



MEMORANDUM

To: All Residential Aged Care Centre Residents and Families
From: Richard de Haast, National Director
The Salvation Army Aged Care
Date: 18 March 2020
Subject: **Coronavirus (COVID-19) update**

Dear all,

As you know, your wellbeing is very important to us and this will continue to be the case. Throughout this pandemic we have taken steps in accordance with direction from the Australian Government and we will continue to do so.

This morning Prime Minister Scott Morrison addressed the nation and provided information relating to COVID-19 and the restrictions that have now been put in place across Australia. These are significant developments and changes and I acknowledge the impact that this will have on you, as well as the lives of your families and friends. I also acknowledge that you and those around you may experience worry or anxiety and I would encourage you to reach out to our chaplains for a chat.

Following the Prime Minister's press conference today we have needed to adjust how we deal with our response to COVID-19. This crucial information is found below and shows how this applies to our staff, residents and their families.

As you may have picked up through the media reporting these steps are significant and particularly impact residents and visitors to residential aged care facilities. Please understand that we do realise the impact on our residents and their families / visitors of these steps and are acting in accordance with the directives of the Australian Government.

Social Distancing

- It is absolutely crucial that we maintain social distancing (1.5m) where practicably possible.
- All indoor gatherings of 100 people and outdoor gatherings of 500 people are now forbidden. We will adjust our lifestyle programmes accordingly and will advise the residents of these changes as they are rolled out.
- Please note that this is about social distancing and not about stopping the care or interactions that you or your loved one receives.
- In order to achieve this requirement of 1.5m, we will need to change the way we deliver meal services in our various locations, as well as at seating in common areas / chapels and our lifestyle programme. Please be aware that these rearrangements are underway and that we will take the upmost care in ensuring minimal disruption.
- All staff continue to practice good hand hygiene.
- We have increased our cleaning regime in the common areas.



Visitors

Following the Australian Governmental directive, the following individuals (both staff and visitors) **are not to enter** any of our aged care residential facilities:

- All individuals who have returned from any travel outside of Australia unless they have self isolated for a period of 14 days;
- All individuals who are experiencing flu-like symptoms;
- All children under the aged of 16 years;
- All school groups;
- All entertainment individuals and groups;
- After the 1st May, a person (staff member or visitor) who has not had a flu vaccination.

Furthermore, the Australian Government has placed further restrictions on visitors:

- Any visit to a resident is limited to a maximum of two people at any given time.
- These visits must be for a limited period of time;
- These visits can only take place in the bedroom of a resident or in an outdoor area.
- These visits must only be with the family member of the visitor.
- If a volunteer is visiting a resident, then they can only do this in the bedroom of the resident or in an outdoor area.

For residents who are receiving end of life care, it is important that family members can spend time with them. For this reason, the number of visitors may be increased along with the period of time of the visit, although the visit still needs to take place in the bedroom of the resident.

We will also be holding location specific Q&A sessions for residents and families and those details will be shared shortly. Given the restrictions around physical distancing most of these will be held online so that we do not get large groups of people together. These will enable you to pose specific questions to myself and the clinical leadership team of the organisation.

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

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

If you did want more factual information, please visit The Department of Health's website. A collection of resources about the virus is also available on the Department's website.

These are challenging times and so please continue to exercise care when you are out and about. You trust our team with your care and activities and we are committed to showing you that that trust is valid and well placed – we do that by going about delivering fabulous customer moments with calmness and care.

This will pass and we will come through this – in the meantime, take care of yourselves and each other.



All the very best

Richard

Richard de Haast

National Director

The Salvation Army Aged Care