

Australian Capital Territory

Corrections Management (Official Visitor) Appointment 2013

Disallowable instrument DI2013– 199

made under the

Corrections Management Act 2007, section 57(1) (Official Visitors- Appointment)

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

This instrument appoints Mr Ivan Potas as an official visitor for a period commencing on 1 August 2013 and ending on 30 July 2014. The maximum permitted term of appointment is three years. An additional period of twelve months will mean Mr Potas will have been an Official Visitor for three years.

The appointment of an official visitor is provided for under section 57 of the *Corrections Management Act 2007*. Under that section, the Minister must appoint at least one person who possesses suitable qualifications or experience to exercise the functions of an official visitor. The Minister must not appoint a public employee as an official visitor. Mr Potas is not a public employee.

Mr Potas is a lawyer and research criminologist with a long career in the criminal justice system, particularly with the Australian Institute of Criminology between 1975 and 1991 and the Judicial Commission of NSW between 1991 and 2006 (where he was the Director of Research).

As part of his work with these organisations and additional consultancy work that he undertook independently, Mr Potas made studies of such matters as periodic detention, the sentencing of drug offenders and sentencing of juveniles. In the Corrections context, he has visited prison facilities (particularly in NSW) many times and has interviewed corrections staff and prisoners. As a consequence he is very familiar with the issues faced by both detainees and corrections officers and is comfortable in dealing with people in the prison environment.

Mr Potas demonstrates a sound understanding of the correctional environment. He also demonstrates a good understanding of the *Human Rights Act 2004* and of the processes for resolving grievances associated with human rights.