

2022/23 Annual Report





Acknowledgment of country

Blue Knot Foundation respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and pays respect to their Elders, past, present and future. We acknowledge their strength and resilience to thrive as Sovereign Owners and are honoured to journey with all Indigenous people on the path to healing and reconciliation.

We would also like to acknowledge people with the lived and living experience of complex trauma and its effects and confirm our commitment to empowering people impacted by complex trauma to live full and rich lives.

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“My first interaction with Blue Knot Foundation was nearly a decade ago, as I was ‘coming to terms’ with my past and acknowledging not only my Complex Trauma (and many other associated mental illnesses) but also the enormous damage that had resulted. Meeting with the amazing Dr. Cathy Kezelman and learning about Blue Knot Foundation and what they did, was the first step forward for me in regaining some semblance of control of my life.

Since then, I have evolved and grown stronger in myself and finding my voice, to help others and make a difference within the community.

As a result of my interactions, I was privileged to become a member of the Lived and Living Experience Committee for Blue Knot Foundation and join a band of fellow survivors of Complex Trauma. A group of individuals committed to raising the awareness of Complex Trauma, its presence and impact in everyday lives and ensuring that services and support are available. This journey is in its infancy stage and a lot of work is in front us this group, though achievements have been made, seeing an increased social media presence, enhanced website that is catering to all individuals and full of informative content and resources, helplines, and the commencement of strategic community partnerships to ensure sustainability and functionality.

Honoured to be part of this Committee and Blue Knot Foundation. Thank You.”

Paul



Putting the expertise of lived and living experience front and centre!

Welcoming Blue Knot's Lived and Living Experience Committee

Forming our inaugural Committee



“Being part of the lived and living experience work for Blue Knot has been richly rewarding - being given the opportunity to apply all hats as a professional with lived experience is profound and necessary. This work is of immeasurable value where most importantly we get to work together to help shape building lived experience integration into the services and support for people experiencing complex trauma. It is a privilege to help support Blue Knot in expanding its role in integrating lived experiences with the intention and purpose that the flow on impacts and effect to the broader community who really need support and who provide complex trauma support will help weave enhanced new support experiences.” Cassandra

We are delighted to have formed our inaugural Lived and Living Experience Committee. With much gratitude to Lived Experience Australia for their guidance in the process. We were overwhelmed by the generosity of the 106 people who came forward wanting to be part of the Committee.



“Joining the Lived and Living Experience committee of Blue Knot has allowed me to have meaningful input into the review of the website and the helpline services to date. I have been on many reference groups and committees but have never sensed such a commitment to meaningful involvement and feeling so valued for my input as I have with Blue Knot. Blue Knot seems committed to ensuring that its services are truly trauma informed at every level and provide the best outcome for all. We are so fortunate to be able to be involved and valued so highly.” Heather



Lived and Living Expertise front and centre

It was incredibly hard to choose the Committee members from such a diverse group of experts and we thank each and every person who sent in an Expression of Interest for your passion and connection.

We are keen to stay connected with you as we strengthen the voice of lived and living experience within Blue Knot. As an organisation born from the wisdom and drive of survivors, we will continue to find ways for meaningful engagement to ensure that our collective expertise drives further change.



“As a survivor of complex trauma, being a part of the LLEC is an invaluable opportunity to work alongside other survivors to ensure that there is “nothing about us without us.” Informed by our lived and living expertise, we work towards amplifying voices that are too often silenced, redefining recovery, and rekindling hope for survivors of complex trauma. I am hopeful and excited to work with Blue Knot toward a future where lived and living expertise is not just acknowledged, but genuinely respected and celebrated.” Emily

We held our first Committee meeting in May, and it was a rich generous meeting of minds and experience. Thank you to all 14 Committee members for your engagement and sound counsel. And thank you for the enhancements you spurned even in that first meeting, through your frank and fearless feedback around our Helpline client survey, Helpline messaging on our website and our Telehealth ‘welcome’ message. Thank you all. We are so looking forward to working with you all and seeing the changes we can make together. Your passion, drive and expertise will help us help survivors of complex trauma heal and recover.



“Joining the LLEC gives me hope that people with lived experience will be continue to be heard and their experience valued and taken into account in Blue Knots program design and delivery. Living with complex trauma means living with a wide range of symptoms which are sometimes difficult to explain for survivors and difficult to capture for service providers so lived experience voices are essential.” Vanessa



**amplifying
voices**

**empowering
recovery**

**holding
hope**





Chair Report

As I reflect on the 2022–23 year, I am filled with a profound sense of pride in the strides that Blue Knot Foundation continues to make, and the positive impact we continue to deliver.

