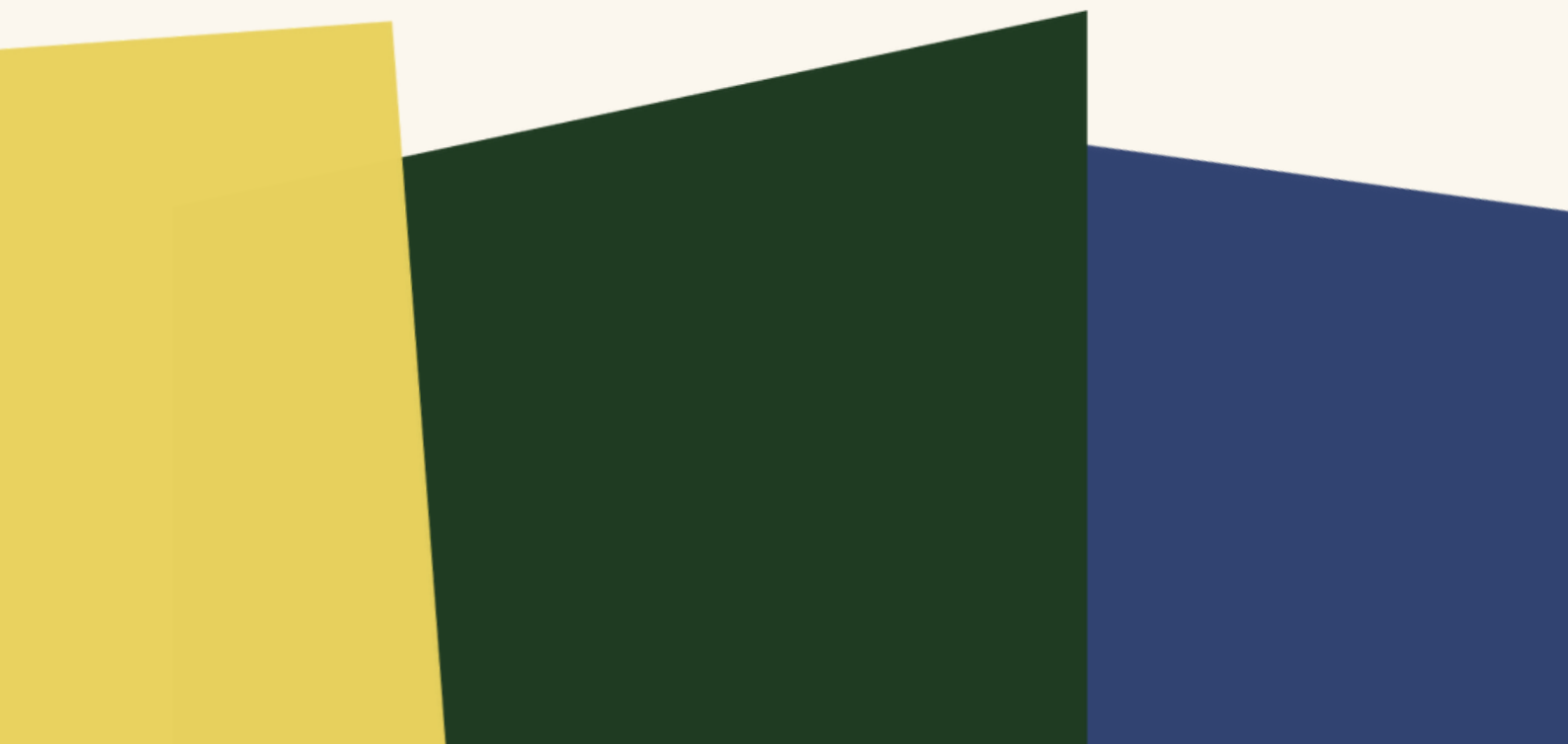




2022/23 Annual Report



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ABOUT ECONOMIC JUSTICE AUSTRALIA



Economic Justice Australia (EJA) 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.

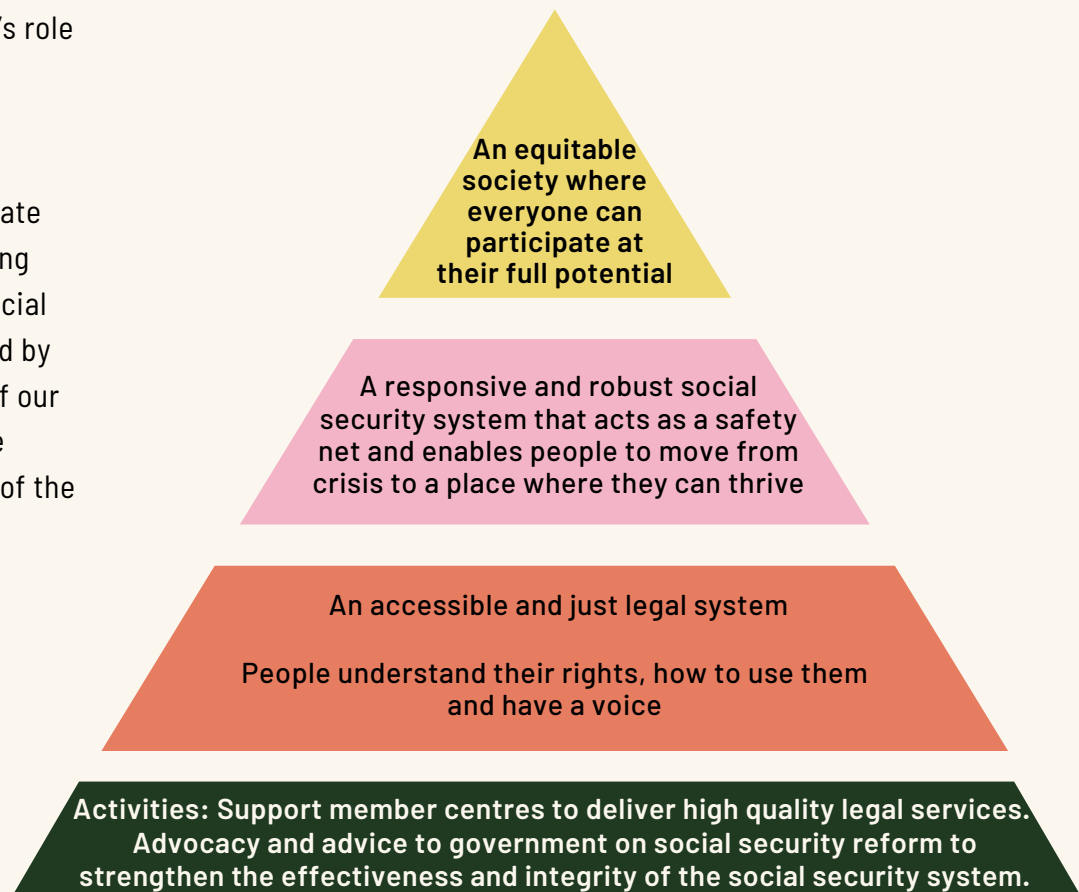
Our theory of change

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;
- 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;
- People to have an understanding of their individual rights, know how to exercise those rights, and their voice on their social security needs to be heard.

Economic Justice Australia's role in achieving this goal 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 Australian 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 member centres

We have a national membership of 22 community organisations that specialise in social security law and its administration.



