

# 2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT



**Phoenix**  
Professional Development  
and Prevention Services



**Phoenix**  
Support & Advocacy  
Service Incorporated



“Never had counselling before, I'm so glad I did with Phoenix. They were so caring and professional.”

Phoenix Client

“Safety is important but for me it impacted me hugely because I didn't realise how unsafe I had been in my life because that was normal. That's why it hits me now sometimes because the reality is still unfolding and you know without Phoenix I really didn't know where I would be today, to be honest.”

Phoenix Client

“I would just like to take the time to express my gratitude to my counsellor. It is clear she is a very experienced professional who knows exactly how to coax everything out of a client in such a professional, and authentic, and safe way. She made what was going to be hard and confronting work for me, an enlightening, self-revealing, and compassionate process.”

Phoenix Client

“My counsellor was amazing so kind and caring and really wanted to help me. She has just made such a huge difference to my life for which I will be forever grateful.”

Phoenix Client

“It's about finding people who are willing to listen and it must be an extremely difficult story to listen to but it's finding people who are willing to listen.”

Phoenix Client



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# 2020-2021 IN REVIEW





# Board Members and Staff

2020-2021

Board Members	Position	Appointments & Resignations
Julie Woodhouse	Chair	October 2014
Leanne Sultan	Deputy & Secretary	October 2016
Amit Kabra	Treasurer	October 2018
Leanne Allison	Board Member	October 2018
Bianca Hadzic	Board Member	October 2019
Gavin Bagley	Board Member	October 2019
Monica Taylor	Board Member	October 2019
Peter Le	Board Member	October 2019

Part-Time Staff	Position	Appointments & Resignations
Louise Lamont	Chief Executive Officer	Appointed February 2015
Marc Spradbury	Accountant	Appointed January 2019
Kaye Doolan	Finance Officer	Appointed June 2016
Lois Lloyd	Office Manager	Retired September 2020
Sally Woods	Senior Counsellor	Appointed July 2019
Liz Magee	Senior Counsellor	Appointed October 2019
Baljit Carroll	Senior Counsellor	Appointed August 2020
Danja Locke	Senior Counsellor	Resigned March 2021



## A Good News Story

Phoenix Support and Advocacy Service Inc. is delighted to announce that in June 2021 a Lotterywest grant application submitted by Phoenix was approved by the Premier of Western Australia, the Hon. Mark McGowan MLA.

The grant provides seed funding to assist Phoenix to expand and diversify our services through the establishment of Phoenix Professional Development and Prevention (PDP) Services as a new fee-for-service program and business. Phoenix PDP will include workforce training, sector professional development, clinical supervision and mentoring for professional staff who wish to work with, or currently work with individuals and families impacted by interpersonal violence and abuse. We are thrilled to have a range of industry experts join our team to also provide this training.

The Lotterywest grant will help build the sustainability of Phoenix in its work with survivors of child sexual abuse. The grant provides Phoenix with the opportunity to share practice wisdom and knowledge that in turn will grow the capacity of related sectors to introduce trauma-informed and other evidence-based practices. Phoenix PDP services will assist professionals to intervene more effectively and safely with those experiencing high level risk, trauma, dysregulation, and other challenges as a consequence of family and domestic violence, sexual violence, and child sexual abuse.

The increase in knowledge and skills that will result from the training and professional supervision will have a direct and positive impact on the safety and lives of child and adult survivors and witnesses of interpersonal violence and abuse.

Phoenix is pleased to have also partnered with the Safe & Together™ Institute USA to deliver the globally recognised evidence-based CORE model training.

The Safe & Together™ model is focused on child protection by supporting the non-offending parent, while ensuring an emphasis on the perpetrator’s patterns of abuse and holding them to account for their violence



rather than expecting the survivor to protect, manage, and be responsible for changing the violent behaviour.

Phoenix thanks Lotterywest and everyone else in the community who support Lotterywest for helping to build a better WA through the community grants program.

As part of our Prevention work Phoenix will be holding various events in 2022 to raise awareness for parents and professionals about the emerging epidemic related to the number of school aged children accessing hard core pornography which leads to assumptions that violence is a ‘normal’ aspect of sexual intimacy.

To bring this issue into focus along with child sexual abuse and sexual violence more generally Phoenix will hold a Symposium in 2022 with a range of keynote speakers and experts including 2021 Australian of the Year Grace Tame. We encourage readers to SAVE THE DATE of Monday 14 March 2022 with more announcements later in the year.

This is a pivotal time for Trauma Treatment with the emergence of body-based therapies, polyvagal theory, and the increasing understanding about the neuroplasticity and healing capacity of the brain. Survivors of trauma are being offered hope and healing from suffering the torturous impacts of trauma on their brain and nervous system.

Phoenix is committed to Creating Compassionate Communities by providing information about how we can build better brains and can contribute to a greater capacity for compassion by changing one mind and one heart at a time.





# CHAIRPERSON & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER 2020-2021 REPORTS







## Chairperson Report

2020-2021



**JULIE WOODHOUSE**  
CHAIRPERSON

As I reflect on the last 12 months and consider the challenges brought about by the global pandemic, I am heartened by the community response and most particularly the dedication and resilience of the Board and our staff to ensure high quality support to our clients.

I am pleased to report that in general terms, the operational impacts of COVID-19 on Board operations have been minimised. Flowing from decisions made in the previous reporting period, the Board continued to implement strong and effective governance. In addition, the Board provided greater flexibility for our Chief Executive Officer to demonstrate amazing creativity in developing and consolidating e-learning, new partnerships, and alternative ways of working. Despite the many difficulties that COVID has created, there have been many achievements for us as an organisation to celebrate as we grow and flourish knowing that we continue to make such a fundamental difference in the lives of people living with the impacts of child sexual abuse and complex trauma.

Phoenix continues to provide current evidence-based practices, including clinical interventions such as Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing Therapy, Schema Therapy, self-regulation,

resilience building and our healing model the Trauma Transformation Initiative.

As an independent specialist organisation, Phoenix has expanded its strategic priorities to include a business arm that focuses on professional services that includes designing and delivering professional learning for practitioners to improve responses to and prevention of child sexual abuse. Phoenix Professional Development and Prevention Services (PDP) successfully partnered with the Safe & Together Institute to establish a training partnership.

I would like to formally acknowledge and farewell Lois Lloyd who was a loyal and committed staff member of Phoenix for 34 years. Lois decided that it was time to focus on family and explore what retirement has to offer. She was a tireless worker and strong advocate for our organisation. Lois always put our clients first and showed empathy and genuine care for them.

Finally, I would like to thank the Phoenix Board for their time and effort in directing the organisation through the stormy waters of this challenging year. I would also like to thank and acknowledge our Chief Executive Officer, Louise Lamont, and the wider Phoenix Team for their teamwork and collaboration.

“Phoenix feels like a safe comfy home filled with people who genuinely care and have the skills and expertise to meet clients where they are at, to help facilitate healing and growth, however long that takes. I have also recommended them to people with specific need in the past.”

Phoenix Client





# Chief Executive Officer's Perspective

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW

### ANOTHER CHALLENGING YEAR

Phoenix, along with the West Australian community services sector, has learnt to adapt to the ongoing unpredictability of the pandemic and the ensuing lockdowns. Phoenix took the opportunity in early 2020 to develop new E-Services which facilitated a continuity of support to clients when staff have been required to work from home.



