



Annual Report 2019-20



**Zooming to the  
Planet of Possibilities...  
and Beyond!**

# 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.



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# Chairperson's Report



It is hard to imagine a more complicated time for the management and delivery of services to the community. The COVID-19 pandemic with associated restrictions and special measures has dominated our thoughts and actions since March. I am so proud and pleased to say that the Rosebank team have continued to provide a high quality service to families. Appropriate adjustments were made quickly to ensure the safety of all involved and new policies and procedures developed so that the essential work could continue in an adapted form until regular appointments could resume.

We have all embraced virtual meetings with the good humour that is often required. I have wondered how Tracy (Management Committee Secretary) has been able to convert our disembodied discussion to comprehensive minutes but she always does a brilliant job. My thanks to all committee members.

This year has not just been about 'getting through' as during the year the new Human Service Agreement with Department of Communities and

Justice was been finalised. It is really gratifying to know that the new Human Service Agreement ensures Rosebank will be able to provide a service for the next 5 years. In addition a number of policies, procedures and systems have been developed or reviewed. Importantly we have also considered the Management Committee membership and constitution and the roles of Committee members. This is reflected in some important changes.

My congratulations to Amanda for her impressive leadership and dedication to purpose and to Melissa, Nicole, Ruth and Heike for their resourcefulness and commitment. The demand for Rosebank's unique and important service continues to remind us that children and families need our support. Thanks to the Rosebank team and Management Committee we can continue to provide this support to families in the area.

**Alison Huggan**  
Chairperson  
Rosebank  
(Sexual Assault Counsellor, South West Sydney Local Health District Sexual Assault Service)



# Our Management Committee



**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.



**Tracy Phillips**  
Role: Secretary  
(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.



**Lena Tooma**  
Role: Ordinary Member  
(Practice Co-ordinator, Headspace Liverpool)

I was recommended to join the committee by my Centre Manager, Vikki Radford, as a replacement for a previous committee member, Claire Affleck-Warn.

I have thoroughly enjoyed learning about the work Rosebank does and feel proud of how dedicated the team is to their clients' wellbeing.

Also, I am impressed by the amount of time and effort Amanda has invested in to this committee and its members ensuring that everything runs smoothly.





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

## Our Year: Amanda Pardy, Coordinator



**T**he past 12 months has been a time of big change – new spaces, new challenges and a very different way of doing things.

It's a pleasure to write to you this year as the Coordinator of a service that I first visited in 2008 as a student on a

Social Work placement. That placement was an incredibly inspiring experience. Rosebank is where I first came to understand the true value of non-government organisations (NGOs) and how the passion and commitment of their teams support our community's most vulnerable members. Three years later, in 2011, I returned to Rosebank as a counsellor and then, in 2019, I took up the role of Service Coordinator.

### Where the magic happens – this beautiful building

Funnily enough, a big part of my placement in 2008 was helping Rosebank move back 'home' from a temporary location after much needed ground floor renovations. Then in August 2019, I found myself doing it all again – not as a student this time, but as Service Coordinator. Rosebank Cottage had been under renovation for the second time and I was able to manage our move back with the current team. It was an incredible privilege to return to this beautiful and powerful building. Previously we only had access to the ground floor and now, the opening up the second floor has given the building a new energy with light and space.



### Our new management structure

Usually, in small NGOs like ours, the team members are responsible for everything that needs to happen for the service to survive and thrive. They don't have the luxury of a department that can apply for funding or manage the WHS risks or meet HR deadlines. Instead, it all falls on their shoulders and they're constantly juggling different responsibilities – from working with clients, to ensuring the building is maintained, to even remembering to make sure the garbage bins are collected.

When I became Service Coordinator, we decided to try a different management structure. This year, for the first time, the counselling team has been free to wholly focus their energies on supporting our clients. As Service Coordinator, I can focus on supporting *them* and the management side of things – the funding, the networking, the policy making and of course, the building.

This change has turned out so well for us this year and it really came into its own as COVID threw the world into unfamiliar territory. We were well placed to make changes quickly, keep client-centred and respond in a way that I'm proud of.

There was so much chaos going on around us but it was easy for us to support each other, understand our own anxieties and be on the same page about what we all needed to manage the service from a position of strength – rather than being reactive. We were able to protect our staff and clients by stopping face to face sessions, take it in turns to work from home, provide support to clients over the phone and prepare for what none of us knew might lie ahead of us. It was like those aircraft safety messages always say, 'Put on your own mask first, before helping others,' and that's what we knew we needed to do.

