

samsn

SURVIVORS & MATES SUPPORT NETWORK

Annual Report



2023-2024



Men's Business by Brendan 'Japangardi' Kerin. Brendan was prompted to create this painting in acknowledgement of SAMSN's commitment to providing services to men. The painting represents men meeting around a campfire in a healing circle. With permission from the artist.

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Acknowledgements

Acknowledgement of Country

SAMSN acknowledges the Dharug people who are the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work. We express our deepest gratitude for their protection and conservation of this beautiful Country. We offer our respects to the Elders who have gone before us, the Elders who are with us today and the Elders who will continue to teach us about the importance of cultural practices, land management and the preservation of their deep spiritual connection. SAMSN endorses the development of initiatives that value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage, cultures and peoples, and recognises their unique position as the original custodians of Australia.

SAMSN is committed to providing a culturally safe environment to support the healing journey for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Support acknowledgement

SAMSN gratefully acknowledges the funding and support received from the:

- Australian Government through the Department of Social Services and the National Partnership Agreement
- NSW Government through Victims Services and NSW Health
- City of Parramatta Council.

We also acknowledge with thanks and gratitude all donations received.



Acknowledgement of survivors

We acknowledge those with lived and living experience of childhood sexual abuse and thank them for sharing their unique insights and learnings with us.

Who we are

SAMSN is Australia's leading organisation for male survivors of child sexual abuse. Survivor founded and led, we provide free support and information to adult male survivors and their allies. We also offer trauma-informed training for professionals working with child sexual abuse survivors.

We are a not-for-profit charity and are not affiliated with any religious organisation.

SAMSN exists for all male survivors regardless of ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, religion or expressions of male gender identity.

We want every survivor to know that the abuse was not their fault and that healing and recovery are possible.



Our tricycle logo

SAMSN's logo represents a rite of passage for many children. A tricycle opens a young child's world; learning to ride helps to build confidence, safety, independence, and initiative.

Our purpose

To build a support network that gives voice and agency to survivors and their supporters.

Our belief

Survivors of childhood sexual abuse can recover, support others to thrive and be leaders for change.

Our vision

A world in which male survivors of childhood sexual abuse can easily access support and find understanding and acceptance.

Our values

Hope

The courage to believe in what's possible

Dignity

We honour each other's inherent worth

Connection

Together we achieve

Community

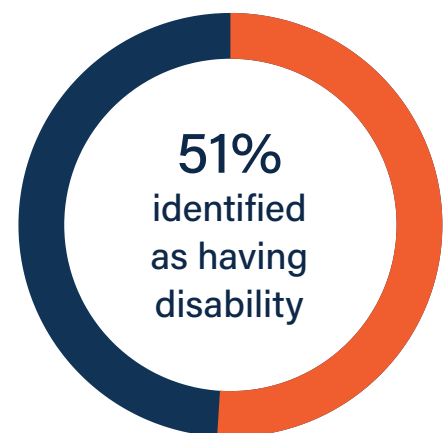
Engaging the power of networks for growth

Our tricycle logo is a reminder that adult male survivors were once children. SAMSN walks alongside men and their supporters to restore safety, self-belief and joy in people's lives.

Services snapshot 2023-2024



Snapshot - Clients aged 20-86



CEO report

From the very beginning, SAMSN's work has been underpinned by the power of peer support. The lived experience voice of survivors, in partnership with professionals who understand at the depth the issues we face, continues to be the reason for SAMSN's ongoing success and the burgeoning demand for our services.

The following report speaks to the dedication and professionalism of our team and highlights my colleagues' commitment to this challenging, yet immensely rewarding work. I would like to offer my deepest appreciation to everyone who has worked with SAMSN this year; your passion in this work is both inspiring and sustaining. The work performed by the men manning our Peer Support Phone Line deserves special mention.

