

# FOR A FAIR SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM

2021/22 Annual Report

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# ABOUT ECONOMIC JUSTICE AUSTRALIA

Economic Justice Australia is the peak organisation for community legal centres that provide specialist legal services for people about their social security issues and rights.

**Our vision** is a fair social security system in Australia.

## Our theory of change

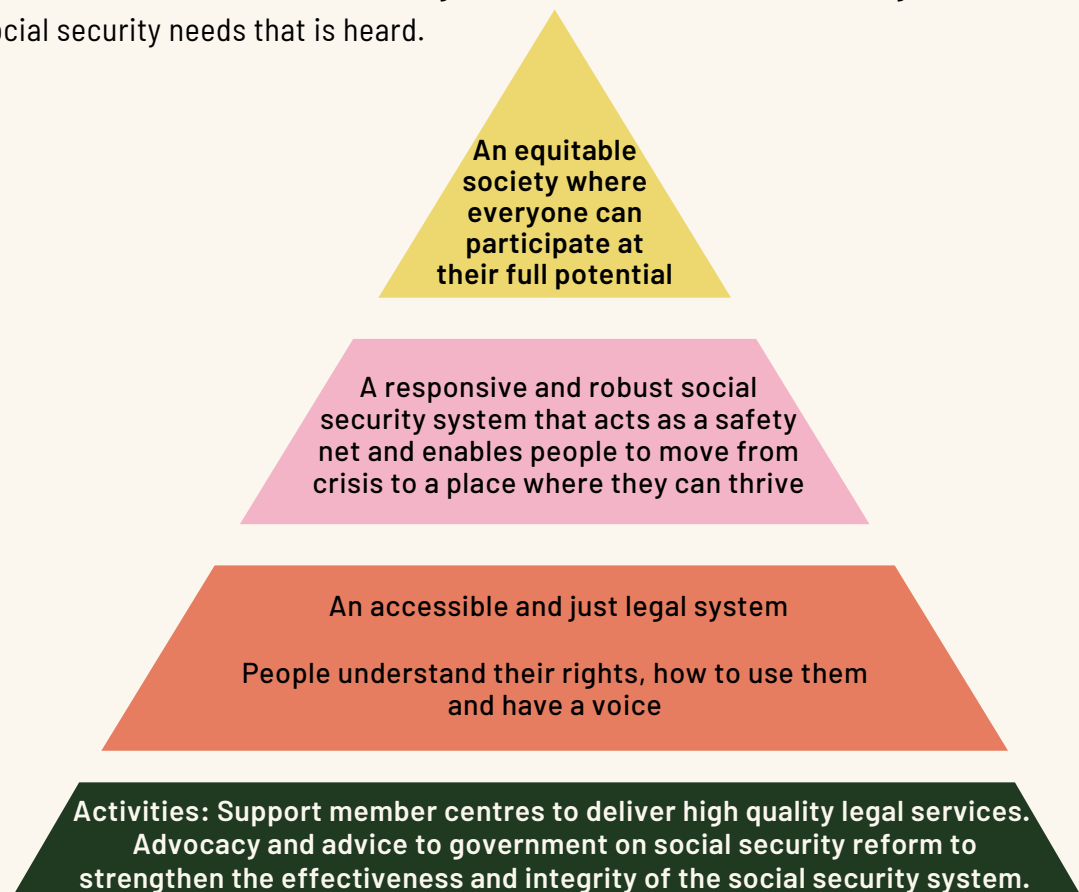
Our final goal is an equitable society where everyone can participate at their full potential. We believe that everyone has an equal right to receive economic support when we hit challenges along life's journey. Further, we believe that everyone has the right to participate in the community.

For this to be achieved, we need a responsive and robust social security system that acts as a safety net (swiftly and effectively) and a life raft enabling people to move from crisis to a place where they can thrive.

For this, we need an accessible and just legal system that provides for and ensures rights and entitlements, and enables equitable access to social security for all community members.

For this to happen, people must understand their individual rights, know how to exercise those rights, and have a voice on their social security needs that is heard.

Economic Justice Australia's role in this is to support member centres to deliver high quality legal services. Further, we advocate for positive change, providing advice to government on social security reform, as informed by the work and experiences of our members, to strengthen the effectiveness and integrity of the social security system.



## **Our principles**

Our work recognises the right to social security contained in article 9 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) to which Australia is a party.

A fair social security system is based on:

- the right of all people in need to an adequate level of income support which is protected by law;
- the right of people to be treated with respect and dignity by Centrelink and those administering the Social Security and Family Assistance system;
- the right to accessible information about Social Security and Family Assistance rights and entitlements, obligations and responsibilities;
- the right to receive prompt and appropriate service and Social Security and Family Assistance payments without delay;
- the right to a free, independent, informal, efficient and fair appeals system;
- the right to an independent complaints system;
- the right to independent specialist legal advice and representation; and
- the right to natural justice and procedural fairness.

## **Our Key Values**

Economic Justice Australia is committed to the following key values:

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the traditional owners of the land. We respect the experience and cultures of Australia's First Nations peoples, and we will work with First Nations people and community-led organisations to overcome the systemic disadvantage faced by Indigenous people.
2. We recognise the inherent dignity, and equal and inalienable rights of all human beings.
3. We respect and value diversity and promote the need for a compassionate, fair and inclusive Australia.
4. We value the voices of the people we serve and will work to ensure that these voices are heard by our own organisations, by government and by the wider society.
5. We represent the interests of disadvantaged people in Australia and fearlessly promote and defend those interests through evidence-based, non-party political advocacy.
6. We act with honesty, openness, integrity and impartiality.



## Our members

We have a national membership of 20 community organisations that specialise in social security law and its administration.