In a time of so many unknowns, we were able to look after each other and provide certainty, comfort and safety to our clients – essential foundations of our counselling relationships. And continue our

focus on resilience.

### Our families and their resilience

The 2020 COVID pandemic has reminded everyone in the community of the importance of certainty and safety in our lives. And we've been reminded how fragile those feelings are too.

Our Rosebank families are already confronted by many impacts of sexual assault. They endure uncertainty every day, even without the additional virus. They are already feeling unsafe, standing with the unknown of the future. They are sometimes isolated from, or by, their families and friends and are feeling alone. They often feel powerless and their lives out of control. They are forced to change and manoeuvre around the expectations, information and new rules of organisations, the legal system and support networks.

Yet week after week we hear and watch children and young people flourish and find their voices. We see them connect with those close to them, re-engage in the things they love and find their own sense of safety and future. We are really amazed by the resilience of our families.

We thank all our community and supporters, our Management Committee and clients for standing with us, and our Rosebank families, again this year. Despite all the upheaval and challenges of recent months, I am very hopeful for the year ahead.

I am writing this from our beautiful Rosebank Cottage with its beautiful high ceilings, solid walls and comforting rooms. I can feel the power of our 35 year history here and I know that the year ahead will bring an opportunity to build on that history, and Rosebank's value and reputation.

We look forward to finding new ways to support our young people to find new possibilities and follow them.

**“There was so much chaos going on around us but it was easy for us to support each other, understand our own anxieties and be on the same page about what we all needed to manage the service from a position of strength – rather than being reactive.”**

# INTRODUCING OUR TEAM



**Amanda Pardy**  
Coordinator



**Melissa MacLean**  
Counsellor/Advocate



**Nicole Soto**  
Counsellor/Advocate



**Ruth Ellem**  
Group Facilitator



**Heike Obermayr**  
Finance Manager

## Our Counselling Team: Melissa and Nicole

Nicole will soon celebrate her first anniversary as counsellor and advocate with us. Previously, she worked with Lifeline for 7 years, manning their famous phone line support service. We got to know her better through her great work with Bonnie Support Services and her work with our Kidz Space program. It was a delight to welcome her to our counselling team. She joins Melissa. They studied in the same Masters program at Western Sydney University.

Melissa has been with Rosebank since March 2018. Her first career was as a librarian and researcher. After 25 years, she took the leap from characters and books, to real people and real life. She went back to University for her Masters in Psychotherapy and Counselling and hasn't looked back since.

Together Nicole and Melissa are a mighty counselling duo. In this conversation (recorded on COVID-friendly Zoom), they reflect on the past year, what they have learnt and how they have been reminded of the importance of the work they do.

## A surprising year

**Melissa:** It's been a strange year, very different, very surprising..

**Nicole:** I mean, when you think how we started last year ... our plans and ideas...

**Melissa:** There was such a great feeling of renewal, wasn't there? We moved back into the new building and that was very exciting. It was energising, having this new space and so much potential.

**Nicole:** I remember our Planning Day where we were talking about ideas for a group space...and all that we could do...

**Melissa:** And then the years started with the fires and then COVID happened. We had to put a lot of that thinking on hold and just focus on the best way to look out for our clients. Especially during lockdown. More than anything we knew we needed to hold the space for them but we weren't sure what would be the best way to do that...for them...

## Holding the line

**Melissa:** Mostly what we did was telephone work rather than Zoom or Facetime. Sometimes it could be just checking in, letting them know we were here and we were still thinking about them. And we'd be around like this until we could all go back to meeting in our building.

**Nicole:** I had just one or two kids who didn't want the phone contact. They thought it was just too weird doing it over the phone but my little ones, the 10 or 11 year olds and younger, I think they really enjoyed having someone to talk to. I think they felt very important and special. It's like they were thinking, 'Look! Someone's calling me on my parent's phone... just to talk to me!'

They were usually quite quick calls – check-in's mainly. We'd talk about how they were and how school was different but mainly I wanted to keep the relationship going and let them know that I wasn't going to drop out of their lives. Most of my teenagers wanted the calls and there were unexpected benefits to that.

For example, one of my clients would always have her Mum in the sessions and she'd be pretty quiet. But on the phone, just the two of us, and she just lit up. She was a completely different person to when Mum was in the room. Now that we're back in the building, she feels comfortable to sit in the room alone with me... and I think that's because of the phone connection during the big lockdown.

