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Robodebt program must be suspended

Anglicare Australia has called for the Centrelink automated debt recovery process to be suspended. The call is made ahead of the release of the Senate Inquiry's robodebt report.

"This system has no human oversight – and it puts the onus back on ordinary people to correct robotised errors," said Anglicare Australia Executive Director Kasy Chambers.

"We've seen Government Ministers reject out of hand the impact of this clumsy process and the distress it has caused. That's not good enough.

"The inquiry has heard plenty of evidence that the goal this system is simply to maximise revenue. And while everyone agrees that we should stop overpayments, it beggars belief that we could keep using a system that saddled people with almost \$3.5 million in false debt.

"We must suspend this program immediately – and stop its scheduled expansion to Disability and Aged Pensioners," Ms Chambers said.

Ms Chambers said the robodebt fiasco was the latest in a series of moves aimed at targeting people in need of income support.

"The shift in the onus of proof onto recipients, the barriers to people trying to fix these problems through the Centrelink system, and the growing stigmatisation of welfare, is a step towards the criminalisation of poverty and disadvantage.

"Let's suspend this failing system and work together to design one that works for people – not just the Government."

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