Photo: Economic Justice Australia members at 2022 internal conference

# OUR PEOPLE

## **Economic Justice Australia Secretariat**

### Chief Executive Officer

Leanne Ho (0.5 FTE)

### Law Reform Officer

Linda Forbes (0.6 FTE)

### Policy and Communications Officer

Emily Singh (0.25 FTE, 6 month contract)

### Project Officer

Lucia Mai (0.2 FTE, 6 month contract)



Photo: (clockwise from top left) Lucia Mai, Emily Singh, Linda Forbes, Leanne Ho

## **Economic Justice Australia Board**

The Board members during the financial year ended 30 June 2022 were:

Chairperson - Genevieve Bolton OAM, Executive Director/Principal Solicitor, Canberra Community Law

Vice Chairperson - Katherine Boyle, Executive Director, Welfare Rights Centre

Treasurer - Kate Beaumont, Executive Officer, Welfare Rights and Advocacy Service

Secretary - Michael Murray, Solicitor, Townsville Community Law (resigned 14 June 2022)

Ordinary Board Member - Abby Cone, Townsville Community Law (replaces Michael Murray but not formally appointed until 12 July 2022)

Ordinary Board Member - Emma Cvitak, Solicitor, Barwon Community Legal Service

Ordinary Board Member - Natalie Ross, Principal Solicitor, Welfare Rights Centre

Ordinary Board Member - Rhea Thomas, Solicitor, Welfare Rights and Advocacy Service

Independent Board Member - Mitra Khabaz, Deputy CEO of Host International

Independent Board Member - Irini Shnody, Financial Controller for Telstra

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Magnificent is how I would describe the work of Economic Justice Australia over the last 12 months.

Under Leanne's outstanding leadership, Economic Justice Australia has gone from strength to strength and has punched well above its weight. Economic Justice Australia continues to be at the forefront of advocating for positive changes in the design of the social security system and reforms to social security law and policy to make it a fairer and more effective system. Thank you to all our member centres, whose contributions ensure that Economic Justice Australia's work is informed by the lived experience of those interacting with the social security system each day.



Photo: Genevieve Bolton, Economic Justice Australia Chair

Economic Justice Australia has been incredibly fortunate this year to have had the benefit of an experienced and expert Secretariat Team. Linda Forbes' work in this area is legendary, having spent decades doing social security casework and policy work, and Emily Singh joining the team this year having previously worked as a Principal Solicitor at an Economic Justice Australia member centre. The policy engine of the Secretariat was well supported by Lucia Mai, Economic Justice Australia's project officer, and our pro bono partners Hall & Wilcox and Wotton + Kearney. On behalf of Economic Justice Australia's membership, I would like to extend our thanks to Leanne, Linda, Emily, and Lucia for their magnificent work. To our pro bono partners, thank you for your generous contributions to our work during this reporting period.

The comprehensive work undertaken by Economic Justice Australia's Secretariat during this reporting period is outlined in Leanne's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) report. Leanne's CEO report tells a powerful story of numerous submissions being made to Senate inquiries and other Government reviews and inquiries, the completion of three research reports and the many effective and productive meetings with the Department of Social Services (DSS), Services Australia, Ministers, Shadow Ministers and other Members of Parliament and key stakeholders. It has been pleasing to see an openness from Government to consider and in some cases progressing the recommendations and proposals we put forward this year. Significantly, Economic Justice Australia's work over many years

contributed to the abandonment of the bill extending the four-year newly arrived residents waiting period to carer and family payments this year. We also welcomed the recent establishment of the Royal Commission into Robodebt.

The volume, depth and effectiveness of the work undertaken by Economic Justice Australia during this year has been nothing short of extraordinary, particularly given the Secretariat staffing was equivalent to just over one-and-a-half full-time workers.

Thank you to our funder, the DSS for its ongoing support to Economic Justice Australia. Efforts to diversify and grow Economic Justice Australia's income base continue, with funding this year from the Kapsvalu Regenerative Fund and the Shepherd Foundation. Huge thanks to both philanthropic funders for your support. Many thanks to Katherine Boyle, Economic Justice Australia's Vice Chairperson who has worked closely with Leanne to progress this work.

The decision made by Economic Justice Australia's membership at our last Annual General Meeting to expand and diversify the Board's membership is already yielding significant dividends. This year, two independent members, Mitra Khabaz and Irini Shnody, joined Economic Justice Australia's Board. The Board's collective expertise and capacity has been significantly enriched through Mitra and Irini's contributions to our deliberations this year.

Thank you to Michael Murray, who stepped down as the Board's Secretary just before the end of the financial year, for his commitment to the Board and the many contributions he made. As always, many thanks to my other Board members, with particular thanks to Katherine Boyle for being a wonderful Vice Chair, going above and beyond to support the work of Economic Justice Australia's Secretariat during the year.

I can't wait to see what the next year brings!

Genevieve Bolton, OAM  
Chair, Economic Justice Australia  
September 2022



# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

As we all move beyond immediate pandemic crisis response into recovery mode and planning for the future, Economic Justice Australia is focusing its research and advocacy efforts on two areas of reform that will require fundamental change to the social system and the way services are delivered – gender equality and automated decision-making.

Outdated ideas of relationships and gender roles underpin the social security system's method for working out entitlement to payments according to whether or not someone is a member of a couple. The income and assets of an intimate partner or ex-partner can knock out a victim/survivor's eligibility for any Centrelink payment and force them to be financially dependent on their abuser. This so called 'member of a couple rule' can mean that victims/survivors of domestic violence, mostly women and their children, are left with a terrible choice: either leave the violence and fall into deep poverty or stay/go back to the violence.

Recognising the difficult nature of fundamental system reform, Economic Justice Australia has developed a legislative brief which proposes achievable amendments to the Social Security Act that would assist victims/survivors of domestic violence to access critical income support. These reforms are based on key recommendations in our research report, *Debts, Duress and Dob-ins*, which examines how Centrelink compliance processes can impact victims of domestic violence and be used as a weapon by perpetrators of violence. The legislative brief provides government with actions it can take toward achieving measurable targets which we believe should be included in the new National Plan to End Violence Against Women and their Children, and in associated action plans. It is crucial that the Plan includes priority actions to promote economic security for victims/survivors of domestic violence in the form of social security income support; income security is fundamental to escaping domestic violence and achieving safety.

The Robodebt class action settlement brought some justice for victims of what the Federal Court called a massive failure of public administration. However, the settlement amounts paid to many class action members were tiny, being limited to interest forgone on amounts repaid. Class action members were not compensated for pain, suffering and distress, and people who did what they were told and provided payslips to Centrelink, enabling calculation of a valid debt, received nothing at all from the class action settlement. Economic Justice Australia welcomes the Robodebt Royal Commission and is



Photo: Leanne Ho, Economic Justice Australia CEO

embarking on a new project using the learnings from Robodebt. The project will examine issues related to automation of decision-making in social security, to inform the development of an ethical framework to underpin automation in Centrelink decision-making.

Workforce Australia, the new employment services model, involves automated decision-making at various points – from development of a person’s job plan to implementation of suspensions and penalties where a person fails to accrue sufficient points under the new Points Based Activation System. Economic Justice Australia is concerned to ensure that vulnerable job seekers, many of whom have partial capacity to work due to disability, illness or caring responsibilities, retain the opportunity to negotiate suitable participation plans and have their individual circumstances taken into account. Our members see too many people who have had their payments suspended or cancelled when they cannot meet their mutual obligations and risk destitution and homelessness.

