



RUAH

Centre for Women & Children

A place to rewrite the future.



A new approach for long term safety, support and recovery of women and children experiencing family & domestic violence.

ruah.org.au

Family and domestic violence is the most significant health issue facing our country.

One in three women has experienced physical violence since the age of 15, and one in five has experienced sexual violence¹. On average, a woman is killed by an intimate partner every 10 days. Rates are even higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

This year, 1 million women have or will experience violence, emotional abuse and stalking.

For children, data shows that any exposure to domestic and family violence from infancy to 10 years was associated with poorer health outcomes², and we know that recognising children 'in their own right' is an overlooked gap in our current service system.

Our Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments have made a commitment by way of the 2022-2032 National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children in this generation, to end violence and its associated costs.

This is a bold plan in need of a bold solution.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), 2016 Personal Safety Survey (PSS), ABS, Australian Government, 2017

² Conway et al., 'Children's language abilities at age 10' as cited in the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032

The existing system is failing our most vulnerable women and children.

Our existing system is focused on crises responses, and as a result it is failing our most vulnerable women and children.

The 3.5% increase³ in family domestic violence recorded assaults 2020 to 2021 tell us this is true.

Women who have experienced family and domestic violence have consistently said they need an integrated response providing exactly what they need, when they need it, for as long as they need it, however this remains a clear gap in the service system.

³ Excluding Qld and Victoria, ABS (2022)

The truth behind the statistics.



1 in 4

have experienced **emotional abuse** by a current or previous partner



25 - 44

the greatest health risk factor for **women** aged 25 to 44 is **intimate partner violence**



32 x

Indigenous adults are 32 times as likely to be **hospitalised for family violence**



43%

of all **homicide and violence** is due to **family domestic violence**

The complexity of our current system.

A women's journey through our current system is disconnected, complex and retraumatising.

With perpetrators often distancing their victims from family, friends and finances, many women return to their perpetrator.



Extract from Sunshine Project Insights, a partnership between Ruah, 100 Families WA and AngicareWA, October 2022

What women and children need.

Existing services do the best they can within constraints of funding contracts and models of care. Rigid programs lock activities against a predetermined set of outcomes for the duration of the contract⁴.

There is little room to adapt or change an approach if something is not working as well as it could.

Families with complexity can be overlooked as they are resource intensive. They can become stuck in an endless cycle of disparate supports - devoid of the flexible and focused approach they need.

⁴ Extract from Sunshine Project Insights, a partnership between Ruah, 100 Families WA and AngicareWA, October 2022



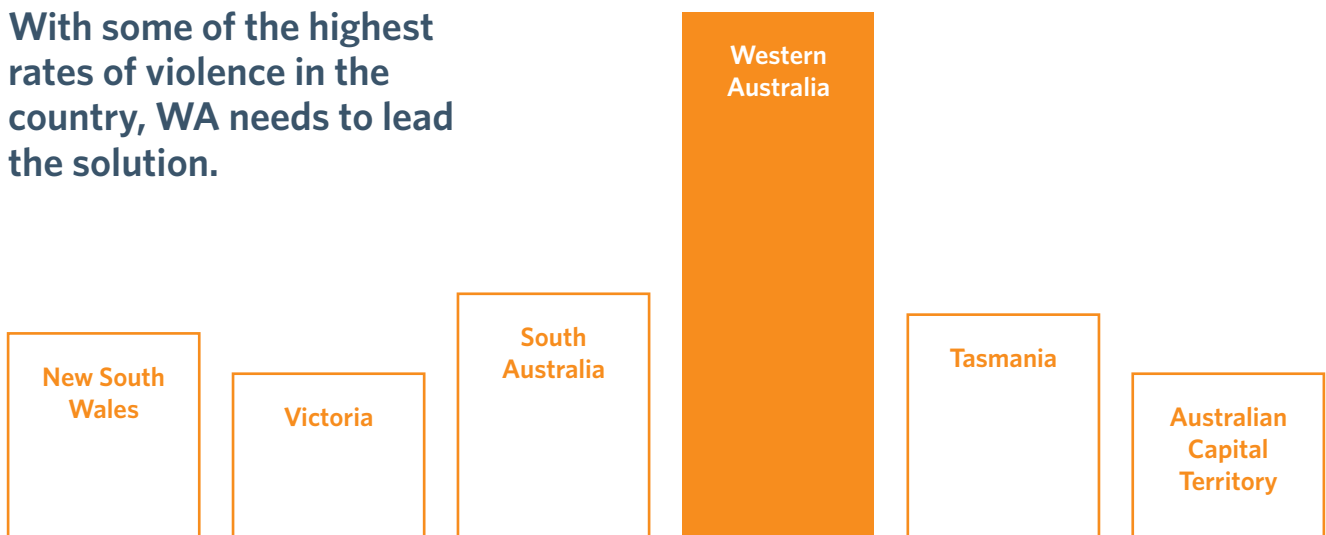
“I felt alone. I needed somebody to listen & understand what was happening to offer advice on what to do. We had nowhere to go and no family to turn to”.

