

Australian Capital Territory

Legal Aid (Commissioner – ACT Law Society Nominee) Appointment 2015

Disallowable Instrument DI2015–219

made under the

Legal Aid Act 1977, s 16(2) (Constitution of board)

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Section 6 of the *Legal Aid Act 1977* (the Act) establishes the Legal Aid Commission (A.C.T). The Commission’s functions include provision of legal assistance in ACT matters in accordance with the Act.

Section 16(1)(c)(iii) of the Act provides that the Commission’s Board must consist of “one member who is chosen from a panel of not less than three people nominated by the council of the law society”.

This instrument appoints Mr Walter Hawkins as a member of the Commission’s Board nominated by the ACT Law Society, pursuant to section 16(1)(c)(iii) of the Act for a period of three years.

Mr Hawkins has extensive experience as a solicitor in private practice and in the community legal sector. Mr Hawkins is currently the Practice Leader/Principal of Maurice Blackburn Lawyers since 2013. Prior to that, Mr Hawkins was General Counsel and a member of the Leadership Group at Maurice Blackburn Lawyers. He was previously a Partner at Pamela Coward Higgins Lawyers and Higgins Solicitors.

Mr Hawkins is not a public servant. Under section 228 of the *Legislation Act 2001*, this appointment required consultation with the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety. The Committee advised that it had no comments on the appointment.