



RAIN

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

MAKING SENIORS' LIVES BETTER FOR FIFTEEN YEARS
RESOURCEFUL AUSTRALIAN INDIAN NETWORK INC



FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Welcome to the 2020-21 Annual Report for Resourceful Australian Indian Network Inc. During 2020-21 RAIN has maintained focus on the important issue of delivering outstanding customer experience to a growing number of customers, not withstanding a year of significant challenges.

As a community we have once again faced a difficult year in the grip of the Covid-19 pandemic. The RAIN community service team has responded by supporting local Indian Sub Continent seniors, new comers in the community and refugees, with great skill and compassion.

Our focus on quality assurance and safety remained strong as we considered the findings of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

We have undertaken a review of the organisational structure to ensure we have a strong foundation on which to deliver the objectives laid out in our Strategic plan.

During this period of challenges RAIN Leadership Team has demonstrated resilience and commitment, continuing to ensure quality service delivery against a backdrop of significant Home Care Package growth and the implementation of a Centre-based day Respite care programme.

In this ongoing COVID era, the RAIN committee is well aware of the trust placed in RAIN by customers, staff and members. We appreciate and value the hard work that our people do in the organisation and in the communities we serve.

Adarsh Sachdev
Chairperson

Bharti Black
Vice Chairperson

FROM THE SECRETARY



2020-21 was a period of challenge and change, and I am extremely proud of how our staff and volunteers have adapted, responded and remained committed to serving our customers.

Many frail aged in the Indian Sub Continent community experienced significant challenges across all areas of their lives – their physical and mental health, financial security, sense of safety and overall wellbeing.

Always considerate of safety issues and the Covid -19 restrictions, our staff have been flexible and creative in their approach in service delivery and have provided valuable assistance to those in need.

There has been increased demand for support, constant phone calls that have been attended to and sensible provision of consolation and immediate response to emergency needs.

As RAIN continues to adapt to the 'new normal', we are well placed to meet ongoing pandemic challenges. With a united approach and the commitment of our staff, volunteers, members and our board, we will continue to empower Indian Sub Continent seniors to live a better life

We have strengthened our business operations and continued to find ways to ensure our sustainability over time. We are optimistic about the future and getting over the challenges provided by the pandemic, we will continue our important service to the community.

We gratefully recognise the significant positive impact that our volunteers make every day.

The unwavering support from volunteers was especially exceptional in 2020, with our volunteers adapting to significant changes brought about by COVID-19.

Through the Muster and Social Enterprise projects, our volunteers maintained strong connections with our customers and support to families experiencing additional strain during this time.

We were able to pamper our seniors with delicious dishes cooked every Saturday, deliveries for the ones who were unable to pick up. Our taste buds pushed us to cook over 500+ idlis, 700+ panipuris. The endeavour to highlight Street foods from India created a nostalgic feeling! We as volunteers also went out to dinners and lunches.

We look forward to a fulfilling 2021-22 as we grow and continue to evolve as the best in delivering community services for the Indian Sub Continent community. For all our clients, thank you for your trust and resilience and we will always strive to provide the best service that you need.

Throughout this turbulent period we have stayed true to our Vision and Values, focussing on being flexible and adaptable to meet the needs of our community with a strong focus on providing support and increasing wellbeing within vulnerable groups.

Archana Sachdev
Secretary
Management Committee

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FROM THE CEO



I am exceptionally proud of the staff and volunteers for their selfless support and resilience during this time of challenges. Working through the pandemic period and providing staunch support to our consumers have earned them exceptional trust and gratitude. My special note of appreciation and congratulations to our Manager Parag Shah for brilliant management and professional integrity throughout the challenging times.

Committed & caring workforce

Whilst we live with the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, the team continues to work tirelessly to ensure that our staff, our volunteers and our customers remain safe. It is with pride that I recognise the inspirational efforts of our staff and volunteers who have constantly exceeded expectations through the constant upheaval of regular lockdowns and outbreak concerns. They have not only supported customers with necessary services, they have provided a sense of security for a vulnerable group in challenging times.

The ongoing commitment to strengthening and empowering seniors, and the care and dedication of our people is evident through the positive and touching feedback that we receive from our customers and their families every day.

Throughout this difficult period we have focussed on providing the needed support, assisting in shopping, meeting up with emergency needs and providing all possible help in transport and accompanying to medical appointments. We have had touching and emotional feedback from our seniors regarding the willingness of our staff to listen to their woes and the prompt assistance they continued to receive.

