

# ANNUAL REPORT

2022/23



**PINK BELT**  
PROJECT



# 1. ABOUT US

---

## OUR MISSION

Empower women on a recovery journey by connecting them with martial arts for healing, health, wellbeing and growth.

## OUR VISION

Pink Belt Project is a peak body for women involved in martial arts and an authority on martial arts for violence prevention and recovery.

## OUR VALUES

**Never give up!** No matter the challenge, we will never give up.

**Treat everyone as equals.** We believe in and demonstrate equality for all.

**Uncompromising integrity.** We will never compromise our integrity.

## OUR HISTORY

Pink Belt Project was started in 2018 by West Australian Black Belt mum Kristy Hitchens who was inspired by the journey of a friend impacted by domestic violence. Pink Belt Project became an Incorporated Association in early 2021 and a Board of Management was appointed soon after.

## 2. CONTENTS

---

1. Cover
2. About Us
3. Picture
- 4-6. An Overview
7. Our People
8. Our Supporters
9. Governance
- 10-11. Chairperson's Report
- 12-15. Strategic Plan
16. Planned Projects & Activities
17. Our Finances
18. Contacts
- 19-20. Appendixes



# AN OVERVIEW OF PINK BELT PROJECT

---

## ABOUT US

Pink Belt Project empowers women on a recovery journey by connecting them with martial arts for healing, health, wellbeing and growth. This is largely achieved by providing 12-month Pink Belt Scholarships at approved Supporter Clubs to selected applicants in every State and Territory of Australia, removing the financial barrier to women accessing the training at their nearest, local club.

Pink Belt Project enhances the capacity of the martial arts community to address drivers of violence against women.

Our work is based on an extensive body of international sociological research and evidence demonstrating a unique capacity in the way martial arts is traditionally practiced for challenging traditional gender stereotypes and de-emphasising gender difference while also having an empowering, transformative and in some cases, healing effect on women. Martial arts offers powerful (but under-recognised and under-utilised) potential for providing a grassroots, community-strengthening, cross-setting, sports-based approach to combatting societal beliefs around rigid gender stereotypes, recognised as a key driver of violence against women.

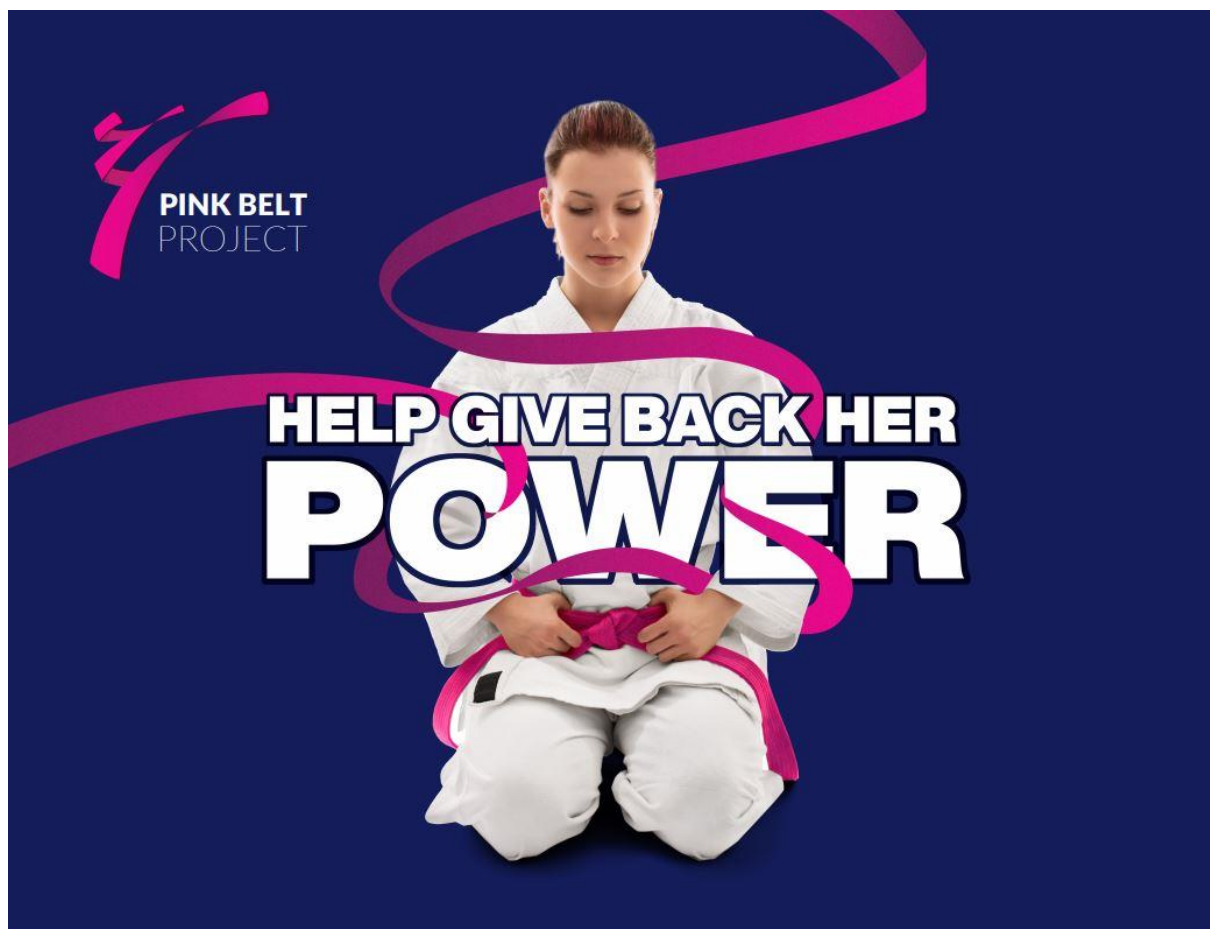
Pink Belt Supporter Clubs located in every State and Territory of Australia agree to sponsor a Scholarship Recipient at their club by covering all expenses associated with a year of training for a selected applicant. More than 100 Pink Belt Scholarships have been awarded across Australia since January, 2019 and we have had the privilege of seeing many victim-survivors take back their power and turn their lives around through their association with the project.