SARAH*

Lived Experience Advocate

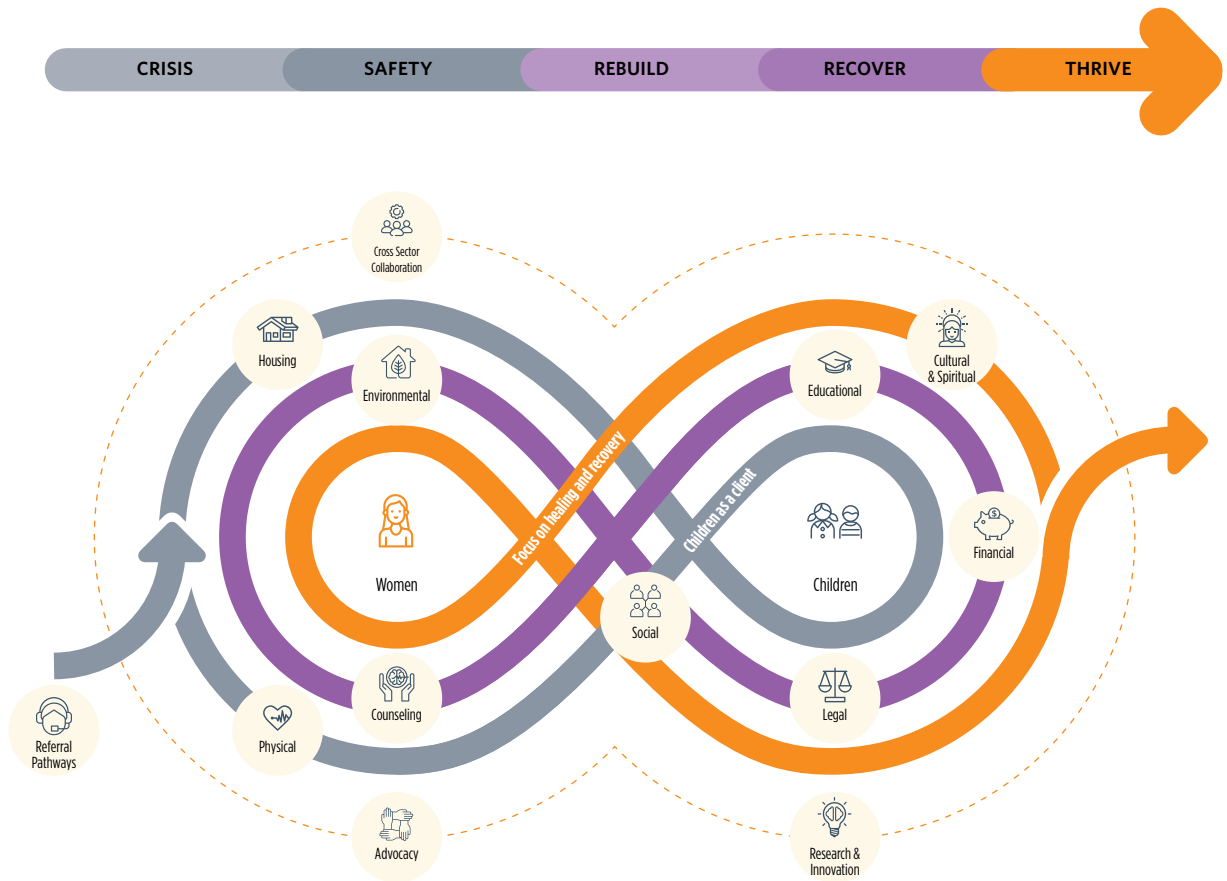
*Not her real name

With some of the highest rates of violence in the country, WA needs to lead the solution.



