



bosom  
buddies <sup>ACT</sup><sub>inc</sub>

facing breast cancer together

2019-2020

# annual report

# Annual Report 2019 - 2020

To our members and supporters

This report reviews the activities and accomplishments of Bosom Buddies ACT inc during the elected periods of the Management Committee: December 2019- October 2020.

It covers the financial year 1 July 2019 - 30 June 2020.

Bosom Buddies ACT inc  
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bosombuddies.org.au  
ABN 59 262 617 782  
Patron: Annette Ellis



# Dear members and supporters

As per all organisations that have and will submit annual reports covering 2020, this year has not turned out at all as planned. Owing to COVID-19 and the associated Government initiatives to prevent virus spread, Bosom Buddies had to adjust what assistance was offered. This resulted in some disappointment as we had to suspend aspects of our work, but it has also led to a few new opportunities.

The most remarkable thing about this year was it demonstrated once again that we have wonderful members whose resilience and adaptability shone in tough times. The core activity of Bosom Buddies for the longest time has been our coffee groups. When the ACT went into lockdown and restaurants and cafes could not have dine in patrons, we were very concerned that not meeting would have a detrimental effect on our members' wellbeing. However, our members took the news on the chin, accepting that health and safety were paramount. We provided an online meeting option, which did not achieve the same numbers as face to face meetings but gave an alternative for members who did feel the need or desire to connect.

When restrictions began to lift, we asked members what they wanted to do and the overwhelming response was to delay meeting again given their risk profile. As the months of low and no infections have passed, groups have eagerly recommenced face to face gatherings, and while the rules around how we do that seem to change regularly, there is only joy and gratitude about being together again and an acceptance that we may need to adapt again if things change. Numbers are returning to pre-COVID levels, even for the Young Women's Group which only started last year.

Our Executive Officer, Kareen Tait, continued to do an excellent job despite all the COVID-19 curveballs. The office did not skip a beat even though Kareen was forced to work from home for several months while the SHOUT premises were closed. We even had some new members join over the course of the year. I thank Kareen for the huge effort she put into updating members regularly and ensuring they felt connected to Bosom Buddies even if we were not operating as usual.

Much of what we planned for this year had to be cancelled or tweaked with varying degrees of success. Our switch to online information sessions was unsuccessful as it did not engage members sufficiently in the new format. On the other hand, we did our first online workplace presentation and it went very well; we are hopeful it will increase access to audiences.

Bosom Buddies celebrated its 25th birthday in 2020 and we had planned on a range of activities to thank our members and also reconnect with past supporters. Of these, at the time of writing, only a high tea with limited numbers will proceed. We intend to hold over our celebrations to next year.

The biggest issue we will face coming into 2021 is an extension of the biggest issue we faced in 2020 albeit exacerbated by COVID-19. The lack of certainty around our revenue streams looms as an even larger problem, especially as the economy tightens and less money is available for charities and community organisations. Oddly, Bosom Buddies has generally fared well this financial year. Even though there was limited fundraising, we continue to be in a good cash position owing to significant reserves coming into the year, government assistance and lower costs because our support program had to be curtailed.

However, our current and immediate focus is to lend as much support as possible to encouraging people to have mammograms and seek medical advice for any changes to their chests and breasts. During lockdown, Breastscreen was forced to temporarily suspend operations, and there is data that people avoided and continue to avoid going to their health providers in the current COVID-19 climate despite low case numbers in the ACT for quite some time. We are concerned about a potential spike in cases in the next couple of years as early intervention has not been sought.

Finally, this will be my last President report as I am stepping down from the Committee for work and family reasons. I am a bit sad not to be able to continue in this role as I feel that Bosom Buddies is on the verge of even bigger and better things, following all the work to increase our profile, diversify our member base and modernise our support program. I thank Kareen and all past and present Committee members for their generosity and assistance, and look forward to lending my support to Bosom Buddies in other ways.



