

# QHVSG ANNUAL REPORT 2023





# A MESSAGE FROM OUR PATRON



I am honoured to have been the Patron of the Queensland Homicide Victims' Support Group (QHVSG) since 2019. The ongoing support this foundation offers to the families of homicide victims and the wider community is extraordinary.

The compassion, dedication and commitment by the Board of Directors, staff and volunteers to be a point of solace and refuge for those families affected by homicide is truly remarkable. I encourage you to explore the valuable information and support available, and to reach out to QHVSG if you or someone you know has been affected by homicide.

Katarina Carroll APM  
COMMISSIONER  
QLD POLICE SERVICE

QHVSG honours all Police Officers who have been lost to homicide whilst selflessly serving the public.



# QUEENSLAND HOMICIDE VICTIMS' SUPPORT GROUP FAMILY SUPPORT AFTER MURDER INC.

Queensland Homicide Victims' Support Group, Family Support after Murder Inc. Annual Report 2022-23 Financial year.

We pay our respects to every person who has lost their life through homicide; all women, all children, all men. We also honour all of our members who every day continue their journey of life after homicide.

We thank all those who give their time to help others who have lost loved ones. Your contribution is priceless.

The Queensland Homicide Victims' Support Group Board of Directors, Operational team, Peer Supporters and Volunteers respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners, Elders and Leaders past, present and emerging as Custodians of the lands across which we deliver our Family Support After Murder Services.



## VISION

To be the leading organisation, providing high-quality support, education and reform for victims of homicide.

## MISSION

To provide support to victims of homicide through:

- our unique peer network, providing a family environment of empathy, compassion and understanding;
- education and awareness for members and the community; and
- advocacy for reform on behalf of our members.



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## CHAIRPERSON - SHERRIE MEYER

Sherrie became active in QHVSG in 1995 as a Founding member. Her family has also been involved in the group since that time in a number of roles. Sherrie was the president of the organisation from 1995 through 1998 and a staff member from 1998 through 2006.



Sherrie is committed to promoting education, awareness and training within the organisation and to the wider community to promote the needs and the welfare of families impacted by homicide. As a previous Board member, Sherrie understands the challenges of negotiating a broad range of systems including government, non-government and the business sector in promoting the multitude of needs experienced by our membership.

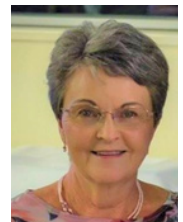
Sherrie has a Registered Nurse License (FLA - USA) and Bachelor of Social Work and is an Accredited Mental Health Social Worker who has specialised in Child Trauma Counselling for 15 years. In that time Sherrie has consulted and liaised with Police, Child Safety, Education, Health and Mental Health, Victim Assist and Department of Justice, as well as community and private organisation.

Sherrie is now in private practice and provides trauma counselling and psychotherapy to children, adolescents and adults. She also provides group art therapy specialising in trauma healing and recovery.

Sherrie feels honoured privileged to serve QHVSG and its members.

## DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON - LEANNE PULLEN

Leanne became engaged with QHVSG in 2012 when her son Tim was declared a victim of homicide after having been listed as a missing person. Tim's remains have never been located even though six people were charged and imprisoned over his homicide.



Leanne is a dedicated and passionate Peer Support Leader whose main focus is on providing support for members, especially those living in rural and regional areas by being an advocate for them and a confidante. Leanne is a dedicated Court Supporter and has participated in detective training. Leanne was awarded the QHVSG Volunteer of the Year in 2017.

Leanne was involved in the No Body No Parole Legislation by being instrumental in having the legislation amended to include all perpetrators involved in a homicide rather than only those sentenced for murder.

Leanne brings extensive fundraising experience from her involvement raising funds for and awareness of the Royal Flying Doctor Service (QLD). From 2006 to 2012 Leanne raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to help purchase lifesaving medical equipment for RFDS aircraft. Leanne actively raises funds for and awareness of QHVSG by selling raffle tickets and manning driver reviver stations.

As well as Peer Support meetings, Leanne also organises Awareness Day and Memorial Day events along with Christmas get togethers for her Support Group members. Leanne co-organised with Monique Ferrario 'A Splash of Silver', QHVSG's 25th Anniversary Celebration.

Leanne's family has appreciated immensely the support provided by QHVSG and she dedicates her time to give back.





## SECRETARY – MONIQUE FERRARIO



Monique became a member of QHVSG when her 36 year old brother Mitchell was murdered in April, 2009.

Monique is a professional Early childhood Educator and has run her own successful business for more than 20 years. She has been a volunteer with QHVSG since 2010 and in 2015 first served on the QHVSG Board of Directors as a General Board Member. Since then Monique has served as the Treasurer and more recently, as the Secretary.

As a Peer Support Group Leader Monique is aware of the importance of peer support.

She has supported many members through home visits, telephone support, Court support and facilitating the monthly Gold Coast Support Group meetings.

Monique is committed to raising awareness in the community, supporting our education programs and providing advocacy for our members. She has shown total commitment to making a difference in the life of our members.

Monique is a dedicated fundraiser and has volunteered at many events. Monique is innovative and has been involved in the organising of events such as the 2015 Brisbane Walk for Support and Family Fun Day, Annual Night of Recognition and Christmas Celebration, the Children's Christmas Party and more recently she co-organised the 25th Anniversary event 'A Splash of Silver' with Board colleague Leanne Pullen. Monique was also a key driver behind the Member Weekends which commenced in 2018.

Monique was recognised for her volunteer efforts in 2014 and 2018 when she was awarded the QHVSG Volunteer of the year. Monique was the co-recipient of the QHVSG 2022 Volunteer of the Year award alongside her mother, Gai. In 2023, Monique was a recipient of a 2023 McPherson Awards for outstanding voluntary contributions residents make to the Federal Electoral area of McPherson, on the Gold Coast.

Monique feels privileged to support our members in memory of her brother and finds a great deal of comfort in providing support to people who also have experienced homicide in their lives.

## TREASURER – CONOR O'BRIEN MD



Conor's professional career spans 15 years in which time he has held various commercial, economic and policy advisory roles. Conor has worked within a variety of commercial and public service organisations including utilities, global advisory firms and the Queensland Parliament. Conor possesses intimate knowledge of Queensland policy and law making processes along with professional and academic experience in infrastructure development and financing.

In 2020 Conor gained entry into the University of Queensland's Doctor of Medicine (MD) program. During his medical studies Conor has focused on developing the skills necessary to achieve excellence in patient centred care through translation of biomedical and psychosocial knowledge to the clinical environment. Conor has special interests in critical care and rural medicine, and management of patients experiencing traumatic stress.

Conor joined the QHVSG Board in 2021 after learning of the important and unique contribution the organisation makes to the wider community through both support and advocacy for those impacted by homicide. Through his role on the Board, Conor works to assist in the development and execution of the QHVSG's operational and strategic objectives to ensure the organisation's capability enables it to continue to deliver the highest quality support services and advocacy.

## GENERAL MEMBER – BERNADETTE SCHILLER

Approximately six years ago Bernadette attended her first peer support meeting after being introduced to QHVSG by a friend who had lost his brother to homicide. Her friend asked Bernadette to attend a meeting with him as he knew that she had survived a mass murder at Ayers Rock in the Northern Territory in 1983. Bernadette was surprised by the support provided at the meeting as she didn't think anything could help. Bernadette has attended the peer support meetings ever since due to the wonderful benefits it offers.



Bernadette's belief in peer support led to her volunteering for QHVSG. For several years, Bernadette has provided court support, telephone support, undertaken home visits and has assisted at many events including the Gold Coast Awareness Day, Night of Recognition and Children's Christmas party. Bernadette has also at times facilitated support group meetings. In 2021, Bernadette was the recipient of the QHVSG Volunteer of the Year in 2021.

Bernadette's background in business ownership, provides her with broad experience in customer service, financial knowledge, communication and critical thinking skills. Having lived in remote Indigenous communities, Bernadette has a deep understanding of the family ties with First Nations people.

Bernadette cares deeply for QHVSG and understands the importance of members feeling supported and heard. She looks forward to sharing her skills, knowledge and passion to help the Board deliver the best support possible for the QHVSG members, and to advocate for needs.

## GENERAL MEMBER – SARAH SIMPSON

Sarah is originally from Tasmania and wanted to find a group that supported victims for most of her life – sadly no such organisation existed there.

When Sarah came across the QHVSG Facebook page, she immediately sent a direct message to voice her interest in volunteering into peer support. Sarah has felt like she was able to find a family that she had always been searching for.

Sarah has over a decade of professional experience across a range of industries, with expertise in administering business accounts, online sales platforms and customer relationship management. Her willingness to listen and support others is a skill that Sarah wants to utilise to enable an open door for members to have to share their needs and ideas.

Sarah's experience on Boards over a ten-year period will be an asset for our work, as will her enthusiasm and knowledge of fundraising, event planning and relationship building.



