



Rosie's Place is a counselling and support service for children, young people and families seeking freedom from violence.

2022 ANNUAL REPORT





As a community we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land on which we work, the Darug people of the Darug nation. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, traditions, cultures and hopes of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We acknowledge that Australia was, and always will be. Aboriginal land.

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Collective Management

We wish to thank our wonderful collective members who have given us so much support in the past year. It is important to acknowledge and thank this wonderful group of people for their time, commitment and continuing support of Rosie's Place and all who come into contact with her. Their commitment to all management responsibilities is constant and their wisdom in regard to the challenges of the last year has been a guiding light.

We thank each and every one of these amazing people who individually and as a group are an integral part in the ongoing work of Rosie's Place.

Rosie's Place Team

The strength of Rosie's Place has always relied on highly skilled, professional, and dedicated members of staff. It would not be an overstatement to say that in the past year the wealth of innovative, dignity driven and proudly held work practices of this organisation would not have occurred without our current staff.

We continue to be guided by the amazing Cathy Want, whose commitment to the service is always unwavering. Her guidance, wisdom and support of us as a team reminds us of the privilege it is to work together and ensure clients are always at the centre of our work.

The names below must all be recognised as the fabric of our small yet inspiring team, which would be the envy of an organisation in this field.

Maggie Escartin	Counsellor/Groupworker/Resource Development
My Gago	Counsellor/ Intake
Nat Johnson	Counsellor/From All Sides Project Worker
Matilda Mantel	Counsellor/ Intake
Linda Marsonet	Bookkeeper/Miracle Worker
Nicole Miller	Counsellor/Redress Support Worker
Aidan Palacios	Counsellor/Redress Support Worker
Josene Perri	Administration Manager
Ben Thompson	Counsellor/Trainer/From All Sides Project Worker
Cathy Want	Service Manager/Counsellor/Trainer



Collective Members

Krystal Evans
Steve Hare
Marnel Lagarde
Pauline McRae
Aneeta Menon
Robyn Pearson
Deb Spence

Service Acknowledgments

Rosie's Place receives its core funding from NSW Department of Communities and Justice under the TEI (Targeted Early Intervention) funding stream.

Rosie's Place is able to extend the work of the service through additional grants and donations. We would especially like to acknowledge:

- Blacktown Area Community Centre Donation
- Club Blacktown (formally known as Blacktown RSL)
- Corrections NSW Donation (Probation and Parole)
- Hillsong Donations
- Department of Communities and Justice (COVID Partnership)
- Department of Communities and Justice (Multicultural NSW)
- Department of Communities and Justice (Social Sector)
- Department of Communities and Justice (Women NSW)
- Department of Industry, Innovation and Science (Stronger Communities Programme)
- Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (Safer Communities)
- Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources (Powering Communities Program)
- Department of Infrastructure (Community Building Partnership)
- Department of Social Services (Redress Support Services)
- Education Centre Against Violence (Women NSW grant)
- Good360 Donation
- NSW Ministry of Health (Project Delivery Office)
- Transurban Group Donation
- UBS Asset Management Australia Ltd Donation
- West Tradies Dharruk
- Westpac Group (Safer Children, Safer Communities)

Our special thanks to the Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV), Sydney West Area Health Service. Our thanks to the entire team for their ongoing, unwavering support of our service.

We wish to acknowledge many of the local services who we continue to work closely with. They include: SAGE Community Services (formally Parramatta Holroyd Family Support), WASH House, Family Violence Team Mt Drutt, Department of Education, Catholic Education Diocese & Joint Investigation Response Team.

Personal Thanks

Rosie's Place is in the unique position of being supported by so many personal and professional connections. All these people have supported the service over the past several years through their fundraising efforts, professional supervision, professional support, advice, and donating their time to support the work of the service.

We thank the following people for their ongoing support of Rosie's Place:

Edmond Atalla MP
Elizabeth Botte
Krystal Evans
Jo Fuller

Ed Husic MP
Isabelle Khoury
Marnel Lagarde

Mary-Jo McVeigh
Anna Mae Marquez
Linda Marsonet

Aneeta Menon
Donna Roesse
Catherine White

A Year In Review

The year 2021-2022 has been a bit more of the same again that everyone experienced in the last financial year.

COVID continued to invade people's lives and time and time again the families we meet with were both housebound and impacted by the physical toll that COVID took on their overall wellbeing, physically, emotionally and mentally.

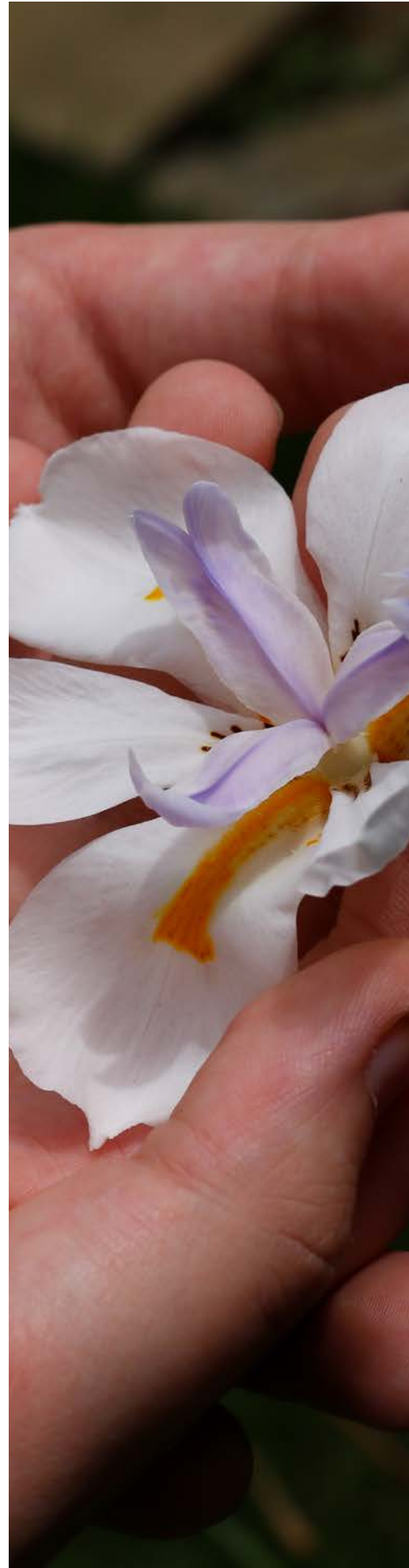
The service had workers fall ill with the virus and it seemed that the usual routines undertaken at Rosie's Place would never resume. At the start of 2022 it seemed as though the old ways of working were returning and then again another outbreak would occur and further restrictions put in place to try and ensure that people were protected as much as possible but also provided with as much practical support as possible by the organisation.

