

## Hello,

It has been a number of weeks since we last sent you a video message and given that the situation regarding COVID-19 continues to change, I thought it was a good time to provide another update.



For your reference this update is relevant for the first week in July.

I'd like to begin by thanking everyone – residents, clients, families, loved ones and our team members, for your understanding and assistance as we have worked through this period and implemented a number of important measures.

As I have said before, many of the restrictions we have put in place, particularly around visitations, have been difficult, but essential in keeping the people we care for safe. And to date they have thankfully done just that, keeping ALL of our residents, clients and team members safe, by protecting them from COVID-19.

NOW, as always, we are guided by State and Federal health authorities who have been providing Whiddon, and the industry, with guidelines regarding the measures, procedures and protocols Whiddon implements.

What we are starting to experience in NSW and QLD is a gradual easing of these measures in the public domain, which are slowly and carefully bringing changes to our aged care services.

In regard to visiting your loved ones in our homes, the good news is that we are now in a position to provide a greater level of access.

While community transmissions remain controlled in NSW and QLD, the risk associated with visitations is reduced, which provides us with a greater level of confidence in regard to allowing more people to visit our homes.

This continues to be managed locally by our Directors of Care, who still need to monitor the number of visitors coming into our homes as well as the rosters to support this.

As always you will be screened prior to entry, are required to be vaccinated against influenza (unless you have an acceptable exemption) and will need to book in advance and follow the protocols we have in place.

There are some locations where the risk of COVID-19 is a little higher and there are more recorded cases in the community, so where this occurs we will be more rigid with visitation practices to ensure we are keeping everyone safe.

State and Federal authorities have also allowed us to invite children back into our homes, which is a welcome change as we know how important this is to our residents. We do ask however, that if you are bringing children into our homes, they are supervised at all times.

While time limits have also been lifted for partners and close family members, we are still required to limit visits to two people per resident and we will have to keep an eye on the duration of visits where increased demand is being experienced.

In addition to this, NSW Health have also asked aged care providers to DENY access to our homes to anyone who has travelled to Melbourne in the past 14 days.

As such you will be asked to disclose this should you visit any of our homes and we will be complying with these recommendations at our homes in both NSW and QLD.

Remember that we are still offering to provide risk free visits, using physical screens such as windows and doors and are also supporting remote technologies, such as the Checked in Care App, video calls and skype to assist during this time – we have updates on our website at Whiddon.com.au, or you can contact our homes directly for more information.

On another note we have also been asked about whether we should resume resident bus trips.

At this stage and based on the directives provided, unfortunately bus trips will continue to remain suspended.

We are, however, allowing residents to be taken out for small family gatherings, which just needs an assessment completed by our local team in advance. This is something you can speak to your local care manager about.

In addition to this, and pleasingly, we have also started to welcome back a number of external providers to our homes. These include hairdressers, volunteers, music and art therapists and personal trainers.

We are managing this through a staged approach which will be supported by a risk framework we have developed. This involves an additional screening process applied to all third parties and contractors, which includes meeting current flu vaccination guidelines.

Of equal importance, I wanted to take this opportunity to recognise all of the amazing Whiddon team members who have been caring for our residents and clients, both in our homes and at home.

Over the past few months we have sent out two special deliveries to all of our team members, that have included Thank You gifts from Whiddon, just to show the team we support the incredible work they are doing under such difficult times.

If you visit one of our homes, or come across anyone working in aged care for that matter, I really urge you to thank and recognise these people who have been working continuously and tirelessly throughout the pandemic – and continue to do so.

On 7th August we celebrate Aged Care Employee Day – a National day created by Whiddon and now celebrated nationwide – this is a perfect time to recognise the people working in aged care and at Whiddon we have a host of plans in the pipeline to make sure we do just that.

Finally, as you will be aware, there does remain the risk of renewed community transmission of COVID-19, so it is important that we all remain vigilant and conscious of government advice.

When you visit our homes, we will continue to ask you important COVID-19 screening questions, take your temperature and check your Whiddon flu vaccination record card. I thank you for your cooperation with these important measures.

To our Community Care clients and Village residents, we continue to be there for you and please know that we are only a call away, either via your Care Coordinator or our village manager ARP.

You can continue to check our COVID-19 page for updates and remember to follow all of the guidelines provided by regulators, even more so if you have a loved one in aged care – Download the COVID-19 app, follow physical distancing guidelines and continue to practice hand hygiene.

Until our next update thank you again.

**Chris Mamarelis**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Whiddon**

Award-winning care that connects,  
inspires and enriches lives every day.