

ANNUAL REPORT -2016

In 2016, our dream of having a spacious Life Long Learning hall for RAIN has become a reality. The Indian Sub-Continent Seniors have proven their patience in putting up with the inconvenience as the building work progressed during the year but their patience has been well rewarded by the happiness they have derived in seeing the well-equipped spacious centre they will be using soon.

Slowly and steadily RAIN committee has built its excellent reputation supported by the community members who have a strong passion and commitment to the well-being of the seniors in their community.

To meet up with the need of taking care of our frail aged seniors, the following developments have been achieved:

- Our home at 501 Forest Road, Penshurst is currently well prepared for conducting regular centre based social support for the group of Indian Sub-Continent seniors. They are able to enjoy the benefits of a spacious hall where they are provided with activities such as Yoga, gentle exercises, Indian music sessions and religious discourses and festivities. .
- We are extremely grateful to the NSW Government "Community Building Partnership" Grant in making it possible to have a carport and community kitchen built. We wish to acknowledge with gratitude the support of the State Member of Parliament for Oatley Mr Mark Coure' .
- With funding from Stronger Communities Programme of Department of Infrastructure, Australian Government, for purchase of Air conditioning system, a television , projector and screen and sound system we have the capacity to conduct seminars, workshops and visual information sessions for the elderly. We wish to acknowledge the strong support from Mr David Coleman Federal Member of Parliament for Banks.
- A strong management committee with professional office bearers and an equally strong trust board have taken on the commitment to make RAIN successful in its endeavours to serve our seniors. We wish to thank our current Chair Person Mrs Adarsh Sachdev for her efficient direction and guidance in making this year

highly successful.

- We continue to work with the Georges' River, Sutherland and Inner West Councils, the Inner West Community Development organisation , GyMEA Community aid and Information Services to provide support to the Indian Sub-Continent Community in the St George and Sutherland Shire region.
- We continue to raise funds for building an activity room and library for a Life Long Learning centre which will provide language classes, Scripture reading and analysis, training courses for our volunteers and important informative courses for seniors. This is in line with our aim to provide a creative and knowledge based positive diversion in the lives of seniors of ISC community.
- We provide Social support for our seniors with traditional Indian Vegetarian food provision for on a regular basis. We continue to work with the Hurstville Community food Services in providing the traditional Indian vegetarian meals to the elderly.

- With our concentrated efforts, regular transport facilities for the ISC seniors for Social Support group service provision, have been implemented and we work with St George Community Transport and Activus Community Transport (Sutherland) to make this effective.
- More community members have come forward to take on RAIN life memberships which is 195 currently.
- Fund raising events are organised and public donations are being sought for the charitable pursuit of serving the increasing population of Indian Sub Continent seniors in this region. Every year we conduct a successful event which brings in awareness of our services in the community. We wish to acknowledge our gratitude to the Gujarathi Brahmin Samaj for organising a play to raise nearly \$2000(along with their members' donations) towards our building fund.
- Fund raising was further supported by the most talented and versatile Indian dancer and Choreographer

Mrs Manju Viswanath who did a fantastic dance program with 70 of her young students and raised \$6,000/- for our building fund.

- Under the able leadership of Dr Gunu Naker, Dr Avinash Joshi, Mr Ravi Pandit our men's shed carries out activities of interest to the RAIN Men. Trips to places of interest are planned and our male members show great enthusiasm in participation.
- Our Permaculture garden project continues and the back yard has been improvised with facilities to provide more convenient gardening activities for the seniors. RAIN Men's Shed has actively maintained the garden and grown Carrots ,Beetroot, Indian beans and Mehti (Fenugrik)that have been sold to the Thursday group and with the money raised we have bought more seedlings to keep the garden growing.
- We are preparing effectively for an ageing community with support for frail older people who are house bound by recruiting peer groups and promoting home visits with volunteer support. The new Vice Presidents have formed Nursing home and home visiting teams and plan to visit our seniors in the nursing homes with their friends on a regular basis.
- In partnership with Inner South West Community Development Organisation, 16 South Asian women received Home and Community Care Certificate 3 training for nine months in 2015/16 and qualified and many of them are currently employed in Aged care services.
- Our RAIN project with funding from Clubs NSW is running environmental sustainability sessions and our volunteers support the elderly in encouraging them to assist in gardening herbs.
- We plan several education and awareness sessions for seniors to prepare them for smooth and happy ageing in place and also assist their carers with effective support.
- We thank Mrs. R.S.Loga for the effort put in to maintain our website successfully. Our address is www.eager2rain.com