Photo: EJA Members Conference 2023 in Hobart

OUR PEOPLE



Economic Justice Australia Secretariat

Chief Executive Officer (to 30 June 2023)

Leanne Ho (0.5 FTE)

Deputy Chief Executive Officer (Acting Chief Executive Officer from 1 July 2023)

Kate Allingham (0.7 FTE)

Chief Operating Officer

Tori Edwards (0.8 FTE)

Senior Advisor (Law Reform Director until 13 September 2023)

Linda Forbes (0.6 FTE)

Law Reform Officer

Sarah Sacher (1 FTE)

Law Reform Officer

Amy Schneider (1 FTE)

Policy and Communications Support Officer

Terina Hegarty (0.6 FTE)

Project Officer

Lucia Mai (0.2 FTE)



Photo: Terina Hegarty, Amy Schneider, Sarah Sacher, Tori Edwards, Linda Forbes, Kate Allingham, Lucia Mai, and Leanne Ho

Economic Justice Australia Board

The Board members during the financial year ending 30 June 2023 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: Abby Cone, Solicitor, Townsville Community Law (resigned 4 April 2023)

Ordinary Board Member: Fiona Hunt, Basic Rights Queensland (commenced 9 May 2023, resigned 6 July 2023)

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



Photo: Amy Schneider, Sarah Sacher, Mitra Khabaz, Terina Hegarty, Genevieve Bolton, Fiona Hunt, Tori Edwards, Kate Allingham, Linda Forbes, Leanne Ho, Katherine Boyle, Natalie Ross, Lucia Mai and Olivia Tan at the 2023 Strategic Planning Day

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD



What an extraordinary year it has been!

The year witnessed a historic growth in the resources available to Economic Justice Australia through the generous support of the Paul Ramsay Foundation, the Snow Foundation, Mannifera, and the Thyne Reid Foundation. I would like to thank these philanthropic donors for their trust in Economic Justice Australia and their shared commitment to creating an equitable Australian society where everyone can thrive and reach their full potential.

I would like to acknowledge Leanne Ho who resigned as CEO of Economic Justice Australia at the end of this financial year. Since taking up the leadership reins in late 2017, Leanne's impact on Economic Justice Australia has been truly transformative. She leaves Economic Justice Australia with a strong brand, wonderful staff team, unprecedented level of resources, a treasure chest of research and policy work which will continue to inform our strategic priorities for years to come and an enviable reputation within government and the broader community as a trusted organisation with deep expertise in social security law and its administration.

I would also like to thank new staff members, Terina Hegarty, Sarah Sacher, Kate Allingham, Tori Edwards, and Amy Schneider who worked with Leanne, Lucia Mai, Linda Forbes, and our member centres to drive significant systemic change during the year.

Huge thanks to our entire staff team for their excellent work during this reporting period. I would like to particularly acknowledge Linda Forbes for her outstanding work this year which included working around the clock to support Economic Justice Australia's appearance before the Robodebt Royal Commission.

Some Key Achievements this year included:

- The inclusion of social security in the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and their Children.



Photo: Genevieve Bolton, Chair, Economic Justice Australia

- Changes to the Social Security Guide to better inform assessments and reflect the lived experience and circumstances of people affected by family and domestic violence.
- Leading discussion at the Commonwealth Government's Jobs and Skills Summit about the need to reform the social security system to support rather than demonise job seekers and other social security recipients.
- Changes to the Disability Support Pension Impairment Tables which reflected some key recommendations that Economic Justice Australia had been advocating for over many years.
- The Introduction of a Bill into the Commonwealth Parliament to update language about people with disability which reflected the recommendations made by Economic Justice Australia in its August 2022 research report, 'Handicapped – Use of outdated terminology in Social Security law and policy.'
- Participation in the Robodebt Royal Commission which publicly acknowledged in its report the important role that our member centres had played in providing specialist legal services to people affected by the Scheme.

After years of advocacy, it was also pleasing to see the Commonwealth Government restore Parenting Payment until the youngest child turns 14, abolish the ParentsNext program, provide a pathway for New Zealanders to gain citizenship and access to income support and cease the practice of using private debt collection agencies to recover social security debts from individuals.

Thank you to all member centres for the high level of engagement with Economic Justice Australia throughout the year which led to the key policy and systemic changes just highlighted. As always, thank you to my fellow Board members for providing steady governance and strategic oversight during a year marked by historic organisational change. Thank you to Abby Cone and Fiona Hunt who left the Board during the year for the invaluable insights and perspectives they brought to the Board's discussions. Special thanks must go to Kate Beaumont for going above and beyond in her role as Treasurer of Economic Justice Australia during a year of significant organisational growth and rapid expansion.

I look forward to the year ahead and thank Kate Allingham for taking on the role of A/CEO of Economic Justice Australia from 1 July 2023 and working with Tori to consolidate our organisational and staffing systems and continue the excellent work towards realising our vision of a fair social security system in Australia.

Genevieve Bolton, OAM
Chair, Economic Justice Australia
4 November 2023

ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



It's a real privilege to be the Acting CEO for Economic Justice Australia. For years this organisation has punched above its weight with strong analysis and recommendations that draw on the expertise, case examples and data of our member centres to improve the social security system.

This was recognised in the landmark Royal Commission Report into Robodebt, where Commissioner, the Hon. Catherine Holmes, highlighted the important public interest role our member centres play in identifying systemic issues.



Photo: Kate Allingham, Acting CEO, Economic Justice Australia

I acknowledge and thank the outgoing CEO Leanne Ho. Her hard work and strategic flair has left EJA with unprecedented resources and perfectly positioned to leverage the Royal Commission recommendations into systemic reform and a fair social security system that restores a safety net.

I believe the public is ready for broad reform and recognises that years of mismanagement, toxic narrative and thoughtless budget-saving measures caused enormous damage. The Royal Commission did a lot to diffuse the toxic us versus them rhetoric and humanised the people who rely on social security payments. It also confirmed fraud in the system is miniscule.

The Federal Government appears willing to implement the Royal Commission's recommendations and demonstrated a paradigm shift in the Federal Budget 2023, with the axing of ParentsNext and no new compliance measures.

Our social security system is complex and broken, and achieving change is always difficult. But right now - politically, socially and economically - we are in a better position than ever and the EJA team is ready to seize this opportunity and strongly advocate to mend Australia's social-security safety net.

Kate Allingham
Acting CEO, Economic Justice Australia
29 August 2023

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



Photo: Leanne Ho, CEO, at the 2022 Jobs and Skills Summit

As I reflect on the last year for my final report as Chief Executive Officer of Economic Justice Australia, it has become clear to me how truly transformative it has been for the organisation. With rapid growth in the size, profile and influence of the small team at Economic Justice Australia, I am proud to be leaving an organisation which will only go from strength to strength towards its mission of an equitable society where everyone can participate at their full potential.

Since I started leading the organisation at the end of 2017, we have been building a body of work with well-developed policy positions and recommendations based on the evidence of systemic social security system issues from the casework of our member organisations.

This enabled us to seize the opportunities that arose when there was a change of government. We provided the policy solutions to the issues the new government were looking to address. We had a seat at the Jobs Summit, the Ministers' Roundtables, and the consultations on the new National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Their Children, and we gave evidence at the Robodebt Royal Commission. Ministers came to us for advice, they came to our conference, and we have regular meetings with their advisors and Departments.

We were able to drive significant changes in the two areas of reform that we identified and focused on as requiring 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. Changes to the Guide to Social Security Law which went live on 8 May 2023, should mean that people experiencing family and domestic violence are less likely to be refused their claim for payment, cut off payment if they already receive a Centrelink payment, and less likely to have a debt raised against them as a result of being assessed as a member of a couple. The workshops that the Administrative Appeals Tribunal have asked us to hold with their members will help to ensure that this policy guidance

has its intended impact. Next, we need to see these changes cemented in the Social Security Act, along with other legislative changes we set out in our legislative brief.

