

Annual Report 2018-19

# IMAGINE... A WORLD FREE OF VIOLENCE AND ABUSE.

At Rosebank, we create a safe and non-judgemental space – no pressure and no expectation. We invite children and young people to shape, for themselves, the way they are supported in their healing process.

Rosebank offers counselling, advocacy and support and works closely with other services that support the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We work with schools, services such as Headspace, Reconnect Service, Bonnie Support Services, Liverpool Women's Health Centre and other Sexual Assault Services. We actively work to raise awareness about child sexual abuse and the vision of a community free of violence.

## Chairperson's Report



As a counsellor with South Western Sydney Sexual Assault Service, I have been interested in the great therapeutic work of Rosebank Child Sexual Abuse Service for many years. I first joined the Management Committee in 2012 and became treasurer in 2018. I became Chairperson of the Management Committee after the last AGM. As member and now Chairperson I have come to appreciate the high professional standards of this service and its administration.

We've had a busy and complicated year with a number of FACS service and funding reforms, moves out of the cottage and back to the cottage and management changes.

But here we are, still standing and yes, even thriving!

I have had much pleasure in working with Service Coordinator Helen Spark up until the end of May this year and wish her a rewarding change. I am very pleased to work with a familiar (to Rosebank) face in Amanda Cranfield as the new Coordinator. Between them and with all other team members (Heike, Melissa, Nicole and Ruth) these changes have been negotiated with commitment to the service and a calm professional approach.

'Rosebank' shows us all how much difference a small group of dedicated people can make to the lives of others. Many thanks to them and to all members of the Management Committee.

**Alison Huggan**

Chairperson

(Sexual Assault Counsellor, South West Sydney Local Health District Sexual Assault Service)

# Our Management Committee



**Debbie Nguyen**

Role: Secretary  
(Early Childhood Teacher,  
Supported Playgroups  
Program, Fairfield City Council)

I first found out about  
Rosebank when a counsellor  
from the service came to give

the families at our Supported Playgroup an outline of the service in about 2007. Since then different counsellors from the service have continued to come to our groups and inform our families about Rosebank and advise parents about protective behaviours for children. I was asked to be on the committee in 2017 and was happy to assist such a professional service.



**Debra Venables**

Role: Treasurer  
(Manager, Women's  
Homelessness Support  
Service, Women's Housing  
Company Ltd)

My relationship with Rosebank  
began in 2007 when I was

working with women and children in a supported accommodation program and I saw how Rosebank were making a significant difference in the lives of those clients attempting to heal and rebuild their lives. Since 2009, I've held the roles of Chairperson, Ordinary Member, and currently am the Treasurer. I am proud to be a part of the governance of such a highly regarded and valuable service.



**Claire Affleck-Warn**

Role: Ordinary Member

I am currently the Clinical  
Lead at Headspace Liverpool.  
I was recommended to join the  
committee by my manager  
Vikki Radford, who was a prior  
member herself. I jumped at

the opportunity to be part of this small yet dynamic service, whose work and values sit so close to my own. I've been impressed by the dedication of staff, who are able to effectively support and treat trauma survivors while running a highly functional service, all with minimal time and resources. Rosebank is a service with true integrity.



**Tracy Phillips**

Role: Ordinary Member  
(Executive Officer, Bonnie  
Support Services)

I became involved with  
Rosebank because as a  
small service I believed they  
were doing big work – and

doing it well. The organisation's reputation and professionalism are really important factors and I admire the care and consideration given to the children they work with and the thoughtfulness of the staff operating in a very challenging area.



**Margaret Hudson**

Role: Ordinary Member  
(Counsellor with Catholic Care,  
Campbelltown and Life Coach  
in Private Practice)

I joined the committee when  
working in Liverpool at Sisters  
of Charity as Coordinator. My

time on the committee has included chairperson and I support the work that Rosebank does and Rosebank's commitment to helping others. Our governing body has expertise in child protection, adolescent mental health, domestic violence, education and group work, homelessness, social work and community management.



