



St Vincent de Paul Society
NATIONAL COUNCIL *good works*

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Robo-debt must end: government should support people, not intimidate them

The St Vincent de Paul Society has renewed calls on the Federal Government to immediately end the robo-debt program following the Senate Inquiry into its disastrous effects on people's lives.

"This fundamentally flawed and error-prone debt program has shattered lives, eroded trust in government services, and revealed a Government that is intent on bullying people on low incomes," the Society's National Council CEO Dr John Falzon said.

"Robo-debt has been a monumental failure and must be halted immediately.

"It has caused extensive harm to people, both emotionally and financially, and has been riddled with flaws from the outset."

The four-month long Senate inquiry gathered damning evidence from 155 submissions and nine public hearings. The inquiry revealed a program that is ill-conceived, inherently flawed, opaque and error-prone, resulting in deep harm, disrespect and degradation for thousands of people.

"The inquiry has heard numerous accounts from people burdened with grossly inaccurate debts," Dr Falzon said.

"People have been intimidated and hounded for money they do not owe, causing deep distress and anxiety.

"Centrelink should exist to support people who need help, not to persecute them."

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