Phoenix has also had to remain adaptable to the continued uncertainty of funding. However, this year has been particularly stressful with still not knowing at the end of June 2021

the organisation's financial position moving forward. This led once again to the loss of staff and impacted our ability to take on new clients. It is challenging when survivors finally have the courage to seek support to find that support is not forthcoming, and they will have to wait.

Phoenix has taken an active advocacy role in bringing these current service challenges, and the specific needs of child sexual abuse survivors, to the attention of the West Australian Government. Phoenix sought the support of the WA Council of Social Services (WACOSS) and Community Employers WA (CEWA) in this advocacy work, and we are very appreciative of their commitment to the task, and I would particularly like to thank Chris Twomey (WACOSS) and John Bouffler (CEWA).

As a part of this advocacy, Phoenix has met with Minister Simone McGurk, Samantha Rowe MLC, and Simon Millman MLA along with Senior Policy Advisors to discuss these areas of concern, and we appreciated their time and willingness to listen. Our advocacy work has contributed to bringing child sexual abuse and sexual



violence into focus, while also playing a part in influencing a commitment from the WA Government to address these issues as a priority.

With all that has been in the media about sexual violence, and with child sexual abuse survivor Grace Tame being nominated 2021 Australian of the Year, services such as Phoenix and the Sexual Assault Resource Centre (SARC) have seen a spike in demand, which unfortunately has seen growing wait lists for longer periods of time. It is important and timely that sexual violence is on the table, as this is a problem and topic of conversation that has been hidden and avoided for so long. There is much work to do and what has clearly emerged, is that Australia has a growing problem that we are failing to address and change.

The challenges for our young people are enormous, particularly when there is an equally emerging epidemic related to the number of school aged children accessing hard core pornography which leads to assumptions that violence is a 'normal' aspect of sexual intimacy. As part of our prevention work Phoenix will be delivering community education activities to raise awareness about this concern.

### WHAT'S NEW

Phoenix was thrilled to be informed in June 2021 that our Lotterywest Grant application had been successful. To assist Phoenix with our ongoing sustainability challenges a new fee-for-service business arm Phoenix Professional Development and Prevention Services is being established. The Lotterywest Grant provides seed funding for the first 12-months to support the development of curriculum materials, clinical supervision, and the marketing of these new services with the support of a Project Manager position.

Some of the range of Professional Development and Prevention workshops include:

- Clinical supervision training
- Shanker Method™ of Self-Regulation
- Compassion Fatigue and Vicarious Trauma
- Provision of individual and group supervision for practitioners
- Trauma transformation through trauma-informed care and practices
- Gender inequality and its relationship to interpersonal and sexual violence
- Understanding challenges for children and young people accessing pornography
- Understanding and responding to child sexual abuse and family and domestic violence
- The globally recognised Domestic Violence Informed Safe & Together™ Model CORE Training

Phoenix has skilled and experienced trainers, presenters, and clinical supervisors available, and Phoenix will work with community service organisations to tailor the training to the specific needs of their workforce. Phoenix also has several large community awareness events planned for the next financial year so watch this space.

One aspect of the Trauma Transformation initiative developed by Phoenix included **Nutrition workshops** about the mind-gut connection and how this may impact on mood, anxiety levels, and wellbeing. These workshops were highly rated and valued by Phoenix clients. We have since had the Nutritionist create webinar presentations to ensure Phoenix can continue to provide this information to Phoenix clients. Thanks go to Stephanie Rae for these webinars.

Phoenix has become a partner agency with the **Safe and Together™** Institute based in the United States to deliver their globally recognised Domestic Violence informed training. The model is focused on child protection by supporting the non-offending parent, while ensuring an emphasis on the perpetrator's patterns of abuse and holding them to account for their violence rather than expecting the survivor to manage and be responsible for changing their behaviour.

### PROMOTING THE WORK OF PHOENIX

To promote the work of Phoenix, and with the aim to also increase awareness in the community of the impact of child sexual abuse, Phoenix provides various presentations. This has included presentations for the Midland Perth Family Support Network and the Sexual Assault Resource Centre.

### Phoenix AGM Sundowner and acknowledgement of Lois Lloyd's service

In October 2020 Phoenix hosted a sundowner networking event prior to the 2020 Annual General Meeting. The event provided an opportunity for Phoenix Board members and staff to network with sector and departmental colleagues.

The sundowner event also provided an opportunity to formally acknowledge the contribution of Phoenix Office Manager Lois Lloyd who retired from Phoenix after 34 years of service to the organisation. Lois was awarded an Appreciation Certificate that was presented by Simon Millman MLA and Phoenix Chair Julie Woodhouse.

During the Sundowner, Phoenix staff were able to provide colleagues with a tour of the service, and on display were various examples of the complex aspects of our work and the processes required to address this complexity safely.



▲ Simon Millman MLA presenting Lois Lloyd the Certificate of Appreciation and flowers from Chair Julie Woodhouse.



▲ 2021 Networking Sundowner with community services and departmental colleagues held in the grounds of Phoenix.





## SECTOR NETWORKING AND COMMITTEE REPRESENTATION

The 2021 year began as in previous years with the WA Council of Social Services (WACOSS) annual Sector Breakfast. This year the event was held at City Farm and the breakfast is a key networking event that members of the community services sector look forward to. This breakfast was attended by representatives and Cabinet Ministers from the WA State Government including Minister McGurk.



▲ Minister McGurk addressing WACOSS Breakfast delegates.

In my role as CEO, I have represented Phoenix on the following committees throughout the year. Being involved in these committees offers many opportunities for advocacy, collaboration, and growing collegial networks.

- WACOSS Children's Policy Advisory Council (CPAC)
- Sexual Violence Expert Advisory Group (SVEAG)
- Mirrabooka Joondalup Family Support Network (MJFSN)
- Midland Perth Family Support Network (MPFSN)
- Child Sexual Abuse Therapeutic Services (CSATS) Roundtable organising committee

In May 2021, I had the privilege of attending the Symposium "Young People and Harmful Sexual Behaviour – Healing is Prevention" hosted by the Australian & New Zealand Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abuse



▲ ANZATSA "Young People and Harmful Sexual Behaviour – Healing is Prevention" Symposium Perth, May 2021.

(ANZATSA) held at the Perth Convention Centre and the event included National and International Keynote speakers considered experts in this complex field of work.

The work of Phoenix is heavily dependent on WA State Government funding and Phoenix is grateful for that investment. Phoenix also acknowledges the support from long-term Department of Communities Contract Manager Liz Brown.

## PHOENIX GOVERNANCE

At the October 2020 Annual General Meeting all current Board members were re-elected to their positions, which was the first time for some years. It was reassuring to have stability reflected in the Board membership, particularly at a time when there have been ongoing challenges related to funding and organisational viability and sustainability.

The Phoenix staff and I are most grateful for the commitment of Phoenix Board members and particularly for the ongoing and consistent support provided by Chair Julie Woodhouse and Deputy Chair Leanne Sultan. It is under their skilled leadership that Phoenix has been able to continuously improve the organisation's governance processes and practice. Julie and Leanne always make themselves available whenever needed and continue to encourage and support all our endeavours. Phoenix Treasurer Amit Kabra is available to address any financial matters and Phoenix Accountant Marc Spradbury and I are appreciative of his guidance and expertise.

