

- **Street Talk**

Adara Partners hires new directors

Sarah Thompson, Kanika Sood and Emma Repaport

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Charity-minded boutique corporate adviser Adara Partners has added two new names to its 16-strong advisory panel.

Adara's latest picks include veteran ASX 200 board director [Nora Scheinkestel](#) and [Houlihan Lokey's Jim McKnight](#), a managing director in the financial restructuring group.

Scheinkestel has been a board director at Westpac since March 2021, at Brambles since mid-2020 and at Origin Energy since March 2022. Her past directorships include Telstra, AusNet Services and Atlas Arteria. It's her second stint on the Adara panel, and she was a founding panel member in 2015.



*Audette Exel is the chief executive of independent investment advisory firm Adara Partners. **Chris Pearce***

McKnight is a seasoned dealmaker in debt restructuring circles and has worked at UBS, Fort Street and Houlihan Lokey, which he joined in 2017. He was a key player in Virgin Australia's administration two years ago, and has worked on Basslink, Wiggins Island coal export terminal, Centro Retail Trust, Pacific Brands and Network 10.

Adara's "panel" is a bench of advisory talent, who are willing to lend their expertise for deals – often as a second opinion – while forgoing their fees, which Adara donates to communities in poverty.

Panel members are appointed for an initial term of two years and commit to working on at least one deal a year. Adara staffs two members on a transaction.

The model has meant Goldman Sachs' former investment banking chair (and Adara panel member) Tim Burroughs and former JPMorgan managing director Andrew Best tag-teamed to advise Pental's board on the fund manager's sale to rival Perpetual. The duo also worked together, on Adara's behalf, in AusNet Services' defence lineup for its eventual \$18.2 billion sale to Brookfield.

More recently, the firm's boss Audette Exel was in the vitamins business Blackmores' tent, when it fielded a \$1.8 billion bid from Japanese drinks giant Kirin Holdings in April.