## GENERAL MEMBER – JULIE WATERS

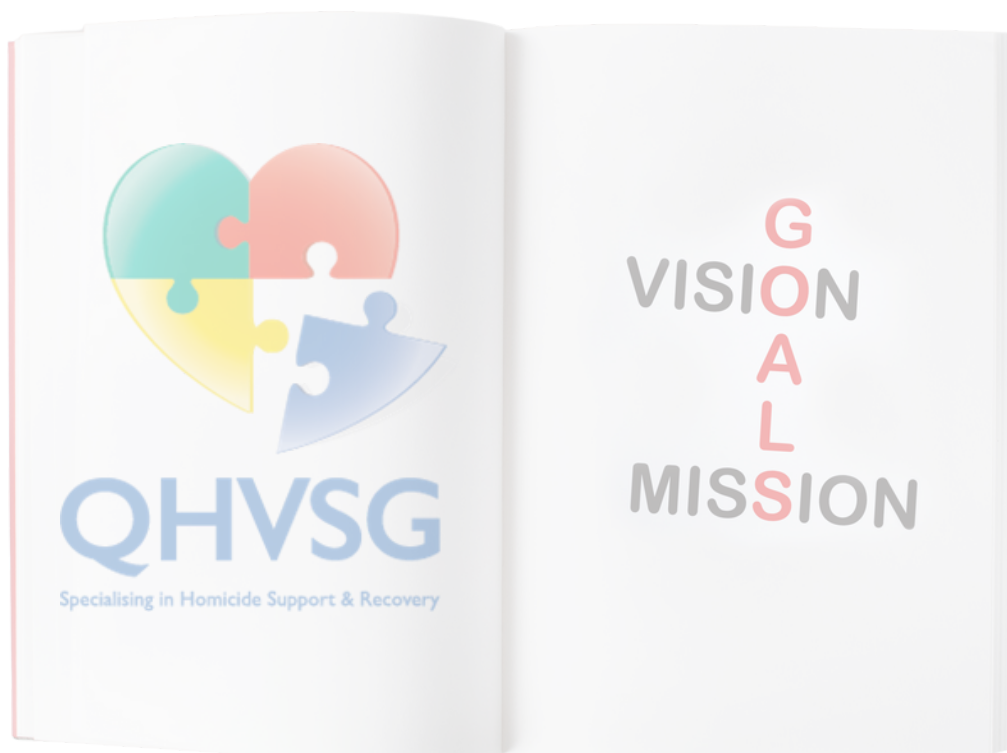
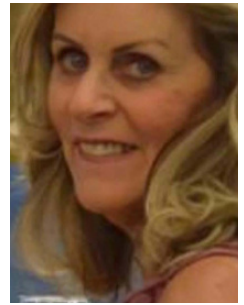
Julie became a member of QHVSG in July 2011, when her son Damian Leeding was murdered. Initially Julie went to the meetings for support, but it soon became apparent to her that this organisation was unique in what it did for its members.

Julie realised that she would like to be a part of helping others through this horrific journey we have to face, and consequently she has served on the Board for a number of years.

Julie is committed to supporting the Board and staff achieve greater outcomes for members in all facets of the organisation, be it support, legislative reform, education programs and research projects: building awareness and developing an inclusive engagement strategy.

Julie is a keen advocate of law reform and will continue to support members by helping to implement new strategies for law reform, advocacy to achieve positive outcomes for our members and continue to strengthen existing relationships, while forging new ones with community organisations and government.

Julie has helped the Marketing and Communications Projects Committee with the QHVSG Brisbane Family Fun Day, Walk for Support, International Women's Day Dining With Daisies breakfast, Gold Coast Family Fun Day and Walk for Support and the Inaugural Annual Night of Recognition and Christmas Celebration.



## OUR PEOPLE

In 2022-23 financial year, QHVSG expanded our operations team to a total of seven full time employees. These positions were a Chief Executive Officer, one Support Services Manager, three Family Support Coordinators, one Peer Support Coordinator and one Court Support and Administrative Coordinator. In addition, QHVSG engages an external finance contractor to provide expertise.

QHVSG has always utilised many volunteers across a variety of roles to meet our governance and operational needs.

We increased our Peer and Community Volunteer numbers by twenty percent last financial year. Our 29 Peer Supporters who have a lived experience of homicide, as well as 20 Community Volunteers. All of these generous people are invaluable and enable us to provide 24 / 7 support across Queensland.

QHVSG also values the contribution of the four tertiary education workplace students who were with us in 2022-23.



## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



QHVSG is an Incorporated Association. A Board of Directors is elected annually and provides governance and strategic direction for the Organisation.

Our operational structure provides Management, Case management, Counselling, Volunteer training and Peer Support.

We have a team of state-wide volunteers who work across both governance and operations.

# OUR FUNDING

QHVSg is a not-for-profit organisation that receives the majority of its funding through government tender. The funds are supplied from the budget of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG). QHVSg have been successful in securing the 2022-2028 tender after being chosen as the preferred provider in November in 2021.

We are extremely grateful for the continued support of the Honourable Mark Ryan MP, and Commissioner of Queensland Police Service Katarina Carroll APM, who have committed to an additional \$1,000,000 across a five year period. We are now in the forth year of this support.

QHVSg values and acknowledges the positive relationship that we continue to have with all levels of government.



## Donors and grants

We are extremely grateful to have had the support of many individuals, businesses and philanthropic programs. We sincerely thank those who have chosen to support our work by financial or pro-bono contributions.

In 2023, we acknowledge:

- AMH Learning Supplies
- Beacon Lighting
- Beautiful Doves
- Bernadette Schiller
- Big W Mackay
- Bill Huntley
- Blackfox Industries
- Breathtaking Balloons
- Casey Waite
- Coles Mackay Parkside
- Coles Mount Pleasant
- Crusty's Bakehouse
- Currumbin Cycles
- Dan Murphys
- David Megginson
- Deep Grey Photography
- Domino's Pizza Logan
- Domino's Pizza North Mackay
- Doris Zagdanski
- Enchanted Flowers Mackay
- Fresh Promotions
- Gai Ferrario
- Gatecrash Security
- Global Food and Wine
- Granite Plumbing
- Homecorp Constructions
- Jackson's Takeaway
- Janine
- Julie Waters
- Kal Tire
- Kerry Oestreich
- Kmart
- Knotted.Co
- Logan City Council
- Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens
- Martha Jabour
- McInnes Wilson Lawyers
- Millmerran Bowls Club
- Monique Ferrario
- New Haven Funerals North Queensland
- Nicole Didlick
- Orb Accounting
- Pacific Hoseflex
- Pal Plumbing
- Payne Print & Sign
- Rapid Tautliner Repairs
- Robertson Web Design and Development
- Rocket Building Approvals
- Sarah Megginson
- Silly Solly's Mackay
- Subway Logan
- Subway North Mackay
- Sunshine Coast Golf Centre
- Tara Quinn
- The Farrington Family
- Tim Nicolls MP
- Tommy Guns Barber Shop
- Village Roadshow Theme Parks
- Wealth Planning Partners
- Willow & Co
- Woolworths Logan
- Woolworths Mount Pleasant
- YesIT



## Special thanks for some very generous people

### Janene and the Millmerran Bowls Club

Our CEO Brett Thompson and Family Support Coordinator Sarah were proud to spend time in October thanking the Millmerran Community for their generosity.

Janene (pictured) lost her partner and wanted to do something special in his honour.

An amazing bowls day and enormous community giving lead to heartfelt support for Janene and her family, and \$10,300 being donated to QHVSG.

It's an honour and a privilege to support and humbling to have this come back our way.



### Sunshine Coast Golf centre



A huge thank you to the Sunshine Coast Golf Centre for a successful third-party fundraising event for our youth violence prevention and education program.

The One Punch Can Kill Program addresses a wide range of issues, including coercive control in relationships.

Thankyou Alicia and Atomu for your wonderful support, who raised \$7,000 for our work.

*Thank  
You :)*

# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Over the past year, our organisation has steadily moved forward through vital and exciting changes, all of which have strengthened our commitment to working with people who have experienced the unimaginable trauma of homicide. The dedication and effort we have seen this year, from all involved with QHVSG, will set us up for improved services and outreach to our widespread membership as we move steadily forward.

First and foremost, I want to acknowledge the incredible strength of the survivors we serve and the loved ones they represent. Each person who walks through our doors carries a story of unbelievable loss and trauma, but also resilience, courage, and love. As our members face the uncertainty that often lies ahead, our organization is privileged to walk with them when they need us. We gain strength and energy from each other and an invisible bond of unity as peers.



We could not provide the magnitude of support services to our members without our amazing staff and volunteer team. This year we are very fortunate to have vibrant, highly skilled staff join our very accomplished CEO Brett. Together they have worked tirelessly providing not only essential supports, but also advocacy and awareness statewide. In the midst of all that hard work, they moved QHVSG into our brand new home on Ann Street. Only a stone's throw from the Ann Street Church that saw the very first Brisbane support meeting held in 1995. It is only a short distance between buildings – but QHVSG has surely come a long way!

Our volunteer staff force are the heroes who are oftentimes behind the scenes organising so many things in 2023 from peer support and support meetings to special events such as regional awareness days, Annual Recognition Night and children's Christmas parties. The commitment shown by our volunteers is outstanding and invaluable and allow us to expand our support services for members throughout Queensland and even further afield. Our QHVSG volunteers, many of whom are surviving their own tragic loss, continue to pay forward their time, energy and empathy for others.

I want to acknowledge our funding bodies and all the government and non-government services and businesses who donate to our organisation in a variety of ways. You have our backs and by so generously standing by us you add the power of your voice to ours in a collective voice of hope and change. With your help our support services, education programs and awareness campaigns have empowered survivors to share their stories and find strength and solidarity as peers. 2023 saw members, staff and volunteers join our supporters to call for better treatment for victims of crime, review of parole issues and continued advocacy for relevant policy change.

2023 was busy year for the QHVSG Board as well. Upon meeting together to review the QHVSG Strategic Plan 2021-2024, I was humbled by the dedication and commitment of our Board members. The working round table was exciting and dynamic, filled with hopeful anticipation for the future direction of this organisation. As always our membership informs the Board's vision and focus for QHVSG and we are dedicated to planning and implementing ever improving services.

I would like to sincerely thank Leanne (Deputy Chair), Monique (Secretary), Conor (Treasurer), Julie, Bernadette, and Sarah for their kind warmth, expertise and guidance that helped me tremendously this year as I navigated the chairperson role. You are legends.

On behalf of the Board, I would sincerely like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone involved with QHVSG for the support you have given us this year, and I extend my very best wishes as we reflect on our collective achievements in 2023 and begin looking towards 2024.

Thankyou  
Sherrie Meyer - Chairperson



# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT



I first of all offer my deepest condolences to all those who have lost someone to homicide. In an ideal world, no one should ever have to face the loss of a loved one, and we should not need to exist as an organisation. Sadly, the reality is that we do need to be here, now in our twenty-eighth year.