One of our previous Scholarship Recipients is now running her own Empowerment Taekwondo classes; will take up an instructor position at her club next year AND is undertaking guest speaking appearances to share her journey and inspire others. A second

is set to undertake her Taekwondo Black Belt grading in November and next year, plans to start running her own classes.

A significant aspect of the PBP's work also involves raising awareness about the evidence-based potential for martial arts to create social change in the primary prevention of FDV.

Martial arts at times battle out-dated stereotypes about its training environments inviting and promoting hyper-masculinity – being a driver of violence rather than a preventer of it. In addition to its ongoing Communications Strategy to alter this perception involving blogs, newsletters, media relations, podcast interviews etc, Pink Belt Project conducts research to provide a scientific foundation for its work.



### 3. OUR PEOPLE

---

#### AMBASSADORS

Dr Lauren Burns – Australian Olympic Taekwondo Gold Medallist

Carmen Marton – Taekwondo World Champion and 3 x Olympian

Kate McAdam – 2018 Commonwealth Champion

#### BOARD OF MANAGEMENT MEMBERS to 28 May, 2023

Name	Position	Dates acted
Kristy Hitchens	Founder & Chairperson	From 2/10/22
Nadine O'Regan	Deputy Chairperson	From 2/10/22
Megan Keefe	Treasurer	From 2/10/22
Courtney Wellington	Secretary	From 2/10/22
Aaron Kearney OAM	Board Member	From 2/10/22
Megan Mulia	Board Member	From 2/10/22

#### BOARD OF MANAGEMENT MEMBERS to 28 May, 2023 – 30 June, 2023

Name	Position	Dates acted
Kristy Hitchens	Founder & Chairperson	From 2/10/22
Nadine O'Regan	Deputy Chairperson	From 2/10/22
Megan Keefe	Treasurer	From 2/10/22
Kerryn Ferris	Secretary	From 28/05/23
Aaron Kearney OAM	Board Member	From 2/10/22
Megan Mulia	Board Member	From 2/10/22
Lisa-Marie Stapleton	Board Member	From 28/05/2023

## 4. SUPPORTERS

---

# WRAYS

Major Sponsor – Wrays Attorneys.





## 5. GOVERNANCE

---

### STRUCTURE & MANAGEMENT

**Pink Belt Project is:**

- Incorporated Association in WA
- Registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC)



## 6. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

---

The 2022/23 reporting period has provided a real insight into the potential of this organisation to create change. To shine a light on the untapped and under-recognised power of martial arts for both recovery from violence and primary prevention of violence against women.



With a professionally-created and iconic new brand in place along with a highly-qualified Board of Management hitting its stride and a growing record of proof that our Pink Belt Scholarships were not only creating change in communities but changing lives, we have felt match ready.

Our network of Pink Belt Supporter Clubs continues to grow every year and we are very proud to now be able to say that we have them in every State and Territory of Australia along with an increasing number of overseas locations in Canada, USA and the UK. Here is a snapshot of our impact since the first intake in 2019.

