

## ANNUAL REPORT – 2017

### SUMMARY

The year 2017 has been yet another year of success for the Resourceful Australian Indian Network Inc. (RAIN). Slowly and steadily the RAIN committee has worked on implementing the strategies that have been developed during the last two years. Our plans for a Social Enterprise have taken shape and to meet the need of taking care of our frail aged seniors, the following developments have been achieved:

- Our home at 501 Forest Road, Penshurst, the Life Long Learning centre, is currently well prepared for conducting regular centre based social support for the group of Indian Sub-Continent (ISC) 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 provide a secure and safe environment for the seniors. We wish to acknowledge with gratitude the support of the State Member of Parliament for Oatley Mr Mark Coure and our Federal MP Mr David Coleman.
- with gratitude to the Sydney Motorway Corporation Ltd for the funding through their West Connex Project we have paved our backyard making it a safe place for the seniors. We are also extremely grateful to Mr Indravadan Shah and Mr Bharath Bhoola for helping us to buy the tiles. • We have established 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 Chairperson Mrs Adarsh Sachdev for her efficient direction and guidance in making this year highly successful. She has provided directional structure to the Thursday sessions at Hurstville seniors’ centre. • 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, Ashfield and Sutherland Shire region.
- We continue to raise funds for enhancing a spiritual enlightenment corner, activity & library space for our Life Long Learning centre which will provide Scripture reading and analysis, language classes, training courses for our volunteers and important informative courses for seniors. This is in line with our aim to support the spiritual needs and to provide a creative and knowledge based positive diversion in the lives of seniors of the ISC community. We are indeed grateful to Mrs Vedavalli Srinivasan (Yoga), and Dr Meenakshi Karthikeyan (language and folk art talks) for their continued support. • We are now providing social support to our seniors with the provision of traditional Indian Vegetarian food on a regular basis. A highlight of this year has been the launch of our catering service to various Council events and community service organisations in the neighbourhood. We have started this social enterprise with the aim of funding the needs of our elderly in the community.
- With our concentrated efforts regular transport facilities for the ISC seniors for Social Support group service has been implemented, and we work with St George Community Transport and Activus Community Transport (Sutherland) to make this effective.
- More community members have joined RAIN as RAIN life members. The total number of life memberships is now at 195.

- Fundraising events are organised and public donations are being sought for the charitable pursuit of serving the increasing population of ISC 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 sincere gratitude to our regular donors.
- Under the able leadership of Dr Gunu Naker, Mr Parag Shah, Mr Niresh Sastry and Mr Bharath Bhoola our RAIN Men's Shed organises activities of interest to the RAIN male members. In the 2018 year, trips to places of interest are being planned for our male members who have shown great enthusiasm in participation.
- Our Permaculture Garden Project continues and the backyard has been developed with facilities to provide more convenient gardening activities for the seniors. The RAIN Men's Shed has actively maintained the garden and grown Coriander, Chillies, Eggplant, Ginger, Turmeric, Fenugreek and Indian beans that have been sold to the Thursday group and with the money raised we have bought more seedlings to keep the garden growing. We wish to thank Dr Gunu Naker for his tireless service in making our community garden a place of interest and serving the needs of our seniors. We also wish to thank Mr Hari Narayan and Mr Niresh Sastry & Mrs Usha Sastry for their help in maintaining the garden on a regular basis.
- We are continually preparing for an ageing community to provide support for frail older people who are house bound by recruiting peer groups and promoting home visits with volunteer support. Nursing home and home visiting teams have been formed and we have plans to visit our seniors in nursing homes with their friends on a regular basis.
- Regular training sessions are organised for our volunteers and staff members and we have encouraged them to attend the training courses conducted by 3 Bridges to receive accredited certificates. • Our RAIN project, with funding from Clubs NSW, is running interesting projects and we are grateful to Illawara Catholic Club for funding received during 2016-17 financial year.
- We are planning to host several education and awareness sessions for our seniors to prepare them for smooth and happy ageing in their own place and also to assist their carers with effective support. • We are extremely grateful to the officers of Georges River Council for the Folk Art project which was extremely successful, much beyond our expectations. Thank you Nicholas Best, Anne-Marie Wiles, Brenda Eggleton and Jamal Bassam.
- We thank Mrs. R.S.Loga for her continuous efforts to successfully maintain our website. Our address is [www.eager2rain.com](http://www.eager2rain.com)
- RAIN Facebook page was launched mid-2017. The page has helped to reach out to the great audience to increase awareness of a seniors' group presence and keep our members and supporters updated on ongoing activities and upcoming events.  
<https://www.facebook.com/RAINforseniors/>
- We thank Mrs Hardika Hirani for her effort to liaise with the Inner West Council and effectively organise programs for the Inner West RAIN group at Ashfield Council premises. Our gratitude to Officer Sarah Harrison of Inner West Council for her support to our social support group.