The overuse of automated systems not only limits the level of service delivery that can be provided to clients with complex needs, but also risks deskilling of Centrelink staff who find it more and more difficult to explain why a decision has been made. Ultimately this means that people will have less access to justice as they do not have the information needed to appeal incorrect decisions.

We were pleased to see that our advocacy was successful in avoiding the extension of the four-year newly arrived residents waiting period to payments for families and carers, amendments which would have led to increased poverty and social problems, and disincentivising migration to Australia at a time when migrants are being seen by many as the solution to Australia’s skills shortages.

This Annual Report highlights the impact we have made over the year in the achievement of the objectives set out in our strategic plan. The impact of Economic Justice Australia’s work is also often seen in the day to day – such as beneficial changes to policy guidelines to inform discretionary decision-making, such as debt waiver.

Finally, I’d like to thank our wonderfully engaged and strategic board and member centres who, in a most challenging year for their legal services, have continued to contribute their expertise and case studies to ensure that all of Economic Justice Australia’s work is grounded in solid casework experience.

Leanne Ho  
CEO, Economic Justice Australia  
September 2022

## **Disadvantaged and vulnerable people are supported by fair and just social security system**

*We take the insights from our member centres' casework to provide evidence-based advice to government. We identify systemic issues in the social security system affecting the disadvantaged and vulnerable people assisted by our legal centres. We make recommendations to Government on how to address these systemic issues to make the social security system fair.*

The depth of practice experience in Economic Justice Australia's team substantially increased this year, with Linda Forbes' 19 years at the Welfare Rights Centre NSW as well as nine years with the Department of Social Security (which preceded Centrelink); and Emily Singh's previous experience as Principal Solicitor at Social Security Rights Victoria. Economic Justice Australia is recognised by the Government and by organisations working in the community sector as delivering deep technical expertise and comprehensive practical contributions to social security law and policy reform discussions.

This year, Economic Justice Australia made submissions, gave evidence or provided feedback in response to the following:

- Social Services Legislation Amendment (Consistent Waiting Periods for New Migrants) Bill 2021 (26 July 2021) and gave evidence at the hearing on the bill (13 September 2021);
- Inquiry into the purpose, intent and adequacy of the Disability Support Pension (30 July 2021) and gave evidence at the hearing (6 September 2021), with the final report heavily quoting Economic Justice Australia's submission and evidence provided at hearing;
- Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights inquiry into the Social Security (Parenting payment participation requirements – class of persons) Instrument 2021. The final report makes recommendations in line with Economic Justice Australia's submission/evidence at hearing to make participation voluntary and to assess risk prior to imposing any suspension/penalty;
- Senate Committee hearing (20 July 2021) giving evidence as part of the inquiry into the current capability of the Australian Public Service;
- Monash stakeholder consultation on the new National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children (22 July 2021);
- Senate Committee hearing into Centrelink's compliance program (19 August 2021);
- Domestic Violence Economic Recovery Taskforce's (DVERT) social security recommendations submitted to then Minister Ruston's office (21 October 2021);
- Inquiry into the performance and integrity of Australia's administrative review system (24 November 2021);
- Survey on the new National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children submitted to DSS (24 January 2022);
- Social Security Amendment (Improved Child to Adult Transfer for Carer Payment and Carer Allowance) Bill 2022 (4 March 2022);
- Inquiry into the application of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Australia (24 June 2022).

All of these submissions are published on our [website](#).

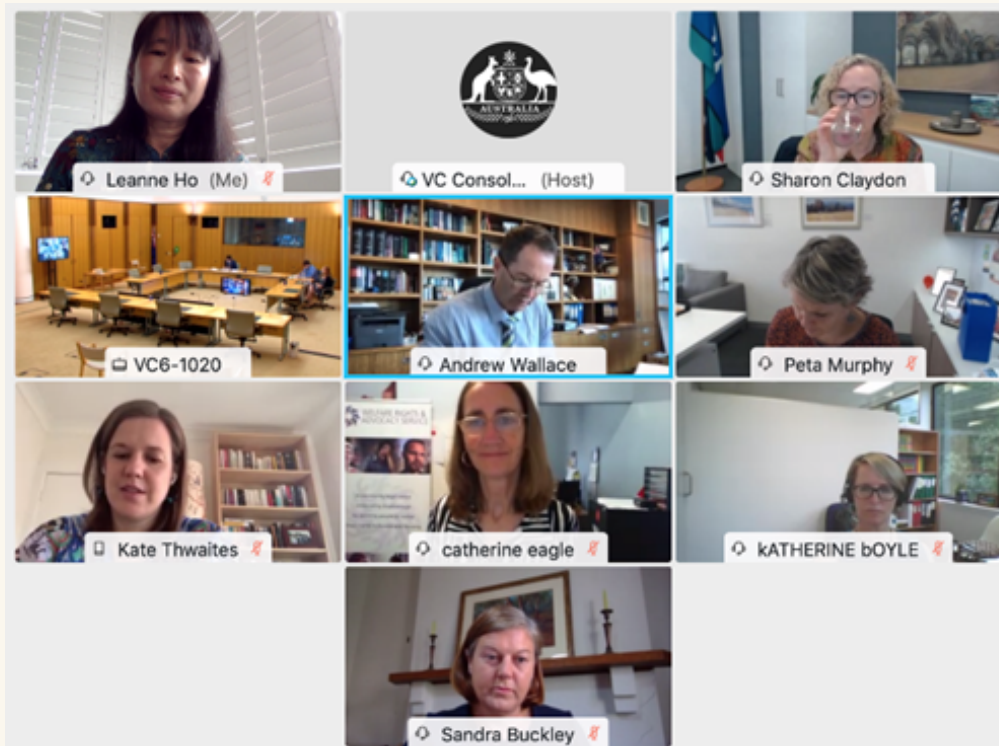


Photo: Leanne Ho (CEO), Katherine Boyle (Deputy Chair and Executive Director, Welfare Rights Centre NSW) and Catherine Eagle (Principal Solicitor, Welfare Rights and Advocacy Service WA) giving evidence at the Parliamentary inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence

### **Support to disadvantaged and vulnerable people is increased as a result of any implementation of recommendations made by Economic Justice Australia to government about how the social security system can be improved**

This year we have seen promising responses by government to the policy recommendations made in Economic Justice Australia's research reports, published on our website:

- *Barriers to Disability Support Pension for people with psychiatric impairments* (30 July 2021);
- *Compensation Preclusion Periods and the Impact of Covid-19* (25 August 2021);
- *Debts, Duress and Dob-ins* (11 November 2021).

