

## Bianca Hurle



Bianca Hurle has spent her entire professional career dedicating herself to improving the lives of others.

She has worked extensively in the healthcare sector, and is currently the Hospice Manager of Rosehaven, a brand-new not-for-profit hospice located in Mansfield.

Bianca's passion for caring started at a young age, but it was not until her first job in an aged care home that she realised her purpose was to help people have a good death.

“When I was younger, I gravitated towards work that focused on helping people, so when I was 17, I started working as a care worker in an aged care facility.”

“On one of my very first days, I was sent in to wash my first dead body. I was by

myself, which shouldn't have happened, and it was an eight-bed room, so we only had the privacy of a curtain drawn. I rolled the gentleman over to clean him and his eyes opened which scared the bejesus out of me. On the other side of the curtain, the two senior nurses were in hysterics as they knew this was going to happen. Their laughter really disappointed me, and I remember thinking how horrible that would have been for that gentleman, to be treated which no care or compassion.”

“This moment ignited a passion within me to ensure all people were given a good death, and treated with dignity and respect.”

When she was 21, Bianca applied for a nursing position. However, with over 400 applicants and only 25 positions, she was unsuccessful. Not deterred by this, Bianca wrote a letter to the local MP about her passion for nursing and was given the opportunity to enrol in an apprenticeship style program working in aged care.

Since then, Bianca has continued to work in the sector and across the past 20 years has become an advocate for holistic, respective care.

***"We need to acknowledge that death is a natural part of life. Palliative care is about working together as a team to provide the best outcomes for people."***

"Across the past 20 years I have done a number of roles. The one thing that has remained consistent for me within these positions has been my passion for palliative care and aged care, which ultimately led me to Rosehaven."

"Rosehaven is a community owned and operated hospice offering short term respite and end of life care to the people of Mansfield and surrounding areas. We are a team of caring and compassionate people, primarily run by volunteers."

"The concept of Rosehaven was the brainchild of several wonderful community members, including Bob Appleby and Rose Gilder.

"I remember when we held our first community meeting to share our vision of Rosehaven with the Mansfield community. We were only expecting around 60 people, but to our amazement, over 150 people turned up. On the night, one of the community funds actually pledged \$150,000, and in that moment, we knew that Rosehaven was going to happen and the community were really going to embrace us."

"Since opening in 2021, we have worked with guests and their families to create a tranquil setting. We're currently operating with five beds out of our beautiful home, which is open to anyone of any age who has a life limiting illness."

"At Rosehaven, we're incredibly passionate about supporting carers and guests to ensure they are getting the best end of life outcome they possible can."

***"I have learnt so much about the importance of dying with dignity, having a choice about how you die and being comfortable."***

Throughout her extensive career, Bianca has observed many changes in palliative care.

"When I first started working in the sector, death was not done well, particularly within aged care homes. There was minimal care, and minimal choice."

"Nowadays, we are provided with more choice around how we are cared for and where we can receive care. There is also more awareness in the general community and an increase of death literacy which is something we really pride ourselves on at Rosehaven. We have

integrated community education and also created bereavement services to support people who are grieving from their loved one dying.”

“However, looking into the next 40 years, I want to see a greater focus on good and sustainable home palliative care, as well as having more discussions around palliative care beyond a clinical setting.”

“Further, we are on the cusp of getting symptom management right, but I believe there is still a lot more improvements we can make. In the near future, it would be fantastic to be able to manage symptoms and educate family members on how to disseminate medication, increasing home palliative care.”

***“As Ann Richardson said, ‘We cannot change the outcome, but we can affect the journey.’ Rosehaven prides itself in allowing people to have the best quality of life until their very last breath.”***

“It's reassuring to have resources available to support quality palliative care, especially from peak bodies like Palliative Care Victoria, which in turn, help educate communities and advocate for more positive changes.”

“Why should we be in a clinical setting, being cared for by strangers when we are dying – this is not a clinical event, it is a part of life. To be surrounded by your loved ones and your own community, living until that very last breath, I believe is quality of life and a good end of life outcome.”