

14 November 2023

## Public must be able to trust government will act with integrity and transparency

The Law Council of Australia welcomes the Australian Government's response to the Royal Commission into Robodebt scheme as an important step to restoring Australians' faith in the public sector.

"The Royal Commission's recommendations are generally directed towards ensuring the public are able to trust that the government will act with integrity, lawfully, fairly and transparently," Law Council of Australia President, Mr Luke Murphy said.

"Therefore, yesterday's announcement that the Government will accept, or accept in-principle, all 56 of the Royal Commission's recommendations, is very welcome.

"In particular, we are pleased the Government has agreed to undertake legislative reform to introduce a consistent legal framework in which automation of government services can operate and which is subject to independent oversight.

"As we have made clear to the Government, the threshold objective of regulation in relation to public sector use of automated decision making is to ensure that it is employed consistently with administrative law principles which underpin lawful decision making.

"We also support the agreed reforms directed towards ensuring that decisions, particularly those with significant legal and policy issues, made by the new federal body which will replace the AAT are transparent and understood by departments and agencies.

"Additional roles to be undertaken by the Attorney-General's Department's Office of Legal Services Coordination and Office of Constitutional Law, and the associated funding announced today are welcome.

"The Law Council applauds the work done by the community sector – including the community legal assistance sector – and the many Australians who were affected by Robodebt, in bringing the issues raised by the scheme to the fore.

"The Royal Commission specifically recommended that as part of the National Legal Assistance Partnership review, which is now underway, the Commonwealth should have regard, in considering funding for legal aid commissions and community legal centres, to the importance of the public interest role played by those services as exemplified in their work during the scheme.

"The release of the Royal Commission's findings and Government response represents a critical juncture from which all of Government now needs to view community engagement differently, including as these reforms are now designed and implemented. Close consultation is fundamental to that end."

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**Contact:** Kristen Connell, P. 0400 054 227, E. [kristen@talkforcemedia.com.au](mailto:kristen@talkforcemedia.com.au)