Blue Knot is the National Centre of Excellence for Complex Trauma. Complex Trauma affects more than 5 million adult Australians. It includes abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation. It can be experienced at all stages of life.

From our humble beginnings to our current position as a beacon of hope for survivors of complex trauma, our journey has been transformative. This year, in particular, we have seen some pivotal developments, and I will share a few highlights.

The heart and soul of Blue Knot lies in the experiences and voices of those with Lived and Living Experience of complex trauma. This year, we brought these voices to the forefront by inaugurating our Lived and Living Experience Committee. This strategic move ensures that our initiatives, resources, and services are deeply rooted in real-world experiences. The testimonies from Committee members have been both heartening and enlightening, reiterating the critical importance of this initiative.

The 2022–23 financial year has been a testament to our resilience, adaptability, and unwavering commitment to our purpose. Despite global challenges, we have not only achieved the majority of our strategic objectives but have also laid down a concrete path for the future. Our upcoming three-year strategic plan, anchored in four pivotal strategic pillars, promises to further our reach and deepen our impact.

Our Training, Practice and Organisational Change services have seen remarkable growth. The emphasis has been on equipping professionals with the tools and knowledge they need to support survivors effectively.

The feedback and data from our training affirms the importance and effectiveness of these programs.

Thank you to the Blue Knot Board for their time and contribution throughout the year. Unfortunately, Conrad Staff and Liza Nadolski stepped down from the Board during the year, and we thank them very much for their contributions, work and commitment to Blue Knot. We will welcome two new board members, Samantha Betts and Patrick Gooley who bring strong skills and experience to our Board in the 2024 financial year. Our Board continues to be well balanced with professionals with strong industry, sector, policy, and board experience.

My warm thanks to two members of our board who continue to work tirelessly, our President Dr Cathy Kezelman AM, and Deputy CEO Belinda Johnson. It may be a cliché when we say we live in uncertain times, but Cathy and Belinda have always faced challenges head-on while also fostering consistency in staffing, nurturing a positive culture, and achieving excellence in service delivery. This has continued to earn Blue Knot high accolades in the sector.

In conclusion, the journey of Blue Knot Foundation this year has been one of collective effort, resilience, and unwavering dedication to our purpose. I further extend my heartfelt gratitude to our Executive team and all our staff, our members, and every individual who has been a part of this ongoing journey. The road ahead is filled with promise. Together we will continue to make meaningful differences to people's lives.

Warm regards,

Silvio Del Vecchio
Chair, Blue Knot Foundation

Blue Knot's journey this year has been one of sustained growth, increased support and greater and far reaching impact.



Reflections from the CEO

I am delighted to share with you some reflections on the 2022–23 financial year, one about which I and the team are truly proud – not just of our achievements in further forging a stable robust organisation but of one consistently delivering on our purpose. It is an honour and a privilege to be able to walk alongside survivors of complex trauma every day on their journey to healing.

As our 2018–22 strategic plan has been wrapped up and we look to the board to lead the conceptualisation of the 2023–26 x 3–year plan we reflect that we achieved the bulk of our strategic objectives from the last plan. And all of this despite the turmoil our world faces, the scourges of COVID, enhanced mental distress, natural disasters and sadly, the relentless rates of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation in our communities.

We have evidenced a changing workforce – one which is resilient and passionate and which even though largely working from home, has been cohesive with a focus on building meaningful collaboration, across teams, across the organisation and with diverse stakeholders. We are secure in knowing that we have an organisation which is trusted by survivors, their families and friends, and their communities. We are resolute in celebrating that we contribute to an organisation which is well respected by government and the many sectors in which we work.

Our annual report highlights our influence and reach as we provide crucial Telehealth services to more survivors in need and train and supervise more practitioners and workers to enable them to better support survivors seeking their counsel. We were honoured to receive an international advocacy award this year from the International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation, and to further cement our position as a sought after thought leader in the media, this too being reflected in increased followers over our social media platforms.

None of this would be possible without a solid base and we are thrilled to report a robust bottom line as we continue to build out our longer-term sustainability, not solely financial but also following considered investment into resources, systems and infrastructure.

The organisation's role as a Founding Member of the National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse alongside our partners, The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation and the Australian Childhood Foundation is groundbreaking. This year NCACSA delivered its 5-year strategy 'Here for Change', commissioned \$2.9 million in research grants, established a full staff complement and developed brand, website and social media presence. The work of NCACSA continues apace, hand in hand with that of Blue Knot Foundation united in purpose and direction.

