



IMPACT REPORT

2023-24

Knowmore
Legal Service

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia as the Owners of the lands on which we all live and work. We pay our respects to Elders, past, present and emerging, and we acknowledge that wherever we are, we are on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land, and that sovereignty was never ceded over those lands. We thank them for their continued stewardship and care of the lands and waterways for more than 2,600 generations. We also pay our deepest respect to the many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and communities we support, and our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff for the care they provide to clients and communities, both in and outside work.

We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture as the longest surviving culture in the world and honour the continued resilience and survivorship of this rich culture. We also recognise the intergenerational trauma and dispossession that resulted from colonisation and see its continued effects today. We are committed to a shared call for Makarrata*, and a path to true reconciliation,

grounded in truth-telling, voice and treaty, and accountability for past wrongs.

We recognise all survivors of childhood abuse and trauma and honour their courage in coming forward and seeking justice for themselves and echo their calls for change so that children are not harmed now and into the future. We see the lifelong effects of their trauma, but we also see their incredible survivorship. We acknowledge that the calls for justice from survivors took many years to be heard, continues today, and comes at a great cost to many. We thank them, and we honour those who are no longer with us.

We acknowledge the diversity that exists not only in the survivors who come to us, but in our staff. We commit to ensuring that a person's intersectionality is honoured, celebrated and considered in everything we do.

We thank our Board, staff and volunteers for their continued and tireless dedication to the people we serve. This report honours their work, and the change they seek to make every day.



*Makarrata is a word in the Yolngu language meaning a coming together after a struggle, facing the facts of wrongs and living again in peace.

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WELCOME

Welcome to Knowmore's first Impact Report. This report marks a significant milestone for our organisation, as it is the first of its kind.

Over the past year, we have engaged in consultations with survivors and our dedicated staff to define the impact we aim to achieve. We began by asking survivors what difference they would want to experience as a result of using our services. We then asked our staff to consider what we

have learned over ten years of service delivery and how we measure or understand if our work is delivering the right outcomes.

This thoughtful input has led to the development of a model focused on five key domains: Legal Justice, Financial Wellbeing, Healing and Recovery, Cultural Connection, and Improving Systems and Preventing Harm. It has helped us begin a journey of holding ourselves accountable

for more than throughputs or outcomes, and as with most journeys we have not reached our destination.

There is more work for us to do. We will implement systems that will measure domains and ensure that the voices of survivors inform our work. We are committed to both of these tasks to increase transparency on service delivery and to ensure that our service continues to meet the needs of our clients.

Times of reflection are always enlightening for an organisation and this process has brought with it the opportunity to reflect on the past year. It has been particularly momentous as we celebrated our tenth anniversary.

Over the past decade, Knowmore has grown significantly, thanks to the unwavering support of our staff, volunteers, and Board. We are proud to acknowledge two staff members, Louise Edgerton and Aunty Glendra Stubbs, who have been with us for over ten years. Their dedication and passion have been instrumental in our success.

We also want to take this opportunity to acknowledge Warren Strange, our past CEO, who left in July 2023. Warren's leadership and vision have been pivotal in shaping Knowmore into the organisation it is today. His contributions have left a lasting legacy, and we are grateful for his years of service.

We spent much of the year advocating for funding to meet growing demand and the announcement of increased funding for the 2024/25 financial year was welcomed with relief. This support will allow us to expand our programs, reach more survivors, and enhance the quality of our services. We

are committed to using these resources effectively to maximise our impact.

We are very proud of our achievements and hope that this report provides you a greater insight into the value of our work. As we look to the future, we remain focused on our aim to support survivors and advocate for systemic change. We are inspired by the resilience of the people we serve and motivated by the dedication of our team.

Jackie Mead
Chief Executive Officer



UNDERSTANDING OUR IMPACT

Our impact can be seen across our five domains of justice-making. These impacts were developed with input from survivors and the Knowmore team. They aim to move us beyond reporting on throughputs and short-term outcomes and to keep us

focussed on the real value of the work that is a key part of Redress and justice-making.

Measuring impact is never easy, particularly when we engage with our clients for a short moment during their lives. We do not have the benefit of longitudinal studies to help us see changes as a result of seeking Redress. We

do however hear evidence of our impact in many ways. This report highlights the impact we have had over the course of this year.

In 2024/25 we will work with academics and others to establish metrics to support our understanding of the impact of our work. The richness of stories is something we will not leave behind.



DOMAIN 1.
Legal Justice

Impact 1: People are empowered to understand their options and seek justice in the way that is best for them.

Impact 2: People get a better outcome than if they had not come to us.

Impact 3: We reach people who would otherwise not get help.

DOMAIN 2.
Cultural Connection

Impact 1: People experience us as a culturally safe service.

Impact 2: People experience an increase in their sense of connection to culture and cultural healing through the process of working with Knowmore.

