



# Annual update 2022–2023

[griefline.org.au](https://griefline.org.au)



# A message from the Griefline Board Chair

**As we continue to implement our three-year strategic plan, we are excited to share with you the progress and outcomes we have achieved in the past year.**

This year we said farewell to three Griefline board members who had played significant roles in the development of Griefline's current strategic plan – Sarah Godfrey, Rebecca Malka and Melinda Jackson. New board members will be sought for 2023/24, with a focus on building board membership reflecting the diversity of Griefline's help seekers.

Griefline is part way through the three-year strategic plan set in 2021/22, with three key goals to optimise the care model, build brand awareness and credibility and improve financial sustainability. I am very pleased to share that under the leadership of Louisa and Kate, Griefline's Executive team, Griefline have made significant progress towards the achievement of these goals with a stepped care framework in place, informed by research and service user feedback, expansion of digital grief support tools and resources, the launch of Griefline Knowledge workplace training programs and the commencement of work to gain accreditation to the National Safety Quality Digital Mental Health standards.

We are proud to announce our partnership with Dying With Dignity Victoria (DWDV), a leading advocacy group for voluntary assisted dying (VAD) in Australia. Together, we are launching a groundbreaking program to offer pre- and post-VAD support groups for people who are considering or have accessed VAD, as well as their families and friends. The program, funded by DWDV as a pilot project, is to be delivered during the forthcoming financial year and is the first of its kind in the country.

Our mission is centred on changing the way we think and talk about grief. Griefline strives to normalise grief and build grief literacy, so everyone understands how to support themselves and others through the universal experience of grief. I thank my fellow Board members, who volunteer their time each month to steward this organisation, our volunteers, employees, funders, partners and every person who trusts us to walk alongside them through their grief experience.



**Nicky Mackie**

Board Chair

# Highlights from the Executive Team

We celebrate another year of overcoming challenges and achieving goals, expanding and improving Griefline's support services for people facing grief and loss, and amplifying our reach through a successful media campaign.

In pursuit of our three strategic goals, we achieved remarkable results in each of these areas, thanks to the hard work and dedication of our team and supporters.

Faced with the challenges of volunteer retention, we adapted our operations to ensure that help-seekers had multiple ways to connect and seek telephone support. To help ensure volunteer availability met demand, we adjusted the operating hours of the national helpline and introduced a booked call and message service. We also enhanced our online resources to offer more accessible and inclusive information to our community.

We launched a successful media campaign that showcased our leadership and impact in the field of grief and loss. We reached a new audience through digital news articles, podcasts, and radio interviews, where we shared our expert commentary and insights on various topics related to grief and loss. We thank the journalists and news outlets who gave us a platform to share our mission to normalise grief by having courageous conversations with a wider audience.

We are grateful for the guidance and support of our clinical and volunteer management team, who ensured the quality and continuity of our services. They led and supported our staff and volunteers with professionalism, compassion, and calmness. We also appreciate the oversight and mentorship of our volunteer board, who helped us to grow and improve as an organisation by providing us with strategic direction, governance, and expertise.

We look forward to another year of serving our community, pursuing our vision to collaborate with the national mental health sector to prevent grief-related mental ill-health.

We thank you for your ongoing support and trust in us.



