



Annual Report 2020-21

WE'RE BOUNCING BACK TOGETHER



NOW, MORE THAN EVER, SYDNEY NEEDS ROSEBANK

The past year has shown us that Sydney's need for our service is greater than ever before.

Here at Rosebank, we know that children and young people deserve to start writing their own story as soon as possible. That's why we create a safe and non-judgemental space where they can shape for themselves, the way they are supported in their healing process.

Rosebank offers counselling, advocacy and support and works closely with other services to aid the wellbeing of Sydney's children, young people and the families who love them. We actively work to raise awareness about child sexual abuse and the vision of a community free of harm.

We work with schools, Health, Child Protection and Out of Home care agencies and services such as Bonnie Support Services, Bravehearts and Headspace.

We actively seek opportunities to build new networks, partnerships and connect with new funds. This allows us to grow, provide new programs and offer more support to the families and professionals in our community.



Contents

Chairperson's Report	4
Our Management Committee	5
Coordinator's Report	6
Our team	8
Acknowledgements and thanks	11





Alison Huggan, our bouncy Chairperson

Last year I began my report with, 'It is hard to imagine a more complicated time'. And when I wrote that I'm sure we all hoped (and possibly assumed) that we were through the worst of the pandemic and the related complications and that the way would be clear ahead.

This year has challenged that hope but has not clouded the vision. Through all the surprises and difficulties, Rosebank is still here, still strong and still looking forward.

In February 2021 we welcomed a new member to our management committee, Jemma Milloy. Jemma is a Mandandanji woman who lives and works across the Dharawal and Dharug nations. We are so pleased to have the knowledge, experience and insight that she brings to our policy development and service priorities. Jemma has significant experience within the Local Health District ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are included and heard and her inclusion in the Rosebank family is a much anticipated step. Together with Debra and Tracy who have been committed to Rosebank for many years and Lena who joined us more recently, we hope to provide Amanda and the Rosebank team with forward thinking support.

Looking to the future, in April Rosebank held a special day to look with fresh eyes at Rosebank's shared vision and goals. It was attended by all staff and committee members.

We had a dedicated time to think about the future with imagination. We wanted to let ideas about Rosebank's role and purpose in the community and within a broader network of services, emerge unlimited by current assumptions and terms of reference.

This was enormously helpful. We considered growth and access issues and imagined the possibility of a Rosebank (the place) more open as a community resource with extended hours and services. We re-imagined and articulated the philosophy and principles of practice in working and walking alongside our young clients. And in fostering their resilience.

This year has presented service issues and lockdowns and restrictions – all of which are an ongoing challenge to both counselling and management. Getting back to working in person with children and colleagues is on all our minds.

Amanda has been unwavering in her focus on the future; and our wonderful counsellors Melissa, Nicole and Ruth continue to demonstrate the resilience that they foster in their clients. The team continues to be inventive and creative in their own unique ways.

In management, along with all the routine duties and enacting adopted changes and process improvements, Amanda and Heike have been working to increase resources. They have proven their skill at developing grant applications and were successful in applications for both DCJ Social Sector Transformation Fund and Women's NSW Infrastructure Grants. These have funded very important upgrades for the building and technology.

In closing, I remember that back in April we all drew pictures of our vision of the future for Rosebank. Without exception the future is seen as responsive, expansive and strong. And that's the future we will work to create.

Thanks to all,

Alison Huggan
Chairperson, Rosebank
(Senior Counsellor South West Sydney Local Health District Sexual Assault Service, NSW Primary and Community Health)

Our bouncy Management Committee



Tracy Phillips
Role: Secretary
(Executive Officer, Bonnie Support Services)



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



Lena Tooma
Role: Ordinary Member
(Service Support Team Leader, Headspace Liverpool)



Jemma Milloy
Role: Ordinary Member
(Team Leader, Aboriginal Got It! Program, Infant Child Adolescent Mental Health Service, NSW Health, South Western Sydney Local Health District)

Introducing Jemma

I'm a proud Mandandanji woman who lives and works across the Dharawal and Dharug nations. I have a strong passion for Indigenous community development and ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices are always a part of broader service and policy development.

