

COVID-19 NOTICE – 18 MARCH 2020 – FOR CARINGA BUSINESS PURPOSES ONLY

To: Caringa Clients, Families, Support Coordinators, NDIS Providers

From: Rachel Choy, Chief Executive Officer

I write to advise you about actions that Caringa is taking to support clients, staff and volunteers in addition to standard precautions in relation to the current pandemic. I have already made personal contact with the CEOs and heads of other NDIS providers who also provide services to existing clients to communicate these provisions. If I have not managed to speak with you personally, please accept my apologies.

SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT LIVING (SIL)

1. Effectively immediately, Caringa is locking down three SIL houses in which Caringa's most vulnerable clients reside – Manor, Queen and Swan Hill.

Why are we doing this?

- Residents in these houses live with or are themselves highly vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 due to co-morbidities. Caringa is being especially risk averse as a result, and this is a strategy to limit pathways for transmission.
- This provides a limited circle of contacts for epidemiological (disease) tracking if required.

What does this mean?

- Effective immediately, clients in Manor, Queen and Swan Hill will not be attending their day programs and/or community participation activities at Caringa or with other service providers.
- All non-essential appointments (including home visits) will be to the discretion of the Team Leader in consultation with the client and family/advocate.
- No visitors to the houses will be welcome. Please respect this as a safety measure for all clients and do not present at the premises.

2. As at 4pm on Friday, 20 March 2020, Caringa will be locking down all remaining SIL houses.

Why are we doing this?

- Residents in these houses live with residents who are moderately vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19 due to co-morbidities. Caringa is using this as a strategy to limit pathways for transmission.
- This provides a limited circle of contacts for epidemiological tracking if required.

What does this mean?

- Residents in all Caringa SIL houses will not be attending any centre-based or community participation activities, regardless of their provider.
- Residents in all Caringa SIL houses will not be attending Caringa Employment or other employment.
- All non-essential appointments including home visits will be to the discretion of the Team Leader in consultation with the client and family/advocate, with a focus on health and safety.
- No visitors to the houses will be welcome. Please respect this as a safety measure for all clients and do not present at the premises.

CENTRE-BASED DAY PROGRAMS

3. As at **4pm on Friday, 20 March 2020**, Caringa will be closing our centre-based day programs to all clients.

Why are we doing this?

- To reduce pathways for transmission by the congregation of several vulnerable people who each bring with them broader circles of contact from other SIL homes, from private homes and the community at large.

What does this mean?

- Clients regardless of their living arrangements will no longer be able to attend their usual Caringa centre-based or community programs at The Vault in Coffs Harbour and Orara Street and/or at Bacon Street in Grafton.

What does this mean for client choice and control?

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented and unpredictable occurrence with no borders or boundaries. I have consulted with the CEO of industry peak body, National Disability Services who has confirmed that actions to protect transmission and preserve lives trumps choice and control, especially in this present time.

I am confident and comfortable about the decisions I am making in good faith on behalf of Caringa, and their express purpose is to reduce risk to clients, to ensure that Caringa has sufficient staff to fully support the most vulnerable clients and to support Caringa staff.

The situation is fluid and Caringa's responses will be reviewed daily. The relaxing or strengthening of these measures will be amended, under advice from relevant industry and/or Government authorities.

Yours sincerely,



End Document.