

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email.

Re: Aged Care Legislation Amendment (Financial Transparency) Bill 2020

Committee Secretary,

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) is providing this submission in support of the passage of the bill being considered and to commend to the Committee the submissions being made by our affiliated unions on this issue. The ACTU believes that this bill addresses the serious lack of financial transparency in the aged care system. We believe that this lack of transparency has significant negative impacts on workers, residents, government and the community.

As the submissions made by our affiliated unions have argued, there are a number of reasons why this bill should be passed. These include:

- \$21 billion in public funding funnelled into the aged care sector each year with no transparency. This is a huge sum of public money which is spent with little accountability.
- The lack of transparency hindering decision-making by families attempting to place a relative into aged care.
- The fundamental lack of transparency in the sector noted in the Royal Commission into Aged Care's interim report.
- Consistent and sector-wide feedback from all aged care unions regarding their member's concerns about low staffing levels, the lack of time to provide quality care, lack of training and CPD for the personal care and support staff workforce, lack of PPE and the increased prevalence of insecure employment arrangements in the sector.
- The precedent for greater financial transparency set by the *Health Transparency Bill 2019 (QLD)*
- The example of the need for transparency provided by the significant additional COVID-19 funding allocated to the sector – the spending of which the government has no ability to monitor.

All of these issues are discussed in greater detail in the submissions provided by our affiliated unions.

The ACTU is of the view that these arguments create an undeniable logic for the passage of this bill and the creation of financial transparency in the aged care sector. It is our hope that this will have the dual effects of ending blatant profiteering from public funding by some providers and providing further evidence of the need for greater funding for this sector in the long term.

31 July, 2020