

SOUTH WEST COUNSELLING INC.

ANNUAL REPORT

2022 - 2023



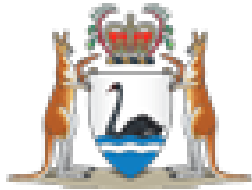
South West Counselling acknowledges we are on
Noongar Country and feel privileged to share this land with its
traditional custodians.

We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
culture and to their Elders; past, present and emerging.

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Our Partners & Supporters

South West Counselling thanks the agencies listed below for their support during this financial year. Without these partners we would be unable to provide the valuable services we do to the communities of the South West region.



**Government of Western Australia
Department of Communities**



Naturaliste Chapter of Red Cross

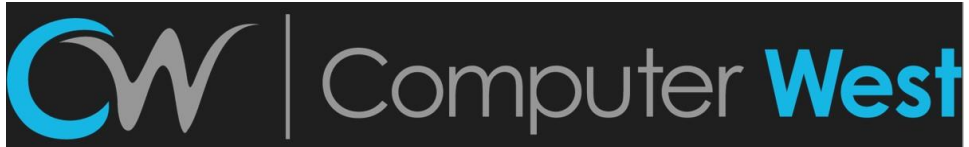


Margaret River Lions



Rotary Club of Busselton Geographe Bay

Our Partners & Supporters



Our New Patron 2023



Wilhelmena (Willi) Smith is South West Counselling's new Patron. Board Chair, Gloria Ross, posed some questions to Willi on accepting this position. Gloria writes: "Reading through Willi's written responses, I was struck by the fact that much of the organisation's ethos today is like its foundations 40 years-ago.

Willi, along with her husband George, began the Mobile Counselling Service on 29th May 1982. Their office, home and counselling service were based in a 3-tonne truck which was especially modified for the service which would take in much of West Australia. The original objectives were:

To provide counselling welfare and charitable facilities and services for the relief of suffering, distress and poverty, and to meet the needs of and provide help for individuals requiring

assistance in the community generally, and without restriction, particularly in remote areas by means of staff accommodated in mobile living facilities.

Willi and George saw their first task was to test out the need for counselling and group work in remote areas of W.A.

It was a new beginning for both Willi and George in every way, after they had always lived and worked in the Perth metropolitan area. They had committed themselves to helping people who suffered from stress, emotional pain and often loneliness.

After three years in the north-west and then five years in the south-west, having worked with thousands of men and women to help them change their problems into possibilities the vision was now a reality.

From May 1982 to May 1990 Willi and George worked in over 60 communities from Alice Springs to Wyndham! When you read George's book *Possibilities from Dream to Destination* it is amazing to realise how much ground they covered and in fact their new approach to offering a mobile service. The counselling was free, confidential and professional. I was particularly struck by the goals of the counselling service they offered (p.148 *Possibilities from Dreams to Destination-Serving the South West*). *Counselling:*

Enhances Relationships
Enriches Communication
Resolves Grief

Teaches Important Living Skills
Relieves Social & Emotional Stress
Introduces new resources

Diffuses Confusion
Provides Information

In a summary of her evaluation Jenny Monson in *Possibilities and Dreams* p.171 states:

The clients of Mobile Counselling described very clearly the impact of being listened to, cared about, and treated with optimism and honesty in a relationship which bore no judgement. These were triggers to their change and growth and they can be applied equally successfully to group work and community development approaches. It is extremely heartening to know that over 40 years on South West Counselling still provides all the above to its client group.

The on-going success of South West Counselling has grown from a vision that was begun 40 years ago to the present day with South West Counselling described by Willi as ***a dream come true!***

Willi is an amazing woman. When asked what she felt was her greatest achievement she said:
My greatest achievement in life is still a work in progress – to be a loving kind person, who is genuine, honest and humble.

Willi stresses that to work successfully as a counsellor it is important to be non-judgemental and to respect humanity. It is easy to judge. It is more difficult to understand. Understanding requires compassion, patience, and a willingness to believe that good hearts sometimes make poor choices or the methods by which to solve or approach an issue. Willi underpins the need to learn and practice skilled active listening; emphasising that by being judgmental we separate, by understanding we grow. It is uplifting to know that the counsellors and all the staff at South West Counselling are all these things.

Willi has accomplished much over her busy life, from working as a mobile counsellor to applying those skills to lone father's support services, establishing various counselling services and working with various support groups.

Talking to Willi and reading what she has written, many of the same issues and areas that affect the human condition – relationships, positive communication and loneliness in all age groups are still problematic today and are affecting our society, as they possibly always will. Social stresses today encompass the impact and prevalence of social media. This in turn can affect self-esteem and the unrealistic expectations placed on society for young women and men. Further, this affects relationships, home life, listening and communicating within all relationships within a family and society in general. The above stresses the need for organisations such as South West Counselling with its strong client focus and mandate to enhance the wellbeing of individuals, families and children in the South West. So, the work still goes on, albeit in a different form, but still with the care and transparency that will see it through to another generation of compassionate care and support for the people of the South-West.

