



5 November 2020

Dear family and friends

I would like to take this opportunity to check in with you and update you on the new Directions released by SA Health and Helping Hand's approach.

Yesterday, SA Health released the revised Emergency Management Directions, **effective from today**. There are a number of variations, including that the universal wearing of masks by staff is longer be required. I know this will be a positive for residents and staff who will now be able to see each other without a barrier.

There are also changes for visitors to residential care homes. These include:

- There are now no restrictions on the number of care and support visits a resident may receive (including volunteers). This includes visits by relatives and friends for social reasons.
- Cross-border community members, permitted to enter South Australia, are also permitted to enter the care homes. Later in this letter I will outline the current travel restrictions in place.

You can read the Directions at <https://www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/emergency-declarations/aged-care>.

Visitation to Residential Care Homes

To support these changes Helping Hand will be extending visitation hours to: Monday – Friday 10am – 8pm, Saturday and Sunday 9am – 5pm and removing the maximum length of visiting time.

We are continuing to maintain a policy of visiting hours due to the need to screen and record visitation to sites under the *Emergency Management Directions*. Screening is required to ensure residents can receive visitors safely, and that a log is maintained of all visitors to site. Our care homes will also endeavour to accommodate visits out of these hours in unique circumstances. Please call the care home to discuss alternatives or to schedule a visit. We ask for your assistance and support.

Each care home is now able to increase the number of visitors onsite, however, we will need to ensure that social distancing and safe practices are adhered to. Therefore staff may give guidance about visitor spaces or ask you to find alternative spaces if an area is crowded.

With the lifting of visitor numbers and visiting times, some delays in screening may occur so please be patient with staff and each other.

Travelling

Travellers from interstate and overseas can only enter our residential care homes if they meet the following criteria:

- They have come from the **ACT, NSW, NT, QLD, TAS, WA and NZ (without stopping in Victoria)**. These locations are currently considered low community-transmission zones.

- Travellers from low-community transmission zones can enter SA without having a COVID-19 test or undergoing a 14-day isolation period, provided they have not been in Victoria for 14 days prior to entering SA.

Some restrictions for travellers entering South Australia from Victoria have been lifted. Travellers from Victoria who meet the necessary criteria can enter SA. However, they will not be able to enter a residential care home for 14 days after arrival and will need to be tested and to self-isolate. There are exceptions in place for end of life circumstances and these are carefully managed to comply with all the COVID-19 safety requirements.

As a result of these latest changes, our screening questions on entry at any of our homes have been updated.

Information on the latest travel updates and travelling to SA can be found at: www.covid-19.sa.gov.au/restrictions-and-responsibilities/travel-restrictions.

Key findings from the survey

In mid-July 2020, Helping Hand commenced a survey of residents, families, volunteers, clients and staff to see the impact of COVID-19 from a range of different perspectives. A total of 817 people took part.

The overwhelming response was that people trusted the decisions we made and appreciated the way we have managed our response to COVID-19. 90% felt that Helping Hand played a role in supporting them during COVID-19. We will be sharing this with our frontline staff, who have also sacrificed much over the past 8 months. I know they will feel proud.

I do acknowledge that for some people, this has been an especially difficult time. If you did not take part in the survey, we would still like to hear from you. Speak to a staff member or submit your feedback online at www.helpinghand.org.au/about-us/feedback.

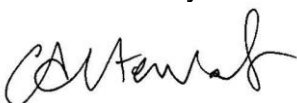
Activities and lifestyle

We understand that social activities on site, and socialising with family is important. As we move into the festival season and visitation restrictions start to lift, we want to ensure that opportunities to celebrate together safely are available.

We are currently reviewing our activities and lifestyle plan for the next few months, with an aim of increasing socialisation and engagement with family and volunteers. We will keep you informed as these events come around and look forward to seeing you with your family and loved ones.

Thank you for your ongoing support, trust and understanding.

Yours faithfully



Chris Stewart
Chief Executive Officer