

17 April 2020

**A MESSAGE TO RESIDENTS, CLIENTS & FAMILIES FROM THE
BOARD CHAIR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF UNITING AGEWELL**

This year's Easter celebrations were like no other. Many of us would normally have celebrated by attending a church service, spending time with extended family and friends or taking the opportunity to go away for a few days. And while none of this was possible, the central message of Easter – one of love, hope and resilience – was clearly evident across our Uniting AgeWell communities.

We thank all of you for your continued faith in us to provide you and your loved ones with the care and support you need during these challenging times.

Tragic reports from overseas and in Australia have shown the devastating impact of COVID-19 among older people, particularly those living in residential care homes.

We have seen the distress that occurs for everyone – individuals, families and staff – when the virus enters a home or community. This is something we are working extremely hard to prevent from happening across Uniting AgeWell.

It is why we took decisive action to restrict all visitors to our residential care homes, and modified the way we deliver our home and community care services to ensure we can provide the safest possible environment for all.

These have been difficult decisions to make, particularly the additional precautionary measures we have taken, which in some cases go beyond the baseline requirements set out by Government. We do sincerely apologise for the stress this may be causing you, yet we hope you understand our intent.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Executive Management at Uniting AgeWell we want to reassure you that our complete focus and priority is on providing the extra care and support that is needed by our residents and clients and our staff at this time, to maintain their health, safety and wellbeing.

We fully understand and appreciate the anxiety and concern the decision to restrict all visitors to our residential care homes has caused many residents and families, particularly when we don't know how long the restrictions will be needed. And for our clients receiving home and community services, we know they too are anxious about maintaining their safety and wellbeing during these uncertain times.

Additional resources have been put in place to provide optimal care and to assist our residents and clients, and importantly, to maintain their social connection to their loved ones and provide them with the spiritual and emotional support they need through our Chaplains. We know this cannot replace the physical presence of family and friends, however we trust these measures and our vigilance gives you some peace of mind.

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Uniting AgeWell's COVID-19 response includes:

- Additional staffing and augmented lifestyle programs at residential sites to assist with social engagement and interaction, including the provision of more communications devices to facilitate contact via Skype, FaceTime and Zoom
- Increased communication and information flows with residents, clients and families
- Additional wellbeing services including mental health, chaplaincy and pastoral care
- Additional staff training and monitoring around infection control and hygiene practices, including increased cleaning of touch points
- Active monitoring of all staff and essential visitors to sites, including the signing of a declaration regarding health and COVID-19 risk and temperature checking every time they present to the site
- Securing additional supplies of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- The introduction of telehealth for GP and specialist consultations to further reduce the risk of spread of infection or the need to attend external appointments
- Isolation requirements for any new residential care admissions or residents returning to a Uniting AgeWell facility;
- The continued delivery of all home care services, with additional hygiene and social distancing precautions in place as well as developing augmented services for people affected by COVID-19 restrictions,. These include regular welfare checks, telehealth options, smart home devices for those living alone to provide greater security, shopping services and in-home allied health services, including physiotherapy and occupational therapy.

Our staff, who are not immune to the anxiety and concern created by COVID-19 and the impact of social distancing and isolation on their own families, have been doing an amazing job on the frontline. Their genuine commitment and dedication to all those in their care has shone through.

Staff are working tirelessly to keep our residents and community-based clients safe and well supported, and we have received many messages of thanks and acknowledgement from residents, clients and families, which have certainly been appreciated. Notwithstanding, if at any time you have a concern about your services or the welfare of a family member, please don't hesitate to contact your local manager for assistance or escalate your concern.

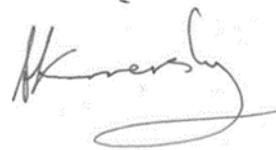
There is no doubt that COVID-19 will continue to be a challenge for all of us in the months ahead and we must hold the course in the knowledge that better times will come.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you most sincerely for your understanding, support and cooperation as we work together through this unique moment in time in all our lives.

Yours sincerely



Raelene Thompson
Chair, Board of Directors
Uniting AgeWell



Andrew Kinnersly
Chief Executive Officer
Uniting AgeWell