Directed funding by the Department of Communities and Justice enabled the service to undertake practice ways of responding to families over the twelve months of this financial year which included the following:

- Packages for families that were delivered to their home or collected from the service. They contained vouchers, household items, games and craft activities to keep families occupied during lockdown.
- On-line groups were developed and held for children and young people. Packages accompanying the groups were delivered to people's homes.
- Counsellors used Zoom and also phones (direct calls/ messages) to stay in touch but it was obvious that face-to-face contact was preferred by most clients.

There is no doubt that COVID brought with it fellow travellers of increased stress for families, difficulties managing schoolwork from home, the financial burdens to families due to electric and gas costs over the winter period, and most importantly, enforced isolation and separation from familiar supports of extended family, neighbours, friends and services.

Although there has been what could be called "a return to normality", COVID has and continues to impact on our work. Families are hesitant to engage in face-to-face groupwork at the service and therefore we have not been able to successfully re-start our groupwork programs for children, young people and adults which have always been a strong component of our work.



There has been an escalation of distress across family members, leading to responses of increased anxiety, disruptions in relationships due to increased stress, and for children and young people, difficulty returning to school routines and being in classrooms.

What has also occurred has been an increasing use by children and young people of the internet to maintain some sense of social contact, but this brings with it constant embroilment in arguments between peers and increased risk of online hate speech, bullying and sexual harassment and violence. However there has also been a responses from services and organisations to this increasing concern and in particular the ESafety Commissioner has developed ongoing resources that seek to support the safety of children and young people with information to both these population groups as well as parents and carers.

Women's NSW & NSW Health Education Centre Against Violence (ECAV) - In Their Own Words

Information about this project is on the following page.

I would like to extend heartfelt thanks to both Jo Perri for driving this project and working in such a solid partnership with our amazing illustrator Elizabeth Botte, Without both women this project would not be producing what I believe are amazing resources for the sector which will also enhance support for their clients.

I would also like to acknowledge the opportunity provided to us to work for the Redress Scheme. Our grant is particularly focused on young people who have experienced institutional sexualised violence and we are extremely grateful for the opportunity to undertake this work over two years.

We also acknowledge other Western Sydney based services that have existing Redress funding (The Women's Cottage, Richmond & SAMSN, Parramatta) as well as another service with first time funding, The WASH House, Mt Druitt.

Throughout this year Rosie's continues the necessary tradition of seeking additional funding from grants. We have been extremely successful in this financial year with projects funded by several government and philanthropic organisations.

The totality of those grants is listed in this report and we are extremely grateful for the extended opportunity the grants provide us in developing innovative ways of responding to families and developing ongoing resources.

In particular I would like to mention two sources of funding which have provided such opportunities.

During this past year Rosie's Place has continued to receive professional fees from our contracted work with the Education Centre Against Violence, NSW Health for curriculum development, training and clinical supervision, the latter provided by Ben Thompson to students of the Graduate Certificate for Interpersonal Violence, Abuse & Neglect.

In addition I would acknowledge that two members of our team, My Gago and Nicole Miller, undertook the Graduate Certificate this past year. Nicole is due to finish and graduate and My will finish in 2023, the delay due to her taking maternity leave in 2021.

I would particularly like to acknowledge the ongoing work undertaken by our small but dedicated team and know that the reputation of our organisation, both in community and interstate, is due to the knowledge, skills, humility and most of all deep passion they hold for this work and the families we are so privileged to meet.

In Their Own Words

In 2021 Rosie's Place received funding from Education Centre Against Violence, this funding from Women NSW was to create resources that would support adults with intellectual disabilities who had been impacted by sexual assault.

The following information formed part of the background for the project.

Adults with intellectual disability are more at risk of subjection to sexualised violence but their access to service responses are restricted due to not only the legacies of such violence (fear, shame, isolation, powerlessness) but the systemic barriers created against them to receive both support and justice.

This project will have both a research base and resource development focus. It will utilise current evidence and best practice material, supplemented by a consultancy component with current service providers in the disability and sexual assault area, as well as current clients with intellectual disability who have experienced sexual assault.

This project aims to:

Bridge the collaborative divide between the different service sectors (disability and sexual assault) who have responsibilities and therefore a duty of care toward adults and young people with intellectual disability who have been subjected to sexualised violence;

Increase skills and knowledge to enhance worker confidence and therefore their levels of response (awareness, appropriateness, empathy, legal advocacy) in safeguarding the protection and ongoing wellbeing of this most vulnerable client group;

Provide guidance and resources that support sound standards of practice within (and between) organisations;

Clearly articulate the cultural shifts in the workplace that are required to achieve best practice, namely from beliefs of "we can't do the work" or "won't do the work" or "can't they do the work" to principles of "we can do the work", "must do the work", "will do the work" and "we will do this work together".

The work is almost completed is made up of online training package, conversation booklets, easy read information sheets, workers guide and fact sheets.

All this information will be made available through our website. The following is an extract from one of the conversation books.

"I know feel safe to talk with my mum about what happened to me because the person that hurt me can't find me"
- 12yr old girl and her mother



Extract from Conversation Book - Being Safe Online

Illustrated by Elizabeth Botte

Jenny met Tom on a dating app.



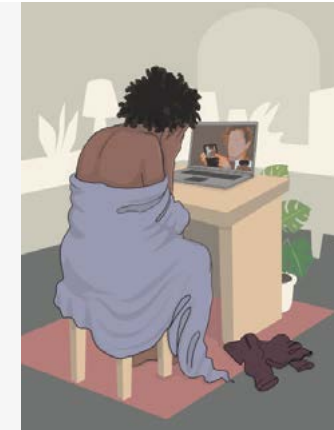
They talked everyday - Jenny really liked Tom.



Tom sent her naked photos to other people.

The people he sent them to sent those photos to more people.

Tom asked Jenny to send him a photo of herself without clothes on.



Jenny's mum was worried about her and kept talking to her trying to help her.

Jenny told her mum what had happened with Tom.

Tom then asked Jenny to loan him some money.



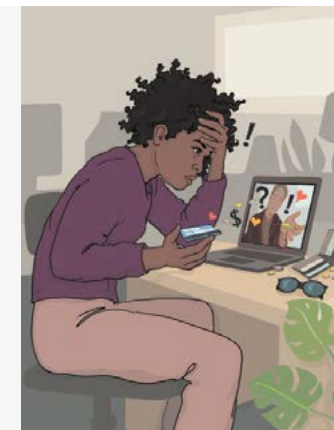
He said he would pay her back.



Jenny and her mum went to the Police.

Jenny told the Police what Tom had done.

Jenny sent Tom some money, but she didn't want to.



The Police were able to track Tom down and arrest him.

He was not allowed to contact Jenny again.

National Redress Scheme Support Service

We are extremely honoured to have received funding from the Department of Social Services to provide Redress Support Services to children, young people and adults across NSW.