SOCIAL SUPPORT PROJECTS CONDUCTED IN 2015/16

COMMONWEALTH HOME SUPPORT PROGRAM – SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUP ON A REGULAR BASIS

A number of seniors are above the age of 80 and the vulnerability of the individual to further deterioration shows the urgency of this requirement. *The provision of Centre based Social support group activities and the transport* help provide a comprehensive coordinated and integrated range of basic maintenance, support and care services for the Indian Sub-Continent frail older people and their carers as per the objectives of the Commonwealth CHSP Program.

This opportunity for them to be served by an ethno specific organization run by seniors who fully understand their cultural and dietary needs helps support them to be more independent, thereby enhancing their quality of life. RAIN is the best option to provide flexible, timely services that respond to the ethno specific needs of these people. (Social Support group services provision for two days per week for 22 ISC seniors in total).

Physical access – Our Community centre at 501 Forest Road, Penshurst accommodates the day care activities. We have an access ramp and disabled toilet and the place is disabled and wheel chair friendly & accessible to people with physical or sensory disabilities.

Without discrimination – Eligible people assessed as needing a service are offered access to Commonwealth CHSP services without discrimination on the grounds of ability to pay, location, gender, ethnicity, language, marital status, religion, sexual preference or type of disability.

Assessment includes screening for eligibility; determining needs and priorities; targeting resources; referral and coordination; monitoring and review; and data collection. Information on the appropriate level and type of assessment is made available to clients so that choices are made on an informed basis. Service are appropriate in response to reflect differences in individual requirements. Client record and referral system are maintained as per funding rules.

RAIN organises transport and clients are picked up at home and brought to the centre for day care and social support group activities. We hire the bus and the volunteer driver from St George Community Transport Services Inc and Sutherland Shire's Activus Transport Services Inc.

Activities such as mentally stimulating games, memory quizzes, Indian songs, Yoga and relaxation exercises, art and craft sessions and spiritual and guest speakers are some of the activities planned.

Plans for ongoing improvements and staff training (work safety, awareness of current developments) are in place.

We are grateful to the Department of Health NSW and department of Social Services for this funding support for CHSP services.

WAITING LIST AND UNFUNDED SOCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAM

We have a long waiting list of frail aged who need social inclusion and relevant activities and we conduct once a week Thursday meetings at Senior Citizen Centre, Hurstville to improve their knowledge on community service facilities available to them. As we are not funded for these people, public donations help us run these activities and keep the frail aged socially inclusive.

MEALS ON WHEELS AND COMMUNITY FOOD SERVICES

In partnership with the Hurstville Community Food Services (Now the St George's Meals on Wheels), we have been successfully running the 'Sabari' Indian community traditional vegetarian food services for the past ten years. Our volunteers cook at the Hurstville Community Food services every week and food is served during our Thursday senior meetings at Hurstville Senior Citizens' Centre. The food is sponsored by caring seniors and their families. We have formed a food committee that work efficiently in offering their services in cooking, serving the elderly and washing up after the sessions. Our volunteers also take meals to the house bound seniors who have the need.

RIGHT AS RAIN PROJECT (Social enterprise & health education through community kitchen

This project was supported by funding from the Hurstville & Kogarah City Councils (Now the Georges River council)

The goal of this project was to develop a self-sustaining model that connects social enterprise development of a community kitchen with healthy life style concept.

