

2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT

2023 2024



Phoenix
Professional Development
and Prevention Services



Phoenix
Support & Advocacy
Service Incorporated

For me, it was the knowledge that the right kind of help (Phoenix) was out there after three prior attempts with therapy with other professionals over the years.

Phoenix Client

My family feels, coming to Phoenix, we find the staff very warm and trusting. We feel we are able to talk freely, say what we want and don't hold back. We had no one to turn to, in private, people would not understand or care. We were so desperate and in despair, family in shock. Without Phoenix and the wonderful staff, my family would have fallen apart, and I (Father) would have looked for revenge. Phoenix to us is a Godsend. They are very genuine people. Thank you.

Phoenix Client

I had some shifts regarding how beneficial to my healing these therapeutic activities can be and that has created thirst for more.

Phoenix Client

I've seen many therapists since the age of 16. I am now 40 and for the past year I've been receiving regular therapy sessions with Phoenix. They have offered me so much in terms of experiencing safety, acceptance, stability and feeling empowered. Through their understanding and profound knowledge, I've been able to move through the many faces of this trauma. They have nurtured a place in my world that allows me to have hope and to dream of so many wonderful possibilities for the next 40 years of my life. Phoenix continues to help me understand the complexities of what I experienced and integrate it into a healthier manageable manner. The highly skilled, sensitive and well-informed therapists have offered me a second chance at life.

Phoenix Client

Phoenix provides a safe haven for survivors. I have found my experience with Counsellors here to be light years ahead of what I have encountered elsewhere. I am so grateful to have the benefit of ongoing support in a caring, validating, non-judgmental environment and of their vast experience. The whole set up of the centre and all people in it reflect this also.

Phoenix Client

Since attending Phoenix, I have felt supported and encouraged to share my experiences in a safe and secure environment. My journey has felt painful and traumatic. However, Phoenix has given me the support needed to cope with the journey to healing. My Counsellor is professional, non-judgmental and gives me the freedom to explore my feelings and emotions in a safe and protected environment. I am grateful to be able to access such a great service.

Phoenix Client

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2023-2024
IN REVIEW



Board Members and Staff

2023-2024

2023-2024 - Board Members	Board Position	Appointed
Julie Woodhouse	Chair	October 2014
Leanne Sultan	Deputy Chair and Secretary	October 2016
Amit Kabra	Treasurer	October 2018
Gavin Bagley	Board Member	October 2019
Monica Taylor	Board Member	October 2019
Peter Le	Board Member	October 2019

2023-2024 - Phoenix Staff	Staff Position (all part-time)	Appointed
Louise Lamont	Chief Executive Officer	February 2015
Marc Spradbury	Accountant and Corporate Duties	January 2019
Kaye Doolan	Finance Officer	June 2016
Sally Woods	Senior Counsellor	July 2019
Baljit Carroll	Senior Counsellor	August 2020
Claudia Da Silva	Senior Counsellor	January 2022
Susan Laird	Senior Counsellor	August 2023
Jay Wright	Project Manager and Admin Assistant	September 2022



JULIE WOODHOUSE
BOARD CHAIR

Julie, appointed to the Phoenix Board in 2014 and serving as Chair since 2018, is a recognised leader in the field of education. Currently holding a senior leadership position as a Level 6 Principal at an Independent Public Primary School within the Department of Education WA, her primary focus is on building capacity to ensure that all students achieve, regardless of background factors or personal circumstances. Julie has completed a Masters in Educational Management at the University of Western Australia and has training in coaching and personal assessment profiling. She has taught at all levels and held roles including Area Director, District Director, and Principal in several primary schools. Julie’s commitment to education and innovative approaches has resulted in her being invited to present to many forums including the Senior Women’s Leadership Program. Julie has been and continues to be a highly valued representative on a range of reference groups and working parties for the Department and outside agencies.



LEANNE SULTAN
DEPUTY CHAIR AND
BOARD SECRETARY

Leanne specialised in all aspects of Mental Health during her 45 years at the Department of Health in Western Australia. She held an Australian Health Practitioner’s Regulation Agency Nurses and Midwifery Board Registration and completed several advanced leadership and management training programs. During her tenure, Leanne worked in senior roles, providing leadership and managing human, fiscal, and resource allocation. She established key components for infrastructure support to ensure the delivery of high-quality clinical services aligned with state and national standards. Leanne’s commitment to customer service, integrity, and personal learning was evident throughout her career. Leanne built strong networks within the broader health and mental health system, effectively communicating with diverse stakeholders. She empowered and motivated others, ensuring an optimum level of skills within the organisation. Her services consistently met consumer needs and quality expectations, all within designated timeframes.



AMIT KABRA
TREASURER

Amit is a Chartered Accountant with over 25 years’ experience in finance, risk and governance. His work life has taken him across Asia, Middle East and Australia working with large organisations across diverse industries ranging from banks and insurance companies to agriculture and trading businesses. Amit is a partner in the Audit and Assurance division of RSM Australia and leads the national Government and Public Sector practice. Amit has served in senior leadership roles in the public sector. A father of two and an ardent cricket fan, Amit is committed to giving back to the community and making a positive difference. Amit was formally appointed to the Phoenix Board to the role of Treasurer in November 2018 and brings with him solid financial expertise combined with sound commercial and business acumen.





GAVIN BAGLEY

Gavin's working career includes over 43 years in the Western Australian public sector with extensive experience in Information and Communications Technology (ICT), delivering services and outcomes across various government departments. Gavin holds a Professional membership of the Australian Computer Society and a Master of Business Systems. His current role is a Senior ICT Project Manager which encompasses transformation of online services to the community while increasing organisational effectiveness in service delivery. With over 20 years of experience in senior leadership and executive capacity including his previous Director (Chief Information Officer) roles, Gavin's responsibilities include team leadership along with strategy development and implementation plus program, budget, risk and change management. He is a positive and inclusive leader with a strong focus on developing and supporting his team. Continuous learning and empowering others to support positive change for the benefit of clients and stakeholders is a key motivator for Gavin.



MONICA TAYLOR

Monica is The Deputy Commissioner Commissioning and Programs at the Mental Health Commission, having previously held the inaugural role of Executive Director Mental Health Nursing where she focused on workforce to lead the development of the WAMH Nurse Capability Framework. As Deputy Commissioner Commissioning and Programs, Monica oversees Treatment Services, Prevention, Community Support and Strategic Management teams. Monica is an experienced executive, who has held a variety of leadership roles over the past 15 years and has been a Mental Health Nurse for over 30 years. She has a history of working in the hospital and health care industry within the WA health sector and is skilled in health care management, organisational development and patient safety. Monica has a skill set in clinical governance and has applied this as an Australian Council of HealthCare Standards assessor for over 10 years. Monica has a Masters in Health and Aged Care Management.



PETER LEE

Peter has over 25 years of legal experience, working in private practice, in house and for local government and has general commercial, corporate, property, construction and major projects experience. In private practice, Peter has worked for national, international, and top-tier law firms. Peter is a trusted advisor to many companies, not for profit organisations, charitable and sporting organisations. Peter also sits on various Boards, providing stewardship in legal, governance, risk, and compliance. Board positions have included: Chair of City West Lotteries House; Board member of Centacare Employment & Training; President of the Asian Australian Lawyers Association Inc (WA Branch); Chair of the Asia Business Council of WA Inc. and Chair of the Lawyers in Local Government Network. Peter has been recognised by being: Awarded the WA Volunteer for Multicultural Communities Award 2019; The winner of the Law Society of WA's Lawyer of the Year Award 2021 and Listed amongst the Most Influential Lawyers 2021 by Australasian Lawyers

Overview of Phoenix Professional Development & Prevention Services

Phoenix is committed to creating compassionate communities through early intervention and prevention training, with a focus on adult child sexual abuse survivors. In 2023-2024, Phoenix Professional Development & Prevention Services' accredited trainers delivered tailor-made and subsidised training courses for the community services sector and other professionals. Topics included self-regulation, understanding and responding to trauma, the connection between sexual violence, family and domestic violence and child sexual abuse. The globally recognised Safe and Together™ Core and Overview models were also delivered. These training events were supported by the Federal Government's National Partnerships Agreement Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence, for which Phoenix is most grateful.

TRAINING QUOTES

What was your single biggest takeaway from the training?

