

Commission statement on appointment of Chief Executive

The Australian Human Rights Commission has announced the appointment of Leanne Smith as the Commission's new Chief Executive.

Ms Smith was appointed on 22 September 2021, following a publicly advertised and open recruitment process. She will begin in the position on 22 November 2021.

"My Commissioner colleagues and Commission staff join me in congratulating Ms Smith on her appointment," said Commission President Emeritus Professor Rosalind Croucher AM.

"Ms Smith brings to this role extensive experience in human rights and public policy. She first worked for the Commission as a project policy officer in 1998-1999, and then pursued a career first as an Australian diplomat and subsequently with the UN, honing her leadership skills in some very challenging situations. We are delighted she has now returned to the Commission."

Ms Smith said: "It is a real honour to come back to the Commission after more than 20 years. The AHRC plays a crucial role in promoting and protecting the rights of every Australian. The incredible work it does across its mandates, every day, is a tribute to the passion and the commitment of the people who work there. I will be very proud to count myself as one of them."

Ms Smith's previous experience includes the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the United Nations' Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN Development Programme, and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

Since 2017, Ms Smith has held the position of Executive Director of the Whitlam Institute within Western Sydney University.