I joined the Rosebank Committee in February 2021 to assist the service in meeting their strategic priority of expanding their relationships with the local Aboriginal community

of South West Sydney. In my short time on the committee I have observed the passion and dedication of the team in providing quality care to their clients. I'm excited for the future of Rosebank, and the commitment of all staff and committee members to making sure that Aboriginal families receive a culturally safe and responsive service.

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A YEAR OF UPS AND DOWNS AND UP AGAIN

Amanda Pardy, Coordinator



Writing this year's report was difficult because as I write this, it's August 2021 and we are in lockdown again. And again we find ourselves unable to provide the valuable face to face counselling that we are so passionate about. Rosebank is supporting

families the best we can but there's no getting around the fact that the families we work with are isolated and restricted in leaving their homes. This means our team are required to work from home and offer their support over the phone.

The good news is that Rosebank is resilient. We are a great team. I am proud of us all and thankful for the support of our committee. We will get through this difficult time and spring back with strength, wisdom and passion.

June 2020 – June 2021

This was a big year of opportunities for Rosebank. While still being impacted by Covid-19 outbreaks and restrictions, we focused on the future and what it could bring. I am really appreciative of how our team supported the families we work with through many challenges along the way.

Rosebank continued to adapt our rooms and groupwork as the Covid risk was reduced. The families and clients responded beautifully to the warm, therapeutic space that our team worked so hard to provide. Covid had changed the way we needed to work and the way our rooms were set up, but towards the end of the financial year we could excitedly return our rooms to the way we like them – welcoming, friendly and comfortable for our clients. It was wonderful to have our sandplay in operation, groups gathering together again and meeting in person. The feedback from our clients was just amazing and the children and their families have really shown their resilience.

Rosebank had a number of opportunities to grab in this 12 months. A number of grant applications were applied for and thankfully were successful. This allowed for future upgrades to our IT network and group room, maintenance and repairs on our building's roof and two new groups to be held here.

One of the most exciting changes for Rosebank this year has been our new relationship with Bravehearts who have joined us to work out of our beautiful building. Bravehearts is an amazing organisation. They give vital personal safety education to



primary school children, preschools and childcare centres through their "Dittos Keep Safe Adventure" program. This age-appropriate information around body ownership and the right to be safe from an early age, is such a perfect complement to our own work.

I'd like to thank the Braveheart's team, Kayleen, Elise, Max and Kirra. Thank you for joining us at Rosebank. You've brought a new energy to our building, supported our team and helped us encourage safety for children in our community.

I speak for the whole team when I thank all our community and supporters, our Management

Committee and clients and Rosebank families for holding fast with us again this year. And for believing, with us, that together we can change the story and help each other write new ones!

Over the past 12 months, we've never lost sight of this. We've been seizing every opportunity for Rosebank to grow and offer more and more support to our community. This is at the heart of our new strategic plan which we began formulating earlier this year and which is now informing the way we see ourselves and the future of Rosebank, every day.

We are bouncing back together.

The reward for work well done is the opportunity to do more.

Jonas Salk (1914 -1995), virologist – the polio vaccine



THE SPRINGY-EST TEAM IN TOWN



Amanda Pardy
Coordinator



Melissa MacLean
Counsellor/Advocate



Nicole Soto
Counsellor/Advocate



Ruth Ellem
Group Facilitator



Heike Obermayr
Finance Manager



Rosebank's team is small and powerful. We bring different experiences and backgrounds to a shared belief in every child's power to create their own future. Everyone travels at their own pace and as a team we are always so heartened (and happy) to catch glimpse of the signs that affirm the value and impact of our work, for children and young people and their families too.

This year we asked Melissa, Nicole and Ruth to share stories about the year that was.

A cosy place to land

Nicole Soto, Counsellor/Advocate

Growing resilience and confidence is not always straight-forward, especially for our kids and young people. I love catching sight of a little marker in behaviour or attitude that shows me that they're on their way...

For example, when we came out of lockdown last year, we had to move our sessions into different rooms. Everything needed to be arranged for covid safety. All of our comfy pillows and couches were gone and instead we had plastic chairs and a table in the corner that could be easily wiped down. It was a different space. I was very excited at the thought of being back with the kids and I hoped they'd have fun in these rooms because they'd be able to play around and paint and get really messy.

