

Copies of emails received

Cc: "Luke.Gosling.MP@aph.gov.au" <Luke.Gosling.MP@aph.gov.au>

Subject: **Re: Letter to families in Residential Aged Care_22 April 2020**

Dear Families of Residents at Pearl,

First and foremost, I hope you are well and keeping safe.

I am reaching out to you regarding this announcement by SCC CEO to maintain the lock down of Pearl residents despite guidance from the national cabinet given by the Prime Minister Scott Morrison on Tuesday 21st April.

The Prime Minister stated:

"We reviewed recent events in a number of aged care facilities and took the lessons from those cases. An important one is, the findings that we are very concerned about the restrictions that have been put in place in aged care facilities [that are] over and above what was recommended by the National Cabinet on the residents in those facilities,"

"There is great concern that the isolation of elderly people in residential aged care facilities, where they have been prevented from having any visits from loved ones and support people, is not good being and not good for their health.

"And so the National Cabinet agreed that there needs to be a strong reminder that the National Cabinet decision was to not shut people off or lock people away in their rooms. That was never the recommendation or the advice of the National Cabinet.

"It shouldn't be done out of the convenience of isolation in terms of how these facilities are run. It should always be in the interest of people who live in those facilities."

What the CEO did not acknowledge in his statement is that a substantial number of positive cases in nursing homes in Australia were transmitted by their own staff. This is deeply concerning especially given that the CEO does not address the risk associated with staff infecting the residents. Implying that visitors, whom he states will now required a flu vaccine from 1st May pose the highest risk to residents.

that Since the crisis started, Pearl have not provided reassurance of any additional screening measures of staff. This may include but is not limited to:

- A single point of entry to the facility
- Temperature check (must be 37.5 degrees Celsius or below)
- Key questions about:
 - recent overseas travel
 - exposure to anyone diagnosed with COVID-19
- Checking for any respiratory symptoms

- Hand sanitation on entering and reminders to do so regularly while in the care home
- Reminders regarding the importance of spatial distancing
- Maintaining records of all additional screening results for all staff entering the facility
- COVID testing of all employees (and residents)

Furthermore, since the decision to stop visitors, SCC have not provided any additional services to fill the gap with regards to social, emotional and/or psychological support of its residents. Aside from a face time call (at the convenience of their staff, 1-4pm) and most recently a family window (only for special occasions), there have not been any strategies implemented to support the residents who may already suffer from loneliness, generalized anxiety and/or depression.

Whilst SCC are quick to boast about face time calls, a viewing window and even one volunteer (unpaid) in the entire organisation coming in on a weekend, it is extremely disappointing that no additional qualified staff resources and/or allied health services have been provided to our loved ones during this period. Even basic activities, such as outings to the garden for fresh air are not being done and visits by psychogeriatric services have been stopped. I am deeply saddened that when I call the facility to ask for a PCA to sit with my mother and hold her hand for a few minutes (because she is upset and crying on the phone), I am repeatedly told there are not enough staff and they are too busy to do that.

My mother has been a resident of Pearl since March 2019 and during this time I have had the pleasure of chatting with many of the lovely residents and their families. Listening to stories about their families and their lives. Some of you, like myself has spent a considerable amount of time visiting our mother, father, grandparent to provide love and support to them.

I completely support the need to keep everyone safe, but not at the expense of the mental and emotional health our loved ones and not for the convenience of SCC. Particularly when SCC continue to make no investment to address the additional needs and concerns of the residents and their families during this crisis. SCC have neglected other important implications and effects of isolation, which some of us (who are not considered as "vulnerable") are struggling with in our own lives. The risk should be heavily weighed against the residents well being and I firmly believe that any request to review and reduce some lockdown rules rearing to family visits remains reasonable.

Should you wish to raise your concerns, then I encourage you to contact the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission:

<https://www.agedcarequality.gov.au/making-complaint/lodge-complaint>

Thank you for taking the time to read my email. I wish you, your loved one in Pearl and your family and friends the very best of health during this period and in the future.

Warm Regards,

David De Rubeis

From: Banda Ng <banda71268@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, 23 April 2020 9:44 AM
To: Janet Brown (Project Manager Aged Care System Navigator) <agedcare_darwin@cotant.org.au>
Subject: Fwd: Letter to families in Residential Aged Care_22 April 2020

Good morning Janet

This is the email I received this morning.

Please help.

I could not bear to be lockout much longer.
I'm sorry I couldn't take this much longer.

Tell me what to do or where to go and
I'm will to take it to the next level.

I apologise for causing you and everyone
in COTA , for an inconveniences caused.

Desperately and sincerely yours,
Alice xx

Begin forwarded message:

From: Rahul Singh Thakuri <rahul.thakuri@southerncrosscare.com.au>

CEO

From: Janet Brown (Project Manager Aged Care System Navigator)
Sent: Thursday, 23 April 2020 9:12 AM
To: CEO
Subject: FW: Pearl visitations

I sent the Reaffirmation of Aged Care Guidelines etc to another person not allowed to visit her relative, here is her reply.

From: Louise Bilato <louise.bilato@imconcepts.net.au>
Sent: Wednesday, 22 April 2020 3:19 PM
To: Janet Brown (Project Manager Aged Care System Navigator) <agedcare_darwin@cotant.org.au>
Subject: FW: Pearl visitations

Hi Janet,

Please see email response from the Pearl to my request to recommence visits to our mother, as her Adult Guardian.

I was also advised that the Chief Minister Michael Gunner wrote to the Pearl asking for families to have access visits and received a negative response from Southern Cross on 17 April 2020.

If Southern Cross is unable to accept the advice of the Prime Minister, Minister for Health or the request of the Chief Minister of the Northern Territory not sure what higher authority is required for the Pandemic Committee to overturn this decision that is keeping people from their families.

Key NT data

- No cases in over 14 days
- 28 cases 15 recovered
- No community transfer all interstate or overseas visitors.
- No aged care related cases.

If you have any further suggestions as to how best to progress this stand-off I would be most grateful.

Kind regards,

Louise Bilato