Rate of family and domestic violence-related assaults, selected states: 2016 to 2020 (ABS). Queensland not represented as they do not report family domestic violence statistics to the ABS.

Australia needs to invest in a system that works.



One service, in one place, with dedicated advocate for both woman and child.



A focus on long-term healing and recovery.



Treat children as a client with early intervention programs to end intergenerational violence.

We have the breakthrough approach.

1.

Build a Purpose-Built Centre

Building has commenced on a state of the art Centre for Women & Children, which will deliver services in one place. The building is due for completion in early 2024.

2.

Cutting Edge Service Model

Our cutting edge service model will activate and accelerate the trauma-informed and culturally appropriate service model required for the Recovery Pillar of the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-32.

3.

Research, Iterate, Improve

Research and innovation will build in a continuous feedback loop to test and refine the service model, and offer points of engagement with sector experts, lived experience advocates and government policy makers that will catalyse system wide innovation.

4.

Disseminate

As the service model evolves, best practice learnings will be shared with other providers, to create an exemplar practice model that informs system wide reform, to end domestic violence.

We have aligned with the 'National Plan to End Violence Against Women and their Children 2022-2032'



"Women and children who have experienced violence must be able to access support for their recovery and healing, beyond the crisis response, to achieve long-term improvements in health and wellbeing. This requires support to recover from the financial, social, psychological, and physical impacts of violence.

Recovery helps to break the cycle of violence and reduce the risk of re-traumatisation. Recovery also relates to the broader rebuilding of a victim-survivor's life and ability to return to the workplace and community, obtain financial independence, and economic security.

The National Plan recognises that recovery and healing take time and will, in many cases, require lifelong support through dedicated and tailored services and interventions.

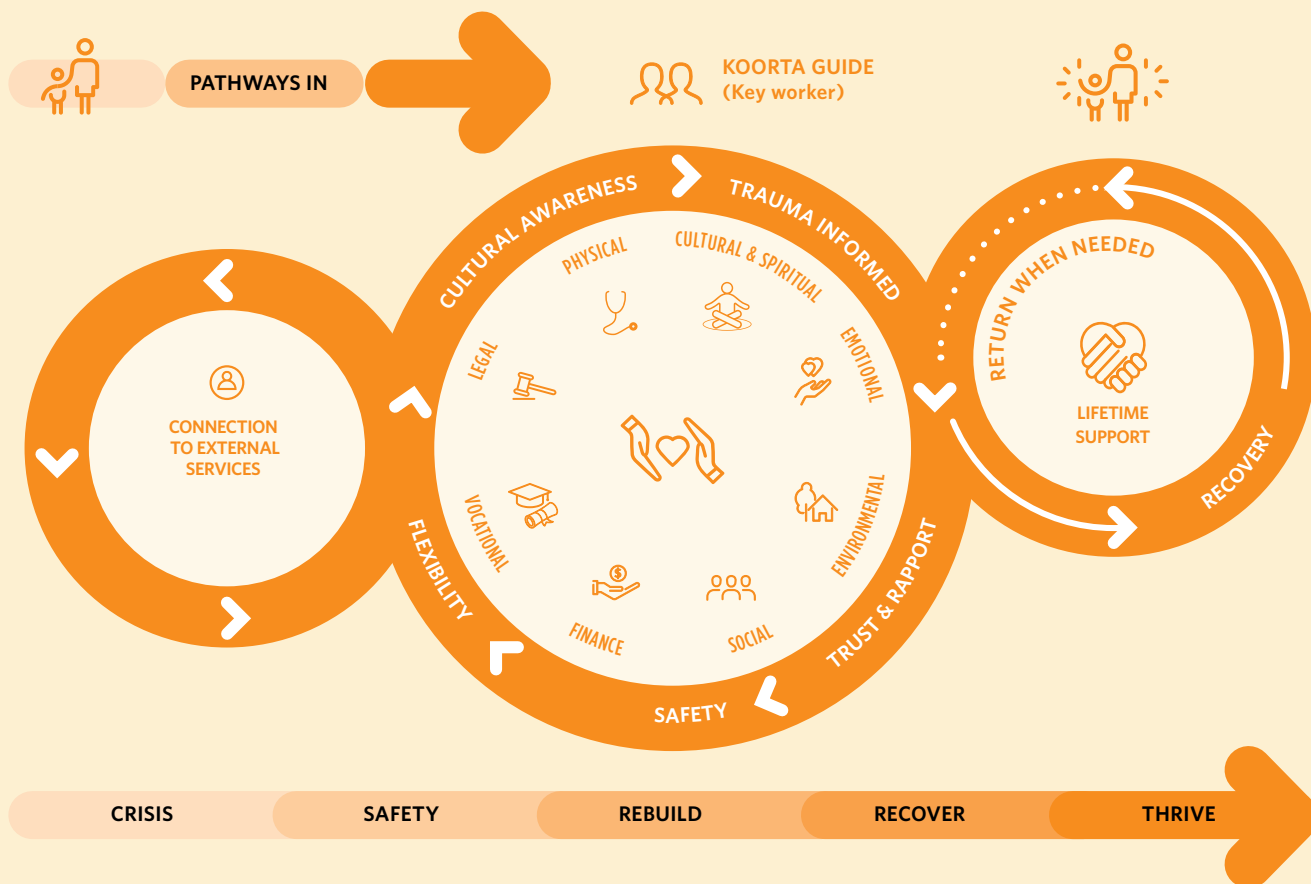
When women and children are not supported to recover, they are at higher risk of being unable to leave abusive relationships, and could be targeted by another perpetrator."