Impact 3: Growing relationships with First Nations Communities and Elders guide the way we undertake our work.

DOMAIN 3.
Healing and Recovery

Impact 1: People experience less re-traumatisation in navigating legal processes because we helped them.

Impact 2: People report healing and recovery as part of justice-making.

Impact 3: People are connected with supports that can help them.

Impact 4: People's sense of safety, trust and connection is improved.

DOMAIN 4.
Financial Wellbeing

Impact 1: People's financial situation is improved.

Impact 2: People's money is protected.

Impact 3: People's quality of life is improved as a result of receiving a Redress payment.

Impact 4: People have improved their financial literacy.

DOMAIN 5.
Improving Systems and Preventing Harm

Impact 1: Our contributions result in change to existing systems that impact survivors and protect children from harm.

Impact 2: We increase the capability of others to support survivors.

Impact 3: We are acknowledged across the sector as a valued and effective service system partner.

THE CONTEXT IN WHICH WE STRIVE TO MAKE AN IMPACT

Justice-making only comes when survivors can speak their truth. For many survivors this involves engaging with a variety of services to create the support needed to take this step. Knowmore acknowledges that we must work closely with other organisations to ensure that we create an environment of safety for truth-telling. We therefore choose to share our knowledge and resources wherever they can be of help, and to use the resources of organisations thus reducing duplication of effort and resources.

We also acknowledge that we must understand external factors impacting upon the organisation. Enduring colonial systems have historically marginalised First Nations Peoples, creating

deep-seated inequities that persist today. The legacy of colonisation manifests in various forms, including systemic discrimination, socio-economic disadvantages, and intergenerational trauma. These factors complicate the legal and support needs of First Nations clients, requiring Knowmore to navigate a complex landscape of historical and ongoing injustices. Additionally, the legal frameworks and policies shaped by colonial histories often fail to adequately address the unique needs and rights of First Nations communities, posing further challenges to delivering culturally safe and effective services.

It is imperative that we acknowledge the incredible pressure many support sectors are currently experiencing. Our colleagues

in mental health and housing for example, are overwhelmed. The demand for these essential services often exceeds capacity, leaving survivors without the comprehensive support they need. This bottleneck can hinder Knowmore's efforts to offer holistic assistance, as legal issues are frequently intertwined with mental health and housing stability. Furthermore, the scope of what Knowmore is funded to deliver can constrain its ability to address all aspects of a survivor's needs. Funding limitations may restrict the range of services provided, impacting the organisation's capacity to offer extensive support and referrals. These external pressures underscore the importance of a well-resourced and integrated support system to ensure that survivors receive the full spectrum of care necessary for their recovery and empowerment.

Despite the barriers we see survivors demonstrate incredible courage when they decide to seek justice for what happened to them. For some survivors picking up the phone to us or walking through our doors can be years in the making. And sometimes, that

reach out may be the first time they've ever told anyone about their experiences; for others, the first time someone said they believe them.

At Knowmore, the impact we seek to have sits within an evidence-based service model built on

three foundational pillars: trauma-informed practice, culturally safe practice, and multidisciplinary practice. These elements guide our work and ensure that we provide holistic, respectful, and effective support to those who seek our services.

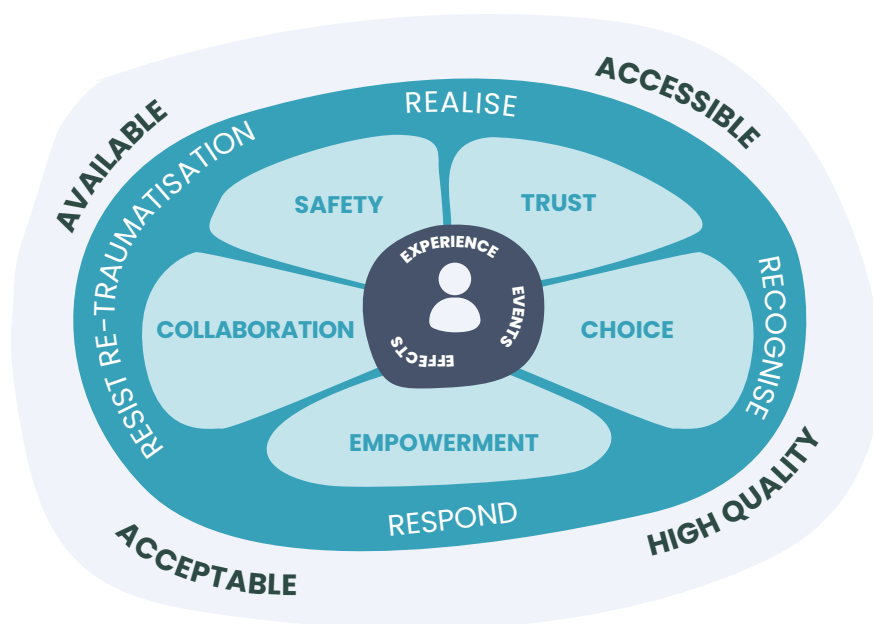
Trauma-Informed Practice

Being trauma-informed means understanding not just the events that have occurred, but also the survivor's experience and the profound effects these events have had on their lives. At Knowmore, we strive to create an environment of safety, trust, and connection. We offer survivors choices and respect those choices, empowering them rather than diminishing their autonomy—a common experience for many navigating the legal system.