In June 2021, a Strategic Planning Day was held with Board members and was facilitated by Jennifer Chaplyn. This was also an opportunity to assess what had been achieved to date by the five-year 2018-2022 Phoenix Strategic Plan and begin to conceptualise the next five years when the Board seek to develop a new plan in 2022.

Special congratulations go to Board Member Peter Le



▲ Board member Peter Le addressing The Law Society of WA



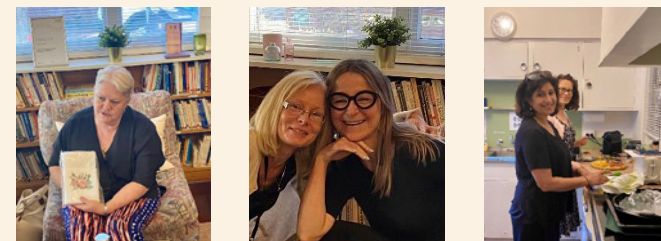
▲ Peter Le awarded Senior Lawyer of the Year 2021

who was awarded 2021 Lawyer of the Year by the Law Society of Western Australia.

Having a diverse, skilled, and committed Board with sound governance practices is essential particularly for a small and somewhat vulnerable organisation such as Phoenix working with an equally vulnerable client cohort.

## PHOENIX STAFF

As mentioned previously, Office Manager Lois Lloyd retired in 2020 following 34 years' service with Phoenix. Lois, apart from being the living historian for the organisation, was a consistent familiar face for the clients and Lois had the ability to create a safe space while also ensuring Phoenix clients felt welcomed, respected, and valued. The staff enjoyed a Farewell celebration together at the office with Lois to honour her contribution to Phoenix and the team.



Phoenix Accountant Marc Spradbury, along with Finance Officer and Admin Assistant Kaye Doolan continue to refine and improve our office and finance practices which creates greater efficiencies and streamlining of processes. Their willingness to also attend to duties not normally assigned to their roles makes a real difference for a very small organisation like Phoenix where flexibility and a 'can-do' attitude is a critical component to our success.

Since 2016 there has been an ongoing turnover of staff due to funding uncertainty from continual one-year funding extensions. Staff need security of tenure and often can't wait for the Government's last minute funding decisions.

In 2020, we welcomed Baljit Carroll and Danja Locke to the team as Senior Counsellors and then in 2021 we farewelled Liz Magee and Danja. Liz was delighted to take up a position in Broome working with Aboriginal communities and Danja moved on to develop a private practice. Thanks go to all our Senior Counsellors for their contribution to the healing and recovery journey of Phoenix clients. Sally Woods is now our longest serving Senior Counsellor and her extensive experience as

an EMDR practitioner has been invaluable to the client work.

In May 2021 Phoenix was delighted to appoint Sharon Tanner as Project Manager and Admin Assistant for the new fee-for-service business Phoenix Professional Development and Prevention Services. Sharon brings a wealth of experience in events management, networking, and marketing.

Phoenix is most fortunate to have a team of mature, professionally skilled, and highly experienced staff who are committed to the work of the organisation and the clients who access the service and it is these qualities that underpin and support successful and effective service delivery.

## WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Phoenix has many aspirations for the organisation and for continuous improvement in everything we do and deliver.

In the short term, the focus will be on securing long-term funding and the recruitment of Senior Counsellors for current vacancies to stabilise the team again, along with stabilising service delivery so we can attend to the growing wait list.

With the success of the Lotterywest Grant application there will be a focus on building the profile of the new Phoenix Professional Development and Prevention Services. There will be more investment in the prevention space and in raising awareness, while also supporting the professional development of community services sector workers around trauma informed practice, the impact of child sexual abuse and a range of other practices.

In 2022 we have some major events planned with nationally and internationally recognised presenters, so watch this space!

Phoenix is committed to Creating Compassionate Communities by providing information about how we can build better brains and can contribute to greater capacity for compassion by changing one mind and one heart at a time.



LOUISE LAMONT  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



# OUR RANGE OF THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS

**Phoenix Shining  
A Light On Child  
Sexual Abuse  
Healing & Recovery**

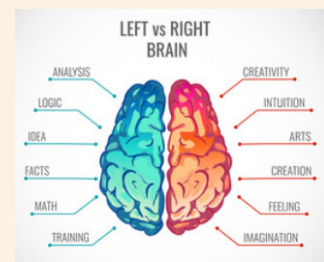




# Understanding and Healing All Parts of Ourselves

*Judith Herman, one of the pioneers of trauma treatment, has been quoted saying, "It's bad enough that our clients lost their childhood; it's unacceptable that they lose their adulthood too."*

Being overwhelmed by anxiety, anger or upset can be a regular occurrence for clients at Phoenix. Intellectually a person who is a survivor of child sexual abuse knows they are now no longer in danger and that they can ask for help, but their nervous system is automatically set to protection mode so any slight reminder of the past trauma e.g., a kind therapist can be a reminder of the grooming process and can trigger them into protecting themselves from feeling unsafe and they automatically panic and withdraw or snap with an angry defensive comment followed by shame and regret. So, how can counselling help clients from being hijacked by their emotions?



Janina Fisher (2017) uses a Structural Dissociation Model to help explain what happens to the nervous system as a result of childhood trauma. When a child endures repeated experiences of turning to an adult for

love and security but is abused, their nervous system must find a way to cope as there is no escape or anybody to rescue or protect them. Their two brain hemispheres split off, so the left verbal linguistic self keeps on going with normal daily living tasks whilst the right emotional brain with its more physical survival resources prepares for the next threat and is known as the 'trauma-related part.' To be able to keep on doing daily functioning tasks the left part of the brain will distance itself as much as possible from the right emotional trauma

parts to say as Ana Gomez reports 'not me not mine' because the emotional trauma is just too painful and shameful.

Clients are very familiar with the different survival responses of their trauma parts and which ones they relied on as a child and adolescent:

- Fight Part (Vigilance) – Angry, mistrusting, suicidal, self-destructive all in a bid to try and gain control, sense of purpose or mastery.
- Flight Part (Escape) – Wants distance and to escape so may resort to addictive behaviours.
- Freeze Part (Fearful) – Terrified, phobic of being seen so can have avoidant behaviours and reports panic attacks, craves safety from harm or threat of death.
- Submit Part (Shame) – Self-sacrificing, ashamed, filled with self-hatred, people pleaser, passive, caretaker, depressed. Needs to feel worthy and autonomous.
- Attach Part (Needy) – Craves rescue, connection and safe from being abandoned, wants someone to depend on.

Janina Fisher helps clients to recognise in their bodies the difference between the two states of being 'blended' and 'unblended.' Being 'blended' is to be overwhelmed by one of their emotional parts e.g., anger, shame, or fear. In this state they feel all consumed and if they try to push it down or ignore the feeling only gets stronger and more intense.

Being 'unblended' is coaching the client to have dual awareness so they can be in a state of being calm, curious, and compassionate and this state is known as being in 'adult' and is innate in everyone no matter what trauma a person has experienced. Whilst in 'adult' the client can then be aware of their emotional part(s) being

felt in different parts of their body e.g., tightness in the chest from a scared anxious part that wants to withdraw.

