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MDAS Appoints Chief Executive

The Chair of Mallee District Aboriginal Services, Ms. Vicki Clark OAM, has announced the appointment of Ms. Darlene Thomas as the Organisation's new Chief Executive.

In making the announcement, Ms. Clark said that MDAS had undertaken a rigorous recruitment process, led by an independent Indigenous recruitment agency – Pipeline Talent – and that the level of interest the position attracted was a testament to the progress the Organisation was making.

“MDAS has been working hard to regain its reputation as an employer of choice and a place of impact and opportunity. We had 17 high calibre applications from around the country for this position and we believe it's a reflection of that work.”

Ms. Clark said the Interview Panel included highly regarded external professionals who offered great insight and experience and as a collective, they focused on identifying the candidate who would be best placed to continue to guide MDAS on its journey.

“We were seeking someone who is values-driven, and who will conduct themselves with, and demand of others, a high degree of transparency, accountability, integrity and innovation.

“The panellists provided us with detailed advice and after consideration, the Board unanimously voted to accept their final recommendation to offer the position to Ms. Thomas.”

Ms. Thomas had been performing in the role of Acting Chief Executive since the departure of Mr. Dallas Widdicome in September. Prior to that, she had fulfilled a range of roles across the Organisation and Ms. Clark said Ms. Thomas has a deep understanding of MDAS's opportunities and challenges.

“Darlene has consistently demonstrated compassion, resilience and commitment to community, and this has never been more obvious than over the last two years. She was on-the-ground supporting our COVID-19 response during 2020 and 2021, ensuring our community had access to the services they required and motivating her teams. In this year's flood crisis, Darlene again showed her leadership skills, implementing a response that included care packages and outreach support for members of our community who were impacted by the flooding.”

Ms. Clark said the Board is excited that Ms. Thomas has accepted the role, and they're confident she will deliver great things for MDAS and the people the Organisation serves.

“Darlene has established strong relationships with our key partners and stakeholders, and she has embedded community engagement and respect in all her work.

“We have no doubt that she will continue to drive positive change for our Organisation whilst providing the stability it needs. We also know that she's supported by her strong Executive team, senior leadership and staff, and that together, they will fulfil our shared vision for the future.”

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