



15 August 2023

Committee Secretary
Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary

I write to clarify evidence provided at the Budget Estimates 2023-24 hearing of the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee on 4 August 2023.

On page 43 of the Hansard proof, in response to a question from Senator O'Neill relating to an increase in the number of protection applications on hand between 2012-13 and 2021-22, I said:

Mr Hawkins: It would have to relate directly to the inputs that we received—the number of applications that we received in that period of time—and our capacity to make decisions in relation to them. I can give you, if you wish, a breakdown of the number of applications we have received on an annual basis since then, but I do know that in one year there were 46,000 applications and in the following year there were more than 20,000 applications.

I wish to clarify my evidence to confirm that, after the amalgamation of certain merits review tribunals in 2015, applications to the Migration and Refugee Division of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal peaked in 2017-18, at almost 38,000 applications.

On page 45 of the Hansard proof, Senator O'Neill asked me what the Tribunal's current member base is and I said:

Mr Hawkins: Total members in the tribunal today is 276.

Later in the hearing, on page 56 of the Hansard proof, Senator Shoebridge asked me what the membership headcount and FTE were for the Tribunal, and I said:

Mr Hawkins: I'm just being advised that our headcount is 274 members, with a 200 FTE.

I wish to clarify my evidence to confirm that, as at 4 August 2023, the Tribunal had 274 members.

On page 49 the Hansard proof, Senator Shoebridge asked me whether I had seen former President Meagher in the office on 28, 29 or 30 November 2022, and I said:

Mr Hawkins: No, she was not.

I wish to clarify my evidence to confirm that, consistent with my earlier evidence to the Committee on 24 May 2023, the former President was in the office on 30 November 2022, which was when she first told me about her resignation.

Also on page 49 of the Hansard proof, Senator Shoebridge asked me whether I had spoken to the former President at all on 28, 29 or 30 November 2022, and I said:

Mr Hawkins: No.

I wish to clarify my evidence to confirm that, consistent with my earlier evidence to the Committee on 24 May 2023, I spoke to the former President on 30 November 2022.

Your sincerely

Michael Hawkins AM
Registrar