

MEDIA RELEASE

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COTA NT calls for urgent action by Darwin Residential Care Home

Pearl Residential Care Home continues to deny families visit to their loved ones

COTA NT calls on the Pearl Supported Care in Darwin to have families visit their loved ones. COTA NT has received numerous calls from distressed and desperate family members denied access to visit and even to view their family members, who reside at the Pearl residential care home.

“Mrs Ng usually visits her husband daily to assist with his care, especially with feeding and she stays for the extended time he needs to consume his meals. This is the first time they have been separated in 50 years,” reports Sue Shearer, COTA NT’s CEO. “As Mr Ng has advanced dementia, he has returned to the Chinese dialect of his youth and his wife is the only person with whom he can communicate. His remaining time on this earth when he can emotionally connect with Mrs Ng is limited and she is extremely distressed that she hasn’t been with him in over six weeks.”

“We have heard from numerous other family members who are bereft at not being able to see their loved ones,” continued Ms Shearer, “And whilst we understand the need to protect such vulnerable seniors, the Deputy Chief Medical Officer in Australia, the Prime Minister of Australia and the NT AMA President, Dr Parker in the Northern Territory have all stated that the Northern Territory is in the enviable position of being community-transmission free, and so these types of extreme distancing measures could be relaxed to allow family members to visit. In other states, transmission of COVID-19 has been mainly through staff. These inhumane measures – meant with the best of intentions no doubt – are causing huge physiological distress such as depression to both residents and family members.”

“We understand that family members are able to ‘view’ their loved ones at pre-arranged times and access is provided to limited phone calls and video calls, but we are concerned about what happens for those residents who are vision-impaired, hearing-impaired and those who are not ambulant to go this viewing area.”

“On behalf of these concerned family members, COTA NT would implore Pearl Supported Care and Southern Cross to rethink their position on family visits urgently.”

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Sue Shearer – CEO – COTA NT

Contact: 0408 987 751

COTA Northern Territory is the peak advocacy and representation organisation for senior Territorians advocating for and working towards an age-friendly, just, inclusive and equitable society since 1969

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More information

See attached emails (used with their permission) from concerned family members.

Northern Territory advice,

<https://coronavirus.nt.gov.au/community-advice/elderly-and-aged-care/residential-aged-care>

Department of Health advice,

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/advice-for-people-at-risk-of-coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-advice-for-people-in-aged-care-facilities>