

## Newmarch House 2020 COVID-19 Outbreak

(A report from Anglican Community Services, t/as Anglicare Sydney.)

### Introduction

1. On 11 April 2020, a staff member at Anglicare Sydney's Newmarch House residential aged care home was diagnosed with COVID-19. By the time the COVID-19 outbreak at Newmarch House was declared over on 15 June 2020, 37 of the 97 residents (38%) and 34 staff members had tested positive. 19 residents of Newmarch House passed away in connection with the outbreak. The staff members recovered.<sup>1</sup>
2. The outbreak was the subject of a number of reviews and inquiries, including by the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (the **Royal Commission**). The Royal Commission conducted a public hearing in Sydney, with Anglicare Sydney executives and others giving evidence. The final report of the Royal Commission is publicly available, as are other reports commissioned by federal and state health departments (see below).
3. The reviews are ongoing, with a coronial inquest underway. Anglicare Sydney executives and staff are witnesses at the coronial inquest at a hearing over three weeks in late July and early August. As a result, the matter is *subjudice*.
4. Anglicare Sydney has acknowledged with deep gratitude the compassion and dedication of our staff, the support provided by agency staff who joined the Anglicare Sydney team and many agencies that provided guidance and direction in dealing with the unprecedented impacts of the pandemic at Newmarch House. These included the Commonwealth Department of Health, NSW Health, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District, BaptistCare, St Vincent's Health and other organisations from the aged and health care sectors.

### The Lessons Learned

5. Anglicare Sydney's Chairman, Mr. Greg Hammond OAM, on behalf of the Board and Anglicare Sydney, has acknowledged the tragic loss of life and the distress experienced by residents, their families and friends, and apologised for the communication failures that amplified the trauma for those concerned.<sup>2</sup> Anglicare Sydney's former Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Grant Millard, has also expressed his regret in relation to the failures in communication during the early days of the outbreak.<sup>3</sup>
6. Anglicare Sydney publicly acknowledged before the Royal Commission that there have been many lessons learned from the COVID-19 outbreak at Newmarch House<sup>4</sup>. Lessons learned include recognising the emotional toll on residents, families and staff, and the need for more responsive communications and staff training.

### What Happens Next?

7. Anglicare Sydney expects that it may take some time before the Deputy State Coroner reports. When all inquiries and legal matters are resolved, Anglicare Sydney desires to be able to report in more detail to the Synod and Standing Committee.

---

<sup>1</sup> Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (2020), *Aged care and COVID-19: a special report* p.5 available at <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-12/aged-care-and-covid-19-a-special-report.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Anglican Community Services (2020), *Chairman's Message: Anglicare Annual Review 2020* p.4 available at <https://www.anglicare.org.au/media/7361/anglicare-2020-annual-review.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Anglican Community Services (2020), *CEO's Message: Anglicare Annual Review 2020* p.5 available at <https://www.anglicare.org.au/media/7361/anglicare-2020-annual-review.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Anglicare Sydney (2020), *Some Lessons Learned – A Pandemic And Residential Aged Care*, Submission to the Royal Commission available at [https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/2020-08/ANG.500.007.3067\\_0.pdf](https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/2020-08/ANG.500.007.3067_0.pdf)

8. In the meantime, Synod representatives who wish to obtain further information can consult the publicly available reports at the links below.

GREG HAMMOND OAM  
**Chairman, Anglican Community Services**

18 July 2022

## Links to Publicly Available Reports

Anglicare Sydney (2020), *Some Lessons Learned – A Pandemic And Residential Aged Care* Submission to the Royal Commission available at [https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/2020-08/ANG.500.007.3067\\_0.pdf](https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/2020-08/ANG.500.007.3067_0.pdf)

Gilbert, Lyn and Lilly, Alan (2020), *Newmarch House COVID-19 Outbreak [April-June 2020] Independent Review Final Report* available at <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/08/coronavirus-covid-19-newmarch-house-covid-19-outbreak-independent-review-newmarch-house-covid-19-outbreak-independent-review-final-report.pdf>

NSW Ministry of Health, COVID-19 Public Health Response Branch (2020), *Summary Report on Anglicare's Newmarch House, Kingswood* available at <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/NDH.0020.0002.0001.pdf>

Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (2020), *Aged care and COVID-19: a special report* available at <https://agedcare.royalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-12/aged-care-and-covid-19-a-special-report.pdf>