**Melissa:** I felt we were able to create that same feeling of a safe place, in the phone calls. I'm thinking of one young woman now... she'd stay on the phone for 60 minutes... she'd be in her house, in her safe place and we'd both have earphones in and it almost felt like we were both there, in

the session room. With one client, it was describing in detail the session room at Rosebank (a room she loved) that made all the difference. She could picture it: she remembered it as a very quiet, safe place. It was like she was there... the building was working for us, even from a distance!

## And now

**Nicole:** It's great now that we're back in the building and able to do our sessions face to face but to keep COVID-safe, there are certainly still differences to the way we normally work.

**Melissa:** Cleaning after every client. Separate resources for each child.

**Nicole:** Phone calls to clients before every session with the COVID – safety questions and checking if they're well before they come...

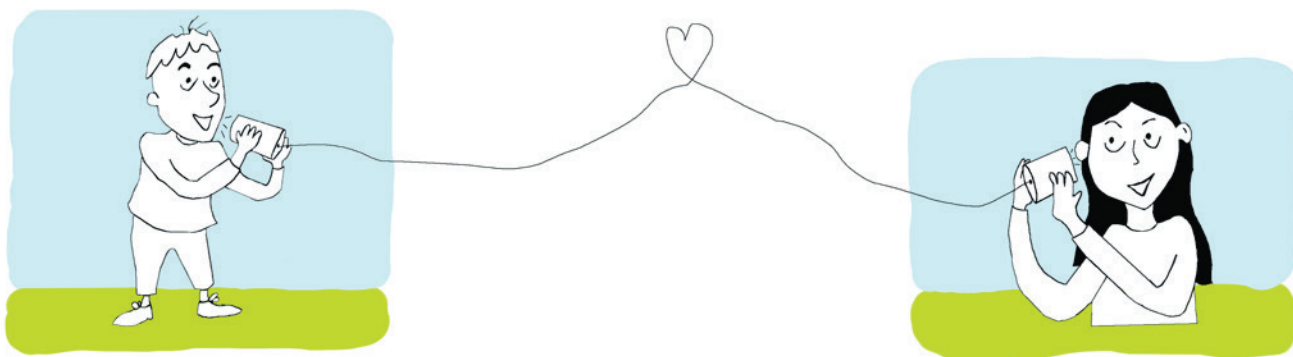
**Melissa:** And often that will lead into good conversations about how the child has been between sessions. Or how the family is going.

**Nicole:** There's definitely been increased contact between sessions and during this time, that's been really appreciated I think.

**Melissa:** We've stayed the course with them. And that is always a privilege of this work -that we can be alongside them, a witness, part of it. And sometimes we hold the memory so that in the future we can say, 'Can you remember what it was like when you first came here? Can you see the great changes you've made? Maybe you can't see them yet but I can...'

**Nicole:** And when they get to the point where they do see them? They can see the progress they've made and they know they're on their way? That's the very best part!

**"I think they felt very important and special. It's like they were thinking, 'Look! Someone's calling me on my parent's phone... just to talk to me!'" – Nicole**





## Other team members



**About Ruth** – Ruth has a long history with Rosebank as not only a Group Facilitator with Girlspace Project and the Tree of Life Scrapbooking Group starting in 2010 but as a Counsellor. She has supported many young people and women in both schools and the Community. Her current project co-facilitating the Creative Space at Bonnie's is a wonderful partnership passionate about providing a safe space for women and reducing isolation.



**About Heike** – Heike has been a significant part of the Rosebank team since 2013. Heike is passionate about the not-for-profit sector, she has worked for community organisations for the past 30 years in a variety of roles. Her expertise is in the areas of accounting, commerce and community services. Heike's valuable role is not just about ensuring Rosebank's financial systems are efficient and financial information is communicated in a timely and professional manner. But she is also a wonderful support to the team and her knowledge and experience is substantial to the service.

## Kidz Space



The first part of the year started off as normal, Kidz Space continued to be a space for young people to meet and have a space of their own. In our last Kidz Space for 2019, we had a participant who did not like drawing. He felt a massive

weight on his shoulders to have the perfect drawing. We didn't want him to feel pressured to draw, nor cause further anxiety within him, so we started to think about alternatives.

We soon discovered that he preferred to use words as a way of expressing himself and any activities from that point on, he was encouraged to write and describe what he thought, rather than draw. A simple change like this can have such a big impact. In the past, he may not have had many adults listen to him or have his opinion

and preferences respected. It was lovely to see his confidence, comfort and safety grow within the activities and in the space after implementing what worked best for him.

