# STAFF MEMO

To our valued staff

Currently in Australia we are facing some challenges relating to minimising the spread of the corona virus called COVID-19.

As a front line worker who interacts regularly with the frail aged and other vulnerable people, we want to make sure that we put in procedures that protect not only the clients you work with, but yourself and your families as well. This means you will see some changes in the way we operate and interact with consumers of our service.

The following modifications to our service and practices are designed to minimise spreading the virus in the wider community as well as between clients.

**Changes to Service Delivery**

* All large group activities will be suspended indefinitely.
* Small group activities (4 or less clients) will be carefully monitored and may be cancelled at short notice if there is any risk of infection to the clients or staff.
* One to one activities of an essential nature will continue e.g. social support -shopping trips.
* All general services such as domestic assistance, personal care and transport will continue unless there is an identified risk to the client or staff member.
* Where a client is unable to, or has a preference not to, visit the shops their services are able to be amended to include shopping services.   
  ***Note:*** *the organisation is unable to pay for groceries or other items as this falls outside funding guidelines.*

**Staying Safe**

* When you arrive at a client’s home you must check that it is safe for you to enter. Ask the person who answers the door:

*“Is there anyone here who is sick with a cold or the flu?”*

If they answer **YES** do **not** enter the home, tell the person you are not able to provide support that day and, if they haven’t done so already, they need to call the Health Clinic to talk to a doctor or their own GP. Call the office as soon as practical so that we can follow up with the client and/or their family.

* Where a client is unwell with flu like symptoms or COVID-19 is suspected, all services will be suspended until a medical clearance from their GP is forwarded to the organisation.

**Cleaning practices**

* Staff must continue to follow standard hygiene practices such as disposing of used cleaning cloths into the bin after cleaning the client’s home, only taking equipment necessary to complete the task into the home, using gloves when cleaning and washing hands after gloves are removed.
* Where required, the organisation will ensure that staff have sufficient cleaning equipment and chemicals to support good hygiene practices.
* Where cleaning equipment is taken into the home it must be thoroughly disinfected after use and BEFORE placing it in the vehicle using disinfectant wipes.
* Staff must sanitise their hands at the completion of the service, on leaving the home.
* Where a shared vehicle is used the staff member should wipe over areas of the car that they will touch before and after using.

**General Precautions**

* If you or a member of your household have or are suspected of having COVID-19 please do not come into the office or visit clients. Call your doctor or clinic via phone to obtain advice.
* Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue and dispose of appropriately, teach others in your family and clients to also do this.
* Try to avoid touching your face as this is a common way that the COVID-19 virus enters the body (e.g. you have touched a surface that an infected person has coughed or sneezed on and then rubbed your eyes.)
* Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
* Minimise the sharing of mobile phones with others, if you have a mobile phone clean it daily with an appropriate cleaner and after others have used it including children.
* Change out of uniforms and clothes worn while working with clients at the end of your workday or shift and put on laundered uniform or work clothes each day as the virus can become trapped in the fibre of clothes and may remain viable (infectious) for up to 24 hours.

We are keeping informed of all updates relating to the COVID-19 outbreak and recommended responses.

Please be assured that we have the best interest of our staff and clients in mind and will be updating our practices as and when required to ensure that our most vulnerable people are adequately protected.

Regards