

YAC CEO APPOINTMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

26 July 2021

This year YAC is celebrating 40 years of supporting, advising and representing at-risk young people through its wraparound model of providing legal and social welfare services. Our staff's focus on young people has been unwavering, and the reach and breadth of the services that the organisation delivers has continued to grow. YAC now provides online educational services and strategic policy advocacy work throughout Queensland and provides on-ground legal, court support, bail support, homelessness and youth support and family support services to young people across South East Queensland and Cairns.

Janet Wight has been central to this evolution, first as a caseworker, then as a Community Legal Education lawyer; and, over the last 10 years, as Chief Executive Officer. Her vision and leadership, particularly as CEO, have been instrumental in guiding YAC to where we are today, in maintaining a culture of deeply-committed workers, and in seeing that we have a clearly articulated policy position, closely informed by our experience as service-providers. After over 20 years with YAC, Janet has recently indicated she will be stepping down as CEO and the Management Committee has taken on the daunting task of finding a replacement.

YAC is excited to announce the appointment of Katie Acheson as CEO.

Katie has a distinguished career in the youth development sector, having spent the past 20 years working in a variety of community sector and government roles in both Australia and internationally. This has included roles as CEO for the peak body for young people in NSW from 2014 – 2020 and chairing the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition for four years. Katie is a fierce advocate for young people and provides regular media commentary on youth issues.

Most recently Katie co-founded an international consultancy that connects data with lived experiences to empower decision makers to deliver solutions to real-world problems. Recent projects include the 2020 Australian Youth Development Index; and a global consultation with young people for the 2021 United Nations World Youth Report on mental health.

Katie is passionate about working with and for young people, especially through cross-sectoral collaboration and justice and social welfare reform. She will take up the new role on 2 August 2021, which will be a significant transition for YAC, and we are excited for the next phase. It will also see the appointment of Janet to focus on YAC's policy and advocacy work, which is so critical to the young people of Queensland.

We thank you for your support in the past, and we look forward to working with you in the future.

Damien Atkinson
YAC Chair