



**Supporting male survivors of childhood sexual abuse
& their families**

Annual Report 2016/17



Co-founders' message

After five years, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse is drawing to a close at the end of 2017. We look forward to the Commission's Final Report and the response from governments, both state and federal, to its recommendations. We remain hopeful that a national redress scheme will be fair and equitable and that all state and territory governments and institutions will opt in.

It is worth noting that 64.3% of the survivors who attended private sessions at the Royal Commission were men. This statistic alone highlights the extent of a problem hitherto largely unrecognised in the Australian community.

The reality is that child sexual abuse impacts on a substantial proportion of Australian men, including those not abused in institutional settings, who are also contacting SAMSN for support. Yet, to date, few funded organisations in Australia provide specialist knowledge and support to respond to the needs of male survivors.

We currently derive our core operational funding from NSW Victims Services, as well as individual donations, sponsorship and fundraising events.

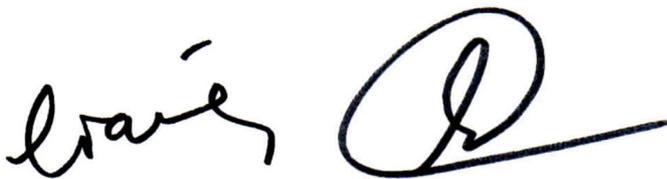
We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the visionary Mahashini Krishna, the NSW Commissioner of Victims' Rights and her team at Victims Services for their ongoing support of SAMSN and our shared clients.

We would like to express our thanks to our small but highly effective team; Mark Griffiths, Tony Phiskie, Gideon Lim and Briega Bailey, for their passion, hard work and dedication. They are a joy to work with.

Finally, special thanks must go to the members of our Executive Board and our Clinical Advisory Board for their wisdom, encouragement and commitment to making a difference to the lives of male survivors.

SAMSN is future-focused and remains committed to growth. We will continue to deliver programs and resources to meet the needs of survivors and their supporters, as well as educate professionals and service providers. Through our advocacy and influence, we will work to find new ways to engage with younger men and give hope to all those affected.

Thank you for your support.

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature on the left is 'Craig' and the second signature on the right is 'Shane'. Both are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Craig Hughes-Cashmore & Shane McNamara
Co-founders & Executive Directors

1. ABOUT US

OUR VISION

A society in which male survivors struggling with the adverse effects of childhood sexual abuse (CSA) can easily access support and find understanding and acceptance.

OUR MISSION

SAMSN's mission is to build an Australia-wide support network that provides practical and emotional support and meets the therapeutic needs of survivors and their supporters.

2. WHAT WE DO

SAMSN delivers 'trauma-informed' programs to provide support, increase awareness and drive systemic change

- Eight-week professionally facilitated peer support groups for male survivors of CSA
- Monthly drop-in meetings for men who have completed a SAMSN Eight-week group
- Workshops for male survivors of CSA, their families and supporters
- Tailored training for health professionals and service providers working with male survivors.

We work directly with survivors and their families

- Responding to the palpable distress of first time callers, survivors or family members
- Undertaking initial assessment of a survivor's circumstances to identify what they see as being the priorities they need addressed
- Supporting men who seek to engage with the criminal justice system, including making an initial statement to police and appearing in court, as well as assisting men considering civil legal action
- Providing information and referral to NSW Victims Services, healthcare and medical support, education, housing, mental health, employment and financial services.

We are open and responsive; we connect survivors and their families to critical services

SAMSN provides a holistic, wrap-around service designed to aid healing and recovery, so that no man experiencing the adverse effects of CSA is left without hope and to suffer in shame, silence or isolation. Our services are either free of charge or low-cost.

3. CASE MANAGEMENT & REFERRALS

SAMSN received 420 new referrals. The majority being from NSW. This is an increase of 65% from the previous year.

