

9 December 2021

The Hon Josh Frydenberg MP
Treasurer

The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health and Aged Care

Dear Treasurer and Minister Hunt,

Blue Knot Foundation – Federal 2022–23 Budget Submission

I am writing to present a proposal on behalf of Blue Knot Foundation for additional support to sustain the capacity of Blue Knot's phone and online service to meet the ongoing increased demand for this service.

The Commonwealth Department of Health has funded Blue Knot Foundation to deliver a trauma specialist Helpline service for adult survivors of complex childhood trauma and their supporters since January 2013 as part of the National Leadership in Mental Health program. The Blue Knot Helpline fills a critical gap in the mental health service system and demand has never been greater.

Demand for our trauma specialist Helpline service has increased significantly for a range of reasons:

- Increased acceptance of telehealth services – a cost effective and efficient way of delivering services nationally
- greater awareness of trauma and its impacts related to a range of Royal Commissions, inquiries and elevation of issues of abuse, violence to public consciousness
- increased and protracted mental health burden related to the COVID-19 pandemic on whole population

patron

Thomas Keneally AO

president

Dr Cathy Kezelman AM

ambassadors

Damien Rider
Rida Aleem Khan
Jane Caro
Rose Parker
Christine Foster
Detective Chief Inspector Peter Fox

**Blue Knot Helpline and
Redress Support Service**
1300 657 380

**National Counselling and
Referral Service – Disability**
1800 421 468

contact

T 02 8920 3611
E admin@blueknot.org.au
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P PO Box 597
Milsons Point NSW 1565
ABN 49 072 260 005

- cumulative harm of the additional trauma of isolation and threat of COVID-19 on people with lived experience of childhood trauma
- greater service visibility with growing brand recognition, trust and credibility

Increased core funding for 2021-22 of \$1.389 million ex-GST was received in December 2021, from the May budget that year, and is a welcome response to the steadily growing demand for our service over several years. This will help us respond to the abandoned calls we received which continued to rise from 16,811 in 2020-2021 FY to 17,172 2021-2022 FY.

The additional COVID-19 funding of \$998,000 also received in December 2021 for the 2021-22 financial year is helping support the additional demand on Blue Knot's Helpline service as a result of the pandemic and its mental health impacts.

Funding request

Blue Knot requests an extension of the additional support related to the increased demand of the COVID-19 pandemic for the 2022-23 year. As such we are requesting funding \$1,050 million ex-GST in addition to our core funding. The increase requested as compared to 2021-22 is in recognition of Award and CPI increases.

The additional 2020-2021 funding to support the increased demand related to COVID-19 enabled Blue Knot to more than double its occasions of service from 10,158 (2019-20) to 22,500 (2020-21). In the 2021 calendar year, in the first 6 months 213 callers mentioned COVID but this increased to 921 in the subsequent 5 months, a 530% increase. Similarly Blue Knot's reach increased with a 65% increase in calls from rural and remote clients, and a 268% increase in First Nations callers.

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We are also requesting a modest 5% increase in core funding from \$1.389 million to \$1.458 million ex-GST in recognition of Award, CPI and additional costs.

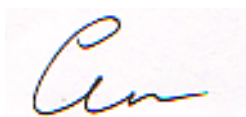
Blue Knot meets an unmet need

Blue Knot is a national leader in trauma-informed practice and has the knowledge, skills and expertise to meet the need of people with the lived experience of complex childhood trauma. Feedback from callers consistently affirms the critical role we play – a specialist trauma-informed service in which callers feel heard, understood and safe and supported on their recovery journey.

Many callers report being retraumatised and their mental health deteriorating after calling other Helplines and/or seeking support from other services and practitioners. This occurs due to a lack of specialist understanding around the particular sensitivities and vulnerabilities of complex childhood trauma survivors. Many callers affirm that Blue Knot has kept them alive and provided them with vital tools for healing, enhanced wellbeing and reduced mental distress. Thank you for your ongoing support in enabling us to deliver this service to those in need.

I would be pleased to provide additional information through discussion with your office and/or department; please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards



Dr. Cathy Kezelman AM, President Blue Knot Foundation

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Mental Health Grants: Projected Budget	
Organisation: Blue Knot Foundation	
Activity: e-mental health support for childhood abuse survivors Activity ID: 4-G08S68A	
<i>FY 2022 to 2023 Budget</i>	
Budget Items	Amounts Approval Date
Budgetd Income (GST exclusive)	
Department of Health Grant Funding	1,458,520
Total Income	1,458,520
Budgeted Expenses (GST exclusive)	
People	
Sub-total People	1,133,481
Administration	
Sub-total Administration	209,170
Other (please list other items)	
IT/Telephony/Hardware	115,870
Sub-total Other	115,870
Total Expenses	1,458,520
Surplus / Deficit (Total Income minus Total Expenses)	0

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Mental Health Grants: Projected Budget	
Organisation: Blue Knot Foundation	
Activity: National Leadership in Mental Health Activity ID: 4-EAVLOGS	
<i>FY 2022 to 2023 Budget</i>	
Budget Items	Amounts Approval Date
Budgeted Income (GST exclusive)	
Department of Health Grant Funding	1,050,000
Total Income	1,050,000
Budgeted Expenses (GST exclusive)	
People	
Sub-total People	786,050
Administration	
Sub-total Administration	181,000
Other (please list other items)	
IT/Telephony/Hardware	82,950
Sub-total Other	82,950
Total Expenses	1,050,000
Surplus / Deficit (Total Income minus Total Expenses)	0

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