- The link between CSA, FDV and coercive control. So eloquently explained. I have already let my colleagues in the FDV space know about the training and its importance to engage with it.*
- It's hard to choose. Tori was knowledgeable, engaging, insightful and passionate in what she was discussing. I could have sat through 3 more days of training!*
- The awareness of the difficulty and obstacles of a successful charge once a statement of assault is made.*
- Stages of grooming, very impactful video of Grace Tame.*

- Separating the event from the individual and making the victim aware too. Providing that hope! The intake assessment information is very useful.*
- Recognising the stages of grooming. Beginning to understand the profound impact that family violence and sexual abuse has on the internal core of victims.*
- What would you like to see next?**
- Anything! So excited to see more trainings around CSA.*
- I would love to attend another training from Tori.*
- Anything that Tori wants to present – she is amazingly informed and knowledgeable presenter.*



SAFE AND TOGETHER™4-DAY CORE TRAINING (ONLINE)

Our partnership with the Safe and Together™ Institute USA continued in 2023-2024 with Phoenix regularly delivering the globally recognised and evidence-based domestic violence training. The three key principles of this model are:

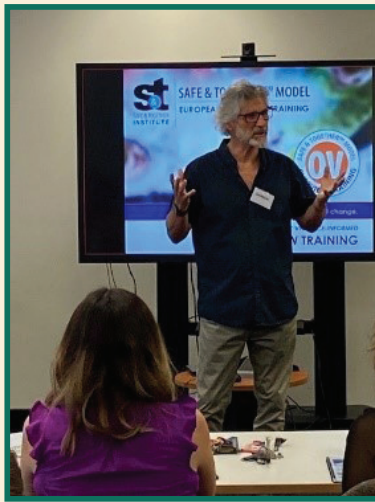
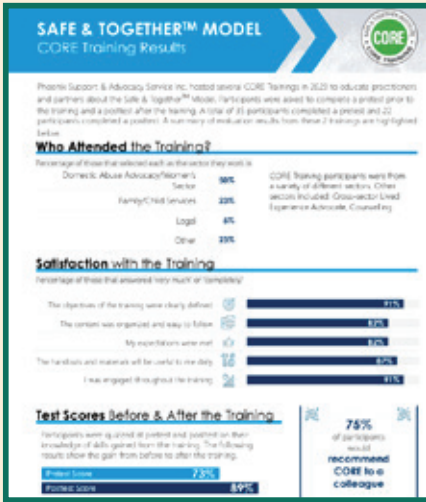
- 1) Keeping the child safe and together with the non-offending parent
- 2) Partnering with the non-offending parent as the default position
- 3) Intervening with the perpetrator to reduce risk and harm to the child

Our trainer, Dawson Ruhl, continues to deliver dozens of FDV training sessions across Australia to hundreds of professionals each year and hosted the following in-person Safe and Together™ training events on behalf of Phoenix.

The Safe and Together™ Model 4-Day CORE was provided in August 2023, February and March 2024 and the 1-day Overview workshop in February 2024 to over 100 participants.

Attendees represented a wide range of organisations including the Armadale Family Violence Hub, Act for Kids, Centrecare, Zonta House, Holyoake, Good Shepherd, OzChild, Salvation Army, Key Assets, Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, Uniting, Family Life, Women's Legal Services WA, Life Without Barriers, AccordWest, and the Pat Giles Centre.

Independent pre and post tests are managed by the Safe and Together™ Institute USA, with outstanding results for our trainer Dawson provided below:



TRAINING QUOTES

Dawson was excellent, very engaging and knowledgeable in the area of DV.

Dawson was extremely knowledgeable, professional, and engaging.

Excellent trainer, extremely knowledgeable across sectors and handled the training group well.

Incredibly knowledgeable and I appreciate his engagement with the class and ability to answer questions and reframe peoples thinking. You can tell he knows exactly what this model is and how to use it for best practice.

Dawson presented as experienced and competent. He was able to facilitate meaningful discussions between the participants of our training group .

Dawson was very engaging and clearly knowledgeable around this area of practice. In particular Dawson managed challenging perspectives well in unpacking participants comments in a supported and constructive way.

I am so grateful that there are facilities like Phoenix available, to provide such an excellent service. I have found a safe environment in which to confront my problems. My first encounter with my Counsellor Claudia, was positive and in the months of counselling, she has continued to guide me in a manner that has given me understanding, new tools, and a feeling of greater stability, confidence and hope for my future. Thank you, Phoenix, and thank you to my Counsellor.

Phoenix Client

I am truly thankful for the help, I had received. The staff and my counsellor, was very helpful and very professional. There is no area that needs improvement. Thank you very much, truly appreciated.

Phoenix Client

I cannot thank everyone enough at Phoenix. Marc and Kaye were always friendly, very approachable and always willing to answer any question I had. Sally was and is incredible. I cannot thank Sally enough. With Sally's expertise, support and wise words I have recovered from a break down and I am now me again. I will always be very grateful and thankful that I came across Phoenix counselling services. Thank you to all .

Phoenix Client

I have been using the service for nearly three years. I have found everybody I've been in contact with are very professional and compassionate. I have come a long way since attending Phoenix and I know there is a long way to go. This counselling thing is extremely hard, and I have been supported all the way. Well done to the clerical staff, they're always pleasant and make you feel welcome and at ease.

Phoenix Client

It was phenomenal. From the reception staff and counsellor, I experienced professional respectful prompt and courteous treatment. I cannot thank you enough for the positive impact you have had on my life. I came to your service a wreck and terrified of relapsing on meth amphetamines and alcohol, but you guys got me through the toughest time of my life, and you can take some credit for my celebration of 14 years clean and sober the day after my last counselling session. Thank you.

Phoenix Client

One sentence gave me insight that will hasten my healing "abuse was done to me" so now I don't have to hold onto any guilt that it was my fault, and I actively engaged or encouraged it.

Phoenix Client



CHAIRPERSON & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER 2023-2024 REPORTS





Chairperson Report

2023-2024



JULIE WOODHOUSE
CHAIRPERSON

As Chair of the Board, I am pleased to reflect on another year of progress and challenges for Phoenix Support and Advocacy Service. Despite the hurdles we've encountered, 2023 to 2024 has been a period of growth, partnerships and continued commitment to supporting adults who have survived childhood sexual abuse.

One of the major changes in 2023 was the sale of the Phoenix property in Coolbinia. This strategic decision allowed us to relocate resources and strengthen our operations with City West Lotteries House, located in West Perth. This collaboration marks a new chapter for Phoenix, and helps us build capacity to better serve our clients.

Another highlight for Phoenix in 2023 was taking on a Secretariat role supporting 10 other organisations delivering Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Services and Indigenous Healing Services across Western Australia and the delivery of Sector Roundtables in March and June 2024. Phoenix was also delighted to host a lunch for Hon. Sabine Winton MLA which provided Minister Winton with the opportunity to hear directly from survivors of child sexual abuse and the benefits they had gained from having access to long-term counselling and support.

Like many not-for-profit organisations, funding continues to present challenges. However, our organisation has responded with resilience,

finding new ways to sustain and expand our services. We take great pride in celebrating the success of our training initiative, which has been a highlight of this year. Our delivery and facilitation of the Safe and Together™ Core Model Training has been met with overwhelming positive feedback from other organisations. The training initiative not only solidifies our reputation in trauma informed practice but also strengthens our ties within the broader sector.

At the heart of our work is the tireless leadership of Louise Lamont, our CEO. Louise's dedication to advancing our mission is unparalleled, and her extensive involvement across critical advisory groups and councils continues to elevate Phoenix's profile. Her contributions on the Children's Policy Advisory Council, Centre for Women's Safety and Wellbeing Sexual Violence Expert Advisory Group, Reference Group for the WA Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Strategy, and the National Advisory Group for the Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse ensure that Phoenix remains at the forefront of best practice in supporting survivors.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to our dedicated Board members: Leanne Sultan, Amit Kabra, Gavin Bagley, Monica Taylor and Peter Le. Your unwavering commitment, advocacy, and professional engagement have been instrumental in guiding Phoenix. Additionally, I would like to acknowledge Leanne Allison, who stepped down from the Board this year due to work commitments. Leanne's contributions have been deeply valued, and she will be missed.

Finally, I want to express my sincere thanks to the Phoenix staff, whose professionalism, compassion, and steadfast dedication to our clients are the backbone of this organisation. Their work is vital in ensuring tailored support is forthcoming to our clients.

As we look to the future, we are filled with optimism and determination to continue expanding our services, advocating for survivors, and making a lasting impact in our community.





Chief Executive Officer's Perspective

THE YEAR IN REVIEW



LOUISE LAMONT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

It is 40 years since Phoenix Support and Advocacy Service Inc. (Phoenix) was officially incorporated in 1984 after being first established by volunteer social worker Nancy Rehfeldt in 1978. In those early years Phoenix, then known as the Incest Survivors Association (ISA) was the only service in metropolitan Perth providing specialised counselling and support for survivors of child sexual abuse. The Board and the Phoenix team are excited to be holding a Conference and Networking Sundowner later in the year to celebrate the organisation's 40th Anniversary.