The Right As Rain project brought people together to access fresh food, learn how to prepare healthy, culturally diverse and affordable meals and share food in a spirit of conviviality. The project addressed issues of food access, healthy food education and skill building, social isolation, multicultural understanding, food waste and community cohesion.

RAIN Indian Sub-Continent Community, coordinated the management of the kitchen and planned upgrading it to commercial community kitchen standards. Currently the work is completed and licensing procedure has started. Strategic planning for a social enterprise initiative is in place and soon the kitchen will run regular cooking program and in the newly built learning hall, there will be nutrition and recipe sharing sessions as well as cooking demonstrations as a learning process.

RAIN's community garden produced herbs and seasonable vegetables (eggplant, chillies, ginger, Indian beans, bitter gourd) during the summer season. All food scraps were composted through the community garden. Health education (Diabetic management in particular), social enterprise, food security, food waste and food system advocacy and community building were the themes for the centre's activities.

The project in particular increased access to fresh food, provided opportunities for skill and knowledge development contributing to behaviour change around healthy and sustainable food, reducing social isolation increasing community connectedness and wellbeing.

The funding from Kogarah Council also enabled us to provide training sessions with 3 Bridges community services for volunteers and facilitator, workshops in food safety, WHS and nutrition management. A special recipe book created by the seniors on healthy eating was also published and printed.

HIGHLIGHT:

October 11th 2015: RIGHT AS RAIN CAFÉ AND BAZAAR, health information stalls; Choir singing on food theme; Yoga , Ayurvedic diet, food tasting demonstrations. Culture sharing with other Ethnic groups and wider Australian Community; Intergenerational get together

Healthy Communities Projects(Multicultural Health Grants Programme)

Considering the enormous task of carrying out our strategic planning we made Right As Rain community kitchen our main theme for the year. The enormous task in front of the committee was establishing a **Community kitchen** (Indian vegetarian). So we decided to apply for different aspects of the infrastructure and activity process through different grants. Healthy Communities projects of the Multicultural Grants program helped us plan the kitchen, train volunteers and staff for food safety & produce a DVD with four case studies of how this project helped the seniors. We produced two **healthy recipes books** as a motivation to cook heart health and diabetic friendly meals at home (Discussing nutrition and reorganising eating habits within the kitchen)- to address the higher prevalence of behavioural risk factors and certain disease types for CALD ISC seniors).

This model planned a healthy ISC community by design and **Increased promotion of physical activity** and Increased capacity, self-efficacy – (Addressing chronic and complex diseases that affect CALD ISC community, including the self-management of these diseases)

Getting together and invitation to bring their favourite recipes, Increased motivation to discuss recipes (traditional with variations) and try the recipes in the community Kitchen;

We had focus groups that discussed increased promotion of nutritious food options and initiatives (using vegetables and herbs grown in community garden in healthy recipes). These discussions also **improved nutrition knowledge** (prevention and intervention process) in seniors above the age of 55. Monthly talks for the bigger group meeting on Thursdays helped improve processes relating to access to all health services. This helped to improve understanding of health services and build the health literacy of people from culturally and linguistically diverse Indian backgrounds, including the new arrivals.

We liaised with 3 Bridges Community Services and organised training in skills of food safety, Improved food budgeting skills and healthy menu planning.

Social inclusion (for those experiencing food insecurity, mental health issues) to improve confidence with peer support and enthusiasm in taking on new tasks empowering seniors.

Plans included health promotion activity for hard to reach elderly Indian ladies who are widowed. Some have lost the motivation in life as their families have grown and left them to feel inadequate and experiencing a loss of self-esteem. When they were young and widowed, traditional cooking for the growing family has been one activity that has provided meaning to their existence. Once the children are grown up with their own families, these older women find their lives meaningless and the food they cook is not considered healthy by the younger generation.