New referrals to SAMSN are dealt with by SAMSN's two full-time Social Workers who were employed early 2016 due to NSW Victim's Services recurrent funding of SAMSN. As well as responding to phone calls and face-to-face contacts during normal business hours, the two Social Workers also follow-up all out-of-hours voicemails received on SAMSN's 1800 number, and to messages directed to SAMSN's email address support@samsn.org.au.

The work involved in providing these services includes:

- Responding to the palpable distress of first time callers. Whether they be survivors or family members as in either circumstance, it is common for their contact to be the first, or one of the first times they have disclosed their abuse, or the abuse of a family member or friend, to anyone, and certainly to service providers
- Initial assessment of the client's circumstance to identify what they see as being the priorities to be addressed
- Provision of information on services and assistance available. For example, many men who contact SAMSN are unaware of the support provided by NSW Victims Services
- Management around issues of housing, financial difficulties, employment, Centrelink and material assistance
- Liaison with community mental health services, General Practitioners and other health services
- Advocacy and support around legal issues and reporting to police – this often involves assisting men to complete SARO reports and NSW Victims Services applications for recognition payments and counselling support

SAMSN's 2 x Executive Directors contributed significantly to our social workers efforts to assist Survivors and their Supporters navigate their way through the legal system. A lot of the men we are engaged with are involved in criminal cases against their offenders, and despite the allocation of a WAS Officer, they often express a wish to have a SAMSN representative with them, particularly at key points such as producing a Police statement, giving evidence, cross-examination, preparing their Victim Impact Statements etc.

4. EIGHT-WEEK GROUP PROGRAM & MONTHLY MEETINGS

In the 2017 financial year we delivered a total of 11 eight-week groups. 3 in Erskineville, 2 in both Adelaide and Newcastle and one in Granville, Liverpool, Wollongong and Canberra with 87 men completing the Eight-week group program (compared with 77 in 2016).

Administration of SAMSN's Eight-week group program was co-ordinated by our two full-time Social Workers, both in terms of the coordination of the wait list of men for each of the group program locations, and the coordination and mentoring of the health professionals contracted to facilitate the groups.

All group participants are invited to complete an evaluation form at the end of the final night.

Our group sessions are regarded as effective in addressing the needs that survivors *themselves* nominate as most important. For example: guilt/shame, secrecy, self-esteem issues, addiction, gambling problems, depression and a range of other challenging issues. The figures below highlight the magnitude of the issues nominated across participants of group sessions, relative to the impact of the session in enabling them to address that particular issue. The data is derived from feedback questionnaires completed by all 175 participants who completed 24 groups between January 2011 and December 2016.

Experience	Self-identified problem / 175	Did the group help?
Guilt, anger, shame and/or other difficult emotions	173 (98.86%)	163 of 173 said YES (94.22%)
Depression, anxiety or mental health problems	162 (92.57%)	134 of 162 said YES (82.72%)
Secrecy	157 (89.71%)	145 of 157 said YES (92.36%)
Poor self-esteem	156 (89.14%)	131 of 156 said YES (83.97%)
Vulnerability	152 (86.86%)	133 of 152 said YES (87.5%)
Relationship problems	147 (84%)	104 of 147 said YES (70.75%)
Difficulty knowing who to trust	144 (82.29%)	116 of 144 said YES (80.56%)
Problems coping	133 (76%)	111 of 133 said YES (83.46%)
Alcohol or drug abuse	131 (74.86%)	69 of 131 said YES (52.67%)
Sexual difficulties	127 (72.57%)	95 of 127 said YES (74.80%)
Suicidal thoughts or feelings	108 (61.71%)	79 of 108 said YES (73.15%)
Self-harming behaviour	80 (45.71%)	69 of 80 said YES (86.25%)
Urges to self harm	77 (44%)	60 of 77 said YES (77.92%)
Suicidal behaviour	64 (36.57%)	58 of 64 said YES (90.63%)
Problem gambling	33 (18.86%)	25 of 33 said YES (75.76%)

After completion of the Eight-week group program, participants are automatically considered SAMSN members. They then qualify to attend monthly drop-in meetings held in Sydney, Newcastle and Adelaide. These monthly meetings provide an opportunity for SAMSN members to maintain ongoing connection and support as they continue their recovery. This year, SAMSN has been able to consolidate these meetings by employing 2 professional facilitators in all 3 locations.