Economic Justice Australia presented the *Debts, Duress and Dob-ins* research report findings and recommendations to 166 staff of the DSS social security stream and families team members responsible for domestic violence-related policy on 16 November 2021.

Economic Justice Australia provided feedback to Services Australia on its Operational Blueprint and prosecution investigation guidelines relevant to family and domestic violence and continues to engage on implementation of recommendations from the report, *Debts, Duress and Dob-ins*.

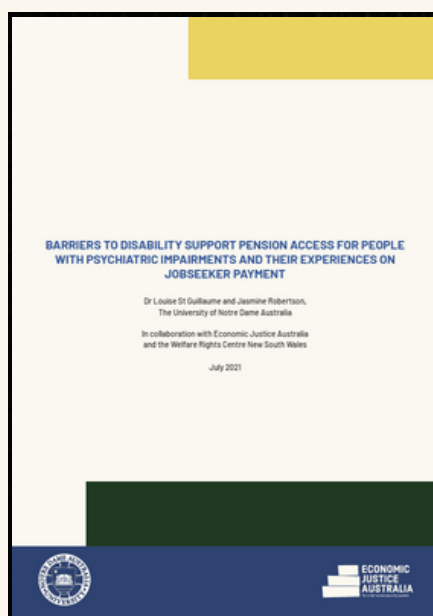
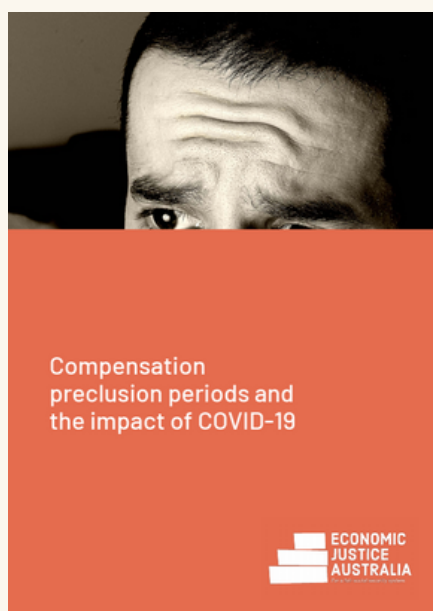
The DSS, Services Australia and relevant former Government Ministers (former Minister Anne Ruston and former Shadow Minister Linda Burney and former Shadow Assistant Minister Jenny McAllister) expressed openness to considering legislative change when we met to brief them and their offices on proposed domestic violence reforms. We have launched a campaign to build support with the new Government, including Minister for Social Services, Amanda Rishworth.



The Departments have also engaged with Economic Justice Australia on proposed changes to policy on Compensation Preclusion Periods and Disability Support Pension.

Economic Justice Australia provided Services Australia with advice on Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment and Disaster Payment eligibility on an as-needed basis. We provide ongoing feedback to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) on the transition to Workforce Australia via ongoing fortnightly meetings and input on administration of mutual obligation requirements.

Economic Justice Australia continues to liaise with Services Australia and DSS to address erroneous assessment of National Redress Payments as income, and also regarding cancellation of SHEV holders' Special Benefit payments despite continued eligibility. Feedback on a day-to-day basis has resulted in improvements to the Service Australia website, and reviews of remote service officer and social worker allocations. Our longer-term advocacy efforts have contributed to significant wins like the abandonment of the extension of the newly arrived residents waiting period to payments for carers and families, and the Robodebt class action and Royal Commission.



Photos: (clockwise from top left) cover of *Debts, Duress and Dob-ins* research report; cover of *Compensation Preclusion Periods and the Impact of COVID-19* research report; cover of *Barriers to Disability Support Pension Access for People with Psychiatric Impairments* research report; Genevieve Bolton (Chair and Principal Solicitor/Executive Director, Canberra Community Law), Catherine Eagle (Principal Solicitor, Welfare Rights and Advocacy Service WA) and Emily Singh (Policy and Communications Officer and former Principal Solicitor, Social Security Rights Victoria) attending Department of Social Services biannual meeting.

Economic Justice Australia's research reports are available on our [website](#).

**Government and other key stakeholders are engaged with Economic Justice Australia through its effective communications, maximising the likelihood of recommendations being implemented**

Since launching its presence on social media platforms in 2020 – Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn – with a new organisation name and brand, Economic Justice Australia has been able to leverage its increased profile to step up its direct engagement with government Ministers and departments. Building a community of allied organisations to support its advocacy asks and messaging has strengthened Economic Justice Australia’s influence.

Economic Justice Australia’s recommendations on Disability Support Pension Reform led the sector response to the Inquiry.

Key domestic violence organisations and women’s community legal services wrote to relevant Ministers in support of Economic Justice Australia’s domestic violence social security reform proposals.

