

Aged Care Legislation Amendment (Financial Transparency) Bill 2020

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2 August 2020

To **Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs**
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

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Before my father passed away last year at the age of 84, my family went to great lengths to keep him at home and care for him there, even though his needs for care were high in his later years, partly because we were afraid that profit-driven aged care providers could not be relied upon to provide dignity. We had seen too many instances in the lives of family friends around Australia, where their loved ones suffered in aged care because there weren't enough staff to look after them properly, and food was tightly rationed.

I have read that every year, the Commonwealth Government gives aged care providers tens of billions of dollars, which is 80% of the sector's funding. But they have no obligation to spend that on actual care. It's all cool and normal for private aged care providers to pocket public funding as profit.

It is an affront to common decency that private aged care providers should be allowed to keep public funding as "profit" if they have passed rudimentary checks, while at the same time the aged care sector is known to be rife with systemic flaws, with the quality of care too often propped up by the good grace and extra effort of overworked, underpaid and under-resourced staff. This is unfair on those staff and their families, as well as unfair on the people who are residents in aged care facilities.

Every member of the Australian public should be entitled to know how our taxes are spent by aged care providers. This information should be freely available, promptly and in sufficient, granular detail for us to see that public funding for aged care is actually being spent on providing quality care – every last dollar. Until that happens, we're being taken for mugs.