



ILLAWARRA
DIGGERS
CARING FOR THE COMMUNITY'S AGED

Illawarra Diggers Family and Visitor COVID-19 UPDATE

Wednesday 23 December 2020

Dear Family Members and Visitors to Illawarra Diggers

Merry Christmas to you all again for this coming Friday.

As foreshadowed in my letter yesterday 22 December, today the Premier and NSW Health issued an updated advice for the general public and also for residential care homes in NSW in response to the current Northern Beaches outbreak of COVID-19.

Please note that in the Advice below, the term Greater Sydney includes the local government areas of Wollongong and the Central Coast.

The following is taken directly from that Advice:

Advice to residential aged care facilities as of 23 December 2020

Key points

- Until further notice all staff and visitors must wear a surgical mask whilst in a residential aged care facility.
- Until at least 11.59pm on Wednesday 30 December 2020 up to two visitors are permitted to visit residents in residential aged care facilities in Greater Sydney (including local Government areas of Central Coast and Wollongong). Visitors from the Northern Beaches LGA are excluded.
- Exclude staff and visitors who:
 - Have been in any of the locations:
 - On the self-isolate and get tested immediately list, at the times and dates listed
 - On the monitor for symptoms list, at the times and dates listed except where noted otherwise on the web page
 - Have a fever (37.5°C or higher) or symptoms of COVID-19 (acute blocked nose congestion has been added to the list of symptoms)
 - Are a close contact of a person with confirmed COVID-19 and are within their self-isolation period
 - Live in a household with a person who is identified as a close contact of a person with confirmed COVID-19.
- If visits can be delayed and a later festive gathering organised please encourage this as it may allow aged care facilities to undertake supervised visits for essential reasons.

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Visiting

- Until at least 11.59pm on Wednesday 30 December 2020 up to two visitors are permitted to visit residents in residential aged care facilities in [Greater Sydney](#) (including local Government areas of Central Coast and Wollongong). **If possible, visits should be delayed.**

Visitors performing essential caring functions and where there are exceptional circumstances* ("exempt visitors") may be allowed but must wear a mask, be escorted to and from the resident's room by a staff member and remain within the room during the visit.

- Access for exempt visitors should be in line with the screening requirements set out in the [Public Health \(COVID-19 Aged Care Facilities\) Order \(No 4\) 2020](#) and the guidance outlined in the [Industry Code for Visiting Residential Aged Care Homes during COVID-19](#) and the [CDNA National Guidelines for the prevention, control and public health management of COVID-19 outbreaks in residential care facilities in Australia](#). View the [Aged Care Public Health Order Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

Facilities are asked to:

- **ensure all exempt visitors wear a surgical mask whilst in the facility**
- record **every** exempt visitor's name, phone number and date and time of entry (and time of exit where possible). If hand-written records are collected, they should be legible and provided to NSW Health for contact tracing purposes if requested as soon as possible but within 4 hours. Records should be kept for a minimum period of 28 days.

Situations that require restriction of access

Exclude any staff or exempt visitors who:

- have a fever (37.5°C or higher) or any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 infection, even if mild. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, headache, fatigue, runny nose, sore throat, shortness of breath, and loss of taste or loss of smell. Other reported symptoms of COVID-19 include muscle pain, joint pain, diarrhoea, nausea/vomiting, loss of appetite and acute blocked nose congestion.
- during the last 14 days have been:
 - a close contact of a person confirmed with COVID-19 and are within their self-isolation period
 - in any of the locations listed on the [self-isolate and get tested immediately](#) page, at the times and dates listed
 - in any of the locations listed on the [monitor for symptoms](#) page, at the times and dates listed, except where noted otherwise

Community activities and outings - Individual and group excursions

- **Until at least 11.59pm on Wednesday 30 December 2020, residents from residential aged care facilities in [Greater Sydney](#) should not leave the facility to attend family gatherings and group excursions unless the visit is essential (such as a medical appointment).**

- If a resident makes a decision to leave the facility to attend a family gathering or excursion, it is appropriate from a risk perspective for the facility to advise a resident that they may be required to go into 14-day self-isolation upon return.
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So, for Illawarra Diggers Residents and Families (until 11.59pm Wednesday 30/12/2020):

- Residents are advised not to leave the home for any reason other than to attend essential medical appointments;
- If residents do leave the home to attend family gatherings or other non-medical visits they will, in all likelihood, be required to remain in their room for 14 days in isolation upon return;
- Up to 2 visitors at a time are allowed to visit residents between the currently restricted hours of 8.30am and 4pm Monday to Friday. For the coming week that means every day except Saturday 26/12 and Sunday 27/12.
- We will still run "outings" on buses to get out for a drive and also plan for our Christmas Lights drives this week as residents do not get off the bus.
- As advised, we have catered to accommodate all residents being here for Christmas Day. Please be assured that all residents will be given a special Christmas and each dining room will be decorated for a festive day.
- Please be reminded that all visits, including on Christmas Day, will be in the resident's room, the front verandah or the allocated screened visitor room adjacent to the main dining room.

This is not welcome news for anyone. We are bound by state health directives and will continue to make the physical and mental health of all our residents our priority.

We will be meeting again with all available residents tomorrow, Thursday 24 December, to further update them on these developments.

If you have any questions re this latest advice please contact our administration office and we will seek to clarify your concern.

If you have any requests or suggestions please contact Vikki, Debra, Kayleigh or Sophie on their general email address at lifestyle@illawaradiggers.com.au;

For administrative issues relating to appointments or other matters please contact admin@illawarradiggers.com.au.

As previously advised, if you wish to deliver anything to your family, you will need to do so in office hours, Monday to Saturday 8.30am to 4.30pm. The office staff will accept the delivery and ensure it gets to your family member. This is preferred rather than fully entering the home to make the delivery yourself, but if you wish to then you will need to go through the screening process as normal.

Please do not visit or deliver anything outside of these times as the admin office is not attended and care staff may be taken away from attending to residents to answer the door or they may not attend the front door if they are busy.

Should you require further information regarding COVID-19, please refer to the Commonwealth Department of Health website:

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

We will continue to update our procedures and protocols in line with government guidelines and to communicate with our residents and our families and Illawarra Diggers community.

As always, Illawarra Diggers will continue comply with all government directives and to make informed conservative decisions to ensure the best outcome for our residents and staff.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Peter Whittall', written in a cursive style.

Peter Whittall

CEO

Illawarra Diggers Aged and Community Care