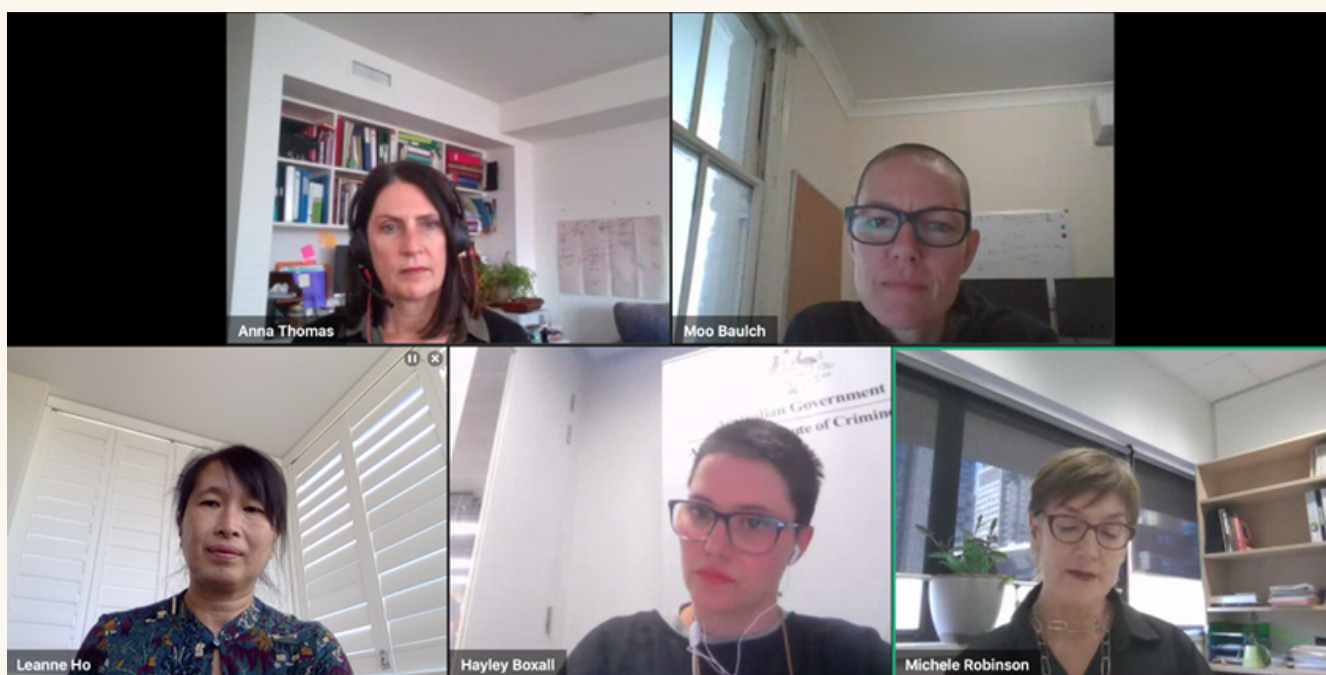


Photo: Leanne Ho (CEO) presenting at ANROW conference on proposed domestic violence law reform

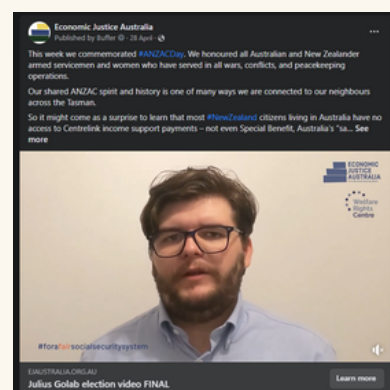
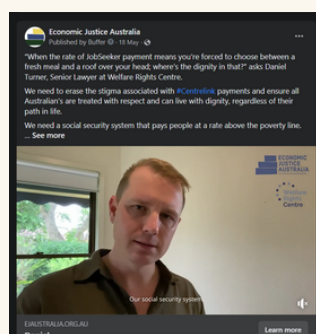
**Awareness in the broader community of why a fair social security system is important for everyone is increased as a result of engagement with Economic Justice Australia’s effective communications**

Public engagement with Economic Justice Australia’s messaging on the importance of a fair social security system has increased as a result of its social media presence, launching of a YouTube channel, as well as appearances in traditional media.

## Media appearances 2021-22

- Leanne Ho, CEO, was a panelist on 'Eliminating economic abuse: Fixing the system, supporting survivors, disarming perpetrators' for Economic Abuse Awareness Day;
- Leanne Ho, CEO, and Catherine Eagle, Principal Solicitor (Welfare Rights & Advocacy Service WA) were interviewed by ABC Radio National AM on social security reform for DV victims;
- Featured in multiple articles about the National Women's Safety Summit;
- Featured in a Canberra Times article about the Senate Inquiry into DSP;
- Featured in an ABC News article on Centrelink's 'member of a couple' test.

## Examples of our most popular social media posts in 2021-22





## Our membership is strong and engaged

The capacity of member centres to undertake their centre's social security-related work is developed and supported through the facilitation of training, development of resources and information sharing.

### 2021/22 webinars:

- *Disability Support Pension: Eligibility, Challenges and Resources* (10 June 2021 with SSRV & CLCQ);
- *A Practical Guide to TPD (Psycho-Social Disability) Claims - financial relief for permanent disablement, ill or injured* (13 April 2022 with CLCQ);
- *The New Employment Services Model and Workforce Australia* (5 May 2022 with ACOSS);
- *The New Employment Services Model - What's new? What's changed?* (15 Jun 2022 with CLCQ).

### 2021 Annual Conference feedback:

- 88% Strongly Agree or Agree - 'I was satisfied with the content of the conference program'
- 92% Strongly Agree or Agree - 'I was satisfied with the quality of the speakers'
- 88% Strongly Agree or Agree - 'I felt the conference gave me an opportunity to learn new ideas and develop skills'
- What attendees enjoyed most about the conference:
  - 'Practical and detailed information'
  - 'Confirmation that everyone else struggles with the same things I do and is just as frustrated with matters as I am. Always nice to know that I am not alone in that. Nice to get confirmation from more experienced workers that I am on the right track with client work'
  - 'The engaging presentations, particularly on day one, and the opportunity to hear about initiatives from CLCs around Australia, such as the disaster preparedness and remote outreach in Queensland.'
  - 'The variety of topics and the high level of presentations. Seeing our colleagues.'



Photo: Leanne Ho (CEO) and Katherine Boyle (Deputy Chair and Executive Director, Welfare Rights Centre NSW) – radio interview on Yarra Valley FM

# THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS

## Economic Justice Australia is sustainable

Economic Justice Australia's core funding is from a DSS grant agreement. We appreciate the Department's ongoing support and engagement.

The sustainability of Economic Justice Australia's work has been bolstered with philanthropic funding support this year from Kapscalu Regenerative Fund and the Shepherd Family Foundation.

## Volunteer and internship program

UTS Brennan Award volunteer and communications/law student, Lucia Mai, resumed volunteering with Economic Justice Australia this year before taking on employment as a project officer to organise and run the Economic Justice Australia Annual Conference 2022 and manage the transition of our data to a CRM.



## Pro bono partners

The generous pro bono contributions of law firms provided much appreciated support for Economic Justice Australia's capacity to deliver a high volume and quality of expert law reform and policy advice, and manage its own operations.

Hall & Wilcox provided high quality legal research and drafting assistance to assist in researching and publication of our reports on compensation preclusion periods and Covid 19, the use of outdated 'handicapped' language in the social security law, and the proposed Remote Engagement Program trial that was to replace the Community Development Program.

Wotton + Kearney provided a graduate lawyer secondee one a day a week to support the development of major projects focusing on domestic violence reform and automation in social security.

# CASE STUDIES

The following case studies have been selected from those published in Economic Justice Australia's Social Security Rights Review and research reports, to highlight areas of focus for Economic Justice Australia's work in the previous and coming year. All names have been changed to protect privacy.