5. SERVICE PROVIDERS WORKSHOP

In 2016/17 we ran 2 Service Providers Workshops at Hunter New England Mental Health and at the Rydges Hotel in Camperdown.

This workshop is designed for professionals working with adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

The effects of CSA on men are explored, along with strategies that can help men recover. Specific attention is paid to the role of group work. This workshop includes a Q&A with the Co-founders of SAMSN, and emphasises the importance of trauma-aware practice.

Participants learn:

- The dynamics of grooming and the resulting confusion
- The impacts of child sexual abuse on males
- Trauma-informed care in working with men, both individually and in groups
- The advantages that support from peers brings to the recovery process.

6. ENGAGEMENT, ADVOCACY & EVENTS

- Our third annual fundraiser dinner was held at the Waterview Restaurant in Bicentennial Park in July. The event was hosted by SAMSN Ambassador Rob Carlton. Guest speakers included Gold Walkley award-winning Fairfax journalist Joanne McCarthy, Jodie Sloan (Victims Support Services – South Australia) and SAMSN member Ryan Chandler
- We conducted a workshop at Sydney University Law School in October with 6 SAMSN members with experience of the legal system to feed into our joint Royal Commission submission
- We held our annual Golf Day in October at the Cabramatta Golf Club
- Craig appeared alongside Professor Judy Cashmore at the Royal Commission's Public Hearing into the Criminal Justice System in November
- We held a second Golf Day at Pennant Hills in December
- We conducted our first comprehensive online survey of SAMSN's membership in December

- In February, we held our first Eight-week group Facilitators Forum at the Rydges Hotel in Camperdown
- We consulted on the documentary Ghost Hunter, and appeared on the fundraising panel for the film at the Sydney Opera House, Good Pitch event
- In March Craig was appointed to the NSW Sexual Assault Expert Group to advise the NSW government on the development of their new strategy for responding to sexual assault
- We filmed seven SAMSN members for our website, asking them about their thoughts on SAMSN and recovery, as well as their experience of our Eight-week groups. These two videos will be launched at our annual dinner and then posted to social media
- We attended the NSW Victims Services Interagency meetings throughout the year
- Craig continued his work as a Board member of knowmore legal
- Tony & Craig attended several meetings at ECAV as a member of the Consultation Network for Adult Survivor Group Work.

7. GOVERNANCE

- SAMSN Executive Board

Held on 5th July 2016, 2nd November 2016 & 26th March 2017. In attendance was

3 x Craig Hughes-Cashmore – Executive Director

3 x Shane McNamara – Executive Director

3 x Karen Lindley – Executive Director

3 x Charmaine Bourke – Board Member

3 x Mark Eggleston – Business Coach

- SAMSN's Clinical Advisory Board

Held on 23rd July 2016, 27th October 2016, 23rd Feb 2017, 25th May 2017. In attendance was

4 x Mark Griffiths – Chair & Consultant Psychologist

4 x Tony Phiskie – Principle Social Worker

4 x Craig Hughes-Cashmore – Executive Director

4 x Prof Patrick O'Leary

3 x Dean Brown – Community Representative

2 x Prof Caroline Taylor

- SAMSN Senior Facilitators' Committee

Held on 19th November 2016. In attendance was
Mark Griffiths – Chair of CAB & Consultant Psychologist
Tony Phiskie – Principal Social Worker
Brett Pickard – Eight-week group facilitator

8. 2017 FINANCIAL REPORT (See Appendix 1)