trying to be as ready as we can to help our communities for what is an ever-changing environment.

The above measures are entirely focused on keeping our residents safe and comfortable. We recognise that some of these strategies will have an impact on the social and emotional wellbeing within our villages, and we appreciate your support and understanding as we work together during this challenging and unprecedented time – please remember we are here for you.

As always, your local village teams are available to chat with you about any of your concerns. We are here to discuss these required actions in relation to the ongoing care and support of our residents. We aim to keep you as informed as possible and further updates will be distributed when new information comes to light.

Stay well, and look out for your neighbours.

Sincerely,



Ralph Warburton
Chief Executive Officer



The Hon. Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister

MEDIA STATEMENT

Wednesday 18 March 2020

UPDATE ON CORONAVIRUS MEASURES

The focus for the Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments is the health and wellbeing of Australians and their livelihoods, ensuring that Australia is positioned to emerge strong and resilient from this global pandemic crisis.

Leaders met last night for the second National Cabinet meeting and agreed to further actions to protect the Australian community from the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Aged Care and Older Australians

As the transmission of COVID-19 increases rapidly, it is our priority to protect and support elderly and vulnerable Australians. Aged care is a critical sector that faces staffing challenges as existing staff are either subject to self-isolation requirements due to COVID-19 or are unable to attend work.

The National Cabinet has agreed to the recommendations by the AHPPC to enhanced arrangements to protect older Australians in Residential Aged Care Facilities and in the community

Restrictions on entry into aged care facilities

The following visitors and staff (including visiting workers) should not be permitted to enter the facility:

- Those who have returned from overseas in the last 14 days;
- Those who have been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days;
- Those with fever or symptoms of acute respiratory infection (e.g. cough, sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath); and
- Those who have not been vaccinated against influenza (after 1 May)

Visitors

Aged care facilities should implement the following measures for restricting visits and visitors to reduce the risk of transmission to residents, including:

- Limiting visits to a short duration;
- Limiting visits to a maximum of two immediate social supports (family members, close friends) or professional service or advocacy at one time, per day;
- Visits should be conducted in a resident's room, outdoors, or in a specific area designated by the aged care facility, rather than communal areas where the risk of transmission to residents is greater;
- No large group visits or gatherings, including social activities or entertainment, should be permitted at this time;
- No school groups of any size should be allowed to visit aged care facilities.
- Visitors should also be encouraged to practise social distancing practices where possible, including maintaining a distance of 1.5 metres.
- Children aged 16 years or less must be permitted only by exception, as they are generally unable to comply with hygiene measures. Exemptions can be assessed on a case-by-case basis, for example, where the resident is in a palliative care scenario.
- Measures such as phone or video calls must be accessible to all residents to enable more regular communication with family members. Family and friends should be encouraged to maintain contact with residents by phone and other social communication apps, as appropriate.

Managing illness in visitors and staff

Aged care facilities should advise all regular visitors and staff to be vigilant for illness and use hygiene measures including social distancing, and to monitor for symptoms of COVID-19, specifically fever and acute respiratory illness. They should be instructed to stay away when unwell, for their own and residents' protection.

Given the high vulnerability of this particular group, aged care facilities should request that staff and visitors provide details on their current health status, particularly presentation of symptoms consistent with COVID-19. Screening for fever could also be considered upon entry.

These additional measures should be implemented in order to better protect residents and prompt individuals entering the aged care facility to consider their current state of health prior to entry. Both individuals and management need to take responsibility for the health of visitors and staff at facilities to protect our most vulnerable community members.

These are the recommendations of the AHPPC, individual facilities may choose to implement additional measures as they see fit for their circumstances.

Symptomatic staff

Staff should be made aware of early signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Any staff with fever or symptoms of acute respiratory infection (e.g. cough, sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath) should be excluded from the workplace and tested for COVID-19. Staff must report their symptoms to the aged care facility.

Further information is available at: <https://www.health.gov.au/committees-and-groups/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc>



Information for residents of residential aged care services, their family members and visitors

Older people are more at risk of both contracting COVID-19, and having a serious illness as a result. Managers, staff, family, friends and residents need to work together to protect our most vulnerable community members.

In order to protect older people, new restrictions on visits to aged care facilities apply. It is important staff, visitors and visiting workers take care to ensure they stay away from residential aged care services if they may have COVID-19. They should closely monitor their own health, and will be asked to provide details on their health status before entering a facility.

Residents

Like all members of the community, people who live in residential aged care services have an important role to play in protecting their own health. In addition to practising good hygiene and social distancing, there will be restrictions on visits to residential aged care facilities. Large group visits, gatherings, and external excursions will be postponed. Residents will be supported to stay connected with family and friends by phone and video calls.

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19, you will be kept separate from other residents and will not be able to see visitors. Health care and residential care workers will continue to provide support and care while you are isolated. If you need to leave your room, such as for medical care, you will be required to wear a surgical mask, which will be provided by health care workers. There is no need for any healthy resident to wear a mask.

Visitors

Visitors who have returned from overseas or been in contact with someone confirmed to have COVID-19 in the last 14 days will not be able to visit a residential aged care facility. Nor will anyone with a fever, symptoms of a respiratory illness, or who has not been vaccinated against influenza, be able to visit.

From 1 May, you must have your influenza vaccination in order to visit an aged care facility.

Visits should be short, and conducted in the resident's room, outside, or in a specific designated area (not a communal space).

Each resident may have no more than two visitors, including doctors, at a time, and visits by children 16 years and under are not permitted except in special circumstances.

All visitors will need to wash their hands before entering and leaving a resident's room and will be encouraged to practise social distancing where possible, including to stay away when unwell.

Managers and staff

The Government has announced that residential aged care facilities should take extra precautions to keep residents safe from COVID-19. The health of staff will be closely monitored, new and returning residents will be screened before entry, and signage and other forms of communication will be used to explain the steps being taken to protect the health of residents.

To make more workers available to aged care providers, the Government is relaxing international student visa work conditions for aged care facilities and home care providers. This will allow international student nurses and other aged care workers to work more than the 40 hours a fortnight. There are currently around 20,000 international student nurses studying in Australia.

How can we help prevent the spread of coronavirus?

Practising good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence against most viruses. You should:

- wash your hands frequently with soap and water, including before and after eating, and after going to the toilet
- cover your cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues, and wash your hands, and
- avoid contact with others (stay more than 1.5 metres from people whenever possible).

More information

While coronavirus is of concern, it is important to remember that most people displaying symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat or tiredness are likely suffering with a cold or other respiratory illness – not COVID-19.

For the latest advice, information and resources, go to www.health.gov.au

Call the National Coronavirus Help Line on 1800 020 080. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

The phone number of each state or territory public health agency is available at www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts

If you have concerns about your health, speak to a doctor.