Source: National Plan to End Violence Against Women and their Children 2022-2032

Karlup, a cutting edge service model.

Karlup, a Noongar Aboriginal word, means a 'place' where you belong and feel safe.

In designing our service model, we listened, engaged with and were informed by diverse lived experience victim-survivors. Our Karlup service model will provide immediate impact for women and children, providing a future blueprint that can be scaled nationally.



What is a Koorta Guide?

Koorta means "trusted friend" in Noongar, the Aboriginal Language for WA Southwest

Our Koorta Guide is a trusted advocate who will 'walk alongside' women and children through their journey to recovery, providing support and guidance to meet their needs.

Children will also be connected to a Koorta Guide specifically for children. Their Guide will liaise closely with the mothers Koorta Guide to achieve the best possible outcomes for the family.

Dedicated guides that provide continuous support throughout a client's journey is part of Ruah's vision and commitment to reducing trauma and complexity in navigating the system.



Why this is different.

Our ground-breaking model will change the future for thousands of women and their children. It will foster innovation and collaboration across the community sector, governments, research institutions and private enterprise, and deliver measurable community and economic outcomes.

Focus on healing and recovery

- Rather than only offering crisis support of limited duration, Ruah's model has a long-term focus, providing space and time for healing and recovery.
- Clients can return as their support needs change, so they can continue to move toward enduring safety and wellbeing.
- This comprehensive, sustained support is what makes the difference between surviving and thriving, so women can become active participants in a society that protects them from harm.

Changing the future for children through early intervention

- Ruah recognises children as victims of family and domestic violence in their own right. We work with children and young people as a client so they can recover and heal.
- Our model provides practical, educational and therapeutic assistance through an early intervention approach that can bring an end to intergenerational violence.

Beyond a hub model - a one stop service

- Unlike a hub, the service will feel seamless and easy to access, both through the Centre and through ongoing outreach.
- With multi faceted support, system complexity is reduced and women and children will not need to retell their story to multiple providers.

Streamlining the journey

- Lived experience advocates have told us the current system is complex, confusing, and often re-traumatising. To streamline access to Ruah's services, our dedicated Koorta Guides will help clients access a flexible support model to achieve long term safety and wellbeing.

The Ruah Centre for Women & Children
Sod Turning, November 2022.





Research & Innovation

- The service will collect evidence to understand the demonstrable impact.
- The service will be closely coupled with research and innovation - where important insights are received, interpreted and put into practice.
- Wider system change will be catalysed from learnings that are shared with the sector.

Systems wide change for a better future

- No other organisation in Australia or the world has attempted such a comprehensive and focused approach to recovery of both women and children.
- The model can be replicated at other locations across Australia and supports impact scaling.

Purpose built Centre under construction

- The Centre is due for completion early 2024.
- A large part of the \$30 million capital cost has been raised through philanthropic donors, plus State and Federal funding.