During the year we welcomed to the team our new Chief Operating Officer, Karin Waldmann, a new counsellor, Gill, and a new receptionist and administration officer, Gabby, while Rachel Hart took on the Senior Practitioner role. The vast experience these appointments bring to SAMSN has strengthened our collective ability to deliver on our promise to help create a world in which male survivors of childhood sexual abuse can easily access support and find understanding and acceptance.

I would like to thank the members of our Board, Karen, Tanem and Jed, as well as the members of SAMSN's Practice Advisory Committee (PAC), for their wisdom and guidance throughout the year. This past year has seen some movement within the PAC, with Gail Frank taking on the role of Chair after Professor Patrick O'Leary stepped down after many years in the role. Thankfully, Patrick will remain on the PAC. I would



also like to acknowledge the contribution of Rob Hall who served on SAMSN's PAC for many years. Rob is a real gentleman who has given so generously of his time to SAMSN, both as a PAC member and as an Eight-week Support Group facilitator. At the start of the financial year, we were thrilled to welcome Dr. Gary Foster as a PAC member. Gary brings with him years of experience of working alongside male survivors and we benefit greatly from his expertise also.

Over the past year, SAMSN was recognised as an important support service for male survivors in the Final Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Tasmanian Government's Response to Child Sexual Abuse in Institutional Settings. SAMSN was also invited to appear before the Western Australian Inquiry into the options available to survivors of institutional child sexual abuse and to give evidence at the Victorian Government's Board of Inquiry into historical child sexual abuse in Beaumaris Primary School.

I would like to thank our primary funder, the NSW Department of Communities and Justice, for their invaluable ongoing support as well as NSW Health for working with SAMSN to auspice the National Partnership Agreement funding.

SAMSN greatly appreciates the funding we receive from the Commonwealth Government via the Department of Social Services to support survivors living in NSW to apply for redress and to build capacity in Redress Support Services in South Australia, Tasmania and NSW.

We know that one of the significant and devastating impacts of child sexual trauma is the sense of isolation that can carry through into their adult lives, no matter what their individual circumstances. Healing from the impacts of child sexual abuse is difficult to do on your own. SAMSN remains the only community-based specialist service in Australia supporting male survivors of child sexual abuse, their families, loved ones and supporters. I am incredibly proud of the work we do.

Craig Hughes-Cashmore
CEO



Board and Practice Advisory Committee

SAMSN Board of Directors

Tanem Taskin

Chair

Karen Lindley AM

Dr Jed Horner

Secretary

Practice Advisory Committee

SAMSN's Practice Advisory Committee (PAC) provides expertise and direction on matters related to programs undertaken and proposed.

The committee is a collaboration between professionals, community representatives and men with lived expertise in the development of excellence in service delivery.

Professor Patrick O'Leary

Chair (July - December 2023)

Gail Frank

Chair (January - June 2024)

Lindsay Gardner

Rob Hall

Dr Gary Foster



Staff

As of 30 June 2024, SAMSN's dedicated team includes 15 full-time or part-time staff and 13 casual staff.

Management team

Chief Executive Officer

Craig Hughes-Cashmore

Chief Operating Officer

Karin Waldmann

Policy, Advocacy and Stakeholder Relations Manager

Prue Gregory OAM

Senior Practitioner

Rachel Hart

Office Manager

Vivianne Fatu

Programs and operations team

Receptionist/admin officer

Gabby

Service administrator

Luke

Planned support workers

Alex, David, Joey, Holly, Michael

Counsellors

David, Gill, Rachel

Accessibility project lead

Karise

Accessibility project coordinator

Julie

Program consultant

Jack

Peer Support Phone Line workers

12 peers



2023–2024 highlights

The Peer Support Phone Line transitioned from pilot to permanent program in NSW and was also made available to men in South Australia and Tasmania.



Phase 1 of the accessibility project was completed, including refreshing SAMSN's website in line with WCAG 2.2 international standards, and the development of a Disability Inclusion Action Plan.