We recognise that trauma and stress responses are likely to occur when survivors share their experiences. Our team is trained to identify these responses and respond promptly and with care. We actively work to limit re-traumatisation, understanding that navigating legal systems and processes can be deeply personal and challenging.

We employ professionals with the right skills and experience to support survivors throughout their legal journey. All client-facing staff, including administration, intake, lawyers, social workers, counsellors, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander engagement advisors, and financial counsellors, receive regular training in trauma-informed

practice. This training also emphasises staff wellbeing, recognising that the work we do can be confronting. We provide appropriate support, including mandatory external supervision for all client-facing staff, ensuring we can offer our best to those who come to us.



Culturally Safe Practice

Creating cultural safety is essential for First Nations Peoples and Communities to feel comfortable accessing our services. At Knowmore, we focus on building meaningful relationships based on trust, empowerment, reciprocity, and cultural respect. We aim to be a culturally safe service that enhances our client’s connection to their culture and values, cultural healing and truth-telling as integral components of justice.

We build cultural safety by employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff across all levels of

our organisation, including our Board and executive leadership team. First Nations services are led and provided by First Nations people who bring the depths of their own experiences to support our work with First Nations clients. We aim to create accessible services, available no matter where you live across our country. This means we travel to remote parts of Australia, using interpreters and local guides to support our work where needed.

Our commitment to cultural safety includes compulsory cultural awareness, sensitivity,

and immersion training for all staff. We believe in understanding the history of our country, the enduring effects of colonisation, and resisting the re-traumatisation of First Nations people. We acknowledge that we cannot assume that this history has been a part of the educational experiences of our staff, and we therefore take seriously our responsibility to provide these opportunities.

Knowmore’s Culturally Safe Practice Framework describes these key principles to our service delivery.

PRINCIPLE	PRACTICE
Protocols/relational practice	respect cultural ways of engagement – permission, reciprocity, mutuality, collaboration
Equitable Practice	being awake to one’s own cultural identity, social locations of power and privilege
Decolonising practice	truth telling, honouring resistance
Positive purpose	strength based, client focussed, confidential, accountability. Do no harm, make it matter
Reflective practice	continuous improvement, values to action

Multidisciplinary Practice

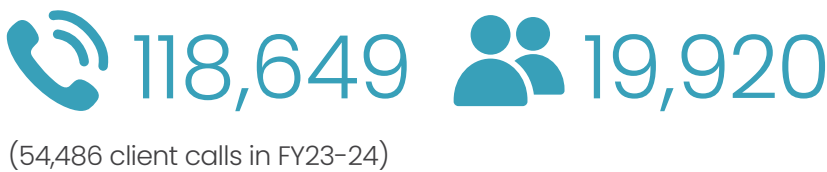
Knowmore’s multidisciplinary practice ensures that we provide comprehensive support to our clients. Our team includes professionals from various disciplines, such as lawyers, social workers, counsellors, and financial counsellors, working together to address the diverse needs of survivors. This collaborative

approach allows us to offer holistic support, addressing not only legal issues but also the emotional, social, and financial challenges that survivors may face.

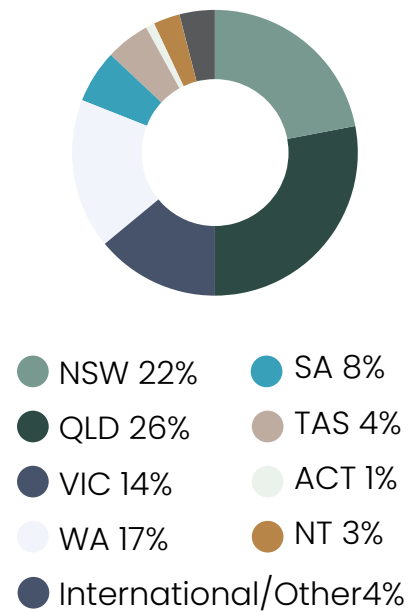
Our multidisciplinary team is trained to work in a trauma-informed and culturally safe manner, ensuring that all

aspects of our service are aligned with our core values. By integrating different professional perspectives, we can provide more effective and empathetic support, helping survivors navigate their legal journeys with confidence and dignity.