Liesl Centenera  
President 2020

# Management Committee

December 2019-October 2020

Liesl Centenera - President

Shantanu Bhattacharya - Vice President

Briana Lee - Treasurer

Bonnie Bleathman - Secretary

Fundraising Coordinator - Vacant

Lynn Bean - Public Officer

Cheryl Tandy - Breast Awareness

## Committee members

Justine Gibbings

Leilani Bodle

Lisa Bell

## Other key positions:

Shelley Atkins - Support Team Coordinator

Kareen Tait - Executive Officer

# Patron

Annette Ellis



# Our Purpose

Our mission is to connect people affected by breast cancer to support, information and services provided by Bosom Buddies and others within the community. **Support Community Connection Awareness**

In carrying out our mission, Bosom Buddies ACT inc is seeking to:

- Continue with support based activities:
  - Hospital presence, phone calls, social gatherings, workshops and events.
  - Raise awareness in our community about breast cancer and how to detect it early.
  - Develop rosters for social activities.
- Expand our volunteer base.
- Expand our support work to be inclusive of younger patients and family members as well as carers.
- Continue to advocate for better services and treatment:
  - Communication with medical professionals.
  - Ensure they provide our literature to patients and recommend us.
- Achieve ongoing secure funding (as we don't receive any funding from national cancer or breast cancer organisations or from any government):
  - Measurably increase community and corporate awareness of our work.
  - Ensure administration support is funded to the level needed to continue all activities.
  - Develop alternative and attractive options for individual donations.
- Raise the Bosom Buddies profile within the community, businesses and media such that:
  - Bosom Buddies ACT inc is acknowledged for the support work it does and attracts community and corporate support.
- Continue active relationships with breast cancer related services and organisations:
  - BreastScreen ACT.
  - ACT branch of BCNA and BCF.
  - Dragons Abreast ACT.
  - HeadsUp.
  - Look Good ... Feel Better.
  - ACT Health Care Consumers Association.
  - Rise Above (formerly Eden Monaro Cancer Support Group).
  - Knitted Knockers.

Bosom Buddies volunteers and Committee members are currently on ACT Health Committees, including:

- ACT & SE NSW Breast Cancer Treatment Group
- BreastScreen ACT Advisory Committee
- BreastScreen ACT Consumer Focus Group

# Programs

**Buddy Program** includes our personalised support via phone, at the Calvary Drop-in Clinic or through visits by our Support Team. It also includes morning teas, after work get-togethers, and social events and information events for members both during and after treatments. During Covid, like all other organisations we had to find other ways of providing support and social outlets. Facebook and Zoom were popular and easy mediums for people to connect however when we were able to recommence our morning teas we had an overwhelming number of members keen to head out and finally see others face to face.

We support men and women with secondary breast cancer when we can and on request.

We were very successful last year moving our Young Women's Group forward. Before restrictions the group were meeting every eight weeks and we quite often have husbands and partners come along as they too need peer support. Its great to finally get this group up and running again.



Young Women's Group Christmas Event @ The Breakr Room



Young Women's Group together again!

**Blue Buddy** is the blue information bag we provide to the breast care nurses who distribute them to patients in hospital. Again this year was slightly different as our volunteers were unable to pack the Blue Buddy bags in the hospital, the dining tables in our homes became the place to pack. Our volunteer team put handmade drainage bags, under-arm cushions and seat-belt cushions made by women across our region, literature from all the other support groups and services in our region, and medical information from the breast care nurses.

In addition to the Blue Buddy, we now provide an Oncology Pack for patients who have chemotherapy prior to having surgery. This provides them with useful information and supports available, including the offer of support from Bosom Buddies.



Blue Buddy bag & contents

**Spreading the Word** involves Breast Awareness presentations to organisations large and small, as well as the thousands of flyers, shower tags and "lemons" that we fund and that are distributed each year by our volunteers, BreastScreen ACT and the ACT Women's Health Service. Unfortunately in 2020 the opportunities to distribute our shower tags were unavailable. We are looking forward to boosting our numbers in 2021.

**Giving Back** is a service through which we donate funds for specific items requested by the hospitals, from medical equipment to artwork, from offering financial assistance for health professionals' professional development, to supporting women in a practical way.

**Community Representation** includes specific advocacy programs, building awareness among our political representatives, and consumer representation on specific ACT Health projects and committees.

**Facebook** continues to be one part of our communication strategy to reach members and supporters who use it as part of their everyday life.



# The Support Team

The Support Team is the oldest component of Bosom Buddies' services, and the reason why we were established and have lasted so long. Support Team volunteers are there to offer one-on-one contact to women (and men) who have been diagnosed with breast cancer and who would like to chat to someone else who has gone through the same experience.

We are very clear that members of the team are not medical professionals or counsellors, but are women who have experienced breast cancer themselves and, having undergone treatment and come out the other end, are willing to offer their experience and support to others as a 'Bosom Buddy'.

