

## Media Statement

8 July 2020

### UNITING AGEWELL PRESTON COMMUNITY

Uniting AgeWell was notified late on Saturday 4 July that a staff member from our Preston aged care facility was a close contact of someone who had tested positive to COVID-19. We have now been notified that this staff member has also tested positive to COVID-19. Both have no symptoms.

While this is not the outcome we had hoped for, we were well prepared for this possibility.

The staff member, who last worked on Friday 3 July, along with four other staff members who worked with them across three shifts, are in home isolation. Three of those staff have since tested negative and one is pending test results. Affected staff are being provided with support by Uniting AgeWell.

Importantly, none of these staff members had extended direct contact with any residents and only worked in one wing of the facility.

None of our Preston staff or residents are exhibiting any cold or flu-like symptoms or symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

All residents and families were immediately informed of the situation on Sunday 5 July and continue to be regularly updated. We are extremely appreciative of their trust in our team and their ongoing support and understanding.

The Department of Health and the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services Public Health Unit have also been notified, and we are working with them to ensure all processes are implemented as required.

The Public Health Unit is undertaking contact tracing and the Department of Health today conducted COVID-19 tests of all residents and staff this afternoon. Uniting AgeWell will continue with the additional precautionary measures put in place across the weekend. These measures include:

- Extra hygiene cleans daily (deep cleans were conducted on Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 July)
- All residents in the affected wing to remain in their rooms pending test results
- The use of PPE as required
- Extra staff allocated to support residents and close monitoring of residents' health and wellbeing
- No visitors will be permitted until further notice

All steps completed and underway are precautionary and will remain in place until all test results are known and further advice is received from the Department of Health.

The Preston team is fully across what needs to be done as they implement our Infection Management protocols and additional support is being provided by Uniting AgeWell's senior response team. Should the situation change, we are well prepared and will work closely with the Department and health authorities.

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#### Uniting AgeWell

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An organisation of the Uniting Church in Australia

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We know that everyone in the community will be understandably concerned and anxious on hearing this news, particularly given the increasing number of COVID-19 cases across metropolitan Melbourne.

We wish to reassure the community that our full focus is on maintaining the health, safety and wellbeing of all residents in our care and our staff, and keeping families fully informed and connected to their loved ones during visitor restrictions.

**Andrew Kinnersly**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
**Uniting AgeWell**

*Media enquiries to Rebecca Ryan [rryan@unitingagewell.org](mailto:rryan@unitingagewell.org) or 0401 850 288*

*Further information on Uniting AgeWell's response to COVID-19 is available at:*  
<https://unitingagewell.org/covid19/latest-information>

### **About Uniting AgeWell**

Uniting AgeWell is an organisation of the Uniting Church in Australia with a long tradition of providing quality aged care services for older Australians. With services available throughout metropolitan and regional Victoria and Tasmania, Uniting AgeWell offers a range of specialised options to support health and wellbeing including independent and assisted living, home care, social support and therapy programs, respite and residential care communities.

Uniting AgeWell Preston Community opened in November 2019. It is a 104-bed residential care facility across three levels. It is currently home to 56 residents, supported by 127 staff.