**Kate Cahill**

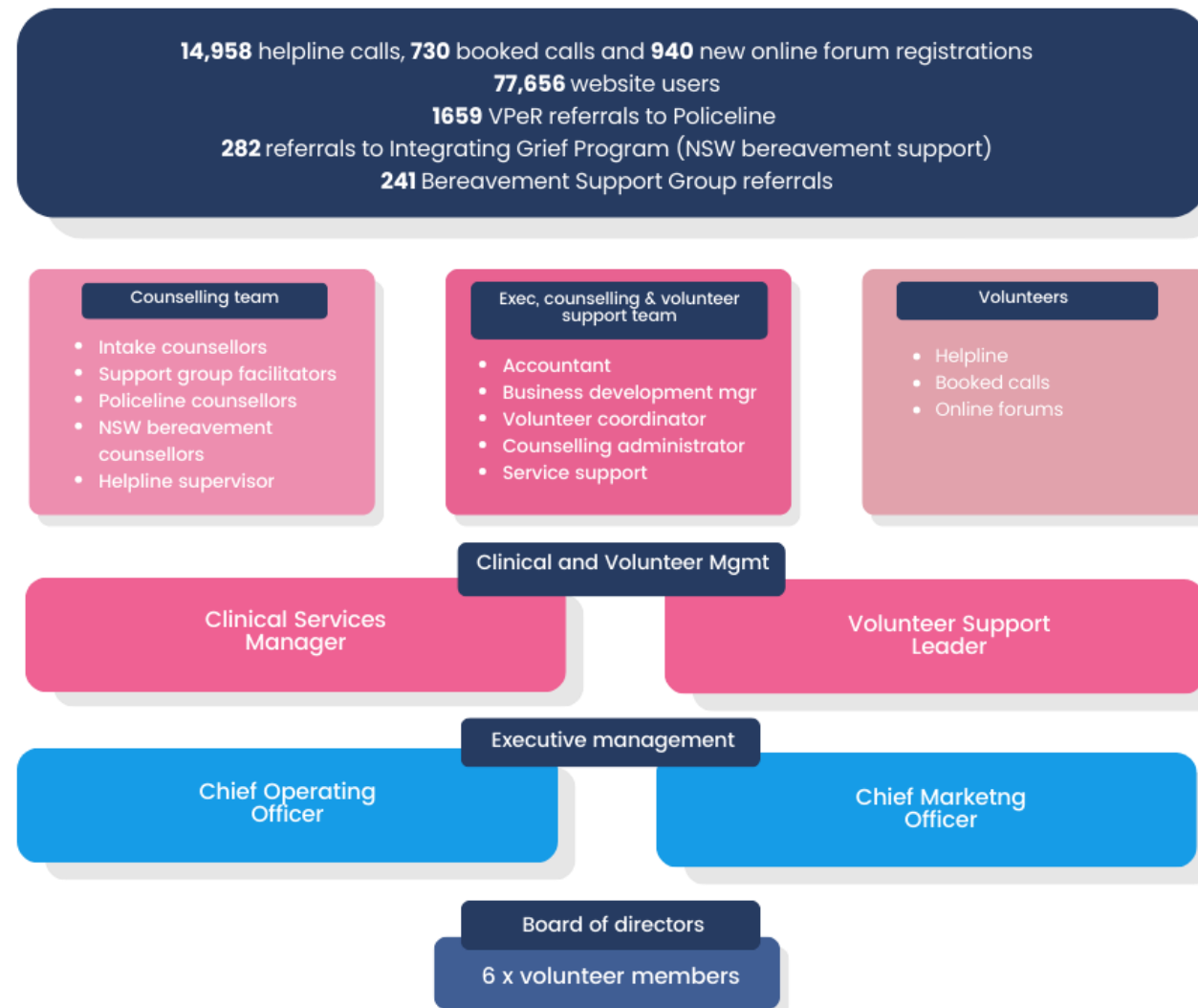
Chief Operating  
Officer



**Louisa Smith**

Chief Marketing  
Officer

# Supporting Griefline's program and service delivery



# Griefline team update

**Celebrating the achievements and challenges of our volunteers, counselling and support staff, who are the heart and soul of our organisation and who have demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability in the past year.**

We are immensely proud of our outstanding counselling staff, who not only provide compassionate and effective support to our clients, but also enrich our organisation with their diverse skills and expertise. They are involved in various research projects that inform and improve our programs, they participate in our Reflect RAP process that fosters cultural awareness and inclusion, and they facilitate workplace training and education programs.

We are thrilled by the high demand for volunteering and student placements with Griefline. Our volunteers are our greatest asset, and we appreciate their commitment and empathy. The culture survey showed us that our volunteers value their experience with us, and also highlighted the difficulties of remote-based volunteering, such as staying engaged and connected with our organisation and our mission. We are determined to enhance our volunteer retention and satisfaction by implementing continuous improvement strategies.