Economic Justice Australia and two of its member organisations, Welfare Rights Centre NSW and Welfare Rights and Advocacy Service WA, appeared before the Robodebt Royal Commission. Their evidence highlighted how lack of access to advice and representation from under-funded community legal centres meant that Centrelink was not held to account for its decision-making in many cases. Economic Justice Australia's member centres saw the impact of Robodebt on their vulnerable clients and obstructions to internal review of Robodebts by Centrelink's Authorised Review Officers, as well as barriers to external appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. With notices regarding social security and family assistance debts continuing to include insufficient information to enable people to understand or challenge these decisions, the reversal of the onus of proof which was central to Robodebt, remains an issue that we continue to pursue in our advocacy as we kick off our Automation in Social Security project.

I would like to personally thank the staff of the Paul Ramsay Foundation, the Snow Foundation, Mannifera and Thyne Reid Foundation for being such a joy to work with, coming on board as our major philanthropic donors. Their support is enabling Economic Justice Australia to maximise its impact during this period of opportunity by adding much needed capacity to the team. It is an understatement for me to say that I am overjoyed with the talent we have been able to attract to the team at Economic Justice Australia this year.

- Kate Allingham joined as Deputy CEO in May 2023 after over a decade working as a political advisor and Chief of Staff to an Independent MP with a focus on driving our government engagement strategy. I am delighted to be able to pass the leadership of the organisation to someone of Kate's calibre as Acting CEO.
- Tori Edwards joined the team in June 2023 as Chief Operating Officer from Justice Connect with over 7 years leading teams delivering legal services to people experiencing economic and social disadvantage.
- Sarah Sacher joined the team in January 2023 from the Human Rights Commission, where she was a Senior Legal Research Officer to the Commission's President, to lead our Automation in Social Security project.
- Amy Schneider joined us from Legal Aid NSW in June 2023, where she has worked as a solicitor in the civil law and human rights teams, to lead our domestic violence advocacy and Remote Women research.
- Terina Hegarty joined us from Basic Rights Queensland in November 2022 and brings her social work expertise to the role of Policy and Communications Support Officer.

Having the depth of experience and expertise with Linda Forbes as Law Reform Officer these past few years has been a major part of how the organisation was able to make so much impact with just 1.55FTE staff. For the first time since I started in the role, the organisation now has the staffing resources to build for the future in working towards its mission.

This year we celebrated advocacy wins. Social Security is in the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Their Children, Social Security Guide changes were made to guide member of a couple assessment in domestic violence cases, Parenting Payment has been restored until the youngest child turns 14, ParentsNext is abolished, New Zealanders have a path to income support access via citizenship, the Government is making all the right noises about accepting the recommendations of the Robodebt Royal Commission and Minister Shorten has already announced the end of third-party debt collectors for Centrelink debts.

I would like to thank Ministers Shorten, Rishworth and Dreyfus and their advisors, the staff of the Department of Social Services, Services Australia, the Attorney General's Department and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for their genuine engagement with Economic Justice Australia in introducing these welcome reforms and, most importantly, their shift away from negative stereotypes of welfare recipients. It was so heartening to hear from the Treasurer, Jim Chalmers when I presented with him at the ACOSS Post-Budget event that he wants to move away from toxic narrative around social security that led to programs like Robodebt and the punitive ParentsNext.

With these initial but significant steps being taken in the right direction, I know that Economic Justice Australia will continue its impactful work with government and the community to bring about a fairer social security and legal system.

The grounding of Economic Justice Australia's policy work in the casework experience of its members and strategic oversight provided by its board is what makes its advocacy so credible and powerful. I wish the membership, Board and staff every success as they continue to seize the opportunities for positive change and will be doing everything I can to support Economic Justice Australia from my new position as a law firm pro bono partner.

Leanne Ho
CEO, Economic Justice Australia
30 June 2023



Photo: Leanne Ho, CEO, presenting the Open Letter to Government to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese

HOW WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE



The social security system should be fair and just and support people who are disadvantaged or vulnerable.

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.

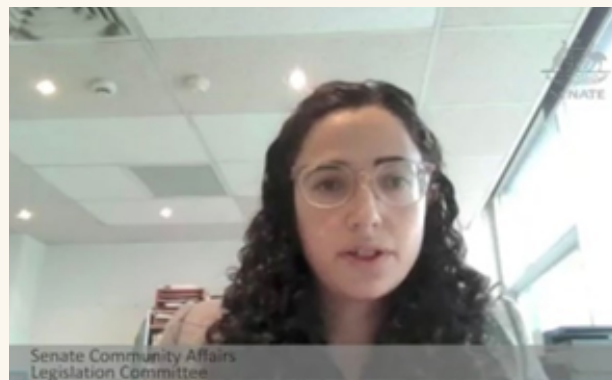


Photo: Sarah Sacher, Law Reform Officer, giving evidence at the Senate Inquiry into the extent and nature of poverty in Australia

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

- Inquiry into Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Repeal of Cashless Debit Card and Other Measures) Bill 2022 (8 August 2022)
- Inquiry into the Fair Work Amendment (Paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave) Bill 2022 (19 August 2022)
- Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services (11 November 2022)
- The Employment White Paper (30 November 2022)
- Royal Commission into Robodebt (3 February 2023)
- Inquiry into the extent and nature of poverty in Australia (15 February 2023) and gave evidence at the hearing (27 February 2023)
- Select Committee on Workforce Australia Employment Services (28 February 2023)
- Select Committee Inquiry into the Cost of Living (21 March 2023)
- Social Security (Administration) Amendment (Income Management Reform) Bill 2023 (14 April 2023)
- Joint Select Committee into the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice Referendum (21 April 2023)
- Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework (30 June 2023)

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

Jobs and Skills Summit

In September 2022, Economic Justice Australia CEO, Leanne Ho, was invited to give a speech at the Government's Jobs and Skills Summit. She used the opportunity to speak about how the overly complicated and punitive social security system is acting as an impediment to job seekers rather than supporting them into suitable work opportunities.

Economic Justice Australia's legal centres see thousands of people each year whose jobseeking efforts are frustrated by the social security system.

...The social security system has the potential to transform lives. We assisted a survivor to get onto parenting payment by having her domestic violence recognised. She used this support to retrain as a social worker and now helps others in the same position.

A great result, but she needed a lawyer to get it. It shouldn't be this hard. We need the system to change.

Watch the full speech at:
<https://www.ejaustralia.org.au/jobs-summit-2022-speech/>

Leanne was joined by Economic Justice Australia's Deputy Chair, Katherine Boyle, also the CEO of the Welfare Rights Centre, at the Minister's Employment Roundtable organised by DSS.



Photo: 2022 Jobs and Skills Summit

Robodebt Royal Commission

In November 2022, Economic Justice Australia Chair, Genevieve Bolton, and two member organisation representatives, Katherine Boyle, CEO of Welfare Rights Centre NSW and Catherine Eagle, Principal Solicitor of Welfare Rights and Advocacy Service WA, appeared before the Robodebt Royal Commission.

Their evidence highlighted the impact of Robodebt on the vulnerable clients of Economic Justice Australia's member centres and obstructions to internal review of Robodebts by Centrelink's Authorised Review Officers, as well as barriers to external appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

The case studies provided by our members include Sara, who was a survivor of family and domestic violence, carer for her mother, and couldn't work at the time given her physical injuries.

"Our clients were being told to use their credit cards or borrow money to repay their Robodebts. Sara was so panicked after being told by Centrelink that she had to repay the debt on time that she felt compelled to borrow money from a payday lender at a high rate of interest. She was as yet unaware she could get legal help from our centre",

Catherine Eagle, Principal Solicitor of the Welfare Rights and Advocacy Service WA

Most clients with Robodebts were denied the right to review, as our lawyers and their clients were told by Centrelink that unless they provided pay slips for the alleged debt period, the request for review would not proceed.