So when one of my little kids, who I hadn't been working with for long, walked in and told me she just wanted to have the old room back, I was

surprised. She's in infants school and she might be thought of as naughty because sometimes, she would just run straight out of the classroom. But you know, it wasn't naughtiness. The thing is she's sensitive, especially to loud noises. If something was making her feel uncomfortable or unsafe – her first impulse would be to run. Sometimes teachers can't know what is behind a child's behaviours – what's triggering them.

So anyway, when we came back from the first lockdown, she was happy enough in our new COVID safe space but she still always asked me, 'When can we go back to the other room?' She was missing the couches and the cosiness and us just sitting on the floor, playing games together. And that's when I realised she feels cosy and safe and comfy at counselling. That's exactly what it should be for kids to heal. As soon as we were able to go back into the cosy room, she was straight there!

Time at Rosebank can be an oasis. It's fun and informal: a space where they can talk about whatever they want and feel safe to do so. It's a place where they can let it all out. The best thing is seeing little moments of empowerment where the young person feels that it's not only me they can talk to but they can talk to Mum or Dad or their siblings too. They're no longer holding it in, bottling it up – they feel safe enough to speak up and deal with things outside of the counselling room. Comfy chairs or not!

The flags are flying

Ruth Ellem, Group Facilitator and **Alison David**, Group Facilitator, Bonnie's

Ruth and Alison tell a story from **The Creative Space, the women's group we offer with Bonnie Support Services**

Ruth

When the first lockdown lifted, Alison and I and the women in the Creative Space couldn't wait to see each other again. I couldn't even imagine how hard the lockdown must have been for some of our mums – living in a little unit with no outside space and 3 kids to keep happy. At our first gathering back at Bonnie's, it was immediately apparent that the thing they had valued and missed the most, was their connection with each other.

We decided that for our first project back, we would make prayer flags that could hang up in Mimosa, one of Bonnie's refuges. We thought that after so much time apart, it would be nice to do a project all together.

The idea was to create something that celebrated the resilience and creativity experienced during lockdown, and then give it to the refuge as a way of inspiring hope, support and good wishes for the women experiencing crisis. All the materials we used for the prayer flags were sentimental, cut from special, old clothes or from donated pieces of fabric that could be used to upcycle. Old fabric and clothing can hold deep meaning for people and we thought it would be a beautiful way for it to live

on. For example, one woman used her children's old clothes for the flags and other mums wrote inspiring messages on theirs.

A woman in the group from Nepal said they had prayer flags all over her home country, and two other Arabic women excitedly explained that they also had similar ones back home, too. Everyone got to connect their values and personal hopes in this shared way, while also bringing a bit of their culture and history along too. All this was reflected in each of the flags – all so beautiful but unique in their own way. Once they were finished, I took them home and sewed them all together. What a beautiful sight.



Ruth and Alison

Alison

One of the nicest memories from the Creative Space this year was our celebratory end of year lunch at the Casula PowerHouse Museum. Everyone was so excited to meet up with each other, all dressed up! And out at a cafe too. As we were sitting down to eat, I saw Ruth reaching into her bag and like a magician pulling silk scarves out of a top hat, out came the stream of beautiful prayer flags. All stitched together!

I grabbed one side and Ruth grabbed the other and we held it up for all our women to see. Soon enough, they drew the attention of all the patrons of the restaurant too. They started coming up to us saying, "Wow! Did you all make this?" and "That's so beautiful, how amazing." I looked around the table and saw how proud everyone was – it was a really touching moment of recognition.

The lockdown last year taught us so much. We realised that during the restrictions of COVID, connecting with each other is at the heart of the Creative Space. At other times, when the group is running normally, connection is important but it's the creativity, presence and the calming effect on the women's bodies that stands out. It's so beneficial to reduce anxiety, stress and symptoms of PTSD – the women take this positive energy with them and it ripples down to the children and the atmosphere at home.

We are so proud of the program and our work with Rosebank.

Toby the dolphin

Melissa MacLean, Counsellor/Advocate

I'm thinking about one little boy, Toby, who was only 6 when he came to us. He'd been through a really difficult time: his parents had separated, their home had been lost in the floods the year before and his Dad had recently been arrested for sexual offences. There was a lot of grief and loss and change. Dad's not there, home's not there... plus there was a question mark as well around whether Dad had hurt Toby.

