



Dominic Perrottet
Premier of NSW

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, 22 June 2022

NEW CHIEF COMMISSIONER AND COMMISSIONERS RECOMMENDED FOR APPOINTMENT TO ICAC

Premier Dominic Perrottet has notified the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption of the proposed appointment of a new Chief Commissioner and Commissioners of the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

Former District Court Judge and NSW Attorney General the Honourable John Hatzistergos AM is proposed to be appointed as the new ICAC Chief Commissioner, subject to the concurrence of the Parliamentary Committee.

The Honourable Helen Murrell SC, recently retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the ACT, and the Honourable Paul Lakatos SC, District Court Judge and President of the Mental Health Review Tribunal, are proposed to be appointed as ICAC Commissioners.

Mr Perrottet said the appointments would bring experience and leadership to the integrity agency.

“ICAC plays a central role in ensuring good governance and ensuring public faith in government, and these appointments will bring a huge depth of experience, perspective and awareness to these positions,” Mr Perrottet said.

“Judge Hatzistergos has experience as a barrister, a judge and in government as Attorney General, and will come into the role as Chief Commissioner at a time when our government has boosted integrity agency funding and independence.

“The Honourable Helen Murrell and the Honourable Paul Lakatos also have incredible expertise in a range of roles and responsibilities, and I am confident they will bring great understanding, foresight and integrity to their new positions.”

The appointments are proposed following a merit-based selection process. In May 2022, a nominations panel was convened to identify a shortlist of candidates suitable for the three appointments.

The Nominations Panel members were the Hon Thomas Bathurst AC QC (former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of NSW) as chairperson, the Hon Dr Annabelle

Bennett AC SC (former Judge of the Federal Court of Australia), Ms Juliana Warner (Partner at Herbert Smith Freehills), Mr Michael Coutts-Trotter (Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet), Mr Michael Tidball (Secretary of the Department of Communities and Justice).

The proposed appointments fill the roles to be vacated by current Chief Commissioner Honourable Peter Hall QC, and Commissioners Patricia McDonald SC and Stephen Rushton SC who are nearing the end of their terms.

The Joint Committee has 14 days after the proposed appointment is referred to it to veto the proposal, and has a further 30 days (after the initial 14 days) to veto the proposal if it notifies the Minister within those 14 days that it requires more time to consider the matter.

The ICAC is an independent body established to expose corruption and enhance public confidence in the integrity of the NSW public sector. The ICAC's principal objectives are to investigate, expose and seek to prevent corrupt conduct in the NSW public sector, and to educate public authorities, public officials, and members of the public about corruption and its detrimental effects.

The Hon John Hatzistergos AM

Mr Hatzistergos was appointed as a Judge of the District Court of NSW in 2014. He was called to the NSW Bar in 1989 and practised as a barrister from 1989 to 2003 and 2012 to 2014. During 2014 to 2015, Mr Hatzistergos was commissioned by the Government to conduct a 12-month review of the *Bail Act 2013*. In 2012 to 2014, Mr Hatzistergos was an Examiner at the Australian Crime Commission. Between 2005 and 2011, Mr Hatzistergos was a Minister in the NSW Government, holding portfolios including Attorney General (2007 to 2011), Minister for Justice, Minister for Regulatory Reform, Minister for Health and Minister for Industrial Relations. He was Chair of the Joint Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption from 1999 to 2003.

The Hon Helen Murrell SC

Ms Murrell recently retired as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the ACT, a position she held since 2013. She was called to the NSW Bar in 1981 and appointed Senior Counsel in 1995. Prior to her role as Chief Justice, Ms Murrell was a Judge of the District Court of NSW from 1996 to 2013. Her prior appointments include Deputy Chairperson of the NSW Medical Tribunal, Senior Judge of the Drug Court of NSW, President of the Equal Opportunity Tribunal of NSW and Deputy President of the Administrative Decisions Tribunal of NSW (Equal Opportunity Division), and Acting Judge of the Land and Environment Court of NSW in 1996.

His Hon Paul Lakatos SC

Mr Lakatos was appointed Judge of the District Court of NSW in 2008 and as President of the Mental Health Review Tribunal in 2019, where he leads approximately 30 permanent staff and 140 part-time members. He has extensive legal experience and relevant legal qualifications, having been appointed to the NSW Bar in 1984 and appointed Senior Counsel in 2005. His work as a Barrister included criminal law, administrative law, and the conduct of, and Counsel Assisting for, various coronial and other inquiries including ICAC hearings.
