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EFA Calls For Full And Transparent Review of Unlawful Robodebt Program

Australia, 31 May 2020 - Electronic Frontiers Australia (EFA) applauds the tireless community action that has seen the Australian government finally concede the true nature of the Robodebt program and to refund money taken unlawfully from welfare recipients.

“Robodebt demonstrates the importance of civil society involvement in scrutinising government programs that affect us. Robodebt should never have been enacted, let alone remained active for as long as it did. Digital rights specialists spoke up about this unlawful program early and often, but they were largely ignored as the damage compounded,” said Lyndsey EFA Chair and NotMyDebt website founder.

“When digital rights specialists speak up on issues, this is why. Technology and automation casts a wide net, and people become collateral damage when due care and diligence is lacking,” she said. “This is not the only government program that seeks to replace human care with automated punishment.”

“Technology should be used to help people, not to abuse them at scale.”

“It was community action, and the bravery and tenacity of people like Asher Wolf, Andie Fox, Deanna Amato, and all the Robodebt victims who shared their stories that lead to this moment. We have been reminded that when governments stubbornly refuse to listen, we must increase the pressure until they are forced to.”

“We must now examine this unlawful program in detail—warts and all—so that we can understand how it was allowed to happen and make the necessary changes to prevent a recurrence. Those responsible must be held to account for their actions, and be reminded that actions have consequences.”

“Every Australian deserves to know the full truth of what happened here if we are to have faith in the so-called integrity of our welfare system.”

About EFA

Electronic Frontiers Australia Inc. is an independent, member-funded not-for-profit organisation that has been promoting and protecting digital rights since 1994. For more information, visit efa.org.au.

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