

Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Community Affairs
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Committee Secretary,

RE Question on Notice – EJA communication plan re Income Apportionment

This submission is in response to the request by Senator Ananda-Rajah “to present to us at a later point the comms plans that EJA plans to use” in the context of the recent Government announcement that both EJA and ACOSS will receive \$400,000 each to assist people to navigate the proposed Income Apportionment Resolution Scheme. This request was made during the Public Hearing on Friday 3 October 2025.

I understand that this funding will be provided through a variation to our FCSI grant agreement and details of this variation will not be provided to EJA until after the *Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Technical Changes No.2) Bill 2025* has been passed. To date, EJA has received no formal notification from DSS about the specifics required of us under this grant.

EJA is of the view that assisting people to navigate the proposed Income Apportionment Resolution Scheme goes beyond a communication strategy. Having carefully reviewed the *Social Security and Other Legislation Amendment (Technical Changes No. 2) Bill 2025*, it is clear that individuals will need legal advice before deciding whether it is in their best interests to access the Resolution Scheme. Accepting a payment requires releasing the Commonwealth from liability and waiving the right to engage in a class action. Some people may also wish to explore with a welfare rights advocate whether their debt can be waived under the Social Security Act. Details in the Regulations will also be an important consideration in any public communications, which we will scrutinise once they have been made publicly available.

EJA has already had several meetings with both our member centres and other key stakeholders, including ACOSS, about how we use this funding to best assist vulnerable people navigate the complexities of income apportionment. As the Committee would be aware, EJA has twenty-two member centres across the country, community legal centres that specialise in social security law, who each have their own extensive

network within the community sector. The knowledge and expertise of our member centre staff will be key to the assistance provided under this grant. All communications regarding the Income Apportionment Resolution Scheme will be distributed through these networks, as well as further afield.

I would like to assure the Committee that it is not EJA's intention to mention Robodebt in any of our communications with details of accessing the proposed Income Apportionment Resolution Scheme. To do so would create further confusion and unnecessary panic.

Yours sincerely

Kate Allingham
CEO
Economic Justice Australia