“The Ruah Centre for Women and Children will be a catalyst for change; to change the landscape that we currently face in the family and domestic violence space... to give women the safe environment and critical support to heal, empowering them to be amazing mothers and contributors to society. It gives their children the right to be children instead of learning to parent as well as survive in a constant environment of fear and trauma”

RELLE

Lived Experience Advocate

RUAH research and innovation



Our service design participants working to create a service model that would give women & children the support they need to recover and thrive.



Why should we do this?

Experiencing violence has significant implications for victims, their children, families, friends, employers and co-workers. The implications of violence can include long term social, health, psychological, financial, and economic damage.

Based on the 2012 Personal Safety Survey (PSS), KPMG estimates that the total cost of violence against women and their children is \$22 billion.

The Australian Government bears \$4.1 billion (19%) of this cost⁵.

5 - KPMG, 2015-16

262% return on investment.

Our projected benefit/cost ratio is \$2.62 after 5 years.

With complex social issues resolved for an individual, benefits are cumulative, and accrue over time. The economic burden is removed for all years following a successful intervention.

The costs associated with achieving that successful intervention are annual and cease after a successful intervention.



Violence against women and children causes a ripple effect in our communities.

VICTIM SURVIVORS Intimate partner homicide is the most prevalent homicide type in Australia

CHILDREN & FAMILIES Women who experience partner violence during pregnancy are 3 times as likely to experience depression. Children exposed to domestic and family violence may experience trauma symptoms, including PTSD. There may also be long-lasting effects on children's development, behaviour and well-being.

COMMUNITY Domestic and family violence is a leading driver of homelessness for women.

ECONOMY The cost of violence against women and their children* is estimated at \$26 billion a year *This cost applies to women and their children only. If all forms of violence against children were included, the cost would be significantly higher.

*Ref: National Plan to End Violence against women and children 2022-2032 p17

A new model reduces the long term costs and effects.

For every **\$1.00** of service cost we return

\$2.62 in value. That is, the benefit/cost ratio results in a projected benefit of \$2.62 in liberated system capacity for every \$1 of service.



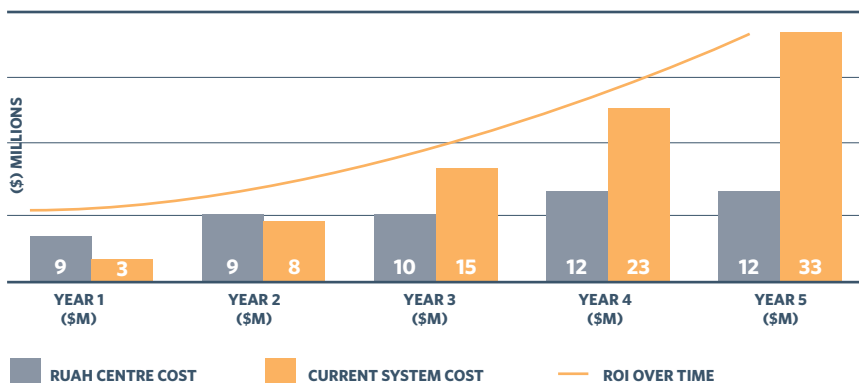
Replicability - A Scalable Approach for Future Generations

Our approach can be replicated in other locations, enabling impact scaling to support the Australian Government’s vision of ending violence against women and children in a generation.

“The Ruah Centre for Women and Children presents an opportunity to change the lives, not only of every woman and child under its roof, but of all of us. To enable us all to better see and understand the patterns of behaviour at work in our culture that contribute to family violence, and to work towards a culture where the dignity of all members of the community, especially those most vulnerable, is safeguarded and assured. I am honoured to be a part of this project for real and lasting change.”



5 YEAR VALUE FOR MONEY



THE HON. CHIEF JUSTICE PETER QUINLAN SC

Chief Justice of Western Australia, Supreme Court of WA

Why Ruah?

This ground-breaking project represents another bold stride for Ruah – a leading not-for-profit that has been operating in Western Australia for more than 60 years. Ruah works with thousands of people every year as they transform their lives.

Ruah has enormous depth and breadth of experience in homelessness, family violence, mental health and associated legal services.

We provide comprehensive care and support and offer accommodation, case management, risk and safety planning, legal advice and representation, advocacy and education to address the impact of violence and abuse.



A track record for breakthrough innovation.



