

## **Why I train at Phoenix**

-Melissa Perry-

Why I joined Phoenix and why I still train at Phoenix are two very different reasons.

Back in March 2010 a close friend dragged me along to a beginner Muay Thai class at Phoenix. I was quite overweight and, although I had managed to lose some weight training at a traditional gym, I was bored and feeling very unmotivated.

Having dabbled with Karate in my younger years I thought that my experience would mean that I would be prepared for what was to come – I couldn't have been more wrong.

Every single class took me out of my comfort zone and I quickly became hooked training up to 6 days per week. Lead and inspired by the knowledgeable coaches, my motivation quickly returned as I learned to push beyond limitations that I had placed on myself.

In my time with Phoenix I have lost 15kg and am the fittest/ healthiest that I have ever been. I have also had the privilege of representing Phoenix in more than 10 fights. One of the highlights of my fighting career was representing Australia and receiving a bronze medal at the Muay Thai Amateur World Championships in Malaysia in 2014. These are accomplishments that, as someone who has been overweight and unfit for most of their life, I could never have imagined. And they would not have been possible without the amazing coaches at Phoenix.

Now I won't lie to you, the journey from that first class to stepping into the ring for my first fight was a long and extremely challenging one. I didn't always have fun and it certainly wasn't easy, but I was never alone. The coaches and like-minded, hardworking students train along side you and, through the blood, sweat and tears that you shed together, you develop a bond and become family. This is what separates Phoenix from all others and is the primary reason why I still train at Phoenix.

Today, 6 years on, I'm still a proud member of the Phoenix family. My priorities have changed and, due to a recent surgery, I can't train the way that I used to, but this doesn't matter at Phoenix. I'm still greatly valued as a member and, with the support and encouragement of Anthony and the coaches at Phoenix, I have now been presented with my next challenge – learning to coach. Being able to direct my energy, knowledge and experience towards being developed as a Phoenix coach has been extremely rewarding so far and I look forward to inspiring the next generation of Phoenix members the same way that I was inspired by my coaches all those years ago.

- Mel Perry, 29 February 2016