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	TOTAL
<b>Scholarships Offered or # Supporter Clubs</b>	16	27	36	37	48	<b>243</b>
<b>Scholarships Awarded</b>	11	20	36	19	23	<b>109</b>
<b>Scholarships Completed</b>	5	6	10	3	10	<b>34</b>

These figures tell us two things:

- 66% of scholarships offered are filled
- 31% of scholarships awarded are completed.

Both of these outcomes are expected. Success to Pink Belt Project is not measured by the number of women who take on a Pink Belt Scholarship. We measure our success by the size of the network of Pink Belt Supporter Clubs we have. A growing army of martial arts clubs who uphold the values and standards of the Pink Belt Project brand by providing a trauma-informed approach to their work plus a safe and welcoming training environment for all. We will continue working to grow that network so that no matter where a woman is located, when she seeks support from us, we will have a Pink Belt Supporter Club close by to step in.

Additionally, the women we seek to assist are often carrying trauma which results in a range of complex health and wellbeing issues that most of us would find hard to imagine. Their strength in even considering taking on something potentially so far outside their comfort zone as martial arts training is nothing less than inspiring. While as an organisation we continue to expand the range of wrap-around supports provided to our Scholarship Recipients to help them persevere with their training, we do expect a high proportion to discontinue. Not completing their scholarship does not mean they have not benefitted from the experience. For those who are able to turn their training into a long term habit, we have been privileged to witness some profound transformative outcomes.

Once again, I would like to offer heartfelt gratitude to my Board of Management who have provided immense support to me both personally and for Pink Belt Project. Thank you to the supporters and the believers in this cause who have contributed in a countless number of ways to its continued growth and success.

**Kristy Hitchens**

**CHAIRPERSON**

## 7. STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-26

---

### PROGRESS TOWARD GOALS OUTLINED IN STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-26

#### **Goal 1: Extend the reach and strengthen the impact of Pink Belt Project**

*Strengthen and consolidate the project to meet the needs and aspirations of the priority population and extend to reach diverse and evolving communities.*

DATE	DESCRIPTION
July, 2022	Annual 3-month Fundraising & Club Recruitment Campaign for 2023 Scholarships launched with new brand unveil.  T-shirt fundraiser launched with \$10 from every sale through Chatty Tees donated to Pink Belt Project.  New Pink Belt Project uniform patches ordered and distributed to Supporter Clubs.  Pink Belt Supporter Club appointed in Canada.
Aug, 2022	Pink Belt Project Monthly E-newsletter launched.
Sep, 2022	Marketing toolkit distributed to Pink Belt Supporter Clubs.  Custom design Medusa rashie with Pink Belt logo launched by BJJ apparel company Helax with percentage of sales directed to Pink Belt.  Media Coverage by The Advocate newspaper in Tasmania.

Oct, 2022	<p>Applications for 2023 Pink Belt Scholarships opened.</p> <p>Media Coverage by online publication Her Canberra.</p> <p>Media coverage of Pink Belt Project by ABC in Tasmania.</p>
Nov, 2022	<p>Media Coverage by Leicester Mercury newspaper in England and BBC Radio.</p> <p>Pull-up banner produced and displayed at Pan Pacific Games in Queensland</p>
Dec, 2022	<p>Second AGM. All Board Members re-appointed.</p> <p>Pull-up banner displayed at Australian Taekwondo Nationals in Sydney.</p> <p>A4 booklet produced to support advocacy work.</p> <p>Instructor and Scholarship Recipient Handbooks updated.</p>
Feb, 2023	<p>Revolution Coaching by Keslie online workshop for Scholarship Recipients. Feedback Appendix #1</p>
April/May, 2023	<p>New Pink Belt Project logo becomes Registered Trademark with pro-bono assistance from Wrays Attorneys.</p>
May, 2023	<p>Introduce new mentor/buddy scheme. Previous successful Pink Belt Scholarship recipient matched with a current one to provide additional support.</p> <p>Pull-up banner on display at Queensland Taekwondo state championships.</p>

**Goal 2: Foster mutually beneficial relationships to enhance the capacity of martial arts clubs to empower women in need.**

*Increase engagement and connection with martial arts clubs, governing/peak bodies and community organisations to extend the project reach and impact.*

DATE	DESCRIPTION
July, 2022	Commence discussions with White Ribbon Australia which expressed interest in funding creation of online Pink Belt Project Training & Accreditation Course on trauma-informed martial arts as a primary prevention of violence initiative. Discussions progressed but the project was eventually halted due to advice from Department of Social Services suggesting the project did not meet with the 'primary prevention' criteria of the funding. While this point was argued with presentation of supporting evidence and research, the project did not progress.
Aug, 2022	Tronox Grant Application.
Oct, 2022	Aurizon Grant Application. Synergy Grant Application. Kleanheat Grant Application. Online auction of 5 x pairs of donated hot pink Athletikan sneakers.
Sep, 2022	Department of Community Services Primary Prevention of Family Violence Grant Application.
Nov, 2022	Colonial Foundation Grant Application. Letter sent to Tasmanian Premier's Office.
Jan, 2023	Founder & Chair Kristy Hitchens travels to Sydney and Canberra to connect with Supporter Clubs in each location.
Feb, 2023	Trauma-informed Martial Arts expert Georgia Verry engaged to run an online Instructor Workshop for Supporter Club instructors. 22 instructors attended and several more have watched recording. Liptember Grant Application.