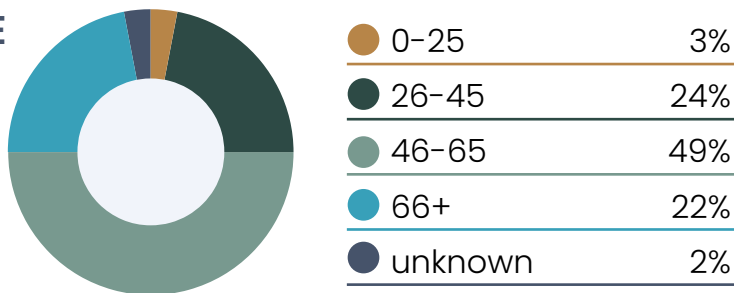
TOTAL CALLS AND CLIENTS SINCE JULY 2018



CLIENTS CAME FROM



AGE



OUR CLIENTS





DOMAIN 1:

LEGAL JUSTICE

Justice-making for survivors of child abuse sits at the core of Knowmore's values and purpose. For more than ten years, we have walked alongside survivors of child sexual abuse, and the Stolen Generations, as they have sought remedy for the harms done to them as children. For many survivors we work with, these can be new conversations and navigating legal processes to get there can feel daunting.

And as much as we wish otherwise, the reality is that the legal system can be at best difficult and at its worst, re-traumatising for most survivors. They may have also had past experiences with the legal justice system that have created an understandable lack of trust. What we have seen however is that there is something really transformative that can happen when a survivor accesses the law in a safe and

supported way. And, that they often get better outcomes as a result.

The law is a powerful institution. It is incumbent on us therefore, to empower, not overpower, to walk gently with not stride ahead, and to be patient in how we create



safety, trust and connection in our shared work with survivors. At the heart of how we work is our person-centred, trauma-informed, culturally safe model of integrated services. We recognise that while accessing the law requires a lawyer, to do so safely may mean you also need other help such as cultural support, financial counselling or wellbeing support. And, we champion choice by making supported referrals to trusted civil lawyers for survivors to be fully informed of what a compensation path might look like, should they choose to continue on a civil path with a lawyer on a trauma-informed, no-win no-fee basis.

'Redress' is about righting a wrong. It is far more than a Scheme, it is a whole of justice-making process, aimed at putting the survivor at the centre and helping them navigate their own pathway to justice. For some it may be about truth-telling and witness-bearing; for others it is about criminal justice; financial restitution; or it may be an acknowledgement or apology; or the opportunity to access healing and recovery. And, it can be combinations of all of these. As one client told us

"the outcome has given me closure...because you've been defiled by government, you think

they're going to cover it up, say they wouldn't acknowledge it, but they did, which is a big thing."

It is important that we acknowledge that 'justice' is not something many survivors have come to expect from the law, and no two people will ever have the same ideas about what justice could look like for them. It is however our responsibility to ensure that we continue to ask, and wherever possible, to help that be achieved. As with everything Knowmore has learned over these ten years, it begins, very simply with listening.



IMPACT 1:

People are empowered to understand their options and seek justice in the way that is best for them

EVIDENCE:

2,059 referrals

to our panel of civil lawyers

EVIDENCE: *"My lawyer was bloody fantastic, he listened and talked me through some moments where I was upset, he was punctual and sent me lots of information about my options. He gave me varied options and talked me through them well. He couldn't have provided better service"*

- Client survey response

EVIDENCE: *"Words cannot express my gratitude to you for all you've done for me but I'll try. I'm forever indebted to you for going above and beyond in representing me and guiding me through the process with care and understanding, with the utmost sensitivity and comfort.*

You made sure the grim details were correct and then minimised the exposure to the topic and with your supreme professionalism skills managed to achieve the maximum monetary compensation for the abuse I kept buried for over 25 years.

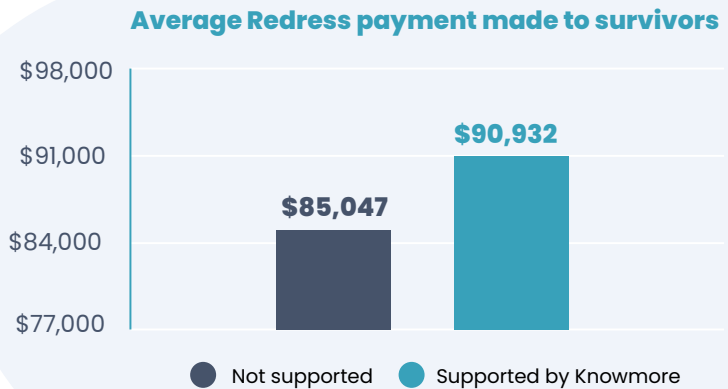
You really are an angel doing god's work and because of you and your team the spotlight is on these predators and now the systemic changes will hopefully prevent any more victims of further abuse in the juvenile correction facilities.