"The Welfare Rights Centre was severely under-resourced to respond to the huge number of inquiries generated by the introduction of the Robodebt Scheme. As a consequence, many individuals were not able to access advice about their Robodebt and we were not in a position to follow up clients whom we had assisted to obtain records of their debt from Centrelink. Lack of access to advice and representation meant that Centrelink was not held to account for its decision-making in many cases",

Katherine Boyle, CEO of the Welfare Rights Centre



Photo: Leanne Ho, Genevieve Bolton, Catherine Eagle and Katherine Boyle at the Robodebt Royal Commission

Economic Justice Australia makes recommendations to government to improve the social security system to better support people who are disadvantaged or vulnerable.

Significant law and policy reform has resulted from the recommendations made in Economic Justice Australia's research reports and submissions.

Disability Support Pension

Changes to the Disability Support Pension Impairment Tables (Tables) which took effect from April 2023 reflect recommendations made in Economic Justice Australia's submission to the 2021 Senate inquiry into the purpose, intent and adequacy of the Disability Support Pension and July 2021 research report Barriers to Disability Support Pension for people with psychiatric impairments. Economic Justice Australia and its member representatives also participated in the DSS consultation process and provided detailed input on the wording of the Tables.

While some concerns remain in relation to the new Tables, it is a significant positive step that the 'fully' qualifier has been removed regarding the requirement that a condition be "diagnosed" and "treated" to be assessed under the Tables. The previous qualifier of "fully" created confusion which prompted illogical requests of people claiming Disability Support Pension, with requests for "evidence" that a condition had been "fully" diagnosed and "fully" treated when the claimant had already provided reports attesting categorically to a particular diagnosis. This caused particular issues for people with psychiatric conditions that could be subject to changing diagnoses and which could be difficult to treat, let alone stabilise.

Changes to Disability Support Pension rejection letters have also been made in response to Economic Justice Australia feedback which will provide more information to enable claimants to understand why their claim has been refused and make it easier to understand if they have legitimate grounds for appeal.

Economic Justice Australia is continuing to advocate for the abolition of the Program of Support Requirement and the reintroduction of the Treating Doctor's Report as part of Disability Support Pension claim package.

Ultimately, the restoration of Parenting Payment is a model of structural reform that should be applied across the social security system. A good place to start would be to restore access to Disability Support Pension for people with a partial capacity to work who have been relegated to the lower JobSeeker payment and fall through the cracks when they are unable to comply with mutual obligations.

Outdated language reference to people with a disability

In August 2022, Economic Justice Australia published a paper identifying outdated and arguably offensive language remaining in the social security law referring to people with a disability as

“handicapped”. The report quotes the People with Disability Australia Language Guide which explains:

The choices people make about language have an impact on the way people with disability feel and are perceived in society. It is important that there is awareness of the meaning behind the words that are used when talking to, referring to, or working with people with disability. Disrespectful language can make people with disability feel hurt and excluded, and be a barrier to full participation in society.

On 1 June 2023, the Statute Law Amendment (Prescribed Forms and Other Updates) Bill 2023 was introduced to Parliament. The Explanatory Memorandum explains:

Schedule 2

1. *The main purpose of Schedule 2 to this Bill is to update language relating to persons with disability to focus on the person, rather than the disability. The object of each update is to prevent negative impacts on the lives of people with disability resulting from the way they are referred to in the Family Law Act 1975, the Social Security Act 1991 and the Veterans’ Entitlements Act 1986.*
2. *The updates give effect to the recommendations made by Economic Justice Australia in its August 2022 research report, Handicapped - Use of outdated terminology in Social Security law and policy. These updates do not change the meaning of the provisions.*



Photo: cover of 'Handicapped': Use of Outdated Terminology in Social Security Law and Policy research report

Family and Domestic Violence

On 8 May 2023, significant changes were made to the Guide to Social Security Law (the Guide) in response to Economic Justice Australia’s research reports *How Well Does Australia’s Social Security System Support Victims of Family and Domestic Violence?* (August 2018) and *Debts, Duress and Dob-ins* (November 2021), and the 2022 legislative brief we developed to implement some of the reports’ key recommendations.

The policy in the Guide provides official guidance to social security decision-makers on how to interpret the social security law.

The Guide now explicitly provides that the presence of family violence within a relationship may indicate that two people should not be defined as being a 'member of a couple' under section 4 of the Social Security Act. It also provides that decision-makers should consider family and domestic violence as a special reason to use their discretion to treat someone as not being a member of a couple under section 24 of the Social Security Act, even when they technically meet the definition under section 4.

Victims-survivors of family and domestic violence often do not have access or control over their finances and cannot access their fair share of the resources within their relationship. They are essentially trapped in abusive relationships because they do not have financial support to leave.

Treating victim-survivors as though they are no longer a member of a couple so they can access the 'single' rate of payment, with their rate unaffected by their partner's income and assets, will give them the independent source of income they need to leave and rebuild a life in safety.

This change represents a significant paradigm shift towards understanding that the reason that we look at members of a couple in the social security system is because we expect members of couples to pool their resources and share them equally.

While the updated Guide will provide greater flexibility to take domestic violence circumstances into account in Centrelink decision-making, there remains a need for legislative changes to fully address family and domestic violence concerns. In particular, Economic Justice Australia calls for amendments to the 'special circumstances waiver' provision in section 1237AAD of the Social Security Act, to protect victim-survivors from being pursued for debt that was caused by an abusive partner.



Photo: Leanne Ho, CEO, interview on ABC News Breakfast

Automation in Social Security in the aftermath of Robodebt

In the aftermath of Robodebt, we started work on a major research project looking more broadly at automation in social security, with Sarah Sacher recruited in January 2023 as our project lead. Our project partners, Ed Santow, Director of the UTS Human Technology Institute and Paul Henman, Director of the UQ Centre of Excellence for Automated Decision-Making in Society are leading the expert advisory group assembled to guide the conduct and recommendations of the project.