This project improved their self-esteem and introducing variations by discussion of recipes amongst the peer group thus increasing their interest in learning about healthy diet and along with this knowledge, workshops on healthy living and self-management of diabetes and cardio vascular conditions helped improve their eating/behaviour pattern.

Strategy: Continued support for Healthy Lifestyles through implementation of Healthy by Design; Support and be an active partner in Integrated Health Promotion Plan with information sessions and workshops for the ISC community especially the senior women.

10 Information sessions: Monthly once covering topics on Diabetes management, heart diseases, dealing with high blood pressure, causes and management, Dietary needs, nutrition and healthy eating. (Will liaise with SESLHD chronic diseases) **10 sessions:** Community Kitchen Discussion, share recipes, plan variations to cater for diabetics, high blood pressure and heart issues. Cook a healthy meal. (Meet and eat sessions) (Will discuss inclusion of healthy recipes with Hurstville community Food Services); Recipe Choices-with discussions amongst the group, recipe's replacing rice with millets and Quinwah have been suggested. Further discussion on recipes to promote heart health ,also suitable diabetics will be sourced with linkage with **Ambulatory & Primary Health SESLHD.**

DVD :Four participant case studies will be video recorded to assess impact.(Recipe discussion: 15 people in a group)

Cooking sessions with 5 at a time alternating with active cooking and assisting for preparations)

10 sessions(Physical activities): (Linkage with **Ambulatory & Primary Health SESLHD**) Gardening, Walk and talk (Penshurst Park); Stretch and sing (at Hurstville Senior citizens centre), Yoga & meditation.

2 Outings to Community gardens and Community kitchens. **Training courses** for new migrant women of ISC background: Food Safety; Nutrition; Setting up Kitchen and budget management.

Networking with health service providers and Department of health: Special Project Launch Day on **11th October** at Hurstville Marana Auditorium with individual stalls for the following awareness information: We will invite other service providers as well as wider Australian community to participate. Theme would be 'wearing the coloured saree specific for the three component chronic diseases'. We will feature a saree tying component to include wider Australian community in the spirit of wearing the saree to create the atmosphere.

Ashfield(Inner-West Council)

RAIN GREEN PROJECT:

Promoting welfare and increasing activity participation:

This project has helped us to build community capacity, provide social inclusion for Indian Sub-Continent Community, through herbal gardening and healthy living activity for a sustainable lifestyle.

Promoting environment awareness :

Fortnightly gatherings shall include intergenerational activities with Council's Indian community groups (young mothers, volunteers& members of Library's knitting club) as follows:

- Four Herb Gardening workshops (table-top, balcony gardening for urban unit dwellers), by Rita Devmurari, Hardika Hirani and S.Loga
- sustainability practices (compost making, worm farm).

Encouraging the community to reduce consumption, increase recycling and take up home composting as per Ashfield Council's environment plans)

- **S.Loga conducted the workshop**

– Two herbal recipe sharing (Ayurveda talks) with wider Australian Community by Dr Indu Narayan.

BARTER MARKET:

For the first time and as a part of our RAIN GREEN project funded by the Ashfield Council's environment Grant, RAIN Inc held a Barter Market for the table top plants that the RAIN Members had grown. There were many herbal plants like Tulsi, Methi, Curry Leaves, Coriander, Wheat and some vegetables from the RAIN Inc Garden. RAIN members knew about the barter market so had come prepared to exchange their goodies for the garden products. The members of public did not come prepared so later on whatever was left was given away free. Anyway for a first time attempt we did well.

RAIN Inc participated in 2016 Carnival of Cultures at Ashfield Park and it was a great success. The event was well attended. RAIN Inc was positioned well in Gazebo area. About 20 Ashfield Members of RAIN participated and a bus load of their peer group members arrived from Hurstville RAIN to show their support. Many volunteers and members made their way on their own by public transport. We had Chair Yoga sessions for seniors lead by Mrs Veda Srinivasan. Our senior ladies turned out in their pink sarees to show support for Cancer awareness. There was Sari Demonstration where members of wider community joined in and learnt how to wear a sari.

