

## Mercy Services in 2021

Last year taught our community some tough lessons. Last year, we had fires, floods, a pandemic that affected not just our health, but our economy and even the supplies on the supermarket shelves. The community of Mercy Services has prepared for, and adjusted to so much over the last 12 months.

In 2021 the COVID-19 pandemic is still a core consideration in how we operate safely at Mercy Services. Much of the advice has stayed the same for several weeks now – masks are currently required due to an outbreak over Christmas, distancing is still required in our facilities and on our buses, and there are rules and restrictions for visitation at our Singleton Residential Aged Care. We are grateful to our staff, clients, residents, volunteers and our wider community for being so understanding that these restrictions are for everyone's safety, and a matter of compliance with advice from NSW Health.

I also want to take the time to acknowledge the Brighter Futures program, which has assisted hundreds of local families. Mercy Services have partnered with Samaritans since 2005 to deliver this much needed service to families in need of support. At the end of 2020, the partnership came to a natural end and our valued Brighter Futures Support Worker, Sue, has joined McAuley Outreach as a Counsellor. We can't thank the Samaritans, and Sue, enough for the support the Brighter Futures service has provided over the years to so many families, and the impact it has had on the lives of the parents and children alike. There is no doubt Sue will make the same significant impact in our McAuley team of Counsellors, going forward.

As the New Year takes form, please continue to stay safe, and don't hesitate to let our staff know how we can best support you with whatever 2021 brings you.

*Tony Bidstrup*  
CEO, Mercy Services



# Celebrations Across Mercy Services

It might seem a while ago now, but Christmas was celebrated across Mercy Services with friendship, laughter and great food.

And just as we recovered from Christmas a celebration of being Australian took place at Singleton Residential Aged Care. We thank all our clients and staff who make these days so memorable.

## West Wallsend



## Mayfield Senior Citizens Centre



## Singleton Residential Aged Care



*"In all our work we strive to provide compassionate, respectful, high quality and environmentally sustainable practices."  
Part of Mercy Services Mission Statement*

# Newcastle ... then and now

As Geoffrey Chaucer wrote, "time and tide wait for no man". We can definitely see that in the progress of Newcastle over the years. It is interesting to see that while the buildings have changed, there are still some aspects that are recognisable as quintessential Newcastle. As you look at the photos, perhaps you'll start dreaming about where the ships sailed from, or what it would be like to take a picnic in King Edward Park while dressed in a suit?



Walsh Point from Christ Church Cemetery c1900



Walsh Point from Christ Church Cemetery location 2019



Left: King Edward Park c1890s

Above: The houses on the ridge above King Edward park are still there c2020.

*"We can never say 'it is enough'".  
Catherine McAuley, Foundress, Sisters of Mercy*

# The joy of rain

Our garden at West Wallsend is a joy to behold at present due to the recent rain and lots of sunshine. We are very fortunate to be able to have a display of roses like these in our front foyer.

Our garden also encourages visits from keen gardeners. Peggy and Doug love their garden at home and asked if they could have a tour of the West Wallsend garden. Doug was quick to spot the first flower hiding on the sweet potato plant and Peggy loved the lavender.



# Face Masks

Done with your mask? Don't forget to pull the straps off and dispose of appropriately. You don't need scissors as they easily tear off – our native birds will thank you.

