



13<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Re: COVID-19

Dear Service Provider.

In light of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation, we are writing to you with some important information and requirements that you must be aware of before visiting Wongaburra Society or our home care clients, and to outline Wongaburras current and future support needed and the role you play in our response, as an individual, community member and family member

As you will be aware, the international situation has changed significantly in the last few weeks. New imported cases are being seen every day, some from countries not previously identified as high risk.

On Tuesday, 3 March, New South Wales Health identified an aged care worker with COVID-19 in Sydney. The staff member, who has worked at the facility for more than two decades, had not travelled overseas. She presented with symptoms on 24 February 2020 and is being treated at Royal North Shore Hospital and is in a stable condition.

This represents the first case of COVID-19 identified in relation to an aged care facility. Five aged care residents at the facility have since tested positive for COVID-19, and were transferred to hospital. Sadly, two of these residents have died. A further two staff, and several close contacts outside of this facility, have tested positive for COVID-19.

Elderly people are vulnerable and at a higher risk of serious disease from COVID-19 and Wongaburra has been advised to have appropriate precautions in place to ensure residents continue to remain safe from coronavirus. .

## **Disease characteristics**

Current information about COVID-19 shows that the majority of people with COVID-19 infection (>80 per cent) have a mild form of the disease. This mild disease contributes to the high transmissibility of the virus. Wongaburra Management and Staff are very conscious our residents and clients are at much greater risk of serious illness.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that can make humans and animals sick and symptoms can range from the common cold to more severe diseases.

## **Symptoms**

Symptoms can range from mild illness to pneumonia. Some people will recover easily, and others may get very sick very quickly. People with coronavirus may experience:

- fever
- flu-like symptoms such as coughing, sore throat and fatigue

210 Brisbane Street, Beaudesert  
Mail: P.O. Box 189, Beaudesert, QLD 4285  
Phone: 07 5540 1400 Fax: 07 5541 3484 Email: [don@wongaburra.com.au](mailto:don@wongaburra.com.au)  
ABN: 60 633 552 611

- shortness of breath

## How it spreads

There is evidence that the virus spreads from person-to-person.

The virus is most likely spread through:

- close contact with an infectious person
- contact with droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze
- touching objects or surfaces (like doorknobs or tables) that have cough or sneeze droplets from an infected person, and then touching your mouth or face

## Who is at risk

The COVID-19 virus infects people of all ages. However, evidence to date suggests that two groups of people are at a higher risk of getting severe COVID-19 disease. These are older people; and those with underlying medical conditions. WHO emphasizes that all must protect themselves from COVID-19 in order to protect others

## We will or have commenced in response to the potential risks

- Encouraging your Family to be vaccinated for seasonal flu vaccinations
- Have an open conversation with the family on a case-to-case basis. Such as an understanding and arriving at a mutual decision with cancellation or non-attendance of special outings or special events due to the high risk of contraction of the Coronavirus at these type of large gatherings and the risk of bringing it back to the facility.
- Increase awareness to Wongaburras Infection Control protocols;
- Increased awareness to optimal Hygiene Practices - One of the important messages is the value of basic standard hygiene (hand washing, cough etiquette, social distancing) in preventing transmission. We appreciate your assistance with communicating this message to your family
- Prepare for potential need to engage external staff
- Prioritising resources for Infection control stock
- Reduce external Activity/Outings and Appointments as well as non urgent social leave unless there is a medical need – and as instructed by GP

## How can you help prevent the spread of coronavirus?

We are currently following all advice given to us by the Department of Health, Australian Health Sector Emergency Response and the National Guidelines for the Prevention, Control and Public Health Management of COVID-19 Outbreaks in Residential Care Facilities

We request all services providers understand and adhere to any changes guidelines or measures Wongaburra puts in place to reduce the expose to our Residents Clients, Staff, and Community.

We ask that you help us to keep our residents, families, employees and visitors safe by taking steps such as regularly washing your hands, avoiding close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms and not visiting our Facility or Clients if you are unwell

- Practising good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence against most viruses. You should:
- wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, and after going to the toilet

- cover your cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues, and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- and if unwell, avoid contact with others (stay more than 1.5 metres from people).

**Do not Visit Wongaburra or Wongaburra Clients if:**

- You have returned from a country or region that is at high or moderate risk for COVID-19
- You think you may have been in close contact with a confirmed case of coronavirus
- If you develop symptoms including a fever and cough

**You must not present to Wongaburra Society, and need to tell us immediately, if you:**

- have been diagnosed with COVID-19,
- have been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 or are at high risk through travel to identified countries
- follow advice and any isolation requirements if you are at risk from any of the above.
- Check the latest advice being issued by government authorities before visiting any of our homes and services

We thank you for your efforts so far and encourage you to maintain your vigilance in assisting to prevent further transmission of this disease.

Please be advised that this communication is provided to assure you that we are taking the best preventative steps to protect all those connected with Wongaburra Society

You can contact for the Queensland Government's Department of Health, 13HEALTH or [13 432 584](tel:13432584) for more information.

Yours Sincerely

Wongaburra Outbreak Management Team