



3 August 2020

To family and friends of residents.

Victoria has increased its State of Emergency due to increasing numbers of COVID 19 cases. We are now in Stage 3 restrictions across regional Victoria and Stage 4 in Metropolitan Melbourne, which is concerning. The tragedy that has fallen on a number of aged care facilities in addition to this has been upsetting to us all.

Even though we are fortunate to live in Mildura and have not had a positive COVID 19 case for over three months, I would like to reassure you, from the outset, at Princes Court, we have been extremely careful in all of our practices to do what we can to reduce the risk of COVID 19 entering our premises.

I am aware that you may be anxious about your loved one and you would like to know what is happening and what plans are in place at Princes Court. The leadership team has been spending considerable time in preparing, just in case the situation does arise.

What plans we have if COVID 19 positive case occurs

To outline what we have in place, we have:

- An extensive outbreak plan that we completed in the first weeks of COVID 19 being present and we are updating this as regulations change and more information becomes available.
- A plan for the first 24 hours if a resident or a staff member's test is positive to COVID 19.
- The Department of Health both Federal and State are ready to provide assistance if a case arises.
- Good relationship with the Mildura Base Hospital and other health providers across the region for assistance if needed.
- Enough Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to deal with an initial need and reassurance that significant quantities will arrive within a two-day period.
- An Outbreak Leadership Team and also alternative people if needed that are very familiar with all aspects of the plan.

- A room that is isolated, if needed and fortunately our separate units will act to cohort residents (We are very lucky in this aspect).
- Plan ready to isolate the entire unit if one resident is found to be COVID 19 positive.
- A communication plan with a number of people that stand ready to keep you informed. This includes informing every family member via text that an outbreak has occurred and a personal telephone call within the first three hours to inform you of what is happening.
- A workforce plan and documentation providing clear direction that can be provided if, worst case scenario, a percentage of our workforce are required to leave.
- We have already trained the owner of Café 1909 and Gourmet Chef in operation of our kitchen and if the kitchen staff need to isolate, we have a backup team that can be implemented quickly.
- We have documented the small number of staff who are employed at a second location or organisation in Mildura. If a positive case occurs in this community, they will automatically only work at Princes Court. Some have already dropped the second work location.

Preventions

Prevention remains the most important barrier to COVID 19 and we are also continuing to:

- Promote technology for communication with residents and where necessary, any one that has extenuating circumstances and needs to visit will be under strict regulation and supervision including palliative care. This includes wearing full PPE including gowns, gloves and masks.
- Temperature check everyone entering the facility, ensure their flu vaccination is up to date and complete an admittance criteria statement.
- All staff are now wearing masks and we will also be introducing visors for all clinical care staff. Training in keeping these sanitized, wearing and placing on and taking off will be provided.
- We are isolating any resident that has any symptoms, however small or insignificant. This means residents stay in their rooms and only staff with full PPE will enter, food is only provided on disposable plates.
- Physical distancing is a must and we are doing what we can to ensure residents and staff adhere to this.
- Staff are well trained and aware of the best things to do to control infection.

- Ensure all deliveries to the facility are being sanitized and other than perishable goods for the kitchen, are being kept for a 24 hour. All deliveries are received by Maintenance staff and no delivery representatives are allowed in the facility.
- Only essential work that required subcontractors will be carried out and masks must be worn.
- All outside gates and touch spots are wiped regularly.
- Telehealth has been organised with the ability for doctors to interact remotely.

Staff precautions

We are also conscious of the potential infection that may enter the facility through community transmission and the risk of staff being the conduit of this.

The news today that Mildura is now at Stage 3 lockdown restriction and masks being worn in the community being compulsory is very good news to stop the spread of the disease. I assure you; we are advocating to staff to be extra careful when away from Princes Court undertaking essential shopping and family care, that they continue to apply the best hygiene practices possible to keep Princes Court clear of infections.

Princes Court is a home away from home for staff and an important part of their lives and they genuinely care for the residents. Therefore, ultra-careful hygiene habits apply both at work and away. This COVID pandemic just lifts the bar in being mindful every minute of the day in whatever they are doing to keep themselves and others safe and to lead the way in the community. We are advocating to staff to:

- Keep contacts outside family bubbles to a minimum
- Wear masks (Olinda, one of our staff made every staff member one in the initial stages)
- Wash hands regularly
- Avoid touching surfaces
- Wipe surfaces, especially supermarket trolleys, handles and door knobs
- Not linger
- Keep a physical distance and avoid crowded situations
- Sneezing and coughing into elbows and disposable tissues
- Not going out if feeling unwell (or coming to Princes Court)
- Getting tested for COVID with slightest hint of symptom
- Annual flu vaccinations
- Regular on line training such as Hand Hygiene Australia, infection control and COVID as well as in person training in donning & doffing personal protective gear.

Then when they check in for work:

- Temperatures are taken, and again if leave facility for any reason, any temp over 37.5 degrees, they don't stay and then get COVID 19 tested and isolate.

