



# St Basil's Homes for the Aged in Victoria

ABN: 41 070 511 616

6 August 2020

Dear Relatives, Resident Representatives & St Basils Fawkner Visitors

We write to you to advise that we are commencing the return of the staff to St Basil's in preparation for resuming our operations and repatriating our residents. As from 9 AM this morning we will have some staff on the premises and the phones will be un-diverted from the communications centre to which they were diverted and will now be answered by our staff at the home.

As you would no doubt be aware all of our staff left the premises at 9 AM on Wednesday 22 July 2020 when they were all placed in quarantine and self-isolation due to the fact that they were considered to be close contacts. From that date forward the home was being run by Department of Health appointed contactors until the home was evacuated on Friday 28 July and the last few remaining residents were transferred to various hospitals.

In the intervening two weeks we lost some of our residents who succumbed to COVID-19 and we are devastated by that. We mourn their loss with their families and their loved ones and send the condolences of all of our staff that looked after them at the home since the day that they arrived. We all feel their loss and we will miss them.

We were one of the first aged care homes to be hit by COVID-19 but we are now told that almost 100 homes are battling this insidious silent virus which has devastated the whole of Melbourne to the point that we are now living under a state of disaster. A large number of our staff were also infected, and some were ill and hospitalised, but they are all on the way to recovery. We have been asking all of our staff to test regularly and so far, they have all been tested on Sunday 26 July and again on Sunday 2 August. Any staff members who have tested negative twice and have been cleared by DHSS are now commencing to return to St Basil's to start the preparation for repatriation and return of our residents that are well enough and who wish to return

The entire premises have been deep cleaned and totally sanitized by contractors who were originally engaged by Department of Health who we have continued to use. The premises have now been declared safe for occupation and are COVID-19 free.

The home is working closely with the Nursing Advisor who was appointed as requested by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission and plans are being submitted for the safe repatriation of the residents who are ready and wish to return to their home. The care to be provided will be by existing staff of St Basil's and with familiar faces and familiar surroundings we hope that returning residents will settle in quickly. Returns will be coordinated with hospitals and made in small numbers of 5 so that full assessment of care needs of returning residents can be made as soon as they return. We have been in contact with the hospitals where our residents are, and we are monitoring their condition.

All returning residents will be tested regularly and will be admitted to separate COVID-19 negative and positive sections of the home to prevent any further infection. All protocols for staff and infection control will continue to be applied rigorously including approved and recommended cleaning and sanitising of the home.

Thank you for your understanding and we wish that you and your family stay safe in these difficult times

Konstantin H Kontis

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