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INVESTMENT BANKING FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Some of the most senior leaders in the Australian financial services industry, acting as Panel Members, will offer their services pro-bono as part of an innovative financial services vehicle launched today by the Adara Group. The skills of investment bankers and senior corporate advisors will be harnessed to generate revenue for the Adara Group, which focuses on improving the lives of women and children in poverty in the developing world.

Adara Partners (Australia) Pty. Limited ([Adara Partners](#)) is a company through which prominent members of the Australian financial services community, acting as Panel Members on the Adara Panel, will advise and work on a select number of transactions and mediations, to generate fees for the benefit of marginalised people through the work of the Adara Group.

Founding Panel Members include some of the biggest names in the industry working together on this initiative, many of whom traditionally compete rather than collaborate with each other. The Founding Panel Members on the Adara Panel are:

- Ilana Atlas
- Catherine Brenner
- Guy Fowler
- David Gonski AC
- Matthew Grounds
- Peter Hunt AM
- Diccon Loxton
- Peter Mason AM
- Steven Skala AO

Panel Members will offer their services as Panel Members to clients of Adara Partners as “wise counsel” with an emphasis on general strategic advice, second opinion and independent advice and mediation services. They will work on the Adara Panel pro-bono for Adara Partners and 100% of the Company’s profits will be donated to Adara Development, directly benefitting women and children in need. Panel Members’ involvement on the Adara Panel is in addition to their other professional commitments. It is intended that the Adara Panel will grow over time to include additional leading members of the financial services community.

[The Adara Group](#) consists of a globally-recognised business for purpose, Adara Advisors, and an international development organisation, Adara Development. The Adara Group (formerly the ISIS Group) was founded by Audette Exel, AO in 1998. Ms Exel is well-known in Australian corporate life for her work with Adara and as a non-executive director of Suncorp.

Since inception, the Adara Group has touched the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in poverty. Adara Development is known for its expertise in improving health and education for women, children and communities living in poverty, particularly in Uganda and Nepal. They are specialists in three areas: maternal, infant and child health; remote and rural community development; and care, support and reintegration of children at risk. Additionally, they are currently managing a significant relief effort in Nepal where they have been active since 1998.

The Adara Panel structure follows the model of the Australian Takeovers Panel, which is a validated and industry-supported peer review structure that allows senior members of the industry to work together to regulate corporate control transactions in widely-held Australian entities.

Ms Exel said “Adara Partners and the Adara Panel represent a major new initiative for the financial services and non-profit sectors. I am absolutely delighted to be working with such an incredible group of leaders from across the financial services sector to showcase how investment banking skills can change the lives of people in need. Many people from across the industry have worked incredibly hard to get this concept off the ground. I want to particularly mention the substantive engagement of the regulator ASIC and the hugely constructive way that they have worked with Adara on this innovative new structure.”

David Gonski said: “The concept of Adara Partners and the Adara Panel represents real leadership in the financial services sector with experienced corporate advisors using their skills to directly benefit the less fortunate.”

Matthew Grounds sees the concept as a complement to, not competition with, existing financial services offerings. “From the moment Audette raised the idea with me at the beginning of the year, I saw the potential for this great initiative to generate revenue for social good. I am very much looking forward to getting involved and applying our skills with powerful effect for those in need.”

The inaugural Adara Panel Chair, Peter Hunt, also chairs two overseas development not for profit organisations, Grameen Australia and SoTheyCan, which focus on poverty alleviation in Asia and East Africa respectively. “This is a chance to bridge the enormous gap between people who work in the financial services sector in Australia and poverty in the developing world. My hope is that corporate Australia will embrace this initiative and that it will become an integral part of the Australian investment banking sector in the future.”

The creation of Adara Partners and the Adara Panel is being supported through social capital investment by some of Australia’s leading families, namely Paul Bassat, Suzi and Barry Carp, Peter Cooper, the Liberman family, Tracey Ryan, and the Werdiger family.

In addition to the creation of the Adara Panel structure, Adara Partners has partnered with a number of top-tier firms in the Australian financial services industry to support pro-bono Adara’s day to day operations, including, [ansarada](#), [Deloitte](#), [Minter Ellison](#) and [Thoughtworks](#).

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