

## A Royal Freemasons community update

### Dear Royal Freemasons community

Our highest priority is the safety and wellbeing of our residents and employees. With this in mind, on Wednesday, 18 March 2020 we implemented stringent access controls limiting visitation to our homes. We thank you for your patience and understanding during this difficult time.

Our recent [family](#) and [resident](#) surveys highlighted that that 65% of family members were in favour of these measures and 75% of our residents felt safer as a result. We received 646 completed family-member surveys and 748 resident surveys which illustrated a diverse mix of opinions and community feedback.

Thankfully, Australia has entered a new pandemic phase as our daily new case diagnosis rate reaches a controlled low and as a result, we believe we are now in a position to carefully expand visitor access within strict Federal and State requirements.

In addition to the current exceptions for compassionate reasons, we will now welcome visitors during set times. Please be assured that we continue to review the COVID-19 situation and its risks daily. The situation changes on a daily basis and we will need to continue to make the appropriate changes to our policy, in the event that the situation escalates.

### Visitor Access

From Wednesday, 6 May we will welcome families and loved ones back into our homes. There is no doubt that we have all missed connections with our families since the changes made in response to COVID-19.

Visiting hours will be Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 4.00pm each day, unless there are compassionate or exceptional circumstances in which case we will work with those residents and families individually. Because of the anticipated numbers of people coming into the homes on the weekend, weekend visits are not currently available. We will be reviewing this at the end of May.

- Bookings must be made via the [online booking system](#) on the website or by telephoning the facility who will make the booking for you.
- You must present evidence of a recent flu vaccination or you will not be permitted to visit.
- If you do not have a booking, please do not attend as you will not be able to enter.
- Each resident may only have one visitor per day.
- The number of visitors who may attend at once for each resident is one.
- To ensure that our staff can properly implement the government time restrictions and hygiene requirements the number of appointments per hour is limited to five visiting appointments available at each hour at facilities with more than 100 beds and three visiting appointments available at each hour at facilities with less than 100 beds.
- Time with residents for each booking is 45 minutes. The remaining time allows for hygiene and escorting to rooms.
- Visits are only permitted in resident rooms and away from any other residents.

## *A Royal Freemasons community update*

---

- If you refuse to sanitise or wash your hands with the staff member providing your access, you will not be permitted to enter.
- If you refuse to respond to the visitor entry record questions that are asked, you will not be permitted to enter.

Those who do not abide by the guidelines set down by the Department of Health and Royal Freemasons are sadly also likely to carry greatest risk to our community. If you do not follow the guidelines, you may be restricted to visiting only at times where the Facility Manager is available to support your visit.

We understand that everyone has heightened anxiety due to COVID-19, however bullying and intimidation, poor behaviour and verbal as well as physical abuse, or not following the direction of our staff will simply not be tolerated.

### **Flu Vaccination**

It is essential that you receive the flu vaccination and provide proof in order to visit our homes from 1 May. This is a new Australian Government requirement and our staff must not allow visitors entry without proof of vaccination.

### **Safe Visiting**

Please note the following requirements are to keep our people safe and to respect those who do not wish to allow visitors at all.

- Social distancing must be adhered to, both inside and outside the home
- Visits are to occur in the resident's room only
- Visitors must proceed directly to the resident's room
- Visitors must wash their hands before entry and during their visit
- Visitors should use the call bell to request assistance and not leave the room until the end of the visit
- Visitors should avoid using bathrooms if possible
- Visitors are not to make physical contact with any other resident, visitor or member of staff
- Visitors must follow the instructions of staff at all times

The wellbeing and safety of our communities is our highest priority and we appreciate your support in the measures we are taking to make our homes safe for our residents and those who provide their care.

If you have any further questions, please email [coronavirus@royalfreemasons.org.au](mailto:coronavirus@royalfreemasons.org.au) or speak with your Facility Manager.

Regards,

**Chris Tanti**  
Interim Chief Executive