



8 April 2020

Dear families and advocates

Thank you for your ongoing understanding and support as we work together to protect our Kalyra community from COVID-19.

### **Visiting restrictions extended for residential aged care**

Since we implemented a strict no visitor's policy on 25 March, I am pleased to report we have had no cases of COVID-19. The South Australian Government regulations under the Emergency Management Act, were reinforced on 28 March 2020 and we are focussed on continuing to minimise risk to those in our care.

It is important to remember that COVID-19 is 2-4 times more contagious than the flu and 10-20 times more likely to result in death even though 80% of people don't get very sick. The most at-risk group is those aged over 80 with chronic disease which is 100% of the people we support in residential care—so we are taking this pandemic very seriously.

This week, our Board met to review the visitor restrictions and, based on the latest advice from the Federal Department of Health and SA Health, we have decided to extend the restrictions to the 6 May 2020. The Board of Trustees is well aware that this is a difficult time for families and did not take the decision lightly. I encourage you to use our feedback channels if you wish to comment on this decision.

This means Kalyra will continue to NOT allow visitors into its residential aged care facilities at Belair, Woodcroft or McLaren Vale to minimise risk. An end of life pathway remains an exception to this direction.

### **Protection is our best defence**

I understand that this is an incredibly difficult time for our residents and their families however protecting your loved one is our absolute priority.

Restricting access in residential care is a very uncomfortable concept for us as we've spent so much time helping our residents feel connected to the wider community under the new quality standards.

We've worked hard to build strong relationships with you, as families and advocates, and now more than ever we will be calling on that trust and goodwill over the coming months to keep Kalyra COVID-19 free.

### **Staying in touch**

To help ease the pain of temporary separation from loved ones, we will soon launch an online portal for family, friends and the local community to send photographs, audio files, cards and short videos directly to each resident.

And don't forget, good old-fashioned letter writing: letters and surprise parcels are received with great joy. There is something special about a hand-written letter or drawing or something made with love, especially to the older generation.

We know this will never replace visiting in person, but we hope it will offer a different way to connect and stay in touch for both residents and families in the short term.

### **Special celebrations**

A resident has recently turned 100 and we supported a small number of family to bring balloons, champagne and joy in the garden outside her room. Your cooperation in limiting this sort of activity means we can still celebrate the very special occasions while other residents can continue to enjoy fresh air and sunshine safely.

### **Mandatory flu vaccinations**

From 1 May 2020, all staff and visitors must have been vaccinated against seasonal influenza to enter an aged care facility. To meet the Federal Government's audit for this directive we will be seeing appropriate evidence of immunisation status from everyone wishing to visit residents in aged care.

Appropriate evidence may be a statement or record from a health practitioner; or an immunisation history statement available from Medicare online or the Express Plus Medicare mobile app.

For more information on the restrictions on entry into and visitors to aged care facilities from 1 May 2020, please download the [fact sheet](#) from the Department of Health and visit the [South Australian Directions for Residential Aged Care page](#).

While visitors are still NOT permitted to enter our residential sites at present, I encourage you to upload your vaccination evidence via our [Annual Flu Vaccination Register](#) to minimise any delays once we are able to welcome visitors back to Kalyra.

### **A lesson for us all**

Finally, I want to acknowledge the resilience and support that we've received from our residents. Their calm, sensible response to the coronavirus crisis has been remarkable and a great lesson for us all.

I will continue to keep you updated regularly and encourage you to explore the new Family Portal and follow us on [Facebook](#).

We all look forward to moving through this challenging time and throwing open the doors to Kalyra once again.

Best wishes



Sara Blunt  
Chief Executive Officer  
Kalyra