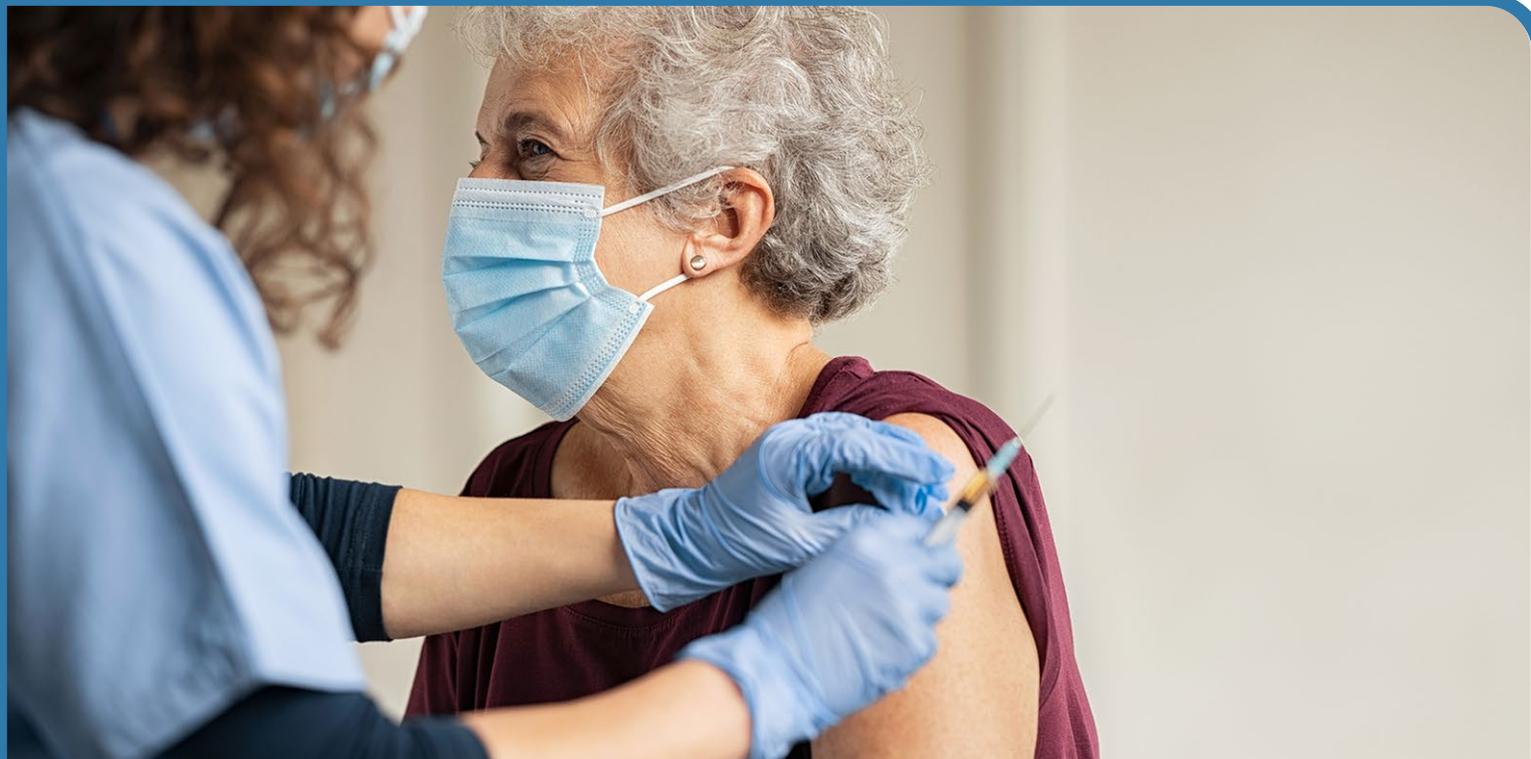


# Volunteer Donations

This year Mercy Services was unable to celebrate Christmas with our volunteers and after such a tough year for so many of our community members, Mercy Services (on behalf of our volunteers) donated to several local charities instead.

Mums Cottage, Singleton Neighborhood Centre and Mercy Works Ltd all received donations.

Thank you to all our amazing volunteers for supporting this gesture and making a difference in the lives of others.



## COVID-19 Vaccination *Frequently Asked Questions*

The following questions and answers have been taken from a recent publication from the Commonwealth Department of Health, which we believe is of interest to the Mercy Services community. For more info go to <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/covid-19-vaccine-frequently-asked-questions-for-the-covid-19-vaccines-in-residential-aged-care>.

### ***Is the vaccine voluntary?***

COVID-19 vaccines will be voluntary and free for everyone living in Australia.

While the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) strongly encourages COVID-19 vaccination, at this time AHPPC has not recommended mandating COVID-19 vaccination for the aged care workforce. The AHPPC will continue to monitor the situation and update its advice accordingly.

