



MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 14 February 2022

STATE GOVERNMENTS MUST MOVE SWIFTLY TO IMPLEMENT AGED CARE VISITOR CHANGE

Australia's largest non-government grouping of aged care services, Catholic Health Australia, has welcomed the federal government's plan to allow greater access to visitors, and is urging the states to act urgently on implementation.

The federal government's new Interim Guidance on Managing Public Health Restrictions on Residential Aged Care Facilities encourages increased visitation and supports aged care providers to apply the least restrictive isolation requirements on residents.

Catholic Health Australia chief executive Pat Garcia said aged care facilities in the CHA network were eager to see the changes implemented.

"Staff and managers across our network have worked heroically to make life as comfortable as possible for residents during this unprecedented and deeply challenging time," Mr Garcia said.

"There is no doubt, however, that pandemic restrictions have been badly eroding quality of life for thousands of aged care residents. This new plan offers hope of some relief, so we need state governments to change their public health orders urgently to activate these guidelines.

"Our members in aged care have had to battle not just the pandemic, but confusing communication from different levels of government. Changes to public health orders have often been too slow and unclear.

"State governments should recognise the importance of these measures and move swiftly, decisively, and unambiguously to make them a reality on the ground."

Notes to editors: Catholic Health Australia (CHA) is Australia's largest non-government grouping of health and aged care services accounting for approximately 10 percent of hospital-based healthcare in Australia. Our members also provide around 25 percent of private hospital care, 5 percent of public hospital care, 12 percent of aged care facilities, and 20 percent of home care and support for the elderly.