I would like to thank Silvio Del Vecchio, Chair of the board and all of our board members for their commitment and support over the last year. In particular hats off go to our Executive Team of Belinda Johnson, Deputy CEO and Tamara O'Sullivan Executive Manager, all of our leaders and teams. What an amazing force for change you/we all are!

Warmly, Cathy

Dr Cathy Kezelman AM, President and Executive Director, Blue Knot Foundation;
Deputy Chair National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse.



Mapping our path forward...

During the 2022–23 financial year we tied off the period for our last strategic plan. The closing off of the 2018–22 strategic plan provided an opportunity to sit back, reflect and celebrate Blue Knot’s and the team’s many achievements.

It was also affirming to map back to our last plan and establish that we had not only stayed focussed on our purpose but successfully completed many of the deliverables of the last plan.

What we were even prouder of was our steady and sustained growth during the COVID-19 pandemic. Achieving this is a testament to a team of seasoned professionals who give their all every day. Together through Blue Knot’s achievements we empowered many survivors on their path to healing.

So where to from here?

The board and Executive together engaged in two planning workshops, facilitated by an external consultant. In these workshops we reflected on the achievements of the previous plan, articulated what we still needed to tie off and conceptualised what it was we wanted to achieve in our next 3 years. Bottom line is the services we provide to people with the lived and living experience of complex trauma such as our Telehealth services.



“Your helpline service, I feel, is essential. I feel you should be mandatory trainers in the health field. The WHOLE health field. Wait times to get onto a counsellor are your only downside, as I’ve experienced that lots. But I think Blue Knot is getting more out there? Being recommended more? So perhaps you’re getting more callers? I wish I had millions of dollars. I would give them all to you...” Anonymous Helpline service user

Designing the path together was a connecting and inspired process. Although our new strategic plan looks and feels different it is grounded in the same vision and purpose of the last one and builds steadily on it. For our new strategic plan we identified 4 key strategic pillars, as always with the needs of people with the lived and living experience of complex trauma our key driver.

What are our strategic pillars?



As we build out our operational plans, we look forward to meeting our strategic objectives year on year. A key focus in operationalising the plan is to further stabilise our infrastructure and strengthen our already solid foundations to set us up for future growth. Core to achieving anything of course is the health and wellbeing of all our staff and we will continue to forge a culture of collaboration and support. This will in turn enable us to expand and refine our suite of safe quality services to adult survivors of complex trauma and to those who support them.

As we embark on our plan for the next 3 years, we will redouble our efforts to reach more members of the community in need, provide the resources and support they need to heal and recover, and build the capacity of the workforce and community to respond in ways which are informed, compassionate and empowering.

To see a copy of our 2022-2026 strategic plan [click here](#).

A group of people, likely employees, are shown in a huddle, smiling and looking towards the camera. The image is slightly blurred, focusing on the hands and forearms of the individuals. A large, stylized blue knot graphic is overlaid on the lower half of the image, partially obscuring the people's arms. The knot is composed of several loops and is rendered in a vibrant blue color.

Our people are everything and it is their skills, dedication and commitment which truly enable Blue Knot to deliver on its purpose every single day.

Keeping the organisation humming

No organisation can achieve its objectives without establishing the processes, systems and frameworks which underpin its operations.

The last few years with the ravages of COVID-19, the move to working from home and a mainly remote workforce in the last financial year have brought challenges and opportunities to the way we deliver what we do. Blue Knot akin to many other organisations has seen an increasing reliance on digital platforms and data-driven processes. During the last financial year, we have also commenced a process of accreditation through the National Safety and Quality Digital Mental Health Standards. We completed a pilot and developed a plan of action for implementation related not only to our Telehealth services but with implications for the broader organisation.

The ops team under the guidance of Belinda Johnson has supported this evolution, ably assisted by leadership across the organisation and other staff members. This is a continuous improvement process as we build and integrate our quality management systems to deliver solutions for the times.

Supporting and engaging a largely remote workforce has been a priority during this period and will continue to be so. Blue Knot is hardly the only organisation to be grappling with a change in work culture and expectations. As we move into the next financial year we will continue to survey our staff to identify additional initiatives to build connection and collaboration. Our people are everything and it is their skills, dedication and commitment which truly enable Blue Knot to deliver on its purpose every single day.

Training, Practice and Organisational Change

The Training, Practice and Organisational Change program, affectionately known as TPOC, continues to go from strength to strength under the thoughtful stewardship of Tamara O’Sullivan, a member of the Executive Team. Tamara and her internal and external team are second to none, with an enduring eye on quality.

The already successful programs of professional development training – for individuals and organisations, group supervision and a range of initiatives to support organisations to become trauma responsive and resilient, have been supplemented by new products and structures, new practice and development programs, and a variety of projects. The smooth delivery of these programs and the scaffolded learning they foster have been supported by robust processes across and between programs.