The National Redress Scheme was established in response to recommendations by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The scheme aims to hold institutions accountable for the harm people suffered as children in their care and help those who suffered institutional abuse access support. The support the National Redress Scheme provides includes access to counselling support, a direct personal response from the institution responsible, and a monetary payment. Rosie's Place has extensive skills and experience supporting children, young people and families who have experienced childhood sexual assault. Dynamics specific to institutional abuse include: separation from family and community, dependency for safety on others, self-placement by offenders, closed cultures maintaining their power and influence and refusal to respond to disclosures. Such a context has been defined as "institutional betrayal". (Blakemore et al, 2017)

Rosie's Place implements trauma informed practice, evidenced by our policies and procedures, client information packages, including rights of clients at the service, resource development and ongoing worker training and professional development. The service holds both a trauma informed and violence informed framework to guide practice, linking the occurrence of trauma as a response to interpersonal violence and abuse, most notably child sexual abuse. This places emphasis on a person's various experiences of past and ongoing violence as the cause of the trauma and avoids seeing the problem as residing in the person's physical, emotional, psychological, social and spiritual state.

National Redress Scheme

For people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse

What is the National Redress Scheme?

The Scheme is a way to support people who went through child sexual assault while in the care of an institution, or while an institution was supposed to be looking after them.

Why was the National Redress Scheme started?

The Scheme was started after the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The Scheme aims to:

Acknowledge that many children and young people were harmed while under the care of an institution

Recognise the ongoing suffering of those who were harmed

Hold institutions accountable for the abuse

Help people who have experienced institutional abuse access support

What is an Institution?

An institution includes some of the following groups:



Churches



Hospitals



Schools



Detention Centres



Police



Sports Club



Foster/Youth



Community

Who can apply?

You can make an application to the National Redress Scheme if:

- You experienced sexual abuse when you were under the age of 18
- The abuse happened before 1st July 2018
- An institution was responsible for bringing you into contact with the person who abused you
- You will be 18 years old or older on 30th June 2028
- At the time you apply, you are an Australian citizen or a permanent resident, and
- You have not made a Redress application previously

Our practice principles adhere to a public health model and to the National Redress Scheme Service Charter across all levels of intervention and a biopsychosocial framework, including intersectional considerations and the importance of cultural responsiveness to diverse groups.

In July 2022 Rosie's Place began participating in the National Redress Scheme as a Redress Support Service. Rosie's Place currently holds two Redress Support Workers whose roles are to provide support to those seeking to make an application to the National Redress Scheme. As part of this, Rosie's Place specialises in working with those under the age of 25 who are eligible to make an application under the scheme.

We wish to acknowledge the great work both Nicole and Aidan have done to get our Redress Support Services up and running. Their compassion and dedication to people who are applying to the scheme is unwavering and will ensure best possible outcomes for all clients.

Rosie's Place Redress Website

If you would like to follow more about our National Redress Scheme efforts, please follow the below QR code to our website.



"I appreciate the support from Rosie's place as my nephew feels safe and comfortable to talk about the difficult things from his past"
- Carer/aunt of 11yr old boy

A Right to Belong

In 2019 Rosie's Place received funding from the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources under the Safer Communities Fund Round 4 to develop a training program that promotes respect and inclusion for children from migrant and refugee backgrounds living in Greater Western Sydney. During 2021-2022 this training program was developed into an online training package called The Right to Belong.

The Right to Belong online training package is hosted on the RISE training platform and will be accessible through the Rosie's Place website by the end of 2022. The training package is accessible for free and is targeted for adults working with or who have children. The purpose of the training package is to educate adults about racism so to be equipped to talk about racism with children and raise them as "anti-racist allies".

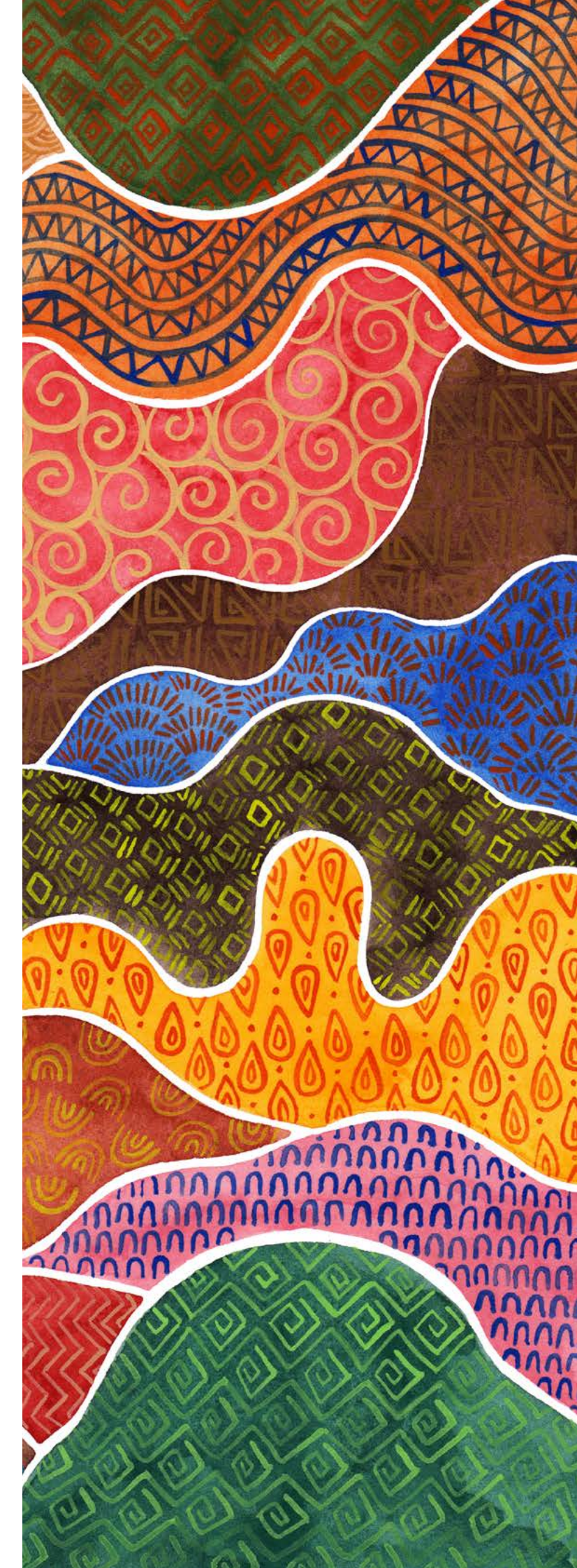
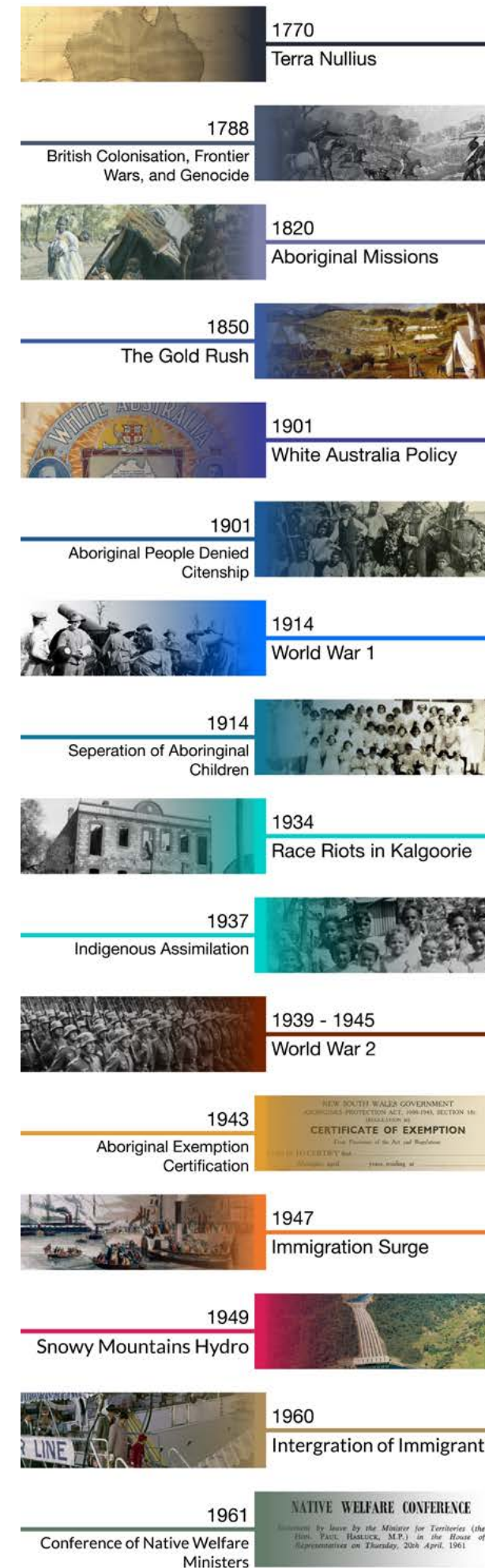
The training package contains three modules: Understanding racism, Australian history and racism, and Talking to children about racism. The first module, "Understanding racism", is focused on what racism looks like in Australia and the different forms of racism that exist. The second module, "Australian history and racism", explores the history of racism and how this has influenced modern day racism, and contains a timeline of significant events in Australian history that are racially significant. The third module, "Talking to children about racism", discusses child development and how to best discuss racism with children up to the age of 12 years old.

