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MEDIA RELEASE

ACICA FORUM EXAMINES GREATER EFFICIENCIES AND COOPERATION IN DISPUTE RESOLUTION PRACTICE IN AUSTRALIA

The Australian Centre for International Commercial Arbitration (ACICA) Judicial Liaison Committee convened a forum on 20 November 2020 to explore *Taking Advantage of Technology – Dispute Resolution Best Practice*.

This initiative, the first of its kind, brought together 150 members of the judiciary, government and dispute resolution practitioners from across Australia in a virtual forum to consider best practice, the creation of efficiencies in all aspects of dispute resolution and learnings from collective experiences over the course of 2020, particularly in light of COVID-19 enforced operations.

Chief Justice Allsop AO, Chief Justice of the Federal Court of Australia and Chair of the ACICA Judicial Liaison Committee, commented: *It is timely for us in Australia to consider the opportunity that our experience this last year and the related technological developments provide to settle Australia's place as an arbitral venue and Centre of excellence in all forms of dispute resolution. The tyranny of distance has evaporated in this time.*

Brenda Horrigan, President of ACICA, agreed, adding: *The forum presented an excellent opportunity to collaborate and learn from each other – which can only enhance the quality and positive opportunities and experiences for all participants in the dispute resolution process.*

The forum program commenced with *Chief Justice Allsop AO in conversation with Doug Jones AO* in a session that explored methods for the creation of efficiencies in dispute resolution practice. Panel sessions followed on topics covering the whole spectrum of dispute resolution - document management and cyber security, procedural fairness, advocacy, alternative dispute resolution and cooperation between the courts and arbitration.

The forum featured expert speakers from around Australia and the region including judicial officers from various Australian courts and leading international and domestic dispute resolution practitioners. Doug Jones AO, Independent Arbitrator and Judge of the Singapore International Commercial Court remarked: *This event constituted in my view an exemplar par excellence of Australia's worldwide leadership in dispute resolution.*

The half day forum was moderated by Judith Levine, independent arbitrator and Vice President of ACICA, who observed: *The quality of contributions from our judiciary and practitioners reinforced Chief Justice Allsop's remark that this year may prove a fertile opportunity to establish Australia both as an arbitral centre and as a centre for arbitral talent.*

Doug Jones said that this event built on the excellent work done over the years by the ACICA Judicial Liaison Committee in providing a forum between practitioners and the Australian judiciary in furthering the development and understanding of international commercial dispute resolution in Australia. *International Arbitration practice, and that of*

Australia's courts, have much to learn from one other and this forum represented a world first in sharing learnings from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, he commented.

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ABOUT ACICA AND THE ACICA JUDICIAL LIAISON COMMITTEE

Established in 1985, ACICA's objective is to facilitate the efficient resolution of commercial disputes in Australia and internationally by arbitration, with the aim of delivering expediency and neutrality of process, enforceability of outcome and commercial privacy to parties in dispute. ACICA maintains sets of arbitration and mediation rules under which administers these processes. ACICA can also acts as an appointing authority. In 2011, ACICA was designated by the Australian government as the sole default appointing authority competent to perform the arbitrator appointment functions under the amended *International Arbitration Act 1974* (Cth).

ACICA works closely with the Australian judiciary to promote harmonisation of approach to arbitration-related court proceedings. The ACICA Judicial Liaison Committee, with its expertise in judicial and arbitral experience, is an integral part of the Australian arbitration infrastructure. The Committee undertakes valuable liaison work between the Courts and ACICA and is a vehicle for the exchange of information on the conduct of arbitration in Australia.

The Committee, Chaired by Chief Justice Allsop AO, consists of judicial officers from all Superior Courts across Australia, along with ACICA President Brenda Horrigan, ACICA Vice President Jonathon Redwood SC, ACICA Secretary General Deborah Tomkinson and Mr Allan Myers AC QC.

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