



Annual Report 2024-25



Up, up and away!



There's no place like Rosebank.

***We're here to support you:
helping you feel stronger, listening to what you need,
and making sure your voice counts.***

Many of our children and young people don't feel listened to or feel that they even have a voice.

The sexual abuse silences them further and makes it harder for those around them to listen, understand and support them. Our young people talk about Rosebank being their space. It's a place they know they will be heard, can be themselves and grow their confidence and self-belief.

It's our 40 year history working with the trauma of sexual abuse that makes us continue the way we do.

Established in 1985, Rosebank is one of the oldest sexual abuse services in NSW. The community trusts us to provide a safe therapeutic space for some of our most vulnerable families. Our expertise, experience and passion allows the children and young people of Rosebank to find their voices and

step through their therapeutic process the way they want to.

Rosebank works closely with other services to aid the wellbeing of South West Sydney's children and young people. We offer counselling, advocacy and support in a myriad of ways including skill development, parent strategies, case management etc. 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 are a small service with big ideas and heart. We actively seek opportunities to build new networks, partnerships and connect with new funds.



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Chairperson's Report



As always at this time, I reflect on the particular achievements of Rosebank and again, I feel privileged to witness the steady, vital work this service provides to children and young people in our community.

The nature of Rosebank's work demands absolute consistency – young people need to know we'll be here, that we're reliable, that we understand their particular needs. This year tested that consistency beautifully when Amanda took well-deserved long service leave. Watching Nicole step seamlessly into the coordinator role and seeing the whole team rally together was deeply reassuring. It showed me that Rosebank's strength isn't just in individual excellence, but in the culture we've built together.

What strikes me most is how this small, specialised service continues to deliver far beyond expectations for its size. We're not trying to be everything to everyone – we're focused on doing one thing exceptionally well: supporting children and young people who've experienced sexual abuse. That clarity of purpose, combined with our team's expertise and heart, makes Rosebank uniquely valuable in our community's network of services.

To Amanda, thank you for your thoughtful leadership. To Nicole, Sogol, Heike and the whole team – your dedication is so important and appreciated. To my fellow committee members Claire, Debra, Jemma and Joan – thank you for caretaking this precious service.

Alison Huggan

Chairperson, Rosebank Management Committee

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Our Management Committee



Alison Huggan

Role: Chairperson since 2018 Committee member since 2012 (Senior Sexual Assault Counsellor, Retired July 2022)



Jemma Milloy

Role Secretary since 2023 Committee member since 2021 (Director Aboriginal Health, South Western Sydney Local Health District)



Debra Venables

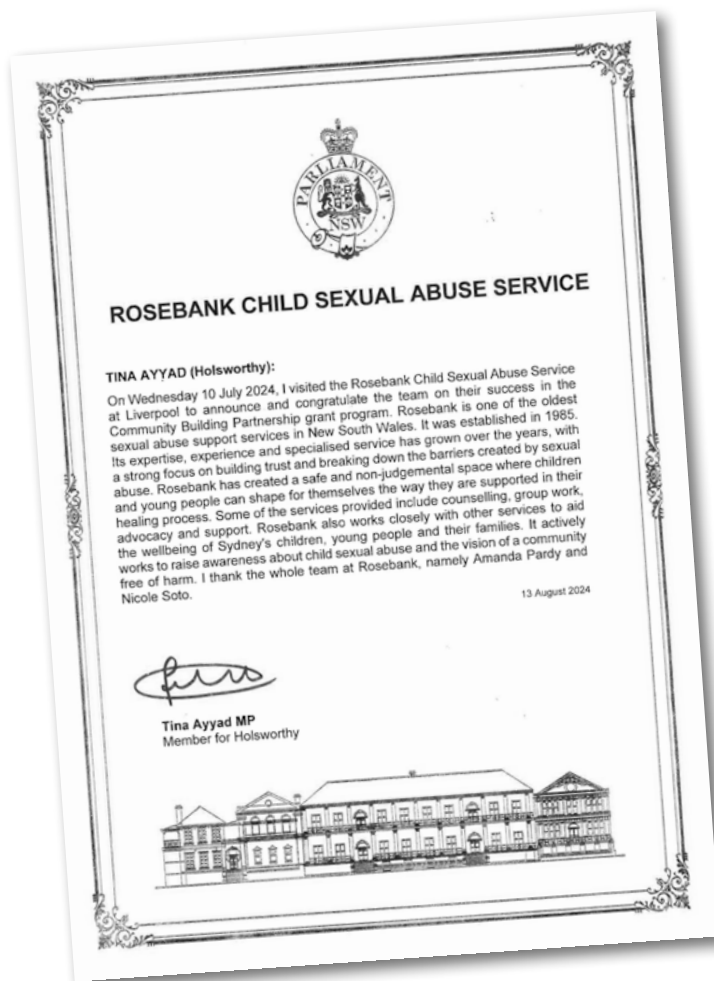
Role: Treasurer since 2018 Committee member since 2009 (Manager, Women’s Homelessness Support Service, Women’s Housing Company Ltd)



