



MEMORANDUM

To: All Independent Living Residents and your families
From: Richard de Haast, National Director
The Salvation Army Aged Care
Date: 24 March 2020
Subject: **Coronavirus (COVID-19) update**

Dear all,

As you know, we are absolutely committed to providing continuity of care and service while placing necessary precautions in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. This ensures we keep you and your loved ones as safe as possible.

In the last 24 hours, we have seen an exponential increase in the number of cases of COVID-19 across the country and a number of the State and Territory Chief Medical Officers have also issued specific guidelines with respect to visitors to residential aged care centres. In particular, the directives from the State and Territory Chief Medical Officers have tightened up the visitor restrictions to residential aged care centres and we are needing to adjust our processes accordingly.

As a resident in our independent living villages these will not particularly impact you unless you have friends or family in a residential aged care centre. The reason for this is that the Chief Medical Officers have limited visitors to a maximum of two in any one visit, those visits must only take place outdoors in the resident's bedroom and more crucially that each resident in a residential aged care centre may receive one visit per day for a maximum of two hours.

I guess that this demonstrates the seriousness with which the health authorities view the pandemic and in particular the potential for serious impacts amongst the elderly. We are responding to that view by taking the step of ceasing all group activities and village outings (with the exception of the shopping trips). Please note when going on these shopping trips, the residents must use hand sanitisers upon boarding the bus before and after trips. This is to safeguard themselves and others. Please be advised that if you chose to refuse to use hand sanitisers, we will not be able to take you on the bus trip.

I can appreciate that option may be divided about this step with some of you applauding this and others feeling that we are removing things and what is all the fuss about. In response I would like to acknowledge all of those reactions and views and say that we did not take this step lightly. One just has to consider the decision over the weekend to close all bars, cafes, cinemas, restaurants and places of worship to understand how profoundly our lives as Australians has been impacted and how we need to adjust accordingly. Within the village context we needed to do our part to minimise interactions and contact between people.

I would like to take the opportunity to remind you of a number of key points:-

- Please let the village team know if you are feeling unwell so that we can keep an eye on you;
- Please also ensure that you have sufficient groceries on hand and available at home;
- When in proximity with people please remember the 1.5m social distancing



- requirement;
- As tough as it may sound, I would like to urge you to ask that your family and visitors do not visit you if they are unwell. This will minimise the potential of you and other residents contracting any illnesses from visitors.

Resident and Family Question and Answer Sessions

We are still finalizing an appropriate technology platform to conduct these and I remain hopeful that we will confirm the times and dates with you shortly.

Communication

For your ease of reference, we have created a separate landing page on our website that contains this and every other piece of communication to you. You can access them by typing the following URL into your browser <https://agedcare.salvos.org.au/coronavirus-updates/>
We will continue to place all our correspondence in this location as we distribute it.

Visual Messaging

We understand that people sometimes prefer to hear a message and so I have videoed the content of this letter and you can listen to it by typing the following into your browser <https://youtu.be/8Uki-bo9WO4>

Naturally, we will continue to update you all should we make any changes to any of this information.

If you have any questions or feedback around this, please feel free to contact me directly at Richard.deHaast@salvationarmy.org.au.

If you did want more information, please visit The Department of Health's website. A collection of resources about the virus is also available on <https://www.health.gov.au/>

All the best and take care

Richard

Richard de Haast
National Director
The Salvation Army Aged Care