People contact us through our office. They may have heard about us, read our literature in their Blue Buddy (the blue bag distributed to all women and men having surgery for breast cancer in the ACT and surrounding regions), or been told of us by a friend or a health professional. Initially we make contact by phone, and often one phone call is the only contact we have, but we also arrange to meet some people or have regular calls to check how someone is travelling. We only make contact with people who have given their consent for us to phone. Some women have a simple question that we can easily answer, but others we need to refer to the Breast Care Nurses or to counsellors or we agree to get back to them. Team members encourage women to come along to one of our coffee or drinks events or to information sessions.

Over the last twelve months the team have supported over 200 women, men and their families or work colleagues.

Another important and regular role for us was our fortnightly presence at Calvary Hospital's Wednesday outpatient clinic run by the breast care nurses. Unfortunately the clinic was closed due to restrictions and our volunteers are still unable to enter the hospital. Patients must now make an appointment to visit with a Breast Care nurse and fortunately the nurses will always recommend patients contact Bosom Buddies.

The team has seven members and a co-ordinator. One member joined during the year, and early next year another member will join us. We meet regularly and use the time to share useful information and to support one another. We have agreed to undertake at least three sessions of professional development each year. It's important to us that we understand issues like privacy and confidentiality and that we understand the importance of just listening to someone and giving them the chance to air their emotions to someone who does have an idea of what they are experiencing.

One of the things members of the support team can do is simply let women see that other women who have been through surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy are now getting on with their lives, looking and feeling confident about themselves.

**Are you undergoing treatment, or have you had breast cancer?** 2019

Come along for tea, coffee or a drink and friendship.  
No need to book, just turn up.

<p><b>Monday morning</b> Little Garraan Cafe 2/28 Garraan Place, Garraan 9.30am - 11am</p> <p>14th January 11th February 12th March* 8th April 13th May 11th June* 8th July 12th August 9th September 14th October 11th November 9th December</p> <p><small>* Held on Tuesday due to public holiday</small></p>	<p><b>Tuesday morning</b> Country Heir Cafe 54 Monaro Street, Queanbeyan 9.30am - 11am</p> <p>29th January 26th February 26th March 30th April 28th May 25th June 30th July 27th August 24th September 29th October 26th November</p>
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**Wednesday evening**  
Tilley's Devine Cafe Gallery,  
1/94 Wattle Street, Lyneham  
5.30pm - 7pm

16th January      20th February  
20th March      17th April  
15th May          19th June  
17th July          21st August  
18th September   16th October  
20th November   18th December

**Please Note:**  
These are social gatherings, not formal support. If you would like support please contact the Bosom Buddies office to arrange for a member of the Support Team to make contact.

**Office Details:**  
0406 376 500 or 6290 1984  
Monday - Thursday 9.30am - 2.30pm  
admin@bosombuddies.org.au  
bosombuddies.org.au  
ABN 59 262 617 782



**bosom buddies** ACT inc  
facing breast cancer together

**Are you undergoing treatment, or have you had breast cancer?** 2019

Come along for tea, coffee or a drink and friendship.  
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**bosom buddies** ACT inc  
facing breast cancer together

**Bosom Buddies offers support to those who have Breast Cancer**

**Would you like to speak with a Bosom Buddies volunteer?**

**Call Bosom Buddies on 0406 376 500**  
bosombuddies@shout.org.au  
(Mon-Thurs 9.30am - 2.30pm)

Visit our website for further details  
[www.bosombuddies.com.au](http://www.bosombuddies.com.au)

**Bosom Buddies volunteers** have all experienced breast cancer and are trained to support you.

A volunteer can speak to you on the phone or meet you before or after surgery and treatment.

