



## **Media Release**

### **Ruah Community Services says “YES” to marriage equality**

Thursday 14 September 2017

On 15 August 2017 Ruah Community Services expressed a public commitment to creating an inclusive workplace for LGBTQI staff and volunteers and reconfirmed our commitment to providing accessible, appropriate and quality service provision to members of the LGBTQI community. We also called on all parties in the marriage equality debate to moderate their statements.

Today, Ruah Community Services calls on Australians to vote YES in the Marriage Equality Survey that was posted to households this week.

We make this request firm in our belief that continuing exclusion and discrimination are key contributing factors to poor mental health outcomes in the LGBTQI Communities. We also draw on the legacy and inspiration of our bold and courageous founders, from as far back as the 17th century in doing what nobody else dared. Within our guiding manifesto, we find the following statement:

*“We keep moving, we overcome the complex, change the rules, challenge the systems. Ruah delivers not just what clients expect but what clients deserve. And they deserve what you deserve”.*

“Silence is not an option when the long-term wellbeing of a significant and valued community is at risk,” said Ms Debra Zanella, Ruah’s Chief Executive Officer.

“This is a great example of where we need to change the rules and challenge the system to achieve sustainable outcomes for our clients.”

“For Ruah, our support for the YES campaign is how we demonstrate open hearts and bold strides.”

For the duration of the YES campaign, Ruah will incorporate the rainbow colours into its logo on its social media and web pages.

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## **About Ruah:**

Ruah aims to empower vulnerable and disadvantaged people to create meaningful change in their lives through the provision of quality support services in the areas of housing and homelessness, family and domestic violence, justice and mental health. Ruah's vision is to build flourishing communities through active participation and wellbeing of people with complex needs.

## **The Ruah Manifesto**

We are all better off, as a community, as a society, if we are all connected. We need the disconnected, the homeless, the vulnerable as they need us. They are us. We, but for advantages of birth or circumstance, are them –human hearts, in need of human connection and meaning in their lives. There is more that unites us than divides us, yet the most disadvantaged are stigmatised, without a voice for change.

Change does not come easily. We take our legacy and inspiration from the bold, courageous individuals from as far back as the 17th century doing what nobody else dared. Not because it was asked of them but because it was right and it was needed. Today Ruah will not meander in our pursuit of measurably transforming lives. We go boldly toward not just helping homeless people, but ending homelessness. Ending domestic violence. Changing the lives and creating opportunities for those experiencing mental health issues. We choose to work with the most vulnerable, the most challenged –because it's difficult, because this makes a difference.

What we fulfil in our clients, we nourish in ourselves. By wrapping around our clients, we navigate the system or change it, based on what they need, on their terms. We keep moving, we overcome the complex, change the rules, challenge the systems. Ruah delivers not just what clients expect but what clients deserve. And they deserve what you deserve.

Open your heart. Embolden your stride. Ruah