This wonderful program was funded back in 2019 but had several false starts due to covid and other delays. We are so grateful to Aidan for getting this project back on track and producing a comprehensive, respectful and engaging training package. Available on our website, it will be a valuable resource for the community.

Racism Statistics



Timeline of Racism in Australia



From All Sides Project

Toward the end of the last financial year the Project Delivery Office, NSW Ministry of Health approached Rosie's Place to contract the service to submit an expression of interest for a project focussed on children with problematic and/or harmful sexual behaviour. Rosie's Place submitted the application and the funding for the project was granted.

The Project is called 'From All Sides'. From All Sides is targeted at secondary level- early intervention responses to children, parents, and community in the context of children who display concerning sexualised behaviours. Rosie's Place selected this target area due to the significant role early intervention has on supporting children who display concerning sexualised behaviours.

The three primary objectives are:

1 Advance community collaboration and coordinated and consistent responses, recognising that children may interact with a range of different services and community-based organisations

2 Develop specific engaging and relevant material to engage cohorts of children, families and carers and communities informed by extensive community consultation

3 Equip parents, carers and communities with information via suitable forums to raise awareness of concerning sexualised behaviours and how to respond to children with care, support, direction and dignity

The four main project activities:

Community and Sector Engagement:

Conduct community consultation, engagement and education activities via online and face-to-face modes to build capacity to respond to concerning sexualised behaviours.

Sector Needs Assessment:

Auditing and needs assessment of current community sector operational policies and procedures to appropriately respond to PHSB and work in partnership with the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) to support implementation of Child Safe Standards.

The Aim of the project is to improve the social and emotional wellbeing of children with problematic sexualised behaviours by building the capacity of relevant workforce, families and carers, and communities to identify, understand and respond to behaviour and mitigate the risk of further escalation by facilitating appropriate support. The activity will be implemented across Blacktown LGA in NSW.



Resource and Support Development:

Develop accessible and succinct information, resources and assessment tools to enable early responders to identify, understand and appropriately support children who have displayed inappropriate, problematic and therefore initially concerning sexualised behaviours based on community consultation with key priority populations.

Evaluation:

Conduct an independent evaluation to capture impact of activities and build evidence for what works.

Project progress summary:

- The project management is the responsibility of Catherine Want.
- Two project workers (Ben Thompson & Natalie Johnson) applied for the positions and have been employed to undertake the project.
- The bookkeeper (Linda Marsonet) for Rosie's Place, along with Josene Perri, has set out a budget until the end of the financial year (June 2023).
- Membership for the Advisory Group has been almost finalised.
- An External evaluator (Catherine White) has been contracted for the longevity of the project and has been involved in completing the Project plan and program Logic.
- The project has engaged an external contractor (Krystal Evans) to help develop both ethics committee applications.
- Applications for the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network Human Research Ethics Committee and the Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council of NSW Human Research Ethics Committee are underway.
- Natalie Johnson, our Aboriginal project worker, is leading and planning initial consultations with key Aboriginal services in the community to begin conversations about the project and seek their support for ongoing involvement. Cathy Want is focused on both literature review and documenting initial project planning.
- Current policies and procedures of the organisation regarding responding to children who display PHSB, is being reviewed by Catherine Want.
- Rosie's Place is also developing practice priorities when responding to children who display concerning sexualised behaviours.
- Catherine Want has begun conversations with the Director of ECAV (Peta Anderson) and the Team Leader of the IVANI Portfolio (Donna Roese) to form a partnership approach in this project. This will ensure that the project complements rather than in any way crosses over the work that ECAV is undertaking in this field.
- Contact has also been made with regarding Children's Commission regarding Child Safe Standards and incorporation into organisations' policies and procedures.
- Rosie's Place submitted the first progress report to the Project Delivery Office, NSW Ministry of Health on the 30th September 2022.

The team is looking forward to engaging with the community to fulfil the project aims and objectives. The team is also looking forward to developing the resources to support children who display concerning sexualised behaviours and their parents, carers and/or other significant adults.



More Than the Sum of Parts: Children's Responses to Interpersonal Violence

Recently, Cathy and Nicole did a talk for The Hatchery conference – Child Centred Approaches to Family Violence, this is an extract from their talk.

