



**Tanunda**  
Lutheran Home Inc.

24 April 2020

### **COVID-19 & Influenza - update**

Dear Residents, Family Members, Representatives and Volunteers,

Thank you for your ongoing understanding and support as we work together to protect our community from COVID-19. I hope you are all well, still staying at home, practicing your social-distancing when out and about and performing good handwashing techniques.

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

Since we at Tanunda Lutheran Home (TLH) implemented a strict 'No Visitors' policy, I am pleased to report we have had no cases of COVID-19 even though the Barossa Valley has the identified highest cluster of COVID-19 cases in South Australia to date. The South Australian Health Department regulations under the Emergency Management Act, were reinforced on 23 April 2020 and we at TLH are dedicated to continuing to minimise risk to those residents and staff in our care as much as we possibly can.

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 65 with chronic disease and those 70 years and over which is a vast majority of the people we support in residential care – so we are taking this pandemic very seriously.

In taking all the current information, directions being given by government authorities, considering the local COVID-19 testing results and with the TLH Board support, it is our decision to revise our current position to a restricted visitor process whilst maintain protective measures. TLH remains in "lockdown". This means we have all our

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## Tanunda Lutheran Home Inc.

external doors locked and monitored. We will remain this way for some time to come with the object of protecting our vulnerable residents from becoming infected by either the COVID-19 virus or the annual seasonal Influenza virus.

I encourage you to use our feedback channels if you wish to comment on this decision. 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 support over the coming months to keep the Home COVID-19 and influenza free.

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

I understand that this is an incredibly difficult time for our residents and their families, protecting your loved one is our absolute priority. Our residents love to maintain contact with family and friends unfortunately, during the COVID-19 pandemic, visits come with increased risk to our Residents. TLH staff are monitoring all residents closely to ensure that they are coping with the current levels of social-distancing, visitor restrictions, COVID-19 information and all of the changes brought with the pandemic. If at any time our staff believe the residents need a visit we will contact family members and suggest a visit.

Restricting access in the Home is a very uncomfortable concept for us as we've spent so much time helping our residents feel connected to the wider community as part of the TLH Vision and Values. We are comforted to have seen an increased uptake in the use of technology to stay in touch with loved ones.

When visiting with pre-approval during office hours, entry into the Home is via the main entrance near reception. After hours by arrangement and pre-approval you can enter via the Protea doors. Prior to being authorised inside you must complete the documentation and have your temperature checked. There is a maximum of two visitors to the resident for a short period (1 hour) once a day.

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### **Palliative Care**

Residents who are nearing end of life or who are requiring Palliative care have different exemptions within the emergency management plan-COVID-19 and family members and representatives impacted in this way will be contacted directly by one of the Registered Nurses or Clinical Leaders to consult with you about your options through the nominated contact.

### **Staying in touch**

To help ease the pain of temporary in person separation from loved ones, we encourage those who can use the phone to have a phone installed in the room, consider purchasing an iPad or tablet to have zoom meetings, encourage family members to write letters or organise a window visit (very popular and safe). We are looking into the possibility of developing an online portal for family, friends and the local community to send photographs, audio files, cards and short videos directly to each resident. I will keep you all informed of the progress of the project. 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 to long term.

### **Mandatory flu vaccinations**

From 1 May 2020, any person entering TLH must have been vaccinated against seasonal influenza to enter an aged care facility. To comply with the Federal Government's audit of this directive we must seek appropriate evidence of immunization status from everyone wishing or required to enter TLH. It will be expected the next time you visit the Home the evidence is presented to staff who greet you. Records will be kept of the evidence to assist in future visits. Please remember all persons are required to show evidence of having had a vaccination. Until all restrictions are lifted no child under the age of 16 is allowed to enter an aged care facility.



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

Finally, I want to acknowledge the resilience and support we've received from our residents, families, staff, the Board Members and our community. Their calm, sensible response to the COVID-19 crisis has been remarkable and a great lesson for us all. On behalf of us all, Thank you

For more information on the COVID-19 situation, Influenza restrictions to the entry of visitors to aged care facilities from 1 May 2020, please visit the Department of Health website.

We all look forward to moving through this challenging time and throwing open the doors to Tanunda Lutheran Home once again. If you require further clarification of this situation please contact 8563 7777 your call will be referred to a nominated staff member.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lee Martin', is positioned above the printed name.

**Lee Martin**  
CEO / DOC  
Tanunda Lutheran Home Inc