ROSEBANK IS SMALLER THAN OUR  
IMPACT WOULD SUGGEST.  
WE DO A LOT WITH VERY LITTLE.

## Coordinator's Report



**On May 30, our Coordinator, Helen Spark moved on to another role after 12 years with Rosebank. On her last day, she looked back on her time with us and what lies ahead.**

It seems strange to say this now but when I first started at Rosebank, I hadn't worked much with adolescents and to be honest, I wasn't sure it was going to be my calling. It's turned out to be completely the opposite, of course. I've loved working with young people: they're open and real and it's been possible to make a real difference in their lives. Watching them flourish has been a most beautiful part of my work. Of course, the role of Coordinator in a small service like ours, isn't easy - it's been a very, very difficult job. Not only are you overseeing all the operational and service delivery aspects but you are also

carrying quite a heavy clinical load.

Over recent years, I've seen Rosebank not only stay afloat amidst the many changes that can often break a service, but I've seen us grow and our reputation in the sector increase. We are now a well-regarded professional service and we are seen to be doing great work. We don't have a huge amount of money to fund the service on but we've been able to do an incredible amount with what we have, including working holistically and offering safety, security, consistency and stability to the families.

As I watch Amanda skipping up to the Coordinator's role, I'm so proud of her. When I first met her, she was doing her Social Work degree and finishing her placement at Rosebank. Over the last 8 or 9 years, I have witnessed this huge transformation and now she takes over the reins of management, with great ease.

I'm now taking off my management hat and stepping into a more clinical role. I can acknowledge to myself that I'm really proud of the work I've done and I'm proud to be able to hand the service over in such good shape.

I know Rosebank will flourish.

Thank you to everyone

With best wishes,

**Helen Spark**

Coordinator

“All young people want is to be heard. They just want someone to listen to them. Often it's very small things that become magnified for them and overwhelming. If you can provide an environment that's safe and secure and non-judgemental where they are free to talk, they will flourish. And that's what we do...”

# HOW WE WORK WITH OUR PARTNERS.

## Bonnie's Kidz Space – Snapshot

It seems fitting that one of Australia's oldest child sexual assault support services (that's us!) should team up with one of Australia's oldest women's refuges. Bonnie Support Services was the second ever women's refuge established in Australia. Bonnie's supports women and their families who have experienced domestic violence and/or the threat of homelessness. Together we make a difference for women and children with Bonnie's Creative Space and the Kidz Space.

Bonnie's Kidz Space is in its second year. Child Youth Worker Marryanne from Bonnie's and counsellor Nicole from Rosebank work in partnership to deliver the group. The following is a blog post written by Nicole about the Kidz Space.

See <http://www.bonnie.org.au/making-small-change>



Being creative at Kidz Space

## Making small change

WRITTEN BY NICOLE SOTO

Kidz Space at Bonnie's is a place where kids can come to share and learn about themselves in a safe environment. It's for kids aged 7-11 who have witnessed domestic violence but haven't had a chance to speak about it. Kidz Space gives them the chance to do this, diving in and reflect on what's going on internally.

Last term we had an all boy group attend the sessions. I went into it thinking our time together will run shorter because the boys will not want to talk. Some of the boys that were a part of the group were a little bit older from the kids we had worked with previously and I thought they would not want to participate in some of the activities.

I couldn't have been more wrong. We always start the group asking the kids to speak about an emotion they have felt during the week, using emotional learning cards to prompt them. This gets us into the mood and emotions start flowing. Near the end of our time together, we talk about

a negative and positive feeling each one of us has felt. Everyone is asked to take part including the facilitators, helping kids to normalise talking about their thoughts and feelings.

In this particular group, the boys that were older seemed to get the most out of the experience. They felt comfortable sharing what they had seen and heard at home, and it was wonderful to see how honest they were about their home life. In one of the activities, we asked what they were most proud of about themselves; one of the boys said "learning, talking about stuff I didn't want to talk about, feeling comfortable", while another said "expressing feelings, drawing, smarter, getting things off my chest and more creative".

