



## Hon John Carey MLA

### Minister for Planning; Lands; Housing; Homelessness

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#### STATEMENT FROM MINISTER CAREY:

On Friday, 15 March 2024, I issued a Direction Notice to the President of the State Administrative Tribunal (SAT) to refer an application for review in relation to the Ruah Safe Night Space service for Ministerial determination.

The SAT application seeks review of the conditions of approval applied by the City of Perth for a change of use application that would enable the Safe Night Space service to operate temporarily from existing premises in James Street, Northbridge.

Under s246 of the *Planning and Development Act 2005*, a planning application that is considered to raise issues of State or regional importance can be called in to be determined by the Minister for Planning.

Further, section 247 of the Act states that in determining an application, the Minister for Planning is not limited to planning considerations but may have regard to any other matter affecting the public interest.

I want to clarify that this review is not a question of whether approval is valid or not – that decision has been made. Rather, it is about the conditions of approval which speak directly to how the proposed Safe Night Space service will operate.

The Ruah Safe Night Space is a key service established to support vulnerable women who may be experiencing immediate crisis such as family and domestic violence. It assists to provide a safe environment for vulnerable women, for example, those escaping family and domestic violence from areas in the Perth CBD and surrounds.

The Safe Night Service is the only accessible drop-in service, and is often utilised by WA Police as a safe, supported place to take vulnerable women during the night rather than lock up. Ruah developed the model and their organisation and staff have particular expertise in supporting the vulnerable women who present with a range of highly complex needs.

The State Government remains committed to the *All Paths Lead to a Home: Western Australia's 10-Year Strategy on Homelessness 2020–2030* and the *Path to Safety – Western Australia's strategy to reduce family and domestic violence 2020-2030*.

Given the significance of the Safe Night Service as a key service in the system that is accessible over-night for vulnerable women, including those experiencing family and domestic violence, the question of the appropriateness of the current conditions of approval goes to the effective operation of the services provided by Ruah on this site.

The effective operation of the Safe Night Service is crucial to the State Government's support of vulnerable women, many of whom may be experiencing family and domestic violence, supporting the broader homelessness sector by providing this specialist service and implementation of the State's strategies to end homelessness and reduce family and domestic violence.



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s246 of the *Planning and Development Act 2005* provides for an opportunity for both the applicant, Ruah, and the respondent, the City of Perth, to make submissions in this process to inform decision making. That process will commence soon.

Lastly, I am advised that as the Minister for Homelessness, Planning and the Member for Perth, I do not have a conflict of interest in this matter. However, I consider that there is a minor risk of a perception of such and, out of an abundance of caution, I have asked that the Honourable Amber-Jade Sanderson MLA, as a Minister of the Crown, act for and on my behalf in exercising the Minister for Planning's powers and functions under legislation, committed to the administration of the Minister for Planning, to consider and determine this review application.

ENDS