A new program around trauma responsive leadership:

The second trauma responsive leadership training in the two part series was successfully launched this year. This program builds on part one which focused on self as leader whilst this program looks outward to support the application of leadership in an organisational practice context.

We continue to steadily build our pool of trainers, supervisors and consultants whose particular areas of knowledge and skill are leveraged to make our programs a real success. It is wonderful to see a number of government and non-government organisations running training sessions throughout the year and over time.

Our continuous improvement processes have enabled consistency and quality across all of our training programs with increased efficiencies and processes, supported by robust risk and quality assurance frameworks. This is delivered across our integrated systems and evidenced by exceptionally high-quality feedback from clients.

A review of the supervision program has led to improvement in the trauma-informed framework utilised, as well as the recruitment and induction of supervisors and enhanced contract management processes. Its success has been evidenced by ongoing growth and uptake of the program.

“ This training was amazing!!! So very informative, the videos, content, case study and statistics were all up to date, engaging and relevant. Facilitator was amazing!!!! So knowledgeable, supportive, and empathetic. She explained things so clearly, gave us time to explore and converse, and was very understanding of the fact that some of us may have experienced trauma, so provided a safe and non-judgmental space. Made it easy to want to share and engage with the facilitator and the larger group.” – Kayla, Uniting


530
Training,
Workshops &
Webinars

12,796
Training
Participants

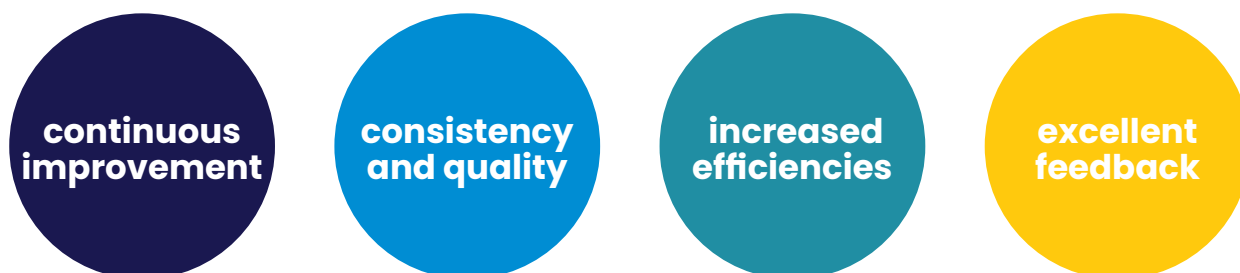
784
Supervision
Sessions

We have also continued to build on our organisational development services, ensuring greater clarity around offerings and also opening up additional opportunities for organisations seeking different elements at different times to enable them to step out their development.

Our training programs, supervision services and organisational development services continue to attract a wide range of organisations across varied sectors which demonstrates a growth in the professional community wanting to understand and develop their knowledge and practice in supporting people with living and lived experience of complex trauma.

 *This is the 5th and final session of training I have completed with Blue Knot and I would highly recommend it. The presenters have all been amazing and the format has been flawless. The regular use of breakout rooms has kept me engaged and all of the print material has been great. Thanks” – Ange, Social Worker*

Our training programs consistently achieve very positive feedback. In fact our top five programs are deemed highly relevant with attendees keen to return for further training.



Was this training relevant to your work?

Yes
98.31%

Would you be interested in attending BKF training again?

Yes
96.51%

Marketing, media and social media

This year has evidenced a lot of planning within the marketing space buffeted by a number of staff movements. Despite this, the year has seen great gains in social media engagement, media exposure and reach, and, of course the marketing of programs which supports the training, practice organisational team.

It is wonderful to watch a growing number of community members joining both the Blue Knot and the Blue Knot professional community year on year. As we continue to build awareness in the community and engage with more survivors and their loved ones over time, we are honoured to be able to offer resources and support to help empower them on their healing journey.

As we reach more professionals who engage with and support survivors on their journey we know we are also contributing to a trauma-informed community of connection and meaning. Our advocacy around complex trauma is a critical part of changing the landscape for survivors, as we build knowledge and understanding of how we can all contribute to adult survivors' healing journey.

As more survivors speak out and there is a greater public discourse about trauma, there has never been a better time to build greater awareness around complex trauma. With our refreshed brand and recognised position as the National Centre of Excellence for Complex Trauma we will continue to educate the community about the need for greater acceptance and understanding around the particular needs of people living with its impacts.

On Blue Knot Day 2022, our national awareness day we held a digital Festival of Healing which welcomed survivors to join free webinars and access to a series of resources. Of course, the need for greater awareness is a requisite every day of the year and not only on Blue Knot Day.







