



MEDIA RELEASE

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CATHOLIC HEALTH AUSTRALIA ADOPTS NEW AGED CARE COVID-19 MEASURES BUT WILL ALLOW MANAGED VISITOR ACCESS TO CONTINUE

Statement from Pat Garcia, Chief Executive of Catholic Health Australia, on the new aged care COVID-19 measures announced today.

"We want to reassure families that the health and safety of our residents remains paramount. We accept the new measures limiting the number of visitors but will continue to allow residents managed access to their families, health professionals and anyone else deemed important to their lives.

"We need to be careful and compassionate. The safety of our residents and staff is our number one priority but the mental wellbeing of our residents comes a very close second.

"Our members want to provide comfort and care to their residents in what are very disturbing times. Many homes are already limiting visitors but the last thing that we would wish to impose is a blanket ban and enforced isolation, especially to those who are nearing the end of life.

"For a number of weeks Catholic aged care providers have been deterring all but the most essential visits, and have been screening visitors on arrival. Visitors are required to follow strict hygiene protocols.

"However elderly residents have a right to see their family or their priest and operators will continue to manage access on a case by case basis.

"The Catholic sector, which oversees 25,000 residential aged care beds, will now adopt the measures announced today by the Prime Minister as its new minimum standards."

Catholic Health Australia is the country's largest grouping of not-for-profit aged care providers.

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