



St Basil's Homes for the Aged in Victoria

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Office of Chairman –

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It is with much pain of soul that his Eminence Archbishop Makarios of Australia, the Auxiliary Bishops, the Chairman of the Board in Victoria Mr. Kon Kontis and all the Greek Community in Australia follow the developments at St Basil's Homes for the Aged Victoria, which is currently encountering cases in Coronavirus. The Board of St. Basil's, with the blessing of his Eminence Archbishop Makarios call upon all employees, all those who are implicated and primarily the relatives of those with the illness, to show understanding and to support everyone, during these trying times. We are certain that no one is pleased with this situation and no one rejoices in the spread of the pandemic. Under these circumstances we are all striving to do that which is best, that which complies with the recent guidelines issued by those in State Government, Victoria.

Currently we have a total of 47 residents that are positive cases and a total of 18 staff members who have tested positive and have been stood down. In addition, we have many close contacts of infected staff who have also been stood down. Our residents who tested positive have been isolated and are now together in "COVID wings" to prevent further spread of the virus. Residents that have tested negative are in separate wings. All residents are receiving continuous support and assessment by doctors and nurses from the Northern Health RECIPE Team and Geriatricians and the level of high care will be further stressed during this period.

The Chairman of the Board in Victoria Mr. Kon Kontis and other staff members met yesterday with the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner Ms. Janet Anderson and with State and Commonwealth Health Department representatives. It was decided that under these current circumstances and effective from 7:00 am this morning of the 22nd of July, our regular staff would be directed to vacate their positions, go into isolation and submit to further testing, returning only when they are cleared, and it is approved. This action, whilst implemented with a heavy heart, is one that was directed by the Victorian Public Health experts, doctors themselves who have shown unconditional understanding and commitment which will help us to overcome this difficult period.

As of today, 22nd July, our home will be overseen by replacement staff provided by the Commonwealth Department of Health. Staffing levels and care will be strictly monitored by doctors and nurses who will be on site and work with the RECIPE Team from the Northern Hospital. Our own staff members who test negative on Sunday, July 26 or later will be allowed to return to their positions on Thursday July 30 and then only, take over the management of the home. It is imperative that we respect and comply with the recent guidelines which have been issued by the Victorian State Government and the assistance which has been given to our facility.

The Chairman and Board of St. Basil's Victoria, together with his Eminence Archbishop Makarios, will continue to remain vigilant in monitoring the situation daily and, in cooperation with the Governing Authorities, will directly communicate any changes as soon as they are received. We especially ask that everyone shows caution, fellowship, unity, understanding, love and most certainly your trust in the authorities and the Holy Archdiocese of Australia. We continue to pray to our loving Lord asking that He may provide His loving mercy, that He may strengthen us with His love and protect us with His care.

From the Board of St. Basil's Homes for the Aged in Victoria