Suicide Prevention Australia accreditation of our Peer Support Phone Line, Planned Support and the Eight-week Support Group program.



Suicide Prevention Australia named Craig Hughes-Cashmore a finalist in the NSW LiFE Award 2024 for Outstanding Contribution.



We supported the campaign #YourReferenceAintRelevant against the use of character references to reduce the sentences of convicted sex offenders.



“Purely by chance, I found an amazing organisation called SAMSN. I found their resources helpful and insightful and – most importantly – a safe place and safe people to be with.” Nicole

Peer Support Phone Line

The Peer Support Phone Line is a free and confidential service that gives people a way to speak with other male survivors who identify with the issues commonly faced by men who have experienced child sexual abuse.

The service has moved beyond the pilot phase, with survivors embracing the opportunity to talk with a mate who can relate. SAMSN receives eight calls a week on Tuesday and Thursday nights, and over the past year we took 233 calls from survivors.

Thanks to the service's success, we have secured funding to make the phone line a permanent program. It has also achieved Suicide Prevention Australia accreditation.

We now have 12 peer support workers taking calls, all of them SAMSN alumni who have completed one of our Eight-week Support Groups. In addition to their lived experience, peer support workers have comprehensive training in Mental Health First Aid, Suicide Awareness and customised SAMSN training to prepare them for the Peer Support Phone Line role. They also receive ongoing monthly peer supervision.



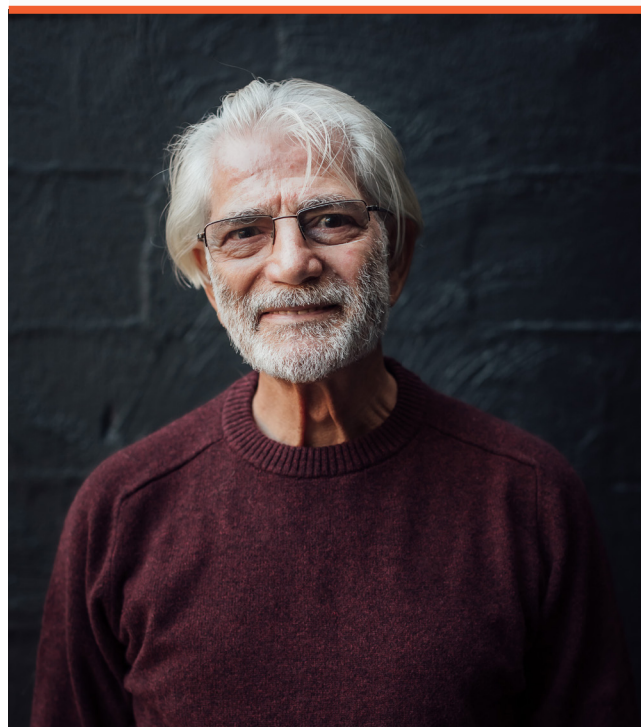
Program feedback

‘It was refreshing and gave me lots of hope and the ability to debrief/gain some insight with a trusted survivor. I felt less alone, and that I was building some new steps to a healthier and more sustainable life.’

Caller, Peer Support Phone Line

‘Speaking to other survivors has been one of the most purposeful things I have done with my time. Being able to be a beacon of hope for others has been quite meaningful and purposeful in my own life.’

Peer Support Phone Line worker



Eight-week Support Groups and Monthly Drop-in Meetings

These free, professionally facilitated peer support groups (in-person or online) provide practical information and supported discussion to assist participants in their healing and recovery.

Since starting our first Eight-week Support Group 13 years ago, we have completed 98 groups with more than 900 men. In the 2023–2024 financial year SAMSN ran 10 groups, with 95 men attending.

Our professionally facilitated Monthly Drop-in Meetings are available to men who have completed an Eight-week Support Group. The meetings offer continued connection with other survivors focusing on enhancing support, recovery, reducing feelings of isolation and providing a safe space to discuss common issues for male survivors.

