



St Basil's Home for the Aged, Victoria

Statement from Ms Janet Anderson PSM, Aged Care Quality and Safety Commissioner

27 July 2020

“As the national regulator of Commonwealth-funded aged care services, the Commission’s role is to protect and enhance the safety, health, well-being and quality of life of older Australians receiving aged care.

The Commission is closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation in Victoria and we are using the full range of our regulatory powers to ensure that providers meet their obligations with respect to the Aged Care Quality Standards and implement all necessary steps to mitigate the risks of transmission of the virus consistent with the advice of health authorities.

The large number of outbreaks in aged care facilities in Victoria serves as a reminder to the community of the elevated risks facing older Australians and reinforces the need for everyone working in the aged care sector to remain alert and ready.

The COVID-19 outbreak at the St Basil’s Home for the Aged in Fawkner, Victoria has been a very significant and challenging event for everyone at the residential service. Its impact on residents, family members and staff has been far-reaching; they have shared a traumatic and distressing experience.

Since first learning of the outbreak at the service, the Commission has actively engaged with those in charge of this residential service (St Basil’s Home for the Aged in Victoria – the “approved provider”). We are working alongside several other agencies who are providing expert advice and assistance, including the Commonwealth and Victorian health authorities. The Commission’s role has been and continues to be to monitor and support the provider’s efforts both to manage the outbreak and to respond to residents’ and relatives’ concerns.

On the basis of evidence available to the Commission, we developed concerns about the serious impact of the outbreak on the residents and staff, and the response of the approved provider. These concerns included ongoing challenges apparent in implementing an effective outbreak response in a timely manner, and in fulfilling responsibilities to provide timely communication relating to the care of individual residents.

As a result, on 26 July 2020 we took action that requires the approved provider to:

- not admit any new residents until the risks have been adequately addressed;
- agree to immediately appoint an independent adviser to ensure the health and well-being of residents, and;
- provide regular reports to the Commission on a specified set of key issues.

The Commission considers that this regulatory action is in the best interests of residents and families and we remain committed to taking every step necessary to ensure the health and well-being of residents who have been cared for in St Basil’s during this exceptionally difficult time. The independent adviser has already commenced work at St Basil’s to support this goal.



All services with an active case of COVID-19 are receiving support from the Australian Government (Department of Health) including a single case manager, access to PPE, testing in residential aged care facilities, and access to surge workforce and supplementation.

The Australian and Victorian governments have also established a dedicated Victorian Aged Care Response Centre in Melbourne to coordinate support to each aged care provider experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak in Victoria. A senior staff member from the Commission has joined the Centre. These actions are occurring in concert with ongoing work by the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission and Department of Health to provide up to date guidance and information to aged care providers, services and consumers on the management of COVID-19.

Additionally, the Commission is undertaking targeted activities to monitor and support all aged care services in Victoria in response to the increased risks of a COVID-19 outbreak. More details about these activities can be found on our website [here](#).

For information on compliance actions taken by the Commission in relation to specific services, please visit the My Aged Care website's non-compliance checker: <https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/non-compliance-checker>

If there are concerns about the care of residents or the actions of specific services in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic or more generally, complaints can be made via the Commission's website: www.agedcarequality.gov.au or by calling **1800 951 822**."