

5 October 2024

To Anika Wells, Minister for Aged Care and members of the Community Affairs Legislation Committee,

As both a member of the media and a carer of an elderly parent, I ask that the government show some respect for both groups and engage in a proper consultation process over the new Aged Care Bill that allows public scrutiny and informed input.

It is obvious this process is being rushed (announced on September 16, public submissions close two weeks later on September 30 and the committee to report on October 31.)

It is simply not possible for you to do the work needed and in a way that will not be detrimental to the most vulnerable members of our community in this timeframe.

Most of those who will be affected would not have even known the consultation period had opened, let alone closed already.

As someone who has advocated for regional communities on important issues, I can tell you right now that this legislation has been written from a perspective of little or no understanding of the realities of being elderly outside a capital city, either with a home care package or not.

If you push ahead with these reforms without understanding those factors, people will die or – and this appears to be what the government is more concerned about – end up prematurely in aged care.

Who on your committee can honestly say they know what it is like to live in a regional area let alone try and survive as an elderly person?

If one of you can, you need to speak up now.

This should be a six-month process at least.

Do the right thing and request an extension so this can be reported on properly and people can actually have a say.

Regards,

Dale [REDACTED]

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