

## Media Release

### **Shining stars in employment services celebrated at national awards**

Two employment services Consultants have taken out national awards at this year's National Employment Services Associations' Awards of Excellence for their dedication to helping disadvantaged job seekers into meaningful employment.

Jobfind's Danielle LeCouteur has been awarded Employment Consultant of Year, while Workways Australia's Mikayla Birnie has taken out the perpetual Bright Star Award. Both Awards are sponsored by Aware Super.

Danielle LeCouteur is Jobfind's Recruitment Consultant in its Workforce Australia program in Inner Metropolitan Melbourne and Gippsland regions.

Beyond her job title, she is a single mother who has raised two children by working three jobs a day. She knows work. She knows setbacks. And she deeply understands how a job can transform lives.

That's what makes Dani the perfect ally for disadvantaged Australians seeking work. As a Recruitment Consultant at Jobfind, Dani secured 470 job placements in the qualifying period, with her participants achieving 540 employment outcomes: 4, 12 or 26-weeks in employment.

Dani sees firsthand how supporting job seekers to construct their self-agency is an important building block to them finding meaningful work that lasts.

"When people understand they have control, they can be accountable, and they can also be proud of themselves. That is a necessary part of a relationship where we have mutual obligations. It sets the scene for a good partnership."

She is a fierce advocate for job seekers and their successful long-term relationship with their employers. She believes obstacles often represent a lack of opportunities.

She has worked with a range of people who have faced severe challenges in finding a job including those suffering from mental health or substance abuse or those being ignored in the job market for their criminal history or limited English.

Dani is highly valued by her team and is a trusted and reliable recruitment source.

Mikayla Birnie is a Recruitment Partner for Workways Australia based in Brisbane South, working in the Disability Employment Services contract across both Employment Support Services and Disability Management Services.

She works with a caseload of 50 to 60 participants and is a passionate force to be reckoned with who believes that “everybody can get a job”.

The area she works in is in ‘dire need of some TLC’ with a significantly higher rate of mental illness at 12.2% compared with national average of 8.8%.

Mikayla’s ‘get in there and get the job done’ attitude has seen her smash targets from the moment she started - even as a young person grappling with a global pandemic.

Her ‘get up and go’ attitude means she just keeps going.

In recognition of her potential as an emerging star of the employment services sector the judges awarded Mikayla the Bright Star Award. This Award is only presented when NESAs Awards Judges identify a stand out recipient and is awarded in honour of Maily Duong, the inaugural winner of the Bright Star award who sadly passed away at a young age.

CEO of National Employment Services Association Sally Sinclair says stories like Danielle and Mikaylas’ are true testament to the care that employment service consultants have in what they do for individuals and achieve for their communities.

She says the pair, along with hundreds of others, deserve to be acknowledged every single day for the life-changing work they do for disadvantaged Australians.

**ENDS**

### **About NESAs Awards for Excellence:**

Presented by NESAs and Minister for Social Services Hon Amanda Rishworth - The award ceremony took place at Sydney’s Sofitel Wentworth on Wednesday October 5th to highlight the shining stars in the country’s employment services. The occasion also celebrates NESAs 25th year in leading the sector.

From individuals that have overcome adversity to thrive in employment, employers that have put inclusion at the forefront of their business models and employment services consultants going above and beyond - - the awards aim to highlight the commitment the employment services

sector has made to improve individuals', families' and communities' economic and social well-being through employment inclusion.

The awards are split into three categories – Achiever of the Year, Employment Consultant of the Year and Champion Employer of the Year.

CEO of NESAs Sally Sinclair says the awards are an opportunity for employment service providers' to be acknowledged for their innovation and support in creating pathways between disadvantaged individuals' and employers' across the country.

Following the Government's recent Jobs and Skills Summit, the focus on getting more disadvantaged Australians into the workforce and creating more accessible and inclusive workplaces has never been more in the spotlight.