**SOCIAL SUPPORT PROJECTS CONDUCTED IN 2016/17 COMMONWEALTH HOME SUPPORT PROGRAM – SOCIAL SUPPORT GROUP ON A REGULAR BASIS**

As per the objectives of the Commonwealth CHSP Program we aim to establish centre based social

support group activities and transport assistance to provide a comprehensive, coordinated and integrated range of basic maintenance, support and care services for the Indian Sub-Continent frail senior population and their carers. A number of our members are seniors who are above the age of 80 and the vulnerability of these individuals to further deterioration highlights the urgency of this requirement.

RAIN is motivated by the opportunity for these valued members to be served by an ethno specific organisation run by seniors who completely understand their cultural backgrounds and dietary needs, and who can help support them to be more independent, overall enhancing their quality of life. We strongly believe that RAIN is the best option to provide flexible, timely services that meet these needs and we are best placed to respond to the ethno specific needs of these people. We provide Social Support group services for six days per month for 22 ISC seniors in total. We are continually working towards providing these services and to date, a number of initiatives are in place to support this objective. Firstly our community centre at 501 Forest Road, Penshurst which accommodates the day care activities has an access ramp, disabled toilet and the place is 'disabled and wheelchair' friendly and is accessible to people with physical or sensory disabilities. Also, we have policies in place to ensure that people that RAIN assesses as needing a service are offered access to Commonwealth CHSP services are assessed without discrimination on the grounds of ability to pay, location, gender, ethnicity, language, marital status, religion, sexual preference or type of disability. Assessment criteria 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 their decisions for assistance are made on an informed basis and services 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. To facilitate this, we hire a bus and a 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 we host and regularly plan. 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 their 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 weekly Thursday meetings at the Senior Citizen Centre, Hurstville to improve their knowledge on community service facilities available to them. Public donations help us run these activities and keep the frail aged socially inclusive.

#### **RAIN SUTHERLAND CHSP PROGRAM**

Rain Sutherland meets twice a month to offer its service to the frail aged seniors of the Indian community living in the shire. All these members are registered with My Aged Care and they enjoy the benefits of CHSP. They meet once a month at Stapleton avenue community centre and enjoy socialising, meeting peers, health and information talks, gentle exercises and art & craft sessions. They also enjoy singing, dancing and presenting folk art sessions. Once a month outing is arranged for the seniors when they visit places of their interest. The seniors are provided with the much

needed physical, mental, social and recreational activities focusing on their wellness approach. Their activities are well planned and executed by Sutherland coordinator R.S. Loga and facilitator Rita Devmurari.

### **RAIN COMMUNITY FOOD SERVICES – RAIN RASOI (kitchen)**

Food has been an integral part of RAIN seniors. Their love to cook and feed their friends, family and loved ones has inspired us to start our social enterprise. RAIN RASOI originated with the idea to preserve and pass on traditional and authentic recipes building the bridge between the seniors and the younger generations.

RAIN Rasoi was launched in early 2017 and its first project was to cater for 200 people at RAIN's Annual Fundraising event. RAIN Rasoi attracted a wide age range of volunteers ready to help to learn, cook and be part of the event. The food was enjoyed and savoured by all and it was a great boost to seniors and a great social and learning experience for all involved. A special thanks to our volunteers for all their services for and on this day Peruvemba Radhamani, Shantaben Balsoad, Manjula Hirani, Rita Devmurari, Gita Pandit, Patchaiyammal Yadav, Usha Sashtry, Vandana Bareja, Shiwani Sanghvi, Hitesh Sanghvi, Parag Shah, Ram Tihari, Rajesh Tihari, Nisha Hunt, Shobha Narayan, Hari Narayan, Tara Surti, Surendra Surti, Shiraz Nathvani, Sapna Shah, Archana Sachdev, Bharti Black, R. S. Loga and Sudha Natarajan, and special thanks to our youth members Suesann Black, Shikha Shah, Aditi Shah and Tanya Bareja.

RAIN Rasoi launched the "Saturday Brunch" in May, cooking and serving authentic Indian dishes from various states. We have had good success with the brunch being held every 3rd Saturday of the month. Thanks to all our volunteers and Supporter for making it a successful. We look forward to your continued support.

RAIN RASOI has also been providing catering to various Georges River Council events. We thank Georges River council for their continued support.

### **BRIDGING THROUGH FOLK ART PROJECT- SUPPORTED BY FUNDING FROM THE GEORGES RIVER COUNCIL**

RAIN set up a steering committee with 6 members to plan and carry 'Bridging through Folk Art' Multicultural project.