## **COVID impacts for compensation lump sum recipients**

*Lisa is a single mother who received a compensation payout after she sustained significant injuries from a workplace accident. As a result of her compensation payout, she was precluded from receiving Centrelink income support payments for eight years. Lisa had been managing her finances efficiently to support herself, until she had no choice but to provide financial assistance to her son, who had lost his job due to COVID-19 and was unable to secure another. In doing so, Lisa's compensation payout ran out during her preclusion period. Lisa applied for JobSeeker Payment, however, Centrelink refused her application due to the compensation preclusion period. Lisa appealed but the Centrelink Authorised Review Officer affirmed the decision, giving no consideration to the fact that Lisa's son had lost his job due to COVID-19 and was unable to find employment due to the continued restrictions. Lisa was left in severe financial hardship and facing eviction as she was unable to pay rent. Further, Lisa was unable to find employment due to her ongoing injuries and is unable to rely on her friends and family for financial support as many of them were also unable to work during protracted COVID-19 public health restrictions.*

Economic Justice Australia is working with the DSS to improve guidance on the exercise of discretion in social security decision-making, including the policies in relation to compensation preclusion periods, based on its [research](#).

## **Waiting period for migrants' access to social security**

*Justina is a survivor of domestic violence who separated from her partner in September 2018, after he made threats to kill her and their unborn child. She had moved from Papua New Guinea to Australia to be with her partner. Once she arrived in Australia, her partner's behaviour became jealous and controlling and there was increasing domestic violence. Whenever she tried to leave the relationship and seek help, her partner would threaten to have Justina deported.*

*Townsville Community Law advised Justina on her rights and assisted her to successfully obtain her permanent residency in 2019. Centrelink had told her that she would be able to apply for Parenting Payment after two years of permanent residency. She understood that she would be eligible for Single Parenting Payment (SPP) from April 2021 as she would have satisfied the two-year newly arrived resident's waiting period (NARWP). What she didn't know was the NARWP for Parenting Payment was extended from two to four years from January 2019.*

*Due to the special coronavirus income support measure in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Justina was able to claim Parenting Payment as the NARWP was temporarily waived. Having Parenting Payment made a huge difference to Justina and her 2 year old child and their ability to rebuild a safe and stable life after experience family and domestic violence. She was able to start saving money for emergencies and was assisted by ParentsNext to help with the costs of studying. Being on the payment also meant that Justina could work some extra hours as it did not deduct as much from her payment.*

*When the special coronavirus income support measures were wound back in March this year, Justina was told that her Parenting Payment would be cancelled from 1 April because the waiver no longer applied, and that she was in fact subject to a four-year NARWP for Parenting payment – running to April 2023.*

*Our member centre assisted Justina with applying for an exemption to the Parenting Payment NARWP, and then with an appeal against refusal of the exemption. Justina's appeal was eventually successful but pending consideration of the appeal Justina was at least entitled to Family Tax Benefit A and B for her child. However, the changes proposed in the budget meant that single parents like Justina who become permanent residents from 1 January 2022 would not even have access to this basic payment which is meant to ensure that no child lives in poverty in Australia.*

Economic Justice Australia's advocacy efforts, including submission and evidence provided at hearing, contributed to the Government's decision to withdraw the bill extending the four year NARWP to payments for children and carers.

### **Partial capacity to work and mutual obligations**

*Living on JobSeeker Payment (JSP), with little guidance about medical evidence required for a Disability Support Pension (DSP) claim, Candice first applied for DSP three years ago. She has an intellectual disability, with low literacy and does not know how to use a computer. Up until recently, Candice enjoyed working and she has worked for most of her life. However, a long period in hospital due to kidney disease resulted in her resigning from her job. To meet preconditions for DSP, Candice was placed on a 'program of support'. Meanwhile, her only income is JSP. This payment was cancelled twice when hospital stays prevented her from reporting to her Disability Employment Service (DES) provider. Candice says that her first DSP claim was rejected because she didn't provide the right information. Candice does not understand why. Her doctor had provided a letter to explain the nature of her condition, but it was not considered suitable evidence. She subsequently presented at a disability advocacy service for assistance and a new claim was commenced. Candice says that if someone had explained to her doctor what was needed it would have made things easier. Also, having a lifelong intellectual disability, she has not needed to undertake any disability assessments since she was at school.*

Economic Justice Australia's submission and recommendations to the inquiry on Disability Support Pension were heavily cited in the Senate Committee's report, including the removal of the Program of Support, and is advocating for the report recommendations to be implemented.

# TREASURER'S REPORT



It pleases me to present the 2021-2022 audited Financial Report for Economic Justice Australia Inc. Rucker Audit and Assurance Pty Ltd conducted our financial audit and have issued an unmodified opinion.

The last year has seen Economic Justice Australia achieve an increased surplus in terms of income and expenditure in the amount of \$13,624. The Secretariat funding from the DSS which remains at \$250,000 per annum was fully expended in 2021-2022. The bulk of the surplus came from increased income received through Conference registrations and charitable donations received toward the end of the financial year coupled with a small reduction in overall expenses for the year.

In terms of the balance sheet the current assets of the association as at 30 June 2022 was \$129,491 including cash at bank of \$121,511 and prepayments/refunds and security deposit (bond) of \$7,980. The total liabilities for the association as at 30 June 2022 was \$54,695 which included trade and other payables and current and non current employee provisions. The net assets of the association are \$79,098. Economic Justice Australia continues to be able to pay all its liabilities when they fall due.

I would like to acknowledge the work of Janine Lindsay who has been the Bookkeeper for Economic Justice Australia since December 2021.

Kate Beaumont  
Treasurer, Economic Justice Australia  
November 2022



**ECONOMIC JUSTICE AUSTRALIA INC**

**A.B.N. 13 789 701 090**

**DIRECTORS' REPORT**

**For the year ended 30 June 2022**

Your directors present this report on the association for the financial year ended 30 June 2022.

**Directors**

The names of each person who has been a director during the year and to the date of this report

Genevieve Bolton  
Katherine Boyle  
Michael Murray (resigned 14/6/2022)  
Kate Beaumont  
Emma Cvitak  
Natalie Ross  
Rhea Thomas  
Mitra Khakbaz (appointed 17/02/2022)  
Irin Shnody (appointed 17/02/2022)

Directors have been in office since the start of the financial year to the date of this report unless otherwise stated.

**Principal Activities**

The principal activities of the association during the financial year were to provide secretariat services to members of the association.

**Significant Changes**

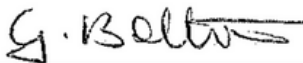
No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the year.

