



Annual Report 2023-24

# Rosebank... it's a gem



# There's no place like Rosebank... it's a gem.

## *Rosebank supports children and young people to heal and flourish.*

It is Rosebank's long history working with the trauma of sexual abuse in our community that makes us the precious gem that we are. Established in 1985, we are one of the oldest sexual abuse services in NSW.

We hold the same name, the same contact number and are located in the same building almost 40 years later. During that time however, our expertise, experience and unique relationship with children and young people changed because it grew and grew.

We're constantly reminded of how valuable we've been to the community when children of the past, as adults, reach out again. They felt safe with Rosebank as children and they trust us still to direct them to where

they can get comparable support as adults.

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 are a small service with big ideas and heart. We actively seek opportunities to build new networks, partnerships and connect with new funds.



# Contents

Chairperson's Report	4
Our Management Committee	5
Coordinator's Report	6
Welcome...	7
Our other valuable team members	8
Farewell Tracy Phillips	9
Thank you to the families	10
Acknowledgements and thanks	11



# Chairperson's Report



**A**s Chairperson of the Management Committee, it's so rewarding to see all the incremental improvements to the space and the growth of our beautiful service over time. What a privilege it is to share the long-

term successes and see the service flourish in the community.

Looking back over the last year, I see that domestic, family and sexual violence has been a very prominent issue in public discussion. Gendered violence against women and children is at the forefront of media and minds, perhaps to an extent it has not been before.

This means Rosebank's identity as part of a network of services and agencies dedicated to support and healing has never been more important. We are increasingly recognised by funding bodies for the quality of our services to children and their families. It's disheartening to acknowledge that the need for our services is not diminishing but Rosebank's ability to meet that need is reassuring and a reason to be proud.

In May we farewelled Tracy Phillips, a dedicated supporter and friend of Rosebank. Tracy has been a member of Rosebank's Management Committee since 2016 and her connection with Rosebank goes back many more years. Tracy has also retired from her role as Executive Officer at Bonnie Support Services. Her depth of experience in managing a service in the sector has been invaluable to Rosebank and the Management Committee. We also enjoyed Tracy's deep understanding of the needs of adults and children who have experienced gendered

violence. The opportunities for collaboration with Bonnie Support Services has been a great mutual benefit and will continue. Tracy has been a wise voice, an experienced guide through complex territory, an unflappable Secretary/office bearer and a compassionate supporter of the whole team. We will miss Tracy a lot and wish her all the best for a new adventure.

The Committee will seek a new member in due course. Our members have a variety of backgrounds, experience and expertise in the public and NGO sectors. Mindful of the advantages of different perspectives we will be seeking to widen that experience in a new recruit. Committee members share a strong belief in the Rosebank mission and values, the ability to see possibilities and the wish to support the team in their essential work. The reward is in helping to give young people a future.

To Amanda goes our greatest respect and appreciation for her intelligent and thoughtful management and for her ethical and collaborative leadership. Thanks go to our awesome counsellors, Nicole, Melissa, Ruth, Katie and Milena as they continue their excellent client work. Thanks also to Heike, our Finance Officer, whose knowledge and commitment is essential.

To Committee members Claire, Debra, Jemma and Tracy, much appreciation for the thoughtful discussions. It's always such a pleasure to share our thoughts at meetings and to look forward together.

**Alison Huggan**

*Chairperson, Rosebank Management Committee*

***... Rosebank's identity as part of a network of services and agencies dedicated to support and healing has never been more important. We are increasingly recognised by funding bodies for the quality of our services to children and their families.***

# Our Management Committee



**Alison Huggan**

Role: Chairperson (Senior Sexual Assault Counsellor, Retired July 2022)

*I've always been really impressed that no matter how tricky things get, and how short of time and resources, there's never any question of compromising the commitment to excellence.*

*I'm proud that we never, never drop the standard, no matter what.*



**Jemma Milloy**

Role: Secretary (Aboriginal Workforce Manager, People and Culture, South Western Sydney Local Health District)

*As a new member, I felt proud when we were working on our strategic goals. It showed me how the committee and the staff collaborate so closely and I could hear the voices of the children and the families in the ideas as well. I love the holistic thinking about the wellbeing of children and families.*



**Debra Venables**

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

*I have been a part of Rosebank's Management for over 10 years and have always been proud of the service and the unique position Rosebank holds in the community. I admire, the commitment and expertise of the team (both past and present) and fellow Committee members.*



**Tracy Phillips**

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

*Rosebank does a lot with very little and I'm always excited and admiring of the ideas that the team comes up with, especially considering the little time you must have. They're these great, great things and always professional, polished and thoughtful.*



**Claire Affleck-Warn**

Role: Ordinary Member (Service Manager, Headspace Liverpool)

*Our counsellors at Headspace are always so happy when they've managed to get a young client into Rosebank for specialist help... and when I see that, it always makes me so proud to be on the Board. And I love that Rosebank has been around for such a long time - all that expertise over years as a feminist service.*

# Coordinator's Report



*I'm writing at the end of another year of feeling proud of the work we do.*

Our clients' resilience and strength inspires us every day and we have the privilege to see their world through their eyes, and their voice.