A diverse group of Indian seniors, hailing from different states of India (Punjab, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh & Karnataka) participated practising songs and dances expressing their folk tradition. 5 Folklore sessions with songs from the states of Punjab, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu were held and enjoyed by the seniors at Hurstville Senior citizens' centre. The project included 1 Folk-art workshop during Seniors week) and 3 multicultural sessions of folk performing art and yoga, festivities relevant to folk art such as Diwali, Pongal, and a folk art festival in April (Baisaki with Bhangra dancing). The seniors went to Ashfield Council to conduct a relevant multicultural session with their peer group. The participants are practising regular (fortnightly basis) Sun Salute Yoga encouraging gentle stretches on an ongoing basis. On May 25 2017 Asian Women at Work led by Angela Zhang performed Chinese folk dances for the Indian group, and this has helped us to exchange ideas with the Chinese community and enjoy their folk dances. We invited the Fiestaville multicultural Choir to present Australian folk music with a Hindi song included. The emphasis was on providing an activity for multicultural community to get together and make new friends, develop healthier and happier lifestyles. Encouraging multicultural participation, this program proceeds to build bridges of understanding across different cultures. We have also actively participated in Council's Harmony Day and Seniors Week where different ethnic

groups came together to enjoy the celebrations. The month of June was celebrated as the Folk Art Festival month and weekly Yoga and Folk Art events were held to complete the project successfully.

### **GEORGES RIVER STRONGER COMMUNITIES INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT**

To improve the meeting space for community activities of ISC frail aged who are using our centre at 501 Forest Road, Penshurst, we installed cupboards & storage space for staff and volunteers serving the frail aged. The newly built Lifelong learning centre that accommodates the centre based day care for the frail aged and training facilities for the volunteers, did not have any storage cupboards or areas where the seniors can keep their activity materials. The Stronger Communities Infrastructure Grant helped us overcome this problem and our seniors enjoy an uncluttered space and safety. A community kitchen has been renovated according to building codes and standards, and the outside demonstration and learning area is equipped with a pantry and proper storage cupboards. This is in line with the Council's priority of providing equipment to improve delivery of community services. This project has allowed frail aged and disabled members of the Indian sub-continent communities residing in St George & Sutherland area to access the range of social, recreational, environmental, health & well-being activities at the community facility at 501 Forest Road, Penshurst, To encourage volunteers, this project has helped us have sessions that enable exchange of knowledge between older and younger people.

### **ASHFIELD (INNER-WEST COUNCIL)**

**RAIN FOLK ART AND YOGA PROJECT:** A diverse group of Indian seniors, hailing from different states of India joined others from around the world including Aboriginal Seniors to learn folklore music and expression through gentle dance and exercise. The participants had regular Sun Salute Yoga practices encouraging gentle stretches required for the performance sequence. This project emphasised providing an activity for multicultural communities to get together and make new friends, develop healthier and happier lifestyles, and to create something as a group which will be presented and shared with the broader community. Intergenerational and multicultural activities carried out under the successful management of Hardika Hirani include:

1. Folk Art workshops by Dr Meenakshi Srinivasan, R.S. Loga, Kumud Powar, Eden Chinese seniors group and young RAIN ladies headed by Anju Srivastava.
2. Sun Salute Yoga sessions were carried out by our Yoga Guru, Vedavalli Srinivasan, whose enthusiasm and dedication is much appreciated. Yoga and gentle movements helped in creating a folklore sequence that promoted health and well-being.

Project participants were actively involved in Inner West Council's Carnival of cultures, Harmony Day, seniors' week & Diwali celebrations for the Indian Sub-Continent community.

Thanks to the Inner West Project Officer Sarah Harrison, we had an interesting and eye-opening presentation by Josh and Ben on Aboriginal communities. This project promoted the Council's objectives of connecting people to each other to foster an inclusive and multicultural community.

A grand finale to the Folk Art Project was the Ashfield Diwali celebration which was held on a grand scale at the Town Hall on 28th October 2017. We are grateful to the Inner West Council for supplying the venue.

Big thanks to our MC Shiraz Nathvani. We had entertaining folk dances by Bhangra Instyle dancer Jaspreet Singh, the Chinese dancers of Asian Women at Work, RAIN young ladies with their

Bollywood performance, Gujarati dance Garba by the Hurstville RAIN dance group and the Classical Kerala dance by young women of Kerala. All in all it was a great fun day for all with a multicultural display of performing folk art.

**Clubs NSW (Hurstville) – Caring Companions project** RAIN Caring Companion Project has enabled the building of a much needed consumer directed one to one support system and safe atmosphere to provide it for our frail aged members of the Indian Sub-Continent Community. The main aim of this project was to help community members who are reaching a stage where they are unable to take care of their immediate needs, and at the same time providing them with social inclusion. This project has proven to be a model which RAIN can adopt for the continued caring for the growing senior population of Indian Sub-continent Community.