To make the meetings accessible to more participants we have moved to an online format with sessions run twice each month.

Participant feedback

‘SAMSN facilitators, support staff and peer workers are professional and empathetic. This group has brought me an awareness about my abuse history I never thought I could arrive at. The eight-week group is brilliant. I’ve made mates who are inspiring and caring, we all have a light to share in survival and thriving. Thank you for validating and witnessing my pain and resilience.’ Pete

‘It was a very safe way to discuss very painful, and very personal subjects that are never easy to talk about. Being heard and acknowledged by other men who have suffered in a similar way was very empowering.’ Tim

‘I did their Eight-week Group Program for men, and now attend their monthly online meetings which focus on specific themes each time, allowing me to explore, challenge and expand my thoughts, feelings, emotions and beliefs in a way that is safe, but also allows me to freely express myself without fear of judgement. And also, there’s the ability to simply be present and listen. SAMSN is a wonderful organisation for male survivors of CSA which continues to expand and support me.’ Emad



Individual Planned Support and Counselling

Our Planned Support and Counselling teams are often the first contact survivors and supporters have at SAMSN, working with them to establish safety, connect to other supports and navigate complex systems, while respecting individual privacy and autonomy.

SAMSN's Planned Support is delivered by a team of qualified and experienced practitioners across social work, psychology, psychotherapy and counselling.

These workers respond to all service user requests for support including:

- government agencies such as Centrelink and housing
- victim support services
- the National Redress Scheme
- criminal and civil legal service referrals
- Work and Development Orders (WDOs)
- reporting to police, or the online Sexual Assault Reporting Option (SARO)
- accessing short-term counselling
- finding an ongoing counsellor.

SAMSN has male and female specialist trauma-informed counsellors who can provide short-term counselling and assist survivors and supporters to access longer-term counselling if needed.

Service feedback

'Thank you for being there in my darkest times and for giving me guidance and unconditional support, for which I am very grateful. And thanks also to the team at SAMSN. Without you I would not be where I am today – on the road to recovery. Thanks to all concerned. Keep up the good work.' Jacob



National Redress Scheme Application Support

The National Redress Scheme is designed to support people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse gain access to a monetary payment, counselling and a direct personal response/apology.

SAMSN provides free assistance to survivors thinking about applying to the scheme and to those who have already made an application.

In the past year we provided information about the National Redress Scheme to 125 individuals and supported 64 clients with their Redress Scheme applications. This can be a challenging and time-consuming process that requires survivors to reflect and answer in-depth questions about their abuse.

Redress Scheme applications take an average 10–15 sessions per client over two to three months.

Once a person's application is submitted our Planned Support workers stay in contact.

With the waiting time for Redress Scheme application outcomes about 18 months, our team regularly checks in with applicants to ensure they have adequate support during this challenging time.

Community engagement program

SAMSN is working with People with Disability Australia, Link-Up (NSW), Kinchela Boys Home Aboriginal Corporation and Wattle Place to provide information about the National Redress Scheme via half-day workshops to community organisations across NSW.

We co-facilitated three workshops this year in Lawson, Nowra and Wyong.



Supporters and Survivors Workshops



SAMSN brought survivors and supporters together in four dedicated workshops over the past year.

The purpose of the one-day program is to provide a safe, professionally facilitated environment to share learning and enhance personal and relational wellbeing.

Feedback from participants consistently conveyed relief in finding they are not alone in their experience. Participants came away from the sessions feeling empowered by the information they had gained and connected to others who could relate.

The program reflects our commitment to supporting not only adult male survivors of childhood sexual abuse but also their partners, family and friends.

Participant feedback

‘I’m so glad I found SAMSN. It is a very isolating journey, and it was so comforting to talk to others who understand.’ Carlos

‘Loved it! The patience and caring/understanding environment facilitated some very honest emotions. I felt validated.’ Elaine

Service Providers Workshops

As part of our suite of consultation and training services, SAMSN delivers one-day tailored workshops for service providers working with men who have experienced child sexual abuse.

