

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 26th February 2024

MDAS CHIEF EXECUTIVE STEPS DOWN

The Chair of Mallee District Aboriginal Services (MDAS), Ms. Jenene Murray, has today announced the resignation of Ms. Darlene Thomas as the Organisation's Chief Executive.

In making the announcement, Ms. Murray said that the MDAS Board was sad to see Ms. Thomas leave but supported her decision to pursue new opportunities and to spend more time with her family.

"Darlene has been with MDAS for over nine years and over the last eighteen months, in her capacity as chief executive, she has led the Organisation with dignity, passion and determination. Her commitment to achieving better outcomes for our community has seen MDAS become a force for advocacy and the board is proud of the progress we have made under Darlene's leadership.

"We have seen an expansion of service delivery and a renewed focus on collaboration.

"As CEO, Darlene has been re-establishing MDAS's reputation as an employer of choice and a place of impact and opportunity. She has worked tirelessly for her community and the board is committed to ensuring her achievements are both recognised and built upon, going forward."

During her time at MDAS, Ms. Thomas has had several roles, and she said that although it is now time for her to move on, she will carry MDAS with her.

"I have always referred to MDAS as my family. We have worked collectively, to support our community, to ensure the services our people need, are available to them, when, where, and how, they need them. The recent growth of our Organisation is not the culmination of one person's work, it has, and will continue to be, a combined effort.

"I applaud all those who have shared a part of the MDAS journey with me and wish the Organisation every success as it moves into the future.

"MDAS now has a seat at the table when discussions on policy reform are had. Long may that continue.

"The Organisation has navigated the challenges of COVID-19, of the Referendum and is now addressing the ongoing impact of the cost-of-living crisis, advocating for those it supports, clear in the knowledge that strong communities are those which find things to unite, rather than divide them.

"Finding ways to work together, will be key to closing the gap and to ensuring our young people have a future worth chasing," Ms. Thomas said.

Ms. Murray said that while MDAS undertakes the recruitment process for a new chief executive, Ms. Thomas has agreed to continue in her position and to support the transition when her replacement is found.

"We will commence recruitment immediately and acknowledge Darlene's professionalism in agreeing to provide support during this period."

For Ms. Thomas, there are no immediate plans, but she said that whatever comes next, it will see her using her voice to champion for those who have long felt unheard.

"On behalf of the staff, clients, members and Board of Mallee District Aboriginal Services, I thank Darlene for her contribution, and there is no question that when she is ready, she will continue to drive positive change," Ms. Murray said.

ENDS

*Self-determined, healthy, robust & culturally strong
Aboriginal communities, throughout the Mallee Region.*