It was hard to open up and be vulnerable but it was a necessary step to face it, confront it and then put it to rest to move forward. You have changed my life and although money comes and goes you've healed a wound in me I thought couldn't be fixed"

- Client survey response

IMPACT 2:

People get a better outcome than if they had not come to us



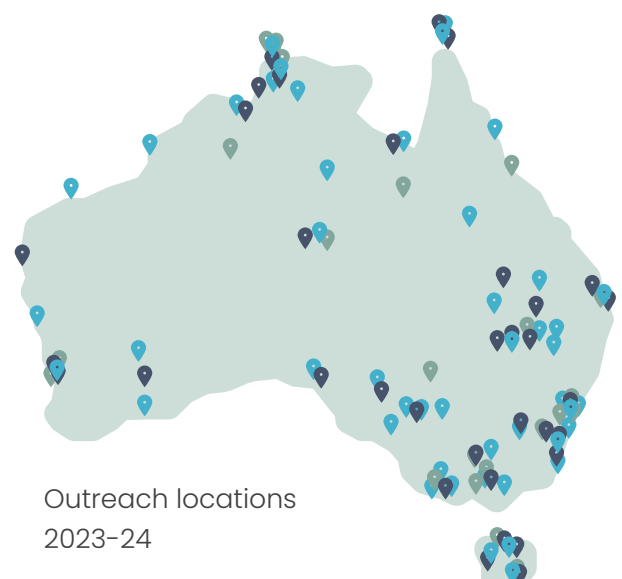
Figures from DSS, provided to JSC, as of 15 September 2023

IMPACT 3:

We reach people who would otherwise not get help

EVIDENCE: *"Their professionalism was beyond compare. They always met my needs knowing that at times I had mental health issues. They were supreme in offering support with other services & government. The counselling service was incredible. To be honest, I could not and would not have done it without them. I am extremely grateful and appreciative for all Knowmore did for me"*

- Client survey response





DOMAIN 2:

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Knowmore remains committed to providing culturally safe and trauma-informed legal services to First Nations Peoples and Communities. We achieve this through a service delivery model prioritising:

✓ First Nations Voices

✓ Truth-Telling

✓ Cultural Safety

✓ Cultural Healing



The cultural expertise and leadership of Knowmore's Director of Strategy and First Nations Engagement, Gary Oliver, and Elder in Residence, Aunty Glendra Stubbs, has been instrumental in shaping our ambitious plans to ensure that every First Nations person in Australia has the opportunity to access Redress and legal options available to them. They are supported throughout this work by our national team of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Advisors, who work out of our six offices and outreach to communities across the country. Cultural support provided by a First Nations person is critical to our success. As one Stolen Generations survivor said

recently, the best thing about Knowmore is "the Indigenous people who work there".

Knowmore's culturally safe and respectful 'on the ground' approach to community engagement has enabled us to better understand the needs of those who we walk alongside and support. Knowmore acknowledges the devastating legacy of forced child removal and government assimilation policies on First Nations Peoples and Communities. These policies have inflicted deep wounds, caused immense suffering and left lasting scars. Many children who were removed from their families and communities never found their way home. For those who did, their return

was often accompanied by a deep sense of grief, loss and mistrust in organisations and institutions.

We know that in order for First Nations Peoples and Communities to feel comfortable accessing our services, we must firstly focus our efforts on building meaningful relationships built on trust, empowerment, reciprocity and cultural respect. We want people to experience Knowmore as a culturally safe service, one that increases their sense of connection to culture and values cultural healing and truth telling as important components of justice.



IMPACT 1:

People experience us as a culturally safe service

EVIDENCE: An increase in the numbers of First Nations peoples seeking support from Knowmore, with 38% of our clients identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

EVIDENCE: *"Knowmore gave good help with what was happening with all the old people."*

EVIDENCE:

85% of Stolen Generations survivors we surveyed said Knowmore had helped them

EVIDENCE:

88% of Stolen Generations survivors we surveyed said they would tell others to come to Knowmore for help



IMPACT 2:

People experience an increase in their sense of connection to culture and cultural healing as a result of their interactions with Knowmore.

EVIDENCE: *"They made sure I was ok in other ways, not just legal things."*

"They got it. I didn't have to tell them what it meant. They made me feel less like a shadow, like I can be a bit more like me."

"I see what I did to my kids – I didn't know anything better but it won't be like that for my grannies. I want them to be proud of who we are."

IMPACT 3:

Growing relationships with First Nations Communities and Elders guide the way we undertake our work.

EVIDENCE: An increase in 'word of mouth' referrals.

As an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Engagement Advisor, Brian's role involves traveling to regionally isolated communities where individuals may be unaware of their rights to justice.

In 2021, during a visit to Karratha, a city in the Pilbara region of Western Australia, Brian gave his business card to a local. Over the next three years, this very card was passed on to family members from Karatha to Port Hedland, the Kimberley's, Geraldton and most recently to Perth – 14 community members in total. Community who would otherwise have not exercised their rights to seek justice.