These Service Providers Workshops are designed for government and not-for-profit organisations who want to provide trauma-informed responses and services.

SAMSN delivered 12 workshops in the past year in Adelaide, Brisbane, Devonport, Gosford, Hobart, Parramatta, Sydney and Wagga Wagga.

The sessions are a powerful combination of theory, practical training and lived experience. They cover:

- The elements of trauma-informed gender appropriate approach (process).
- An understanding of the prevalence, dynamics and impacts of child sexual abuse on survivors' health, well-being and relationships.
- Engaging and working with male survivors to support recovery and address overwhelming feelings of guilt and shame.
- Responding to disclosures in a trauma informed way that acknowledges context and honours resilience and resourcefulness.
- Navigating justice, criminal, redress and civil litigation.
- Supporting personal and professional self-care and resilience.

Participant feedback

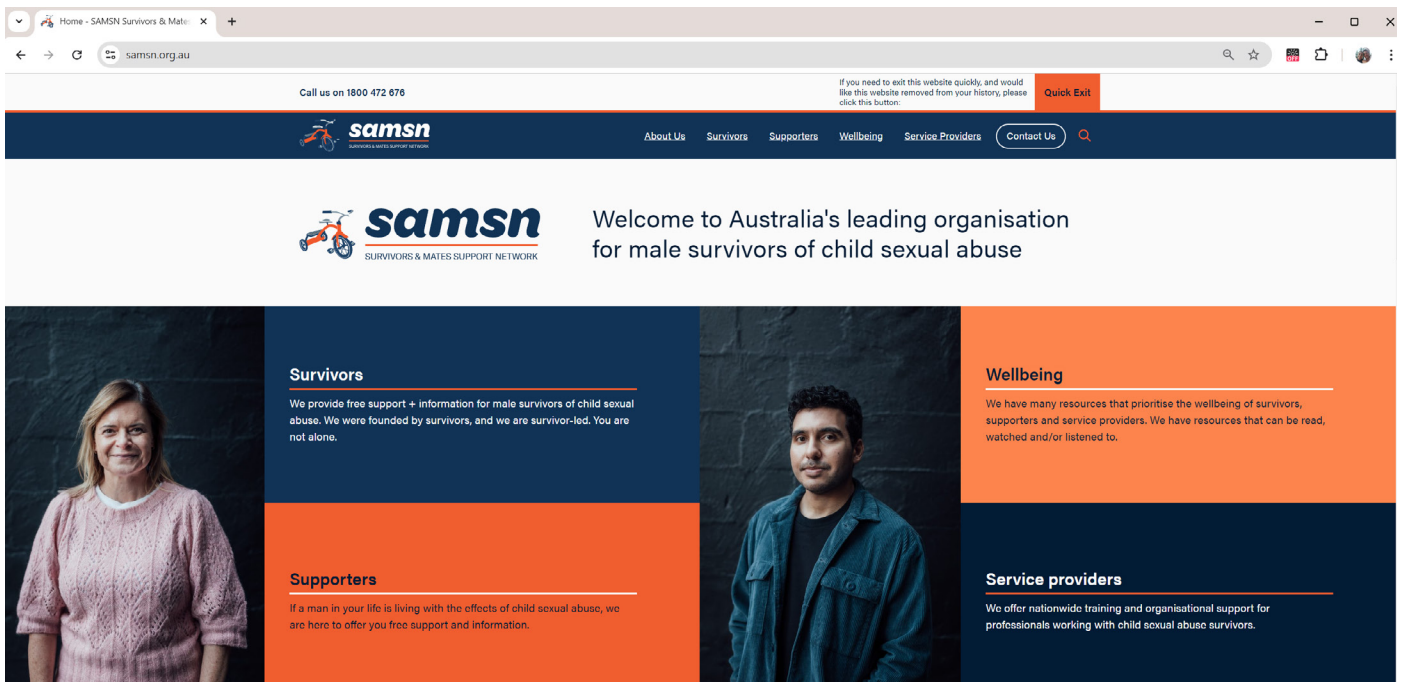
'The lived experience, legal and therapeutic components blended brilliantly.' Elaine