Chairperson's Report

I am now celebrating my third year as Chair for SWCI. As I look back, I realise that this has been a somewhat calmer year than the previous two, due to Covid.

As a board we work hard to maintain a consistent level of support for our CEO Karen Sommerville and this in turn supports the excellent counselling and administration staff of the organisation. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our counselling staff and our excellent administration team – without your professionalism and willingness to go the “extra mile” SWCI would not run as smoothly and efficiently as it does.

The Board's role is essentially to take on that of an oversight role, to support our CEO in providing strategic policy and business direction, reviewing and monitoring risk, financial and operational performance, and accountability to relevant parties. Meetings are now held every two months as we unanimously felt we could deal with all business within that time frame. If necessary, Karen can call an emergency meeting. Karen and I continue to meet each month to ensure continuity.

During the year the Board has highlighted the importance of having robust and consistently high-quality internal practices, processes and outcomes. The board consists of Jennie Parrin, Arvind Pillay, the Hon Libby Mettam, Michael Brown, Jodie Richards, Elizabeth McGovern, Dr Tess Martin and myself, Gloria Ross, as Chair. With backgrounds in finance and accounting, insurance, family law, community service management, education, counselling, senior public service and politics, you can be assured that decisions made by the Board underpin a wealth of experience and interest in community support.

Unfortunately – for the Board, our previous treasurer Steve Carr has resigned, his expertise, eye for detail and genuine care and support for our client group and staff, along with a fine sense of humour and positivity, will be sorely missed. Steve and his wife Kay will now be traveling and generally enjoying a well-earned rest.

As we celebrate over forty years of supporting the community, we have many wonderful people to thank for the history of South West Counselling. Jenny Monson, for example, who was instrumental in the successful submission to Lotterywest that enabled us to use the Busselton premises in perpetuity. That caveat has since been removed and SWCI owns the premises. Thank you, Jenny!

The original founders of Mobile Counselling in WA, which was later to become South West Counselling Incorporated, set out in their caravan on May 29th, 1982, to offer support and counselling to townships across WA. This amazing couple were Willi and George Smith, and we are very proud to announce that 86-year-old Willi Smith has agreed to be our patron. As you can

imagine this vibrant and wonderful woman has some interesting insights and observations on the organisation. Please read the article on pages 3 - 4 to read some of those observations from Willi herself.

As we look towards new challenges, we also see new possibilities as an integral part of the community. Our Board is based on mutual trust and respect as is SWCI's approach to its client base. In the last year client feedback reported a 95% beneficial outcome. With the mutually beneficial support and encouragement of the staff, the CEO and the Board of South West Counselling Inc., I see no reason why this shouldn't continue.

***Gloria Ross
Board Chair***



Willi Smith (Patron) & Jenny Monson at South West Counselling's 40th Celebration



Chief Executive Officer's Report

Delivering counselling and support services in today's challenging environment has consistently demanded commitment and dedication to providing the best for our clients and colleagues. The past year has been no exception.

In 2022, South West Counselling celebrated an impressive 40 years of service to the Western Australian community, a testament to the organisation's enduring commitment to its local communities. During the 2022/2023 period, 794 individual clients sought our services, with 357 of them being new clients. Additionally, 162 children and young people under 18 engaged in some of the 1791 counselling sessions during this time.

Our work is grounded in a philosophy that aims to support those grappling with the escalating cost of living, affecting areas such as housing, healthcare, education, and basic necessities. Many families find themselves under financial strain, leading to chronic stress and a sense of helplessness. This crisis has strained couple relationships and is reflected in our client statistics. We've witnessed family separations, parent-child conflicts, domestic violence, depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and other mental health issues. Unfortunately, our waiting list remains consistently high, underscoring the strain we face due to being under-resourced to meet the demand, a challenge common to most community services. The burgeoning population in the South West region further compounds our service delivery challenges.

We firmly believe that collaboration among service providers is crucial to achieving optimal client outcomes. The benefits of these partnerships extend to clients, their families, and the broader community. We emphasise cooperation with other services to ensure a comprehensive approach in addressing the diverse needs of our clients.

The South West Counselling Board and staff engaged in a Strategic Planning Day in 2022, charting the course for the 2022-2023 year and including plans to introduce additional income-generating programs to enhance our service delivery. A subsequent Planning Day in February 2023 enabled the team to fine-tune the implementation of these programs, identifying specific professional development needs to equip the team with the necessary knowledge and skills. Throughout the year, staff participated in numerous workshops and training opportunities, as detailed in this report.