I left the group feeling incredibly proud of each boy that had taken part. They had felt safe in the group, had opened up and were able to learn and grow from the experience and hopefully in the future, be better for it.

I also learnt a lesson: not to judge by a book's cover.

We're always stronger working together.



# Dean and Joanna's story

## Joanna recalls her family's experience at Rosebank

It was my Mum who found Rosebank for me and at first, I was very anxious about it and sceptical. My son Dean was 11 years old then and I was looking for help with how I could support and care for him. We needed help badly but I knew we needed 'the right' help. I made that first appointment with Rosebank from my car. I was sitting in our work carpark, answering intake questions and I was just so upset and worried. Was this going to be good for us or not?

I've had counselling around domestic violence and some places I've been to, have not been a good experience. They didn't help. They were the sort of places where you're always on the back foot and feeling like you're being judged. But I've also been to places where I've been lucky enough to find the right people and that's made all the difference.

When I made the decision to try Rosebank, I was just hoping it would be one of those 'right' places.

That first time, as soon as I walked in the door, I started to relax. Rosebank's very warm and welcoming: it's in a gorgeous old home so it's homely not clinical. And then, when I met Helen, I just knew. I knew this was going to be a safe space for me. I knew she didn't bring any judgement. She was kind and gentle. No clipboard. No ticking off the boxes. Just really listening.

In the beginning, it was just me who went to the sessions – Dean was very closed to the idea at first. Helen was helping me with what we called 'The Toolbox' – coping strategies for me and things for Dean to try himself. She helped me to accept what had gone on before too. She'd say, 'Be kind to yourself' but that was hard to do because I was struggling with thoughts like, 'I should have done this to protect him. I should have done that.' She helped me move on to more useful ways of thinking. Like she might say...

**'That was you, before. That was when you were just trying to keep your head above water. You did the best with what you had at the time. Think about what you are doing for him now and what you are doing for the family now. And be kind to yourself.'**

When I'd come home from a session, I'd talk with Dean about what I was learning that might help us

and I'd slip Helen into the conversation whenever I could. I always mentioned her by name. I might say, 'Helen thought of this idea for you.' Or 'Helen, sent you this little whiteboard that you can write affirmations on.' And so he sort of got to know Helen and be comfortable with her before he even met her. This was important because later in the year, when he was really struggling, he was ready to reach out.

We'd been doing okay with just the coping mechanisms Helen had taught me but when the holidays came around and our routines got interrupted, the old stuff starting popping up. Dean started falling back into the spiral of getting anxious and depressed and that led to thinking that what happened to him was his fault. As his night terrors got worse and he'd get tired, his temper would flare – and when that happened, he'd start worrying that he'd turn out like his Dad.

I knew I had to go back to Rosebank and I think we both knew that Dean needed to start seeing Helen too.

One day he just said, 'I want to see her. I want you to be there Mum but I want to see her.'

He was very brave and when he met Helen for the first time, she reassured him about how brave he was to speak up and say his biggest fears. And when Helen said, 'It's not your fault,' he listened. After a while, he was ready to see Helen by himself.

Helen had a very holistic approach. We talked about meditation and exercise and nutrition; going for picnics in the park and going for a massage. Dean actually did go for a massage and he loved it. I know these probably just sound like small things but when you add them up and put them with new ways of thinking, it really helps. For example, Helen was often reminding us to celebrate the good things that happen. And we'd talk about the idea that what happens to us, does not define who we are. Or who we're going to be. She opened the door for Dean to imagine a life he can create for himself.

I can't exactly pin point when I looked at Dean and knew he was on his way but I do remember noticing him using the tools himself – without me suggesting it. These days, rather than yelling at his little sister, he'll take himself off to the backyard and bounce on

the trampoline to feel better. He still struggles with anxiety but now he can recognise it – he uses the breathing exercises Helen gave him and he's finding his own spaces to calm down.

But one of the things I'm most grateful for is that Dean now knows how good the right help can be. And he knows he can reach out if he's struggling in the future. If when he's 16 or 17 or 18 or a fully grown adult, he'll know that there is good help out there. And he can ask for it. Rosebank has been vital to our family recovering, and moving forward. Helen has had a huge, huge impact on our life – in keeping us strong.