Claire Affleck-Warn

Role: Committee member since 2022 (Service Manager, Headspace Liverpool)

Joan Gennery – Thank you to Joan Gennery and her great work with us from November 2024 to April 2025



“Rosebank has created a safe and non-judgemental space where children and youngpeople can shape for themselves the way they are supported in their healing process. [Rosebank] actively works to raise awareness about child sexual abuse and the vision of a community free of harm. I thank the whole team at Rosebank, namely Amanda Pardy and Nicole Soto.”

Excerpt from Hansard of a speech delivered to the New South Wales Parliament on 13 August 2024 by **Tina Ayyed MP**, Member for Holsworthy.

Coordinator's Report



2025 was a promising year with successful grants and positive opportunities for Rosebank.

We were given the opportunity to realise our potential with additional funding and we thrived! To be able to strengthen our team with extra staff and a wealth of experience, create new energy and improve our counselling spaces was magic. It has allowed us to increase our support for the community, engage with more young people, strengthen the networks and improve our systems.

The Rosebank team is strong. Each staff member brings their own skills and experience, complementing the whole and creating the stable, consistent environment that is our priority. As we are still a small service, every change has the potential to impact. We are reinforced by a team of great people who all come with a common goal : to keep Rosebank great. And so Rosebank's stability shines.

This was especially highlighted this year when I took four months long service leave to travel around Australia with my family. It was a wonderful experience for me but it would not have been possible without my amazing team. They held Rosebank beautifully.

Nicole stepped into my Coordinator's role and was a great leader. She continued my supervision for the team in my absence, coordinated the organisation and was proactive in applying for additional funding. Sogol and Nicole attended the annual CASAC conference in Bundanoon where equine therapy was a highlight. The whole team pulled together to continue Rosebank's work. We didn't miss a beat and I am so grateful to have a wonderful team.

In early 2025, we farewelled one of our long term counsellors, Melissa. Over her years with us, Melissa contributed a great wealth of knowledge and counselling skills to the team. She supported

many families through the challenges of trauma and strengthened their resilience. We wish Melissa all the best with her future career working as a University lecturer and in private practice.

In June Milena became a mum with the birth of beautiful baby girl Francie and went on maternity leave in May to begin her new chapter. We wish Milena and her little family lots of love over this time. (But we can't wait to have you back in the office with us!)

This year Rosebank was delighted to give our counselling rooms a makeover through a Community Building Partnership grant. Our rooms now offer more comfort, safety and privacy with comfortable supportive lounges, sensory beanbags, noise reducing floor mats and hall runners, calming lighting and counselling resources to sooth and allow sensory processing. Rosebank is very grateful for the community support with the purchases.

The Member for Holsworthy Tina Ayyad and her Electorate Officer Hwaida Ammoun visited to congratulate Rosebank on the successful Community Building Partnership grant. Tina was so astounded by Rosebank's work that she spoke about it in the NSW Parliament. This is a huge recognition and as coordinator I am very proud to have this support.

Working with the impact of sexual abuse, supporting families through difficult times, navigating external systems that are under-resourced and dysfunctional, can be challenging for our team. But with the support of the community and Rosebank's wonderful Management Committee we stay committed and positive. We know Rosebank's support makes a huge difference to the children and young people we support. We will continue to thrive.

Amanda Pardy

Coordinator

Our team



Amanda Pardy
Coordinator



Nicole Soto
Counsellor/Advocate



Ruth Ellem
Group Facilitator



Heike Obermayr
Finance Officer



Sogol Rezaei
Counsellor/Advocate



Katie Mayle
Group Facilitator



Milena Mijajlovic
Counsellor/Advocate



Melissa MacLean
Counsellor/Advocate



Some of this year's highlights.