'I found this to be the most beneficial education I attended in 2024.' Fran

'Amazing presenters and presentation.' John



Accessibility project – phase 1



The accessibility project aimed to increase people's engagement with SAMSNS's services, including making the website easier to navigate for individuals with physical, psychosocial and other disabilities.

We implemented WCAG 2.2 international accessibility standards for our website, and also developed a Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

The website refresh includes a specially designed section for supporters to provide a reliable and thorough resource bank for anyone supporting an adult male survivor.

Co-designed with survivors, supporters and other stakeholders, the new website includes:

- expanded resource pages for survivors and supporters
- a wellbeing hub with information about mental and physical wellbeing, mindfulness, grounding, and relaxation
- an accessibility tool that allows users to adjust fonts, colours and links to suit their requirements
- site navigation that suits screen readers and is keyboard navigable
- transcripts and captions on videos
- original images that reflect the diversity of our service users.



Leadership and advocacy

As Australia's leading organisation for male survivors of child sexual abuse, their families and supporters, SAMSN's advocacy role is vital. SAMSN seizes every opportunity to educate the community and build awareness of the dynamics and impacts of child sexual abuse on men.



SAMSN has supported the survivor-led campaign against the use of character references to reduce the sentences of convicted sex offenders. Led by Harrison James and Jarad Grice, the #YourReferenceAintRelevant campaign has advocated for changes in these laws across Australia.

SAMSN has made submissions on law reform affecting male survivors to both Commonwealth and state governments. In some cases, our submissions have led to appearances before parliamentary committees. These include the:

- Commonwealth Standing Committee on the Implementation of the National Redress Scheme
- Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee on reducing a Governor-General's entitlements when they have been involved in serious misconduct
- Community Development and Justice Standing Committee of the Legislative Assembly of WA on the options available to survivors of institutional child sexual abuse in WA.

We also made submissions to the NSW Government and to the Sentencing Council of NSW in relation to character references and claim farming.

These submissions have increased SAMSN's visibility as an important, reliable and responsive authority in this area.



The last word



My ex-husband was sexually abused at a school in the 1950s. He never talked about it, not even to me, until nearly 60 years later.

The trauma he suffered broke our marriage and led, I believe, to his lifelong complex PTSD, depression and alcoholism.

I talked him into doing your group and getting counselling during Covid lockdowns. It changed his life.

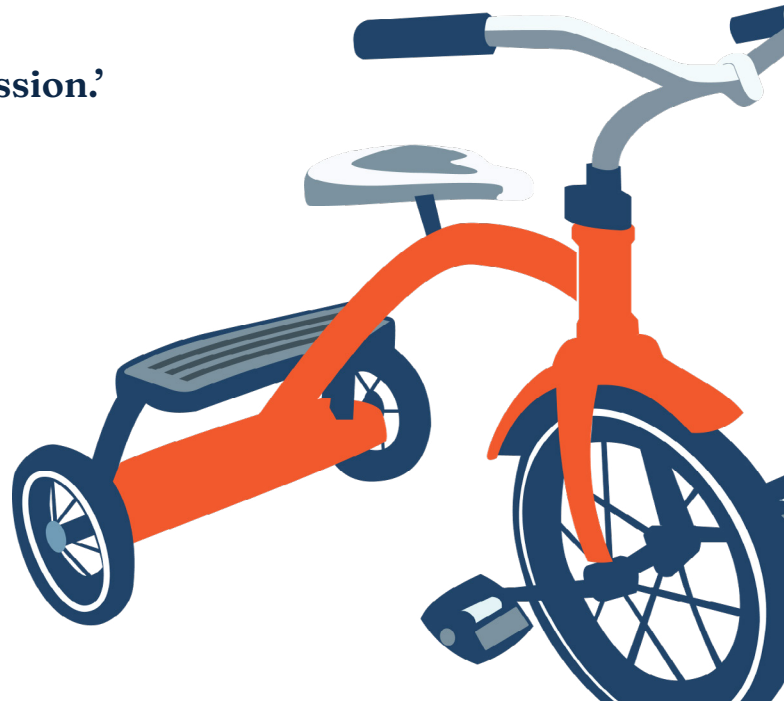
A week ago he died suddenly, and his family is still in shock and grief. But what I wanted to tell you is that doing your course gave him the first hope and freedom from suffering in many, many years.