- ✓ 111 active volunteers at the end of June 2023
- ✓ 123 volunteers trained between July 22 – June 23
- ✓ 10 social work placement students from Monash and RMIT
- ✓ Volunteers and students contributed to over 5,300 hours on the helpline

➡ *The picture shown on the right was captured during the Griefline Team Symposium held at the Griefline HQ in St Kilda in February 2023. As a geographically dispersed team, it was the first time many members had met each other in person.*





“

Exposure to grief and loss has been grounding and has sharpened my priorities (and helped me let go of non-priorities, like cleaning my car and ironing!). Professionally, I'm studying for a Master of Clinical Neuropsychology, and volunteering at Griefline has given me insight into how loss and grief might be experienced by patients. The supervision we have access to at Griefline has been a wonderful source of wisdom and guidance."

**- Neri, 2022 Griefline Volunteer of the Year**

# Our three-year strategic plan

To help achieve Griefline's vision and mission, we developed a three-year strategic plan that outlines our priorities and objectives for the period of 2021–2024.

The strategic plan is based on a comprehensive analysis of the needs and expectations of its stakeholders, including its help-seekers, volunteers, staff, board, partners, funders, and the wider community. The strategic plan also reflects Griefline's values of compassion, courage and connection. The strategic plan has three main goals that guide Griefline's actions and decisions.

## OPTIMISE OUR MODEL OF CARE

Ensure that Griefline provides the best possible support and care to people experiencing grief and loss, by enhancing its service delivery, expanding its reach, diversifying its offerings, and improving its outcomes.

## BUILD BRAND EQUITY

Raise Griefline's profile and reputation as a leader and expert in the field of grief and loss, by engaging with the media, the public, and the mental health sector, and by sharing its knowledge, insights, and impact.

## ESTABLISH SELF-FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Secure Griefline's future and growth, by diversifying its income sources, increasing its fundraising capacity, and managing its resources efficiently and effectively.

These three goals are interrelated and mutually supportive, as they all contribute to Griefline's ultimate purpose of normalising grief and supporting communities to grow from loss, and our vision to prevent grief-related mental ill-health in collaboration with Australia's mental-health industry.

# Strategic goal 1: optimise our care model

Activities to improve the effectiveness and efficiencies in delivering Griefline's support services

- ✓ **Service user feedback informing program design and delivery:** We value the feedback of our service users, as they are the best source of information on how we can improve our support services. We regularly collect and analyse their feedback through surveys and use it to inform our program design and delivery.
- ✓ **NSQDMH standards:** Accreditation continues to be a core operational focus encompassing a full review of our organisational policies and procedures. We are committed to achieving the highest standards of quality and safety in our support services, as outlined by the National Standards for Quality and Delivery of Mental Health Services (NSQDMH).
- ✓ **Data security:** We take data security very seriously, as we deal with sensitive and confidential information from our service users, staff, and volunteers. We have implemented a password manager system to ensure secure and easy access to our online platforms and provided privacy training for all our staff and volunteers to raise awareness and compliance with our data protection policies and practices.
- ✓ **Professional development:** We recognise the importance of professional development for our counselling staff, as they are the frontline of our support services. We have provided them with Trauma Informed Care and Psychological Safety training, which are evidence-based approaches to enhance their skills and knowledge in supporting people who have experienced trauma, and to foster a positive and supportive work environment.







“Carol was an absolute gem. Her compassion and support were really appreciated. I felt welcomed and heard and validated and I feel more hopeful of my future knowing that Griefline and people like Carol are there to help. Thank you so much.”