# The Awareness Team

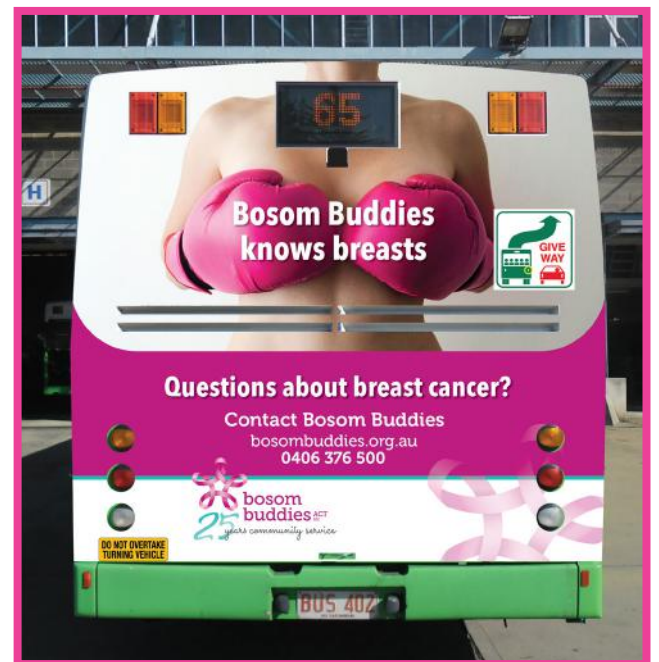
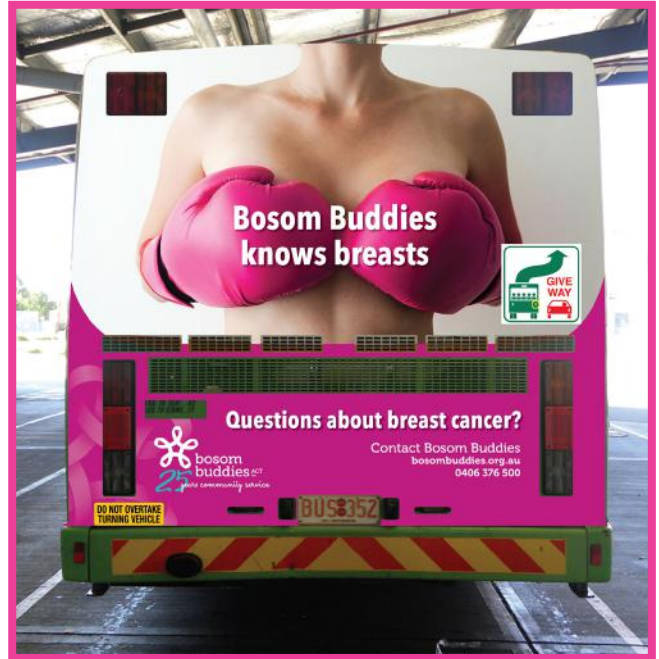
The Awareness Team looked very different this year. We held our very first virtual Breast Awareness presentation with staff from Beyond Bank. It went so well we were asked to hold a second session. Going virtual meant we could present to the staff located all over the country, whether they worked in the office, a branch or at home.

As there were less opportunities to “spread the word” during Breast Cancer Awareness month and throughout the year we made the decision to once again advertise on the back of four Action Buses.

Since 2015 we have handed out nearly 40,000 shower tags that show women and men how to check their breasts to detect differences. Bosom Buddies provides shower tags to BreastScreen ACT and ACT Health centres, and sends them to nurses and Health Centres in the local region.

Tonic Health - GP brochure boards contract was renewed for 2019/2020. The boards provide another way of reaching a new audience about the importance of early detection. The Bosom Buddies shower tags are present in 65 medical centres waiting rooms across Canberra.

As we can't have a presence at Community events and health expos the GP brochures boards are a great way of continuing the distribution of our Shower Tags.



Action Bus advertising October 2020 - January 2021



Tonic Health - GP brochure board





Bosom Buddies was invited to be part of the Rise Challenge at Fernwood Woden



Cheryl Tandy explaining the best way to do self examination with Nicole Lawder and staff at the ACT Legislative Assembly



Enjoying the sun at the Opening of the Pearce Community Centre Community Garden





## Giving back

We are very aware that breast cancer has a big financial impact on many people especially those who have to stop work and who may be facing additional medical and other costs as a result of their cancer. It particularly hits people paying rent or mortgages, those with child expenses and women on reduced retirement incomes.

In 2020 we continued our MOU's with HeadsUp and Colleens, to offer support to women who needed to buy headwear or a wig and for those women who were faced with buying specialist underwear and a prosthesis.

Thanks to a grant from the John James Foundation we have been able to increase the number of breast cancer patients we can assist with lymphoedema garments, MOUs are in place between Bosom Buddies and the Physiotherapy department at Canberra Hospital, Capital Chemist Charnwood and again with Positive Motion Physiotherapy.

We do not see this as 'charity', but as offering a sisterly, buddy-like helping hand at a difficult time. Colleen's, HeadsUp, Calvary Hospital, Capital Chemist and Positive Motion Physiotherapy in turn help us in various ways, including by handing out our information and referring people to us.

This support is really a gift from the local community as it is community fundraising and donations that allow us to offer subsidies to women.