**Operating Result**

The Surplus for the 2022 financial year amounted to \$13,624. (2021: Surplus \$3,318)

The association is exempt from income tax.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the directors of the board.



Director name: Genevieve Bolton

Dated 7/10/2022



Director name: Kate Beaumont

Dated 7/10/2022

## Associations Incorporation Act 1991

### ANNUAL STATEMENTS GIVE TRUE AND FAIR VIEW OF FINANCIAL POSITION AND PERFORMANCE OF INCORPORATED ASSOCIATION

We, Genevieve Bolton,  
and Kate Beaumont,  
being directors of the board of Economic Justice Australia Inc, certify that –

The statements attached to this certificate give a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of Economic Justice Australia Inc during and at the end of the financial year of the association ending on 30 June 2022.

Signed: G. Bolton  
Dated: 7/10/2022

Signed: K Beaumont  
Dated: 7.10.2022

**ECONOMIC JUSTICE AUSTRALIA INC**  
**A.B.N. 13 789 701 090**  
**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022**

	NOTE	2022	2021
<b>INCOME</b>			
Government Grants	7	250,000	250,000
Membership and Levies		5,125	5,080
Conference Registrations		5,500	3,045
Interest Received		22	41
Donations		7,000	-
Social Services Subscription		4,000	-
Other Income		2,500	8,734
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>		<b>274,147</b>	<b>266,900</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Accounting/Bookkeeping Expenses		9,000	8,000
Advertising		140	-
Audit Fee		3,675	3,675
Bad Debts		136	-
Bank Charges		67	42
Communications		225	-
Computer Expenses		8,090	7,128
Conference & Forum Fees		104	-
Consultancy Fees		9,000	-
Credit Card Fee		129	164
Depreciation		1,143	1,123
Insurance Expenses		2,693	2,647
Long Service & Annual Leave Provision		17,049	12,495
EJA Conference Expense		80	200
Office Expenses		536	910
Rent		15,570	15,331
Social Services Subscription		4,000	-
Staff Training/Education		154	-
Strategy & Planning		800	5,353
Subscriptions & Publications		2,237	2,143
Superannuation		16,523	17,469
Telephone Expenses		1,250	1,512
Travelling Expense		416	504
Wages & Labour Cost Reimbursements		165,229	183,720
Website		788	119
Workers Compensation		1,489	1,047
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>260,523</b>	<b>263,582</b>
<b>Current year operating surplus/(deficit) before income tax</b>		<b>13,624</b>	<b>3,318</b>
Income tax expense		-	-
<b>Net current year operating surplus/(deficit) after income tax</b>		<b>13,624</b>	<b>3,318</b>
Other comprehensive income		-	-
<b>TOTAL OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) &amp; COMPREHENSIVE INCOME</b>		<b>13,624</b>	<b>3,318</b>
<b>RETAINED SURPLUS AT 1ST JULY 2021</b>		<b>65,474</b>	<b>62,156</b>
<b>RETAINED SURPLUS AT THE END OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR</b>		<b>79,098</b>	<b>65,474</b>

**ECONOMIC JUSTICE AUSTRALIA INC**  
**A.B.N. 13 789 701 090**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**  
**AS AT 30 JUNE 2022**

	NOTE	2022	2021
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2	121,511	99,891
Prepayments/refund		5,230	3,640
Security Deposit (Bond)		2,750	2,750
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		<u>129,491</u>	<u>106,281</u>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Property Plant & Equipment	3	<u>4,302</u>	<u>2,731</u>
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>		<u>4,302</u>	<u>2,731</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>		<u>133,793</u>	<u>109,012</u>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Trade and Other Payables	4	5,032	10,924
Provisions for Employee Benefits	5	<u>38,712</u>	<u>24,813</u>
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		<u>43,744</u>	<u>35,737</u>
<b>Non Current Liabilities</b>			
Provisions for Employee Benefits	5	<u>10,951</u>	<u>7,801</u>
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>		<u>10,951</u>	<u>7,801</u>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<u>54,695</u>	<u>43,538</u>
<b>Net Assets</b>		<u>79,098</u>	<u>65,474</u>
<b>Equity</b>			
Retained Surpluses	6	<u>79,098</u>	<u>65,474</u>
<b>Total Equity</b>		<u>79,098</u>	<u>65,474</u>

**ECONOMIC JUSTICE AUSTRALIA INC**  
**A.B.N. 13 789 701 090**

**CASH FLOW STATEMENT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022**

	NOTE	2022	2021
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Receipts from government grants		250,000	250,000
Receipts from members and other income		24,125	16,859
Interest received from investments		22	41
Payments to suppliers of goods and services		(84,584)	(53,483)
Payments for wages and labour cost reimbursements		<u>(165,229)</u>	<u>(183,720)</u>
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		<u>24,334</u>	<u>29,697</u>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Proceeds from sale of plant and equipment		-	-
Purchase of plant and equipment		<u>(2,714)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net cash used in investing activities		<u>(2,714)</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>NET INCREASE/(DECREASE) IN CASH HELD</b>		21,620	29,697
<b>Cash at Beginning of the year</b>		<u>99,891</u>	<u>70,194</u>
<b>Cash at end of the year</b>	<b>2</b>	<u><u>121,511</u></u>	<u><u>99,891</u></u>

**CASH FLOW INFORMATION**

**Reconciliation of Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities to Operating Result**

Operating surplus	13,624	3,318
<b>Add Back</b>		
Depreciation	1,143	1,123
<b>Changes in Assets and Liabilities</b>		
Decreases/(increases) in receivable & prepaid expenses	(1,590)	16,635
Increases/(decrease) in creditors	(5,743)	(2,918)
Increase/(decrease) provision for employee benefits	17,049	12,495
Increases/(decrease) in GST payable	(149)	(956)
Net Cash provided by operating activities	<u>24,334</u>	<u>29,697</u>

**ECONOMIC JUSTICE AUSTRALIA INC**  
**A.B.N. 13 789 701 090**

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

**NOTE 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 1991. The board has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historic costs and does not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless stated otherwise, have been adopted in the preparation of this financial report.

**a. Income Tax**

No provision for income tax has been raised as the entity is exempt from income tax under the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

**b. Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)**

Leasehold improvements and office equipment are carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

The depreciable amount of all PPE is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

Leasehold improvements are amortised over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful lives of the improvements.