Rangoli (Indian Art) table was also set up where the children and adults equally enjoyed colouring rangoli following the design on templates. Colour powders and flower petals were used to enhance the beauty of designs drawn with dots and connecting lines depicting the traditional Rangoli style of India. The wider community mothers and children were attracted and gave it a try and we could see families engaged in colouring the pattern with great interest and enthusiasm.

We also participated in the Ashfield Senior week events for 2016 by organizing Rangoli and Saree demonstration activities. It was well attended by RAIN Members. 22 Rain seniors attended (transport provided) and the others made their own way to the council hall. In all there were about 38 RAIN members and volunteers. Approximately 15 members of the wider community visited us and took part in various activities. It was overall a great day and those who came enjoyed it thoroughly.

Clubs NSW (Hurstville) Café Create project

RAIN Café Create is a social enterprise model for encouraging sustainability, by offering the prospect of greater equity in economic participation. Main aim is to help community members generate some income to further their social and environmental goals.

We have designed and developed a community commercial kitchen which is Fully equipped to meet with the Standards of food industry. The community kitchen is expected to help RAIN to:

Have a Café setting for the frail aged seniors of Indian Sub-Continent Community.

Accommodate training new migrants and volunteers in skilful cooking with plans of catering and supportive training in food handling.

Community seniors' social inclusion and empowering them will be through sharing their expertise in therapeutic and involving healthy way of cooking.

Use the vegetables and the herbal produce of the garden that they have established in the past year with support from Illawara Catholic Club under Clubs NSW grant program.

This project also aimed to increase the production and consumption of locally grown food by community members, in ways that promote both human and environmental sustainability and health. This was done through building a peer support network amongst community members to access much needed education in how to do it well and sustainably.

Project included:

Buying required kitchen equipment and setting up community commercial kitchen as per safe food handling and licensing requirements.

2 sessions of planning workshops for traditional food items (recipes have already been discussed) that can be included in the prepare and sell list .

2 'Try our cooking' sessions with the wider Australian community.

4 sessions on sustainability practices, food safety issues and aspects of social enterprise(catering)and marketing strategies.

2 special interest tours and outing.

2 celebrations of Intergenerational and multicultural nature (Navarathiri and Diwali (Festival of Lights)

PINK SARI DAY

Lunch in Pink Sari to promote Breast Cancer Awareness and encourage the involvement in Indian Sub-Continent community women in South East Sydney Local Health District

The Pink Sari Project is a community initiative that aims to increase awareness of low participation rates in the BreastScreen NSW program among Indian Sub-Continent and Sri Lankan women in New South Wales and encourage them to screen regularly. The Pink Sari Project is led by NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service (MHCS) in conjunction with BreastScreen NSW and Refugee Health Service, and supported by an interdisciplinary academic team from the University of Technology (UTS). The Project is

funded by the Cancer Institute NSW.

On Thursday afternoon (19 May,2016) the Resourceful Australian Indian Network Inc (RAIN), hosted a lunch to raise awareness of breast cancer amongst Indian Sub-Continent women in Sydney and launch its recruitment drive to get women in the community to volunteer with its forthcoming projects including supporting asylum seekers and refugees and a support programme for women living with breast cancer.

Recent data from the Cancer Institute NSW identified women from a Tamil background as having one of the lowest rates of participation in screening (mammograms) for breast cancer. Rain is keen to make sure ISC women are well aware of Breast Cancer and the need to go for regular Mammograms, so we organised a delicious traditional Indian Vegetarian lunch with entertainment and informative talk by Dr Saroja Srinivasan a practising Clinical Psychologist.

