

*1 September 2022*

## **New appointment to provide strategic leadership at National Legal Aid**

Louise Glanville, Chair of National Legal Aid (NLA) is pleased to announce the appointment of Katherine McKernan to the newly created position of Executive Director, NLA.

Ms McKernan will be responsible for implementing NLA's Strategic Plan and influencing and engaging at a national level with government, senior stakeholders, community, and legal assistance providers.

The role will strengthen NLA's ability to develop best practice legal assistance, and where possible national legal services, as well as our strategic advocacy, influential and meaningful data sources and effective engagement.

"It is a critical time for NLA in terms of raising the profile of Legal Aid work nationally and in advocating for key law reform that will increase access to justice and support people experiencing disadvantage," Ms Glanville said.

"Ms McKernan has the experience, energy and enthusiasm to support NLA on this journey and we look forward to this new phase."

Ms McKernan began her career at Legal Aid NSW as a communities program manager and has extensive experience in social justice and working to end disadvantage across government and the community sector. For the past 7 years she has been the CEO of Homelessness NSW and Deputy Chair of Homelessness Australia and has led policy and advocacy work in many areas including housing, domestic and family violence, support for ex-prisoners, supporting young people at risk and the NDIS.

She was integral in successfully advocating to maintain National Housing and Homelessness Agreement funding in 2016–17 and again in 2020–21 and most recently in helping ensure that New South Wales' response to the COVID-19 pandemic prioritised support for people experiencing homelessness.

Ms McKernan said she is very pleased to be given the opportunity to support NLA in raising awareness of the critical role Legal Aid, as part of the legal assistance sector plays in Australia and to help ensure that all legal services providing access to justice are able to support the communities they are funded to serve.

"It is a great privilege to support NLA in the national conversation about access to justice for disadvantaged communities and to assist in positive service system changes and law reform to facilitate this." Ms McKernan said.

Ms McKernan will commence in the role on 4 October 2022.

**Ends**