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To: Joint Select Committee on National Anti-Corruption Commission Legislation

CLA welcomes National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) legislation...as soon as possible. It is a progressive move by a Government and Parliament starting to clearly put the Australian people first.

NACC is fundamental, national, community infrastructure law. It should be complemented in this term of Parliament by a federal Human Rights Act. The two laws comprise sides of the same coin.

The NAAC will ensure Integrity in society at the macro level. It will help to prevent corrupt behaviour by politicians and discourage morally inappropriate misuse and misallocation of public funds, as decided by an independent authority. NACC will foster higher standards of behaviour at the "big end of town", including among supplicant major corporates and government suppliers, as well as their lobbyists, spinners and soothsayers. It will restore confidence in the policy-making process, and boost the reputation of Parliament and its Members and Senators.

At the other end of the community spectrum, a federal Human Rights Act will empower the little people to hold departments, agencies, authorities, forces, and public servants to account for bad decisions, or non-decisions. It will ensure public authorities revise practices or procedures to curtail decision-making which infringes individual human rights and the civil liberties expected in a wealthy western nation like Australia (and the USA, Canada, NZ and the UK). A federal HRA law can be crafted in 2023 to deliver to the Australian people a quick, relatively cheap and universally available human rights complaints-handling process, using the existing Australian Human Rights Commission and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal at relatively very little extra cost to the nation. For major human rights cases, more expensive access to justice would be available through higher courts.

The personal access for the people of Australia when they need unjust public decisions corrected can be implemented through a 'No Rights Without Remedies' approach that would create greater equality for all Australians, as promised by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in his election night victory speech. The model for 'No Rights Without Remedies' has already been subject to extensive public and ACT Legislative Assembly consultation, with tri-party support now confirmed.

Australia has 36 years' experience of human rights Acts (18 years ACT, 16 years Victoria and 2 years Queensland). It is time a federal HRA provided Australia with a mechanism for early correction of incalculable harms like the Robodebt fiasco. It is time a NACC and a federal HRA operated jointly to give the nation protection from abuse at the political, bureaucratic and corporate level...and also to safeguard society at community level when people's individual rights are ignored, evaded or abused.

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