



**Statement from Ms Janet Anderson PSM, on Menarock Life Aged Care Services at Essendon,
Victoria**

17 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 COVID-19 outbreak at the Essendon residential service operated by Menarock Life Aged Care Services (the provider) has understandably brought anxiety to residents, family members and staff. It serves as a reminder to the community of the elevated risks facing aged care facilities during the pandemic, and reinforces the need for everyone working in the aged care sector to remain alert and ready.

The Commission has engaged with Menarock Life Aged Care Services from the day we were notified of the outbreak at the Essendon facility on 9 July, to ensure that they take all necessary steps to manage and mitigate the risk to residents and staff at the service.

The Commission is an active participant in daily interagency co-ordination meetings with Menarock Life and their Essendon facility management team. These meetings, which are chaired by the state office of the Commonwealth Department of Health, also involve clinical experts and others from the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services.

On 16 July 2020, the Commission took regulatory action in relation to Menarock Life Essendon Aged Care Services because of significant concerns about the provider’s response to the outbreak and the safety, health and wellbeing of the residents at the service. Menarock Life Aged Care Services has notified the Commission that it has accepted the requirements imposed by the Commission under the regulatory action.

The Commission supported the decision to transfer residents from Menarock Essendon to Latrobe Private Hospital to ensure their ongoing safety and wellbeing. This transfer is taking place on 17 July 2020.

Once residents and their families have been advised about the Commission’s regulatory action, details will be published on the Commission’s website. The Commission will closely monitor and assess the provider’s actions to return to compliance with the Aged Care Quality Standards until such time as they can demonstrate full compliance with all requirements.

Menarock Life Aged Care Services operates 12 services in Victoria and one in Tasmania. The Commission has undertaken assessment contacts with all Menarock services since the beginning of the pandemic. We have also conducted site visits at 12 of these services across 2019 and 2020. The Essendon facility has had four site visits since its reaccreditation audit site visit on 16-17 May 2017 including three unannounced visits.



The Commission continues to work with the Commonwealth Department of Health and the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, including infectious disease and clinical experts, to monitor and support services experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks in Victoria. The Commonwealth and Victorian governments have jointly put in place arrangements to ensure the immediate availability of additional clinical expertise and care staff for outbreak sites, as well as urgent access to COVID-19 testing and supplies of personal protective equipment.

The Commission is undertaking additional 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](#).

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