– Booked Call service user

# Strategic goal 2: build brand equity

## Activities to improve awareness, accessibility and credibility of Griefline's services

- ✓ **New Code of Conduct policy:** to promote a positive, inclusive and ethical organisational culture that aligns with our mission, vision and values.
- ✓ **Inclusivity and accessibility:** Engaged with Reconciliation Australia to commence our Reflect RAP and formed a working group to deliver information, resources and cultural training opportunities to staff and volunteers.
- ✓ **Established an information partnership with Healthdirect Australia:** a non-commercial, government funded organisation providing trusted health information to all Australians.
- ✓ **SEO activities launched in May:** to improve website performance and rankings in search engines. Initial results showing significant growth in website usage and engagement, with overall annual growth in website users of 45% with over 6,400 people visiting the website each month.
- ✓ **Over 3,000 downloads of our translated fact sheets:** plus over 2,000 downloads of our free ebook '*How to support a grieving friend*' developed in collaboration with our ambassadors Sal and Im from the Good Mourning podcast.
- ✓ **National outdoor and digital media campaign:** led by Sydney media agency Love Media, we shared the Griefline message to a massive audience over the Christmas period. They sourced and secured free strategic placements of outdoor advertising, national digital TV and radio advertising, reaching tens of thousands of people across the country.
- ✓ **Media outreach campaign to over 100 journalists:** across digital, print and broadcast contacted resulting in requests for comment in news articles, radio and podcast interviews, and recognition as a primary support service in digital news articles.

### If you or anyone you know needs grief support:

- **Griefline:** Phone support for all Australians Monday to Friday and 24/7 [online forums](#). Call **1300 845 745** from 8:00am to 8:00pm AEDT
- **Kids Helpline:** 24/7 phone support and [WebChat](#) for young people aged between five and 25. Call **1800 551 800**
- **Headspace:** Centres for young people in each state and territory or check out [headspace](#) for online or phone support
- **Lifeline:** 24-hour support for all Australians on **13 11 14**

Source: ABC news online





"I can't remember the ladies name I spoke with as I was pretty emotional when she rang. She is the first person I have spoken to that I felt truly understood me and what I was saying with no judgment. She let me speak and allowed me to express the emotions I was feeling. I lost my mum and gave birth to my first child in the same week so I am dealing with learning to be a mum at the same time learning to live without mine."

– Booked Call service user

# Strategic goal 3: establish sustainable self-funding opportunities

Activities towards supporting a sustainable financial future for Griefline

## Griefline Knowledge

Our workplace training sessions are one of the key offerings of Griefline Knowledge. These sessions aim to equip employees and managers with the skills and strategies to cope with grief and loss in the workplace, which can affect their wellbeing, performance, and relationships.

- ✓ Launched in 2022, this program has generated over \$70K income for Griefline, enabling us to sustain and expand our services and support.
- ✓ We have delivered these sessions to over 500 people from corporate, NFP, and community service organisations, such as Financial Counselling Victoria, Anglicare, Moira Connect, and the TrackSAFE Foundation.
- ✓ We have received positive feedback and testimonials from our clients, who appreciated our tailored and evidence-based approach to addressing their needs and challenges.
- ✓ We were also invited to speak on several occasions including the Metro Trains Melbourne 2023 Rail R U OK? and Cygnett Men's Health Week events.



Griefline counsellor and facilitator Shelley Andreeetta and some of the Metro Trains Melbourne team who heard her speak about how to support themselves and each other through grief at their Rail R U OK? 2023 morning tea.