## Information Sessions

Each year we run a variety of Information sessions based on Member requests. The calendar of sessions this year was reduced however we were still able to run several face to face sessions and one virtual session. The sessions are advertised to outside organisations and members of the community.

**Exercise; During and after treatment** was the first Zoom session we've ever held. Our guest speaker - Kellie from UC Canberra is always keen to present to Bosom Buddies members and update them on what's new, particular what options are available during lockdown and the members had lots of questions about exercise after surgery.

**Nutrition** is always a popular information session particularly the taste testing. Nutrition Australia host the cooking demonstration with a focus on your nutrition during treatment and recovery. The session provides valuable information about nutrient dense food and how to create it with a minimum of fuss.



**Music and Mindfulness** will be our final session for 2020. The session will be a great way to end an uncertain year. One of our lovely members, Alison Ware is a Creative Arts Therapist, Registered Counsellor and Certified Clinical Musician. The aim of the session is to discuss the emergence of therapeutic harp in healthcare and the community. Alison will highlight the benefits of music and mindfulness in health, recovery and wellbeing. The members will be able to have a try of the harp at the end of the session. Pictured to the right is Alison teaching Sylvia in 2019 how it's done.



Many thanks to all our presenters who volunteered their time. We look forward to some new topics for 2021.

## Member events

We recommenced meeting for Monday morning coffee in September 2020, after restrictions eased, at The Mawson Club. The group has grown from 10 to now between 20 and 30 women turning up most months. Some people attend regularly or from time to time, but most months at least one new person turns up.

Our other coffee groups are all back on the calendar:

- Northside Group at Cafe Injoy
- Queanbeyan Group at The Mill House Cafe
- Yass Group meets somewhere different each month
- Young Women's Group at a variety of central locations

Women hear about these events from our website, Facebook, email newsletters, their breast care nurse or by phoning the office, but often from the information provided in their Blue Buddy Bag.

Our gatherings are a chance to get support from someone who's been there and done that and also just to have coffee and chat about life in general – holidays, children, food, politics, movies. All welcome – the more the merrier!

We are trialing the "After work drinks" every eight weeks instead of every month as fewer people have been coming in recent years, until Tilley's return to extended hours the group have been meeting at The Deco Hotel..

Unfortunately we have only held one social event this year due to restrictions, however it was a wonderful event. The members were all given a special guided tour of the Picasso and Matisse Exhibition held earlier in the year at the National Gallery of Australia.

We are looking forward to having a full calendar of events in 2021.



# Community representation

Many thanks to Bosom Buddies volunteers, Cheryl Tandy, Marisa Gerussi and Theresa Kerby who continue to represent us on a number of ACT Health committees: Breast Cancer Treatment Group, BreastScreen ACT Advisory Committee and BreastScreen ACT Consumer Focus Group.