New programs implemented during the year include:

- Mental Health Care Plan Counselling through GP referral to SWCI Psychologist.
- Single Session Counselling.
- NDIS Self-Managed or Plan-Managed Counselling.

- Social Worker Advocacy.
- Clinical Supervision.
- Mother-Baby-Nurture Peer Support Group.
- Reestablished the Sexuality & Gender Acceptance (SAGA) Support Group.

Our new Social Worker Advocacy program has successfully separated advocacy work from therapeutic intervention, providing clients with enhanced support for their complex needs. Delivering advocacy within a counselling setting has empowered clients by amplifying their voices, rights, and access to crucial resources. This approach not only benefits individuals but also contributes to systemic change and fosters more inclusive and supportive environments.

South West Counselling's current Service Agreement with the Department of Communities concludes on 31st March 2024. The organisation recently underwent a Service Review and an external consultant engaged by the Department of Communities conducted a comprehensive review to determine the future of our current contract. Notification regarding the outcome of this evaluation is expected to be provided to the organisation by 31st December 2023. As in previous years, this uncertainty leaves the organisation in a precarious position regarding the future of our service.

Finally, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the entire staff at South West Counselling. Together, we form an incredible team! 😊 A special thank you to Bev, our Service Coordinator, and Shantell, our Clinical Coordinator, for your unwavering and unparalleled support. I would also like to acknowledge Gloria Ross and the other Board members for their support throughout the year. Thank you.

Karen Sommerville
CEO



Environmental Commitment



We are steadfast in acknowledging our obligation to the environment, extending beyond mere compliance with legal and regulatory mandates. Our enduring dedication lies in minimising our environmental footprint. To realise this commitment, we have an established Environmental Policy, a basis of our environmental responsibility. This policy undergoes an annual review.

The policy binds SWCI to:

- Adhere to applicable regulatory stipulations.
- Pursue ongoing enhancement and diligent monitoring of our environmental performance.
- Continually improve and diminish the organisation's environmental impact.
- Integrate environmental considerations into organisational decision-making.
- Heighten employee awareness.

Furthermore, SWCI endeavours to elevate environmental performance as an essential facet of our organisational strategy and operational approaches. We actively encourage our clients, suppliers, and other stakeholders to embrace similar goals. To ensure steadfast accountability, a dedicated team member is tasked with overseeing the implementation of the Environmental Policy.

SWCI has embraced a range of practices to reduce its environmental footprint, including:

- Printing service brochures, business cards, and appointment cards on recyclable paper.
- All light globes in the Busselton office are fitted with energy-efficient LED globes.
- Policy to turn off lights and electrical equipment when not in use.
- Thoughtful adjustment of heating and cooling systems with a focus on minimising energy consumption.
- Prioritising the procurement of environmentally friendly and efficient products whenever feasible.
- Embracing a culture of reusing and recycling wherever possible.
- Utilising environmentally friendly cleaning materials.
- Maintaining a compost bin for organic waste.
- Abandoning the use of plastic bags.
- Transitioning to entirely online client information management, eliminating the need for paper client files.
- Adopting a paperless approach for Board meetings, utilising electronic equipment exclusively.
- Utilising reusable coffee pods and recycling through designated Recycle boxes at the Busselton office.
- Prioritising local sourcing whenever practical.

Human Resources



We are governed by a committed and highly competent Board which places significant emphasis on good governance and sound financial practices.

<i>Chairperson</i>	Gloria Ross
<i>Deputy Chair</i>	Jennie Parrin
<i>Secretary</i>	Arvind Pillay
<i>Treasurer</i>	Steve Carr
<i>Member</i>	Libby Mettam
<i>Member</i>	Michael Brown
<i>Member</i>	Jodie Richards
<i>Member</i>	Tess Martin
<i>Member</i>	Elizabeth McGovern