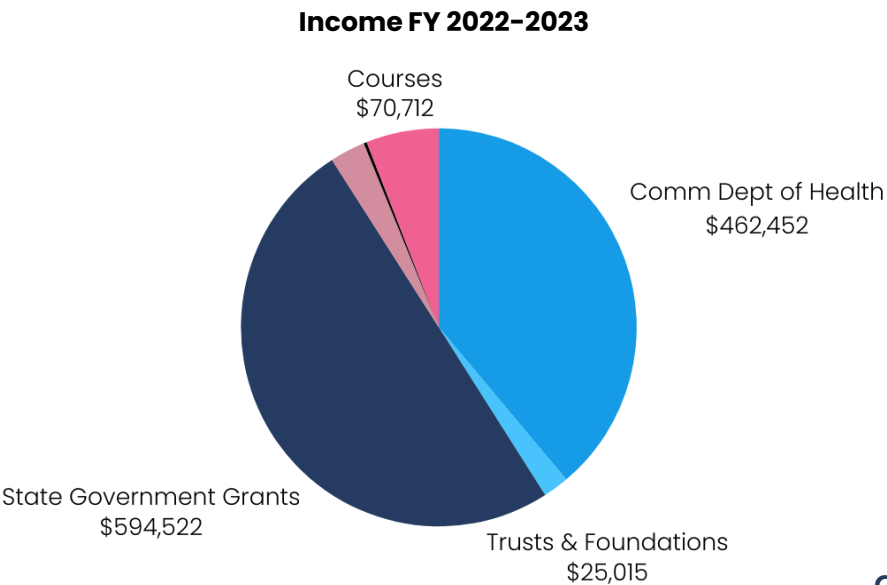
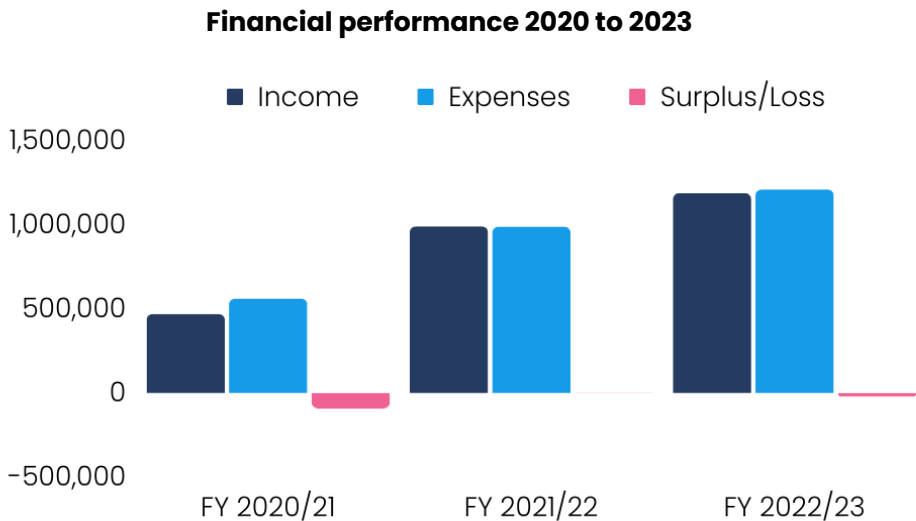


“It was great to draw our attention to grief, given it is something most people have experienced whether firsthand or supporting someone at some point in their life. The disenfranchised grief certainly resonated with me individually and culturally.”

– Grief and loss workshop participant from ESTA 000

# Treasurer's report

- Griefline's total income for FY 2022 23 was \$1,190,017 with total expenses of \$1,212,167
- Despite the 20% increase in revenue in the FY 2022 23, driven by Commonwealth and NSW Ministry of Health funding, Griefline returned a net deficit of \$22,150 for the FY 2022 23.
- Increases in rent, workcover and insurance incurred in the last financial year were not covered by subsequent increases in grant funding and are the main reason for the operating deficit.
- The focus for FY 2023 24 is to continue growth of Griefline Knowledge sales to between 10% – 15% of total income and assist in covering any operational cost increases not covered by existing grant funding.







"The sessions were very informative, which I didn't quite expect. I've been to group counselling before but it's the first time I felt I was there to actually learn about my grief. The exercises (week 4 and 6) were also very illuminating in the sense it made us all able to put our emotions on paper, plain and simple, in a way our thoughts don't always manage to be. All of it was masterfully done."

– Support Groups participant

# Beyond 2023

Our plans to launch new and improved services to continue to meet our strategic goals.