It is a privilege to lead an organisation that has such a long history serving the West Australian community. Due to the highly specialised nature of the work provided by our organisation, Phoenix has remained a relatively small organisation but one that is making a large impact, as evidenced by the testimonials provided by Phoenix clients.

Our small team is committed to providing quality services and to continuous improvement. The ongoing challenge for most not-for-profits in the community

services sector is sustainability and capacity to respond to high levels of demand, and this is also true for Phoenix.

Given our small size, limited funding, and reduced days of operation, I believe the Phoenix team is definitely "punching above their weight" so to speak however we are always aware of the unmet need in the community and our growing waitlist. Having entered into the family and domestic abuse and sexual violence field of work 35 years ago, I have since witnessed a shift in terms of community attitudes toward family and domestic violence and also a greater commitment by government to addressing these challenges however, when it comes to talking about and addressing familial child sexual abuse particularly, this shift is way behind. It is still very much a 'taboo' topic. I certainly hope it is not another 40 years before sound solutions are in place to eliminate this scourge in our society of 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 5 boys being subjected to child sexual abuse (Australian Child Maltreatment Study).

It is my pleasure to have the opportunity to reflect on what Phoenix has achieved over the last 12 months.

2023-2024 PHOENIX INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Phoenix Training

In 2023-2024, our accredited trainers delivered workshops for professionals via our fee-for-service business arm **Phoenix Professional Development and Prevention Services**, and we have trained more than 100 professionals. Some of the training delivered included the following:

It's Time to Ask

This was a new course on identifying and responding to adult sexual violence and child sexual abuse which I had the pleasure of developing with the very experienced and delightful trainer and facilitator Tori Cooke. This new workshop was launched in December 2023 and delivered again in April 2024. Having received excellent feedback, with 100% of respondents able to use the session information immediately, several more workshops will be held well into 2025.



Safe and Together™ Model Training

Phoenix continued its partnership with the Safe and Together™ Institute USA, delivering domestic violence training that focuses on perpetrator accountability to minimise victim blaming. Trainer Dawson Ruhl hosted multiple in-person training events, receiving outstanding feedback for his knowledge and engagement.

Additional Therapeutic Interventions

Phoenix, once again thanks to the support of the Fremantle Foundation and Zonta Club Northern Suburbs, was able to offer Trauma Sensitive Yoga (TSY) and Mindful Embodied Awareness (MEA) programs online and led by accredited yoga instructor and counsellor Coby Greer. Both programs received positive feedback, with participants appreciating the trauma-informed approach and the practical techniques offered to support and enhance emotional regulation.

Upcoming Phoenix Conference

Following a very successful conference delivered in 2022 Phoenix is very excited to be hosting our second **Creating Compassionate Communities Conference "Ending the Blame Shame Game"** being held in Perth 30 October 2024 followed by a Networking Sundowner to celebrate Phoenix's 40th Anniversary. The conference will have international and national keynote speakers delivering findings from a recent Australian Community Attitudes Study along with a focus on victim blaming and disclosure of sexual violence over the lifespan.

Further details about the Safe and Together™ model and other training offered, have been noted in this report by Phoenix Project Manager Jay Wright. These trainings have been delivered both online and in person and have received positive feedback.

Sector Support and Advocacy

Phoenix has continued our advocacy work with the support of the WA Council of Social Services (WACOSS) and Phoenix was delighted to take on a secretariat support role for the financial year supporting the 10 other service providers delivering Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Services (CSATS) and Indigenous Healing Services (IHS) across the State. This Secretariat initiative was supported by the WA Department of Communities for 2023-2024 and Phoenix was tasked with supporting the CSATS and IHS providers by facilitating Sector Roundtables with the highlight being a conversation with 2021 Australian of the Year, Grace Tame.

Deliverables also included the development of a Service Directory for use by the sector, tailored Newsletters, and the delivery of a Sector Event to launch the National Minimum Practice Standards for responding to child sexual abuse. Phoenix has been contracted to continue this secretariat role for a further 12 months and future Roundtables will provide opportunities to continue conversations about improving child sexual abuse system responses and planning the development of workforce skills and capacity.



▲ Roundtable conversation with Grace Tame & Louise Lamont



▲ Sector in-person Roundtable June 2024 held in Perth

Community Development and Justice Standing Committee Parliamentary Inquiry

Phoenix was invited to present to this committee and to advocate on behalf of survivors of child sexual abuse, and we were grateful for this privilege. This was a wonderful and much needed opportunity to inform the committee members and Parliament of the serious and urgent challenges faced by the sector and highlight the evidence-based studies that have found currently in Australia 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 5 boys are being subjected to child sexual abuse (Australian Child Maltreatment Study). The sector, and Phoenix, faces several challenges in our advocacy work, including:

1. Resource Limitations: Limited funding and resources can constrain the scope and reach of advocacy efforts, making it difficult to address all the needs within the community.

2. Stigma and Awareness: Overcoming the stigma associated with child sexual abuse and sexual violence is a significant challenge. Raising awareness and educating the public about these issues requires continuous effort and innovative strategies.

3. Policy and Legislative Barriers: Navigating complex policy and legislative environments can be challenging. Advocacy efforts often require influencing policy changes, which can be a slow and arduous process.

4. Collaboration and Coordination: Ensuring effective collaboration and coordination among various stakeholders, including government agencies, and not-for-profit community organisations requires building significant trust and identifying a common purpose. Any misalignment of purpose, goals, and priorities can hinder progress.

5. Workforce Challenges: Recruiting and retaining skilled professionals in the field of trauma and sexual violence can be challenging. High turnover rates and the risk of burnout among staff can impact the consistency and effectiveness of services provided.

6. Cultural Sensitivity: Addressing the needs of diverse communities requires culturally sensitive approaches. Ensuring that advocacy efforts are inclusive and respectful of different cultural backgrounds can be complex.

These challenges highlight the need for ongoing support, innovative solutions, and collaborative efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the sector and Phoenix's advocacy work.

Phoenix E-Services

The E-Services offered by Phoenix remain very popular with clients who appreciate accessing counselling support from the safety of their own home or a familiar environment. The E-Services address challenges such as less time off work, assisting with childcare or carer responsibilities, eliminating fuel expenses and lost travel time, and these services offer greater access for those with mobility issues. Phoenix has also refined its Information Technology systems to accommodate this preferred mode of service delivery. Phoenix is also able to offer trauma sensitive yoga for clients and many of our training courses online.

Launch of the "Welcome to Phoenix" Video

A new video was developed by our delightful and talented UWA intern Petunia Shen to help clients

understand Phoenix services, covering topics like operating hours, service fees, and client rights. The video aims to make the initial introduction to Phoenix services more accessible and less overwhelming for clients.

THE PHOENIX TEAM

Phoenix is very fortunate to have a team of professionals that are committed to the organisation and the clients. This commitment is evident in the feedback we receive from the people we serve, and I am proud to lead such a dedicated and skilled team.

It was a pleasure to nominate the Phoenix team this year for an Excellence Award. Although Phoenix was not selected, from my perspective the work of Phoenix is underpinned by a "winning team", and I have stated many times before that the success of a very small organisation relies on a team of individuals willing to take on extra tasks and duties beyond the usual duties required to ensure the service runs professionally and effectively, and the members of the Phoenix team certainly meet this requirement. As many of the team provide online services away from the office we always look forward to when we come together for team building activities such as planning days and team lunches.



▲ Susan Laird, Jay Wright, Kaye Doolan, Sally Woods, Louise Lamont, Marc Spradbury, Baljit Carroll, Claudia Da Silva

Phoenix employs several strategies to support our valued team members:

1. Professional Development: Phoenix invests in continuous professional development for our organisation's staff. This includes providing access to training programs, workshops, and certifications to enhance their skills and knowledge in responding to complex trauma and sexual violence.

2. Supportive Work Environment: Creating a supportive and inclusive work environment is a priority. Phoenix fosters a culture of open communication, mutual respect, and support among team members to



reduce burnout and improve job satisfaction.

3. Supervision and Mentorship: Regular external supervision and internal case management processes are in place to provide guidance and support to staff. This helps in addressing any professional challenges they may face and promotes their growth within the organisation.

4. Flexible Work Arrangements: Offering flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options and flexible hours (where possible), helps staff maintain a healthy work-life balance, which is crucial in preventing burnout.

5. Recognition and Rewards: Recognising and rewarding the hard work and dedication of staff members is important. Phoenix acknowledges the contributions of the team in various ways and the clients provide encouraging testimonials that make the work very rewarding when their progress is evident.

6. Recruitment and Retention Strategies: Phoenix supports retention by a commitment to creating a positive work environment and offering benefits when we can.

7. Wellness: Phoenix supports self-care opportunities and ensures caseloads for client work allows for adequate time to complete other tasks associated with clinical work.