It was a very positive year for us. Our counselling and group work was again at the heart of the holistic wraparound service that is so important to us. Thank you to our wonderful Rosebank team and Management Committee. We all work so hard to find the best outcomes for our service. It is wonderful to have such knowledge and skills for us all to share and support each other with. As a team we were able to share some highlights including Rosebank's new website going live, our staff Christmas party with the Braveheart's Sydney education team, our planning day and attending our beautiful CASAC conference in Bundanoon.

As with every year, Rosebank has been looking out for opportunities. We are constantly writing submissions, applying for grants, strengthening our networks and doing all we can to uphold our reputation with the community. This year, our hopes to reach further, and deeper into our community took hold.

It brings me great pride and excitement to report we have been offered two years new funding specifically for a new sexual abuse counsellor, starting in the 2024-2025 new financial year. The funding comes from the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ), National Partnership Agreement, new frontline workers program. I can't overestimate what a fantastic development this is for us.

Our new counsellor for this position, Sogol, and this new funding, will make a huge difference to work we can do and the number of families we can engage with. We take the news of this funding achievement as an acknowledgement of the great work we do and excites us into the future. It's encouraging to know we will be able to support many more vulnerable families who need our help and do much more for our community.

And the good news continues! A re-shuffle of our counselling hours has allowed us to also recruit two new counsellors, Milena, under our ongoing Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) TEI funding and Katie, with our partnership with Bonnie Support Services.

Our three new counsellors will: complement and strengthen the specialist skills and experience we already hold. It feels like we have been waiting a long time. Last year I wrote in the Annual Report that over the past year, '... we felt the disappointment of losing funding and a counselling position .... but Rosebank's resilience shines through and we don't give up.'

And we didn't give up! Thank you to the Management Committee and team for all your strength, commitment, belief and hard work over the last year. Now, we can enjoy new energy, ideas and beliefs and it's time to celebrate!

**Amanda Pardy**

*Coordinator*



*CASAC Conference, March 2024*

# Welcome...



## **Milena Mijajlovic**

As a fellow CASAC member (child and adolescent sexual assault counsellor), Milena brings a wealth of experience in working with children, young people, women and families

impacted by sexual abuse and domestic violence. Milena has a degree in social work and is an accredited mental health social worker. She has also completed additional training in Circle of security, Tuning into teens, 123 magic and Lovebites. Her one day position is funded under the DCJ TEI program with our other counsellors Nicole and Melissa. Milena's positive vibrant energy complements our team beautifully and we are very grateful to have her at Rosebank.



## **Katie Moyle**

Katie brings her wisdom of working with people with disabilities and mental health. Katie has a Graduate Diploma of counselling and her natural ability to listen, build trust and support clients with complex needs

is invaluable. Her love for dance, movement and creativity shines through her engagement with children and group facilitation. We look forward to seeing the fun and support she can offer the Kidz Space groups with Bonnie's support services.



## **Sogol Rezaei**

Sogol brings a strong understanding of trauma. Her extensive years of working in South West Sydney supporting women at risk of homelessness and/or escaping domestic

violence strengthens her experience in working with families and culturally diverse communities. She has extensive experience working in schools with children and young people and with Victims Services. Sogol has a strong understanding of the complexities of sexual assault counselling and supporting clients after disclosures of abuse. Sogol has a Masters in Psychotherapy and Counselling.

This new counsellor position is funded under the Department of Communities and Justice, National Partnership Agreement, new workers program. It funds a counsellor to work with young people in the Liverpool area with a culturally and linguistically diverse background. It requires a counsellor to specialise in sexual assault. Sogol, with all her ability to speak Farsi and Dari, and her experience and skills working with trauma in diverse communities, she is an absolute asset to join our team.



## Our other valuable team members



**Melissa MacLean**  
Counsellor/Advocate



**Nicole Soto**  
Counsellor/Advocate



**Ruth Ellem**  
Group Facilitator



**Heike Obermayr**  
Finance Officer





# Tracy Phillips... farewell and thank you from all of us



Tracy Phillips

***This year, longtime Management Committee member and friend, Tracy Phillips, stepped down from her role at Rosebank to enjoy a sparkling, new phase of life.***

***Until recently, Tracy was Executive Officer of Bonnie Support Services too. Bonnie's is a valued partner of Rosebank and Tracy will be sorely missed in both capacities.***

***We asked her to share some memories of her time with Rosebank which amazingly, spanned over two decades.***

I've been in the Domestic and Family Violence sector for many years.

I joined the Rosebank board around 2001 when I was managing Joan Harrison Support Services for Women which was a single women's refuge in Liverpool. And it continued of course, with just a little beak, when I joined Bonnies. It was really just a way to have some input into what I thought was a really valuable service. The connection between our work with women and Rosebank's focus on children who've experienced sexual abuse was clear and compelling. Many of the women we supported at the refuge had histories of childhood sexual abuse and this makes Rosebank's work critically important to the big picture.

What drew me there though, and what I've always appreciated, is its nature as a small, specialised not-for-profit organisation. These smaller services have so much to offer – they provide specialised, personalised care that's deeply rooted in the community.