Stories of lives lost, families separated and traumatic experiences have been heard and the strong supporting RAIN team has been there with willing hands and compassionate hearts to offer immediate help and support.

COVID-19 SUPPORT SERVICES

- With funding support from the Commonwealth Government we started our Covid-19 emergency meals provision programme.. Older people who have not been able to regularly cook at home, are benefitting hugely by this service.
- We have also helped expecting mothers who did not have much support from their families during the period of isolation.
- We have been a trusted local information source and our staff have rallied behind our community in line with our values and vision, in conjunction with local not for profit community service organisations, our local health district and local Council, balancing our capacity to help those in need with the safety of our staff.
- We have assisted the Indian Sub Continent seniors in Understanding and adhering to health advice, considering their language barriers.
- Advising on risk of virus transmissions especially with multigenerational family units living together.
- Supporting financially vulnerable frail elderly of the Indian Sub Continent community living in public housing, through the pandemic period.
- Providing activity booklets, art and craft materials to those who are interested and celebrating birthdays on zoom and reconnecting communities and families by encouraging consumers to use technology which they have been reluctant to try.

Strategic Plan & Community Kitchen

We have in place a strategic plan up to 2025 and we look forward to continuing our important work with renewed strength and enthusiasm. We focus on improving our facilities to meet with our contractual requirements and efficient service provision. In this respect, community consultation and request by staff and volunteers who prepare meals at our community kitchen have revealed the need for a bigger kitchen. The committee has taken this into consideration and plans are ahead with a special kitchen construction committee in place to take the necessary steps.

RAIN's response to the Covid-19 pandemic has been outstanding. Staff have worked hard to identify individuals and groups in need and have offered the much needed support with clarity to consider safety and include creativity to plan workable solutions.

Expanding & Evolving Services

RAIN has established new culture-specific respite groups which meet on Wednesdays and Thursdays. This project is funded for two years by the Commonwealth Home Support Programme. Consumers meet and discuss various topics of interest and enjoy peer company and plan to develop a special book on family functions and festivities at the end of the project. This keeps them active and mentally alert to think about past memories and we record essential details of festivities that are not generally available to the coming generations. The groups are also encouraged to do mild chair yoga or stretching exercises and music sessions are their favourites as they remember old Bollywood songs.

The group is treated to freshly prepared hot vegetarian meals and eating it in the company of their friends makes it enjoyable for them. During this time, they also discuss their own nutritional needs.

Awareness is created on safety during this pandemic and precautions that need to be taken, the digital and technological assistance of recording vaccination and other details on their mobiles etc are introduced and support is offered by the staff and volunteers. This has been an important development for this group needing support and guidance to reach their goals.

We use a person centred approach in care delivery.

We have a strong and diverse workforce to support our culturally appropriate service approach and delivery. As we bring on new staff this brings new opportunities to pivot and we are excited about the future possibilities.

Sudha Natarajan CEO

I also appreciate the prompt steps taken by staff and volunteers in being vaccinated on time to be ready for providing safe services to our frail elderly in line with quality assurance. All our staff have taken the two vaccination shots and are providing safe service to our clients.

MANAGER'S REPORT

The 2020-21 lockdown presented a number of challenges for our clients, our workforce and service delivery. We moved quickly to adapt & reprioritise our work and direct resources to ensure continuity of care for clients, in particular those with higher levels of vulnerability. During the year due to lockdowns, we could not do all the social activities we had planned. But we successfully carried out the Covid-19 Emergency meals preparations and delivery to the vulnerable community with limited staff and restricted movements. We had to adapt to the unprecedented situation of social distancing, different lockdown rules in different council areas, wearing masks, checking in with QR codes, Covid Safe plan etc

Support to Young Mothers

In addition to seniors, we were able to cater home cooked meals to either pregnant mothers or mothers with young babies. They were so delighted with the timely and much needed service and gave glowing references for our services. They considered RAIN as their Mother who looked after their wellbeing with healthy and nutritious vegetarian food before and after pregnancy.

Service with a Smile

With due care and sincerity of our work force during this year we managed to provide excellent services in all situations. Each staff member has to be commended for his or her relentless services with a smile. All of them willingly underwent necessary training with every update of Covid-19 and knowing all possible ways of infection control. All staff members attended the Workshop on CHSP & Home care packages which no doubt enhanced their knowledge.

