




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Record of Proceedings, 28 November 2019

HEALTH TRANSPARENCY BILL

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (4.06 pm): Before I contribute to the debate, I wish to advise the House that my partner is the chair of a not-for-profit Rotary Club owned aged-care facility in my electorate. Later I will have more to say about that great facility and about a very special resident whom my electorate holds very dear.

The bill establishes a legislative framework for collecting and publishing information about public and private hospitals and residential aged-care facilities. It amends the Hospital and Health Boards Act 2001 to introduce a minimum nurse and support worker skill mix ratio and minimum average daily resident care hours in public and private hospitals. The bill amends the Health Ombudsman Act to implement recommendations of the Health, Communities, Disability Services and Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Committee's inquiry into the performance of the Health Ombudsman's functions pursuant to section 179 of the Health Ombudsman Act. The Health Ombudsman is important, particularly for people in regional areas who face a malpractice issue or something untoward in the health care they receive. To accompany the bill, the government also tabled two draft regulations: the draft Health Transparency Regulation 2019 and the draft Hospital and Health Boards (State Aged Care Facilities) Amendment Regulation.

Although the bill appears to have reasonable intentions, the LNP has some concerns which I will outline. The lack of evidence to determine the level at which minimum care hours are set is concerning. Another concern is the cost of the new requirements—\$10 million annually—which is to come from existing Queensland Health resources. Another concern is the two-year phase-in period.

The minimum average daily resident care hours was set at 3.65 hours. There was little evidence as to how this benchmark was arrived at. Further, it applies only to 16 facilities, named in the Queensland Health state aged-care facilities regulation. In my electorate that includes the Karingal Nursing Home at Dalby—I understand that you are familiar with that, Mr Deputy Speaker—the Waroona Multipurpose Centre at Charleville and the West Haven Nursing Home in Roma. I will keep a watching brief in relation to how my HHSs—one of them has two of those facilities—find the staff, because it is particularly difficult to find appropriately qualified staff in places like Charleville, and how the HHSs fund it, because they do not have unlimited resources. I am disappointed that none of the facilities in my electorate were visited by the committee.

I also have in my electorate multipurpose health services operated by Queensland Health—at Injune, Surat, Dirranbandi, Quilpie, Augathella, Mungindi and Mitchell—that are not included. I am advised that the committee visited not one multipurpose facility. Given the number of them in Queensland—there are many in my electorate and a lot more across Queensland—and how the model works, I would have thought it would be high on the government's agenda to ensure that elderly people being cared for in those facilities are included in this legislation.

Surprisingly, the ratio will not apply to the residents of the MPHS facilities even though there are significant numbers of elderly people who live and access these multipurpose facilities. For instance, in Mitchell there are 10 beds in that MPHS. That is not insignificant. There are not one or two beds here

and there; there are significant numbers of beds and aged people in those facilities. Aged care is a great challenge for our communities. We cannot ignore the evidence coming from the hearings of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

The royal commission interim report was delivered on 31 October 2019. The Queensland bill, which we are debating today, was introduced on 4 September 2019 together with the two regulations dealing with the nurse percentages and the daily resident care hours and other matters. It is disappointing that this Labor government has not taken a more constructive approach to deal with the workforce matters, and we have heard from members opposite in relation to the *Four Corners* program. Members on the other side of the House have been actively quoting what happened on that *Four Corners* program, but it is a little bit rich for Labor members opposite to criticise the federal government when it is the Labor state government that did not include its own 16 state-run aged-care facilities that were the subject of 16 serious complaints, including the alleged rape of an elderly resident.

This should not be about which government goes first. It should be about getting the best possible outcome for those who are the most vulnerable in our community—those loved ones who are in aged care. I have had personal experience of this issue with both my mother and my father being in aged care, and that is not easy for people who are seriously affected by dementia. This legislation should be evidence based. It should not be average figures across a facility because that does not guarantee the provision of hours to the aged-care residents in accordance with the formula in terms of the number of nurses and others.

Turning to the new reporting framework, the bill establishes a legislative framework to compel public and private health facilities and the residential aged-care facilities to provide information to enable that information to be published. The intention is for that information to be published on a new interactive website. It does not compel private residential aged-care facilities to report information and private residential aged-care facilities may opt out of reporting the requested information. It remains to be seen as to how that will operate in the future. The bill also allows for private residential aged-care facilities to provide contextual information and explain their support and consumer understanding of the residential aged-care facilities and their average daily resident care hours.

Earlier I mentioned the not-for-profit Rotary owned aged-care facility in my electorate. The Pinaroo aged-care facility is the only one that is owned by a Rotary Club in Australia—owned and run by that service club—and there is nothing easy about running and operating an aged-care facility. I commend those who have served on the Pinaroo boards and committees and the members of the Roma Rotary Club for their dedication to aged care across my region. There is something very special about Pinaroo, and perhaps this is something that the minister could look at as a better model than some of the reporting. The community engagement that is present from the Rotary Club, from the families, from the staff and from the community really does set that facility apart from many other aged-care facilities. If you want to run a great aged-care facility, ensure you have the families, the community, the volunteers, the local support auxiliaries and eyes in that facility. That will ensure that it works well with a dedicated staff and you will continuously get good outcomes for aged care.

It would be remiss of me not to mention a very special resident of the Pinaroo aged-care facility in Roma. Dexter Kruger moved into Pinaroo when he was 103 years old. He will turn 110 in January 2020. Mr Kruger is already planning his 110th birthday and I have no doubt he will have a new book or something equally remarkable on his 110th birthday. He is an absolute inspiration. He has published 12 books detailing his life. He published one on his 109th birthday called *As You Like It*. Dexter is on Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram. I reckon that is a pretty good effort for someone who is approaching their 110th birthday. Roma and Pinaroo are very proud to have Dexter in our community.

I want to extend my thanks to the wonderful staff at Pinaroo who provide that 24/7 care for one of Australia's oldest men and all of the other residents at Pinaroo. I also extend my thanks to all of the staff in the aged-care facilities, of which there are many, across my electorate who work 24/7 to care for the elderly members of our community. I know that many of those staff will be working on Christmas Day and working on New Year's Day. They will be making sure that there is extremely good care for our elderly people to ensure that they have a quality of life over this festive season. I really thank them for their efforts and for what they do.