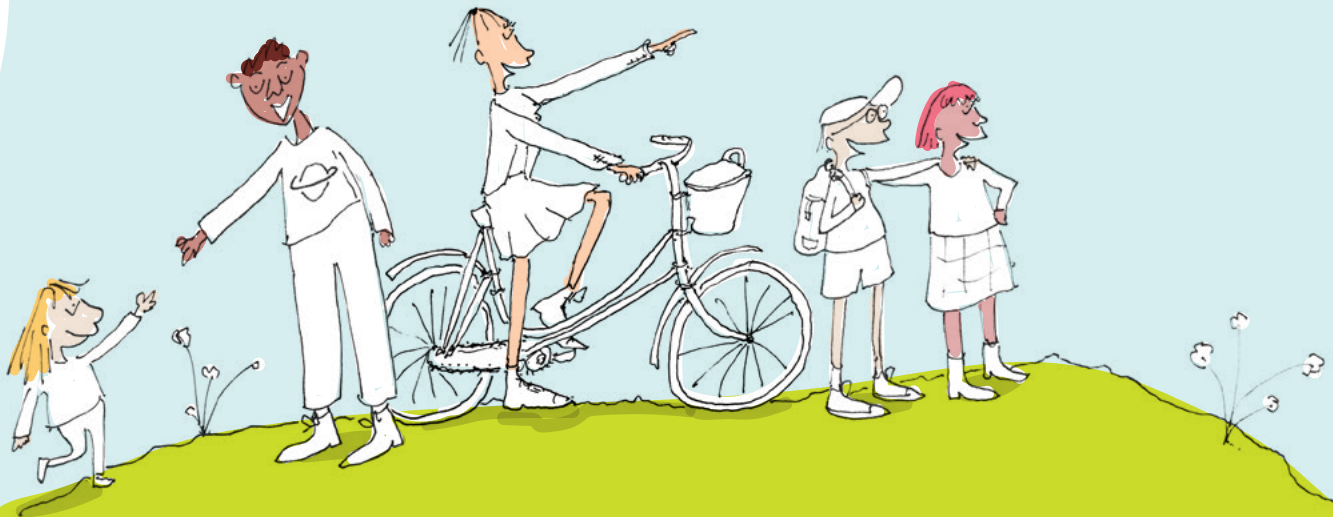
Rosebank exemplifies the best of this: delivering high-quality services with limited resources, a testament to the passion and dedication of its staff and leadership. Over the years all the managers I knew were really passionate themselves and gave it their all.

Over the years, we faced numerous challenges but one that stands out was a period of ongoing uncertainty about our accommodation. Because Rosebank deals with such sensitive issues, finding a space that offered privacy, accessibility, and a welcoming environment was crucial but not easy. Despite these hurdles, the team's resilience and commitment never faltered and now they're back of course, in their beautifully restored old building.

I'm really proud of Rosebank's evolution and growth, particularly in recent years. They've made big strides in forming partnerships with Aboriginal services and expanding the work in multicultural spaces. The introduction of programs like Kidz Space, in partnership with Bonnies, has been a fantastic development. These initiatives, along with the organisation's increased focus on working with Aboriginal children and CALD families, were fantastic to watch.

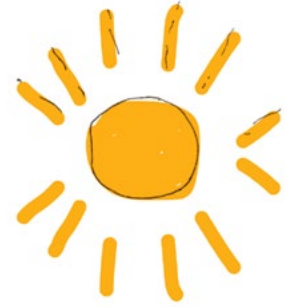
I'm confident that Rosebank will continue to prosper with its dedicated leadership, a committed board, and a clear vision for its role in the community. While my decision to leave is partly personal now that I've retired from Bonnie's: it's also about passing the baton and allowing for new perspectives and partnerships to grow.

To everyone at Rosebank – the staff, my fellow committee members, and especially the children and families – I leave happily knowing that you will continue to be a vital force in our community. I'm very proud to have had a small part.



*Thank you to the families that engage with us. We are constantly inspired by your strength. Thank you for the energy of the parents and carers, your commitment is needed to make things better for your children. Thank you for the hard work of the young people and children we see. You are all so brave to share your fears, thoughts and troubles, you open up and be vulnerable. It really is a honour to witness this. We know it isn't easy to express yourself but you do. Overall, with all the tears, sadness and worries, thank you for filling our building with your laughter and kindness.*





## 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 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.

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 \$5,000 for the installation of external lighting under the Federal Government Stronger Communities Programme. The project has improved security and highlights the historic building to the public.

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.

Lastly, we would like to acknowledge and thank our various individual supporters and donors throughout the year. 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 2024 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.*

When Rosebank Child Sexual Abuse Service was established in 1985, it would have been a challenge to visualise the significant changes that were to come. Whilst we all hold onto the dream of a world in which all children are free from sexual abuse and violence, indeed it is our vision, now, in a new millennium, the work of Rosebank embraces the new and continues to anticipate change.

*We are a small service with big ideas and heart.  
We actively seek opportunities to bring safety and new possibilities  
to our community. Working together we can build new networks,  
partnerships and connect with new funds.*

## Learn more

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