In the coming year, we will undertake several initiatives in our ongoing pursuit to optimise our care model, increase brand awareness, and improve our financial sustainability. These include:

- Launching a new national telephone support service for older Australians to alleviate loneliness and social isolation. This service will address a growing need in the community and align with Griefline's mission of providing compassionate and accessible support to people experiencing grief and loss.
- Exploring innovative and effective ways to support our volunteers, such as providing regular feedback, recognition, training, and social events. With the introduction of the Better Impact platform, it is our hope that our volunteers feel appreciated, empowered, and inspired by their work with us. This will help us to retain and recruit skilled and dedicated volunteers who are the backbone of our organisation.
- Finalising our review of organisational policies and procedures in preparation for an external audit by an independent agency to obtain accreditation under the National Standards for Quality and Delivery of Mental Health Services (NSQDMH). This will demonstrate our commitment to quality and excellence in our service delivery and governance and enhance our reputation and credibility in the mental health sector.



# Beyond 2023: How you can support us

By partnering with us, you will be part of a network of supporters who share our vision, mission and values. We are seeking:

- Corporate partners and sponsors to enable us to deliver free grief literacy training and education to workplaces, community and sporting organisations, schools and correctional facilities. This will help us to raise awareness and understanding of grief and loss, reduce stigma and discrimination, and enable us to reach more people who need our support, while diversifying our income streams.
- Funding to support the national expansion of our bereavement support groups to recruit more counselling staff and innovate the service to include support workers in aged care, palliative care and carers of people with life-limiting illness. This will help us to optimise our care model and to provide more accessible and inclusive support to people who are facing complex and diverse forms of grief and loss. It will also help us to build our capacity and expertise in delivering group-based interventions.
- Funding for the national expansion of the pre- and post-Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) support groups for friends and family of people who have chosen a VAD-death. This will help us to address a growing and emerging need in the community and to provide compassionate and specialised support to people who are affected by VAD. It will also help us to position ourselves as a leader and innovator in the field of grief and loss.


**Please contact us today to discuss how we can work together to achieve our goals.**

We look forward to hearing from you and exploring the possibilities of collaboration.

Kate Cahill, Chief Operating Officer: [katec@griefline.org.au](mailto:katec@griefline.org.au)


Louisa Smith, Chief Marketing Officer: [louisa@griefline.org.au](mailto:louisa@griefline.org.au)

## VAD support groups




### Comfort and support from those who understand

Our group program draws upon the emotional benefits of peer support, in conjunction with evidence-backed information to help reduce the stigma that can be associated with Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD), and building an understanding that each person experiences grief in their own way.





#### Pre-VAD groups

A closed group environment for individuals seeking group support from people who are also facing the death of someone who has chosen the path of VAD.



#### Post-VAD groups

A closed group environment for individuals seeking group support after the VAD death of a friend or family member.





# Thank you

We value our community and business relationships and the support that many organisations and individuals provide us. Without our partners and financial supporters, we would not be able to achieve the positive impact on the wellbeing of tens of thousands of Australians each year.

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to all our supporters from the Commonwealth and NSW State Governments, the South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network for their ongoing support, as well as our devoted ambassadors, corporate and community funding partners and suppliers, and individual donors and fundraisers.

## Grants, fundraising and donors

Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care

NSW Ministry of Health

SEMPHN

Magistrates Court Victoria

Picaluna Funerals

Bentleigh Football and Netball Club

University of Technology Sydney

People Assets

## Our ambassadors

Sally Douglas and Imogen Carn from Good Mourning

Stephanie Chiu

## Community and corporate partners & suppliers

PACFA

SD Communications

Love Media

Light Creative

Viscore

Aspire Web

SBS In Language



Griefline advertising placement in 830 GP clinics sourced free of charge by our media agency partner Love Media

## **GRIEFLINE OFFICE**

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## **GRIEFLINE SUPPORT**

1300 845 745  
8am–8pm AEDT/AEST, 7 days

[griefline.org.au/get-help/book-a-call](http://griefline.org.au/get-help/book-a-call)  
[griefline.org.au/get-help/online-forums](http://griefline.org.au/get-help/online-forums)  
[griefline.org.au/get-help/support-groups](http://griefline.org.au/get-help/support-groups)

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