She opened the door for Dean and now, instead of feeling like things are all piling on top of him and feeling like he can't get out, Dean knows he can open the door himself. And walk straight through."



"We've learnt so many good strategies. On the weekend, I noticed Dean was anxious: he'd been cooped up and his school assignments had got on top of him... so instead of looking at it all piling up, we said 'Okay, off we go.' And we went and walked around the bay, a seven kilometre walk. These things can make all the difference..."

# If we own the story then we can write the ending.

Brené Brown

## Acknowledgements and Thanks

Rosebank acknowledges the original inhabitants of the Liverpool Local Government Area, as the Dharug, Gandangara and Tharawal Aboriginal people.

We thank Family and Community Services NSW for providing the recurrent core funding which enables Rosebank to continue providing a free and confidential counselling and support service for children and young people who have experienced child sexual abuse.

We receive our core funding under the service model Child, Youth and Family Support. Rosebank is currently transitioning to a new service system under the Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) Program Reform. Rosebank's 3-year contract with the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) working towards improved prevention and early intervention services under the TEI program expires in June 2020.

During 2018-19, a major renovation of our premises was undertaken by the owner of the premises Liverpool City Council. The renovation has restored the upper floor of the heritage listed Rosebank Cottage providing us with additional office, counselling and meeting rooms. The building project

also included major repair work on ceilings, floors, walls, windows, stairs and electrical fittings.

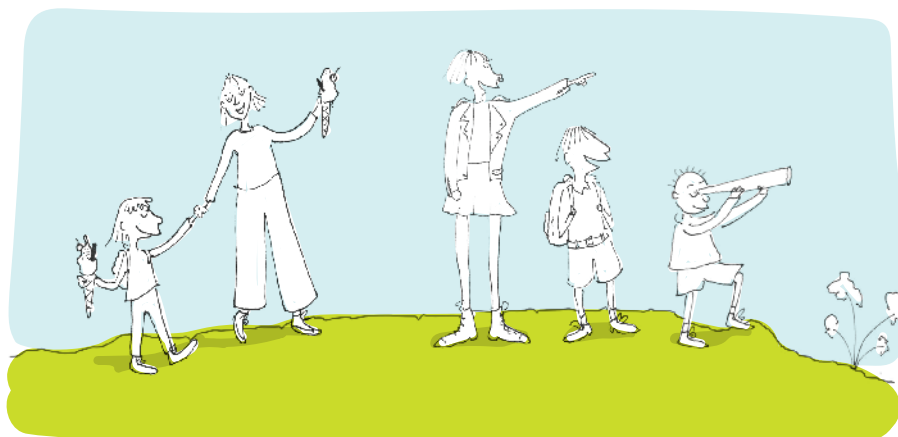
Rosebank Cottage at 17 Speed Street, Liverpool was built in 1883 and is a State Heritage listed building of high significance. The restoration of the first floor will enable Rosebank to increase service provision to meet the needs of vulnerable people experiencing child sexual abuse, domestic and family violence, drug and/or alcohol issues, and social/economic disadvantage. Rosebank provides a range of programs that increase confidence and wellbeing, social inclusion and individual capacity.

We would like to thank our Federal Member, Chris Hayes, and our State Member, Paul Lynch, for supporting the renovation with a grant of \$20,000 under the Stronger Communities Programme and a grant of \$50,919 under the Community Building Partnership Program. Our sincere thanks also to Liverpool City Council for undertaking the renovation and continuing to provide us with affordable premises.

A complete copy of Rosebank's Financial Report 2019 including our audited financial statements, accompanying notes and Auditor's Report can be downloaded from our website [www.rosebank.org.au](http://www.rosebank.org.au) or the ACNC register.

## Meet our clients

Kids age 6 and up / Young people 18 and under / Families supporting kids of all ages



[www.rosebank.org.au](http://www.rosebank.org.au) Email: [info@rosebank.org.au](mailto:info@rosebank.org.au)