### ***How do we know the vaccine is safe?***

The Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA) rigorous assessment process of potential COVID-19 vaccines will ensure approved vaccines are safe and effective.

All vaccines are thoroughly tested for safety before they are approved for use in Australia. This includes careful analysis of clinical trial data, ingredients, chemistry, manufacturing and other factors.

The Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine has been provisionally approved by the TGA for people 16 years and older. The approval is subject to strict conditions, and Pfizer will be required to continue providing information to the TGA on the safety, efficacy and quality of the vaccine.

More information on this approval is available on the Department of Health's website.

Provisional approval of the University of Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine is currently anticipated in February, subject to approval by the TGA.

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*"We must strive to do ordinary things extraordinarily well."*

*Catherine McAuley, Foundress, Sisters of Mercy*

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You can talk to your GP or a health professional about the COVID-19 vaccines and why vaccination is an important part of keeping the community safe and healthy.

### **Is the vaccine safe for frail elderly people over 85 years of age?**

Specific advice for frail elderly people on receiving a COVID-19 vaccine will be provided by the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI).

The TGA have advised the potential benefits of vaccination versus the potential risk and clinical impact of even relatively mild systemic adverse events in the frail elderly should be carefully assessed on a case-by-case basis. Patients and/or their families, representatives and carers can talk to their GP or a health professional about the COVID-19 vaccines.

### **Why should I get the vaccine?**

Getting a COVID-19 vaccination helps protect you, your community and your loved ones.

Both the Pfizer/BioNTech and the University of Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines show they are very good at protecting against severe illness and death.

You can talk to your GP or a health professional about the COVID-19 vaccines and why vaccination is an important part of keeping the community safe and healthy.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration's (TGA) rigorous assessment process of potential COVID-19 vaccines will ensure approved vaccines are safe and effective.

### **Once I have had a vaccination, do I still need to take other precautions to stop the spread of COVID-19?**

Yes, a COVID-19 vaccine is just one part of keeping the community safe and healthy.

It is important for everyone to continue COVIDSafe practises such as hand hygiene, physical distancing and wearing masks when required, particularly in residential aged care facilities.

### **Can I have both the COVID-19 vaccine and the annual influenza vaccine?**

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) agrees that all available steps should be taken to maximise influenza vaccine coverage amongst the aged care workforce, residents and their carers.

Routine scheduling and giving an influenza vaccine with a COVID-19 vaccine on the same day is not currently recommended.

This recommendation from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) is based on the current lack of direct data demonstrating absence of any safety issues or interference of immune responses after co-administration of an influenza and COVID-19 vaccines.

Advice from ATAGI is that the preferred minimum interval between administration of either the Pfizer/BioNTech or the University of Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccines and any influenza vaccine is 14 days. This is the current precautionary advice.

### **How do I get a copy of this information?**

If you would like to receive a copy of the full publication from the Commonwealth Department of Health, please contact our friendly reception team on 4962 6680 and they will post a copy to you.

# Checking in with QR Codes

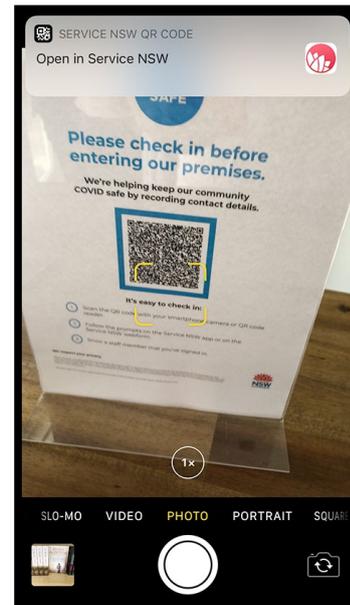
If you've been out and about lately, you will have noticed QR codes in shops, cafes, restaurants and businesses. Let's take a look at how to use them to check-in as you go about your day.

Remember, if you don't have a smart phone and cannot sign in using a QR Code, just let the staff know and another method will be used to check-in.