The importance of Brian's work, and the ripple effect of that one card, demonstrates the need to reach those in underserved communities, who need our support most.





DOMAIN 3:

HEALING AND RECOVERY

For most survivors who come to us seeking to right the wrongs of their childhood abuse, healing and recovery is a long-held hope. Sadly, most do not have confidence that it could happen and many do not know how to begin a process that could lead to those outcomes. Seeking justice is frequently daunting, and the fears of reliving the horrors they have experienced through legal processes and systems are real. We believe that trauma-informed, culturally safe services and service system responses are one important way we can help as we seek to build

safety, trust and connection with the survivors who come to us. This is the foundation of their pathway to recovery and healing.

Safely navigating complex and often triggering legal processes attached to childhood abuse and trauma, requires skilled helpers. At Knowmore we recognise that survivors will move in and out of wellness, but recovery is always possible. While everyone can and should be trauma-informed in their work, providing appropriate supports to survivors of child abuse also requires the skills

of trained and experienced professionals. Our experienced national team of social workers and counsellors not only support our clients, they lead our trauma-informed approach across our organisation, ensuring it weaves through everything we do.

Our social work and counselling team are available throughout a survivor's engagement with us; for some, that can be years and may start from their first call or appointment. The courage to reach out for the first time can also



mean that stress or trauma responses are triggered, and so help to gain re-regulation is needed. Survivors may also come to us with current crises happening that may need to be prioritised before they can start their legal engagement with us.

Our social workers and counsellors' key role is to ensure a person can safely give instructions to their lawyer. They typically provide support during legal appointments, and in a 'time and place' way should someone be in distress or need immediate help. They also make supported referrals in to the broader service system for the help that people may need to treat the effects of their trauma, and to recover and begin healing. This can be a lifelong road for many, and rarely linear. It also needs to be built around the person and their individual needs.

We have seen the benefits overall for survivors in getting access to good quality, trauma-informed care and cultural healing options that must be available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Just as no two people are the same neither is what they will benefit from best in their recovery and healing. We also see the great benefits in participating in some other components of Redress, such as personal response, acknowledgment processes (apologies) and counselling.

Since the pandemic, we have seen the waiting times for mental health services continue to grow (wait times for counselling referrals of 9-12 months are not uncommon), and as a result we have needed to support more people, for longer periods of time with their mental health. We also see our service system partners like the Redress Support Services having greater demand and longer wait times. While

we continue to make these important referrals, we are concerned about the effects of putting increased demand on an already overwhelmed service system, and how survivors can fall through cracks as a result.

While we see the effects of abuse and harm on the people we serve, we also see their incredible survivorship and resilience. We see the many ways they have resisted, protested and thrived in the face of experiencing terrible hurts that no child should ever face. We also see that where we can create an experience of a legal process that is gentler, 'works with' and not 'does to', and creates some opportunity for justice-making, it can be truly transformative for a survivor and can be part of their broader journey towards healing and recovery.

IMPACT 1:

People experience less re-traumatisation and they experience healing and recovery in navigating legal processes because we helped them

EVIDENCE: *"I have been a client of Knowmore for nearly three years. I am writing to you as I feel strongly it is a good time to offer feedback on my experience with Knowmore and the employee's whom I have been in contact with. Without boring you with details I will mention a letter that was sent to me from the Redress Scheme. The information in this letter was not new news to me. However, the letter itself and the timing of it was very alarming. It appeared that my case had been put on hold and that was triggering, confusing and upsetting.*

I immediately rang Knowmore. I spoke with a lovely, compassionate person and within 90 minutes I received a phone call, which I missed. The caller tried again within the hour. When I spoke to "SST" she was clearly committed to ensuring I was settled. She explained that while the lawyer was away, when she would be back and that the plan was still on track. I was again supported, nurtured and provided with patience that felt incredible. 'SST' was patient, clear, supportive and checked in to make sure that I had adequate support that evening.

Now from something yucky (the letter) came something really beautiful. Because, not being listened to, not being heard broke me much, much worse than being abused did. When that letter arrived, I truly believed this was just another example of people just not caring. At that moment I felt like I was being put in the trash, just like when I was young.

To then have that expectation COMPLETELY turned on its head was mind blowing. I was not dismissed or gaslit or made to feel small and told to just do as I was told. I was not silenced. I was instead offered all those beautiful words I have previously described.

Money is great. I am a single mum with 4 children. I know how powerful money is. A letter from the Institution validating my trauma and taking accountability. Amazing. Yes please. Lest I not diminish the importance of opportunity both those things have.

I can honestly say to you though, that if I walk away with zero money and no letter, I will still feel like I have won. Because the human experience I am having with Knowmore and the reaffirming of confidence in us as a community (humanity) is priceless. The potential to heal is more than any dollar mark could offer.