Helping a client to know what their triggers are and noticing their body and when they are starting to become 'blended' helps them to begin having a little more control over their emotions. People of lived trauma experiences have had a lifetime of automatically reacting to certain cues to stay protected and safe so to now be 'unblended' takes a lot of practice.

It is very important clients understand that their emotional parts of anger, suicide, addictive behaviours (although may seem negative and destructive) all have the good intent of trying to ensure the young, vulnerable, hurt traumatised child part is not exposed. Knowing this then means the counselling work is about hearing, understanding, and accepting all emotional parts. No 'part' is rejected or ignored.

A key component in Fisher's work is when clients have a felt sense of being 'unblended' they are asked to relate to their emotional part in the third person- s/he not I because this enables the client to maintain a separateness, so they are not overwhelmed and helps them develop a communication, understanding and co-operation between parts so ultimately their internal nervous system works harmoniously.



Janina Fisher's approach is very different from other trauma treatments because she does not focus on clients remembering or reliving their trauma (which is a huge relief for clients) but rather centers her work on the here and now. The aim of the work is helping clients to develop the ability

to notice their emotional parts and separate from their parts and use their trauma memory to evoke compassion for their young vulnerable part and what s/he never had and now needs.

I think the theory of Fisher's work is very easy to understand and very relatable for clients, but it should be stressed its application and behavioral change can be long term work. Due to their childhood traumas clients amazing automatic survival strategies are not going to change quickly and if a client has Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) this change can take longer as parts may not be initially aware of each other. However, feedback I have had from Phoenix clients is that it really makes sense to them and that it enables them to be an at-

tuned parent for their internal nervous system.

Each time the adult self of the client attunes to the child's parts of unmet need, fear, or painful emotion and 'repairs' the distressing experience, attachment bonds are built, piece by piece, experience by experience.

I will conclude with some paraphrased comments from my clients to further demonstrate the powerful positive impact of Fisher's Structural Dissociation Model.

- It's a relief to feel separate and start to hear and understand my 9-year-old anger part.
- My warrior part is pretty fierce and now I recognise its not helpful for her to be in charge all the time.
- I realised my irritated 7-year-old just needed to be heard and understood because I kept trying to ignore her.
- I see her (10-year-old self) and she is really sad and needs a hug and told she is special.

## References:

- Janina Fisher (2017) Healing The Fragmented Selves of Trauma Survivors - Overcoming Internal Self-Alienation
- Ana Gomez – [www.anagomez.org](http://www.anagomez.org)

**SALLY WOODS**  
SENIOR COUNSELLOR  
EMDR PRACTITIONER



*"I just had wished that someone then had given me some of the tiny bit of information I have had here, because it may have been enough."*

Phoenix Client





# A Partnership to increase child safety

## PHOENIX AND THE SAFE AND TOGETHER™ INSTITUTE

Phoenix is excited to have partnered with the Safe and Together Institute in the United States to provide its ground-breaking, globally recognised **Safe and Together™** four-day Core Training Course and the one-day Model Overview training.

The **Safe and Together™** Model is a skill based experiential training course that provides professionals effective strategies for interviewing perpetrators and survivors of Family and Domestic Violence (FDV) and a greater understanding of the impact of **patterns of perpetrator violence on child and family functioning**.

The Model has introduced **innovative changes at the level of practice** and how the broader service systems respond to family and domestic violence. The training has been instrumental in **improving the understanding, support, and outcomes for survivors of domestic violence across Australia**, transforming the way we hold perpetrators accountable – even if you are not working directly with them, with the key focus on **child and adult safety**.

### SAFE AND TOGETHER™ MODEL CORE TRAINING

The CORE Training is designed to provide a skills-oriented foundation for domestic violence-informed practice. Each day of training provides experiential classroom learning focused on the following foundational practice areas:

Day 1 - Assessment

Day 2 - Interviewing

Day 3 - Documentation

Day 4 - Case Planning

### CORE TRAINING EXPLORES THE IMPORTANCE OF:

- Identifying the impact of domestic violence on children and family functioning
- Fact-based assessment of the perpetrators' behaviour patterns
- Partnering with adult survivors of domestic violence to reduce victim blaming
- Intervening with perpetrators to facilitate understanding violence is a 'parenting choice'
- How domestic violence intersects with other issues such as substance abuse and mental health

The Safe and Together™ CORE training is the first of a suite of new training courses being developed and will be offered under our new fee-for-service business arm, **Phoenix Professional Development and Prevention Services**.

The intention is for Phoenix to continue with its commitment to prevention and to improve responses to family and domestic violence, child sexual abuse and sexual violence while also contributing to the sustainability of Phoenix services. Phoenix is committed to advocating for those in our community that are impacted by interpersonal violence and abuse and ensuring their needs are front and centre.

# What Phoenix Clients are saying

“The process of recovery can be a lifetime process and there needs to be a service like Phoenix replicated. So that people know that this is where I can go when things are getting overwhelming and when I need someone who can understand and that you can come back to a place like this.”

“There have to be more Phoenix because it scares me how little this place is but what huge work you do.”

“The needs to be much more information about how to access support. 'If I did not chase up trauma-sensitive counselling, I would have got nothing different.'”

“And with me, it was definitely trust and building relationships and without being able to build relationships then there is none. I mean, that is how you learn about yourself and others is through relationships with others but if you cannot do that because you have never had an opportunity to choose who you wanted to relate to or how you wanted to relate to people.”

Phoenix Client

“'Shared experience without having to retell trauma stories' It felt much safer and there is a feeling of being understood without explanation or defenses necessary.”

“There is always choice [there]. It took me a while to realise, I had to be told actually.”





## 2020-2021 FINANCES

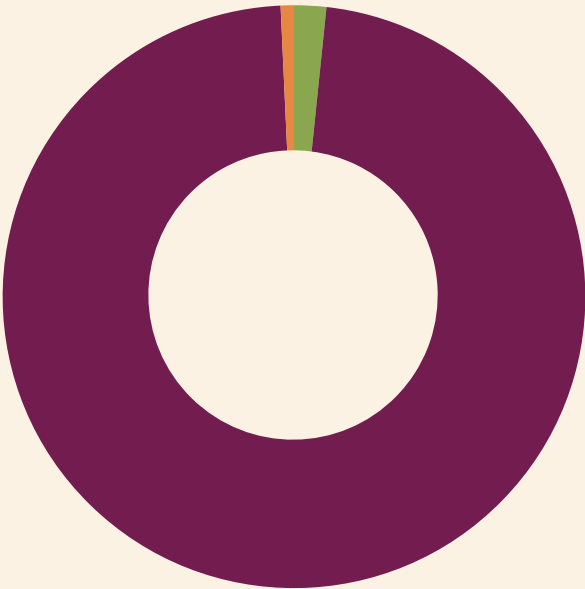




# Financial Report Overview

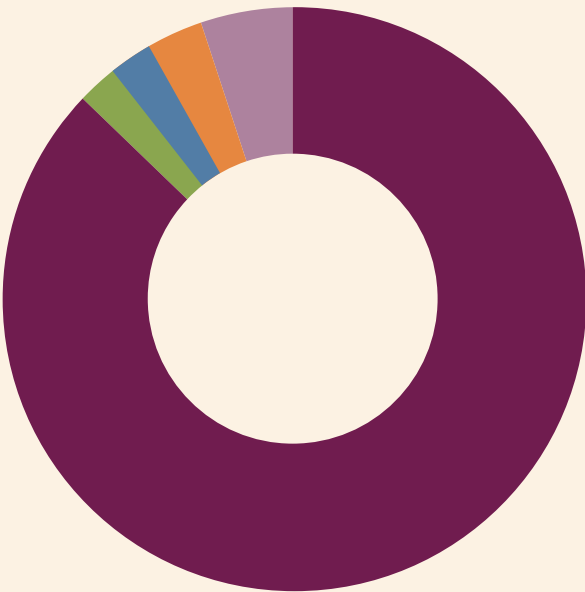
## INCOME

- Fee for service 3%
- Funding 95%
- Other income 2%



## EXPENDITURE

- Service Delivery 87%
- Insurance 3%
- Operating Costs 5%
- Depreciation 2%
- Information Technology 3%



## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Phoenix generated a reduced operational audited surplus over the previous financial year. West Australian State Government funding made up 95% of total revenue and service delivery costs were 87% of total revenue. Funding decreased significantly with the completion of the WA Primary Health Alliance (WAPHA) service agreement. Revenue included State funding, fee for service, the Government stimulus package, and donations. On 24 December 2020 Lotterywest terminated the building grant agreement with Phoenix, and thereby Phoenix has no further obligations to Lotterywest in relation to the property.

Overall expenditure was marginally lower than the previous financial and comprised mainly of employment related costs. On the balance sheet total assets decreased and total liabilities decreased from the previous financial year. All staff entitlements were accrued in full at year-end. The overall financial position at the end of the financial is stable.





# OUR ADVOCACY





# Our Advocacy Work 2020-2021

## SCREENING OF DOCUMENTARY FILM "WILD BUTTERFLY"

In September 2020 Phoenix hosted the screening of the internationally award-winning documentary "Wild Butterfly" directed by Shireen Narayanan. The documentary highlighted the impact of child sexual abuse, and the event was opened by Minister Simone McGurk, and attended by Simon Millman MLA and both stayed on to view the film.

Wild Butterfly told the story of 24-year-old Claire Murray and her desperate search for a lifesaving second liver transplant. It becomes a trial by national media, which depicts her as an ungrateful "junkie" who recklessly destroyed her first transplant by relapsing into drug use. She is condemned by the public.

But what the public doesn't know is that Claire has a terrible secret: a horrific crime that remains unsolved. Catholic institutional obstruction, medical negligence, missing police records, and trial by mainstream and social media, were all at play in this heartbreaking and gripping real-life drama.

This story opens our eyes to the impacts of universal social injustices and prejudices that could befall anyone and anybody's daughter. Through the screening of Wild Butterfly, Phoenix aimed to raise further awareness to the issue of child sexual abuse and its often-devastating effects, not only on the survivor, but their family, friends, and the broader community.

“It is really important knowledge, and that sort of equipped me to face the world and finally to say 'this is you and you will be ok'.”

Phoenix Client

"Thanks go to Claire's Father Michael Murray for attending the event and addressing the audience. Michael and his family's commitment to having Claire's story told to raise awareness is commendable"



▲ Minister Simone McGurk opening the screening of the documentary Wild Butterfly



# A Phoenix Focus Group for Survivors



## SURVIVOR FEEDBACK

Participants from the Phoenix Trauma Transformation initiative were provided with many opportunities to share: their experiences of the program; why these experiences matter; and what needs to happen for this kind of support to work well and provide benefits long term.

A focus group was also held with Phoenix clients and the key findings shared below emerged from that session along with the feedback provided from various Trauma Transformation workshops. The feedback provided by survivors captured some commonalities of experience and highlighted what needs to change in the system to improve the response survivors receive to their reporting of trauma from historical child sexual abuse.

## KEY FINDINGS

### 1. We are better together.

It makes a difference to be with a group of people who have been through a similar experience.

### 2. Knowledge and information = empowerment.

This includes information about the impact of trauma on brain development and about Phoenix and how to access their support services.

### 3. Services need to be supportive and safe.

Every element of support needs to reflect and model safety of participants.

### 4. Experts and professionals need the right training.

People providing support need practical experience and training in working with people who have experienced complex trauma like survivors of child sexual abuse. A university degree is not enough and does not teach empathy, partnership, and building a relationship. It is not all about 'solutions'.

### 5. There is no quick fix.

Healing and recovery is a long-term journey and survivors need to be able to access long term support.

### 6. Support needs to be multi-modal and integrated.

There is no one solution or strategy that will work alone. People need to learn about many ways to help themselves in an integrated support service where they have trust and relationships.

### 7. Sharing our story over and over doesn't help.

Sometimes people don't even need to share what happened. It isn't always relevant to recovery.

### 8. Having choices is important.

There are no choices too big or small when it comes to empowering survivors in their own care.

### 9. There needs to be much more information about how to access support.

This information needs to come from health practitioners, other NGO's and even support groups.

### 10. The system adds to the trauma.

Because the elements listed above are most often absent or poor, the trauma is just repeated.





## A Collaboration for Prevention

Phoenix is delighted to have entered into a collaboration with Kayelene Kerr to work in the prevention space and raise community awareness about the emerging epidemic of children accessing pornography at earlier ages, and to some degree using this as a form of sex education. Unfortunately, the violence, aggression, and objectification portrayed in much of the pornography the children are viewing is contributing to a distorted perspective of sexual intimacy for these children and creating harm and anxiety. Kayelene's knowledge and experience will support and guide Phoenix as we work together with Kayelene to address this challenging and problematic issue. Phoenix is gathering a team to work alongside Kayelene, and we will hold a series of events to raise awareness towards the end of 2021 and throughout 2022.

### REDUCING THE HARM: TALKING ABOUT CHILDREN AND PORNOGRAPHY

The Internet and technology have transformed the way we learn, create, connect and are entertained. It has given our children access to the world, but has also given the world access to our children.

Whilst there are many benefits for our children being online, there are also risks. The increase of children online has seen a corresponding upward trend in cases of online grooming, child sexual abuse and exploitation, sextortion, youth produced sexual content, image-based abuse, and exposure to pornography.

The ubiquity of the Internet and portable electronic devices has transformed the way pornography is accessed and how pornography accesses children. Children are growing up in a world where it's impossible to avoid sexualised media and pornography.

Whilst pornography is not new, the nature and accessibility of pornography has changed considerably. Children with access to the Internet on any device - at home, at a friend's place, at school or in any of our community spaces are at risk of exposure. It's not a matter of 'if' a child will see pornography but 'when' and the when is getting younger and younger. In Australia, the age of first exposure is being reported as between 8 and 10 years of age. Exposure and access to pornography can have a negative impact on children's health, wellbeing and safety.

A significant portion of pornography that children view, accidentally or intentionally, contains violent images and themes. Research has found high levels of aggression in the most popular pornographic videos. In 50 of the most watched videos researches found 88% portrayed physical aggression (choking, gagging, spanking and hair pulling) and 49% showed verbal aggression. This aggression was overwhelmingly directed towards female performers. A UK study found 100% of 15-year-old boys and 80% of 15-year-old girls had viewed violent and degrading online pornography, usually before they have had a sexual experience themselves.