By addressing these areas, Phoenix aims to build a resilient and dedicated workforce capable of effectively supporting Phoenix clients and the organisation's values and purpose.



SECTOR NETWORKING

In early 2024, Phoenix attended the annual WA Council of Social Services (WACOSS) Sector Breakfast along with other members and WA Government Cabinet Ministers.



▲ WA Premier Roger Cook
WACOSS Breakfast 2024



▲ Louise Lamont & Director General
Mike Rowe



A keynote address was delivered by the WA Premier Roger Cook. This event offers a great networking opportunity and is one that the sector keenly looks forward to.

Phoenix appreciated invitations being accepted by **Hon. Sabine Winton MLA** as Minister for Early

Childhood Education; Child Protection; Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; and Community Services, to attend the Sector Launch of the Minimum Practice Standards and the first online Sector Roundtable. Minister Winton also took time from her busy schedule to meet with some Phoenix clients who courageously and very powerfully shared some of their healing and recovery journey and helped to facilitate the Minister's further understanding of the impact for those subjected to child sexual abuse.

Following the Sector Roundtable held in-person in June 2024 a Networking Sundowner was held with more than 100 representatives from the community services and government sectors and the Sundowner was addressed by **Hon. Katrina Stratton MLA** who was introduced by the Department of Communities Director General Mike Rowe.



REPRESENTING PHOENIX

In April 2024 I was honoured to represent Phoenix when presenting to the Legislative Assembly of WA – Community Development and Justice Standing Committee. Phoenix's representation on several committees and Advisory Groups over the years has also allowed the organisation to establish strong and valued networks within the sector both at the local, State, and National levels. Membership of these committees has and continues to offer many opportunities for strategic advocacy, collaboration, and growing collegial networks.



▲ National Strategy Advisory Group Meeting held in Brisbane in June 2024

As CEO I am delighted to represent Phoenix on the committees listed below.

- WACOSS Children's Policy Advisory Council (CPAC)
- Advisory Group for the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse

PHOENIX GOVERNANCE

Phoenix has benefited from stable membership within the Board committed to continuous improvement of the organisation's governance processes, and this has been achieved under their skilled, dedicated, and consistent leadership.

The Phoenix staff and I appreciate the commitment and volunteer time given by **Phoenix Board members** and we appreciate that the Board encourages and supports all our endeavours. The financial guidance provided by Treasurer Amit Kabra to Phoenix Accountant Marc Spradbury, and I, is appreciated.

Phoenix Chair Julie Woodhouse and Deputy Chair/ Secretary Leanne Sultan have provided Phoenix with long-term highly effective leadership for which we are most grateful. Their ongoing value adding support provided to me in my role as CEO, and to the organisation, is not taken for granted and they contribute greatly to the efficient and effective management of Board meetings.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

As Phoenix enters another decade of service delivery still in an uncertain funding environment, we face the same ongoing challenges in terms of sustainability and meeting service demand. Knowing though that our work makes a difference and is an essential service we remain optimistic toward the future. We believe interesting times lay ahead as the world enters a new era of Artificial Intelligence and we hold hope that this can be safely and ethically applied to our work and in service to humanity.

CLIENT QUOTES

This is what some clients had to say in response to the question **"What suggestions do you have to improve Phoenix services?"**

None – It's a wonderful service.

I really can't fault the service, it has changed my life, and I attribute that to my counsellor's skills and approach to my issues. Most positive counselling experience ever.

I can't think of one as I have found the Phoenix service to be second to none and totally superlative.

Nothing! My counsellor was amazing and has helped me achieve so much!! Thank you.

None. I found the environment very supportive and the sessions very helpful.

SURVEY ABOUT PHOENIX SERVICES 2024

100% respondents reported Phoenix Services met expectations, felt welcome and safe and would recommend Phoenix services to others.

100% respondents rated the service provided by the Phoenix reception admin staff as 4.7 out of 5 stars.

SURVEY ABOUT PHOENIX SERVICES 2023

100% respondents reported Phoenix Services met expectations, felt welcome and safe, and would recommend Phoenix services to others.

100% respondents rated the service provided by the Phoenix reception admin staff as 5 out of 5 stars.

OUR RANGE OF THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS

**Phoenix Shining Light on Child
Sexual Abuse Healing & Recovery**

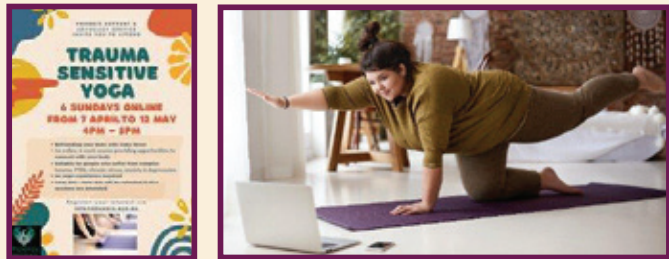
Trauma Sensitive Yoga Program - Virtual Online Course

Once again, Phoenix offered our Trauma Sensitive Yoga (TSY) program with the aim of supporting current and former clients suffering from complex trauma. If assessed as group-ready, clients then joined our specialist trainer, Coby Greer, for online sessions via Zoom. Coby is a counsellor with more than 25 years' experience in human services, a certified yoga teacher and Trauma Centre, Trauma Sensitive Yoga facilitator.

The six-week, 1-hour, online courses were offered at a discounted rate, and the course fee was fully refunded if all six sessions were attended. Sincere thanks to the Fremantle Foundation donor and the Northern Suburbs Zonta Club for providing funds to support the offering of these heavily subsidised courses. These courses were held in July and August 2023 and April and May 2024.

The post evaluation provided extremely positive feedback and testimonials including:

- 100% of respondents stated the TSY course met their expectations
- 100% believed they gained benefit from participating in the course
- 100% felt welcomed, safe and respected



Client Testimonials

"I know yoga but I had no idea how much I would learn through Coby that helps me in day to day life. Would strongly recommend Coby's sessions to anyone that struggles with trauma!"

"The Trauma Sensitive Yoga course was a gentle reminder of how I'm in control of my own body and to feel more appreciation for what my body does for me. Whilst accepting that is not always capable because it needs more love, rest and care. The course also showed me how much I've missed being on a yoga mat, how good it feels to me and that is a component of my self-care that I would like to include again more regularly."

"Coby is a wonderful yoga teacher. She is gentle and respectful. The online course with the video off worked really well for me as there was no opportunity for social comparisons and negative thoughts about my abilities. There was great freedom in how you could participate. I highly recommend the course for anyone who has experienced trauma."

Mindful Embodied Awareness Program

For the first time, we were very excited to offer Phoenix clients a new course designed by Coby Greer. The Mindful Embodied Awareness (MEA) program was delivered over six consecutive Sundays, for 45-minutes online via Zoom. The class was held between April & May 2024, and provided past and current clients with the opportunity to unwind and to connect to their bodies through trauma-informed gentle movement, mindfulness meditation and breathwork. Each session offered a new mindfulness practice to add to client's personal toolbox of grounding and self-regulation practices. Themes included:

- Orienting and boundaries
- Internal resourcing – grounding and centering
- Breathwork
- Mindfulness meditation
- Energising practices
- Restoration and integrative practices

The course aimed to provide a nourishing space for those interested in weaving mindfulness and body-based wisdom into their daily lives. The overwhelmingly positive client testimonials certainly affirm this aim was met! Similarly to the Trauma Sensitive Yoga session, the MEA post evaluation provided extremely positive feedback and testimonials:

- 100% of respondents stated the MEA course had met their expectations
- 100% believed they gained benefit from participating in the MEA course
- 100% felt welcomed, safe and respected

Client Testimonials

"I loved the mindfulness meditation, the energising practices and the restoration. I hadn't done anything like the energising practices before and so it was really helpful. I think I can use these techniques with my children as well, to help manage their anxiety."

"Coby spent each session carefully teaching each topic so that I left with a great understanding of the practise and why it works. Each session would leave me feeling more confident in my ability to live life freely and have the courage to do more as I implemented the sessions into my day-to-day life."

"Session 1-4 changed my day-to-day life for the better. Coby taught me how to stay calm during situations when my body goes into fight or flight. Preventative methods, recognising what is happening while it is happening, how to calm my body and mind down to return to normal functioning and stay that way until I can go home again. Brought confidence to attend more social activities and even have fun! Sessions five and six are very useful when getting to sleep at night."

"This experience was very life-changing for me, especially as I have been going through a very difficult time in my life. It helped me gain some skills I can use every day, and this motivated me to learn more."

"I found the boundaries and values topic quite helpful as it made me reflect on myself, I find it difficult to verbalise my boundaries. But this helped greatly."