I know all this is rather dramatic. But I think sometimes there is a small place in a fierce Industry for people to be told that they are doing a special thing. Because I am sure that sometimes your people get burnt out, frustrated and incensed. I want

you guys to know that your work means so much to so many people. And on behalf of all of Redress Kids, Thank you for being there. Thank you for the time you spend away from your families, for the stress you endure, for the nights you could be at tennis but you're doing paperwork instead, for the times you were out West trying to get away from it all but when your client needed you, you found a way to make that happen."

- Email from client

IMPACT 2:

People are connected with supports that can help them

EVIDENCE: *"My experience being supported by the Support Services Team has been life changing, and there have been topics and trauma well outside of grief that we have continued to tackle. I have gained an appreciation for self-love, I have been encouraged to see a therapist and explore various therapeutic techniques including EMDR and medication even though both were very scary for me to try. I can't explain in words how much transformation I've gone through being supported by your service. I can't thank you enough for everything you've done for and with me."*

- Email from client

IMPACT 3:

People's sense of safety, trust and connection is improved

EVIDENCE: *"I have really struggled with rapport building and trust with this client in getting him to open up and trust me. We are up to doing part two of his application and the client is really struggling with the disclosure, he has never spoken about his experience of child sexual abuse before. Today using humour to diffuse the client's tension we made a breakthrough. I have been working with this client for over a year. It has been a long slow road with progress. But today, I heard him laugh for the first time and felt like we are covering new ground in building a rapport with him."*

- Email from a member of our legal team



DOMAIN 4:

FINANCIAL WELLBEING

A recognition payment is a key part of most Redress schemes. A Redress payment can be life changing for many, it is a larger sum of money than they may ever have had. Many of the people who come to Knowmore for help with Redress have lived lives of survivorship, but also, have not had the advantages growing up that others may take for granted. They may have lived with very low incomes and have had little help to learn about money or how to manage it.

We help people prepare for receiving a lump sum. We also help them to manage debt and to understand how a payment could affect Centrelink, public housing, aged care and other services. This is what our experienced and specialised Financial Counselling team do every day at Knowmore. We also need to keep advocating with big banks and government to ensure that intended protections that have been put in place for Redress payments are applied.

Receiving a Redress payment can also elicit complex responses in survivors. Recognition of past harm can be very much a part of

righting a wrong. And we have seen many lives transformed through receiving a payment. For some survivors, it may be a reconnection to feelings of guilt or shame for the abuse they experienced. We have heard it described by some of the people we support as 'dirty money'. It can also seem like a trifling amount for the impact it has had on their lives, leading to a lack of self worth.

When money and trauma are connected, it can result in the use of unhelpful coping mechanisms including a compulsion to make it 'go away' as fast as possible; to help regain relationships and connections that have

been lost with family; or to help numb the emotions associated with it. It is important therefore, that we understand the complex relationship between money and trauma, that we remain judgment-free in the choices that people make, and, that we support in a trauma-informed, culturally safe way.

We want a Redress payment to be something that contributes to justice-making, healing and recovery.



IMPACT 1:

People's
financial
situation is
improved

EVIDENCE: We helped

190 people

with debt and hardship

EVIDENCE: We helped someone recently released from prison get

\$80,000

of debts waived and put a plan in to manage the \$18,000 balance. This greatly assisted them to be able to maintain their housing.

EVIDENCE: We helped someone get

\$62,000

in insurance premiums paid back to them, as they had not understood what they were committing to.

EVIDENCE: We helped someone get more than

\$1,300

in education debt waived as their past trauma was affecting their ability to study.

IMPACT 2:

People's money is protected

EVIDENCE: After being on the public housing waiting list for years, a person we were supporting received an offer of a home. They had just received the maximum NRS payment of \$150,000. After supplying the required documents to the Department, they were initially advised they were no longer eligible to public housing. We advocated by providing information to the housing officer on the protections that come with a Redress payment. The survivor was offered and accepted public housing.

IMPACT 3:

People's quality of life is improved as a result of receiving a Redress payment

EVIDENCE: A survivor told us that through the process of applying and receiving a Redress payment, they now understood that what happened to them was not their fault. Because of their past trauma and feeling of guilt, they described lifelong challenges with maintaining employment and relationships with their children. They shared that for the first time ever, they had been able to help their children financially, which gave them a real sense of pride.

IMPACT 4:

People have improved their financial literacy

EVIDENCE: We helped someone get \$30,000 in debt waived before they received their Redress payment. In doing so it became apparent they would benefit from better understanding budgeting and money management, ahead of receiving Redress. We helped them set up separate accounts; everyday spending, a bills account and a savings account. When they received their Redress payment, they contacted their financial counsellor to say that their budget was working well, they had not accumulated any further debts. Their spending habits had changed for the better and they felt that improving money management skills has improved their life.

DOMAIN 5:



IMPROVING SYSTEMS AND PREVENTING HARM

For many victims and survivors of child abuse, helping to improve systems and prevent harm is an important part of their healing journey. So many of our clients are motivated to come forward because they do not want anyone else to experience the same harms and injustice that were a part of their childhoods.

