

Media Statement

31 July 2020

COVID-19 EXPOSURE AT UNITING AGEWELL RESIDENTIAL AGED CARE FACILITIES

Uniting AgeWell has three of its residential aged care facilities in lockdown following individual staff testing positive to COVID-19 as a result of community transmission.

Facilities affected are Box Hill, Camberwell (Condare Court) and Kingsville. All residents and staff have been tested at these sites with no one exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19.

Uniting AgeWell has effectively implemented its pandemic plan and outbreak management protocols at these facilities.

Testing of all residents and staff has taken place this week.

Box Hill – Testing at the facility occurred on 27 July. **COVID-19 was not detected within the facility, with all residents and staff testing negative.** Retesting will take place in coming days as a standard precautionary measure and full precautionary measures remain in place.

Kingsville – All residents and staff were tested on 29 July, with results available today, 31 July. While three of the 161 test results are pending, of those results received, **all residents tested negative.** Unfortunately, two staff members tested positive, with un-related community transmission appearing to be the source of infection. No other staff member has tested positive. All residents and rostered staff are well.

Condare Court – All residents and staff were tested on 30 and 31 July. While results are not yet available, all residents and rostered staff are well with no one exhibiting symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

All steps completed and underway at these facilities are precautionary, and will remain in place until all test results are known and further advice is received from the Public Health Unit.

Uniting AgeWell will continue to work cooperatively and collaboratively with Government authorities to ensure directives are understood and correctly applied, and the health and wellbeing of residents and staff is maintained.

Uniting AgeWell CEO Andrew Kinnerly acknowledges these are challenging times, particularly for residents, families and staff.

“We have seen the devastating impact this virus has on frail and vulnerable people and our heart goes out to those in the community dealing with illness, loss and grief,” he said.

“We have worked for many months now preparing for an outbreak and doing everything we possibly can to reduce that risk. Unfortunately, widespread community transmission significantly increases the likelihood of exposure to aged care staff, and that is what we, and other Victorian aged care providers are experiencing.

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“Through no fault of their own, we have had staff members acquire the virus through family or household contact. We have had other staff where a household member has tested positive which has required them to quarantine and for Uniting AgeWell to implement its outbreak management protocols.”

Uniting AgeWell staff are well trained and equipped, and are supported by our COVID-19 risk and response team, comprised of executive, senior management and area experts.

“The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting the entire community, and it is important that we don’t lose sight of the impact this has on people’s lives and on their spiritual and emotional wellbeing,” says Andrew Kinnersly.

“Our committed and caring staff have been doing an amazing job and going above and beyond in these very difficult times. We are also extremely grateful for the trust and support we have received from residents and families.

“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.

“It has never been more important than now for all Victorians to do everything they can to stop the spread of coronavirus. I urge everyone to comply with the State Government directives, stay at home, avoid work if unwell, socially distance, wear a mask and wash your hands frequently.

“The lives of our most vulnerable citizens depends on it.”

-Ends-

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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.