Mental Health In-Reach Services (in-home and in community) - lead by Ruah in the 1990s and now commonplace in community mental health.



Zero Project WA (formerly 50 Lives 50 Homes) - Ruah led a collective impact project called the Zero Project - a recovery-oriented approach to end homelessness in WA, including rapid access to housing and wrap-around support.



Wongee Mia (meaning Strong Home) - innovative project supporting intergenerational homelessness and poverty for far reaching (and family-wide) outcomes.



Ruah Legal Services - launched the pilot project for women's legal representation, paired with social support, which has become one of the most effective health justice partnership models of our time.



Choices (partnership with WA Primary Health Alliance) - peer support mental health services in hospitals, the first of its kind in Western Australia.



Suitsme - Ruah pioneered a disruptive, digital model for NDIS mental health services, a successful project that is ongoing today.

“Women and children who are escaping trauma deserve a place where they can be safe and their total needs can be met. It is unreasonable to think women escaping violence have enough energy to navigate the legal system or other services in order to keep them safe. The Ruah Centre for Women and Children will empower women into the future.”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Debra Zanella".

DEBRA ZANELLA, CEO
Ruah Community Services

We've Done This Before

Ruah Case Study: '50 Lives 50 Homes'.

At Ruah, we are known approaching old problems in new ways, to achieve better outcomes for our most vulnerable people. We did it in 50 Lives 50 Homes with a game changing 'advance to zero' homelessness approach, and we'll do it again to end domestic violence.

50 Lives 50 Homes project captures and represents so much of what we at Ruah Community Services know is critical to sustainable, positive change - the courage to step outside traditional service models, the power of collective impact, the importance of evidence-based service delivery, the determination to stay the distance, and a willingness to keep challenging ourselves and others in the quest to end homelessness.

50 Lives 50 Homes was born in 2015 out of a frustration with the revolving door of those experiencing chronic homelessness and wanting a solution that worked - one that would successfully house people and keep them housed. It was, at the time, a radical, collaborative impact response supporting Perth's most vulnerable rough sleepers to access housing and wrap-around support which captured the imagination of the community services sector, with more than 30 organisations participating and generosity supported by the Sisters of St John of God.

What it achieved goes beyond the project itself, which saw 284 people who had been chronically rough sleeping supported into homes and provided with wrap-around support.

We also have reliable data for the first time. We have tested an effective new methodology. We know we can achieve long-lasting change.

The 'Housing First' approach is now embedded in State Government policy and the foundation stone of its All Paths Lead to a Home: Western Australia's 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness 2020-2030.

The fundamental shift in the sector's approach to ending homelessness was cemented with the launch of the Zero Project which evolved from 50 Lives 50 Homes, expanding to other regions of WA and transitioning to an Advance to Zero methodology, where we know those who are experiencing homelessness by name and are counting down to ending homelessness.

For the first time, the Western Australian community also has free and easy access to the best available data relating to homelessness in their capital city. The public data empowers the community - underlining that ending homelessness is everybody's responsibility.



The Centre for Women and Children.

Under construction in the Perth CBD, our first of its kind, purpose-built Centre will open the door to a new life for women and children through:

1. A seven story state-of-the-art, purpose built facility,
2. A transformational service model co-designed with women with lived experience, and
3. Integrated innovation, research and collaboration with reliable data to support system change and expand the evidence base to end domestic and family violence.

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“Protecting women and children from the intergenerational trauma of family violence is difficult – but an obligation we all share. As complex an issue as it is for our entire community, the historical context and its impacts make family violence even more complex, devastating and widespread for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The Ruah Centre for Women and Children will be a welcoming and culturally appropriate place for all women and children and help build knowledge and sector capacity to meet a critical need in Western Australia. This issue is too important and too damaging for us not to take the strongest possible action to break the cycle.”

PROFESSOR COLLEEN HAYWARD AM

Former Pro-Vice-Chancellor Equity and Indigenous,
Edith Cowan University

Changemakers Invited

Join Ruah’s visionary partners including the Department of Social Services, Lotterywest, and generous philanthropists, each who have invested in Ruah’s transformational approach to immediate impact for women and children and systems wide change.

CONTACT

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Ruah acknowledges the Aboriginal Peoples and Communities as the Traditional Custodians of the Land on which we work. We recognise and value Aboriginal people as the oldest continuing culture in the world and we pay our respects to Elders past and present.