Launch of Our New "Welcome to Phoenix" Video

Following an internal review of our organisation's client welcome pack, it was determined that the initial introduction to Phoenix services forms and policies can be a little overwhelming for clients. It was considered that an audiovisual education tool may help explain all the information that is contained in the various forms and documents. A video was developed in-house by our UWA McCusker intern, Petunia Shen. The video provides a step-by-step guide for completing the forms prior to the first counselling session and explains the organisation's policies and expectations relevant to clients. Topics include:

- Operating hours
- Service fees
- Cancellation and non-attendance terms
- Privacy policy
- Client rights and responsibilities
- E-service tips
- Emergency and support services information

We are very proud of the outcome of this initiative, and we're excited about launching this video on our website! Please have a look on the "Clients" tab of the Phoenix website for the full video and shorter segments <https://www.phoenix.asn.au/clients/>



Grooming

OVERVIEW BY SALLY WOODS

Why didn't she tell me, why didn't I know about it?

These are common concerns I encounter by non-offending parents of adult survivors, and it is to them that I write this article. I think the shock and bewilderment of non-abusing parents comes from their lack of knowledge of the grooming process. Growing up in the 1960's and 70's public health campaigns were alerting parents and children alike to 'stranger danger' with messages of: 'avoid going anywhere where you don't know anybody,' 'don't believe what strangers tell you' And 'don't accept treats or lollies from a stranger.' Implicit in these messages is that the people closest to you, the people you know, your family, friends, teachers, doctors, religious leaders are all safe. In fact, what we now know is that 90% of sexual abuse victims know their perpetrator and these perpetrators can appear friendly, charming, and caring to their victim and their wider circle, because if the perpetrator is to get what they want they must create a convincing smokescreen of kindness and approachability to the child and parents alike.

This is done through a process of grooming to gain the trust of the child and caregivers, and it can insidiously take place over months or even years to increase the child's acceptance of the physical contact and ensuring no questions are raised by family or friends. Grooming by sex offenders is a gradual, calculated process that ensnares children into a world in which they are ultimately coerced and sometimes convinced that they are a willing part of the sex abuse.

This face-to-face grooming needs to be distinguished from online grooming processes where entrapment can be shockingly quick as these can occur on private interactive platforms including instant message apps, social media, gaming sites, emails and chatrooms. Offenders use these as a gateway to initiate contact with a child, often pretending to be a child too, and once they have established a rapport will often direct the child to other platforms with image sharing capabilities to elicit photos, videos, or establish meetings. www.ThinkUKnow.org.au is an excellent resource to educate parents on how to help their children stay safe using the internet.

Academics and law enforcement officers have proposed there are six stages of sexual grooming. These six stage summaries and statistics are sited from Grace Tame's website:

1) Identifying and targeting a victim

The offender targets a victim by sizing up the child's naivety and vulnerability – emotional neediness, isolation, loneliness, lower self-confidence, and physical attractiveness. Child sex abuser researchers have found that among perpetrators they select victims based on:

- 42% physical characteristics
- 27% clothing
- 18% physical smallness

Children with less parental oversight are also viewed as more desirable prey.

2) Gaining child and caregiver's trust

The sex offender gains trust by watching and gathering information about the child, getting to know their needs and how to fill them. In this regard, sex offenders mix effortlessly with responsible caretakers because they generate warmth and compassion, only more awkward or gooey intrusiveness, provokes the suspicion of partners versus a calculated sex offender who is better

disciplined to know how to get near, without revealing themselves. The grooming sex offender on the prowl is akin to a spy with as much stealth. The abuser gets to know the child's situation, interests, and ways to exploit them. The abuser may introduce secrecy to build trust with the child and distance the child from their parents or caregiver, such as allowing the child to do something the parents would not allow. During the trust- gaining phase, an abuser may:

- Give small gifts or play games
- Make promises or share secrets
- Provide individual attention
- Discuss personal life
- Provide access to cigarettes, drugs or alcohol (for teens)

If confronted about their behaviour by parents, groomers may accuse the child of acting out or lying. Once the offenders have fulfilled promises and put on a show of trustworthiness, they will start to ask for favours in return. The process is gradual and may start with a seemingly innocuous touch, like a hug.

3) Filling a need / playing a role in the child's life

Once an abuser begins to fulfill the child's needs with gifts, affection, or attention, the perpetrator becomes more important in the child's life and may become idealised. For a teenager they may enjoy the 'exclusive nature' of their 'loving' relationship as it is non-threatening and can talk freely. The perpetrator strives to be a sole provider of something that is special to the child such as:

- A mobile device
- Alcohol, drugs, cigarettes
- A ride home
- Money
- Sweets, pets
- Friendship, attention

SALLY WOODS
SENIOR COUNSELLOR
EMDR PRACTITIONER



Parents who notice other adults offering gifts, extra attention, affection, or are over eager to caregive, then this should raise extra concern and vigilance.

4) Isolating the child and creating secrecy around the relationship

The grooming sex offender uses the developing of a special relationship with the child to create situations in which they are alone together. This isolation further reinforces a special connection. Babysitting, tutoring, and sports coaching all enables this isolation. However, family member offenders have the easiest access in the home environment, with 41% of offenders sneaking into the child's bedroom.

A special relationship can be reinforced further when an offender cultivates a sense in the child that s/he is loved or appreciated in a way that others, not even parents, provide. Parents may unwittingly feed into this through their own appreciation for the unique relationship. At this stage, groomers often emphasise the special nature of the relationship and urge secrecy. They may accuse others of being 'jealous' 'overprotective' or seeking to 'ruin what they've got.' Excuses for keeping interactions private are designed to make victims feel flattered and special.

5) Sexual contact

Grooming often begins with nonsexual touching to desensitize the child so that they do not resist a more sexual touch. They can start off with hugging, tickling, wrestling, and over time, the adult exploits the child's curiosity and trust and begins to progressively add sexual components to the relationship. Predators may use bathing or tucking the child into bed at night to initiate sexualised actions as a 'routine part of care.' When teaching a child, the grooming sex offender can shape the child's sexual preferences and can manipulate what a child finds exciting. The child comes to see him/herself as a more sexual being and to define the relationship with the offender in more sexual and special terms.

6) Maintaining control

Those who commit child sexual abuse commonly use threats or guilt to maintain power over the child. The offender wants the child to keep the abuse a secret and ensure the child's continued participation and to achieve this the offender will engage in different forms of manipulation and control:

- Blame the victim: convincing the child that they 'wanted, encouraged, or enjoyed it.'

- Use fear: 'If you tell your mum about this, she is going to hate you' or 'we will both get into trouble'
- Threaten the victim: saying that 'no one will believe you' or 'if you tell, we will go to jail' or 'if you tell, your mum is going to get hurt.'
- Increase Violence: using physical force or threats of force against family members.
- Use sympathy: making the child believe no one else understands the perpetrator.
- Employs confusion: claiming what happened was 'normal behaviour'

Children in these entangled relationships, and at this point they are entangled, may feel that the loss of the relationship and the consequences of exposing it will humiliate and render them even more unwanted.

In my clinical experience adult survivors reactions to these six stages of grooming can be a mixture, of shock, hurt, and aloneness as they comprehend the perpetrator's behaviour was not showing them love, as they may have been led to believe through the grooming process, but instead was one of calculated self-gratification. Survivors can also have deep seated anger and rage that nobody protected them from the perpetrator within their own family circle. It is important family members of survivors know that just because the abuse has stopped, their pain has not, and even though the survivor is now in an adult body, they can still have the strong bodily felt sense of all their unmet needs as a child to feel safe, be seen, heard, and understood.

In working with non-offending parents, I have found healing for them involves a multifaceted approach recognising and working to address the needs of the survivor, the parent's needs, and the relationship between the two of them. This includes:

1. Believing the survivor's account of what happened to them.

One of the main reasons survivors did not disclose their abuse experiences as a child is because the perpetrator told them 'They would get into a lot of trouble' or 'it's our special secret to be kept.' Years later into adulthood survivors continue to remain silent and not disclose their abuse because of the shame and stigma that still weighs heavy and is worsened by the fear of not being believed. This is why it is crucial when a survivor takes the courageous step to disclose their trauma the non-offending parent authentically and unequivocally believes them.

2. Condemn and cut off from the perpetrator

In my experience if a non-offending parent believes an adult survivor but does not openly condemn and cut off relations with the perpetrator then repair and healing of the relationship with the survivor may be tenuous at best or worse completely severed. It should be recognised treating the complexity of emotions that arise, and managing any unfinished business with the relationship of the perpetrator can be a lengthy process. This can be further complicated, for example by financial dependence of the non-offending parent on the perpetrator.