The support that we offer can be life changing, and it is an honour to be able to extend our hands to you. I am proud of the work that we are so committed to, and I am honoured to be guided by those with lived experience, and to work alongside the altruistic people who want to make a difference.

QHVSG will continue to grow our support services, we will continue to advocate for change, and we will continue to work with the best interests of our members in mind. I am proud to be a part of that.

## QHVSG Head Office relocation

In March 2023, the head office for QHVSG relocated into the Brisbane CBD. This move has been incredibly effective and is a reflection on how QHVSG is continuing to build on its successes.

There are many benefits associated with the move, which include.

- lower overall costs which enable us to dedicate more funds into our regional outreach support.
- more space for staff, members, volunteers and stakeholders to interact.
- greater access to public transport (Central, Roma Street Station and King George Square Bus Station).
- close proximity to the Brisbane Supreme and Magistrates Courts, which saves travel time and costs as well as increasing support ability for members.
- closer to our key stakeholders such as the ODPP, QPS, Corrective Services and the Parole Board.

The office is in a secure location and complete with reception, tea and coffee facilities and lots of space to be able to meet those we support, and those we work with.

It took a team effort to sift through eleven years of work from the Clayfield location, and I thank the team for their dedication, patience and flexibility.



## Support Services Manager role introduced

The creation of a Support Services Manager has been a wonderful addition to our structure. The role requires an ability to balance an active case load, whilst also providing ongoing professional support and guidance to our team.

Whilst we provide paid external supervision to staff, the Support Services Manager also provides ongoing professional individual and group supervision. These processes are aimed at supporting staff wellbeing, as well as providing an evidence-based opportunity for staff to be able to reflect on their own practices.

I thank Savannah Taylor for her dedication and for her consistent support of the team. It is making an enormous difference.

## New role enhances Court Support for homicide related matters



In late 2022 I announced that QHVSG was provided with a dedicated office space within the Brisbane Supreme Court. The space was previously used by the Court Network Victim Support Unit and allows our court support teams to be on hand as needed. The space also provides a private area for families to be when not inside the court room.

In response to a significant increase in demand for court support, QHVSG established a dedicated Court Support and Administrative Coordinator role. Filling this role is Sandra Scobie who has over twenty years of experience in providing support for families who attend court. Sandra arranges pre-court familiarisation visits, practical and emotional support as well as helping with Victim Impact Statements. In regional areas, Sandra works closely with our volunteer coordinator to arrange someone to be with you, so that you don't feel alone.

Sandra is also our point of contact for hearing updates from the ODPP and will update the support team each day.



## Investment in new technology

We have invested into a range of new technologies to streamline the way we respond to your needs, with \$34,500 provided by a QLD Government grant. These include the following:

- transitioning to a more effective and flexible phone system.
- introduction of a world class SMS platform.
- introduction of a new case management and reporting database, which is specialised around our support models.

As well as supporting enhanced efficiencies, these enhancements are more cost effective.

## Brisbane Peer Support group recommences

It was wonderful to see the Brisbane Peer Support group recommence, thanks to the generosity of Tim Class-Auliff. Peer support groups provide a safe space to talk or just listen to shared experiences with people who have sadly experienced similar, and I look forward to seeing the group provide this unique type of support.

Tim joins our existing Peer Support Group facilitators Peter Muller and Tony Castel (Cairns), Leanne and Gary Pullen (Mackay), Marg Murray (Gympie and Maryborough), April Blake (Sunshine Coast), Peter Klassen (Ipswich), and Monique and Gai Ferrario (Gold Coast).

Our volunteers are well supported by our Peer Support Coordinator, Sandra Cookland, and I acknowledge her dedication to the program.



## Advocacy for those we support

QHVSG has been advocating for systemic and legislative change since 1995, and this year had been no different. This advocacy is always driven by listening to the needs and the experiences of those that we support, to which there is no greater motivation.

Our advocacy has included:

- Submission and appearance at the 2023 Parliamentary Inquiry into support for Victims of crime.
- Submission to the 2023 Parole Board Queensland review
- Requests for changes the Australian Border Force Act 2015, to allow families to be informed as to when a perpetrator is being deported.
- Requests to Amend the Childrens Court Act 1992, to have the attendance of a secondary victim as a right, as opposed to a decision by the court.
- Requests to amend the Sentencing Act to consider the traumatic impact of parole on homicide related matters.
- request to provide financial support for families who are facing the offender applying for parole

We have also had a wide range of process-based discussions with our stakeholders. These are always based on addressing the quality and efficiency of service provision across the state.

Significant change has taken place in the following areas after collaborate discussions with key stakeholders which include:

- the upcoming introduction of electronic notifications by the QPS for homicide notifications, to expediate support interventions.
- QHVSG taking carriage of all crime scene clean up needs after successful planning with the QPS and Victim Assist QLD, to reduce the exposure to families which had existed.
- the streamlining of court updates via the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions

It is important to recognise the ongoing relationships with our key stakeholders. Establishing and maintaining open doors is critical if we are going to create change, and I am proud to report that our key relationships are honest, productive and that conversations are always based upon the feedback from those that we support.

## Violence prevention program



QHVSQ is the owner of the original and trademarked One Punch Can Kill Program™ and we have continued to provide these sessions to schools in Queensland but also in other states. Although we aim at primary prevention, we also expanded these sessions to a detention centre in Tasmania.

We provided these sessions to eleven schools and to over one and a half thousand students. Presentations are always conducted by people who have lost someone to homicide and are aimed at creating awareness of the consequences of violence and preventative skills to increase our personal safety.

## QHVSQ Volunteers recognised

It was a pleasure to attend the 2023 McPherson Awards where two of our Peer Supporters received recognition. These awards celebrate the outstanding voluntary contributions residents make to the Federal Electoral area of McPherson, on the Gold Coast.

Gai and Monique Ferrario are always very reluctant to be nominated for their efforts, however it is appropriate to share this great news.



We are incredibly fortunate to have wonderful volunteers who provide a wide range of functions. Every one of these people make a huge difference to the lives of others, and I sincerely thank each and every one of them.

## Expansion to North Queensland

I was pleased to announce this year that we are in the process of establishing a new role in North Queensland. The Family Support Coordinator role will be an integral part of our existing team and will be able to provide enhanced in person support from our soon to be North QLD Office.

Our expansion is possible due to an increase to our funding from the QLD Government which will exist across the next four years. We acknowledge the Governments response to an increase demand for victim support in Queensland and we look forward to be able to have a friendly face in the north.

## Appointment to the Independent Ministerial Advisory Council

I am pleased to advise that I have appointed as a member of the newly formed Independent Ministerial Advisory Council (IMAC) until November 2025. The establishment of the IMAC is responsive to community concerns about the impacts of youth crime and the need for a mechanism for the perspectives of victims and advocates to inform government policy and reform efforts.

QHVSQ has an impressive history of creating change, and membership of this Council will assist in our endeavors, which are always based on the insights of those we support. I have always been available to listen to your experiences and I encourage you to continue to bring issues forward which you feel need attention.

As I have stated before, our organisation is apolitical, and we are proud of our positive relationships with all parties and independent MP's. Our conversations are based on respect and keeping lines of communication open. This approach will continue as a member of the IMAC.



The Board of Directors has been outstanding, and it has been an absolute pleasure to welcome Sherrie Meyer back as Board Chair this year. As a founding member, Sherrie brings a unique insight into what QHVSG is about, but also brings an evidence-based understanding of supporting people in trauma. I am in awe of Sherrie's ongoing compassion and drive to support her fellow Board members, and I am sincerely thankful to be able to work alongside a person of her caliber.

Of course, good Governance takes a team approach, and I acknowledge the professionalism of our 2022-23 Board. Leanne, Monique, Conor, Julie, Bernadette and Sarah have all been highly effective, have led by example and are working on some significant projects as we speak. It has been an honor to with you all.



In August, Our Board of Directors were fortunate to have the services of Robert Pitt from Orb Accounting' who provided brilliant facilitation for our Strategic Planning Day.

We encourage anyone who is looking for a talented accountant, leadership and business advisor to get in touch with him.

To our incredible Community Volunteers and Peer Supporters. In 2022-23 your 12,692 hours of giving equates to a monetary value of \$538,775. Volunteers have always been a priceless part of our support service, and to put it simply, we would not be the organisation we are without you.

As mentioned in previous years, it is impossible for QHVSG to work in isolation - the ability to develop and maintain effective relationships with stakeholders is paramount. I am proud of what we have established, and how we continue to foster these crucial relationships.

I would like to specifically acknowledge the work of Detective Superintendent Craig Morrow and Detective Inspector Damien Hansen. Both of these officers have been an incredible source of information and their support for our work goes well above any expectations.

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions has been extremely helpful, and I thank in particular Todd Fuller KC, Stacey Cristaldi and Rosemary Cleary.

I acknowledge the genuine support that Queensland Corrective Services, Parole Board Queensland, and the Queensland Health Victim Support Service provide. Our relationships with the organisations are strong, and I thank the leaders of these teams for their ongoing willingness to genuinely listen to our perspectives.

I also acknowledge the willingness of the many Members of Parliament who I have met with. Having access to raise issues is paramount, and I thank those who have been prepared to listen to our needs.

Finally, a thank you to Leanne Pullen who is stepping away from the QHVSG Board after nine years of service. Leanne's insights, comradery, and dedication have been priceless, and her sense of humour will also be sadly missed. Thankfully, Leanne will continue her dedication as a peer supporter in the Mackay Region, which is a silver lining. Thank you, Leanne.

Take care,

Brett Thompson  
Chief Executive Officer

# OUR FINANCIAL REPORT



This year has seen Queensland Homicide Victims' Support Group Inc. (QHVSG) achieve a level of operational stability through office relocation and staff hiring and retention which is fundamental to the organizations ability to provide a high quality and valuable service to members.