Our advocacy around complex trauma is a critical part of changing the landscape for survivors, as we build knowledge and understanding of how we can all contribute to adult survivors' healing journey.



Marketing Metrics for the Year

Social Media

	Audience	Audience Growth *	Published Posts	Impressions	Engagements
	2,747	61	163	43,548	2,298
	5,534	1,895	41	32,742	1,970
	17,843	2,957	254	319,262	22,073
	3,762	1,078	156	106,548	7,421
Total	29,886	5,991	614	502,100	33,762

* compared to 21/22

Net Social Media Audience Growth

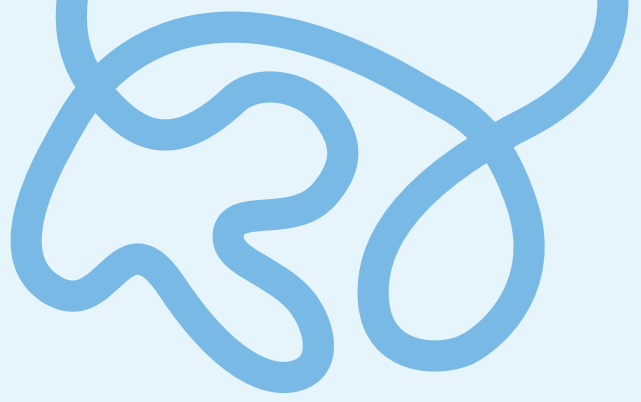


Website







Email Subscribers





Blue Knot Day 2022

Channel	Posts	Impressions	Engagement
	17	2,289	137
	23	14,365	767
	20	6,087	372
	5	3,079	340
Total	65	25,820	1,616

Blue Knot Day Video Views

188

Blue Knot Day
Video Views

Website Visitation

over
1,250

Website Visits on
Blue Knot Day

over
3,750

Website Visits for the 3 days
around Blue Knot Day

Webinars

294

Compassion and Empathy
Attendees Registered

320

Connection to Body
Attendees Registered



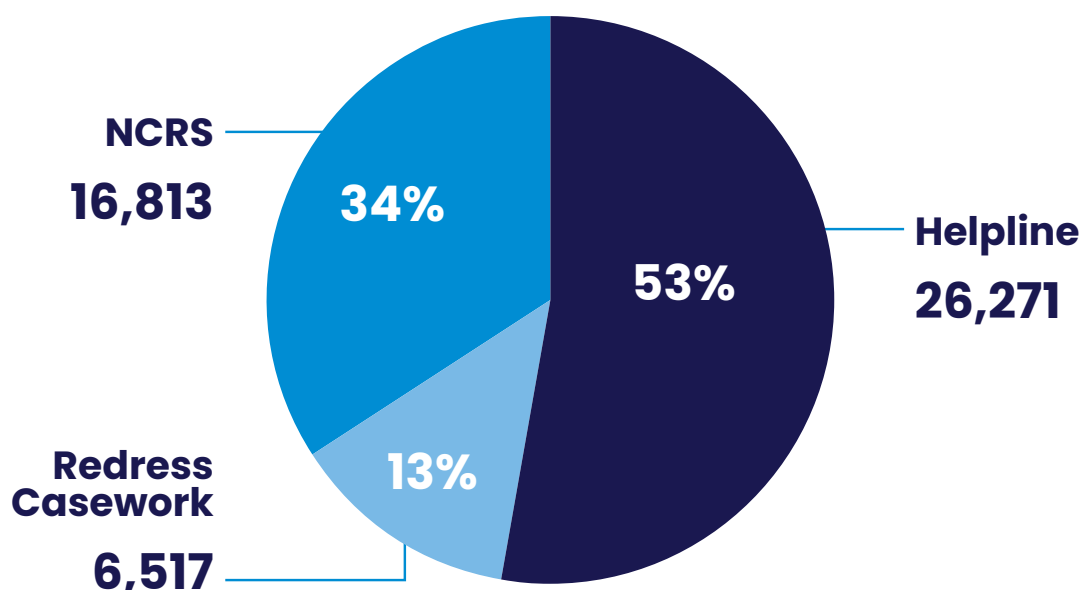
Telehealth

Our Telehealth services have gone from strength to strength this last financial year. The services include the Blue Knot Helpline and Redress Support Service which supports people with experiences of complex childhood trauma and their supporters, as well as survivors of institutional child sexual abuse exploring or engaging with the National Redress Scheme.

We have also supported people with disability and experiences of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, their carers, supporters and advocates as well as inmates in Correctional Centres nationally, through our National Counselling and Referral Service.