We therefore know that working to improve systems and prevent harm is an important part of standing with victims and survivors of child abuse and honouring their experiences.



Our contributions result in change to existing systems that impact survivors and protect children from harm

This year has seen us address a variety of issues that were excluding people from seeking justice or increasing the likelihood of harm for survivors and children. Making systemic change takes time. It requires constructive discussion with a wide variety of people including politicians, public servants, legal bodies and the general public. We are very pleased to have increased our involvement with the media as we have sought to tell the stories that help people understand why change is required.

EVIDENCE: In March 2024, the Australian Parliament made some important changes to the National Redress Scheme for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse. One of the key improvements is that survivors who are in prison can now apply for Redress. This change means that many thousands of survivors in prison are now eligible for the support they deserve.

At Knowmore, we've always believed it was unfair to exclude survivors in prison from getting Redress. We've been speaking up about this issue since 2018, and we've continued our advocacy through to the Australian Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Implementation of the National Redress Scheme in 2023–2024. We're committed to breaking down barriers so that all survivors, including those in prison, can access the support and Redress they need.

EVIDENCE: In 2023–24, Knowmore has spoken to decision makers in every state of Australia about claims farming. This is a harmful practice where someone, known as a 'claim farmer,' contacts a survivor without their permission and sells their information to a law firm. The law firm then usually sends the survivor a costs agreement that includes fees for the claim farmer. We are very pleased to see the South Australian Government lead the way, consulting on new legislation to ensure that claims farming is illegal.



IMPACT 2:

Building the capability of others to support survivors

Knowmore has a unique skillset. Our multidisciplinary, trauma-informed, culturally safe approach is embedded within our legal practice. Not only do we hold specialist legal knowledge regarding Redress, we also understand how to deliver this service with the least negative impact on our clients. We aim to share our expertise with others so that we can increase the options available to survivors.

EVIDENCE:

59% increase in the use of our online resources developed for Redress Support Services.

More than 250 meetings across the country

with services supporting survivors where we aim to share knowledge and create warm referral paths for survivors.

More than 250 people

across the sector who have undertaken training with Knowmore.



IMPACT 3:

We are acknowledged across the sector as a valued and effective service system partner.

Sometimes it is more important to amplify the voice of others rather than leading change ourselves. We understand that this is critical on issues associated with protecting children and we are therefore always seeking to partner with organisations who hold similar values to ours and who have a strong evidence base behind their work. We know that this approach reduces costs and increases success.

EVIDENCE: Knowmore has played a key role in community-based campaigns to improve systems and prevent harm. One important campaign focused on raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility. We're pleased to see progress, with the Tasmanian Government committing to raise the age from ten to 14 years without exceptions, and to raise the minimum age of imprisonment to 16 years. In South Australia, the government consulted on a proposal to raise the minimum age of criminal responsibility, and Knowmore made a submission urging them to set the age to at least 14 years.

Another significant step forward came from the campaign for a Human Rights Act for Australia. The Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights recommended the adoption of a Human Rights Act. Knowmore is part of the National Advisory Committee for this campaign and spoke with the Parliamentary Committee in support of a Human Rights Act in September 2023.

The campaign for a Human Rights Act for Australia saw a significant win, with the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights recommending a Human Rights Act for Australia. Knowmore participated in the National Advisory Committee for the campaign and spoke with the Parliamentary Committee in support of a Human Rights Act in September 2023.

Knowmore

Legal Service

Our vision is a society that is free from child abuse and accountable to survivors. [Donate here](#) to support victims of abuse and change lives.

Your donation will support survivors to achieve redress, justice and healing.

Donations of \$2 or more are tax-deductible in Australia.

Free advice line: 1800 605 762 **Email:** info@knowmore.org.au **Web:** www.knowmore.org.au

ADELAIDE SA

Level 1, 99 Gawler Place
Adelaide SA 5000
GPO Box 1365
Adelaide SA 5001
t: 08 7092 2740

DARWIN NT

Level 2, 13 Cavenagh Street
Darwin City NT 0800
GPO Box 413
Darwin NT 0801
t: 08 7918 8455

PERTH WA

12 Newcastle Street
Perth WA 6000
PO Box 7072
Cloisters Square Perth WA 6850
t: 08 6117 7244

BRISBANE QLD

Level 20, 144 Edward Street
Brisbane QLD 4000
PO Box 2151
Brisbane QLD 4001
t: 07 3218 4500

MELBOURNE VIC

Level 15, 607 Bourke Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
PO Box 504
Collins Street West VIC 8007
t: 03 8663 7400

SYDNEY NSW

Level 15, 175 Liverpool Street
Sydney NSW 2000
PO Box 267
Darlinghurst NSW 1300
t: 02 8267 7400