The 2022-23 financial year saw QHVSG achieve a net surplus of \$3,472 which was a reduction compared to the surplus of \$96,222 in the 2021-22 financial year. This result was driven by an increase in expenditure across several areas of the organisation, most notably rent and IT costs owing to the relocation to our new Brisbane CBD office and an overhaul of our IT system which resulted in significant one-off expenditure. Approximately half of the IT costs were covered by a specific grant, however these grant funds were received in the new financial year somewhat distorting the financial impact of the IT system upgrade. Increased rent costs will be ongoing however we expect IT costs to reduce over the 2023-24 financial year.

Despite this reduction in operating surplus QHVSG retained a strong accumulated surplus of \$250,114 with increases in revenue from Fundraising and Promotions to \$50,445 up from \$3,883 in 2021-22. This was primarily driven by the success of our Night of Recognition spearheaded by Monique Ferrario. This revenue helped to offset a reduction in Grant Funding from \$843,728 in 2021-22 to \$818,000 in 2022-23. Given the success of this event it will become the centerpiece of QHVSG's awareness and fundraising activities for the years to come.

Other notable activities across the year include the facilitation of crime scene clean up. This is an important service to help Members move forward with their lives after the tragedy of losing a loved one. QHVSG incurred expenses of \$38,072, however the expenses are offset by funding provided by third parties which ensures the activity remains effectively revenue neutral.

QHVSG remains in a strong financial position with Net Assets remaining stable at \$427,189, a slight increase on 2021-22. The major component of our asset base is cash received through our grant funding agreements with the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. This ensures we can continue to meet our costs and obligations over the coming year. A focus of the Board for the upcoming financial year will be to stabilize costs to ensure we do not erode our asset base beyond our obligations so we can continue to provide high quality support services to our members.

QHVSG has maintained its position as the preferred supplier for Homicide Support Services

for the Department of Justice and Attorney-General's Victims Services Funding Program, which ensures revenue certainty for the period to 2027. This level of revenue certainty is fundamental in continuing to deliver QHVSG's important support and advocacy services. However, we will continue to maintain restraint over costs while we improve and expand our service provision over the coming years to ensure we maintain our position as the primary homicide victims support service provider in Queensland.

I would like to thank our Board Members and CEO for their work over the year. It has been an important period for QHVSG and lays a strong foundation to ensure continuation and expansion of our vital services.

Conor O'Brien MD  
QHVSG Treasurer

*Prepared by*

**SMB ACCOUNTING PTY LTD  
ACCOUNTANTS**

**Suite 8 51-53 Bulcock Street  
CALOUNDRA QLD 4551**

# **QUEENSLAND HOMICIDE VICTIMS SUPPORT GROUP INC**

**AUDIT REPORT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
30th June 2023**

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**Queensland Homicide Victims Support Group Inc.**  
**Statement of Financial Performance**  
**for the year ended 30th June 2023**

	2023	2022
<b>Income</b>		
Grant Income		
Grants Received	818,000.00	843,728.18
Group Income		
Covid-19 Income	-	-
Donations	7,402.91	11,485.04
Fundraising & Promotions	50,445.64	3,883.27
Sales	121.82	287.28
Gain on Sale	9,787.75	-
Membership	29.00	31.00
Crime Scene Cleanup	38,263.48	
Forensic Support	5,490.00	
Miscellaneous Income	8,895.15	153.85
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	938,435.75	859,568.62
<b>Expense</b>		
Administrative Expenses		
Accountancy	-	4,455.00
Auditors Fees	1,425.00	1,282.50
Bank Service Charges	931.05	647.94
Board Expenses	759.42	9.23
Consulting IT Services	70,073.82	39,798.56
Crime Scene Cleanup	38,072.39	-
Dues and Subscriptions Paid	8,251.13	14,792.09
Equipment Hire & Acquisitions	10,019.26	1,195.65
Gifts & Donations	307.69	(9,660.47)
Insurances	8,078.95	5,668.99
Lease Fees	2,478.84	2,478.84
Legal Fees	4,000.00	-
Licence & Permit Fees	1,109.21	1,755.47
Postage - General	3,323.96	2,717.69
Printing	3,883.52	1,613.66
Merchandise	1,645.00	-
Registrations & Licences	1,245.30	639.85
Stationery	1,436.14	1,666.37
Sundry Expenses	-	-
Repairs	-	-
Telephone	7,149.49	8,429.90
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Administrative Expenses	164,200.17	77,491.27
Client Related Expenses		
Meeting Costs	201.21	237.50
Parking	-	-
Peer Support	14,549.23	3,239.71
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Client Related Expenses	14,750.44	3,477.21

ement should be read with the attached Notes and Audit Report.

**Queensland Homicide Victims Support Group Inc.**  
**Statement of Financial Performance**  
**for the year ended 30th June 2023**

	2023	2022
<b>Motor Vehicle</b>		
Fuel, Oil and RACQ	665.27	1,213.55
Depreciation	-	1,147.00
Parking & Tolls	869.84	6,861.33
Motor Vehicle Service Costs	963.23	1,029.71
Registration & Insurance M/V	<u>1,723.03</u>	<u>1,346.70</u>
<b>Total Motor Vehicle</b>	<b>4,221.37</b>	<b>11,598.29</b>
<b>Property &amp; Energy Expenses</b>		
Cleaning Costs	2,171.25	2,079.96
Electricity	1,591.60	2,574.50
Property Management	2,152.42	1,822.31
Rent	35,216.83	20,667.86
Rates	-	69.70
Waste Disposal	<u>209.00</u>	<u>194.00</u>
<b>Total Property &amp; Energy Expenses</b>	<b>41,341.10</b>	<b>27,408.33</b>
<b>Staff Costs</b>		
Allowances	11,021.04	9,740.04
Staff Provisions	29,646.29	(14,298.09)
Superannuation	55,865.54	51,388.44
Wages	548,673.42	547,283.86
WorkCover	<u>8,125.27</u>	<u>16,863.33</u>
<b>Total Staff Costs</b>	<b>653,331.56</b>	<b>610,977.58</b>
<b>Staff Management</b>		
Staff Supervision	1,280.00	7,619.12
Staff Training	4,281.48	4,075.22
Staff Amenities	509.36	352.99
Staff Event	<u>384.15</u>	<u>320.69</u>
<b>Total Staff Management</b>	<b>6,454.99</b>	<b>12,368.02</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>		
Depreciation	2,475.00	796.00
Fundraising Expenses	188.12	750.40
Promotions & Displays	41,948.21	10,557.27
Travel	5,204.09	2,850.22
Volunteer Expenses	<u>848.49</u>	<u>496.00</u>
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>50,663.91</b>	<b>15,449.89</b>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>934,963.54</b>	<b>758,770.59</b>
<b>Net Income/(Loss)</b>	<b>\$ 3,472.21</b>	<b>\$ 100,798.03</b>

This statement should be read with the attached Notes and Audit Report

**Queensland Homicide Victims Support Group Inc.**  
**Profit & Loss Appropriation**  
**for the year ended 30th June 2023**

	2023	2022
NET OPERATING SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	3,472.21	100,798.03
Prior Years Adjustment	-	(4,575.58)
	<u>-</u>	<u>(4,575.58)</u>
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	3,472.21	96,222.45
Accumulated Surplus/Deficit - Beginning of Year	<u>250,114.20</u>	<u>153,891.75</u>
ACCUMULATED SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	<u><u>\$ 253,586.41</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 250,114.20</u></u>

**Queensland Homicide Victims Support Group Inc.**  
**Statement of Financial Position**  
**as at 30th June 2023**

	2023	2022
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
<b>Cash Assets</b>		
WBC 308940 - Working	463,186.76	449,251.41
WBC 308959 - Debit Cards	1,947.93	1,980.00
WBC 308967 - Interest	-	289.99
Trade Debtors	1,150.00	200.00
Rental Bond Authority	4,038.00	1,620.00
	<u>470,322.69</u>	<u>453,341.40</u>
<b>Total Current Assets</b>		
	<u>470,322.69</u>	<u>453,341.40</u>
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
<b>Property, Plant &amp; Equipment</b>		
Motor Vehicles - At Cost	-	19,645.23
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	<u>-</u>	<u>(15,054.80)</u>
	-	4,590.43
Office Equipment	144,852.52	131,083.52
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	<u>(131,391.77)</u>	<u>(128,949.77)</u>
	13,460.75	2,133.75
Accom Plant & Equip. - At Cost	2,594.14	2,594.14
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	<u>(2,301.60)</u>	<u>(2,268.60)</u>
	292.54	325.54
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>	<u>13,753.29</u>	<u>7,049.72</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<u>484,076.98</u>	<u>460,391.12</u>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Payables</b>		
Accounts Payable	4,932.40	4,213.83
PAYG Tax Payable	10,278.00	8,504.00
Superannuation Payable	4,411.70	3,784.75
Tax Payable	(3,782.70)	(4,131.84)
<b>Provisions</b>		
Employee Entitlements	35,651.03	13,124.79
<b>Other Current Liabilities</b>		
Accruals	5,396.00	11,178.25
	<u>56,886.43</u>	<u>36,673.78</u>
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>		
	<u>56,886.43</u>	<u>36,673.78</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<u>56,886.43</u>	<u>36,673.78</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u>\$ 427,189.66</u>	<u>\$ 423,717.34</u>
<b>MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>		
Accumulated Surplus at beginning of the year	423,717.34	327,494.89
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	<u>3,472.21</u>	<u>96,222.45</u>
<b>TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>	<u>\$ 427,189.66</u>	<u>\$ 423,717.34</u>

# OUR PEER SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Queensland Homicide Victims' Support Group was founded in North Queensland in 1995 by five families, all affected by homicide. These families united to advocate for effective support and acknowledgement by the State government in relation to the enormous distress co-victims of homicide experience.

