

Title: Protecting Aussie Aged Care
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You might not be aware of this, but in last year's Budget the federal government actually cut funding for aged care by \$1.2 billion.

That was a significant reduction in the resources devoted to the care of the most vulnerable in our society.

Next week's Budget must not repeat this mistake.

Aged care is about making sure elderly Australians have the support and help that they require when they need it most.

But aged care is not just about services – it's about the people it helps in their final years.

These Australians have worked hard and paid taxes all their lives, so it is right and proper that they are given a place and quality care when they need it.

Last year's funding cuts, which followed cuts in previous Budgets, damaged investment confidence in the sector and undermined the ability of the aged care industry to provide the required number of new beds.

The consequences of this will have far reaching impacts on older Australians across the health system nationally.

And further cuts in next week's Budget would make affordable aged care harder to access.

That's why the Aged Care Guild has launched the '*Protect Aussie Aged Care*' campaign which calls for no further cuts to aged care in this year's Budget.

This campaign highlights the challenges facing the sector through the voices of aged care residents, their families and industry employees – people on the "front line" of care delivery who understand the impact further funding cuts would have.

Our sector employs some 352,000 Australians, including thousands of nurses and care workers who provide wonderful support to elderly Australians in their final years.

Greater pressure on the system means a heavier burden being placed on these highly valued Australian workers.

And with an ageing population, the pressures on the system will only get worse if aged care is not properly supported.

The Treasury's 2015 Intergenerational Report forecast that the number of Australians aged over 65 would more than double over the next 40 years.

And, over the same period, the percentage of the population aged 85 and over will grow from 2% to 5%.

The Federal Government has estimated that our industry needs to deliver 76,000 new aged care places by 2026. To put that in perspective, today there are around 200,000 residential operational beds.

The major challenge facing the residential aged care sector is meeting this future demand. And for this to happen, there needs to be proper investment in the sector.

Of course, in a perfect world, we would all like to see an *increase* in funding for aged care.

But given the significant demands on the Commonwealth budget, stability of funding – that is, no more cuts – should be a reasonable and achievable objective for next week's Budget.





The Aged Care Guild is asking for your support to stop further cuts to aged care.

Aged care workers and residents need your support.

You can find out more about this important issue at www.protectaussieagedcare.com.au.

Cameron O'Reilly is the Chief Executive Officer of the Aged Care Guild, the representative body of large private sector residential aged care operators.