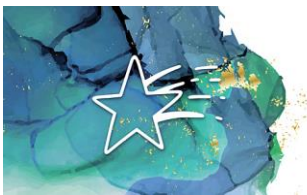
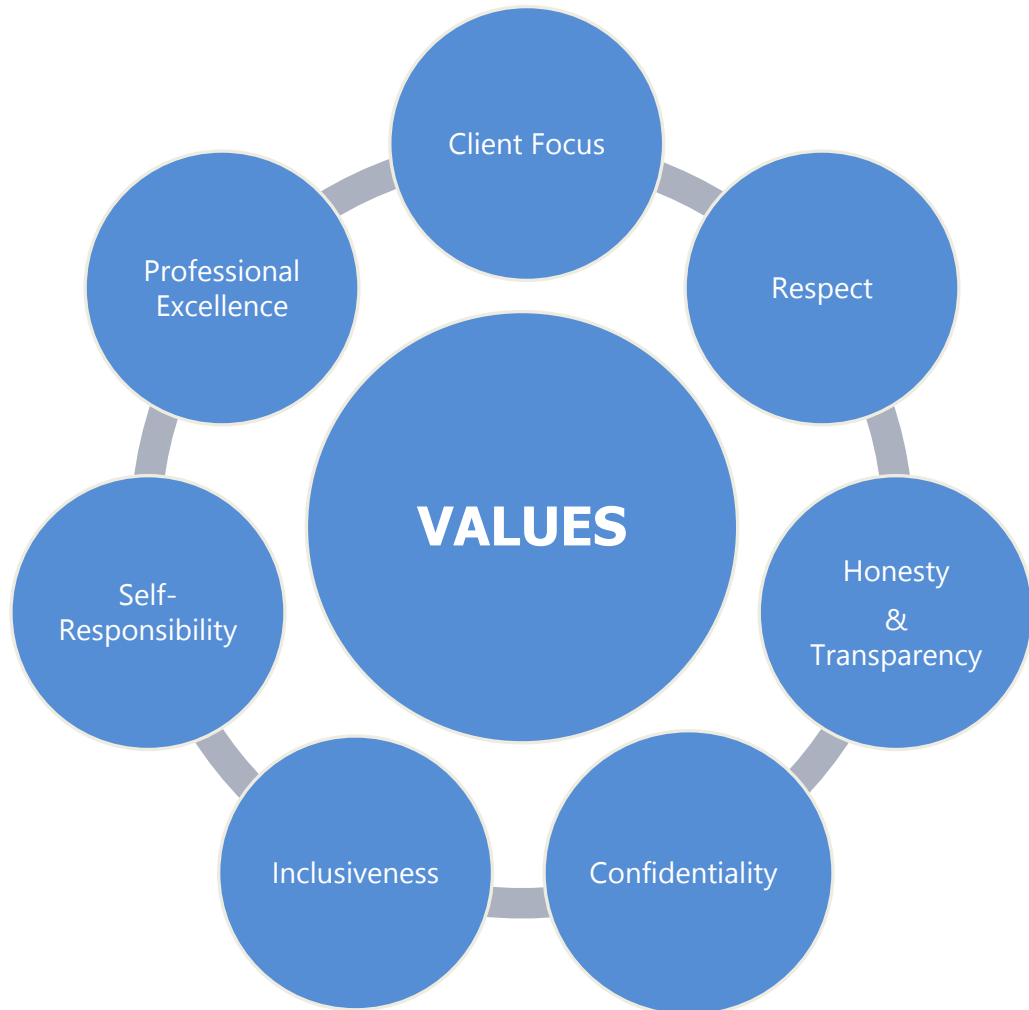


<i>Chief Executive</i>	Karen Sommerville
<i>Service Coordinator</i>	Bev Atkinson
<i>Clinical Coordinator</i>	Shantell McClenaughan
<i>Client Services</i>	Renae Denness Sharn Thompson
<i>Social Worker</i>	Grace Brennan
<i>Counsellors</i>	Renate Best Liz Thomson Jill Brighton Annie West Deb George Kate Mitchell Jess Schuller
<i>Students</i>	Kristy Foster Adaria Kusangaya
<i>Client Support</i>	Harry



Our Purpose

To enhance the wellbeing and safety of individuals, families, and children in the South West Region of Western Australia.



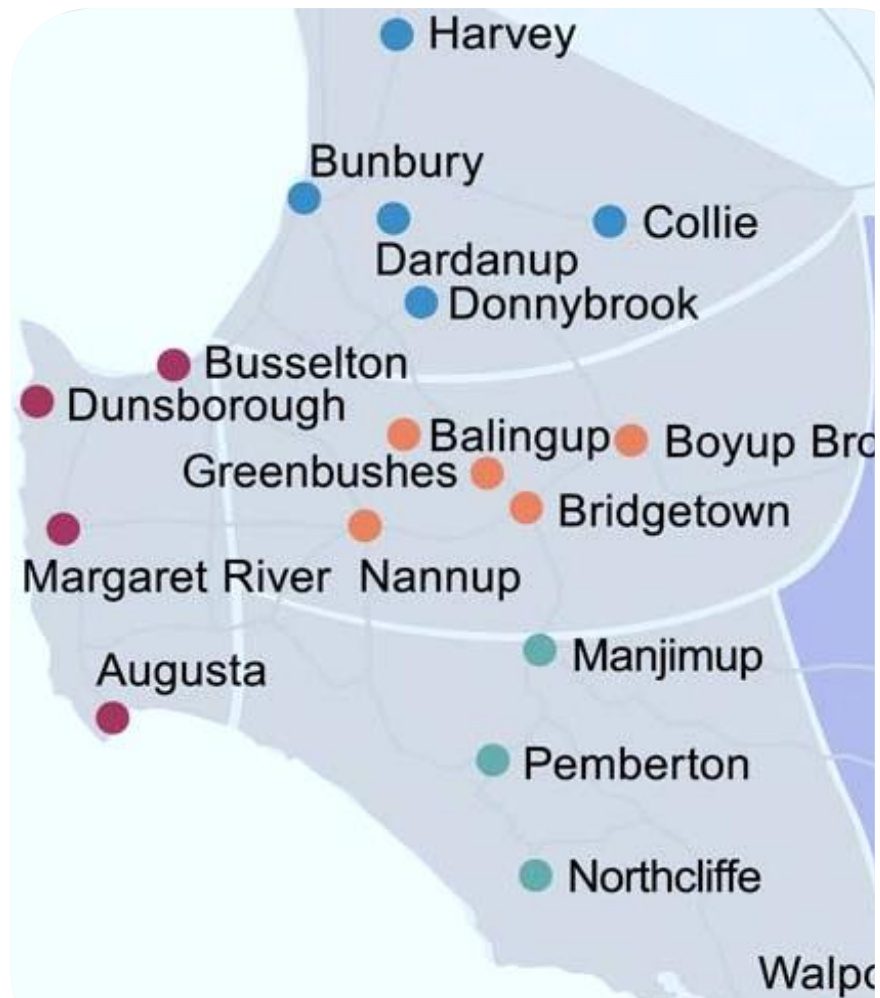
We're committed to being a child safe organisation