From our therapy room window, I could see his mum parked outside, waiting for him. She was suffering, of course – there's often rumination and guilt and doubts. And just trying to make sense of all that's happened. It's a lot for mothers to manage on their own.

Toby was active and very engaged from the beginning – throwing himself on the carpet like a dolphin and really curious about the space. He loved the play and art therapy and the safe, settling environment of our sessions. He had strong supports at home and he responded so well to his visits, that I felt he was going to be okay.

With this little family, a lot of my work was to support and encourage Mum and suggest strategies to help her settle Toby at home too and maintain those important connections with family and friends. In these cases, we often act as part of a team working with school counsellors and other services to create a non-judgemental space for families to heal – and learn how to look after each other.

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. 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 recognition must go to Kerri Scott, Commissioning & Planning Officer, DCJ for assisting our smooth transition to the Targeted Early Intervention program outcomes.

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.

Rosebank continues to seek opportunities to improve our premises and can report significant achievements in securing funding during the reporting period. A grant of \$15,761 for a safety upgrade was received under the State Government Community Building Partnership Program 2020. A contribution of \$15,000 was received under the Federal Government Stronger Communities Program and a further \$25,000 under the State Government COVID-19 Sexual, Domestic and Family Violence Infrastructure Grant Program for a much needed roof repair. Special thanks to Paul Lynch, Member for Liverpool and Chris Hayes, Member for Fowler, for supporting our projects.

Rosebank was also able to secure two grants totalling \$70,000 under the Social Sector Transformation Fund (SSTF), a NSW Government

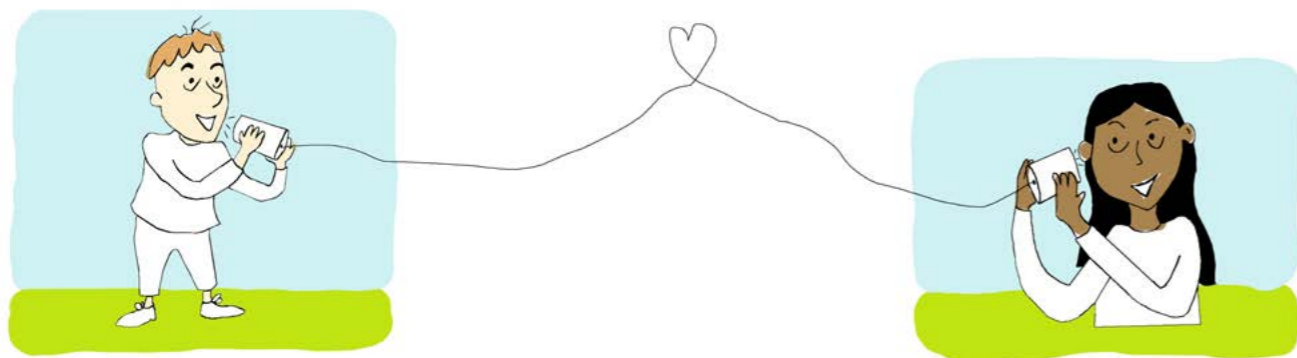
economic stimulus measure. The SSTF grants will enable a vital personal technology and equipment upgrade, improved data and cyber security and the purchase of a new client information management system in the coming financial year. The extra funding will strengthen our organisation, support us in delivering a high quality service and enhance our capacity to meet the needs of our target group children, young people and families who are experiencing or at risk of vulnerability.

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 remained strong during these challenging times. Both our services are essential, and in spite of the disruptions brought by the pandemic, we have found new ways to continue to deliver the therapeutic groups Creative Space and Kidz Space.

Lastly, we would like to acknowledge and thank our various individual supporters and donors throughout the year including Beacon Lighting Crossroads. For example, this year we unexpectedly received the proceeds of a cake sale organised by SCEGGS Darlinghurst, these simple acts of kindness mean the world to us.

Heike Obermayr

A complete copy of Rosebank's Financial Report 2021 including our audited financial statements, accompanying notes and Auditor's Report can be downloaded from our website 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 Email: info@rosebank.org.au