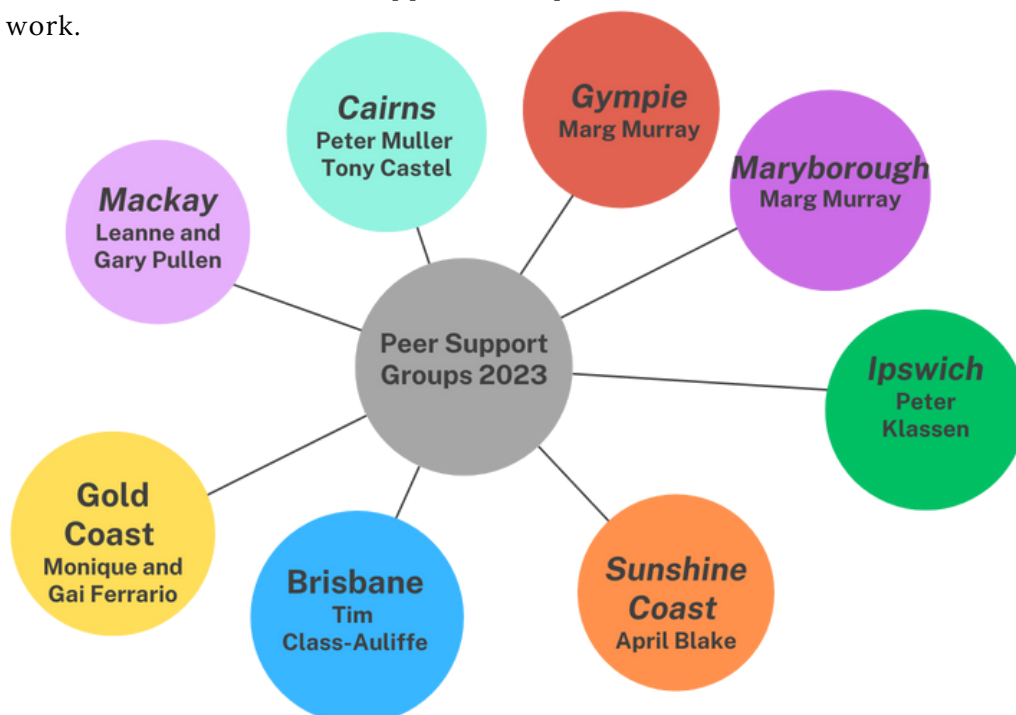
From this grassroots beginning, volunteer peer support groups and activities were established across Queensland. After 28 years, QHVSG is still committed to the practice of mutual support and self-help.

Our peer facilitated activities, such as monthly support groups, peer to peer phone calls, social events, community awareness days and memorial days are crucial to the support of families and enable us to build a community of survivors.

Four new Peer Supporters undertook training through our Peer Support Coordinator, and existing Peers were provided with the opportunity to undertake a range of support and self-care learning sessions through Blue Knot and the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement. Our Peer Support Coordinator has successfully provided training to new volunteers and provide debriefing and ongoing support for existing Peer supporters. Volunteers were also invited to access the 'Resilience Project', which was funded by a Federal Community Grant.

There were nine Peer Support Groups operating across Queensland throughout the 2022-23 year. A total of forty Peer Support Group meetings took place, with two-hundred and sixty-three attendees in all. We also welcomed a new Peer Support Group in Brisbane.

Thank you to our brilliant Peer Support Group facilitators across Queensland. This is priceless work.



## Thank you...

Our growing team of forty-nine volunteers provided over twelve thousand hours of support, which is simply remarkable. So many interactions, so many unique conversations, so much generosity.

Acknowledging and supporting these special individuals is so important, and we thank each and every person who has given their time.

### Our wonderful Peer Supporters

- April Blake
- Bella Adams
- Bernadette Schiller
- Brady Simpson
- Carolyn Martinez
- Charles Symonds
- Debbie Goodlet
- Gai Ferrario
- Gary Pullen
- John Sandeman
- Julie Hand
- Julie Waters
- Leanne Pullen
- Lof Tiatia
- Luke Furlong
- Maree Symonds
- Marg Murray
- Michelle Symonds
- Monique Ferrario
- Peter Klaassen
- Peter Muller
- Sarah Simpson
- Shani Mill
- Sherrie Meyer
- Sonia Holiday
- Sue Muller
- Sue Sandeman
- Tim Class-Auliff
- Tony Castel

### Our wonderful Community Volunteers

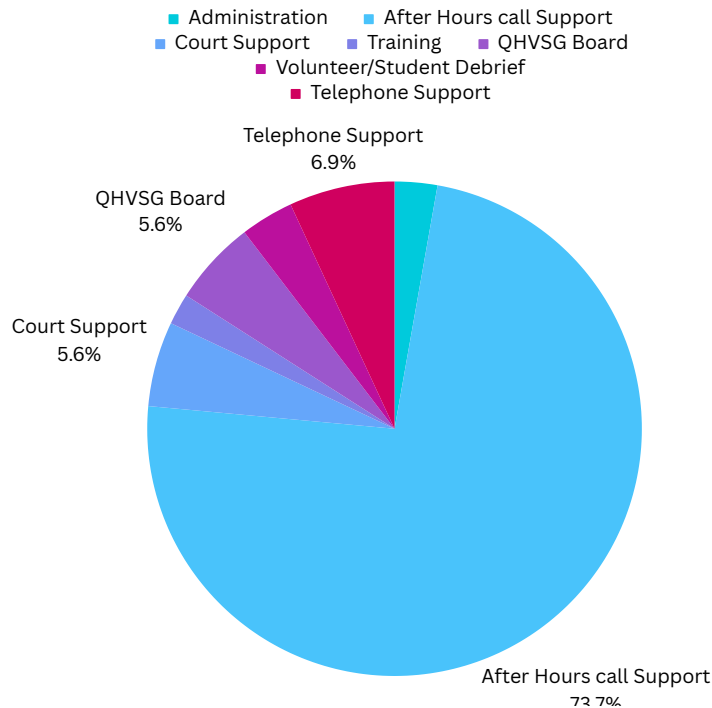
- Amanda Obst
- Angela Wanigasooriya
- Brody Thompson
- Chris Cheng
- Conor O' Brien
- Eli Thompson
- Emma Thompson
- Fay Kairn
- Hayley Munroe
- Jack Taylor
- Jane Wilson
- Jessy Cabrera
- Kate Hansen
- Liz Kam
- Pam Hanifin
- Robert Pltt
- Savannah Richards
- Stacey Stringer
- Tiarna Trevaskes
- Val Currie



## Our community volunteers and workplace students

Our Community Volunteers do not have a lived experienced of homicide but without question, demonstrate deep empathy for our cause. Working side by side with our peers, these individuals work in many areas, and undertake the majority of after hours telephone support, 365 days every year.

Like our Peer Supporters, our Community Volunteers undertake a wide range of tasks to support all aspects of the organisation, and their contribution is priceless.



**Breakdown of Community Volunteers and Workplace Students for the 2022-23 Financial Year**

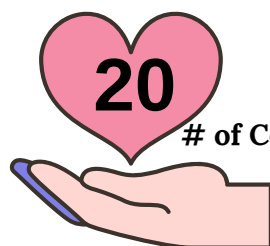
QHVS supports the professional development of tertiary level students who are undertaking studies in psychology, criminology, counselling and human services. Students undertake formal work-placement for a minimum of 50 hours.

Our links to Griffith University, the University of Queensland, Queensland University of Technology and a range of other colleges, are long term and beneficial for all parties.

6963 hours of  
contribution

**\$301,289.01**

**Monetary value of  
Community Volunteer and student  
placement hours in 2022-23 FY**



**# of Community Volunteers**



**Tertiary  
Workplace  
Students**



## Our Peer Supporter contributions

Our Peer Supporters undertake a wide range of tasks that are vital within our mission. These roles are matched to the interests and skill sets of the individual.

Tasks undertaken included:

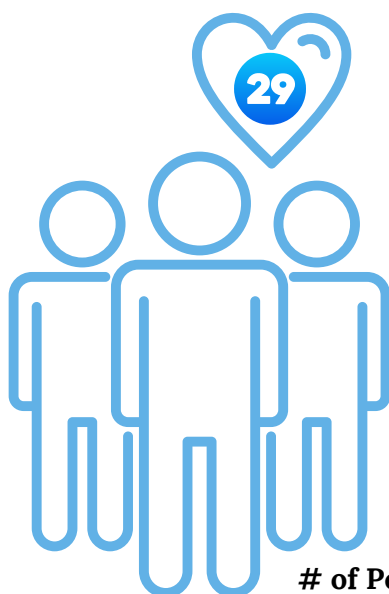
- After hours telephone support
- Board of Director roles
- Community education
- Court support
- Event organisation and attendance
- Fundraising
- Peer Support Meeting facilitation
- Professional Education to university journalism students
- Supported and facilitated Peer Support weekends
- Telephone support
- Queensland Police Detective training

In 2023, our Peer Supporter Volunteers provided 5954 hours of voluntary time.

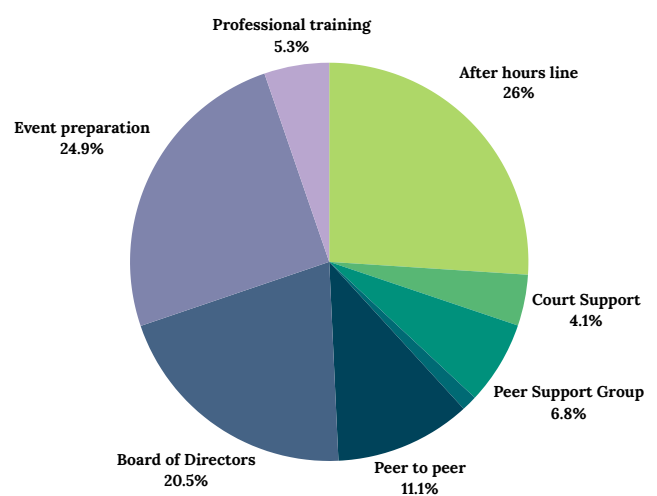


# \$257,629.58

**Monetary value of  
Peer Support Hours in 2022-23 FY**



**# of Peer Supporters**



**Breakdown of Peer Support roles  
2022-23 FY**

# OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

Sadly, we continue to see violence impacting the lives of many people and as can be seen below, our team responded to sixty-seven new homicide cases last financial year. Each homicide is responded to based upon the individual needs of those left behind, and we acknowledge every loss of life as equally important.