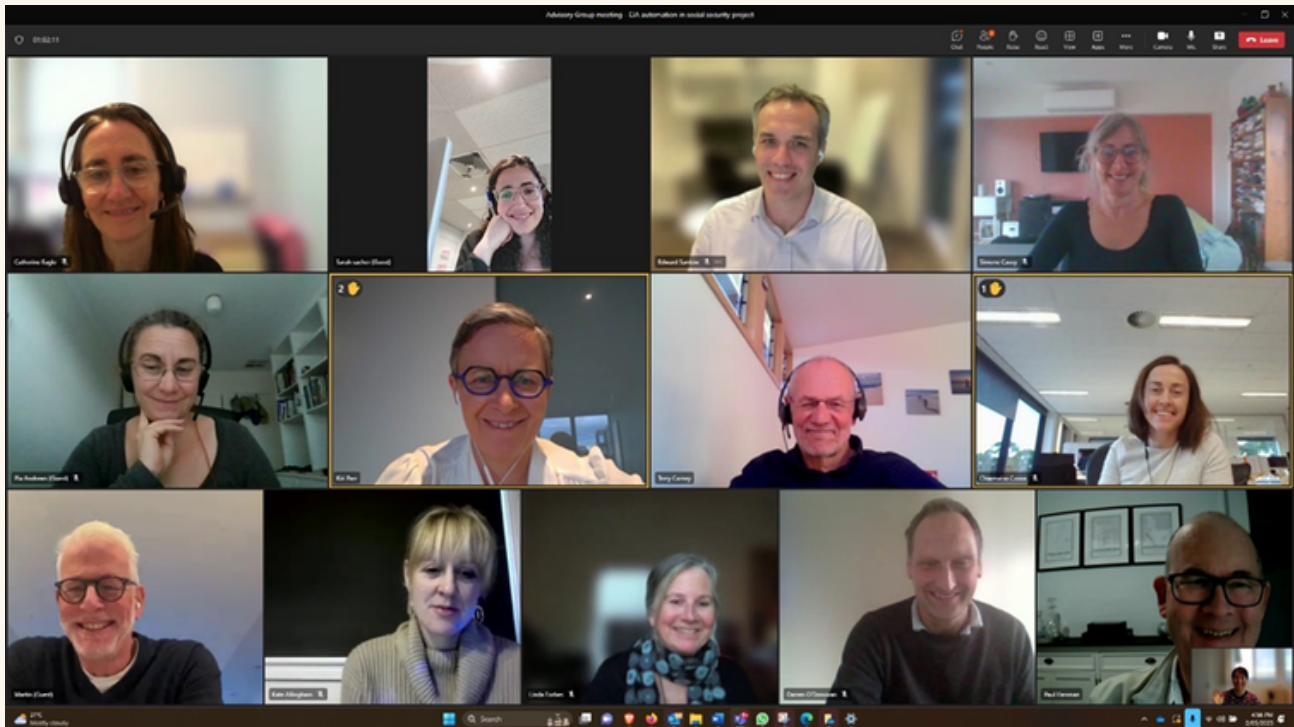


Photo: Expert Advisory Group Automation Project meeting in May 2023

The project will explore other forms of automated administrative decision-making that are not receiving the same levels of attention as Robodebt – for example, Workforce Australia’s Targeted Compliance Framework, which can automatically suspend people’s Jobseeker payments if they do not meet one of a myriad of mutual obligations.

It will also look into how automation of services, at the most basic level, can deny access to the system for vulnerable people. One of the most common issues identified in the interviews with Economic Justice Australia’s member centre lawyers and case workers, is the difficulty people face simply trying to upload a PDF document or photo of the document through a mobile phone app, when they don’t have digital literacy, or phone data, or even a phone.

Insights from our initial research interviews informed the principles for automated decision-making contained in our submission to the Robodebt Royal Commission in a section on Looking Forward – What needs to change to avoid another Robodebt, which is informing the Commissioner’s report.

Economic Justice Australia uses effective communications to engage government and key stakeholders to turn its recommendations into real change.

This year, Economic Justice Australia has harnessed the power of allies and effectively engaged government to bring about significant reforms.

A central example of the way we have used our communications and networks speaking in one voice is our August 2022 campaign to push the Government to include social security in the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children and make changes to the law set out in our legislative brief.

Early indications were that social security would be left out of the National Plan despite consistent feedback from us and our allied organisations in National Plan consultations that having an independent source of income was essential to being able to leave a violent relationship.

Around 600 individuals and the leaders of 70 domestic violence and community organisations signed an open letter which was delivered to the Prime Minister and key Ministers in our meetings with them. Greens Senator, Janet Rice, and Independent MP Andrew Wilkie also supported the campaign making speeches in Parliament. The campaign resulted in the inclusion of social security when the National Plan was released.

The National Plan now recognises that Australia's social security system supports victims and survivors to not only leave a violent relationship, but also to establish a life free from violence.



Photo: Leanne Ho and Hon Amanda Rishworth MP, Hon Mark Dreyfus KC, MP with Leanne Ho and Katherine Boyle, cover of the *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-23*

We have established strong working relationships as trusted advisors to Government Ministers and Departments. In announcing the Social Security Guide changes to member of a couple assessment, Minister Rishworth acknowledged the work of Economic Justice Australia in her media release and engaged with us on social media.

Minister Shorten spoke about the work of our Chair, Genevieve Bolton, Deputy Chair, Katherine and Principal Solicitor of our member centre, the Welfare Rights and Advocacy Service, Catherine Eagle in Question Time referring to them as respected welfare advocates who tirelessly represented Robodebt victims in underfunded community legal centres.



Photo: Facebook post by Hon Amanda Rishworth MP about changes to the Social Security Guide



Photo: Hon Bill Shorten MP mentioning EJA members' evidence at the Robodebt Royal Commission during Question Time on 16 February 2023

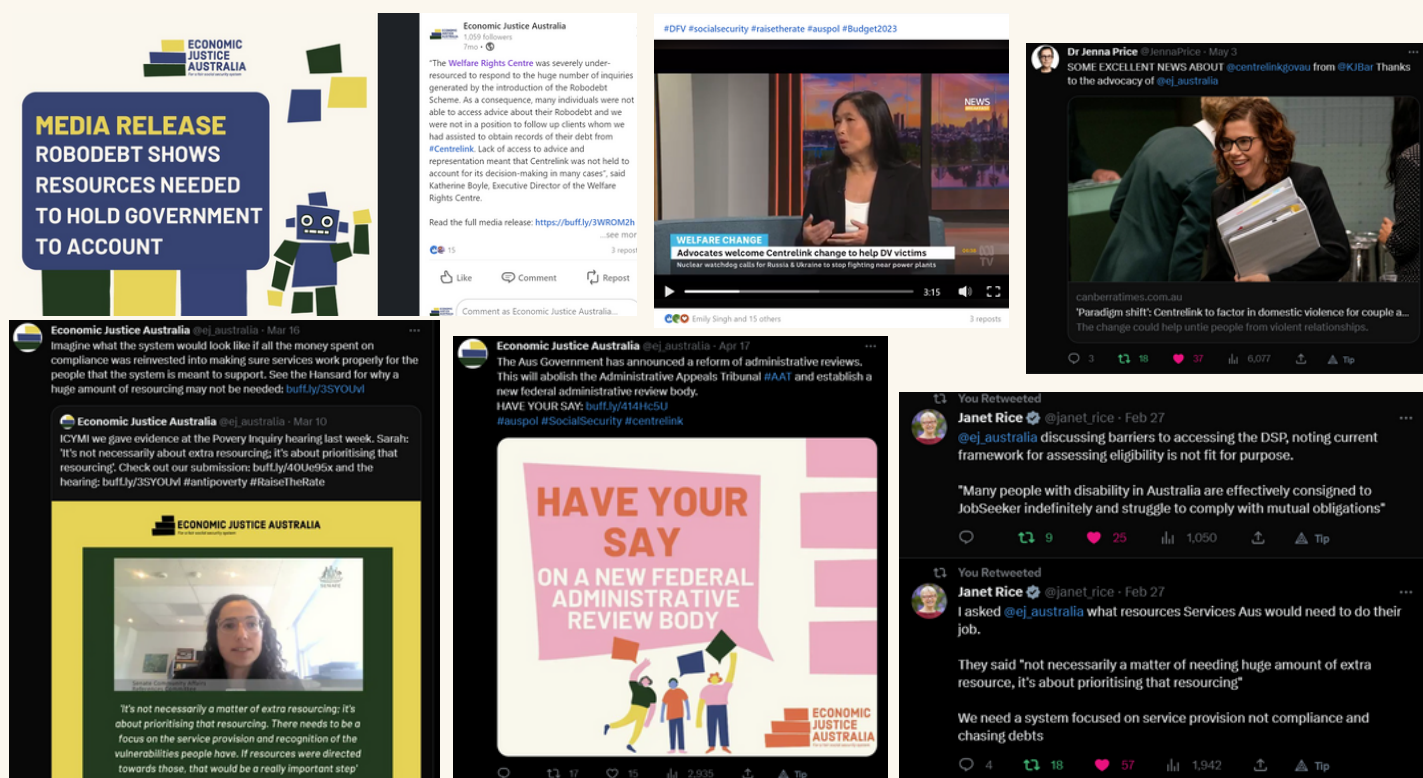
We continue to attend biannual meetings with DSS and Services Australia to progress the reform agenda that we and our members have identified as the most pressing systemic issues arising from our members' case work.

Economic Justice Australia builds awareness that a fair social security system benefit society as a whole.

