



Media Release

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## Statement from Hawkesbury Living Aged Care CEO Kimberley Talbot

Update on COVID-19 cases and response as at 23 August, 2021

Despite the efforts of the team at Hawkesbury Living aged care, a number of residents and staff have tested positive to the Delta strain of COVID-19 this month. The most recent positive result (22nd August) was a staff member who had previously tested negative.

Of our 134 residents and 184 staff, a total of 13 individuals (7 residents and 6 staff members) have a current positive test. None of the resident cases are critical however, unfortunately, our thoughts are with a staff member who is quite seriously ill.

Hawkesbury Living Aged Care has separated those positive resident cases into an isolated zone with dedicated staff. The State Government are taking the lead with the COVID outbreak and provided directions on mitigating the risk of further infections, cross over into the other building and COVID related procedures, specific to the Delta strain. The Clinical First Responders from the Commonwealth have greatly assisted our staff with how to implement these directions.

The organisation is working closely with NSW Health, specialists from infectious disease units, emergency response teams and related agencies to minimise the spread, while providing the best possible care onsite.

Residents who have tested positive are given the option to be treated in our segregated wing or be transferred to Nepean Hospital, with whom we have a strong relationship. To date, all infected residents have chosen to stay at Hawkesbury Living. No resident is considered critical at this stage, and should that change, the hospital will be engaged immediately.

Vaccinated residents are cohorted together in a separate zone. Rivera, the new extension, and the rest of the site remains COVID free at this stage.

We can confirm that 89.1% of residents and over 70% of Hawkesbury Living's team members have received either one or both doses of vaccine, with more scheduled to be vaccinated in the near future. Staff who have tested positive or have been a close contact are in self isolation.

### RESPONSE

All staff of Hawkesbury Living Aged Care have been wearing mandatory personal protective equipment (PPE) as a precaution since a fully vaccinated staff member returned a positive result, with no symptoms and multiple negative results prior, earlier this month during a routine staff testing procedure.

Since then, another staff member has contracted the Delta strain of COVID-19. That staff member is currently battling the illness; our thoughts and wishes are with her and her family. I can confirm that the staff member lives in St Marys.



It was timely that the Board of Directors approved a complete update of all policies and procedures four months ago in light of the pandemic. This update involved re-training staff in infection control and revisiting our pandemic plans.

This, alongside high vaccination rates within the facility, has minimised the acuteness of the outbreak. As at 23 August 2021, it appears that we are stabilising, however the Delta strain is unpredictable.

We are sufficiently resourced to provide the care and protection required to keep our residents as safe and healthy as possible with all the assistance provided by the Commonwealth and State. In addition to the onsite Clinical First Responders team, we have accessed extra clinical staff through further Commonwealth and State assistance, plus via our own broader Richmond Club Executive team. It is hopeful we will have staff returning to work from 24 August 2021, after their isolation period has concluded.

As CEO, I am working daily with my General Manager, Kristen Gower, in communicating with all related government departments daily, and the Board of Directors of the Richmond Club Group are being updated daily as the situation unfolds.

#### **COMMUNICATION**

In addition to nightly reports to all families relaying results of daily testing activity, telephone conferences are regularly held to provide facility updates, high frequency individual updates are provided to family members of positive cases, and residents are using Facetime to stay in contact with their families virtually.

We will provide periodic updates to the broader community over the coming days and weeks.