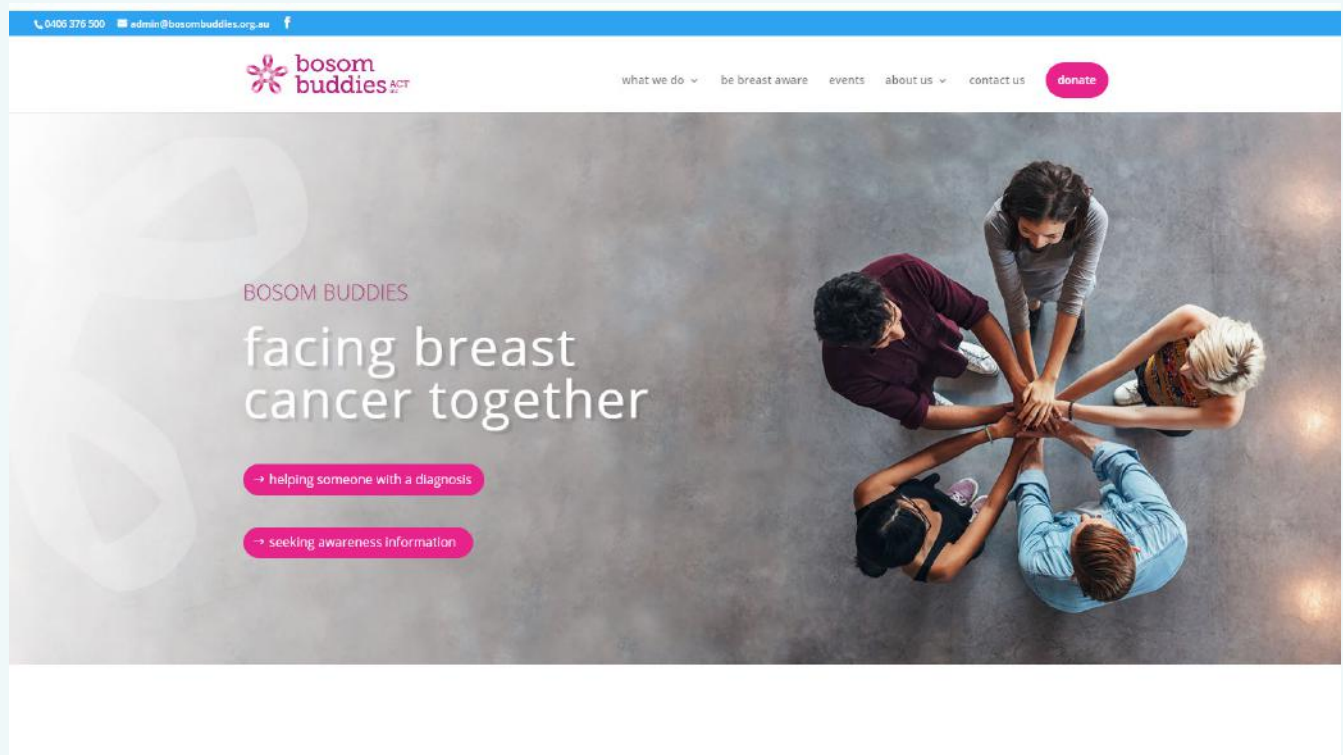
Our lived experience of breast cancer is useful to health professionals, and in turn we learn more about what is happening in the field of breast cancer treatment.

## Bosom Buddies Website

2020 saw the “soft” launch of our new website thanks to Roxanne from 44Creative. The Bosom Buddies Website hadn’t seen an update since 2005 and was in desperate need of an update and refresh.

The website is now very easy to navigate with an emphasis on being able to find the information you need as quickly as possible.

During this process we were also able to break away from our old @shout email address and introduce a new stand alone web address and email address - admin@bosombuddies.org.au and www.bosombuddies.org.au. Mitchell from Beyond Hosting and Design worked behind the scenes with Roxanne to ensure the transition was seamless and caused no disruption to our emails or access to the website.





# Organisational governance

## Management

The Constitution, updated in November 2016, defines our purpose and work, establishes a Management Committee of four officers and up to six general members, and acknowledges the authority of the Management Committee to create subcommittees within which volunteers implement the policies, objectives and budgets established by the Management Committee.

The Management Committee oversees a number of permanent and ad hoc committees, including:

1. The Support Team
2. Events
3. The Awareness Team
4. Communications and Advocacy
5. Fundraising

Bosom Buddies is a member of SHOUT (Self Help Organisations United Together), and we maintain our office through SHOUT in the Pearce Community Centre. The office is staffed part-time Monday to Thursday from 9.30am to 2.30pm by an Executive Officer.

People interested in Bosom Buddies ACT inc can visit the office, borrow books and publications from our library, and participate in various volunteer activities or can call us on 0406 376 500 or visit our website [www.bosombuddies.org.au](http://www.bosombuddies.org.au).

## Compliance

Bosom Buddies complies with the requirements of the Office of Regulatory Services and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission - ACNC.

## Finance

Bosom Buddies ACT inc uses an external bookkeeper, Hudson Gray and supporting advisor to ensure all finances are properly handled. Bosom Buddies ACT inc was reviewed for the fiscal year 2019-2020 by Russell Hearne. Potential sponsors or paid members can request copies of the financial statements.

## Review Conclusion

Pursuant to section 60.50 of the ACNC Act, no matter has come to my attention that causes me to believe that the financial report does not satisfy the requirements of the ACNC Act.

I also observed that:

- the Committee is committed to high levels of accountability and transparency
- the Association employs a qualified bookkeeper who is a registered BAS agent
- the accounts are held in a leading small business accounting system
- the Association's annual statement is available for scrutiny, through both the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission and the ACT Registrar of Incorporated Associations.

## Declaration

In accordance with Section 60.40 of the ACNC Act I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the review.

Russell Hearne FCPA  
27 November 2020

# Contacts

Registered Name:  
Bosom Buddies ACT inc  
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Designated Gift Recipient.  
Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

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Pearce ACT 2607