	<p>Purple Hands Foundation Application.</p> <p>Letter sent to office of Australian Federal Minister for Sport Anika Wells.</p>
Mar, 2023	Department of Communities Women's Grants Application.
April, 2023	Online meeting with British Taekwondo to discuss possibility of promoting Pink Belt Project to members.
May, 2023	Appoint voluntary Engagement Officer to follow up with international organisations who have previously expressed interest.
June, 2023	<p>Meeting held with Australian Federal Minister for Sport's advisor.</p> <p>Proposal for funding of project coordinator presented but was not progressed.</p>

**Goal 3: Provide leadership in evidence-based promotion of martial arts as a tool for recovery from violence and violence prevention.**

*Conduct research and build awareness about the benefits of martial arts for women, particularly survivors of violence.*

DATE	DESCRIPTION
Aug, 2022	Ethics approval provided by University of WA for Qualitative Research Study examining outcomes of Pink Belt Scholarships. Research to be undertaken by Rural Clinical School of WA third year medical students with support from qualified research team and Pink Belt Project.
Sep, 2022	Interviews of successful scholarship recipients by research team commenced.  The Salience Podcast interview.  Bunbury Mail newspaper coverage of research project.
Nov, 2022	Complete Primary Prevention of Violence against women workshop.
March, 2023	Guest speaking engagement WA Women's Country Week Cricket.  Various, Tasmania guest speaking engagements by Board Member Lisa-Marie Stapleton.



## 8. PLANNED PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

---

### PLANNED PROJECTS/ACTIVITIES:

- Undertake growth strategy including secure funding for paid coordinator. (*Grant funding dependent*)
- Form Fundraising Group. (*Completed however not yet active*)
- Develop Fundraising Strategy including identification of Philanthropic funding sources.
- Create and deliver online 'Fight for Change' course for martial arts instructors on trauma-sensitive martial arts. (*Grant funding dependent*)
- Create and deliver video introductory video series to support Scholarship Recipients. (*Grant funding dependent*)
- Publish a book of collected stories written by Scholarship Recipients.

## 9. OUR FINANCES

---

### TREASURER'S REPORT

PINK BELT PROJECT INC		
PROFIT & LOSS		
YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023		
<b>Income</b>		
Fundraising Income		\$ 5,979.08
Containers for Change Donations		\$ 171.00
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>\$ 6,150.08</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Trademark Fees		\$ 1,980.00
Online Workshops		\$ 1,665.00
Postage		\$ 39.70
Marketing & Communication		\$ 1,653.72
Patches & Pink Belts		\$ 1,060.40
Other Expenses		\$ 269.72
Brand Development		\$ 935.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>\$ 7,603.54</b>
<b>Profit/(Loss)</b>		<b>(\$1,453.46)</b>
<b>Cash at Bank</b>		<b>\$ 2,214.12</b>

## 10. CONTACTS

---

**WEBSITE:** [www.pinkbelt.com.au](http://www.pinkbelt.com.au)

**EMAIL:** [KRISTY@PINKBELT.COM.AU](mailto:KRISTY@PINKBELT.COM.AU)

**FACEBOOK:** [@pinkbeltproject](https://www.facebook.com/pinkbeltproject)

**INSTAGRAM:** [pinkbeltproject1](https://www.instagram.com/pinkbeltproject1)

## 11. APPENDIXES

---

### **APPENDIX #1: Pink Belt Project Scholarship Recipient Workshop Feedback**

"I really loved today and can't wait to do more sessions it's so empowering. You are such a genuine kind soul that I am happy I will get to know throughout the year."

"It was great to see you today and listen to Kelsie's great mindset advice. I will take some time to digest the contents of the handbook this weekend. Thanks again for the opportunity. I am very grateful for it and the great work done through the Pink Belt project. I will try my best to make the most of this opportunity to kick some goals. I am also keen to learn learnings so I can help others too in their healing journeys."

"I am so grateful for the Pink Belt Project and everything you're doing. Because I have tried every single thing to better myself. I've tried psychiatrists, medication, psychology, group counselling, domestic violence courses and nothing has helped me as much as this. And I'm so thankful."