Research has found exposure to pornography can result in children displaying harmful and problematic sexual behaviours, child on child sexual abuse, sexual aggression and violence, sexism and objectification, risky sexual behaviours and poor mental health and wellbeing. Studies also suggest frequent viewing of pornography may reinforce harmful gender stereotypes, contribute to young people forming unhealthy and sexist views of women and sex, contribute to condoning violence against women, sexually coercive behaviours by young men, normalisation of violence and potentially drive sexual violence. There may also be broader social impacts in relation to body image, mental health, reduced academic performance and erectile dysfunction.



The Third Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children had a focus on "better understanding and countering the impact of pornography given increasing evidence showing a correlation between exposure to online pornography and the sexual objectification of women and girls, the development of rape cultures and the proliferation of sexual assault". Pornography's effect on children and young people is amplified by the absence of adequate education and conversation in the home, school, and wider community. Many parents/carers are unaware of the pornography that is readily available online. Pornography is the primary, and in many cases, the only education children and young people receive about relationships and sexuality.

Society is only just beginning to realise the scale and nature of harm being done to our children. Australia ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1990, which means Australia has a duty to protect children from harm. There is a substantial body of national and international research that demonstrates children are being harmed. Until the Australian government and 'big tech' do more to safeguard children from the harms of pornography and other illegal, harmful and hurtful content, the responsibility rests with us, the trusted adults in children's lives. This is a public health crisis we can no longer afford to ignore. Children's unrestricted access to pornography can, and must be addressed. Perhaps this is the child protection issue of our time.

Kayelene founded eSafeKids which strives to reduce and prevent harm through proactive prevention education, supporting and inspiring parents, carers, educators, and other professionals to talk with children, young people and vulnerable adults about pornography.

eSafeKids provides Reducing The Harm: Talking About Pornography workshops throughout metropolitan and regional Australia and internationally. Kayelene will be working in collaboration with Phoenix to develop workshops that will be delivered face-to-face or online as a webinar.

Learn more: <https://www.esafekids.com.au/pornography-education>

Visit the eSafeKids website to view a range of child friendly books sourced to support parents, carers, educators and other professionals.

Link: [www.esafekids.com.au/shop](http://www.esafekids.com.au/shop)

Join the free eSafeKids Members' Community and access content to read, watch, listen to and download.

Link: <https://www.esafekids.com.au/community>

Consider parental controls. Parental control tools can assist with monitoring, restricting, limiting and filtering what children and young people do and see online. There are many tools available and they all offer different functions. Parental control tools can be used to assist, not replace, ongoing participation, supervision, education and conversation.

Link: <https://www.esafekids.com.au/cyber-safety>

**KAYELENE KERR**  
DIP (PUBLIC SAFETY),  
ADV DIP (PUBLIC SAFETY), BA (JUSTICE)  
CHILD SAFETY ADVOCATE &  
FOUNDER ESFAKIDS





# The important story this letter tells

**TRIGGER WARNING** – If you are triggered by the content of this document, please seek support

**Crisis Care Helpline - 9223 1111**

**Lifeline Counselling - 13 11 14**  
(24-hour telephone counselling)

**Blue Knot Helpline - 1300 657 380**  
(7 day a week telephone childhood trauma counselling 9.00am - 5.00pm AEST)

## LETTER FROM PHOENIX CLIENT (HISTORICAL CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE SURVIVOR) TO HER MOTHER

This letter was shared with Phoenix by a client wishing for this to be shared for educational and advocacy purposes. The client viewed this as an opportunity to help other survivors and gave consent. \* Reproduced exactly as written in the client's own words and includes some commentary from Phoenix.

### THE IMPORTANT STORY THIS LETTER TELLS – with commentary from Phoenix

I had really really really really (I actually cannot say "really" enough here) REALLY hoped to just not have this conversation at all, hoping that it would come to its conclusion and demise when we get to court and you'll finally learn about all the things I never wanted my mum to know her brother did to me and the disgusting, shameful, unspeakable things I did to him. But I know this is never going to go away. I know you will never let it because you are my mum. So here is the best part of the full truth. **My truth.**

*The client has finally found her voice and feels ready to speak her truth. A very courageous step after sitting with the unthinkable for 18 years (This supports the Royal Commission research that it takes on average 22 years to disclose child sexual abuse). The client also wanted to seek justice and had finally reported to Police, and charges were laid.*

It's been such a painful and emotionally testing past few months for me. I have made so much progress in terms of how I perceive the family and you specifically (and frankly am very proud of myself for being stronger than I ever thought possible), and although, if I'm honest, I don't know if our relationship will ever be what it was before April and whether I ever even want it to be again, I for the most part had come full circle and was doing really well until our Christmas dinner. I thought you were done with blurting such bizarre, impulsive, completely insensitive comments, the likes of which have already caused me so much hurt this year.

*Disclosures are extremely confronting for families and the reactions vary, but often reflect the stages of grief. Frequently family members do not know how to respond to the survivor, and emotions are heightened with reactivity driven by fear, anger, hurt, sadness, shame, and guilt.*

Even if I don't want to, I will always love you because you are my mum. But you have hardly been the mother, the relative, or even just the friend I have so desperately needed this year, and I have found myself turning to absolutely anyone and everyone, both except for and because of you. After **18 years** of holding onto my **secret** I wasn't suddenly crumbling. I wasn't suddenly unravelling. I was always the strong woman you had raised me and taught me to be! What was hurting me so much was purely the thought of having to tell you that your brother is worse than all evil things I could think of. And that I knew this, as his victim. How was I ever supposed to be the one to have to hurt you so much by telling you this? The thought was crippling. It made me nervous, it made me anxious, it made me incredibly upset. I would honestly almost have rather suffered another 6 years at his hands than cause you the pain I knew (or thought) telling you would bring.

*A child believes sexual abuse is their fault as they are groomed by the offender to believe this, or fear is instilled if 'they tell' about others being harmed or being abandoned by other family members who*

*they are attached to or feel safer with.*

But after 18 years I knew it had to be the time to come clean. I knew it was what you would want from me. So I did. And as we lay on my bed, and I cried so much I couldn't even speak, and eventually you could piece together what had happened, I was met with the one and only answer that in 18 years of imagining what you would say, I had never even in my wildest dreams contemplated as a response: **"I know"**. *This unfortunately is not uncommon. Family members will go into denial or minimise the impact of the abuse. If the child is young, they falsely believe they will forget about it or will recover easily. They will avoid exposing what is happening for fear of bringing shame on the family or fear the consequences for everyone if the abuse is reported.*

*I will never forget those words coming out of your mouth. It felt like poison. This is experienced as a double betrayal and the person feels they were sacrificed for the protection of the family rather than protecting them as the victim.*

How could you know what I am trying to tell you in a moment when I can't even bring myself together to utter a proper sentence? How could you possibly know? The question rang through my mind over and over and over and over until you told me about **the day you walked in on him with me when I was 5.**

*Imagine the outcome for this person if her family were able to take appropriate action, sought help and ensured she as the victim received therapeutic support and treatment before the trauma impacted her development and wellbeing long-term. Imagine her potential not being damaged, not losing years trying to manage trauma systems and imagine the cost savings to her and the community because she did not need to access services in adulthood as the road to healing and recovery takes so much longer when the damage is well entrenched in the nervous system.*

