

Media Release**MARCH 8, 2024****ASTRA Celebrates International Women's Day****The Australian & New Zealand Short Term Rental Association (ASTRA) welcomes the 2024 International Women's Day (IWD) theme of tackling economic disempowerment.**

ASTRA represents Mum and Dad owner/investors in the short-term rental accommodation market across Australia and New Zealand. For the vast majority of ASTRA's members their properties are their sole livelihood, they employ their family members, the properties are often mortgaged and in time their properties will fund their retirement in lieu of superannuation.

"A large part of our industry is led by women and a significant portion of the full and part time employees keeping thousands of our properties running are leading, entrepreneur women who have returned to the workforce or who invested in properties in their own right," said ASTRA Board Chairman, Yoav Tourel.

"We have found that for women who want flexibility – perhaps because they are studying or running a household – working in the short-term rental accommodation market offers them a range of options from front-of-house, to property styling and a wide range of trades roles."

"IWD offers me an opportunity to recognise the many remarkable women who enrich our industry. Their efforts not only shape the Short-Term Rental sector but also have a profound impact on our local communities, inspiring and empowering those around them.

"I would also like to acknowledge the leadership and expertise our Board of Directors bring to ASTRA and more broadly to the industry. I am delighted to announce the appointment of Catherine Shields, Karen Howard and Tegan Wilde as Directors of the ASTRA Board," Yoav said.

Catherine Shields has built decades of experience in media, advertising and property, along with deep expertise in tourism strategy and the visitor economy given her service on local and state tourism boards. As Chair and Director of Destination Sydney Surrounds South, a Destination Network for Destination NSW, Catherine led planning reforms in NSW agritourism, opening up new visitor markets and transforming the sector. As Chair of South Coast Tourism, she played a leading role in establishing award-winning co-operative marketing initiatives between local governments. Her passion for regional tourism and industry collaboration saw her establish Host Nation, an industry movement that connects short stay hosts, experts, and businesses across Australia. Following a senior career in creative roles for Vogue Australia and other lifestyle publications, Catherine is now a full-time owner and operator, using her creative expertise to transform properties into unique destination accommodation experiences.

Karen Howard has developed a distinguished 23-year career to date as both an entrepreneur and an Independent Non-Executive Director and Board Chair. With a track record spanning 14 board memberships, her extensive expertise traverses multiple sectors including tourism, health, education, fintech, and property development. For over 17 collective years, Karen has held pivotal positions as Director and/or Board Chair within member-based advocacy organizations and brings a strong passion for championing small business.

Currently, Karen holds the position of Non-Executive Director at Alloggio Group Limited and serves as the Independent Board Chair at Nuvola Group, an Australian-owned fintech company.

Additionally, she assumes the role of President of the Hunter TAFE Foundation and is a Trustee of the Walter and Eliza Hall Trust. She is recognized as a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, further attesting to her professional stature and commitment to corporate governance excellence.

Tegan Wilde, owner of Geographe Holiday Homes, boasts a science degree and a master's in medical imaging. With 14 years' experience as a Medical Imaging Technologist, she honed skills in technology, management, and training. She's now pursuing a real estate diploma alongside 11 years in property management. Founding Geographe Holiday Homes in 2016, it's grown under her guidance, earning trust from 100+ property owners. Tegan's accolades include 2023 BCCI Regional Women in Business as well as Tourism & Hospitality winner at the 2023 South West Business Awards. She's an active Chamber of Commerce member and serves on ASTRA's board, advocating for the WA short-term rental industry

Please Note that head shots are available.

Ends

Media Inquiries to:
Simone Gandur 0404813771

ABOUT ASTRA

[The Australian & New Zealand Short Term Rental Association \(ASTRA\)](#) is the peak body representing the short-term residential rental industry in Australia and New Zealand. With industry comprising over 200,000 properties across Australia and 45,000 properties across New Zealand, ASTRA's members represent the interests of hosted and non-hosted residential property owners, operators, managers, agents, and property management and software businesses.

ASTRA's mission is to promote and standardise the residential short-term rental industry through advocacy, education, and research.