3. Saying sorry you were not there to protect your child.

Many years may have passed since the child sexual abuse took place, but the physical and emotional pain are often still being relived in the form of flashbacks and nightmares. The abuse is very traumatic but the absence of a protective, caring, attuned adult makes the wounds deeper and harder to heal, however repair can begin when the non-offending parent acknowledges with sincere apology for having not been there to protect their child from the abuse. In my experience the sincere felt apology must be followed up with actions of being consistently present and focusing on the survivor's needs with authentic empathy otherwise the apology is felt hollow and tokenistic.

4. Meet the survivor where they are at.

The survivor grew up too afraid to speak and kept themselves safe by attuning to and meeting the emotional needs of others. Now is an opportunity to give the survivor what they missed having as a child: a loving relationship that provides protection and safety, soothing, being attuned to their negative states, delight in them, and foster their best self-development. To aid healing and repair the non-offending parent needs to provide consistent support messages and behaviours that demonstrate to the survivor they are worthy, and they do matter. This can include providing a safe confidential space to talk about whatever the survivor feels ready to talk about, sooth and hold their pain, attune to their needs to report or not report to the police, talk or not talk, ask if they want any practical help, express what about them you are proud of, including how they survived, and offer help for how they want to go forward. Always ask, never assume, even when it comes from good intent because an abused child was always 'done to' so to be consulted and given choice can be a significant start of them experiencing

empowerment and disconfirming their negative self-belief they are unworthy.

5. Have compassion for yourself and refute the shame.

As the non-offending parent, you were also groomed, and it was not your intent for your child to be abused. If you let the feelings of shame, put you into silence, secrecy and negative judgement of yourself you are paralleling the same controlling power the abuser had over your child. It is important to be a role model for your child and contradict the shame you feel with the antidote of, speaking out about the abuse with trusted persons, acknowledge you are not a bad person, and practice being kind and compassionate to yourself.

6. Seek out your own trauma counselling.

Lastly but by no means least, it is important for non-offending parents to have their own trauma counselling as they need a safe space to express and process their own feelings that can include overwhelming shock, confusion, guilt, anger and grief. I have found these emotions can be exacerbated if intergenerational trauma is present and is not addressed.

A consequence intergenerational trauma can mean a parent can struggle or can lack capacity to attune to the emotional needs of their child whilst they were growing up. This is because seeing their child upset can trigger their own childhood emotional unmet needs and they automatically use their survival coping strategy of dissociation. Whilst it is helpful to have this understanding, it does not condone the lack of parental protection. To break the cycle of intergenerational trauma all parties need to take responsibility for change, healing and recovery and this is an important part of the counselling service provided at Phoenix.

It is my hope from reading this article non-offending parents can turn from their stuck position of ruminating questions of 'why didn't she tell me and why didn't I know about it' to one of action, healing and empowerment for themselves and their adult child asking going forward 'how can I now see, hear and meet my own and my adult child's needs?'

Written by: Sally Woods, Phoenix Senior Counsellor

References:

Grace Tame Website and work of Lewis & Llewellyn
<https://sexualabuselawfirm.com/blog/what-is-sexual-grooming-identifying-the-6-stages/>



Self-Care for Counsellors

OVERVIEW FROM BALJIT CARROLL & SUSAN LAIRD

SELF CARE: What is Self-Care? Why is it important for counsellors/therapists? What does it look like?

In this day and age of a plethora of self-help books, self-care as a term has become touted as a necessity and not a luxury. Perhaps this is also, in part influenced by the change in the role of women who have been a big part of the workforce now for several decades. Women are no longer fully assigned to be the primary carers, at least in theory. There is wide acceptance that fathers take a much bigger part in the parenting role, and that domestic duties at best are the domain of both parents.

However, in practice things can look quite different – women often still put more pressure on themselves to be ‘super women’ and attempt to tackle not just paid employment but can still take on more of the responsibility on the domestic front as well. In general, whether this is biologically, or socially driven, it is mainly women that present more readily to therapy, and often with tiredness, stress, and at times burnout, due to internal and external pressures. Add to this the mix of Child Sexual Abuse with all the associated current and historical issues, and our client’s presentation is often that of anguish, and trauma.

Therapy to begin with is to assist with containing the symptoms of suffering felt in the present, and then when stabilised, much time is given to the client being encouraged and supported to practice self-care. This means to no longer put themselves last on the list of priorities, but to learn to value, and take care of their own needs. Therapists collaborate with the client to see the importance of putting the oxygen mask on themselves first, before assisting their children and others.

As therapists working with clients, we are at an increased risk of experiencing vicarious trauma, also known as secondary trauma or compassion fatigue.

This refers to the emotional and psychological stress that can occur when we are exposed to the traumatic experiences of the clients we work with. Symptoms of vicarious trauma can include intrusive thoughts or images related to our clients' trauma, avoidance of reminders of traumatic experiences, increased irritability or emotional numbness, and disruptions in sleep or concentration which therefore can have an effect on our own emotional wellbeing which can impact both our professional performance and personal life.

Fundamentally, self-care is about prioritising our own well-being to ensure that the emotional demands of our work do not lead to vicarious trauma. By supporting resilience, maintaining boundaries, seeking support, and balancing professional responsibilities with personal needs, we can protect ourselves from the negative effects of absorbing others' trauma.

In order to promote this authentically, the therapist needs to have a practicing model of their own to care for their own needs in the busyness, and often conflicting pressures on their time. We, like the clients, can feel time poor, conflicted between the needs of our family, work, professional development etc., and may not be aware of our own needs, until we get blatant warning signs.

In June, we had the opportunity to attend a retreat specifically for therapists. It was encouraged by The Board and our CEO, and this opportunity was taken up by two members of the Phoenix clinical team. The retreat was held at the beautiful Nathanie’s Rest property up in the hills and was held over a weekend. We were treated to nurturing, exquisite food, but also food for the soul. Our facilitator created a safe, sacred space where we were able to be open and share the joys and challenges of our work.

Self-care can be many different things to many people. It is limited only by our imagination. Oftentimes, we have forgotten when we have felt most alive, most vital and functioning optimally. The weight of responsibilities can get to us. So, during the retreat we were encouraged to remember these things. For some, it was tuning into what brought them to the work in the first place, and how to remain effective and have job satisfaction.

This part is exciting, as it includes the 5 main domains of self-care – physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual. The retreat included music, poetry, walking the labyrinth which signifies our journey in life, and in our work. The idea of living life meaningfully and with purpose, sharing challenges as well as the joys of our work were all part of the retreat process. Having a real fire warmed not only our bodies as it was cold, but also our hearts. We came away feeling refreshed, renewed, and reenergised to continue to work with people who are hurting and suffering from trauma, which happened to them when they were children. It is heartbreaking but also a privilege to sit with people in the counselling space and hold hope for them, that they can and will get better. That they deserve to also live a life of purpose and meaning, despite the massive setback of their trauma.

We both felt the benefit of taking this opportunity to attend the retreat, but also had our own unique experience over the weekend. Here is a small part of our individual experience:

Baljit shared that “Nature is such a soothing healer – the ocean, the trees, are examples, and on the retreat the natural environment provided lush green beauty. The poetry of John O’Donohue is a balm also, and synchronistically, the retreat facilitator shared some of his work with us. I also get immense pleasure from



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BALJIT CARROLL
SENIOR COUNSELLOR

taking photos of the natural world, as I did on this retreat”.

Susan shared that on Sunday we attended sound healing. “This was my first experience, and it was powerful. Our facilitator had Gongs, singing bowls and he played the digeridoo, I felt the sounds vibrate right through my body. It transported my body and mind to a place of absolute peace and calm. Being surrounded by the trees and at time only hearing the birds and the breeze and the rain was tranquil. I felt re-energised when we left for home later that afternoon”.

It is accepted in the field that the degree to which we face our own fears, come to terms with unresolved issues and work towards integration, is the degree to which we can assist clients to do the same. In other words, it is vital as facilitators of clients becoming healthy and whole, to truly practice what we preach.



“May the nourishment of the earth be yours,
May the clarity of light be yours,
May the fluency of the ocean be yours,
May the protection of the ancestors be yours.
And so may a slow wind work these words
Of love around you, an invisible cloak, to mind your life”

Taken from: Beannacht/Blessing by John O’Donohue



2023-2024 FINANCES



Financial Report Overview

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Phoenix recorded an audited operating surplus for the financial year ending 2024 (2023 – deficit of **\$13K**). The surplus includes a capital profit realised from the sale of property at 404 Walcott Street, Coolbinia. Gross revenue included state funding, grants, training fees, and fees for service. State and grant funding represented a reduced percentage of **64%** of total revenue (2023 - **82%**), due to the sale of the Phoenix property. Service delivery costs as a percentage of total revenue (**84%**) were at similar levels to the previous financial year. Interest earned from the investment of funds from the property sale offset the rental expense of new office space.

Investment in information technology support has been maintained to improve workplace efficiencies in the organisation. On the balance sheet, total assets and total liabilities increased from the previous financial year, resulting in the organisation’s operating surplus.