Every year we are privileged to hear from more people reaching out to speak to a trauma counsellor. For many callers it is a first step on the path to healing, and for others each call is one providing additional support on their journey to healing.

Occasions of Service FY 22/23



Our counsellors are trauma specialists who are there to really listen, hear and believe, and most importantly support callers to feel safe and secure. Our recent Helpline survey revealed that: *85% of callers either strongly agreed or agreed that they felt heard, listened to or respected. 3.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed.*

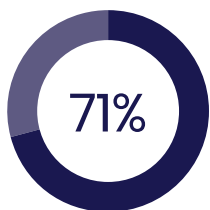


“Just thank you. Thank you for all that you do. Your website is such a great resource How if I am so “complicated and wrong” (by NSW health and community mental health etc) can I call the Blue Knot Helpline and the person on the other end knows EXACTLY what I mean or am talking about and can respond to my distress with NO need for medication and sedation and scheduling. I haven’t even taken my PRN and it’s after the call now. Thank you to all the lovely people who’ve answered when I’ve phoned, to all of you who answer those phones and listen to people with many stories in many emotional states and for the listening, kindness, knowledge and more that you bring to each call. Please know it is needed. So needed. And so appreciated by me. Today especially. Thank you.” Anonymous service user

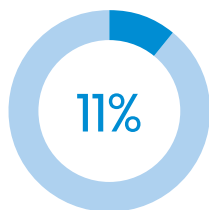
This is the first survey of our Helpline in a number of years, and we were delighted to formulate the survey together with members of our Lived and Living Experience Committee. The final survey was responded to by over 300 participants of which 71% had called the Helpline between 1-4 times, 11% between 5-10 times and 18% more than 10 times. 25% of callers were either from First Nations or a Culturally and Linguistically diverse background.

79% of callers rated the overall experience of calling the Helpline either good or great, while 15% rated it as average and 6% as poor or very poor. We are most grateful to everyone who provided feedback and will use the feedback to enhance the service we provide.

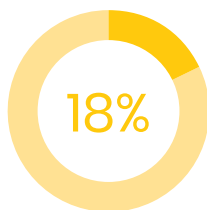
Of 300 participants



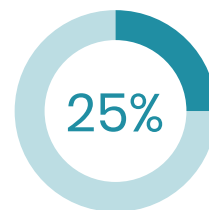
71% had called the Helpline between 1-4 times



11% had called the Helpline between 5-10 times



18% had called the Helpline more than 10 times.



25% of callers were either from First Nations or a Culturally and Linguistically diverse background.



79% of callers rated the overall experience of calling the Helpline either good or great



Here's one of them:



"Blue Knot has been THE MOST amazing service to assist me with my CPTSD. I feel so cared about and supported and understood the few times I've needed to call this number. This service is just life changing for people like me struggling with CPTSD and I would be so lost if it ever closed."

Sadly many of the comments relate to the busyness of the service, and include the waiting times and the challenges in reaching a counsellor. We will continue to explore the possibility of additional resourcing to enable us to support even more people in need.



"Just more funding for more counsellors - it's heart-wrenching to wait and wait and then hang up feeling even worse for trying and not able to speak with someone. When I get through everyone is always incredibly helpful. I stopped calling much - maybe every 6 months or so now - so that other people won't have to wait."

The work of the National Counselling and Referral Service since its inception in late 2019 and including its Correctional Centre work since early 2021 has been life affirming for many of our callers. As the funding for all services supporting people to engage with the Disability Royal Commission concludes by the end of the calendar year 2023, we will be seeking alternate sources of funding to sustain the exemplary NCRS.

