



07 May 2020

Coronavirus Update #13

Greetings from the CEO

I am very pleased to report that, to date, no residents or staff have tested positive to Corona Virus. This is a real credit to our community!

There is nothing easy about dealing with this pandemic. We know that these changes have impacted our everyday lives significantly and that they continue to be both difficult and challenging. We greatly appreciate that residents and staff have been supportive and willing to cooperate with the rigorous testing regimes which we have in place. These include regular assessments and reporting strategies, physical distancing requirements and meticulous hygiene measures to keep this insidious virus away from our community.

I am also pleased to report that the Pandemic Plan that we have developed and implemented is working well. However, it is important to note that this plan continues to be a live document, readily able to incorporate updated information as it becomes available.

Last Friday, we were able to quickly escalate our status from 'Green' to 'Amber' and with cooperation of residents and their families, we moved two residents with flu like symptoms from their regular rooms to our secure isolation wing. They remained there until we received their results which were negative to both Influenza and Covid-19. Following close consultation with the Public Health Unit, it was deemed appropriate to return both residents to their rooms, where they remained in isolation until their symptoms resolved. I am very pleased to report that both residents recovered well and only experienced a short period of feeling unwell.

This incident reminds us that we are well into the active, annual flu season and we must remain highly vigilant to protect our residents and staff from any infectious diseases.

We continue to be cautioned by our local health authorities that it is not a matter of, IF but WHEN Aged care services in our region are impacted. Therefore, we have determined that we will not become complacent despite the public commentary.

We have seen the many wonderful reports from across Australia that the curve is heading in the right direction. However, the alert remains on high for at risk sectors of the community one of which is Aged Care. That is why the Maroba Covid-19 leadership team is constantly reviewing our situation to ensure we can meet the expectations of our residents and their families in a way that best mitigates the risk factors within our control.

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As you will be aware, as part of our Management Planning process we are undertaking a survey of residents and families regarding the strategies we have employed to help prevent a Covid-19 outbreak. Thank you to those who have participated. We will publish the results once the surveys have been completed and collated.

Last Friday, the Prime Minister committed to consulting with the Aged Care Sector and advocacy groups to complete an Aged Care Visitor Access Code. The Code 'aims to apply a compassionate and consistent visitor policy that continues to minimise the risk of Covid19 while providing innovative on-site visiting solutions to maintain the mental health of residents.'

The opportunity for public consultation has been available since the announcement and to encourage optimal opportunities for engagement the draft Code was published on Maroba's social media platforms. It has also been emailed to all families on our distribution list to facilitate feedback. Residents too, were all provided with a copy of the draft Code for their consideration and feedback. The draft Code is helpful in providing a shared understanding of rights and responsibilities for all. It will be officially launched after the consultation period has concluded.

The Prime Minister also has offered some additional funding to support the requirements that are deemed necessary to continue to protect older people in care. However, it will take some time for this short term and modest amount of funding to arrive at Maroba. In spite of this delay, I can assure you that we are continuing to support our residents by ensuring the robust screening regime of staff, visitors and contractors remains in place.

As Mother's Day approaches, a reminder that we welcome deliveries of **non-perishable** items. Please note that we undertake an essential sanitisation process on all items that we receive and therefore ask that you deliver items to the reception desk at the Manor only during office hours from Monday to Friday.

While we are speaking of Mother's Day, there are lots of activities planned for this occasion including a celebration with special morning teas in the suburbs. We have also asked additional staff to be on hand on Sunday to facilitate a High Tea in both the Manor and the Lodge.

Again, we ask for your patience on Sunday. As I have mentioned, we have a limited number of devices and staff to facilitate face time or telephone conversations so I ask that you call (02) 4935 0300 to enquire about arranging a time if you would like to speak to your loved one.

You may recall in our last update, we announced that we would stage a relaxation of visiting protocols.

As a first step we will be encouraging residents to move between the Manor and Lodge. This was planned for last weekend, but unfortunately with the suspected case of infection within our community (please see above), this was deemed to be too risky and our plans were wound back.

However, we wish to advise:

- **Stage 1** – As you are aware, residents have been free to move around their areas, however, as of today residents can move more freely between both the Manor and the Lodge to catch up with friends, as long as they continue with good hand hygiene and

the appropriate physical distancing necessary for their ongoing protection. This will, of course, be supported by staff.

- **Stage 2** – On Friday, prior to Mother’s Day, we will support window visits for couples to catch up for a short period. Phone calls will be made to these family members today and strict protocols must be followed if we are to move into Stage 3.
- **Stage 3** – Will consist of window visits for families and friends between 10-3pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for short periods. These visits will need to be pre-arranged and we will advise of the process and time this will commence in due course.
- **Stage 4** - This will include setting up limited visits within the facility for close family members who have regularly participated in direct care interventions to support their loved one. Of course, there will continue to be very strict protocols in place. These visits will occur between 10am-3pm each Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. We will soon be in touch with eligible individuals to make the necessary arrangements. Maroba accepts, that unfortunately, the decision as to who qualifies for such visits at this time will be difficult and may not please all.

Please be aware that whatever steps are put in place to relax restrictions in coming weeks, there is always a chance that they could be quickly reversed even if there is the slightest indication of an infectious outbreak.

We will endeavour to accommodate your requested days and times. However, until we establish a regular pattern and fine tune these new arrangements, we seek your cooperation, flexibility and patience as we roll them out.

It is also important that I remind you of the requirements for Vaccination which are Public Health orders and require all persons to have been vaccinated prior to visiting an Aged Care facility. Together with the Public Health Unit, we acknowledge that this order is a difficult ruling to implement. Yet ensuring that it is adhered to is mandatory and proof of current vaccination will be required prior to allowing you access inside the facility. However, at present we will do all that we can to support you with window visits until you are vaccinated.

In the meantime, please stay safe and we thank you once again for your patience as we navigate this challenging period.

Should you have any queries please don’t hesitate to call Reception on (02) 4935 0300 or email enquiries@maroba.com.au.

Yours sincerely,



Viv Allanson
CEO, Maroba