

All Staff 4 August 2023

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I want you to ask yourselves – if I see something that I really do not think is right, do I have the courage to pursue that within the organization, rather than notifying via an anonymous annual APS Census? If I don't feel I'm being heard at the local level or through the usual channels, will I raise directly with the Director-General, or with the Chair of Council or the Minister?

We all need to ask ourselves – could we have gone down that slippery slope that so many named in the Royal Commission report went down? How sure can we be that we wouldn't be the frog boiling in a pond, not realizing or realizing far too late that we have not spoken up against something that is illegal or corrupt or demonstrably unethical. We might feel this kind of risk is a long way from where we are here, at the National Library. And clearly we do not have power on whether people are paid benefits or not, or pursued for debts or not. But many of you will spend time in other parts of the APS where that is exactly the kind of power exerted over the lives of your fellow citizens.

For many senior public servants, the feeling around Robodebt is a combination of horror, and grief, a good bit of 'there but for the Grace of God go I', and plenty of determination to strengthen the APS so that the risk of something like this happening again is lessened. It's a very sombre time for the APS, and a time when we need to build up our strength to speak up, to say 'that's not right'.

I want to ask myself – can I set aside my own assumptions about how we conduct ourselves in our organization, recognize that I'm now a long way from the coalface, and truly listen if an allegation, or even a suggestion of something really disturbing happening comes my way. Can I create an atmosphere in our senior leadership cohort so that serious matters are taken seriously? What do we need to do to further help all colleagues to understand what constitutes corruption, what constitutes bullying or harassment, and what our channels are for reporting on this? With so many new faces in our organization, do you know what those channels are?

This is all especially important with the advent of the National Anti-Corruption Commission, which provides a really important avenue for reporting "serious or systemic" corrupt activity occurring in the Australian Government public sector. Like other review agencies – such as the Ombudsman – the NACC won't investigate all cases that are referred to them, because they will focus on 'serious



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