When working with children and young people who have been subjected to interpersonal violence there are co-existing discourses regarding not only their status as a child or young person but the impacts of violence on their sense of self, the attack on their belief that the world should be a safe place and the unjust disruptions on their connections to relationships and what should be ongoing pathways of being and becoming.

The rightful response to support children and their families by inviting them to engage with a counselling service seeks to provide a safe space in which the ongoing shadows of both the harm they experienced, and the impacts of that harm can be lightened.

Accordingly, approaches to the work have been strongly aligned to a language base and practice that identifies key aspects in the work, aligned by trauma informed and biopsychosocial assessments and accompanying interventions that can include attachment focused family therapy, emotional regulation, arousal reduction, shifting concerning behaviours for the child and strengthening supportive and protective factors to foster ongoing safety.

Whilst always holding and referring to the wealth of practice knowledge that has arisen in this therapeutic area of work it is also a critical component of practice to situate that knowledge in a place that invites curiosity about the wisdom, skills and values that children hold and how we may provide the space so that they may tell us.

In the context of our core work we are also violence informed and hold a strong position that in order to best respond to the children, young people and their families who we work with we must provide an environment of safety and dignity that will support them to reveal not only their experiences of harm but also their responses to that harm. What must not be lost are the many stories of the ways in which children resisted against those acts of power held over them and found ways to hold onto a part of themselves that was never overtaken by their abuse.

Children also remain expert storytellers around themes of hope and possibilities for their future. A child who is just learning to read and write will tell you that they will one day fly to the moon or be in the Olympics or become the Prime Minister of Australia. They share with friends a belief about themselves that are filled with stories of adventure and achievement. These stories and others come from both lived experiences but also access to a well of magic, imagination and creativity, that is the ownership of childhood itself. Holding such resources and being able to reveal them through our work with them is a gift that children will generously share if invited to.



Presentation

Once upon a time...

Once upon a time, we had a very different understanding children in the context of domestic and family violence.

What children experience

- Hearing the violence
- Directly seeing their mother abused
- Observing their mother's injury or distress
- Living with tension and fear in the home
- Themselves being hurt by the violence either directly or by trying to intervene
- Experiencing threats to their mother, other family members and / or pets

What children experience cont.

- Being used by the perpetrator to "collude" in the violence (e.g. provide information about their mother, criticise their mother)
- Being used as a hostage
- Dealing with a parent who alternates between violence and a caring role
- Seeing the parents being arrested, not coming home or not hearing from them for days, weeks or months
- Having to leave home with a parent and/or dislocation from family, friends and school

What they hold and hide

- They may try to convince people they are not responding to the violence they are experiencing
- They may pretend that nothing has happened, and everything is normal
- They may work hard to reassure others that what they were exposed to has been forgotten
- They wake up in the morning, get dressed for school, eat their breakfast and say goodbye to their parents

But what are they thinking, feeling, worrying about, or wanting to do instead of pretending everything is normal?

"I like Rosie's Place because my counsellor listens to me and they help me and my mum talk together about the hard things"
- 8yr old girl and her mother

Projects & Donations

Good360

Rosie's Place is a member of a charity distribution company called Good 360. Good 360 receives donated goods from companies and then distributes those goods to charities who can pass items onto families. In the past year we have received some amazing children's gifts for our clients including many Lego sets. These donations have been used as gifts for children, but also as part of our counselling and groupwork. Lego is a great medium to use in counselling sessions and as part of working in a team with peers to build some big Lego sets together. We are forever grateful to Good360 for these donations, it has had a huge impact on our clients.



Car and Fence

In 2021 Rosie's Place was successful for two grants under the Community Building Partnership Program. This grant is run through our local NSW state member Edmond Atalla. The grant focusses on capital expenditure and Rosie's Place and one grant allowed us to purchase a new vehicle for the service.

The other grant was to make repairs to our fence and revamp of our back garden. These ongoing capital grants make a huge difference to the service and ensure we can continue our work supporting the community.

"Court was so stressful and I am grateful that Rosie's Place was able to assist me at court"
- 17yr old young woman

Christmas Donations

In 2021 we were approached by Corrections NSW Silverwater (Probation and Parole). The workers in administration were keen to run a toy drive for all the children at Rosie's Place and have them ready for distribution by Christmas. All the staff across several corrections centres contributed money and then a couple of their staff went Christmas shopping and filled two cars worth of gifts for our families. This was an amazing and generous donation and all the clients at Rosie's were very grateful. The amount of gifts that were dropped off filled the entire back room at Rosie's Place and as children came to pick up presents that were overwhelmed by the gifts they could pick from. It was magic to watch and share their excitement. We are very grateful to Corrections NSW Silverwater for this donation and the wonderful experiences given to all the clients at Rosie's.



Solar Panels

In 2021 Rosie's Place was successful for a grant with Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources under the Powering Communities Program. This grant provided the service with funds to install solar panels on the house to ensure sustainability and renewable energy for our service long term. This installation has greatly reduced our carbon footprint and there has also been a dramatic reduction in electricity costs.

We are very appreciative of the funds provided to the service for this grant. It has been a huge success and we are noticing a big change in electricity costs.

"It has been helpful to have the time and space be able to talk together as a mum and son about the worries we have. Being able to talk about the worries helps the worries"
- 8yr old boy and his mother



Online Groupwork 2021-2022

During the COVID-19 lockdown in Sydney in 2021, Rosie's was in a position of wanting to provide going group work support for clients, but in an accessible format. As such Rosie's developed and facilitate two online children's groups throughout September and November 2021.

During the time that was dominated by COVID, children and young people were dealing with many stressors such as separation from school and friends, lack of physical activities, loss of daily routines, family struggles with having "everyone home" and the unknown of how long their current state of getting through each day would continue. Studies have concluded that the home confinement of children and young people is associated with uncertainty and anxiety which is attributable to disruption in their education, physical activities and opportunities for socialisation.

In looking at resilience factors mediating against the impact of living with COVID and accompanying lock-down restrictions our group programs were developed and they adhered to a strengths-based practice and focus on the many ways children and young people were already finding ways to manage their day to day lives as well as providing opportunities to discover other ways of dealing with what can only be described as the day-to-day doldrums those circumstances created.

The first group ran over a 4-week period and focused on encouraging participants to create different art projects every week. All of the participants were sent with an outline of the activities, as well as the materials for each week. Whilst the at-home crafts varied, from making bracelets, writing letters, creating dreamcatchers to painting plaster, the intention behind the group was to encourage participants to explore and find enjoyment in their time at home, whilst maintaining a connection to Rosie's.

The second group that was facilitated online, however was during a change of transitioning back to the new norm of living life with COVID-19. This meant that in order to adapt to the needs and availability of participants, the group would become pre-recorded in order to allow flexibility and accessibility to the content. The group was delivered over four weeks, and again, craft materials were sent to the participants homes. The group was crafted around the concept of change, an aspect that the wider community was experiencing in returning to social commitments, school and work, which saw seasons (summer, winter, spring and autumn) being explored and week-by-week.