**c. Impairment of Assets**

At the end of each reporting period, the board reviews the carrying amounts of its tangible fixed assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, an impairment test is carried out on the asset by comparing the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell, and value in use, the asset's carrying amount. Any excess of the asset's carrying amount over its recoverable amount is recognised in the income and expenditure statement.

**d. Cash and Cash Equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, and other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of twelve months or less.

**e. Accounts Receivable and Other Debtors**

Accounts receivable and other debtors include amounts due from members as well as amounts receivable from donors. Receivables expected to be collected within 12 months of the end of the reporting period are classified as current assets. All other receivables are classified as non-current assets.

**ECONOMIC JUSTICE AUSTRALIA INC**  
**A.B.N. 13 789 701 090**

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

**NOTE 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (Con't)**

**f. Revenue and Other Income**

Where grants are received with conditions attached, recognition of the grant as revenue is deferred until those conditions are satisfied. This amount is shown as Unexpended Grant under Liabilities in the Statement of Financial Position.

Interest revenue is recognised when received.

All Revenue is stated net of the amount of GST.

**g. Goods and Services Tax (GST)**

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the statement of financial position.

**h. Accounts Payable and Other Payables**

Accounts payable and other payables represent the liability outstanding at the end of the reporting period for goods and services received by the association during the reporting period that remain unpaid. The balance is recognised as a current liability with the amounts normally paid within 30 days of recognition of the liability.

**i. Employee Benefits**

Provision is made for the association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting period. Employee benefits have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled. Employee benefits include annual leave, and long service leave.

**j. Provisions**

Provisions are recognised when the association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation at the end of the reporting period.

**ECONOMIC JUSTICE AUSTRALIA INC****A.B.N. 13 789 701 090**

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2022

	2022	2021
<b>NOTE 2 - CASH ASSETS</b>		
Bendigo Bank Account 143872703	115,701	95,717
Bendigo CMT Bills Account	5,810	4,174
	<u>121,511</u>	<u>99,891</u>
<b>NOTE 3 - PROPERTY PLANT &amp; EQUIPMENT</b>		
Office Furniture & Equipment	11,696	10,631
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(7,394)	(7,900)
	<u>4,302</u>	<u>2,731</u>
<b>NOTE 4 - TRADE &amp; OTHER PAYABLES</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Corporate Credit Card	355	168
GST payable/(refundable)	(959)	(810)
PAYG Accrued	2,336	2,056
Audit Provision	3,300	3,300
Creditors & Accrued Expenses	-	6,210
	<u>5,032</u>	<u>10,924</u>
<b>NOTE 5 - PROVISIONS FOR EMPLOYEE BENEFITS</b>		
<b><i>Current Liability</i></b>		
Annual Leave	38,712	24,813
<b><i>Non Current Liability</i></b>		
Long Service Leave	10,951	7,801
<b>NOTE 6 - RETAINED SURPLUSES</b>		
<b>Retained surpluses/(Accumulated deficits)</b>		
At the beginning of the Financial Year	65,474	62,156
Total Operating Surplus & Deficit & Comprehensive Income	13,624	3,318
<b>Retained surpluses/(Accumulated deficits)At the end of the Financial Year</b>	<u>79,098</u>	<u>65,474</u>
<b>NOTE 7 - GOVERNMENT GRANTS</b>		
<b>Opening balance at 1 July 2021</b>	-	-
Grants Received during the year	250,000	250,000
<b>Grants Income</b>	<u>250,000</u>	<u>250,000</u>



## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF ECONOMIC JUSTICE AUSTRALIA INC

### **Opinion**

I have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report of Economic Justice Australia Inc. (the Association), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2022, the statement of profit or loss, cash flows statement for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and annual statements give true and fair view of financial position and performance of incorporated association by members of the board.

In my opinion, the accompanying financial report of the Association for the year ended 30 June 2022 is prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 1991.

### **Basis for Opinion**

I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of my report. I am independent of the Group in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

### **Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting**

I draw attention to Note 1 of the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report is prepared to assist the Group in meeting its obligations under the Associations Incorporation Act 1991. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. My report is intended solely for the Group and should not be distributed to or used by parties other than the Group. My opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

### **Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance**

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Act 1991, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Group's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Group or to cease operations or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Group's financial reporting process.

### **Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report**

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

**INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF  
ECONOMIC JUSTICE AUSTRALIA INC**

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Group's internal control.

Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the management.

Conclude on the appropriateness of the management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Group's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of my auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Group to cease to continue as a going concern. Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

I communicate with the management regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

I also provide the management with a statement that I have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, and to communicate with them all relationships and other matters that may reasonably be thought to bear on my independence, and where applicable, related safeguards.

From the matters communicated with the management, I determine those matters that were of most significance in the audit of the financial report of the current period and are therefore the key audit matters. I describe these matters in my auditor's report unless law or regulation precludes public disclosure about the matter or when, in extremely rare circumstances, I determine that a matter should not be communicated in my report because the adverse consequences of doing so would reasonably be expected to outweigh the public interest benefits of such communication.



**Geoffrey B Johnson FCA  
of Rucker Audit & Assurance Pty Ltd**

Doncaster, Victoria

Dated this        7th    day of        October        2022

# ECONOMIC JUSTICE AUSTRALIA INC

A.B.N. 13 789 701 090

## Australian Government Department of Social Services Grant

### Financial statement for the year ended 30 June 2022

	\$	\$
Grants Received		250,000
<b>Expense</b>		
Accounting/Bookkeeping Expenses	9,000	
Advertising	140	
Annual Leave Provision	13,899	
Audit Fee	3,675	
Bank Charges	67	
Communications	225	
Computer Expenses	7,490	
Conference & Forum fees	104	
Consultancy	2,905	
Credit Card Fee	129	
Depreciation Expense	1,143	
Insurance Expenses	2,693	
Long Service Provision	3,150	
MYOB Subscription	1,096	
Office Expenses	536	
Planning	800	
Rent	15,570	
Staff Training/ Education	154	
Subscriptions & Publications	1,141	
Superannuation	16,523	
Telephone Expenses	1,250	
Travelling Expense	804	
Wages & Labour Cost Reimbursements	165,229	
Website	788	
Workers Compensation	1,489	
<b>Total Expense</b>		<u>250,000</u>
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit)</b>		<u>-</u>

This Statement has been prepared from and is in accordance with the books and the records of Economic Justice Australia Inc. In my opinion the Financial Statement is drawn up so as to exhibit a true and fair view of the transactions for the year ended 30 June 2022.



Geoffrey B Johnson  
Chartered Accountant

Dated at Doncaster

7th October 2022