Media and speaking appearances 2022-23

- Leanne Ho was featured on Q+A with a question for the panel on 'The Choice: Violence or Poverty'
- Leanne Ho was a panellist on 'The Choice: Violence or Poverty' at UTS Business School
- Leanne Ho was a speaker at the Australian National University 2022 Conference on Women's Safety and Financial Security
- Leanne Ho was a speaker at the NEXUS 2022 Australia Summit Program session on 'An Economy that Works for Everyone'
- Leanne Ho appeared on ABC's The Drum on Violence or Poverty
- Leanne Ho appeared on ABC News Breakfast on the changes in the Guide to Social Security Law
- Leanne Ho and Sarah Sacher were speakers at the National Access to Justice and Pro Bono Conference 2023
- EJA was featured on radio shows including ABC Radio National, ABC Rad2SER's The Wire, 4BC Brisbane, Community Heart Media Radio Show, and 3CR Community Radio's Done By Law
- EJA was quoted in articles in The Guardian, ABC News, The West, The Saturday Paper, The Australian and the Canberra Times on issues including:
 - social security reform in the National Plan to End Violence against Women and their Children
 - social security reform following the 2022 Jobs and Skills Summit
 - the Robodebt Royal Commission, and
 - Centrelink payments being cut off for refugees on Safe Haven Enterprise Visas.

Popular social media posts by or featuring EJA in 2022-23



Our membership is strong and engaged.

Conferences

Economic Justice Australia held two virtual conference days in 2022, the Annual Conference on Tuesday 30 August at which Ministers Shorten and Rishworth provided an address to delegates, and a members only day in October. The theme for the conference was 'System Integrity for Economic Security' drawing on our two main advocacy focus areas of automated system integrity in the aftermath of Robodebt and women's economic safety.

In March 2023, we held an in-person conference in Nipaluna Hobart, following the Community Legal Centres Australia conference which gave our members an opportunity to see each other and re-establish relationships after the years of remote communication. Guest speakers from the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, including DP Karen Synon, and a New Zealand social security system expert, Ben Hoffman, presented and led thought-provoking discussions with our members.



Photo: EJA Members Conference 2023 in Hobart

In parallel, our members facilitated a masterclass for Community Legal Centres Australia delegates on social security law basics. Solicitors, Sam Tracy from Basic Rights Queensland, Laura Jordan and Veronica Williams from Social Security Rights Victoria and Emily Singh from Monash Law Clinics delivered a practical and engaging session to upskill lawyers from generalist community legal centres to assist people with social security law issues and know when to refer matters to a specialist Economic Justice Australia centre.



Photo: Social Security Law Masterclass at the the Community Legal Centres Australia Conference in March 2023



Photo: Linda Forbes, Ian Turton, Terina Hegarty, Leanne Ho and Abby Cone at a biannual meeting in December 2022

Biannual delegations

Twice a year, Economic Justice Australia sends a delegation of its staff and representatives from member centres to Canberra to meet senior leaders from the Department of Social Services and Services Australia. These extended meetings are on top of regular contact with these organisations and present an excellent opportunity to achieve reform. Participation of member centre representatives in biannual meetings is vital to bringing the stories and insights from frontline casework to government policy makers. This year, solicitors Ian Turton from Illawarra Legal Centre, Abby Cone from Townsville Community Law (also an Economic Justice Australia board member) brought their perspectives from regional centres. Laura Jordan, Principal Solicitor of Social Security Rights Victoria presented research on social security issues arising from disasters.



Photo: Leanne Ho, Kate Allingham, Katherine Boyle, Linda Forbes, Sarah Sacher, Amy Schneider, Hon Bill Shorten MP and Laura Jordan at a biannual meeting in June 2023

THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS



Economic Justice Australia is sustainable.

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

Our growth beyond this core government funding would not have happened without the generous assistance of Wendy Brooks Consultants whose strategic funding advice has helped us to attract philanthropic funding.

Our huge thanks to Paul Ramsay Foundation, Snow Foundation, Mannifera, Thyne Reid Foundation, Australian Communities Foundation, Shepherd Family Foundation and Kapscalu Regenerative Fund and all our donors for their generous and impactful support.



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 national conference 2022.

Lucia has managed the transition of Economic Justice Australia's contact data to a CRM database which has been critical to the ability of the organisation to harness supporters and run its conferences and campaigns. Thanks to Lucia and UTS Soul Award IT student volunteer Joseph Phan, for their work populating our CRM with functional data.

Pro bono partners

The generous pro bono contributions of law firms this year continued to provide a significant boost to Economic Justice Australia's capacity to deliver the high volume and quality of expert law reform and policy advice.

HWL Ebsworth and Wotton + Kearney each provided a graduate lawyer secondee for 3 months to Economic Justice Australia to assist with scoping our major research projects, Automation in Social Security and Women in Regional Remote Australia, providing initial interviews and themes upon which our Law Reform Leads could build their project plans.

Wotton + Kearney provided teams of pro bono lawyers and paralegals to assist with other advocacy projects, including international comparative research into the way couples are assessed in the social security systems of other jurisdictions which contributed to the success of our advocacy to change the Guide on member of a couple assessment.

Hall & Wilcox's research and writing of our Handicapped research report has resulted in the introduction of a bill implementing the report's recommended changes anticipated to pass.



CASE STUDIES



The following case studies have been selected from those published in Rights Review to highlight areas of Economic Justice Australia's advocacy work. All names have been changed to protect privacy.

DSP 'program of support' requirement blocking access to DSP

When he contacted our member centre, Michael had been in receipt of Newstart/JobSeeker Payment for five years. Prior to this he was primary carer for his mother who was terminally ill. Michael suffered from multiple health problems. When he applied for the DSP his conditions were assigned 35 points under four separate impairment Tables. Michael also suffered from other conditions which were not assigned an impairment rating because they had not been fully diagnosed and treated. His application for DSP was rejected because none of his conditions was assigned a 20 point rating under a single Table and he had not fulfilled the Program of Support requirement. A review of Michael's medical evidence was undertaken by his GP, with assistance from our member centre. On the evidence it appeared that the initial assessment per the Tables was correct given that Michael had three moderate impairments and one mild.

Michael was engaged with a Disability Employment Service job network provider for the entire period in which he was in receipt of Newstart/JobSeeker payments, and was granted ongoing exemptions from mutual obligations because of his chronic health problems. This was reasonable because the medical evidence made it clear that Michael was unable to work. However, it also served as a barrier to Michael ever being granted DSP.

Michael obtained a referral to another Disability Employment Services provider. The new provider was supportive of his application for the DSP. At the member centre's suggestion, the new provider organised for Michael to be exited from the Program of Support after he had been engaged as a participant in it for a month. Michael was fortunate that his provider facilitated his exit from the Program of Support. Michael now receives DSP. If his caseworker had not been cooperative he would have been stuck in a program which could not be of benefit to him, and unable to access DSP because of his inability to engage in the Program of Support.

Economic Justice Australia is pleased that recent changes to the DSP impairment tables will make assessments more fair but the problematic 'program of support' requirement remains in place. Removal of this anomalous requirement is high on our ongoing DSP reform agenda for the coming year.

Unjust debts for survivor of domestic violence

Sarah had separated from her ex-husband in February 2017. She suffered from severe anxiety and depression due to the domestic violence, with a number of police reports made about her ex-husband's domestic violence. Before the separation, Sarah and her ex-husband sold an investment property. However, Sarah had no access to the money and their bank account was in her ex-husband's name and he had changed the login details for the account after the sale.

Sarah was unemployed. She had a 17-year-old daughter living with her who was sitting her HSC, and a 10-year-old son. Her daughter also needed to see counsellor and had been prescribed anti-depressants. They lived in a garage and Sarah had to borrow money from her mother who was relying on the Age Pension.