National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse

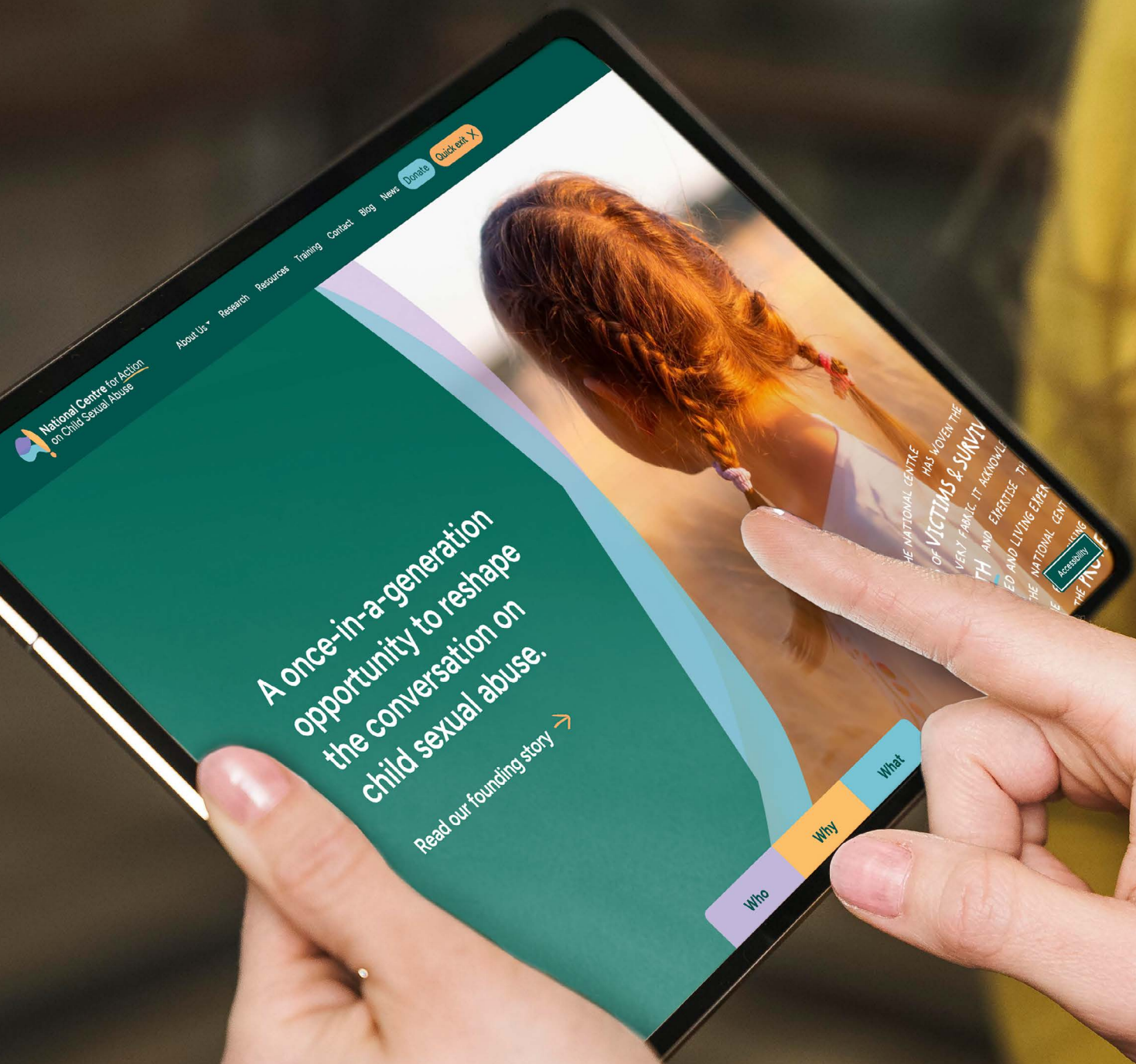
It was also a massive year for the National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse, a key partnership Blue Knot holds with Australian Childhood Foundation and The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Foundation. We are honoured to be a key partner in this once in a lifetime opportunity to reshape the conversation on child sexual abuse.

As we approach the end of our second year since inception, we can all be incredibly proud of the team we have built under the steady leadership of CEO, Leanne Beagley and of the many achievements which hold the National Centre in good stead for the future – from our new brand, resplendent on our purpose-built website (www.ncacsa.org.au) to our growing social media presence and expanding networks. With the expertise of lived and living experience at the centre of everything the National Centre does, we have not only launched our 5-year strategy ‘Here for Change’, but also commissioned \$2.99 million of research projects, and are rolling out a series of learning resources and webinars.

This is only the beginning but together we are serious about real change as we stay determined to deliver on our shared purpose: “To disrupt the dynamics that have failed to stop child sexual abuse and prevented victims and survivors from being believed, validated and supported in the ways they need.”

For Blue Knot it is an honour and a privilege to be helping steer this critical agenda alongside such incredible partners, a growing board and internal team supported by a groundswell movement for change.





A once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape the conversation on child sexual abuse.