Overall, whilst there were challenges in establishing and maintaining groups in a period of disconnection, the participants of the group expressed positive feedback and ability to explore their creative side in a supported and connected way.

This online group work was supported by Transurban, UBS and Department of Communities and Justice.



Who is Rosie?

There are three very common questions that children ask when they visit the service:

- Who is Rosie?
- Who lives here?
- Where do they sleep?

These questions epitomise what Rosie's Place tries to provide to families who attend the service. A place that is just another home, but belongs to them all, every client who visits. Rosie's Place is their place and what happens in this place is behold to the essence of those who come through the front door.

The name Rosie's Place is connected to one of the first clients to attend the service back in 1986. A real person, with a real history also of violence and abuse but more importantly a history of resistance, strength and holding onto hope.

In working with children, young people and families who have been subjected to the most horrendous violation of their human rights to safety, dignity and protection one would think those stories of trauma dominate the space and becomes the landscape of the service, when in fact it is the opposite. Children and young people fill the service with their energy, laughter, and stories of resistance.

Many times over the years all the workers have been asked the same misguided question "How can you do that work?" This question cannot be answered because the answer is too high, too wide, too long, too complex, too multi-storied, and too invisible. So usually, the response is to hold ones breath and then sigh with a silent reply of "If you only knew the answer your question would not be... "How do you do that work?" it would be "How could you not do this work?"



Grandma's Group

I'm a grandmother of two older boys and a young girl that I look after only a few hours a week. I really enjoy every minute that I spend with her but honestly at the end of those hours or full days during school holidays I end up so exhausted that I need to spend a few extra hours in bed resting to gain energy to continue doing what I normally do.

About a year ago, we noticed at Rosie's that we had quite a lot of children that are in the care of their grandmothers. We consulted with a few grandmothers about their needs and how they were managing with this new life experience. Most of them said that it was extremely hard, but they wanted to look after their grandchildren no matter how hard it was. They also talked about how difficult was to deal with all governments agencies and other NGOs that were intervening with their grandchildren.

After this one-to-one contact with these grandmothers, Rosie's decided to invite them to a morning tea. While talking, we were able to understand further their frustration with 'helpers' that appeared from different organizations and created confusion and anger. At the same time, we could see these women's faces light up when talking about their grandchildren, they showed so much tenderness, affection and hope for them. Their love, hope and commitment seemed to go beyond their energy and health. Feeling exhausted was not a word in their thoughts.

These beautiful energetic women taught me many lessons about finding the beauty in the little moments, and not to complain about exhaustion after looking after my granddaughter.

Written and illustrated by Maggie Escartin

We wish to thank both Maggie and Matilda for their ongoing work with the Grandparents support group. Their compassion and support for this wonderful group of carers is unwavering. We wish to acknowledge this project has been funded by DCJ - Women NSW and Club Blacktown.

Who Is Looking After Us?

A booklet for the grandparents who have become carers

With the help of these great women, we decided to write and illustrate a booklet that would explain some of the experiences and challenges of being a carer.

The booklet is divided in themes, each theme relates to a topic that would facilitate grandparents to understand how to deal better with their new situation.

The booklet acknowledges grandparents' love for their children but also recognises the fears of having to change their lives in order to accommodate their grandchildren's needs.

Rosie's has also plans to write a manual for workers.

These Are Some Of The Themes:

Grandparents going into retirement and finding themselves in the situation of looking after their grandchildren.

Having their grandchildren in their care but not knowing for how long and what DCJ and other agencies are doing.

Grandparents realizing the extra amount of work they have to do and the financial stresses. Emotionally having to change their role from grandparents to carers.

Grandparents having to deal with children from different ages and some displaying difficult behaviour.

Dealing with the difficult children that are not allowed to live with their parents, or have restrictive contact arrangements.

Grandmothers having to accept their sons' or daughters' behaviour and feeling ashamed, guilty, and not knowing how to help them.

Having to meet the needs of their grandchildren who may have a disability.

Best practices to make the new situation healthy, strong, happy, and joyful.

"My whole world has changed because of what my uncle did and I have had many emotional responses to it. At first I didn't know what to do but once I had someone to talk with my emotions made more sense"
- 17yr old male



Our dedicated and wonderful dogs Buffy and Ruby continue to work hard welcoming and making our clients and families feel safe. Buffy is 11 years old this year and semi-retired, however has a constant presence at the service, even when she has the day off. Buffy has been working hard teaching Ruby the tricks of the trade, and Ruby has become one of the favourite counsellors at Rosie's Place. We thank you Buffy and Ruby for your hard work and all of your wisdom. Thank you for being exceptional members of the Rosie's team!

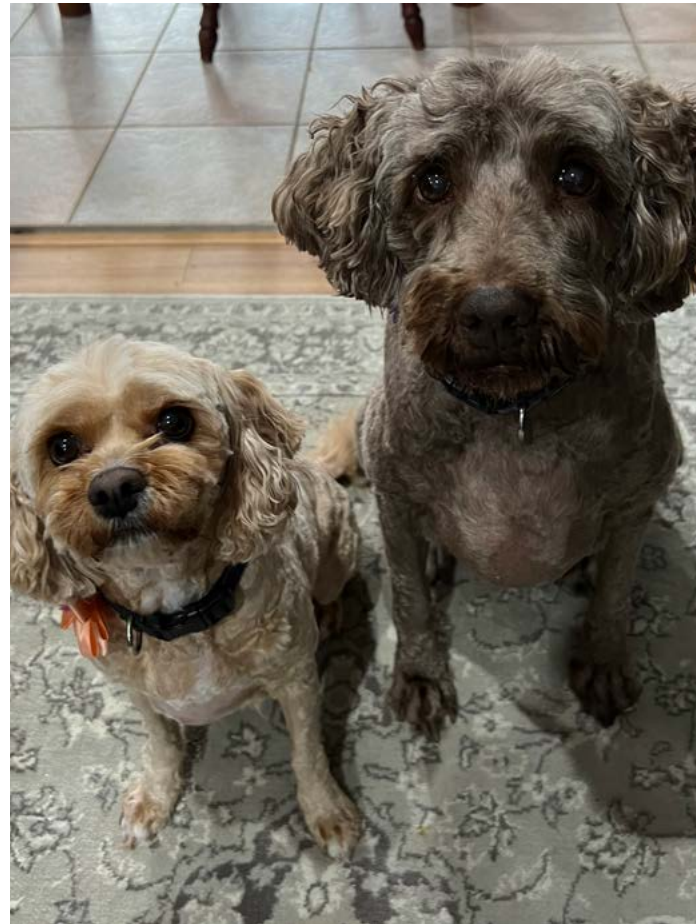


A Day in the Life of a Counsellor at Rosie's Place

My name is Buffy and I have been working at Rosie's Place now for 11 ½ years (I think I am due for long service leave). I have had the privilege of sharing this space with wonderful co-workers but more importantly I have met hundreds of children and young people and their families who have come to visit. My day involves greeting people at the door as they arrive, spending some time with them and sometimes I go upstairs with them to the counselling rooms, but I let them decide if they want me to or not. Not everyone needs me to sit with them in the counselling space, but I can tell if I am needed.