Overall, the financial position of the organization is healthy, with accumulated cash reserves and all staff entitlements were accrued in full at year-end.



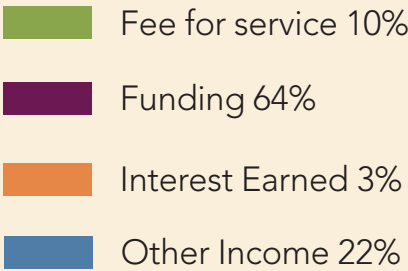
 **MARC SPRADBURY**
ACCOUNTANT & CORPORATE DUTIES

Service Delivery Funding provided by:

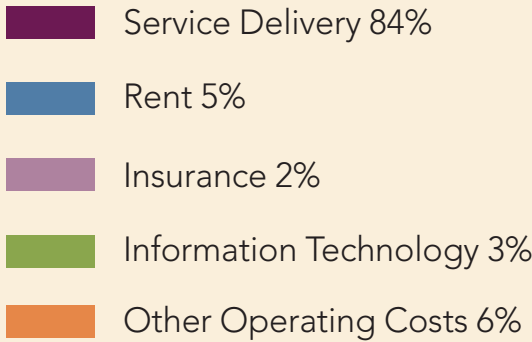


*Department of
Communities*

REVENUE



EXPENDITURE





**OUR
ADVOCACY**

Our Advocacy

1. SECRETARIAT ROLE PROVIDING SECTOR SUPPORT

Phoenix was contracted in 2023 by the Department of Communities to deliver a 12-month central coordination role. A comprehensive range of activities were undertaken during the reporting period. Secretariat services were provided for the other 10 Western Australian Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Services (CSATS) and Indigenous Healing Services (IHS). The secretariat services are delivered by Phoenix Project Manager Jay Wright and overseen by Phoenix’s CEO. Activities across the period broadly included:

- Sector advocacy and support
- Information and resource sharing
- Sourcing professional development opportunities
- Consideration of sector workforce development needs
- Representation of sector and survivor issues related to child sexual abuse in policy and strategy development
- Promotion of contemporary best practice and minimum standards

2. SECTOR EVENT AND LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARDS

In National Child Protection Week, on 6 September 2023, more than 70 people gathered at City West Lotteries House for a Sector Event and the launch of the “Minimum Practice Standards for Specialist and Community Support Services Responding to Child Sexual Abuse” (Minimum Practice Standards). It was a privilege for WA to coordinate and host this national launch, and Phoenix appreciated being selected to do so on behalf of all the WA CSATS & IHS.



Following afternoon tea and networking with Rebekah Kilpatrick, Head, National Office for Child Safety, the Hon. Sabine Winton MLA, Minister for Child Protection and other related portfolios delivered an address. The Hon. Mark Dreyfus KC MP, Federal Attorney-General, then officially launched the Minimum Practice Standards via video. Amanda Paton delivered an overview of the Standards which encompass a set of principles to promote safe and effective services that support individuals who have been impacted by child sexual abuse.



Attendees to the Sector Event and Launch of the National Standards included:

- Peak Bodies: WACOSS Children’s Policy, Advisory Council, Community Employers WA (CEWA), and Centre for Women’s Safety & Wellbeing (CWSW)
- Organisations & Individuals Committed to Child Safety & Wellbeing
- WA Government Department of Communities, Justice, Legal Aid, Victims of Crime Unit, and the National Centre for Action on Child Sexual Abuse (NCACSA)
- National Strategy Advisory Group Members, Hetty Johnson & Kathryn Fordyce
- Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP)
- Megan Graham & National Office for Child Safety (NOCS) Team members
- Representatives from the Indigenous Healing Services (IHS) and Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Services (CSATS).



3. WA CSATS/IHS NEWSLETTERS

Four Sector Newsletters were produced in 2023 and 2024 and distributed throughout our networks, including to peak body industry representatives. Each newsletter provides relevant updates for the sector, links to articles, resources, latest research and events. These were also used to showcase WA’s CSATS and IHS services.



4. WA CSATS/IHS SERVICE DIRECTORY

A WA CSATS/IHS service directory was produced by Phoenix mostly for internal use only by services and not for wider distribution. The Directory included information on key program contacts and staff in the various CSATS and IHS teams located across the state. It also included an overview of services, their location/s, opening hours, range of services and interventions provided, along with criteria for client referrals.

5. INFORMATION SHARING

Phoenix’s committee membership has facilitated the sharing of relevant information with the CSATS and IHS sector (except for embargoed information). This membership offers the opportunity for feedback from the sector to be provided to these groups and to inform various projects and strategies. CEO Louise Lamont is a current/recent member of the following committees:

- Advisory Group for the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse
- WACOSS Children’s Policy Advisory Council
- Reference Group for the WA Strategy for Preventing and Responding to Sexual Violence
- Women’s Health Network Sexual Violence Expert Advisory Group

6. SECTOR ROUNDTABLES – ONLINE MARCH SERIES

Across three days in early March 2024, Phoenix hosted a series of four, online Roundtable events. Minister Winton and Policy Adviser, Nicola Bird, joined the final roundtable meeting on 7 March, along with 22 CSATS

and IHS CEOs and Senior Managers. The increasing complexity of referrals, managing expanding waitlists, high volume of subpoena requests, recruitment and retention of suitably qualified staff, and funding were considered universal issues across the services. The four online Roundtables in March 2024 were held for the following groups from the sector:

- Clinicians working with Adults
- Support & Administration Staff
- Clinicians working with Children
- Senior Managers & Chief Executives

7. SECTOR ROUNDTABLES – JUNE

Across 4-5 June 2024, the long anticipated, in-person Roundtable events were held in the Ballroom at the Novotel Perth Langley. We are delighted to report that 80 delegates attended Day 1 presentations, 106 attended the Grace Tame Keynote and Sundowner event, and 61 participated in the Day 2 workshops. Delegates who represented all 11 organisations delivering the CSATS & IHS programs flew or drove in from across the State.

The diverse training needs of the sector resulted in a generalist program for Day 1, whilst Day 2 included 2 concurrent sessions. Highlights included the conversation with Grace Tame, the Panel discussion with representatives from the Criminal Justice system, and the Communities of Practice workshop and CEOs and senior managers meeting.

Thank you to all those who participated and contributed to the event’s success, and particularly the Department of Communities for supporting the coming together of this very small but highly critical workforce.

The event was opened by Aunty Millie Penny, with Phoenix CEO Louise Lamont then providing an overview, including the aim of the Roundtables being a celebration of innovation and commitment by the CSATS and IHS workforce, in a challenging environment.



Morning session MC Michael Chester, Uniting WA Co-CEO, then introduced eight Panel members comprising sector experts from the following:

- Sex Crime Division - WA Police Force – Hamish McKenzie



- Court Counselling & Support Services - Dept. of Justice – Paul Kerin
- Victims of Crime Unit (VCU) – Dept. of Justice – Kati Kraszlan
- Women's Legal Service WA (WLSWA) – Dr Jennie Gray
- Aboriginal Family Legal Services – Gail Dodd
- Parkerville MIST Program – Kim Brooklyn
- Child Witness Service (CWS) – Dept. of Justice – Tracy Brandis
- Specialist Child Protection Unit – Dept. of Communities – Amber Fabry



Over two hours, the Panel addressed a range of pre-submitted questions from participants, as well as questions opened to delegates on the floor. The discussion around WA system responses to Child Sexual Abuse was a rich and rewarding one.



Following the networking lunch, Yorgum Healing Services delivered a presentation including the history of Yorgum and a family case study.

Members of the Department of Communities Royal Commission Implementation Team (RCIT) then provided an overview of the Royal Commission's findings and recommendations, project highlights, current programs of work, legislative reform and their next steps. The 2021 Australian of The Year, Grace Tame, provided the keynote session to 106+ attendees in the form of a conversation with Louise Lamont and questions from the audience. The conversation covered topics including the six phases of grooming, the continuum of offending, systemic changes needed, self-care strategies for survivors and sector workers, and the challenges associated with the online abuse of children.

The Day 1 session culminated in a networking sundowner, with addresses from Mike Rowe Director General, Department of Communities and the Hon. Dr Katrina Stratton, Member for Nedlands, representing Minister Winton.

Day 2 commenced with a presentation from Amanda Paton on the Minimum Practice Standards for Services responding to CSA. The first concurrent session was then facilitated by Pauline Logan and attended by 20 CEOs and representatives from the 11 WA CSATS & IHS.

In the second concurrent session, 41 practitioners met with consultant Tori Cooke to workshop the establishment of a Community of Practice (CoP) for the sector. Enthusiastic practitioners, clinicians and support workers discussed the parameters of a CoP with the aim of supporting their professional development and sustaining statewide connections. The workshop included defining a CoP, terms of reference, discussing the challenges, forms, processes and benefits of establishing a CoP and practical ideas for implementing a CoP for the CSATS and IHS sector.