Home Care Packages

Our reputation as a caring and committed provider for the Indian Sub-Continent community seniors, continues to be enhanced by working closely with our consumers to tailor their packages to suit their cultural and health needs and lifestyle.

We also provide companionship services, to reduce their risk of social isolation and build friendships. During the pandemic period, this has been designed to improve quality of life by matching consumers with volunteers who have similar interests.

During the year under the Home care services, more new clients signed up. Many clients have been fearful of catching the COVID-19 virus and have experienced concerns with having workers visit their home. Additionally, many have experienced confusion about government information and distrust of authorities and the many health messages being promoted. Our clients expressed significantly higher levels of anxieties and fears about COVID as the pandemic has progressed. Many have felt increasingly isolated and lonely as they have not been able to see their family, friends, attend social groups or even the simple everyday things such as going to the shops to get their groceries or go to the bank.

All these needs have been brilliantly dealt with, during the pandemic when it was difficult for our staff to move from one region to another. But considering the consumer needs, they selflessly underwent weekly Covid-19 tests to make sure the services were delivered on time under safe conditions.

Our programs are supported by compassionate and adept bilingual staff who are committed to supporting older people and people with disabilities to maintain personal autonomy and self-determination in how they receive their supports and services. Staff do this by embracing the philosophy of 'do with, rather than for'. The outcomes of this approach have significantly improved the resilience and quality of life of our clients. Each staff member went an extra mile every time in taking care and looking after clients' needs.

I take this opportunity to specially mention about Ms Rachana & Mr Niranjana who went out of their way and looked after our clients without looking at the day and time. We are so fortunate to have such hard working and wonderful work force.

Parag Shah
Manager

CHSP MANAGER'S REPORT



I am very happy and proud to present this report regarding our CHSP activities and achievements during 2020-2021.

The year was a testing period not only for Australia but for the whole world with the outbreak of Covid and of course it affected us and our activities as well for some time.

The frequent lockdowns, fear of Covid , the happening with families and friends in Australia and around the world, isolation, lack of social contact with friends and family, lack of activities to remain engaged jointly impacted our clients mentally and socially to a great extent.

But at RAIN, where our main focus is on the wellness of our clients, we worked a way to cater to the needs of the clients keeping their wellness and safety in mind and made sure that all our clients remained safe, happy, engaged and learnt to use new platforms of communication. They got healthy, nutritious meals delivered to their doorsteps.

The following services were planned & offered:

Information on Covid-19 precautions and safety measures were updated to clients regularly over phone and whats'App messages and emails. Infection control measures were shared regularly. We are proud and happy to say that not even a single senior was affected during the pandemic with Covid mainly due to the safety information shared with them at regular intervals.

CHSP COVID-19 Meals

- Due to Covid-19 restrictions, our centre temporarily stopped face to face activities. We applied and secured funding for providing emergency meals, as the frail aged seniors who were unable to prepare meals for themselves, desperately needed support. Funded by the Australian Federal Government to provide Covid-19 emergency meals, our community kitchen continued to operate with limited staff maintaining infection control precautions. Dedicated staff cooked fresh Indian vegetarian meals for the needy frail aged and delivery was done to cater for the dietary needs of our esteemed clients.
- This was not an easy task. Staff were encouraged to take their vaccinations on time and each and everyone of them rose to the occasion and joined hands in providing excellent safe service to the elderly.

Centre Based Day Respite

- We started centre based respite for the elderly sensing the need of carers who were exhausted after continuously taking care of seniors who were isolated. Seniors wanted social inclusion and talking to each other provided them with the much needed peer support.
- This is a two years' growth funding project funded by Australian Federal Government. Seniors needing respite care are picked up from their homes and provided support and activities at RAIN seniors' centre at 501 Forest Road, Penhurst, NSW 2222. This respite group meets on Wednesdays and Thursdays.
- Activities such as chair yoga, gentle stretching exercises, Indian Musical rounds and discussions on favourite topics are conducted. Seniors are encouraged to discuss family celebrations which are recorded by facilitators to be published as a booklet at the end of two years.

Activity Booklets

- Activity booklets are prepared regularly and distributed with interesting & fun activities, information to cater for their spiritual thirst, birthday greetings to help them remember the special days in their friends' lives, puzzles and trivia to boost their mental wellness.

