

Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia welcomes new chief.

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Photo credit: Belinda Mason

At this pivotal moment for women in Australia, the Board and staff of [Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia](#) (R&DVSA) are excited to welcome Hayley Foster as their new Chief Executive Officer.

R&DVSA is known for its pre-eminent trauma specialist counselling services for survivors of sexual, domestic and family violence across Australia, and more recently for its growing work with corporates, advising them on policy, and delivering workplace training and employment assistance program counselling services.

The agency has also been assisting the Sex Discrimination Commissioner through the provision of workplace resources and trauma specialist counselling for employees impacted by sexual harassment in the workplace.

Earlier this month, Hayley Foster stepped down from her role as Chief Executive Officer of Women's Safety NSW where she was a leading voice on women's safety, justice and wellbeing in that state and says she is looking forward to expanding her focus to the national arena.

"I am absolutely thrilled to be joining the world class team at Rape & Domestic Violence Services Australia," said Hayley Foster.

"It is an enormous privilege to be afforded the opportunity to work alongside such leaders in the field of sexual, domestic and family violence to deliver essential trauma specialist services and to shape our nation's policy responses to this crisis."

With 20 years' experience in policy, practice and law reform to address sexual, domestic and family violence, Ms Foster is deeply passionate about putting evidence into action and working collaboratively across diverse sectors to create lasting change.

Ms Foster is currently advising federal, state and territory Women's Safety Ministers on the next National Plan in the lead up to the National Women's Safety Summit in July 2021. She says a key focus of her advice will be the need to effectively engage the corporate sector in sexual, family and domestic violence prevention and response efforts - to support them to play their part as employers and as corporate citizens.

"There is now a widespread acceptance that preventing and responding to sexual, domestic and family violence is everyone's business", said Ms Foster.

If we want to achieve a real reduction in violence against women, children and LGBTIQ+ people and properly support survivors to recover and live safe, productive, fulfilling lives, we're going to need to get everyone on board", she continued.

Business

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Ms Foster says that, alongside efforts to address gender equality and diversity in the workplace, corporates are looking to improve their responses to sexual harassment and to better support staff impacted by domestic and sexual abuse.

She says R&DVSA is keen to partner with Australian corporates in this regard, and to support them in transforming their workplace culture and practice in preventing and responding to gender-based violence.

The organisation's foundation arm, the [Full Stop Foundation](#), provides an avenue for philanthropic donors, trusts and corporate foundations to contribute to the work of the organisation, turbo charging its impact.

"Our philanthropic partnerships are incredibly valuable", says Ms Foster. "Australians really want to see change when it comes to sexual, domestic and family violence, and this provides a really tangible mechanism for being part of that change."

Hayley Foster joins R&DVSA on the 50th Anniversary of the historic 1971 Women's Meeting at Redfern Town Hall. It was from this meeting that the original Rape Crisis Collective was established, and for five decades the agency has been providing world-class counselling services, best-practice training and an authoritative voice on policy and law reform across Australia.

The R&DVSA Board is confident Ms Foster is the right leader to take the organisation forward at this critical time.

"The Board is really excited about this appointment", said Debbie Brewin, Chairperson of the Board. "Hayley Foster is an inspired leader in the field of sexual, domestic and family violence. She brings with her a deep understanding of policy, practice and legal frameworks, a desire to collaborate, and immense passion and commitment to achieving gender equality and ending gender-based violence."

"Now is the time for strong, intelligent leadership to drive the changes we need to see to bring down our rates of sexual, domestic and family violence and ensure everyone is equipped to play their part."

Ms Foster says she is keen to continue the organisation's longstanding position as a leading voice on policy and law reform efforts to address gender-based violence.

"I'm really looking forward to the opportunity to work with leaders in prevention and response to sexual, domestic and family violence in each state and territory and at the federal level to drive the legislative and policy reforms needed to end this national scourge." said Ms Foster.

In this regard, Ms Foster has her eyes set on coercive control laws, evidence and procedure in sexual assault matters, and a greater focus on safety in bail decisions and offender supervision in the community.

"We cannot continue to accept the obscene rates of violence and abuse occurring in our homes, our workplaces and our communities", said Ms Foster. "It truly is time to shift the dial, and we can only make this happen if we all work together."

For further information or comment, contact Hayley Foster 0477 442 122 | ceo@rape-dvservices.org.au or Debbie Brewin 0411 823 438 | dbrewin@nrl.com.au

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