Service Area

South West Counselling continues to be an integral community service organisation in the South West. We have a reputation for excellence in service delivery and for providing quality, confidential, accessible, and affordable counselling, support and advocacy services to communities across this extensive region.

Offices are currently based in Busselton and Margaret River. Locations are reviewed periodically to ensure they continue to provide maximum benefit to local populations. All services are available by face-to-face, zoom or phone contact.





Service Provision



We continue to see clients from a wide geographical area across the South West. Counselling interventions, advocacy, group work, and other supports are provided to individuals, couples, and families, including specialised counselling for children and young people.

Client referrals come from a variety of sources including GPs, government departments, schools, community service agencies, workplaces, and self-referrals. It is estimated that at least 60% of clients access South West Counselling because of previous contact, or at the suggestion of a friend or colleague.

We believe there are several reasons clients return or refer others to us:

- Partnership – a client approach that is based on mutual trust & respect.
- Depth of knowledge of local regions.
- Appreciation of client needs.
- Subject matter expertise and experience.
- Affordable counselling.
- Regional & rural locations.
- Options of zoom, phone or face-to-face counselling contact.
- Social Worker support.

Continuing Programs:

- Department of Communities funded counselling.
- Employee Assistance Programs.
- Mother-Baby-Nuture Therapeutic Group.
- SWCI Counselling.

New Programs implemented this year:

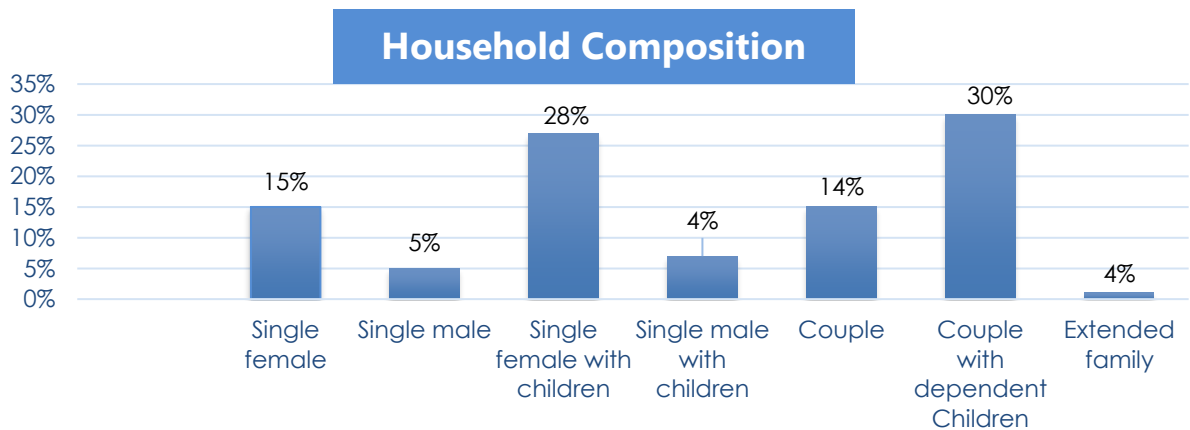
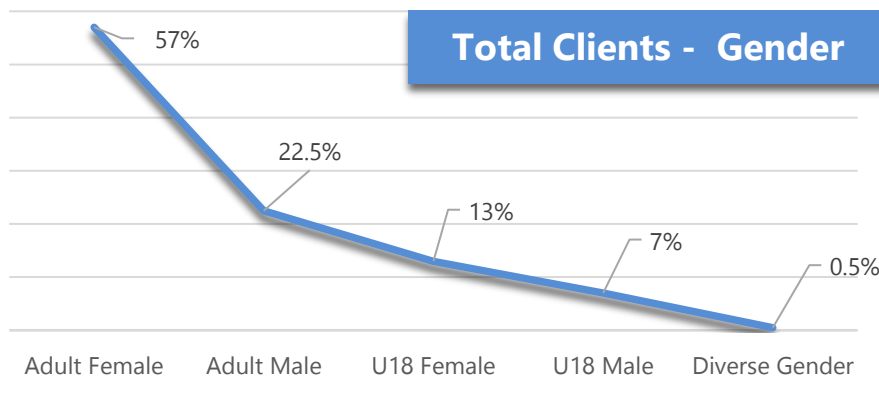
- Mental Health Care Plan Counselling through GP referral to SWCI Psychologist.
- Single Session Counselling.
- NDIS Self-Managed or Plan-Managed Counselling.
- Social Worker Advocacy.
- Clinical Supervision.
- Mother-Baby-Nurture Peer Support Group.
- Reestablished Sexuality & Gender Acceptance (SAGA) Support Group in partnership with Evolve Psychology.
- SWCI *Choir of Allsorts* (Karaoke).

