



Notice Re Residential Fire Safety

Given the tragic events of last Friday when residents lost their lives in a nursing home fire I would like to reassure you of the precautions we take to ensure a safe environment for our residents and staff. The safety of our residents and staff is of paramount importance to us and the critical risk that fire presents is one we take very seriously.

Let me start with our buildings. All residential aged care facilities are required to comply with the upgraded certification requirements that the Department of Health and Ageing put in place as of 2008. Our buildings have been assessed against the very high level of fire and safety mandated under the 2008 certification standards and comply with these requirements.

Fire and safety equipment within our facilities is checked annually by Registered Fire Safety Equipment Professionals and there are twice yearly fire safety training sessions for all staff.

The Aged Care Standards and Accreditation Agency visit our facilities regularly to assess compliance with the Accreditation Standards. Their assessors check that the home has established procedures for detecting and acting on fire, security or other emergency risks and incidents and that the relevant staff know and understand these procedures.

Smoking is prohibited within our facilities to remove the risk that it entails.

In setting our staffing levels, the possibility of the need to evacuate residents from an area is a determining factor.

We do all we can to ensure the quality of the staff that we employ and staff are required to undergo a police check prior to commencement to identify and eliminate any prospective employee with a record of violence or abuse.

The allegation that this fire on Friday was purposely lit is a horrendous one and it was this factor, with the fire starting in two different places, that made this such a difficult blaze to manage. Notwithstanding, the fire systems within the Quakers Hill home worked as intended and the Fire Brigade were on site within six minutes.

This is the first time there has been a nursing home fire in NSW for over thirty years and this is testament to the building and fire safety standards that are now in place.

If you have any concerns regarding the fire safety of your facility please contact me to discuss them.

Graham Reed
Executive Director
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