Our support is offered as soon as we have been provided with consent to make contact, and spans at times across decades.

It is important to note that not all families and individuals accept our offer of support. They will always be able to access our services if and when the time is right for them.

We are just a phone call away, 24 hours a day, 365 days per year.

## Number of new homicides responded to by QHVSG in the 2022-23 financial year

67

23 woman



44 men



## Output measures

QHVSG continues to face high demand for our services, which span from the initial referral at the time of the homicide, to providing support when the perpetrator is applying for parole. This can be up to thirty years after the loss of their loved one.

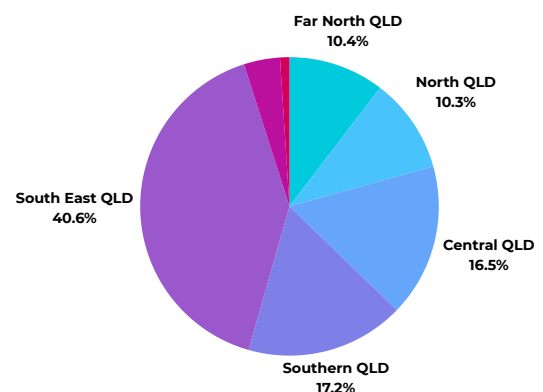
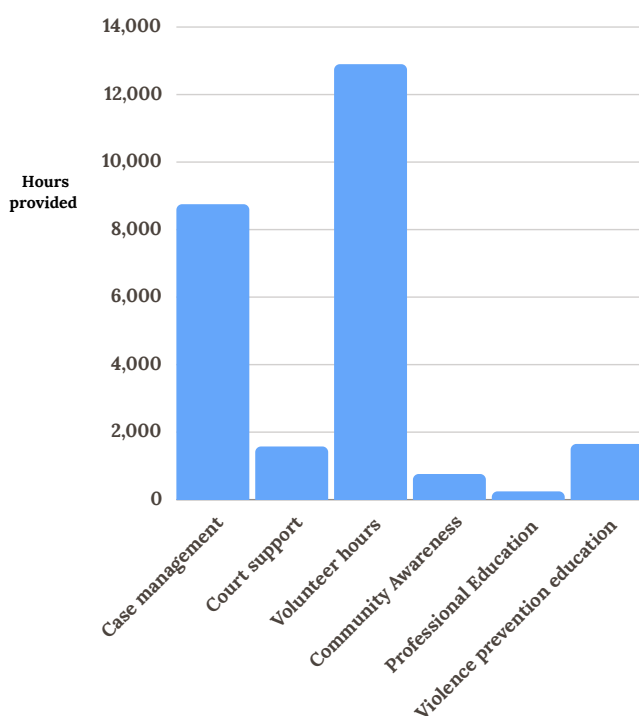
Across the financial year, we had an average of seven hundred 'open' cases. Open cases are individuals who will be receiving support of some kind, whether that be regular contact, or simply receiving updates around certain matters, such as court dates.

Our case management refers to the provision of a wide range of relevant support. These include information, advice, psychological first aid, emotional support, general support through the criminal justice system including information about court processes, applying for financial assistance processes, Victim Impact Statements and the Charter of Victims' Rights. Our average case management length is three years, which is generally linked to the length of the court processes, if one occurs. We have an average of four hundred people who receive more intensive support at all times, which may include contact up to several times per week.

Critical to our organisation is our Peer Support Program, which provided almost six thousand hours of direct and indirect support for families. This provides a long term, sustainable support option for our families, with feedback indicating that the provision of support by someone with lived experience as unique, as they truly understand.

Our professional and community education is an area where we will be looking to expand. We know that greater understanding of how to best support our members is an ongoing objective. This will be an area of focus moving forward.

Our work in the prevention space is not funded, however we have increased our delivery of the 'One Punch Can Kill' sessions to eleven schools from Far North Queensland to Tasmania. Over one thousand five hundred students were able to develop greater awareness around the impact of single punch violence. The sessions also examine domestic violence and cohesive control.



Where our support occurred

NB. Interstate (3.9%) and international families (1%) are also represented in the pie graph above)

## OUR EVENTS

Events are an incredibly important aspect of our work, and it is pleasing to see so many of these continue to occur across Queensland. Events bring people together for a range of purposes which include creating mutual support, developing community awareness and to raise funds which help us do more.

It must be noted that these events could not take place without the dedication and passion of our volunteers. Sincere thanks for this generosity to make so many wonderful events occur.

In the past twelve months, QHVSF has planned and run the following events.

- 2023 Night of Recognition
- Gold Coast Awareness Day
- Gympie Awareness Day
- Mackay Memorial Day
- Cairns Memorial Day
- Sunshine Coast Memorial Day
- Mackay Wellness Retreat
- Brisbane Memorial Day
- Mackay Children's Christmas Party
- Brisbane based Children's Christmas Party
- Volunteer Appreciation Night
- National Victims of Crime Day, conducted at Parliament House, Brisbane.
- Mackay Daisy Planting Day

We also held two support weekends last financial year, which were reported in last document.

Of course, events are about bringing people together, and we recognise the hundreds of people who support these events each year. Whether large or small, these collective gatherings make a big difference, and we hope to see you again at one of these special times.

We are fortunate to have a growing number of individual and business-based donors, who are listed on page nine of this report. Without the generosity, we would not be able to conduct the wide range of events that we do.





## QHVS Night of Recognition

The 2023 Night of Recognition was simply wonderful and QHVS sincerely thanks everyone who attended, everyone who nominated a special person, everyone who voted, everyone who donated to our work and the wonderful volunteer helpers who gave their time and energy on the night.

13 event sponsors  
3 award sponsors  
21 award nominees  
1797 votes  
4 award winners  
194 guests  
1 conga line  
1 magical venue  
And a room filled with love!

It was a beautiful night and our most successful event yet. There were smiles, tears, laughter and dancing. We met new friends and caught up with old friends.

We acknowledged our incredible nominees and congratulated our award winners: Senior Constable Karen Watson, Nicole Morris, Naomi Clarke and April Blake.

We heard from members about the importance of supporting QHVS and we paused to remember our loved ones.

With this support, we were able to recognise the wonderful work of the 21 award nominees. This recognition highlights what support can and should look and feel like.

We look forward to ensuring that we can now do more in 2023-2024 financial year!



## **The Damien Leeding Compassion in Policing Award Presented by Julie Waters**

Julie is the loving mother of Detective Senior Constable Damian Leeding.

Damian was murdered in the line of duty 12 years ago and Julie feels that sponsoring the Damien Leeding Compassion in Policing award is a wonderful way to honour her sons' memory.

Julie and her family are honoured to be sponsoring this award as a wonderful reminder of the individuals in Policing who exude the qualities of care and compassion and go above and beyond in the most challenging of situations.

### **Nominees**

**Senior Sergeant Matthew MacArthur** - nominated by Rhonda Opacic  
**Senior Constable Karen Watson** - nominated by Noeline Rooney  
**Detective Sergeant Dan Collins** - nominated by Alicia Watanabe  
**Detective Sergeant Timothy Heller** - nominated by Sharmagne Fa'apepele and Family



### **2023 Damien Leeding Compassion in Policing award recipient**

#### **Senior Constable Karen Watson**



Photo (left to right)

Hon Minister Mark Ryan MP, Peter Pointon, Senior Constable Karen Watson, Julie Waters (mother of Damian Leeding), Tim and Nick Rooney (nominators), Commissioner of QLD Police Katarina Carroll APM.

### **Nomination for Senior Constable Karen Watson**

I wish to nominate Senior Constable Karen Watson for the QHSVSG Damian Leeding Compassion in Policing Award.

As the mother of Kerry Rooney and on behalf of our family, I would like to share the remarkable compassion and empathy Senior Constable Karen Watson has shown towards us and the positive impact she has made on our lives. During this incredibly challenging time following the tragic loss of Kerry in 2021, Senior Constable Karen Watson demonstrated unwavering support and empathy that went above and beyond her duty as a police officer. She recognised the deep emotional impact the loss had on my grandson, Remi, who now faces life without his father.

In an act of true compassion, Senior Constable Karen Watson initiated and organised a fundraiser at the Stafford Police Unit. Together with her colleagues, they pooled their resources and gifted Remi with a puppy, a beautiful Labrador named Coppa. This heartfelt gesture not only fulfilled Remi's long-standing desire for a dog but also provided him with a faithful companion during these trying times. It was evident that Senior Constable Karen Watson put significant thought and care into understanding Remi's needs and desires. She knew how much happiness and solace the presence of a puppy would bring to him, and she ensured that his dreams came true.

Witnessing Remi's joy and excitement when the officers surprised him with Coppa was truly heartwarming. The exchange between Remi and the police officers exemplified Senior Constable Karen Watson's compassion as she reassured him that Coppa was all his, filling Remi's life with newfound companionship and love.

Senior Constable Karen Watson's support has continuously extended beyond this remarkable gift. When Remi and his uncle returned from NSW and had to quarantine during the COVID-19 pandemic, Senior Constable Karen Watson organised a food package for Remi and his uncle. Her thoughtful gesture provided much-needed assistance during a challenging time.

Additionally, Senior Constable Karen Watson has gone above and beyond by visiting our family in NSW. She consistently remembers Remi's birthday and important occasions, sending gifts that bring joy to his life during significant times such as birthdays and Christmas. Her continued support and remembrance demonstrate her genuine care and dedication to our family's well-being. Senior Constable Karen Watson's compassion, empathy, and dedication to supporting Remi and our family during this trying time exemplify the values that the QHSVSG Damian Leeding Compassion in Policing Award seeks to recognise.