Sometimes you just need someone to listen



Service Provision

1 July 2022 – 30 th June 2023	Clients
Total clients	794
New Clients	357
Total clients aged under 18 years	162
Total number of Counselling Sessions	1791
Clients presenting with Depression/Anxiety	325
Clients attending due to Family & Domestic Violence	129
Clients presenting due to Parent & Child relationships	224
Clients presenting for Couple relationship counselling	158
Clients presenting due to Family Separation	128

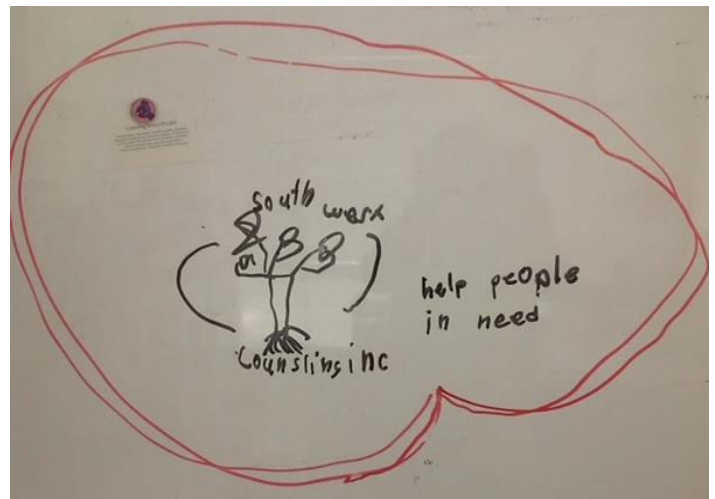
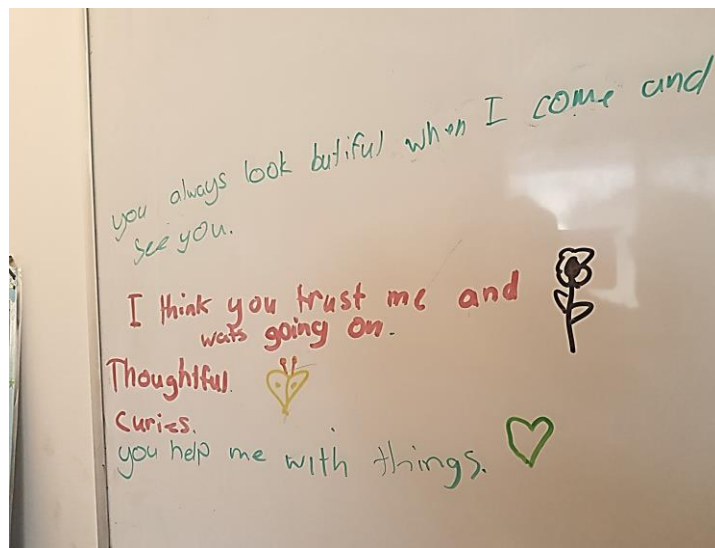


Client Feedback

95% of clients report beneficial outcomes from their counselling contact.



