

15 November 2022

Greetings, Family and Friends and especially our new residents and families,

I am delighted to report that since Maroba officially came out of Isolation on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> Nov all residents have continued with twice weekly RAT testing and no new cases have emerged. This is really great news and we are keen to keep that trend going even though we are fully aware that the next wave of Covid is already building momentum.

I received the following message from Our Commonwealth Chief Health Officer and I would urge you to have a read, **as we don't want you to be afraid but instead be prepared !**

*"We are seeing an increase in COVID-19 case numbers in Australia, reflecting community transmission of the Omicron variant XBB.*

*We are also closely monitoring the overseas transmission of a second Omicron variant – BQ.1. While evidence is still emerging, the experience to date with these two variants overseas is that they do not appear to pose a greater risk of severe illness and death – and that the COVID-19 vaccines provide good protection against these outcomes.*

***All indications are that this is the start of a new COVID-19 wave in Australia. This was to be expected and will be part of living with COVID-19 into the future.***

*The overseas experience is that these new variants have driven increases in case numbers – and hospitalisations at a rate proportionate to these increases – because of their ability to evade the immunity provided by prior infection and vaccination.*

*It's therefore timely to focus on the actions we can all take to reduce the threat of these new variants, keep the pressure off our health care workers and hospitals and continue to look forward to our summer plans.*

***There are three things everyone can do to reduce the threat of these variants across our communities – and help limit the size of the wave.***

***Firstly***, make sure you are up to date with your vaccinations – including having a third or fourth dose if you haven't had them already. Make an appointment for this dose as soon as possible so your immunity is boosted for the coming months when we are most likely to see an increase in COVID-19 transmission in Australia.

*Vaccination is your best protection against getting severely ill or dying from COVID-19 and evidence from overseas indicates vaccination reduces the prevalence of symptoms associated with Long COVID.*

***Secondly***, keep a mask handy when away from home. If you're at indoor public places or in crowded settings, a mask can help protect you and reduce the chance of infecting others. It's a simple, sensible way to add another layer of protection and contribute to our collective effort to slow the spread of the virus.

***And thirdly***, if you have tested positive or are not feeling well, stay at home until the symptoms have passed. If you do have to leave your house, wear a mask and avoid going to any high-risk settings, including hospitals, and aged and disability care facilities.

*Through these three measures, you can make a significant contribution to protecting yourself, your family and friends, and the wider community against these new COVID-19 variants.*

*Advice about managing COVID-19 symptoms is available 24/7 from the Australian Government's National Coronavirus Help Line: 1800 020 080. Information about managing COVID-19 is also available at [healthdirect.gov.au](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au).*

*In addition, people at risk of more severe illness from COVID-19 should talk to their GP now about their eligibility for oral antiviral treatments should they contract COVID-19."*

This is great advice and if we all adhere to it, we will improve our Christmas outlook for sure. I realise many of you will be familiar with our check in and visiting protocols but I will update for the benefit of our new families and residents and for those who may not have visited recently.

Social outings and Medical appointments must be booked using our online booking system at least 48 Business hours before the outing. [www.maroba.com.au](https://www.maroba.com.au) This also helps with contact tracing.

The follow Visiting arrangements will continue for Maroba so please familiarise yourself with these requirements. Please assess your own risk when deciding to visit Maroba as we can never assume we are Covid free, even with a negative RAT.. **These arrangements may change on very short notice if cases emerge.**

- Visiting will be from 10 am to 4 pm weekdays and weekends.
- No Appointment necessary during these times and a resident may receive more than 1 visit a day.
- **RAT testing continues before entry to the facility and photo evidence of negative result is essential proof.** Do Not carry your RAT with you unless in a sealed bag.
- Wear a surgical mask throughout each visit – **No eating or drinking inside the facility.** Protective eye wear / Face Shield provides an additional protection but is not essential so will not be provided unless visiting a Covid positive resident.
- **Check in and out using our Coolguard system in reception. Wait for the green tick before proceeding. Check with reception if it turns red, do not proceed to your visit.**
- Only 2 people may visit in a resident's room, however if more than 2, outside visiting is the only option. **Do not utilise any inside communal area or the coffee machine.**
- 1 child (of any age) may attend an in room visit with 1 adult. Keep in mind the children's playground is open for when you are visiting outdoors. All children must remain under your supervision and care throughout your visit and if using the playground.
- Co-operate with all directions from staff whilst you are visiting Maroba as it is for everyone's wellbeing and safety

- Family members who are nominated Partners in Care for their loved one or those supporting a palliating resident continue their caring and support roles throughout the facility as advised and in conjunction with the above visiting requirements.
- Please complete excursion forms online for all medical appointments and outings 48 hrs before the event. When out and about be sure to activate Covid Safe Protocols.

Be assured that spot checks of RAT evidence will take place and if you fail to provide that evidence you will be asked to leave the building immediately. We have opened visiting based on TRUST and mutual respect, believing that friends and families will want to co-operate with our efforts. I do not want to go backwards in our protection strategies so please make sure you pass on this update to anyone who is likely to visit!

If you have concerns with our approach, please call us to discuss or if you prefer contact:

Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) on 1800 700 600  
The Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission on 1800 951 822  
Senior Rights Service 1800 424 079

If you require additional information, please call reception 49350300 during office hours or email [enquiries@maroba.com.au](mailto:enquiries@maroba.com.au).

News Flash...The Holiday Police are pursuing me to use up some of my accumulated leave so I have to take another one for the team. My last day is this Friday and I return to Maroba on the 12/12/22. Hawaii here I come ...see you all in time for Christmas !!!

On behalf of the Maroba Team we look forward to welcoming those of you who are able to visit.

Yours sincerely,



Viv Allanson

CEO