Her actions have not only provided comfort to Remi but have also demonstrated the positive impact police officers can have in the lives of those they serve. I wholeheartedly recommend Senior Constable Karen Watson for the QHSVSG Damian Leeding Compassion in Policing Award, confident that she is a shining example of the compassion, empathy, and dedication that this esteemed award represents.



*Photo  
The Queensland Police Officers who attended the Night of Recognition.*

*The presence of these officers demonstrated their genuine interest in understanding and supporting the needs of victims of homicide.*

*We are sincerely grateful.*



**Mitchell Ferrario Compassion in Media Award  
Presented by Gai and Monique Ferrario**

The Ferrario family chose to sponsor this award because of their experience with the media during the trial into Mitchell's death. There were some terrible untruths written about him and at times it felt like he was the one on trial, not the offender.

Mitchell's family hope that by sponsoring this award, it will serve as a reminder to the media that there are real people behind the stories they report on, and that what they say can have a damaging and lasting impact on the families left behind.

They also hope that this award will show our members that there are truly compassionate media representatives who honour our loved ones, and who care about making positive changes to the lives of others. This is a legacy that the family know Mitchell would have been proud to leave behind.

**Nominees**

**Jamie Pultz** Six 10 Media for the Beenham Valley Road Podcast  
Nominated by Alison Russell

**Mayeta Clark** ABC Australian Story  
Nominated by Alison Russell

**Grace Mason**  
Cairns Post  
Nominated by Peter Muller

**Nicole Morris** – Australian Missing Persons Register  
Nominated by Julie Hand

**2022 Mitchell Ferrario Compassion in  
Media Award recipient**

**Nicole Morris**

**Nomination citation**

Nicole Morris is the Director of the Australian Missing Persons Register which she founded in 2005. My own daughter Jody was listed on the AMPR Facebook page when she went missing in January 2006 and thousands of people shared the information, commented and looked for her.

Nicole is such a comfort to hundreds of family members and friends both here at home and abroad, she leaves no stone unturned in the search for answers for the families and has made many lasting friendships along the way.

Nicole has gained the respect of law enforcement and government agencies both in Australia and around the world and works closely with them. She has participated in many Podcasts about missing persons, appeared on radio programs, magazines articles and news stories, wherever she can bring awareness to missing persons and highlight the trauma their families go through, sometimes for decades.



## **Brad Lees Compassion in Service Award Presented by Maureen Sutton**

Maureen is the loving grandmother of little Brad Lees whose life was taken in 2012. Brad was 2 years, 1 month and 24 days young when he died. There are no words to describe the loss of an innocent child.

Maureen says "Sponsoring the Brad Lees Award for Compassion in Service has given us a meaningful and positive way to pay tribute to Brad, and to acknowledge and thank the many people who help victims of homicide on the road to recovery by their acts of compassion and kindness.

It is a special privilege to honour Brad in this way and keep the dream of him alive.

There is no foot too small that it cannot leave an imprint."

### **Nominees**

**Todd Fuller** - Deputy Director, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions  
Nominated by Monique Ferrario

**Rae Westbury** -Fathom Psychology - nominated by Sarah Simpson

**Savannah Taylor** - Support Services Manager, QHVSG  
Nominated by Lisa Mooney, Patrick Walsh, Coral-Lee Parkes, Lisa Menzel and Lee Lovell

**Sandra Scobie** -Court Support Coordinator, QHVSG - nominated by Coral-Lee Parkes

**Lisa Mallet** - Victim Liaison Officer, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions  
Nominated by Coral-Lee Parkes

**Naomi Clarke** -Red Cross - Nominated by Brett Geary

**Sam Bain** -former Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions  
Nominated by Sintayehu Mekonnen



## **2023 Brad Lees Compassion in Service Award Naomi Clarke**

### **Nomination citation**

Nomination Naomi has gone above and beyond and has always actually followed through and called back.

Someone like Naomi is someone you need when you've been impacted by a violent crime.

Often, I always had to do my own follow up, and without people like her I would have struggled and been dealing with it alone.

## **QHVSG Volunteer of The Year**

**Presented by QHVSG Board Chair Sherrie Meyer**

### **Nominees**

**Monique Ferrario** - nominated by April Blake and Coral-Lee Parkes

**John Sandeman** - nominated by Sue Sandeman

**Leanne Pullen** - nominated by Angela Head on behalf of the Mackay  
Peer Support Group

**April Blake** - nominated by Alicia Watanabe, Pamela Gordon and  
Monique Ferrario



## **2023 QHVSG Volunteer of the Year**

### **April Blake**

#### **Nomination citation**

'April has been so fantastic with creating a supportive environment for my mother and myself. She makes such an effort with helping us feel comfortable talking about our grief and supplying beautiful snacks and spreads. April makes my mother feel not alone with the grief'. Alicia Watanabe.

'Monthly meetings are very helpful. April is a great listener and very compassionate person. April is very easy to talk to and nothing is too much trouble.

I'm very grateful for this service that is provided to families at this horrible time. Seeing people coming back to the meeting even after years and sharing things is amazing. Thank you, April, and the QHVSG team from the bottom of my heart'. Pamela Gordon.

'I was first put in contact with April in 2021 when she began volunteering to create a peer support group for the Sunshine Coast. During our first conversation April had a lot of questions and ideas to ensure QHVSG had member support on the Sunshine Coast with a successful peer support group. April was always reflecting on what worked and what she could change, eager to see the group grow and support as many members as possible.

The Sunshine Coast support group is now flourishing, and that is because of the hard work and commitment by April. She is selfless and dedicated and shows absolute love and care for the Sunshine Coast members, making sure that everyone feels supported, welcome and heard.

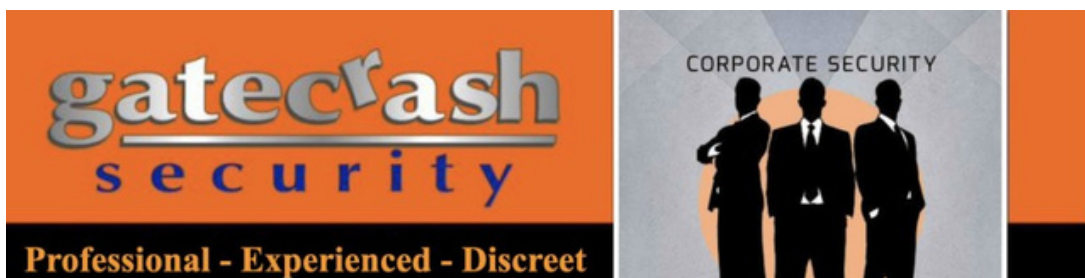
April, the Sunshine Coast members are very lucky to have you in their corner. Thank you for all that you do.' Monique Ferrario.

We sincerely thank the 2023 Night of Recognition sponsors.  
Your support is invaluable

## Major Sponsors



Black Fox Industries Pty Ltd is well known as an experienced and professional local Gold Coast based concrete and epoxy flooring company. They provide clients with top-of-the-line services that cater to their specific project needs and management requirements, are fully licensed and insured, all at the most competitive rates.



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## QHVSQ Memorial Days

Our 2023 Memorial days were all wonderful events, which brought people together for mutual support and to pay respects to our loved ones who have been taken. The events were well supported and occurred in four regions - Brisbane, Mackay, and Cairns, and on the Sunshine Coast.

### Mackay

The Mackay Memorial Day was held on Sunday 8th October. The event took place in the beautiful surroundings of Newhaven Funerals. The setting allowed members time to honour and respect their loved ones before sharing some light refreshments and connecting with others who have lost a loved one to homicide.

Thank you to Leanne and Gary Pullen who make this event so wonderful.



### Cairns

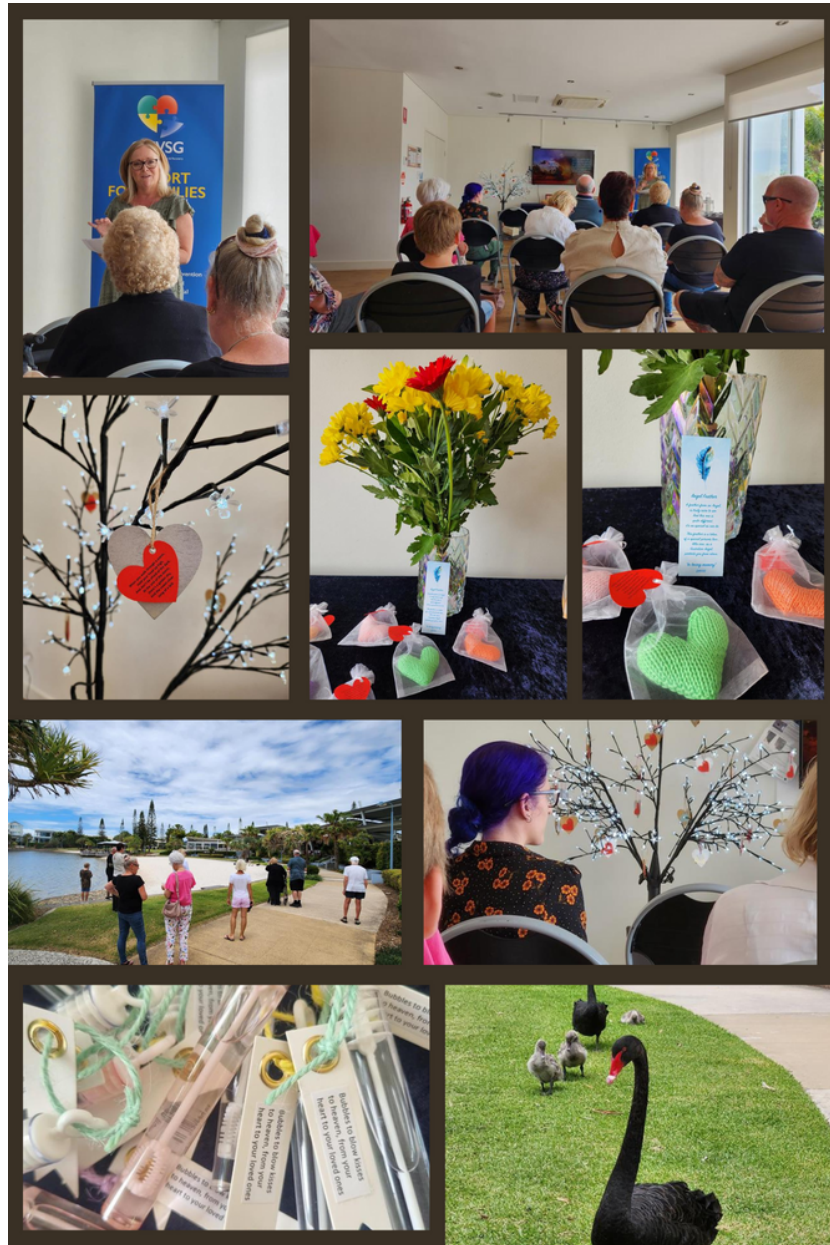
We held our second Memorial Day in Far North Queensland on Sat 21st October. The event was held in the beautiful tranquil grounds of The Couch Wellness Centre in Cairns.