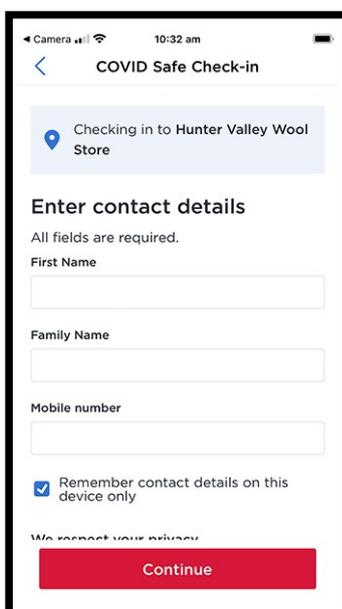
**1. Find the QR Code at the entry of the business.**



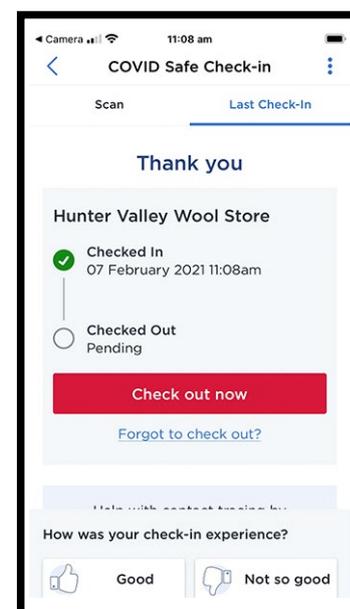
**2. Open the camera on your phone and point it at the QR Code. Then tap the notification.**



**3. Enter your details and click confirm.**



**4. If requested, show your check-in confirmation to staff.**



*"Keep patience ever at your side, you'll want it for a constant guide."  
Catherine McAuley, Foundress, Sisters of Mercy*

# Recipe: Roasted Chicken with Cherry Tomatoes and Asparagus



## Ingredients

- 1 chicken breast
- 8 sticks asparagus , trimmed
- 6 cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- 1 pinch sea salt
- 1 pinch freshly ground black pepper
- olive oil
- white wine
- balsamic vinegar

## Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F. Put chicken breast, with its skin left on, in a bowl. Add the trimmed sticks of asparagus, the cherry tomatoes and the leaves from 1 sprig of fresh rosemary plus a whole sprig of rosemary as well. Toss everything together with a pinch of sea salt and freshly ground black pepper and a drizzle of olive oil. Put the veg into a tinfoil tray and place the chicken and rosemary sprig on top. Add some white wine and cook in the middle of the oven for 25 to 35 minutes. Serve drizzled with balsamic vinegar.

## Find a Word: Say cheese

A C E M A D E N O L O V O R P  
 T H S U L W I E G A T T O C Y  
 E E S C L N I E V E U L B E L  
 F S T I E B N O T L I T S L L  
 I H R L R S H T A F W O L A I  
 T I O R A E R S B Y B R E D H  
 A R F A Z L T A I R F O I Y P  
 V E E G Z R O S D N I W D E R  
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 G R E B S L R A J R B R L W L  
 U G E R E T S E C I E L O G B  
 M A E R C N A S E M R A P G Y

- |            |             |             |
|------------|-------------|-------------|
| BLOCK      | DANISH BLUE | LOWFAT      |
| BLUE VEIN  | DERBY       | MATURE      |
| BRIE       | EDAM        | MILK        |
| CAERPHILLY | FETA        | MOZZARELLA  |
| CAMEMBERT  | GARLIC      | PARMESAN    |
| CHEDDAR    | GLOUCESTER  | PORT SALUT  |
| CHESHIRE   | GORGONZOLA  | PROVOLONE   |
| COLBY      | GOUDA       | RED WINDSOR |
| COTTAGE    | GRUYERE     | ROQUEFORT   |
| CREAM      | HARVATI     | STILTON     |
| CROWDIE    | JARLSBERG   | WENSLEYDALE |
| CURD       | LEICESTER   |             |

*"... we remain committed to the core values of Justice, Respect, Service, Care and Unity ..."*  
 Part of the Mercy Services Vision Statement