[Read our founding story](#) →

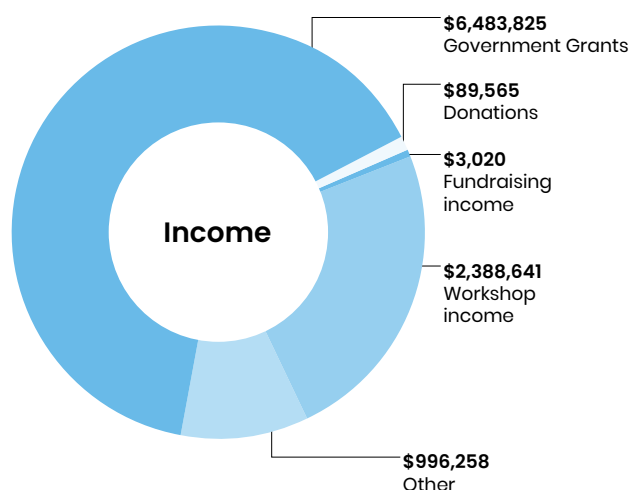
- Who
- Why
- What



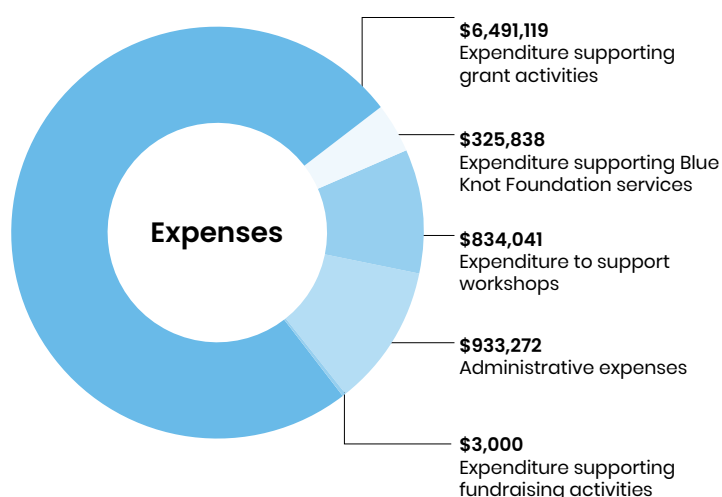
Financial Position

The summarised accounts presented with this report are for the financial year 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023. You can download a copy of the audited financial statements from Blue Knot from the website.

This Financial year 2022 – 2023

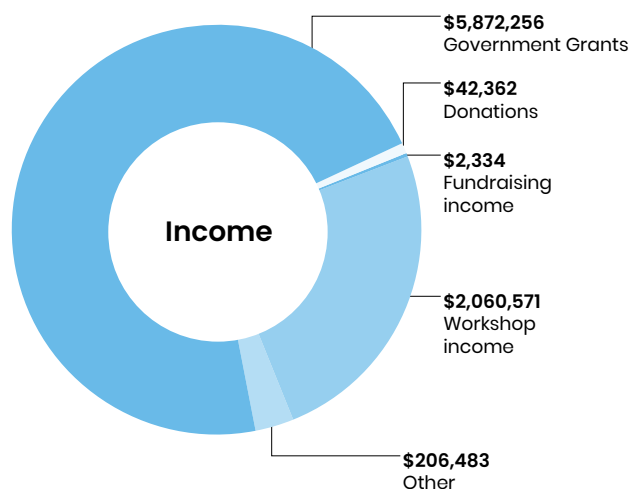


Total Revenue: \$9,961,309

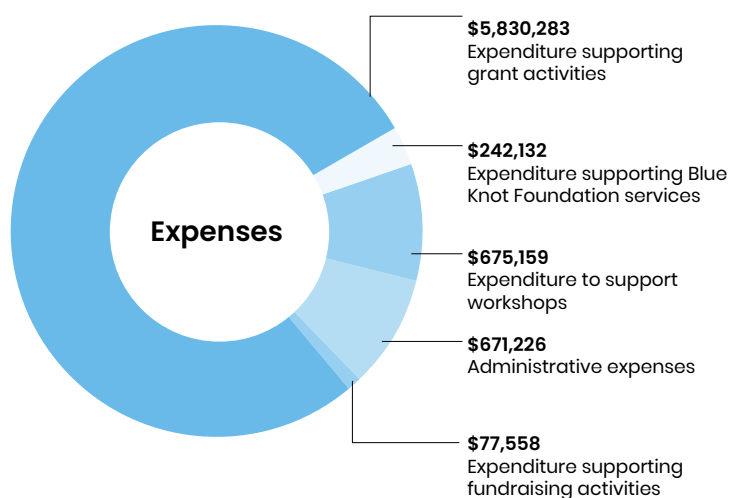


Total Expense: \$8,587,270

Last Financial year 2021 – 2022



Total Revenue: \$8,184,006



Total Expense: \$7,496,358



**Blue Knot Helpline and
Redress Support Service**

1300 657 380

7 Days a Week

between 9am – 5pm AEST/AEDT
or via email helpline@blueknot.org.au

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Member or subscribe to receive our
free monthly e-newsletter and more!

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