

Australian Capital Territory

Official Visitor (Mental Health) Appointment 2016 (No 1)

Disallowable instrument DI2016-83

made under the

Official Visitor Act 2012, s 10 (1) (e) (Appointment)

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Section 10(1)(e) of the *Official Visitor Act 2012* authorises the Minister to appoint at least one official visitor for the purposes of the *Mental Health Act 2015*. The function of official visitors (OVs) is to work to protect human rights in different environments. OVs operate in the ‘closed’ environments of youth and adult corrections and mental health as well as in the ‘open’ environments including disability and homelessness services.

This instrument reappoints Sue Connor as an official visitor for the purposes of the *Official Visitor Act 2012*. Ms Connor has a strong understanding of the needs of persons in mental health institutions and extensive experience and skills in the care of people with mental illness.

Under section 10(2) of the Official Visitor Act, the appointing Minister must consult with the Operational Minister (Minister for Health) and be satisfied on reasonable grounds that Ms Connor has suitable qualifications or experience to exercise the functions of an Official Visitor for the Mental Health Act. The Attorney-General is also Minister for Health. The Director-General from ACT Health Directorate was consulted on the appointment and supported the reappointment of Ms Connor.

Ms Connor is not excluded from appointment by being a public employee or by being the holder of a relevant interest as defined under section 10(3) of the Official Visitor Act.

Ms Connor is not a public servant as defined under the *Legislation Act 2001*.

As required by the Legislation Act, the Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety has been consulted on the appointment. The Committee has advised that it has no comment on the appointment of Ms Connor as the Official Visitor.