You gave me some sob-story of what happened, and how he cried when you confronted him, but as you spoke, all that I could understand was that you saw your brother doing something incredibly unspeakable, he told you he **"would never do it again"**, *The victim and the family had been groomed and these were the empty promises that so many offenders make and uninformed adults believe.* and without much more thought you chose to believe him. And in doing so, holy shit you let me down. As your daughter, I have never in

23 years been so f...ing disappointed of you. And to be quite blunt, not just of you, but to be your daughter. I was, and will be until the day I day, completely disgusted in the choice you made that day. **You didn't report him to authorities, you didn't warn your sister to be careful for her daughter, you did nothing. Families often find it difficult to believe that another family member is not who they think they are, particularly when what has taken place has not been part of their experience. As a result, they will minimise and justify and unfortunately are inclined to blame the victim. The offenders are not 'one dimensional monsters' and often live quite 'normal' lives and the people that experience them in that 'normality' cannot equate, comprehend, or associate them with their offending behaviour, and tend to dismiss and not believe the alleged behaviour took place however, in this case it was witnessed and still dismissed and ignored, like somehow it would magically go away because he said he "would never do it again".** Assuming, as you STILL do, that you "doubt" he would do anything. You could not have been more wrong. What you saw that day, and apparently considered to be mild, resulted in another 5 years of unspeakable abuse that no person on this Earth deserves. But that's okay right, because as you've now said to both me and my sister several times "at least he didn't penetrate you". **Some pathetic attempt to mild-down what he did. More minimisation, excuses, and justifications.** Well mum, that's because I was younger than 11, meaning that I hadn't hit puberty or fully developed and as a result my frame was too small, thus in his attempts he was unsuccessful. Does that count? **It's only ATTEMPTED child rape right? People are inclined to make judgements about the impact of child sexual abuse according to their own belief framework and opinions.**

*The trauma impact is unique to the individual, as there are so many contextual and environmental factors that contribute to the severity of the impact. The healing and recovery process focuses on those impacts and does not measure these by 'the story', but rather by the presenting trauma symptoms and how these are impacting of an individual's quality of life, wellbeing, and ability to function day to day and enjoy life. The impact cannot be measured by the details of the story alone, ultimately it is how the trauma affects the individual and some survivors for many reasons may have more resilience, or a better support system than others.*





Jesus Christ, how could you even utter those words like somehow anything (EVERYTHING) else he did to me was okay. All the while, saying how “shocked” you are, and that you “just can’t believe you didn’t know and you didn’t see it”. Let me tell you something; after walking in on him WHEN I WAS FIVE, it should not be so surprising. ANYBODY else would have seen it. **Apparently (as you told me) even your sister, who warned her own daughter to be careful of him.** Meanwhile, you saw what you saw, and only once did you come to ask me if your brother had ever done anything to me. I was probably 5 or 6 but I remember it like it was yesterday, standing in your room in our first house. **You asked, and afraid of the consequences, I said no. Adults assume if they ask a direct question, and the child responds by saying no or avoiding answering that everything is okay. There is little insight that the child through the grooming process may be terrified of the consequences of revealing “the secret”.** and you apparently never felt the need to persist in asking again. **The adults often make the disclosure all about themselves and are also trying to avoid the consequences of an actual disclosure and are often relieved to be able to avoid dealing with it and convince themselves it will all go away, which it may initially short term until later when it will manifest in trauma behaviours and symptoms. There is so little thought given to the consequences for the victim, which in many cases without treatment is lost potential, and a lifetime sentence of complex trauma.** I’m sure I would have remembered, because it would have finally felt like SOMEBODY would have given me a voice that I so desperately needed in a situation so impossibly delicate, that I had completely lost mine.

What’s even worse for me, is that the only course of action you took was to tell Granny, who apparently, just like you, thought it was not worth fussing over, and that it would be totally fine to leave him with me on quite literally thousands of separate occasions. She walked in on me several times, lying on his lap getting “back tickles” and knowing what she knew, apparently thought that was fine. **Examples here of collusion by family members with the offender and protecting an adult over the safety and wellbeing of a child.**

I am just so utterly shocked at the both of you. The amount you have let me down, as my family, is just incomprehensible. And frankly, your attitude to all of this since the day I told you, and the way you spoke to me those first few months is beyond any amount of repair that you could ever do. They ring through my head every single day like a broken record and yet you probably don’t even remember saying them. But I have never forgotten.

“At least he didn’t touch you.”

“You know he’ll go to jail don’t you? They’ll probably beat him to death in there. And you’re okay with that?”

“I really don’t think you should tell them our distant relatives. They’re his only friends! Just let him have 1 or 2 friends!”

“It’s not like he has access to children”

“You’re an ungrateful little bitch” – an absolute favourite of mine. You stormed out my room as I was packing my bags to move out of the house because I finally decided to stand up for myself.

**Victim blaming, denial, minimisation, justification, making the victim responsible to not “bring shame on the family”, very little focus on the offender or interest in him being held accountable, or protecting other potential victims from his offending. The offender instead is portrayed as the victim.**

But don’t you worry, as I discovered living in the house those few months after I told you, whether you knew it or not, your husband certainly had your back over mine. On one occasion after we had a tiff about your brother, and you had said (as you felt the need to every time the conversation came up) one of the above mentioned quotes, like so many other times I had no idea what to say to you. So I shut off and stopped talking to you. You left to go and cry in your room, and your husband took that as a fantastic moment to pull me aside and tell me to be more “considerate” of your feelings because I was being a “little bitch”. You can imagine when I have never felt quite so alone in this world, that one REALLY hit home. Oh and then there was also another occasion where he actually messaged me to give me some sob story about how the “daughter she loves is not treating her (you) right”. I mean for gods sake. Even after he’s been in my life for nearly 18 years, treating him like my own father, **you both got so wrapped up in your own little worlds and emotions you forgot all about mine and doing what a parent is supposed to do: put their child’s emotions first.** Never mind that I have never in my life dealt with anything this big and I actually have no idea how to cope with it. **Further betrayal of trust by family members of the victim and failing to provide emotional safety and support. Caught in their own emotions. Working with the family when a disclosure has taken place is also an important aspect of this work for healing and recovery.**

The constant back and fourth between your disgustingly filthy comments and this constant “we love you. We support you. We would do anything for you” mentality has completely f...ed me up. So when I say things like “I don’t trust you”, I am not sorry. You have given me ab-

solutely no reason to trust you these past few months. You have told me over and over again that you support me and you are on my side but your actions have not in the slightest reflected that. And what’s so incredibly confusing and annoying about this whole thing is that you both genuinely believe you have done nothing wrong in the slightest. You in fact have even said to me “I’m innocent”. **No acknowledgement that the victim was an “innocent” child. The mixed messages of rejection and support are confusing and add an additional burden for the victim.** Mum, never mind not being involved in the problem, you, your husband, granny and your sister (who I will honestly never forgive for inviting your brother over for what you so pathetically called a – and I quote – “last hoorah” dinner for him because I was “probably going to send him to jail” and they would “never see him again”) ARE the problem. I have dealt with this entire situation alone for 18 years. Do you actually think I just suddenly can’t cope with it? As big a deal as it is, I am stronger than that. Our relationship has been in jeopardy purely because of the actions that you have taken from the time I was 5, right up to this year and all the insane decisions you have made in my journey of coming out to you. You and your reactions are also the sole reason that I am visiting my psychologist.