It was a beautiful service of remembrance for our members and an opportunity to connect with others who have lost to the unimaginable. Thank you to Sandra Cookland for creating a beautiful event for those present.

## Sunshine Coast

April Blake has been a wonderful Peer Support Group facilitator for the Sunshine Coast area.

April, who is also the QHVSG Volunteer of the Year for 2023 worked with Sandra Cookland to produce a simply beautiful event.



## Brisbane

The Brisbane event is proudly arranged and facilitated by the QHVSG Office team. It is a true honour to be able to do this.

Fifty people attended with many families attending, with many publicly saying something to those present. Often, the words made reference to the importance of the group, and how special being with peers was to them.





## Awareness Events

### Gold Coast Awareness Day

The Gold Coast Awareness Day attracted over one hundred participants, who walked together, talked together and enjoyed some family fun. They also had the opportunity to speak with a range of service providers including the QPS, Victim Register, the ODPP, and QLD health.

The children enjoyed the range of entertainment, and of course, the delicious treats.

The dove release was again a wonderful moment, with a very special photo. As the doves circled the skies above QHVSF members and supporters, they formed a beautiful heart.

This is a major event, and we thank Gai and Monique Ferrario for arranging the day.



### Gympie Awareness Day



Marg Murray is another one of our amazing Peer Support Volunteers. Marg gave her time to create Awareness at the Gympie shopping Centre in May. These actions are very important to help people to be more aware of not only our service, but also to help our communities appreciate the impact that homicide has on people.

Marg provides Peer Support to a number of people, as well as facilitating the Gympie and Maryborough Groups.

Thankyou to Marg for this ongoing offer of help to others.



## Mackay Daisy planting Day



On the 6th May, members participated in Mackay's annual daisy planting.

Daisies are planted in memory of our members loved ones each year at the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens. It is lovely to be able to watch the blossoming of the garden which overlooks the lagoon.

After planting daisies, members enjoyed a picnic in the beautiful grounds of the gardens.



## National Victim of Crime Day

Our CEO Brett Thompson was honoured to emcee the 2023 National Victim of Crime Day at Parliament House, Brisbane. Hosted by Hon Yvette D'Ath, the event was also the formal public introduction of the new Victims Commissioner, Jon Rouse APM.

QHVSG joined other organisations to provide information about our services, which were targeted at Members of Parliament and organizational leaders.

A key part of the day was a panel discussion, facilitated by expert journalist Kim Skubris. Kim respectfully engaged with four victims of crime, of which three had received significant support from QHVSG.

We thank Jamaya, Debbie, Vanessa and Tracey for giving their time, and so bravely sharing their stories.





## Children's Christmas Parties

### South East QLD Childrens Christmas party

One hundred and fifty amazing people came together for Southeast QLD Childrens Christmas party, which took place on Saturday 25 November.

Sixty children enjoyed pony rides, jumping castles, face painting and patting farmyard animals such as lambs, goats and chickens. Each child was also given an individual gift from Santa, who arrived in style thanks to two helpful Queensland Police Community Liaison Officers.

Adults were able to catch up with old friends, and also meet new people. it is always wonder to see these Peer-to-Peer interactions. Five office staff were also present to help with the event in whatever way they could.

We are very grateful for the support of Dominoes Logan Central, and also Woolworths Logan Central, who donated forty pizzas and four platters of delicious wraps. No one went home feeling hungry.

Monique and Gai Ferrario spend countless hours arranging this event, and we acknowledge this outstanding effort. Thankyou also to Julie, Sarah, Brady, Shani, Charles, Marea, Kate, April and Bella who volunteered on the day.

The free event is funded by the Night of Recognition and was also supported by a Community Event grant from Logan City Council.





## Mackay Children's Christmas party

On Saturday the 25th November, Mackay Support Group held its annual Children's Christmas Party at the Miniature Trains.

What started as a very bleak day turned out perfectly for the duration of the party.

The children and adults enjoyed train rides, face painting, eating treats and enjoyed a sausage sizzle cooked by Gary.

To everyone's delight, gifts were handed out by Santa's beautiful Elf Angela.

A wonderful afternoon was had by all who attended.



## Mackay wellness event

In April a group of women were treated to a relaxing day of healing. The Wellness Retreat hosted by Michelle and Michael of MM Holistic Healing was held at their beautiful property which is a slice of paradise.

The members were guided through breath work, moving meditation and relaxation and mindfulness meditation and participated in clearing and letting go activities as well as making manifestation Keepsakes.

Michelle and Michael provided refreshments and lunch and each member was presented with a take home guide filled with information and techniques which the members could use to assist in managing daily stresses and relieving anxiety.

The day was a huge success and thoroughly appreciated by all who attended.

## Bridge to Brisbane



It was wonderful to have QHVSG staff enter the 2023 Bridge to Brisbane. Sadly, our numbers were down due to illness and also leave needs, however we were there in spirit!

Thankyou you Sarah and Sandra!

We look forward to having a bigger team in the 2024 event.

## Night of recognition 2024 - Save the date!





# Meet our operations team

## **Savannah** **Support Services Manager**

Hello! My name is Savannah Taylor. I began working as Family Support Coordinator at QHVSG in June 2022. I am excited to now be filling the new role, which was developed and implemented earlier this year, as the Support Services Manager. Prior to my role at QHVSG, I worked in counselling and social work roles in varying fields including crisis domestic violence response, lifeline, and intensive therapeutic mental health services for children and adolescences in residential settings.



The biggest joy in my life is spending time with closest friends, family and loved ones. Outside of work, I'm always up to do anything, from picnics, to theme parks. However, my biggest passion is the work that I am grateful and thankful to be able to have the opportunity to do. I am constantly witnessing the innate resilience and hope that each member has during their journey. I am looking forward to continuously working alongside my dedicated and compassionate colleagues, peers and volunteers at QHVSG.



## **Sarah** **Family Support Coordinator**

Hi, my name is Sarah. I have been working as a Family Support Coordinator at QHVSG since April 2022. Prior to this I have worked in disability support and domestic violence.

Outside of work, my hobbies include spending time with friends, watching theatre and music, and playing board games.

I had been a QHVSG volunteer since January 2018, and felt so lucky and thankful when an opportunity to become a staff member arose. Over my years at QHVSG I have always admired the work everyone does and felt there was incredible value supporting our members. It has been a pleasure to connect with every colleague, peer and member.

## **Ali** **Family Support Coordinator**

Hello. My name is Ali Gray. I commenced working as a Family Support Coordinator with QHVSG in July 2023., I became the seventh member of an amazing team. Within my role I offer emotional and practical support to our members, while working alongside likeminded people.

Prior to joining QHVSG I worked in various roles across many agencies, including child safety, corrections, and restorative justice.

Other than the love for the work I am blessed to do on a daily basis, is the love I have for my family which includes a pair of fur babies (twin cocker spaniels) thrown in the mix.



**Doy**  
**Family Support Coordinator**

Hi, My name is Doy. My current role is the Family Support Coordinator. Previously I had work with the Carer Gateway program to provide support for carers. I had the wonderful opportunity to work in that community space for about 3 years.

I enjoy hearing the stories of people experiences and how the positive community program can improve their lives. My hobbies include spending time with family and friends. I had wanted to joint the RAAF but now just enjoy flying radio control planes on the weekend.



**Sandra**  
**Peer and Community Volunteer Coordinator**

As peer support and community volunteer coordinator, I strongly believe in the ethos of peer support. Peer support is important as it provides a safe place to receive guidance and support from people who have been through the same experience. I feel honored to work alongside our wonderful volunteers and believe that connecting people with others who have lost to homicide is a vital part of people's healing.

I have an extensive career spanning health, social care, training and education, and a practice framework based on providing holistic, strengths-based support underpinned by my values of integrity, inclusivity, and compassion. I am sensitive to people's needs and enjoy supporting and guiding people. I am passionate about keeping people connected and reducing the impact of social isolation. I feel very privileged to work alongside such an amazing and dedicated group of colleagues. In my spare time I enjoy meeting up with friends, playing golf and knitting. I love all animals and volunteer with Labrador rescue as a foster carer.

**Sandra**  
**Court Support and Administrative Coordinator**

I have been fortunate enough to secure a full-time role as the Court Support and Administrative Coordinator in 2023, after working in a casual role since October 2022.

I have worked within the criminal justice system for almost 20 years in many different roles however have spent the last six years supporting primary victims of violent crime through the court process. I feel very thankful to work alongside an amazing team of staff and volunteers and have met many amazing members within my short time at QHVSG.

In my downtime, I enjoy watching movies, catching up with friends and family and going to the theatre and seeing live music. I do love a good music festival! I also have two very cheeky pussycats called Suzi and Floyd.

I look forward to meeting all of you and thank you for all the support you provide.





**Queensland Homicide Victims' Support Group  
Family Support after Murder Inc.  
Annual Report 2023  
[www.qhvsg.org.au](http://www.qhvsg.org.au)**