This project has assisted RAIN to:

1. Provide a safe environment at the centre where caring companions can offer care during the day for their seniors and have safe activities planned for participants. (Carpeting and preparing the hall to enhance safety for elders was part of the project budget)
2. Form a group of caring companions (6). The group was provided with essential training on handling Work Health and Safety issues, and working with the elderly and supportive training in food handling.
3. Form a committee (4 members) to plan and supervise the project. We encouraged family members of frail aged, volunteers and new migrants to be a part of this committee.
4. Train seniors to have a regular practice of gentle stretching exercises and meditation in a safe and healthy environment.
5. Successfully collect second hand mobility aids for the benefit of seniors who are unable to purchase new ones.
6. Support seniors to enjoy with the surrounding community celebration of Navratri and Diwali festivals. With our new community commercial kitchen, which is fully equipped and designed to meet with the Standards of the food industry RAIN has been able to:
7. Train caring companions to cook healthy meals for the frail aged seniors of Indian Sub-Continent Community. Involving community seniors through encouraging them to share their expertise in therapeutic and healthy cooking has motivated the social inclusion of our seniors and has given them more confidence to participate.
8. Practice sustainable cooking methods by using the vegetables and the herbal produce from the Garden Project which has been established with support from Illawarra Catholic Club under Clubs NSW grant program.  
Furthermore, this project has managed to connect frail aged senior above the age of 80 with a caring companion who is trained to assist them. In the longer run, this project will also provide employment opportunities for the selected caring companion to assist the frail aged in their home environment if required and requested for.

**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, Inner West and Sutherland Shire regions. We participated in the Seniors' week, Harmony Day, International Women's Day activities of all these 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. We would like to acknowledge with gratitude the continued support from Georges River Council Community Service team David Lindon, Anne Marie Wiles, Brenda Eggleton, Jamal Bassam and Arabella Lee for support throughout the year. Our community partners are Gynea community Aid and Information services Inc., thanks to Jenny Grey the manager for settlement and Multicultural Services and Rita Napolitano, CHSP manager and Inner South West Community Development Organisation thanks to Asha Ramzan the CEO. We also make use of the St George and Sutherland Activus community transport services for our picnics and day trips. We are thankful to the committee of St George Women's Interfaith Network Inc. and in particular to Mrs Lorraine Watson and Barbara Koppe for the continued support throughout the past years.

### **DAY TRIPS AND PICNICS**

We have carried out trips to various temples during the months of Shravan and Purushotam which are of importance to the seniors of Indian Sub-Continent community. These are specially tailored to the needs of ISC seniors who miss their religious pilgrimages which are essential for their spiritual wellbeing and these are specially requested by our frail aged seniors. RAIN members have also visited several local parks and beaches in the Sydney.

**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 established a regular roster to cook and serve the seniors. In particular we wish to thank R.S.Loga, Gita Pandit, Rita Devmurari, Hari Narayan, Patchaiyammal Yadav and Smruti Desai for their tireless service and enthusiasm. Our function committee volunteers have also assisted in every way possible to organise functions and plan fundraising 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 enviable heights and our heart-felt gratitude to all our volunteers.

A special note of gratitude to our volunteer team of Sapna Shah, Archana Sachdev, Bharti Black, Parag Shah, Suesann Black, Peruvemba Radhamani, Shantaben Balsoad, Manjula Hirani, Vandana Bareja, Shiwani Sanghvi, Heena Wadhvana, Ram Tihari, Rajesh Tihari, Nisha Hunt, Shobha Narayan, Hari Narayan, Smita Bhoola, Prafulla Shah, Kiran Dave, Shikha Shah, Aditi Shah, Tanya Bareja, Vedavalli Srinivasan, Saroja Srinivasan, Tara Surti, Surendra Surti, and Shiraz Nathvani who have worked very hard to launch and manage our current social enterprise of catering and the Saturday brunches. We also wish to thank Hiralal, Gamanlal Khatri, Jayantilal Gohil for their assistance with arrangement of chairs at the Hurstville Senior Citizens' centre.

### **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 of these funds 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 senior's age happy and well.

We are extremely grateful to the retiring Committee Secretaries R.S.Loga and Hardika Hirani and thanks to them we have seen a great year of activities and successful planning and management. Dr Saroja Srinivasan, R.S. Loga and Hardika Hirani will stay on as members of the Committee to offer guidance and support in the coming years.

## **RAIN SENIORS CENTRE AT 501**

### **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Observing urgent ethno specific needs of people above 85 and 90 for home support, RAIN plans to start a project that will support RAIN members, with respect for clients' values, preferences and expressed needs in regard to coordination 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 and staff members who have 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.

We consider it a privilege to work with all our loving seniors in the community and a big Thank You to all of them.

Dr Sudha Natarajan Public Officer RAIN Inc.