Sarah contacted the EJA member centre after she received a Family Tax Benefit debt of \$19,000, plus a School Kids Bonus debt of \$1,200 and Child Care Benefit debt of \$200, which she incurred after her ex-husband submitted his tax return, which included the sale of the property.

The member centre obtained and reviewed documents under Freedom of Information from Centrelink regarding her debt, collected evidence of her circumstances and appealed to the Authorised Review Officer. The member centre submitted that the debt should be waived due to Sarah's special circumstances – i.e., that she is a victim of domestic violence, and the debt arose as part of her ex-husband's financial abuse. Sarah's review was successful; the three debts were waived in full. The member centre also referred Sarah to get further advice from the Child Support Service at Legal Aid.

Waiver of unjust debts accrued by a survivor of domestic violence is a great result but these debts should not have been raised on the first place. Economic Australia is continuing to advocate for legislative and policy reform to ensure victim-survivors are not saddled with debts caused by abusers.

Entrenched cycle of poverty

Anne's JobSeeker Payment was automatically suspended because she was ill and unable to attend a job interview. She called up her employment services provider to explain, but they refused to lift her suspension or accept her medical certificate for non-attendance. Anne advised that she desperately needed to have her suspension lifted as it was the end of her payment fortnight and she had no money left for food or other essentials, so she decided to go by train to her employment service's office to sort it out. She didn't have any money to top up her public transport card, but was desperate so decided to catch the train anyway. Anne was apprehended at the train station and issued with a fine for over \$400. Upon arrival at the employment service they initially refused to see her, and told her to come back the next day. Anne knew that if she left, she risked getting another fine and she wouldn't be able to buy any food until her payments were reinstated.

With the help of one of our member centre's lawyers Anne's suspension was lifted that afternoon. However, the money was not credited to her account in time for her to add credit to her public

transport card, and she received a further \$200 fine on the way home. Anne now had a \$600 debt, with no savings to draw from, so she decided to cut back from 2 meals a day to just 1 meal a day for the next few months in order to pay it off.

Economic Justice Australia is advocating for reform of the mutual obligations policy framework – including policy changes to prevent arbitrary suspension of vulnerable jobseekers’ payments, and to enhance appeal rights.

Failures of automated decision-making beyond Robodebt

Jenny is a single parent of three children who had experienced domestic violence before and after separating from her husband. Following her separation, she began receiving the Family Tax Benefit (FTB) and Parenting Payment. Two FTB debts were raised against her amounting to almost \$20,000. The debts resulted from an assumed increase in her child support assessment that she had been deemed to receive by an automated decision. However, Jenny had never received this increase as her ex-husband was erratic in his child support payments. His volatility made it difficult for her to pursue him for arrears.

Jenny approached the Welfare Rights Centre in Sydney after she had been unsuccessful in her appeal to the Social Security and Child Support Division of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) to have her debts waived, and she had appealed to the General Division of the AAT. We advised Jenny to approach a Centrelink social worker to discuss the possibility of being retrospectively granted a partial exemption from the requirement to collect child support from her ex-husband, which would have the effect of reducing her debt. Unfortunately, the social worker was unaware of the ability of Centrelink to grant such exemptions retrospectively and declined to assist her. We then agreed to represent Jenny in her AAT appeal. Following correspondence and negotiations with the legal representative for Centrelink, Jenny was granted a partial retrospective exemption from the maintenance action test, and her debt was reduced from \$20,000 to approximately \$2000.

Robodebt represented the most egregious form of automated social security decision-making but automation can take many forms. Economic Justice Australia’s ongoing automated decision-making project is identifying where automation of Centrelink decision-making can undermine the integrity of the social security system.

TREASURER'S REPORT



It pleases me to present the 2022-2023 audited Financial Report for Economic Justice Australia Inc. (EJA). Rucker Audit and Assurance Pty Ltd conducted our financial audit and has issued an unmodified opinion.

The last year has seen EJA achieve an increased surplus in terms of income and expenditure in the amount of \$96,764. The Secretariat funding from the Department of Social Services (DSS) which increased to \$271,109 in the latest year was fully expended. Apart from core Secretariat funding in 2022-2023, EJA secured philanthropic funding of \$378,426 from Paul Ramsay Foundation, Snow Foundation and Thyne Reid Foundation to undertake project work. A portion of funding provided by Paul Ramsay Foundation and Snow Foundation was unexpended in 2022-2023 and those funds have been carried into 2023-2024 and committed to the completion of the projects being undertaken. The bulk of the surplus came from increased income received through charitable donations and conference registrations received during the year.

In terms of the balance sheet the current assets of the association as at 30 June 2023 was \$743,745 including cash at bank of \$734,043 and prepayments/refunds and security deposit (bond) of \$9,702. The total liabilities for the association as at 30 June 2023 was \$593,193 which included trade and other payables, unexpended grants, grants received in advance and current and non-current employee provisions. The net assets of the association are \$175,862. EJA continues to be able to pay all its liabilities when they fall due.

I would like to again acknowledge the work of Janine Lindsay who has been the Bookkeeper for EJA over the past 12 months.

Kate Beaumont
Treasurer, Economic Justice Australia
2 November 2023

ECONOMIC JUSTICE AUSTRALIA INC
A.B.N. 13 789 701 090
DIRECTORS' REPORT
For the year ended 30 June 2023

Your directors present this report on the association for the financial year ended 30 June 2023.

Directors

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

Genevieve Bolton	Chairperson
Katherine Boyle	Deputy Chairperson
Rhea Thomas	Secretary from AGM, 8 November 2022
Kate Beaumont	Treasurer
Emma Cvitak	Board Member
Natalie Ross	Board Member
Rhea Thomas	Board Member to AGM, 8 November 2022
Abby Cone	Board Member 12 July 2022 to 4 April 2023
Fiona Hunt	Board Member from 4 April 2023
Mitra Khakbaz	Independent Board Member
Irini Shnody	Independent Board Member

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 2023 financial year amounted to \$96,764. (2022: Surplus \$13,624)

The association is exempt from income tax.

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

G Bolton

Director name: *Genevieve Bolton, Chairperson*

Dated *2/11/2023*

K Beaumont

Director name: *Katherine Beaumont, Treasurer*

Dated *2/11/2023*

Associations Incorporation Act 1991

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

We, Genevieve Bolton,
and Katherine 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 2023.

Signed: G. Bolton
Dated: 2/11/2023

Signed: K Beaumont
Dated: 2/11/2023

ECONOMIC JUSTICE AUSTRALIA INC
A.B.N. 13 789 701 090
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	NOTE	2023	2022
INCOME			
Government Grants	9	271,109	250,000
Grants From Other Organisations	9	378,426	-
Less: Unexpended Grants From Other Organisations	6, 9	(235,925)	
Membership and Levies		5,210	5,125
Conference Registrations		16,785	5,500
Interest Received		1,039	22
Donations		87,265	7,000
Social Services Subscription		4,050	4,000
Other Income		500	2,500
TOTAL REVENUE		528,459	274,147
EXPENDITURE			
Accounting/Bookkeeping Expenses		9,000	9,000
Advertising		730	140
Audit Fee		4,000	3,675
Bad Debts		-	136.00
Bank Charges		341	67
Cleaning		840	-
Communications		-	225
Computer Expenses		11,552	8,090
Conference & Forum Fees		1,080	104
Consultancy Fees		-	9,000
Credit Card Fee		135	129
Depreciation		2,201	1,143
Insurance Expenses		3,010	2,693
Long Service & Annual Leave Provision		(8,592)	17,049
EJA Conference Expense		4,962	80
Office Expenses		1,478	536
Rent		15,570	15,570
Social Services Subscription		4,000	4,000
Staff Training/Education		-	154
Strategy & Planning		10,000	800
Subscriptions & Publications		2,676	2,237
Superannuation		28,744	16,523
Telephone Expenses		962	1,250
Travelling Expense		28,383	416
Wages & Labour Cost Reimbursements		309,201	165,229
Website		-	788
Workers Compensation		1,422	1,489
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		431,695	260,523
Current year operating surplus/(deficit) before income tax		96,764	13,624
Income tax expense		-	-
Net current year operating surplus/(deficit) after income tax		96,764	13,624
Other comprehensive income		-	-
TOTAL OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) & COMPREHENSIVE INCOME		96,764	13,624
RETAINED SURPLUS AT 1ST JULY 2022		79,098	65,474
RETAINED SURPLUS AT THE END OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR		175,862	79,098