Highlights of the afternoon included: Breast cancer survivor story/sharing experience ,Video on the breast screening journey ,entertainment by RAIN Heartywood dancers and teacher Sirshah.

About 90 participants attended this event .

Effective networking and our community partners

RAIN Inc has established a strong network with the several community service organisations and the Councils in the St George and Sutherland shire region. We participated in the Seniors week, Harmony Day, International Women's Day activities of all the Councils and we invited speakers of different faiths from the St George Women's Interfaith Network. The Georges River Council and the Inner West council, have supported us with grants for our seniors projects and our seniors are always happy to participate in their celebrations and community workshops.

Our community partners are St George Meals on Wheels and Gynea community Aid and Information services Inc. We also make use of the St George and Sutherland Activus community transport services for our picnics and day trips. This year we have worked with the NSW Multicultural Health Communication Service (MHCS) in conjunction with Breast Screen NSW and Refugee Health Service to host a Pink Saree lunch to create Cancer awareness.

We continue to assist the Lioness club to collect toiletries for the benefit of relatives of cancer patients.

Day trips and picnics

We have carried out trips to various temples during the months of Sravan and Purushotham months. These are specially tailored to the needs of ISC seniors who miss their religious pilgrimage which is essential for their spiritual wellbeing and these are specially requested by our frail aged seniors. **RAIN** members have also visited several local parks in the region.

- Swami Narayan temple, Black town
- Durga temple , Regents Park
- Shakti Temple , Tungabee
- Shree Mandir, Auburn
- Shiva Temple, Minto
- Helensburgh Temple

We have visited the following list of temples in the region and it is worth mentioning that many of seniors residing in this region for years, have not had the opportunity to visit some of the temples in the region.

VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTION

RAIN Inc is proud to have an excellent volunteer team contributing tirelessly in several ways to make life easier for the frail aged seniors. Our food committee members have gone on regular roster to cook and serve the seniors and our function committee volunteers have assisted in every way possible to organise functions and plan fund raising events to meet our commitments to one cause .to see our seniors ageing well and being socially included.

Our volunteer team has also effectively and regularly provided transport for the peer group to visit the house bound seniors and those who are in nursing homes and hospitals. Without these volunteers RAIN could not have reached such an enviable heights and our heart-felt gratitude to our volunteers.

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

We have a strong management committee with professionals from all fields and under the able leadership of our trustee board, our two funds (The Fijiwala Ambalal Senior Care Fund and the RAIN Life Long Learning centre building fund) have had positive financial growth during the year.

The six trustees are: Dr Saroja Srinivasan; Dr Gunu Naker; Dr A.Manoharan AM; Mrs Sudha Patel ; Dr Sudha Natarajan and Dr G. N. Sukumar. Trust deeds have been legally drawn and stamped. All in all, our management committee is proud of its leadership qualities, compassionate commitment to tasks undertaken and a total devotion to the cause of seeing our seniors age happy and well.

RAIN SENIORS CENTRE AT 501

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Observing **urgent ethno specific needs** of people above 85 and 90 for home support, RAIN plans to provide Home Care, with respect for clients' values, preferences and expressed needs in regard to co-ordination and integration of care, information, communication and education, physical comfort, emotional support and alleviation of fear and anxiety, involvement of family and friends, transition and continuity.

With the success of all RAIN projects and the fact that our senior members are increasing in number, there have been several requests for regular transport facilities and RAIN strives to make arrangements for transport on a regular basis which is essential to assist our ageing seniors effectively. We also have plans to buy a van that will help us provide transport to frail aged when needed.

In conclusion

RAIN management committee wishes to take this opportunity to thank each and every volunteer who has worked hard during the year in various ways supporting and assisting our seniors. We are also grateful to the various councils and community service organisations for their support. Our heartfelt gratitude to community members who generously donated towards our renovations of our new premises and also towards the Life Long Centre Building fund.

Dr Sudha Natarajan, Public Officer, RAIN Inc