

13th September, 2024

Dear Residents, Family and Friends,

Unfortunately, we have an unwelcome visitor at Maroba...the one you are all familiar with. Yes, Covid is back again just as everyone was feeling safe to venture forth into all that life has to offer.



I can report that our Infection Prevention and Control team have acted quickly to isolate and undertake more widespread testing across Bluegum where the outbreak began. So, our 4 Covid positive residents are isolating and have been offered Antiviral treatment. At present there are extra precautions in Bluegum and the lodge to minimise the impact and spread of Covid. The Public Health Unit has been notified of our 4 cases today.

Whilst there is still a flurry of cases across the state we must remain vigilant in the Hunter.

Therefore, we urge you - **NOT to visit if you are even slightly unwell, as a negative RAT is no guarantee you do not have an infectious respiratory disease.** Stay home and seek medical advice rather than press on with a visit. Please be cautious if you have returned from holidays or have attended large public events. Please remember to maintain good hand hygiene and social distancing practices. If in doubt stay home.

There will be random RAT checking after hours and you will do well to offer your RAT for checking at reception during office hours. Let's work on the speed of TRUST and not try to enter without a fresh test. Your loved ones are the ones to suffer ...you get to go home and won't even have to isolate but it's different for communal living, everyone pays a high price.

Current COVID guidelines at Maroba:

For Residents

- Residents only undergo a **Rapid Antigen Test (RAT)** when they are symptomatic and if there has been an exposure to a Covid positive person. This may escalate if other areas are impacted.
- Residents not residing in Bluegum are asked not to visit other residents in that area due to the outbreak.

For Visitors

- All visitors must undertake a RAT before visiting Maroba, even if you visit daily. Please write the date of the test on the RAT cartridge before taking a photo or placing it in a secure clear bag. Keep a photo of your RAT test on your phone as proof and present it to reception or a staff member after hours. Free RAT kits are still available at our reception, please feel free to take some home to test before your visit. Do not leave the kits in your car as they must be kept at a cool stable temperature to be effective.
- No restrictions on the number of visitors to Non Covid effected residents. For Covid affected residents it is recommended that only 2 visit at any one time.
- Please follow instructions from staff when visiting a Covid outbreak area eg Bluegum, as you will be required to wear full PPE including a N95 Mask and a gown. Please ask for assistance as required. No eating or drinking while visiting in Bluegum during the outbreak.**
- There are no visiting hours however for the safety of our residents the doors are locked from **sunset until sunrise**. During these times visitors access is by pressing the call button at the entrance, so a staff member is aware of your arrival and can let you in...please be patient !

Dinner commences around 5.00pm and after dinner residents are usually settling in for the night. Arrangements can be made with staff if you are taking your loved one out during these hours to have easy access on your return.

For Staff, Volunteers, Contractors, Agency Staff & Students

- Our staff, volunteers, students and Agency Staff will continue to RAT test as per staff notices before coming onsite at Maroba.
- Volunteers, Contractors, Agency Staff, and Students will continue to **check in** using our CoolGard System.

If you have concerns with our approach, please call us to discuss. Alternatively, you can 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

For additional information, please contact reception at 4935 0300 during office hours or email us at enquiries@maroba.om.au.

Spring has sprung but unfortunately, we are seeing some unseasonal weather and it is certainly chilly today. Take care to stay warm and do drive safely on the wet roads.



Viv Allanson OAM
CEO