COVID-19 meant we had to change our way in working with young people in term 2. We created packs that would be delivered with activities for the young people to complete with their mum. Our aim was to build on, and strengthen, the relationship with mum during such a scary and uncertain time. A sensory box, supplies to make slime, strength cards, activities and much more, were supplied weekly for 5 weeks. Our role as facilitators working with young people, changed during this time to working with the mums. Stories of togetherness came out of weekly check-ins. One of the mums shared how grateful she was for the strength cards, as it helped her daughter and the rest of her children with their identity and strengths. Another mum shared how her daughter would involve her younger siblings in the activities with mum.

While Kids Space at home packs has brought wonderful stories between mum and children. We hope to return to face to face Kidz Space soon.

Nicole

**A simple change like this can have such a big impact...It was lovely to see his confidence, comfort and safety grow.**

## Creative Space

Creative Space is a therapeutic art group that is held every week (during school term) at Bonnie Support Services by Alison from Bonnie's and Ruth from Rosebank. It's a space for women to creatively explore and uncover aspects of themselves within a safe environment. And it's a place where they get timeout from trauma and where they can immerse themselves in the creative process, without worrying about it being good enough. This nourishing time helps women to be more accepting of who they are.

In a creative group, language doesn't get in the way. You can share without people needing to understand you, or you their language. Through what the women are creating they are showing what's going on inside themselves. It gives them a voice and a way to be seen in a held space, after so much has been taken from them. The women use a variety of art forms from sewing, to flower making, to embroidery to painting.

Women are often a bit hesitant when they start out at the Creative Space but usually they ease into the activity and are engaged and relaxed. During the process, they realise that there's a real skill that they're developing. For instance, lots of women have never used a sewing machine. When they come to the group and start learning how to use one, they become amazed by all the things they can make. And the positive relationships they are building. It builds their confidence.



**It gives them a voice and a way to be seen in a held space, after so much has been taken from them.**



## Acknowledgements and thanks

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

We thank the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) 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.

Rosebank's 3-year contract with the DCJ working towards improved prevention and early intervention services under the service model Child, Youth and Family Support expired in June 2020. During the last 12 months, we successfully transitioning to a new service system under the Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) Program Reform. A new funding agreement for the provision of intensive and specialist support for children and young people was finalised in June 2020 covering a period of 5 years until June 2025. Special thanks to Kerri Scott, Commissioning & Planning Officer, DCJ for assisting our smooth transition to the TEI program outcomes.

Liverpool City Council's substantial renovation in 2018-19 has provided Rosebank with a significantly improved facility including additional office, counselling and meeting rooms thus enhancing our ability to meet the needs of our target group children, young people and families who

are experiencing or at risk of vulnerability. We acknowledge Council's continued effort to maintain Rosebank Cottage, a State Heritage listed building of high significance and thank you for providing us with affordable premises.

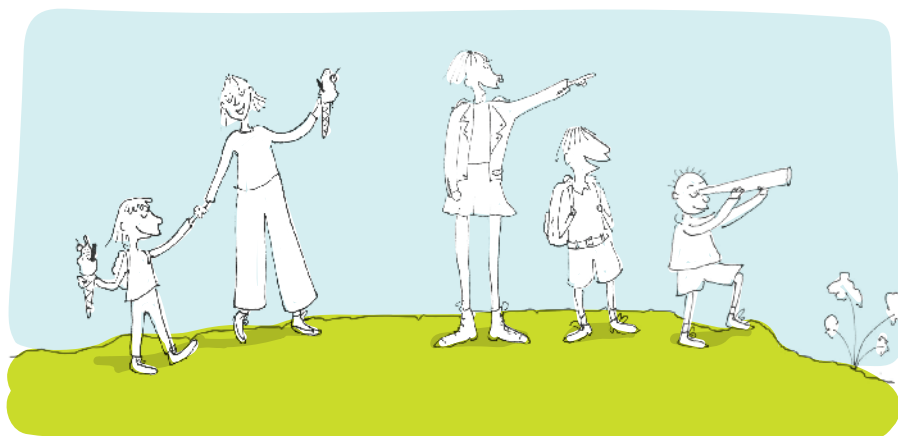
Our goal to support the safety and wellbeing of children and young people would not be achievable without partners. Our robust relationship with Bonnie Support Services, a service who provides support and/or accommodation to women and their children, who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or escaping domestic violence has continued to grow. We share a collaborative-oriented, client-focused approach and a vision of a world free of violence and abuse.

Lastly, we would like to acknowledge and thank our various individual supporters and donors throughout the year. For example this year, Scott Jones from Sydneywide Test & Tag Services unexpectedly provided tagging services free of charge, these simple acts of kindness mean the world to us.

A complete copy of Rosebank's Financial Report 2020 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)