He rebuilt his relationships with us, engaged in regular therapy, could speak up to others about the sexual abuse, developed communication skills, including dealing with anger, and really became so much closer to the person he was meant to be had he not been abused.

So, thank you.

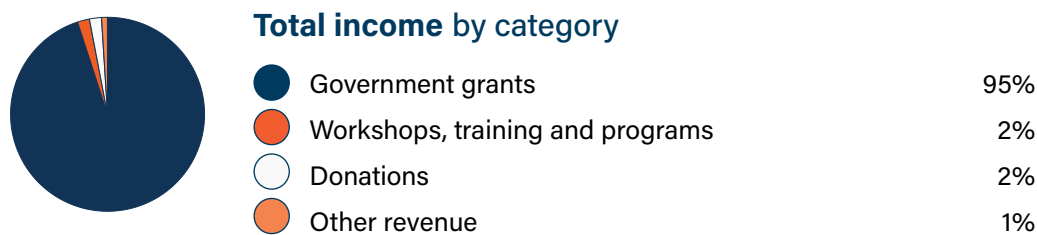
**Thanks for your work,
your compassion, your passion.'**

Theresa

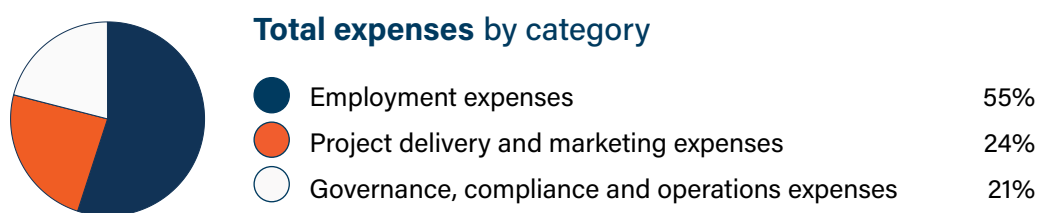


2023-2024 Financial Report

| Revenue | 2024 | 2023 |
|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Government grants | 2,301,015 | 1,786,764 |
| Workshops, training and programs | 40,492 | 47,664 |
| Donations | 53,776 | 157,588 |
| Other revenue | 35,069 | 17,579 |
| Total revenue | 2,430,352 | 2,009,595 |



| Expenses | 2024 | 2023 |
|--|------------------|------------------|
| Employment expenses | 1,282,722 | 1,303,969 |
| Project delivery and marketing expenses | 557,869 | 200,566 |
| Governance, compliance and operations expenses | 482,612 | 371,008 |
| Total expenses | 2,323,203 | 1,875,543 |