Occasionally I visit mid-way through a counselling session just to check in and see how everyone is. I get very excited when visitors want to sit out the back of the house, that means they want to play with me, so I quickly find something for them to throw either a ball or a rock. This is the best part of my day playing with kids who could throw the ball for me for hours and sharing their excitement. I must say some parts of my day involve sleeping and eating but it is exhausting work and I need my rest.

My best friend and half-sister comes with me every day to Rosies too, her name is Ruby and all the kids love her too. She is like me, very relaxed around children although Ruby is quite loud when she welcomes people at the front door. We both think we have the best job in the world and we hope we can stay employed at Rosie's Place forever.



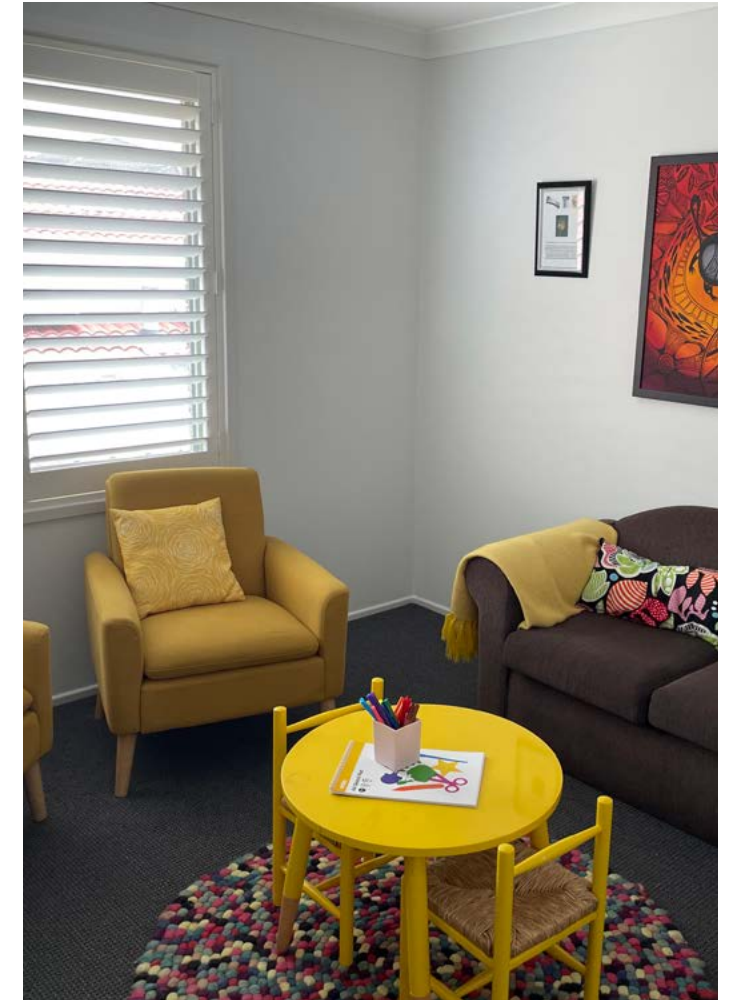
Mary Jo McVeigh's Research Project

Rosie's Place is excited to have had a number of young people get involved in research work being carried out by Mary Jo McVeigh. Mary Jo is conducting research for a degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at The University of Sydney and is focusing on children and young people's experience of therapy.

Young people have been invited to discuss their experiences of the therapy they have attended, and were asked to explore what they enjoyed about the experience, what they found helped them and what they think professionals could do differently to enhance the therapeutic experience. Many of the young people involved have expressed an eagerness to participate in order to have their voices heard and a hope that professionals can learn from their experiences.

We wish Mary Jo the very best with completing her paper and look forward to the wisdom she has gathered from the young people.

Excerpt from a thank you letter Mary Jo wrote to Cathy regarding Nicole, in response to Rosie's Place support of her study.



"Moreover, I would like to give you feedback about Nicole whose belief in this project is the impetus for this email. I truly believe that this study would not have the depth it has if it was not for Nicole, and a social worker from another organisation.

Nicole has made it possible for me to listen to the poignantly painful and important experiences of young people. The very experiences that the profession either blocks or ignores in the academic depositories called professional journals. Stories that need to be heard so practice can change.

I know you are aware of what an incredible worker you have but I wanted to add this research experience as further testimony of her professionalism, passion and dedication to the work."

Finding Home – A Story For Children About Managing Emotions.

In one of our earliest resources a story by a child gave an understanding of the significance of her connection to her body and her mind as a place she owned and could always rely on.

Her story was translated into a poem that appeared in one of our earliest publications, *Dinosaurs Do Dance: Stories of Connections to Hope* (2006).



This was her story

I wish I was a turtle
With a house built on my back
Then I could go on holidays
And never have to pack

I'd like to be an eagle
And sail across the sky
Landing when I wanted to
Or staying up on high

Perhaps a possum would be nice
Gliding through the tress
Warmed at night by moonlight
And rocked by a gentle breeze

Then there's the woolly wombat
So leisurely and meek
Not too proud to go underground
To play at hide and seek

I like to watch the pelican
Bob in on waves of blue
She stores her dinner in her beak
A massive fish or two

The frill necked lizard has the trick
Of showing when he's cross
He fans his neck without a word
To let you know who's boss

The tawny owl sleeps all the day
Then works right through the night
Sounding the house with a gentle call
Until the morning light

An echidna might be best
With nose kept to the ground
She never cares to stop and look
To see who is around

But turtles can't just change their rooms
Around the way they like
And if I was an eagle
Well I'd never ride my bike

I like to sleep in my own bed
Though a possum has a tree
And while the wombat prefers the earth
I think I'd miss the sea.

The pelican might like his food
But I'd bet he tires of fish
And frill necks munch on worms and things
That aren't my favourite dish.

The hooting owl might like the night
But I really love the day
And the busy and shy echidna
Never gets the chance to play

So of all the creatures that I like
And dream that I could be
There's only one choice that I'm sure of
I think I'll just be me



Years later and although not connected to this poem, one of our counsellor, Chris Kulyk, wrote a story that again connected children to animals around them, in this case the story of Charapashka and the home she carries on her back.

Chris wrote the story as a way of supporting children to find some sense of safety within themselves, especially with the understanding that the external world around them was often an unsafe place.