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

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 JUNE 2023

	NOTE	2023	2022
Current Assets			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2	734,043	121,511
Prepayments/refund		6,952	5,230
Security Deposit (Bond)		2,750	2,750
Total Current Assets		<u>743,745</u>	<u>129,491</u>
Non-Current Assets			
Property Plant & Equipment	3	<u>25,310</u>	<u>4,302</u>
Total Non-Current Assets		<u>25,310</u>	<u>4,302</u>
Total Assets		<u>769,055</u>	<u>133,793</u>
Current Liabilities			
Trade and Other Payables	4	25,838	5,032
Provisions for Employee Benefits	5	33,501	38,712
Unexpended Grants	6	235,925	-
Grant Received in Advance	7	290,359	-
Total Current Liabilities		<u>585,623</u>	<u>43,744</u>
Non Current Liabilities			
Provisions for Employee Benefits	5	<u>7,570</u>	<u>10,951</u>
Total Non-Current Liabilities		<u>7,570</u>	<u>10,951</u>
Total Liabilities		<u>593,193</u>	<u>54,695</u>
Net Assets		<u>175,862</u>	<u>79,098</u>
Equity			
Retained Surpluses	8	<u>175,862</u>	<u>79,098</u>
Total Equity		<u>175,862</u>	<u>79,098</u>

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

CASH FLOW STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	NOTE	2023	2022
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Receipts from government grants		271,109	250,000
Receipts from other organisations		668,785	-
Receipts from members and other income		113,810	24,125
Interest received from investments		1,039	22
Payments to suppliers of goods and services		(109,801)	(84,584)
Payments for wages and labour cost reimbursements		<u>(309,201)</u>	<u>(165,229)</u>
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities		<u>635,741</u>	<u>24,334</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Proceeds from sale of plant and equipment		-	-
Purchase of plant and equipment		<u>(23,209)</u>	<u>(2,714)</u>
Net cash used in investing activities		<u>(23,209)</u>	<u>(2,714)</u>
NET INCREASE/(DECREASE) IN CASH HELD			
Cash at Beginning of the year		<u>121,511</u>	<u>99,891</u>
Cash at end of the year	2	<u><u>734,043</u></u>	<u><u>121,511</u></u>

CASH FLOW INFORMATION

Reconciliation of Net Cash Provided by Operating Activities to Operating Result

Operating surplus	96,764	13,624
Add Back		
Depreciation	2,201	1,143
Changes in Assets and Liabilities		
Decreases/(increases) in receivable & prepaid expenses	(1,722)	(1,590)
Increases/(decrease) in creditors	24,812	(5,743)
Increases/(decrease) unspent grants and grant in advance	526,284	-
Increase/(decrease) provision for employee benefits	(8,592)	17,049
Increases/(decrease) in GST payable	(4,006)	(149)
Net Cash provided by operating activities	<u>635,741</u>	<u>24,334</u>

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

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

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 2023

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 2023

	2023	2022
NOTE 2 - CASH ASSETS		
Bendigo Bank Account 143872703	151,995	115,701
Bendigo CMT Bills Account	11,144	5,810
ME Online Saver	270,904	-
ME Term Deposit	300,000	-
	<u>734,043</u>	<u>121,511</u>
NOTE 3 - PROPERTY PLANT & EQUIPMENT		
Office Furniture & Equipment	34,904	11,696
Less Accumulated Depreciation	<u>(9,594)</u>	<u>(7,394)</u>
	<u>25,310</u>	<u>4,302</u>
NOTE 4 - TRADE & OTHER PAYABLES		
Current		
Corporate Credit Card	2,063	355
GST payable/(refundable)	(4,965)	(959)
PAYG Accrued	25,440	2,336
Audit Provision	3,300	3,300
	<u>25,838</u>	<u>5,032</u>
NOTE 5 - PROVISIONS FOR EMPLOYEE BENEFITS		
Current Liability		
Annual Leave	<u>33,501</u>	<u>38,712</u>
Non Current Liability		
Long Service Leave	<u>7,570</u>	<u>10,951</u>
NOTE 6 - UNEXPENDED GRANTS		
Paul Ramsay Foundation	90,886	-
Snow Foundation	145,039	-
	<u>235,925</u>	<u>-</u>
NOTE 7 - GRANT RECEIVED IN ADVANCE		
Paul Ramsay Foundation	290,350	-
	<u>290,350</u>	<u>-</u>

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

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

	2023	2022
NOTE 8 - RETAINED SURPLUSES		
Retained surpluses/(Accumulated deficits)		
At the beginning of the Financial Year	79,098	65,474
Total Operating Surplus & Deficit & Comprehensive Income	<u>96,764</u>	<u>13,624</u>
Retained surpluses/(Accumulated deficits)At the end of the Financial Year	<u>175,862</u>	<u>79,098</u>
NOTE 9 - GRANTS INCOME		
Government Grants		
DSS Grant	<u>271,109</u>	<u>250,000</u>
	<u>271,109</u>	<u>250,000</u>
Grants From Other Organisations		
Grant Received for the year		
Paul Ramsay Foundation	182,426	-
Snow Foundation	166,000	-
Thyne Reid Foundation	<u>30,000</u>	<u>-</u>
	378,426	
Unexpended Grants for the year	6 <u>(235,925)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net Grants Income from Other Organisations	<u>142,501</u>	<u>-</u>

ECONOMIC JUSTICE AUSTRALIA INC
A.B.N. 13 789 701 090
CERTIFICATE BY DIRECTORS OF THE BOARD

I, Genevieve Bolton of
Economic Justice Australia, certify
that:

- a. I attended the general meeting of the association held on
7/11 2023.
- b. The financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2023 were submitted to the members of
the association at its general meeting.

Dated : 23 November 2023

G. Bolton
.....
Director Genevieve Bolton

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 2023, 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 2023 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**

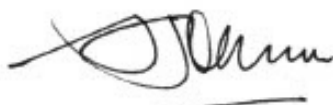
Doncaster East, Victoria

Dated this 2nd day of November 2023

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 2023**

	\$	\$
Grants Received		271,109
Expense		
Accounting/Bookkeeping Expenses	9,000	
Advertising	730	
Annual Leave Provision	(9,744)	
Audit Fee	4,000	
Bank Charges	62	
Communications	840	
Computer Expenses	11,553	
Conference & Forum fees	1,080	
Consultancy	-	
Credit Card Fee	135	
Depreciation Expense	1,056	
Insurance Expenses	3,010	
Long Service Provision	(4,293)	
MYOB Subscription	1,204	
Office Expenses	898	
Planning	-	
Rent	15,570	
Staff Training/ Education	4,046	
Subscriptions & Publications	1,472	
Superannuation	17,252	
Telephone Expenses	962	
Travelling Expense	11,106	
Wages & Labour Cost Reimbursements	199,750	
Website	-	
Workers Compensation	1,423	
Total Expense		<u>271,109</u>
Net Surplus/(Deficit)		<u>0</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 2023.



Geoffrey B Johnson
Chartered Accountant
Dated at Doncaster East
2nd November 2023