Children's Feedback



Service Activities

Networking & Agency Promotion

- Busselton Chamber of Commerce
- Department of Communities
- City of Busselton
- Capes Region White Ribbon Day event
- City of Busselton Youth Network
- Lotterywest Grant Information Clinic
- Thirrili – Indigenous suicide postvention service
- Raising the Vibe Festival
- SWAMS
- Waratah
- Tuart House
- Cyrenian House Nannup
- Legal Aid
- Jobs South West
- Accordwest
- Relationships Australia
- Richmond Wellbeing
- Headspace
- Safe Space Busselton
- Busselton Senior High School
- Roses in the Ocean
- Evolve Psychology
- Busselton Hospice
- Radiance Network South West
- Capes Region White Ribbon Day event
- South West Counselling Studio launch

- South West Counselling 40th birthday celebration

Regular Meeting Attendance

- Vasse Human Services Alliance
- Augusta Margaret River Community Health Network
- Mental Health Consortium
- Margaret River Community Network
- Mental Health Professionals Network
- Holistic Health Network
- Cape to Cape Network
- Capes Early Years Network
- Radiance South West Network
- Capes Region White Ribbon Committee

Presentations, Workshops and Groups

- Early Parent group talks in Margaret River, Dunsborough & Busselton
- Mother-Baby-Nurture Groups
- Family & Domestic Violence talk at Southern TAFE Bunbury
- Mother-Baby-Nurture Peer Support Group
- Sexuality & Gender Awareness (SAGA) Group
- Talk at St Mary's Busselton on family & domestic violence.
- *Choir of All Sorts* Pub Choir (Karaoke)

Quality Control

Maintaining Best Practice

To ensure best practice in service delivery and good governance Board members and staff participate in regular meetings.

- Board meetings (Board & CEO)
- Finance Committee meetings
- Team meetings
- Clinical meetings
- Clinical presentations
- Case management meetings
- Meetings with the Clinical Coordinator
- Clinical Supervision with external provider
- Clinical Discussions
- Annual Team Planning Day
- Annual Strategic Planning (Board & staff)

South West Counselling Child & Adolescent Counsellors at Working with Children Training Day.



Professional Development

Ensuring quality, accessible and professional counselling remains a primary focus of the organisation. To assist in this aim staff participated in the following professional development.

- Session with Department of Communities Senior Practice Development Officer
- Australian Counselling Association Chapter meetings
- APS Practice Certificate in Disaster Support (Psychological Strategies)
- APS Practice Certificate in Disaster Support (Ethical & Professional issues)
- Trauma Informed yoga for clinical professionals
- CBT-E
- Single Sessions Thinking
- Advanced Acceptance Commitment Therapy Concepts
- ODBS training Penelope Database
- Awareness on Instagram
- Couples Counselling – Gestalt Practice Forgiveness in Couple Therapy
- Working with children who are experiencing or engaging in bullying behaviour
- Gestalt Therapy
- Accidental Counselling for Volunteers
- Homeless Clients – Compassionate solutions for problematic behaviour
- DV Alert
- Suicide Training
- Introductory EMDR
- Young People and Consent
- Critical Incident Group Debriefing
- *Walk in their Shoes* tour at Family Court
- Technology abuse workshop
- Helping relationships: creating measurable outcomes for counselling
- When it is darkest: understanding suicide risk
- Intimate partner violence – Solution focused trauma care
- Pulmonary Resuscitation
- Provide Basic Emergency Life Support
- Provide First Aid
- The Lighthouse Project
- Virtual Asian Mental Health symposium
- Introduction to the WA Community Impact Hub
- Using the Community Insight Australia tool
- Radiance Network Symposium
- Communities in Control Conference

40th Anniversary Celebration

South West Counselling celebrated its 40th Anniversary during 2022 and commemorated this milestone by holding an event on the 25th November.

The afternoon was attended by many past staff and board members, along with representatives from various local government and non-government South West organisations. We were also honoured to host one of the original founders of South West Counselling, Wilhelmena Smith. Willi gave a speech on the day, talking about the original intent for commencing the *Mobile Counselling* service. She also shared several stories of her time on the road. Hearing from Willi was a privilege for everyone in attendance. Following this celebration, as previously noted in this Report, Willi agreed to become our Patron.



Opening of New Studio

During December 2022 we hosted the Naturaliste Chapter of Red Cross at our new Studio opening. The fundraising efforts of this Red Cross chapter provided a sizable donation to South West Counselling to enable the renovation of this space at our Busselton premises, to be completed. The studio is well utilised, and provides a purposeful space for groups, workshops, art therapy and other creative therapies utilised by counsellors at the service. We are extremely grateful to the members of the Naturalist Chapter of Red Cross for their generosity.



Choir of 'All Sorts'

(Crowd Karaoke)

Earlier this year South West Counselling initiated a Busselton pub choir as a creative response to supporting people in our local community dealing with mental health concerns and the lengthy wait for support services. This decision was based on research which promotes the power of music as a therapeutic tool.

Since the choir's inception we have witnessed its transformative impact on many of the individuals who have attended. The Choir is inclusive and aims to provide a safe and supportive space for anyone who attends, over the age of 18, to come together and experience the company of others and to have some fun. With proven positive outcomes we are committed to continue to offer this monthly event to the community, at no cost to participants, to ensure it is totally accessible to everyone.

