

To: The Senate Finance and Public Administration Committees

Submission: Public Governance, Performance and Accountability  
Amendment (Tax Transparency in Procurement and Grants) Bill 2019

Date: 27th January 2020

I am an Australian citizen with a background in finance and company administration. As a researcher I have involved myself in matters relating to government transparency, legislation and policy.

I agree with the proposed amendments to reform the Commonwealth Procurement Rules to place greater knowledge and transparency arrangements on government agencies entering into contracts with companies that are, or have related entities, domiciled in recognised tax havens. I also agree with the introduction of similar measures for the provision of taxpayer funded grants by Commonwealth entities.

The 2019 Inquiry into Australian Government Contract Reporting was allowed to lapse by the federal Joint Committee of Public Accounts and Audit, without issuing a report which would normally be the case. This was after three days of public hearings and dozens of submissions into the Government's unexplained splurge on consultants – particularly the biggest winners, the Big Four global accounting firms. The calling of the federal election is blamed, even though another inquiry, the Inquiry into Cyber Resilience, was set to resume post-election.

The Inquiry was in response to an Auditor-General's report (Report No 19 (2017-18), Australian Government Procurement Contract Reporting), which raised red flags about both the massive growth and lack of transparency of government outsourcing, especially the significant but opaque volumes of contracting going to the Big Four global consulting firms (Deloitte, Ernst & Young, PwC and KPMG).

The government has always indicated their desire to be transparent with the Australian people. This Bill will ensure that legislation is in place to ensure transparency in government contracting and the issuing of grants.

I thank the Committee for the opportunity to make a submission.