- Daily personal signed statement confirming say that they are well, have not been exposed to COVID to their knowledge and are adhering to Princes Court Homes guidelines regarding COVID prevention strategies including social/physical distancing.
- Hands are washed and then in-house stringent infection control practices kick in.
- Everyone is going the extra mile to keep well and help each other to do the same both at work and play.

Our commitment to you if case arises

If a positive COVID 19 test arises, we will keep in contact with you through:

- Text to mobile within the first 30 minutes. This text will be to the Medical Power of Attorney or nominated first contact. We do not have the capacity or the knowledge to contact the extended family. We would hope that the nominated person would complete this on our behalf. The information will include the unit where the resident lives if a resident.
- Contacting direct family nominated person to a resident with a positive COVID result, as soon as possible.
- Inform all families via email of what is occurring in the first two hours.
- Endeavour to be in contact directly by telephone to every family nominated contact within the first three hours.
- We will then send a blanket update twice daily to all families

Please be aware:

- There will be many people that will be trying to contact Princes Court Homes, unless urgent, please refrain from calling.
- We will keep you informed of what is occurring.
- We will keep the residents calm, as safe possible and informed also.
- We will be working with new personnel from Department of Health and Human Services on site at Princes Court Home. So, there will be unfamiliar people involved. Please continue to be cordial to them.
- Current staff that will need to isolate will still be connecting with the facility and communicating with you. You may receive call from numbers that are not familiar as Princes Court Homes. The caller will identify themselves and their role.

Please help us in the current situation

- Please help in the community and encourage everyone to wear a mask and social distance.

- Please be respectful to our staff, we understand that it is a trying times for everyone, but we are doing the best to assist you and look after the resident's best interests.
- Please do not come on site unless phone call first and permission gained from staff.
- Please continue to drop off letters and parcels. If you have a delivery and it is something that can't be left in the containers at the front, please contact reception and they will meet you.

Contact with residents

I apologise that visiting residents has been so disjointed lately with changing regulations. We are trying to do what we can to continue to offer opportunities for you to connect.

Karyn and Elly from administration and also the lifestyle team will be in contact with those who have been visiting on a weekly basis to determine what option will suit you best. If contact is not made in the next couple of days, please contact, to work through how we can organise a contact for you.

The options:

- ***Virtual Visits***

Many are making full use of face time on phones, iPads and family zooms. Elly Pilleggi and Lifestyle team can organise for your family member to have access to a device to receive your calls.

- ***Off-site meetings at Sunraysia Carers Centre***

For those not familiar with computers or social media options, we can now organise a time for you to connect through technology with assistance. All you need to do is turn up. Thank you to Sunraysia Carers for providing their offices at 159 Thirteenth Street, first unit to the left on Thirteenth Street after Village Way (the road that leads to Princes Court Village). Times will be Thursday and Friday from 1.30 to 3.30 am.

- ***Extenuating Circumstances***

At times of high need for a resident, visitors will still be supported to enter Princess Court under strict regulation and supervision. This includes palliative care.

- ***Other options***

As the conditions change and we are able to offer other options, we will let you know.

Other information

- **Changes to the front of the facility**

This will increase the security as all visitors, contractors and staff will enter the facility at the front of the reception area. The first stage will be for additional concrete to be laid between Waratah and Banksia unit. This will reduce the gradient of the current concrete walkway and allow easier access from reception to Caffrey and Waratah once the new fences at the reception are closed.

- **Additional clinical staff**

The staff have been under immense pressure given the current situation and I cannot begin to thank the staff for their tireless efforts and commitment to the residents, especially during these trying times. At present, we have residents with additional medical needs in the advanced care areas. We also have residents that need additional care given their behaviours. The leadership team have determined a way to be able to extend the hours in these units to cater for this.

Thank you to Staff

In closing, I need your help. On Friday, it is Aged Care Employee Day. The day is to thank, honour, recognise and celebrate the people who work in the age care services industry. It is difficult this year to run an activity where the staff and residents can celebrate together. In lieu of this, we will be sending messages of thanks to the staff, with a small gift.

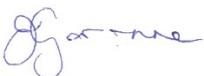
The community values that are being portrayed by staff are extremely commendable and need to be recognised, especially at the moment. The staff are going outside of their roles, often on a voluntary basis to enhance the resident's lives and support our wonderful community.

Families if you would like to send a message. Please email lifestyle at colleen.lewis@princescourt.com.au and the team will increase the size of the font and display all messages in the reception area, staff room and anywhere else we can find space. This would mean so much to the staff.

Again if you have any concerns, or are anxious about your family member, please contact either Sue Zariko, Clinical Care Coordinator, Sianne Nicholds, Director Care Services or myself and we would be happy to discuss with you what is happening and ways that we can support you and your family member.

All the best.

Yours sincerely



Jenny Garonne, CEO