When introducing Charapashka in the opening of the story Chris wrote the following:



This is Charapashka's Home

Home is a place where we go for many different reasons

Home is the place where we go when we feel sad

Home is the place where we go when we feel scared

Home is the place where we go when we feel hurt

Home is the place where we go when we feel worried

Home is the place where we go to when we feel lost

Home is the place where we go to when we need help

Home is the place where we go to rest

Home is the place where we are held when we cry

Home is the place where we are told 'it will be ok'

Home is the place where we are told "tomorrow may be different from today"

Home is the place where our dreams are stored with hope they grow

Home is the place where we are reminded that we all have a place where we belong

Her words have now been adapted into the development of a story for children, with wonderful illustrations provided by a local artist, Anna Marquez.

The book will soon be finalised, adding another resource to the many that Rosie's Place has published over the years.



Multicultural NSW Grant

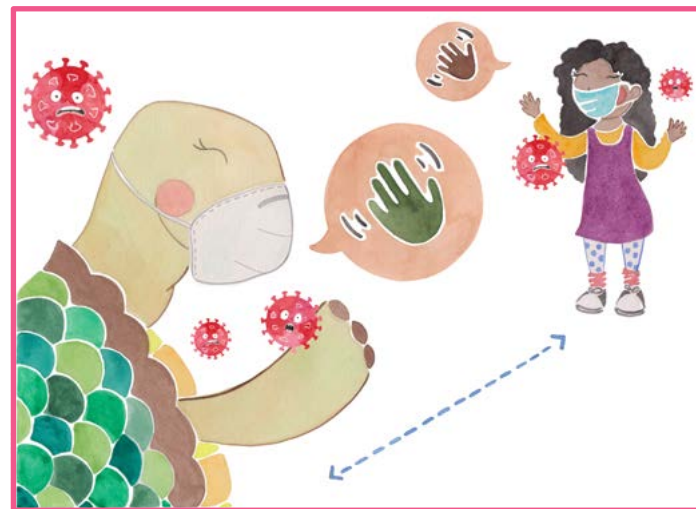
During the long lockdown of 2021, Department of Communities and Justice through Multicultural NSW opened a tender for a grant to support families in the local area through the covid lockdowns and after. The Innovative Grant funds were offered for organisations that could support families from varying backgrounds whilst in lockdown and continuing that support and education long after lockdowns were finished. The result was support through online groups for children stuck at home, creation of Covid-19 support packs, food vouchers, information sheets, and a booklet explaining covid safe practices.

This support spread over many months was of great assistance to families. If a family contracted covid and were all stuck in their house we would organise to deliver a covid pack to their door the packs included:

- Rapid Antigen Tests
- Information fact sheets
- Woolworths food vouchers
- Tissues
- Hand Sanitizer
- Disinfectant wipes
- Masks
- Card games
- Hydralyte
- Block of chocolate

Many families were so appreciative of this support, it made a huge difference to them. A couple of families mentioned how good it was to be supported during this hard time and they felt they were not forgotten in the chaos of the pandemic.

The turtle booklet was made to support children with hand washing, mask wearing and general understanding of the importance of good hygiene was very successful. The illustrations were wonderfully descriptive and allowed children to visual the virus and assist with their understanding.



Statistics of Rosie's Place 2021-2022

Number of counselling clients receiving a service.



Number of clients receiving specialist support.



Number of enquiries for services.



Number of clients who exited the service.



Number of suburbs covered by Rosie's place services.



Number of clients per month are receiving support from Rosie's Place.



The Space to Know- IRL (In Real Life)

This project funded by Westpac Group (Safer Children, Safer Communities)

This program extends previous resource development by Rosie's Place (Finding A Way, 2018) that addressed the personal safety risks for children and young people with intellectual disability regarding sexual abuse and the barriers denying them access to information and services. The dramatic shift of risk from online mediums for children and young people (with and without disability) has created a new level of vulnerability and therefore intervention. In the wake of COVID the changing nature of both information, training and resources sharing has also shifted to online learning.

This program will establish a website of resources that collectively target children and young people with intellectual disability, parents and carers, educators, disability workers and mainstream service providers. The material developed will be inclusive of the differing target groups and utilise visual coding (colours/symbols) to identify the main target group/s as well as opening invitations for others if applicable.

The program will utilise current eLearning mediums which will be known to all members of the targeted audience in some way through their education, workplace and home based education and information sources as well as social media.

The aims of the project are:

- To improve the knowledge and skills of parents/carers in relation to the vulnerability of children/ young people with intellectual disability to online abuse and increase their confidence in talking to their children and monitoring internet usage and enforcing safety strategies.
- To be inclusive of children/ young people and families from Aboriginal and culturally diverse backgrounds and ensure all material is culturally safe.
- To produce resources and online learning that are evidence based, contain accurate information and best practice.
- To engage a range of workers, services, previous clients with intellectual disability and community representation from disability services in the design and review of all resources.
- To support services to develop policies and procedures regarding online safety, child protection responsibilities and referral pathways.
- To ongoingly evaluate and document the online learning via surveys (Survey Monkey) website feedback forms and focus groups with selected participants.

The following is an extract from the EasyRead Information Sheets that have been created as part of this grant.



You hear that your child has been hurt by someone. It was sexual hurt.



You may feel

- shocked
You did not know about the hurt.



- angry
This is bad.
You did not want this to happen to your child.



- guilty
You think you may have let your child down.



You may also feel

- confused
What do I need to do?
The bad person did not go to jail.



- sad
You are sad for your child and for you.
You may think you can not trust people any more.



You may worry

- What will other people think about me and my child?
- What will happen to me and my child?



What you can do to help your self

- Make short and easy plans.
- Plan to do 1 thing today.



Ask for help if you can not do it.



Talk about

- Your feelings



- How to cope



Be with other people.



See people who are **not** part of your child's hurt.



Rosie's Place Publications

- I Have a Counsellor 1998
- Adventures in Group Work 1999
- I Have a Place 2000
- Writing on the Wall 2002
- A Hand to Hold 2003
- Catch a Falling Star 2003
- More Than Words Can Say 2003
- Dinosaurs Do Dance 2006
- Two Trees 2006
- A Child's Guide to Counselling 2006
- Seasons of Change 2006
- Inside Out 2007
- Loveline Board Game 2007
- SNAPS 2002 and 2009
- Swimming Against the Tide 2010
- My Place My Story 2011
- The Mothering Tree 2011
- Navigating the Storm 2011
- Their Place Our Story 2012
- I Wish for a Rainbow 2012
- Balancing the SeeSaw 2014
- My Tree and Me 2015
- Jelly Beans and Popcorn 2017
- Finding A Way Kit 2017
- It Just Makes Sense 2018
- It Matters 2019
- The Heart of the Matter 2019





Counselling and support service for children, young people and families who have been impacted by violence.

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Incorporated number: Y 08937-46





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