You have told me time and time again how much you and your husband are hurting. Did you ever for even a second actually stop and think about how much pain I was in? To be abused is one thing, but to not have the support of your mother is another. You can tell me that you supported me and that you still do, but if you could even CONTEMPLATE saying those disgusting things (and let me assure you there are MANY more incredibly hurtful things that you have said that I have simply decided not to include above), then you are not on my side. You may not be on “his side”, but you have not been shy to make it seem as though you are sitting on the fence. And to me, loud as day, that IS a side. And it is not mine. **Survivors so often feel abandoned by their loved ones and families and not heard.**

It is so incredibly disheartening to me, that as my mother I would ever even need to spell that out for you, but in 8 months, apparently you have not been able to piece that together yourself. Apparently, you really do actually need to be hand-held through where and how you went wrong. Like you deserve some kind of explanation and you want to drag me down to be the person to do it. You have taught me strength since birth and yet you (and your side of the family) are the ones who have made me feel weak. Helpless. Alone.

I have been so worried about everyone except myself

through this, and now it is time to finally put myself first. **To survive, a victim of child sexual abuse often becomes hypervigilant as a way of trying to stay safe. They are always trying ‘to read the room’ so to speak. This can lead to the child becoming tuned into the emotions of the adults however, often at the cost of losing touch with their own feeling and needs. They are often taking care of the emotions and needs of the adults at the expense of their own.** I don’t care if coming out about it tarnishes our family name. I don’t care what happens to your brother going forward. I don’t care if your sister loses 1 or 2 of the 3 friends she has just because word of this has gotten out and she won’t get off her lazy arse to meet more people and make more friends. And I don’t for a second think that you are “judging me”, nor would I care if you were. There are so much bigger things in life. These are small, pathetic things and I refuse to donate them a second more of my time or mental capacity.

It has taken me far too long to actually stand on my own 2 feet about this whole topic. I’m embarrassed of myself that I couldn’t hold my own and stand up to you for myself and all the other abused who are made to feel even for a millisecond as though they are alone. They deserve better. I deserve better. Which is why for my own mental health I have tried to break away from you. Space. Permanent space. Not booting you out of my life, not never calling you, not ignoring birthdays and events. Just space. Like a smashed vase, I feel like I have been picked up and thrown down onto the floor over and over again. Moving out of your house and into my own was the best thing I ever did for myself next to seeing a psychologist, and through both of those things I have finally managed to start piecing back together the hundreds of pieces that I am in, to try to get back to my original state – One I happened to very much liked.

There is no guideline to how this works. And god knows this is such a ridiculous situation that I don’t know anybody who has even been in a similar situation, so it’s hard to get advice on. I really just want to do this at the pace that I am comfortable with. It’s okay that you have been persistent in contacting me; amid this mess it is a nice reminder that you do love me and want to get back to where we were. But I can wholeheartedly say that being through what we have, right now (and maybe not ever, I don’t know) I don’t think we will (or even really know that I want to) have the same dynamic of relationship that we did before April when this whole mess began. I have grown and I am still learning, but I like the feeling of independence it brings. I like to know that I





can do life on my own and I don't need others. I actually can stand on my own 2 feet, and more than that I can walk and jump and run. And going forward, you need to be okay with that, and you need to be okay with the space that I need and this new relationship that we now have, because we are here from your own actions. You make your bed, you sleep in it.

You're my mum, so I will always love you. I will always want you at my wedding, I will always want you in my future kids lives. **This is reflective of the pain of feeling abandoned by the very person the survivor believed would protect them. They are overwhelmed by the confusion of deeply loving a parent who has let them down when they most needed them to protect and keep them safe. This same confusion is even more extreme when the actual offender is a parent or significant other.** But it needs to happen at my pace. What has been done can't ever be undone. It will always pull at my heart strings and it will always be in the back of my memory, but I am working on making them smaller. Please allow me the time and the space for that.

Love you forever, Phoenix Client (client name removed)

## LETTER FROM CLIENT TO PHOENIX COUNSELLOR

*Writing it (the letter above) would never have even been an option before meeting you and going on this whole journey with you. You brought me so much comfort just in having you in my corner and on my team - You were my lighthouse guiding the way for me in a time I was completely lost in darkness.*

*Please let me know if there is absolutely Anything I can do for you! If, for example, I can write a letter to your sponsors giving them a personal account of your unprecedented worth it would be my absolute pleasure. I could never in a thousand lifetimes repay you for the happiness, courage, and self-worth you have provided me.*

*Thank you again, ten thousand times over.*

*You are, genuinely, my hero.*

*All my thanks,*

*Phoenix Client (client name removed)*

### Quote from Clinical Psychologist who wished to advocate for Phoenix:

I am a Clinical Psychologist with 15-years' experience in private practice. I previously held the position of Clinical Psychologist Specialist with the Department of Health, and have worked in various mental health services, including community mental health clinics and inpatient psychiatric units. Much of my work has been with clients with mental health issues arising from childhood trauma.

Phoenix provides counselling for clients with both current and historical sexual abuse in childhood. This service is unique, in that it provides low cost, trauma informed therapy of sufficient duration to adequately meet the needs of clients with complex trauma. Research evidence shows that effective treatment for this group needs to be of medium- term duration (one to two years).

These clients have difficulty accessing public mental health services, and if they do, the mandate of these services is to treat mental health symptoms, rather than provide therapy for the trauma that underpins their mental health difficulties. The process of healing requires attention to both mental health symptoms and the broader aspects of trauma.

The clients I have referred to Phoenix have had excellent outcomes, both in terms of increased function (e.g., return to paid employment) and decreased mental health symptoms, including decreased suicidality.



**Phoenix**  
Professional Development  
and Prevention Services



Building Better Brains

## Creating Compassionate Communities

*Changing one mind and one heart at a time through early intervention and prevention*

- Clinical Supervision Training
- Compassionate Mindfulness
- Shanker Method™ of Self-Regulation
- Compassion Fatigue and Vicarious Trauma
- Provision of individual clinical supervision and group supervision
- Trauma Transformation through trauma-informed care and practices
- Gender socialisation and its relationship to interpersonal and sexual violence
- Understanding challenges for children and young people accessing pornography
- Understanding and responding to child sexual abuse and family and domestic violence
- The globally recognised Domestic Violence Informed Safe & Together™ Model CORE Training






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Professional Development and Prevention Services

*"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





“  
*There have to be more Phoenixes  
because it scares me how little this place  
is, but what huge work you do.*  
”  
Phoenix Client

“  
*Through Phoenix I learned about how  
my body operates. It's just like click,  
click, click and I can see the whole  
thing before me, and what I can do.  
This cycle of trauma.*  
”  
Phoenix Client

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“  
*There is no quick fix.*  
”  
Phoenix Client






 61 8 9443 1910

 61 8 9227 1510

 [info@phoenix.asn.au](mailto:info@phoenix.asn.au)  
[counsellor@phoenix.asn.au](mailto:counsellor@phoenix.asn.au)  
[training@phoenix.asn.au](mailto:training@phoenix.asn.au)

 404 Walcott Street,  
Coolbinia WA 6050

 [www.phoenix.asn.au](http://www.phoenix.asn.au)