Social Connections & Wellness Support

- Social connection is being maintained with whats App groups. phone contacts and zoom meetings.
- Our staff were in daily phone contact with consumers and provided the required assistance for shopping or delivery of meals or accompanying for medical appointments.
- When the lock down was lifted clients were encouraged to attend group activities at the centre adhering to the Social distancing and health restriction by the Government.
- All our dedicated staff underwent the infection control training and continue to follow all rules strictly.
- They have also made use of many other online training opportunities during this period and updated their qualification and knowledge this year.

Referrals to Aged Care

- We are also pleased to announce that some of our CHSP clients who had complex needs due to health issues and change of circumstances, were referred for home care packages and are successful recipients of that package.

Acknowledgements

I take this opportunity to sincerely thank :

- The government for their continued support for CHSP WITH Covid-19 emergency meals funding and Centre based respite funding which helped us to support the seniors during these testing times.
- The advisory committee and management committee who directed us in the right path in our ventures.
- Our CEO who dedication and guidance helped us to perform to the satisfaction of all involved.
- The dedicated, sincere and hard- working team of staff and volunteers, who are the back bones of all these success.
- Kast but not the least, all our clients who are understanding, supportive and consider RAIN not as an organisation but as their extended family.

Loganayaki
CHSP Manager

TREASURER'S REPORT



Though strongly impacted by the pandemic, our strategic management of finances and the funding support of the following grants and subsidies helped us successfully continue our support to the frail aged in the community.

Our grant income for this financial year was \$327,875.36 for Social Support (group) under Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP), Covid-19 Emergency meals under CHSP, Centre based Respite care under CHSP growth funding and Home care package subsidy received from Services Australia. We are thankful to the Australian Government Department of Health for this support.

As approved providers of the Home Care packages we started providing services to more consumers. The number of Indian Sub Continent community seniors using our services has increased during the year and more requests for referrals have been received as the population is ageing.

We will soon switch on to the Home Care Package payment mechanism recently announced by the Federal Government. RAIN will see a reduction in portfolio balances over the next two years as a consequence of these changes, but hopefully interim returns will lessen the impact.

We are extremely thankful to the caring and generous community members who donated to support our services and strengthen our system. Fund raising and donation income is \$210,199.36 in total.

More staff needed to be employed as we embarked on the emergency meals program. Chefs to cook on daily basis and delivery staff were employed and our staff number rose to 14 during this year. Home Care specific staff including Care coordinator and nursing staff were also recruited. Total staff costs incurred during this year was \$332,822.78 as jobs were offered to more people to strengthen the team and to provide more assistance.

As you can see, this has been a struggling and financially challenging year. We have stayed innovative and flexible, striving to apply for funding wherever the need was and with strategic management serve the seniors in the community to live their best lives.

Sapna Shah
Treasurer

RAIN COMMUNITY GARDEN



Due to lockdown with COVID 19, Unfortunately we have not been able to involve garden committee members, but various products from our garden have been harvested and used in preparing our seniors' Covid-19 emergency meals. It is truly rewarding to see the seniors who gather for their social support group or the centre based respite enjoying a meal together and appreciating the garden grown vegetables that have been used.

We had harvested nearly 6 kg of turmeric, nearly 4 kg of ginger, 6 kg of tuver, 6-8 kg of Valor, 6-8 bunches of Methi, mint as needed, mandarins approximately 8kg.

We have planted ginger, turmeric, Methi, coriander, patra, tindora. We have had pickle making sessions under the Muster project and turmeric pickles are always the favourites of the older generation. The therapeutic values of ginger, turmeric and mehthi (fenugreek) are discussed at length and the encouraged seniors come up with recipes for usage.

If we are lucky we may get few mangoes and papaya, late summer.

Dr Gunu Naker OAM
Trustee & Leader of the Garden Committee



HUMBLE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

OUR BELOVED SENIORS OF RAIN,

AS WE PROGRESS FURTHER WITH THE LAUNCH OF NEW PROJECTS AND THE PLANNING OF A NEW BETTER, BIGGER COMMUNITY KITCHEN, YOUR SUPPORT AND TOGETHERNESS ARE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED. OUR HUMBLE PRANAMS AND TOGETHER WE WILL PROCEED TO GREATER HEIGHTS.

THANK YOU.

SUDHA NATARAJAN
PUBLIC OFFICER

