



A2199379

Office for Ageing Well

Department for Health and Wellbeing

Citi Centre Building
11 Hindmarsh Square
Adelaide SA 5000

PO Box 287 Rundle Mall
Adelaide SA 5000
DX 243

Tel 08 8226 7100
ABN 97 643 356 590

www.sahealth.sa.gov.au

Dear Aged Care Provider

RE: STOPPING THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 IN AGED CARE FACILITIES

The increased risk of COVID-19 due to the outbreaks in Victoria and New South Wales is a reminder that we cannot become complacent.

There are a range of resources available on the [SA Health website](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au), including specific advice for aged care, that I encourage you access to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in your aged care facility.

The *Stop the Spread* resources remind people to continue playing their part in helping stop the spread by continuing to practise good hygiene and stay 1.5 metres apart whenever and wherever they can. The resources are available at www.stopthespread.sa.gov.au and include posters, social media graphics, screensavers, web graphics, and email signature banners.

A range of COVID-19 resources and translated materials for culturally and linguistically diverse communities are also available at www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/covidtranslated. I encourage you to display relevant resources prominently in your workplace as a reminder to residents, staff and visitors, if you haven't already.

In addition, aged care facilities should adopt a low threshold for initiating COVID-19 testing among residents and staff. It is important that staff who show any level of symptoms, even if they are only mild, do not attend work and get tested for COVID-19. All residents showing COVID-like symptoms should also be tested, with additional infection control measures implemented while awaiting a result such as isolating unwell residents to their rooms and ensuring appropriate PPE is worn.

If you are unable to source from your usual supplier, SA Health has surplus PPE available to aged care facilities by emailing HealthPSCMSCOCustomerService@sa.gov.au. Additional guidance for aged care workers about the use of PPE is provided on the Australian Department of Health website: www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-when-to-use-personal-protective-equipment-in-aged-care.

The [Guideline for management of COVID-19 in residential care facilities in South Australia](#) outlines how SA Health will work hand-in-hand with aged care facilities to help prevent outbreaks, with key aspects including:

- urgent domiciliary testing of any resident showing symptoms;
- immediate transfer of any resident who returns a positive result to hospital by ambulance; and
- deployment of a Public Health Rapid Response Team to provide on the ground support.

Please ensure that you are familiar with this guideline and that your own local policies and procedures have been reviewed and updated to enable you to respond quickly, if necessary.

We know that COVID-19 can pose a serious threat to the health of older South Australians. By remaining vigilant and taking a swift response to any sign of the infection, we can reduce the risk of transmission and increase the safety of residents and staff in aged care facilities across the state.

Thank you for all your support in the fight against COVID-19 and for helping keep our community safe.

Yours sincerely



CASSIE MASON
DIRECTOR, OFFICE FOR AGEING WELL
DEPARTMENT FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

24 / 7 / 2020