Validated, Believed, Understood

Last year, in an excited Stop Press moment, we introduced Sogol Rezaei. Sogol had just joined us to work exclusively with young people from a CALD background.



I was doing crisis work in the homelessness sector before this. Over 60% of our clients were escaping domestic violence and many of them had a history of childhood sexual assault.

In crisis work your brain is always wired, always on. It's 24/7. The work can be very tough, exhausting: you can feel on the verge of burnout. Therapeutic work is very different and demands a slower pace. It's often long term and sometimes it takes a client a whole year to actually start talking about the trauma. It takes time for them to trust you and know that you're the sort of person who wants to listen and understand them.

I have to thank Amanda and Nicole for teaching me to take a step back from the 'crisis mode'. This permission to take care of ourselves is one of the things we pass onto our clients and I think it's one reason they keep coming back. There's no pressure, they set their own pace.

We all know sexual assault happens in every culture, in every nation. It's taboo everywhere but in a CALD culture it's ten times more taboo, especially if the perpetrator is a family member. Often the victim is isolated and the perpetrator is believed. I'm from a different cultural background myself and I know it's more hidden – it's cultural shame.

In my previous role at the homelessness service, many of the women had a history of sexual assault as adults and as children as well. Most had never had access to free specialised counselling and this would have made such a difference to their lives if they had had it from a very young age. They weren't listened to, understood or believed and inevitably, as women, they wouldn't believe or listen to themselves either. I saw how much these experiences were integrated into their decision making as an adult and the lives they were now dealing with.

What matters most is for the truth not to be hidden but for people to be listened to, validated and actually believed. When something has happened to you and you are not believed, it can be even more traumatic than the trauma itself.

(Sogol's background is Persian – she speaks Farsi, Dari, Dutch and English too!)



I worked with a teenager from a cultural background where honoring your elders is absolutely paramount. When she came to us, she couldn't sleep, was very unsteady emotionally and had no relationship with her mum. They wouldn't speak to one another – it was only hi and bye.

There was a language barrier too: mum couldn't speak English and while the girl could understand her mum, she couldn't express herself. Her own language development had been disrupted by a communication breakdown following sexual abuse in the family. Her sister, the victim, was blamed, told she wasn't telling the truth and asked to leave home. The perpetrator had been told to leave too.

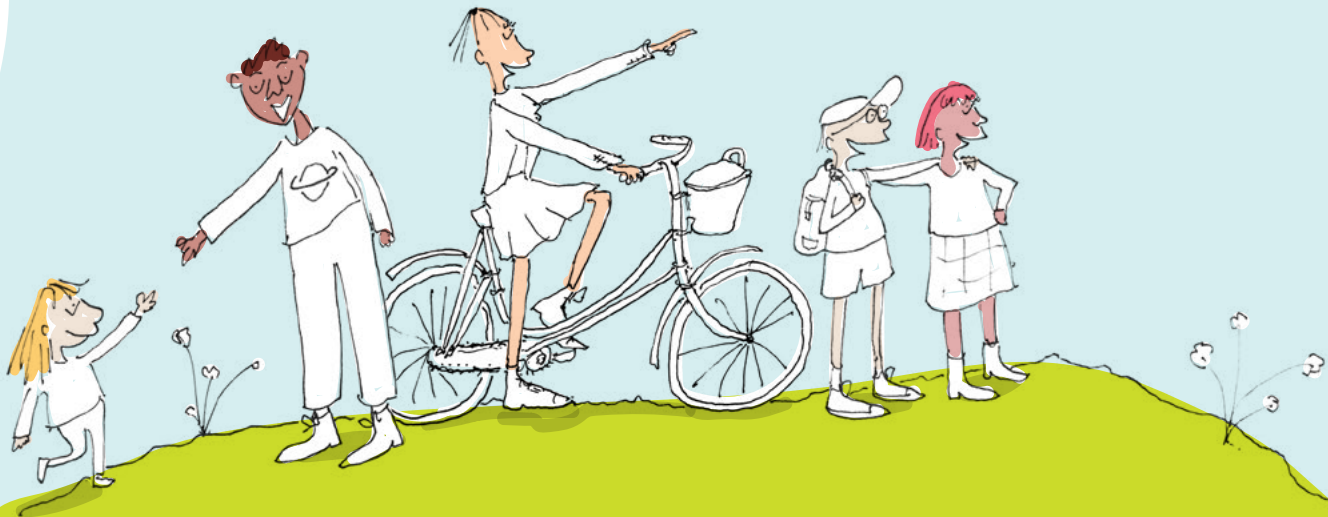
But this young girl knew her sister was speaking the truth. She'd witnessed it and found the courage to tell her mum once but mum didn't understand. To express what she knew in her mother's language needed vocabulary she didn't have. And the embarrassment and nervousness of expressing what she'd seen would have added another layer of difficulty. After this, the family went into silence: no conversation anymore.