8. EVALUATION – JUNE ROUNDTABLES

Following the two-day Roundtable events, an independent evaluation was collated, and certificates of attendance provided to participants on request. Feedback on various aspects of the Roundtable included:

Panel Feedback

"Great panel, really diverse, great to see all panel members including the Government representatives being as open and honest as possible. It really drove home how underfunded every part of the system, legal and support services are. And the need for greater collaboration advocating to government to ensure they are resourced."

"I really appreciated hearing from the panel members, I could see that they are passionate about their work in this field and are proactive in advocating for the victim/survivor needs and are open to listening to the workers and the victim / survivors and hearing new ways to respond to support families and contribute to modelling changes in societal attitudes about child protection."

"I really appreciated the coming together of the various services, and it gives me hope that their collaboration is potentially very beneficial for clients."

Grace Tame Feedback

"A breath of fresh air, says it how it is."

"Again, hearing lived experience and new opportunities is interesting and stimulating."

"Always inspiring and the courage is remarkable. Louise did a great job interviewing her. Much better than a speech."

"Thank you for bringing Grace over!!"

"What an honour for Grace to speak with us; How lovely she is paving the way with contributing to research into combating online grooming and predator practices."

"GT really is that voice for clients impacted by CSA. Her voice hopefully encourages clients to access their own voice."

"I love her, this talk was amazing."

"It is always beneficial to hear the voice of people who have been impacted and can talk to their experiences."

General Feedback

"Thank you for all the hard work, please know it was greatly appreciated. I have been in this field for a long while and have waited so long for this coming together. May we continue to do this into the future."

"Looking forward to the next one."

"Thank you for this long-needed opportunity."

"Bringing the sector together to share knowledge & wisdom"

"Secretariat have completed a wonderful job asking for input into the sectors needs and hopes and arranged the Roundtable event well. Thank you."

Our CEO Louise Lamont actively advocates on behalf of the sector as well as for Phoenix and the survivors we support and serve. In April 2024 Louise appeared before the **WA Community Development and Justice Standing Committee** to present information for their Parliamentary Inquiry into the Redress Scheme. Some of her advocacy work is undertaken through her membership of the following committees:

- WACOSS Children's Policy Advisory Council (CPAC)
- Advisory Group for the National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse



Marc has been great. I was really happy with the service he provided. I felt safe and respected even though he is a male, he made me feel safe and welcome.

Phoenix Client

I had seen four psychologists before I found out about Phoenix. Three out of four psychologists had little knowledge about trauma and caused more damage than help. They were not able to explain what was happening for me. I was so relieved when I met Sally. The first major thing that I was relieved about was that she believed me. Nobody else had before. Sally also helped me understand what was happening as I had no memory of the abuse to begin with and I was demonstrating PTSD Symptoms. I have made incredible progress now. I just feel relief that with the help of Sally I have been able to process the trauma.

Phoenix Client

Words cannot describe, how I am so ever grateful and truly humble. Taking those first few steps, as I entered the Phoenix building, body trembling, with fear and uncertainty, dread in one hand and hope in the other. To my surprise a gentleman exited from behind the front counter, introduced himself, and greeted me with the warmest smile. Escorted me to the seating area, where he also took a seat. In our conversation, I was reassured with all the information I needed to know and each statement was fully explained, prior to signing. When he excused himself, I was thankful, through this kind manner, I felt at ease and relaxed, prior to my first session. The purpose of this feedback, there is no room for improvement, I felt the aim was not only welcoming, but to ease any anxiety, etc., (to catch one's breath) prior to each session.

Phoenix Client

It has been a pleasure to work with the staff of Phoenix for the benefit of our mutual clients. My impression is that they are providing quality trauma informed psychotherapy, delivered within a framework that is respectful, compassionate and sensitive to client needs.

WA Mental Health Professional

I would just like to acknowledge that I have seen many many counsellors and Sally has by far made the biggest and most valuable impression on my life. She was extremely professional while also displaying total compassion and care towards me. I have never felt more understood, heard or seen and I can say with 100% certainty that if it were not for Sally I may have ended my life. Myself and my family owe Sally a great debt. She showed me that life is worth living and that I matter as a human being.

Phoenix Client

Letter from Phoenix Client to her Counsellor

Dear Susan,

I am writing this letter to you as we have parted ways. We had a wholesome goodbye on Tuesday and because I am not good with my words on the spot, I've decided to express my gratitude with this letter.

I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for what you've done for me. I know you said it takes two to tango, but I wouldn't have been able to tango at all if you hadn't made me feel comfortable, safe and cemented to me that my feelings matter and that they're valid. One of the reasons I now believe that my feelings matter is because I constantly heard you saying the phrase "I'm all about the feelings" and it has stuck with me every time I caught myself invalidating or disregarding my feelings which I then reminded myself that my feelings are important and valid.

For so long I have struggled mentally in silence and I'm not quite the religious person and I'm not sure if you are either, but I do believe everything happens for a reason, and I believe that God saw me in an awful shape and gifted me with a counsellor so kind, caring and humorous. God gifted me with a counsellor that aligned with my personality and needs. He has added so many tough battles for me but he has also added people into my life that help to make it easier and you were one of those people for me.

Please know that you have changed my life for the better. I immediately saw changes in myself since the start of 2024 because of my determination to be better and also because of all the advice you gave me. You will always be someone who I think about throughout my life and someone who has helped me tremendously. My mental health would not be where it is now without you.

Being a counsellor isn't easy. I cannot imagine having to hear such heartbreaking stories and that is why I mentioned before that I hope God blesses you with all the good deeds in the world and rewards you for your work. You are an admirable person, and I hope you take care of yourself the way you've taken care of me and I'm sure all of your other clients too.

Thank you once again Susan. You've healed parts of me that were hidden for so long and you have made my younger self feel heard and loved. I cannot thank you enough for everything. I hope to one day cross paths with you again but to have a wholesome chat outside of counselling work and outside of me being a client. I'm genuinely so sad to part ways with you, I'll miss you so much! You were a big part of my life for the past 9 months and you will continue to be a significance in my life because of the advice and kindness you showed me. Please take care of yourself! Once again, I am eternally grateful for you.



PHOTO OF ARTWORK BY EMMA © - A Phoenix Client who kindly donated this amazing painting to our organisation



Strength and Hope

BY CG ©

I am an adult survivor of childhood sexual abuse.

I was groomed and sexually abused by my stepfather on a weekly and at times daily basis for 10 years of my childhood. It began when I was 2 and ended when I was 12. I disclosed and reported my abuse in my 30's which resulted in my perpetrator being charged with 24 offences. During the court process he was granted the reward of a plea deal which resulted in a guilty plea to 12 charges whilst the rest were dropped. He was then gifted a reduction in sentencing for his pleas of guilty, affording him the imprisonment service of 6 years and 3 months out of a 24-and a half year sentence.

As a result of my childhood, I have experienced a lack of access to education, long term homelessness, substance addiction, FDV relationships, social isolation, complete separation from my family of origin, and a life of poverty.

By the time I arrived at Phoenix I was a shell of a person. I was existing, in a state of swinging between dissociated fear and panic, and vivid flashbacks every waking second. Nights were even worse. I would either be unable to sleep or I would experience rolling night terrors. I was unable to complete daily living tasks. I was unable to parent my children. I was unable to function in any capacity as a human being.

I have spent 3.5 years attending fortnightly counselling and EMDR sessions with Senior Counsellor Sally at Phoenix. As a result of the hard work, we have put in together I have been able to process a lot of my trauma. I have developed a healthy sense of self,

I have strategies and skills to cope with life, I have found connection in community, I have returned to education and will next year be attending University, I have secured stable housing and meaningful paid employment, I have healthy relationships with others, I have peace and safety in my life, I can trust myself, my children get to have a whole and happy mother who functions, I am now remarried to a wonderful man who has also engaged with Phoenix in relation to his own experiences of being subjected to childhood sexual abuse. Phoenix has saved our lives and saved our family. Our lives today are filled with hope, promise and prosperity, something we never dreamed possible.






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The workshop was facilitated in a manner that was encouraging, non-judgmental, freedom of choice, ease of movement / alternatives. Space for sensations to be noticed / awareness.  
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Phoenix Client

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Baljit was someone I could talk to and trust which is important in my life because I did not know who else would 'understand' me.  
~~~~~

Phoenix Client

Supporting Us


If you are interested in supporting Phoenix tax deductible donations can be made via our website www.phoenix.asn.au by clicking on  link.



~~~~~  
I can be a better person, the one I want to be.  
~~~~~

Phoenix Client



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