



Our Residents and Representatives  
Residential Aged Care Centres  
The Salvation Army Aged Care

Wednesday 22 April 2020

Dear all,

As you know, we do not take any decision lightly when it comes to the safety and wellbeing of our residents and their loved ones, especially in the current environment of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Yesterday the National Cabinet met and afterwards the Prime Minister issued a statement about visitors to residential aged care centres. We took note of these comments and the fact that up to this point The Salvation Army Aged Care, unlike many other providers, has been fulfilling the spirit and intent of the Prime Minister's comments. Our decision to move this week to a moratorium on visitors and limiting residents leaving the premises would now potentially put us at odds with the views of the National Cabinet. As a result, we have decided to take a more nuanced approach based on using information provided by State and Territory Departments of Health to understand risk to our residents. These Departments articulate hot spot areas for COVID-19 and we will now base any possible restrictions on whether a Centre falls into a hot spot area.

#### **What is a COVID-19 hot spot?**

A hot spot is an area where a State or Territory Department of Health has identified a heightened level of concern about COVID-19 infection rates and therefore an increased risk of community transmission cases. The recommendation is that if you are living or working in an area identified as a hot spot and you have symptoms such as a fever, cough, sore throat or shortness of breath, you must be tested for COVID-19 as soon as possible.

#### **What does this mean for my Centre?**

Your Centre is located in, or in a 5km close proximity to a hot spot area. As a result, we will still continue to implement the moratorium on visitors and the limitations to residents leaving the Centre as shared with you in my letter of 17 April.

We have introduced an addendum to those measures outlined in that letter to mirror criteria developed by the Tasmanian Government, who have directed that visitors are not allowed to enter residential aged care centres. There is a provision that a person is permitted to enter the Centre if they are:

- a) a key support person for a resident of the residential aged care facility who has a diagnosed medical condition; and
- b) present at the premises at the request of the operator of the residential aged care facility and for the purpose providing essential support to the resident by reducing distress or confusion that has occurred in respect of the resident as a result of that person's medical condition.



Should your Centre Manager and our senior operational and clinical leadership team feel there is an assessed need for further support, you will be contacted to develop a specific interaction plan for your loved one. As always you are encouraged to reach out to the Centre by phone or email should you require an update on the wellbeing of your loved one.

**When does the Centre lift the visitor moratorium and resident movement restrictions?**

The relevant State and Territory Departments of Health remove and add COVID-19 hotspots regularly as they deem the risk in a location has diminished or increased. We are monitoring that list on a daily basis and if the hotspot designation linked to your Centre is removed then we will advise you of that. Following that removal, we will be retaining a 14-day period (in line with the self isolation guidelines) during which the moratorium will remain in place.

This will mean that your residents and families will have a very clear trigger and timeline for the removal of the visitor moratorium and resident movement restrictions.

**Keeping in contact during this period**

We are well advanced in putting in place the steps outlined in my letter of 17 April on how we can facilitate regular contact in different ways (“visitor windows”, video chat, drop off a special treat, additional updates from the Centre Manager, etc.). These have been activated to enable our residents to remain connected with their families.

In the meantime, we will continue communicating regularly with you via letter and video and the question and answer sessions for residents and family members as well.

If you have any feedback, please feel free to send me an email at [Richard.deHaast@salvationarmy.org.au](mailto:Richard.deHaast@salvationarmy.org.au).

*Many thanks for your understanding*

*Richard*

Richard de Haast  
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The Salvation Army Aged Care