We built rapport and she was able to tell me what she'd witnessed, what she would like mum to understand, and why she was afraid of speaking up. Once she was ready, she put on paper all the details she wanted mum to know.

I suggested a joint meeting. "Me, you, mum, and someone you trust and knows your story who can translate." She was very happy to do this and after a few sessions to calm down her nerves, we had the meeting.

I was there as a mediator. There were hurt feelings on both sides that were validated once the language barrier was removed. The girl explained her feelings and the mum explained herself from the cultural perspective, as well. "This is why I did this and this and I understand now this was wrong." Their anger towards each other seemed to disperse. Later the girl told me she didn't think she needed to come to Rosebank anymore. She said, "Mum really understood me, really took it on."

Validated, believed, understood.



Thank you to the young people

We want to thank you, the young people of Rosebank.

You are often faced with difficult relationships, navigating questions about your identity, and feeling let down by the lack of safety around you. You're dealing with school and everything else going on, all while making big, sometimes scary decisions about your future, your hopes, and your dreams.

And yet, you keep going.

We see your strength – your growing self-belief, the rebuilding of family connections and friendships, and the courage you show in working through disappointments and picking up dreams again.

We're here to support you: helping you feel stronger, listening to what you need and making sure your voice counts.





Acknowledgements and thanks

Rosebank acknowledges the traditional custodians of the areas we service; the lands of the Darug, Dharawal and Gundungurra Nations. We recognise their continued connections to the lands and waterways that surround us and pay respects to Aboriginal Elders past and present.

We acknowledge Liverpool City 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. During the reporting period, Rosebank received a grant of \$15,000 for therapeutic space enhancements under the State Government Community Building Partnership Program 2023. The project has enabled us to purchase new lounges, armchairs, rugs and other accessories to improve the suitability of our counselling rooms.

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 gone from

strength to strength. Together we make a difference for women and children delivering two therapeutic groups, Creative Space and Kidz Space.

We would like to acknowledge and thank our various individual supporters and donors throughout the year. A special thanks to Morrissa Stephens from KV flooring in Harvey Norman for her generous donation of hall runners and helping us with our rug purchase. A special thanks to Dennis Sanjivi our IT consultant from Osit Pty Ltd who supports us with our IT requirements, we are grateful for his technical expertise. Any financial donation, large or small can help us provide more counselling to children, young people and their non-offending family members in a safe and supportive environment.

Heike Obermayr

Finance Officer

A complete copy of Rosebank's Financial Report 2025 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.

Help us continue making a difference

For 40 years, Rosebank has provided specialised, free counselling to vulnerable children and young people impacted by sexual abuse. We work with families across Liverpool, Fairfield and Campbelltown.

What makes us different?

- » **Child-led counselling** – young people are in full control of their therapeutic journey
- » **No time limits** – we provide long-term support, allowing children to heal at their own pace
- » **Creative approaches** – we use art, play, sand and storytelling to help children feel safe and express themselves
- » **Wraparound support** – we work with families, schools and services when children choose

“Counselling at Rosebank was the first time I felt listened to.”

Young person, Liverpool

“I now understand my child’s behaviour. Thank you Rosebank.”

Parent, Campbelltown.

Your support – large or small – directly helps vulnerable children and families in your community.

Partner with us:

- » **Major sponsorship** – expand counselling and reduce wait times
- » **Regular donations** – run group programs
- » **One-off gifts** – offer interpreters, art therapy resources

***We are a small service with big ideas and heart.
With your help, we can do even more.***



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Website: www.rosebank.org.au

Donate: www.rosebank.org.au/donate