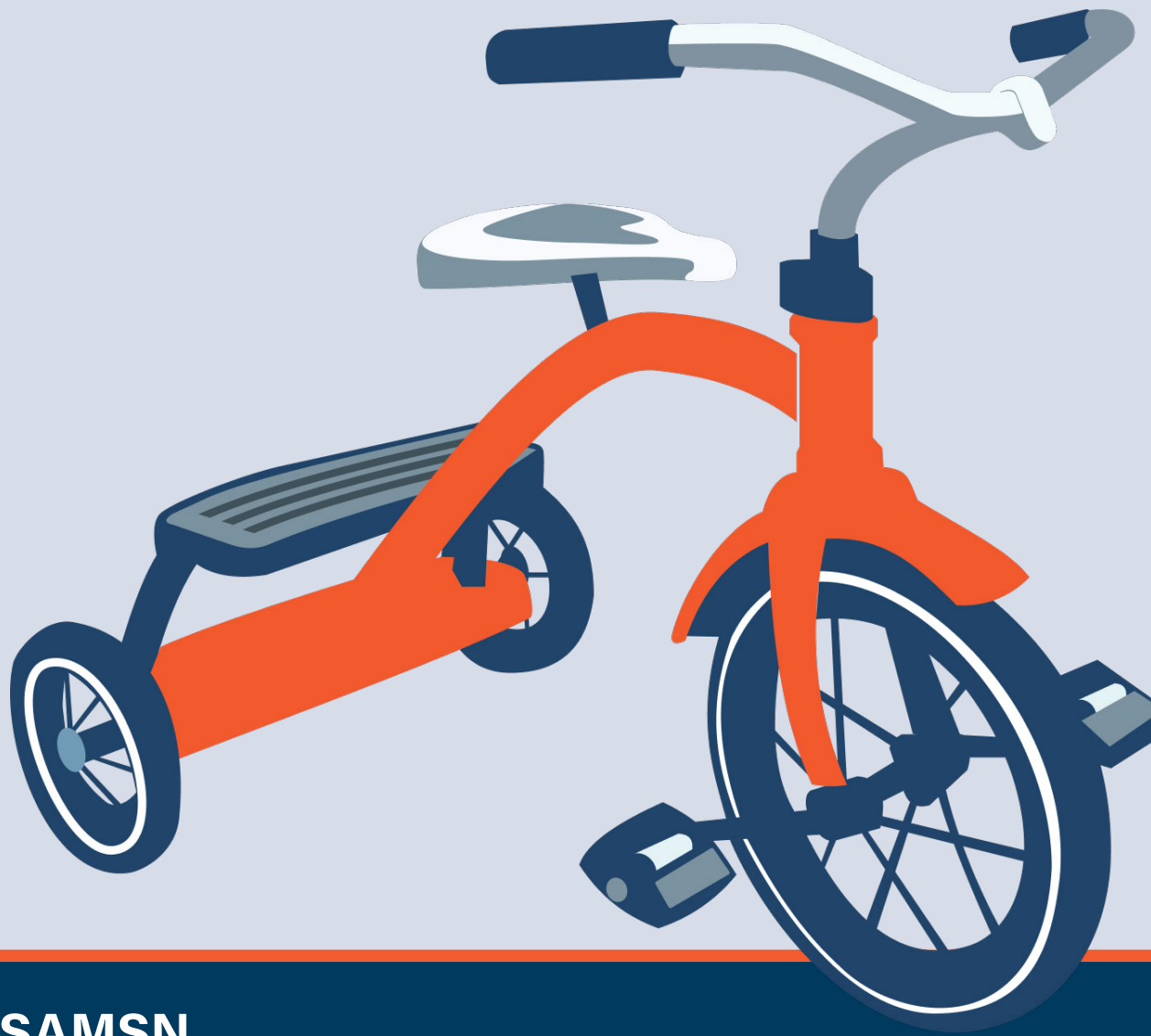


| | | |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Net Surplus | 107,149 | 134,052 |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|

| Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2024 | 2024 | 2023 |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| Total Assets | 987,532 | 1,320,249 |
| Total Liabilities | 857,290 | 1,297,156 |
| Net Assets | 130,242 | 23,093 |

Please visit the [ACNC website](#) to view our full financial statements for this period.





Contact SAMSN

Open Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm

Phone: 02 8355 3711

Free call: 1800 472 676

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SURVIVORS & MATES SUPPORT NETWORK