We sincerely thank our sponsors of this event; Esplanade Hotel; Computer West and Sound Pro. We also acknowledge our choir leaders Louise Bell and Sara Storm.



To maintain attendees' confidentiality this is an artistic sketch of a choir photo

..... and more



**Karen & Bev catching up with
Christabel Chamaret**



**A cute family photo of duck
and ducklings at the front of Busselton Office**



Birthday girls in May Renae & Karen



Some of the team taking a walk after lunch

..... and Finally



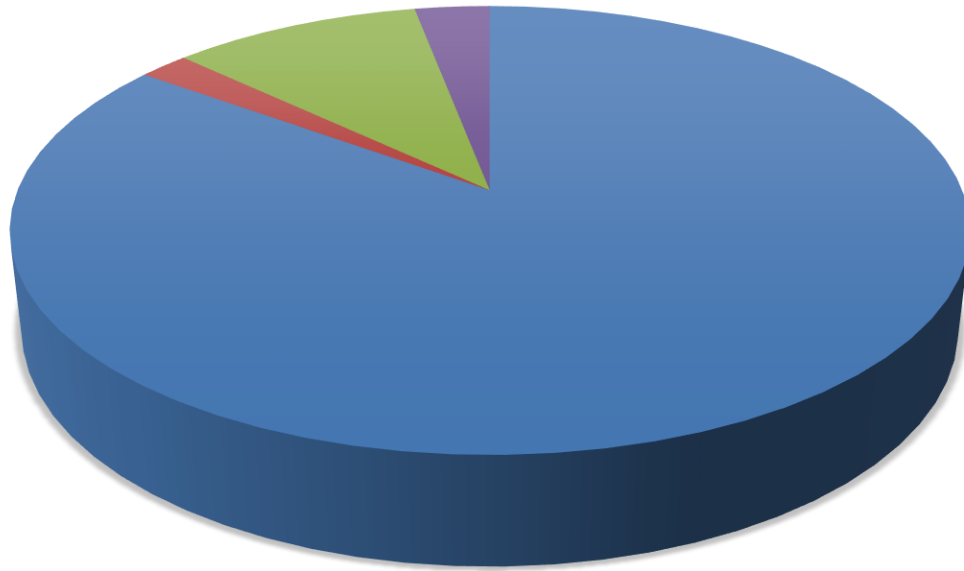
Our Social Worker, Grace, who went on maternity leave in August 2022.

Grace with Georjie, born 16th September 2022.

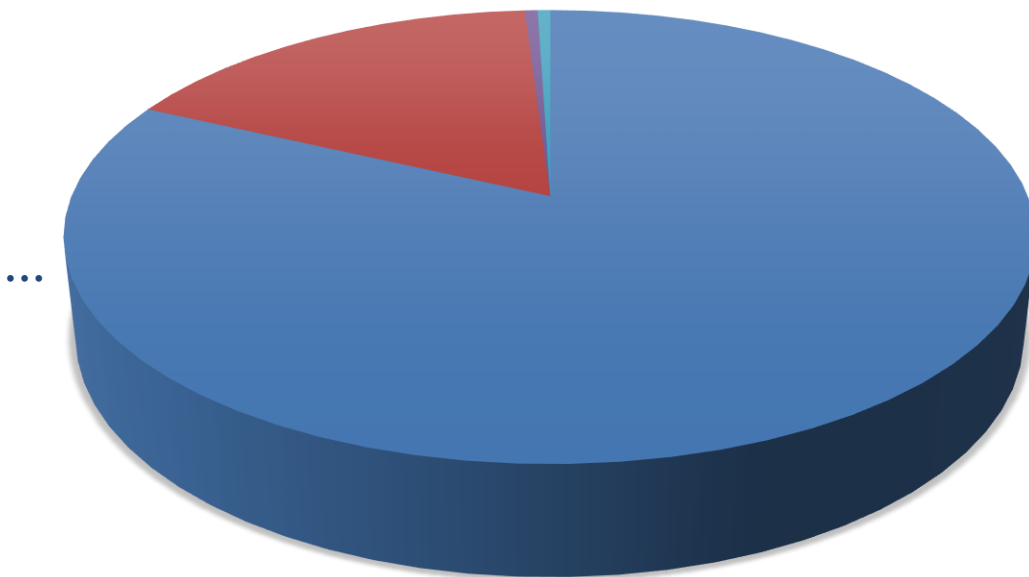




Income for 2022-2023



■ Government Funds ■ Grant Income ■ Counselling Fees ■ Other Income



■ Employee Expenses ■ Operating Expenses ■ Grant Expenses

Refer to the ACNC website for the full reviewed financial report.
<https://www.acnc.gov.au/charity>

