

DECEMBER 2019

Annual Report



COVER IMAGE:Smiling newborn in rainbow swaddle
Adobe stock.



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The mission of Rainbow Families is to build a community that fosters resilience by connecting, supporting and empowering LGBTQIA+ families.

OUR MISSION



WHO WE ARE

Rainbow Families is the peak NSW organisation supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex, asexual (LGBTQIA+) parents and children. We work with partners and volunteers to deliver a range of programs. These include educational seminars, parenting education, playgroups, and social, community and cultural events. Rainbow Families has introduced a strong voice for LGBTQIA+ parents and their children in NSW, providing advocacy, support and opportunities to celebrate our families. Rainbow Families is governed by a board comprising a community management committee of professionals and experienced advocates. We are a not-for-profit organisation that was first convened in early 2015 and has been incorporated since April 2016. We rely on fundraising, community grants, and private donations to ensure our quality programs continue. We are in the process of becoming a Registered Charity under Commonwealth law and have planned to create a welfare division to further assist our communities. Through our programs, Rainbow Families works to support those in need to receive the right assistance.

In particular our programs aim to:

- Support families to get the right help to support their babies, children and teenagers, including social support and parenting programs.
- Ensure that culture, sexual and gender diversity is acknowledged and celebrated throughout all our service delivery
- Build parents and children's resilience and reduce systemic and social discrimination experienced by Rainbow Families.
- Support children and young people to build social support networks
- Advocate for the equality for our community
- Empower parents to provide the best care for their children by providing quality parenting programs and education
- Celebrate and nurture a supportive community

COMMUNITY WORKER REPORT

When someone in our community first becomes a parent, a Rainbow Families' playgroup is often the first connection to community. Some families may be isolated or not know many other parents, and arrive to find a friendly welcome. It's how we started;; a place for parents to get support with a new baby and for children to have a sense of community through friendships and play. We've grown and evolved over the years, adding a range of offerings and developing a strong advocacy voice for the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans queer, and intersex parents and their children.

While building a community continues to be at the core of what we do, today we are a peak body for wider services and supports across NSW, a leader in educational programs and a supports for parents in our community. We also, and advocating for our community's needs.

We continue to build strong partnerships with governments and non-government agencies and socially responsible corporate organisations.

Prospective parents participated in the award winning Antenatal and Postnatal class which was offered in partnership with Sydney Local Health District, and supported by Macquarie Bank.

We are proud to have hosted the second year of the Rainbow Families Resilience Program for children, a weekend camp for school-aged children and their parents with support from LUSH, the cosmetics company.

We are proud of the gains we have made to increase diversity and reach out to many more families.

The "All Families" project has been a partnership with ACON in delivering a resource with an authentic voice for trans and gender diverse parents, their children, health professionals and allies. We launched the resource in May this year to wide acclaim.

Every year we host Family Pride at Sydney Park. It is a celebration of our community and marks the International Family Equality Day. This year the event saw Justine Clarke perform and hundreds of families join us for a celebration of our identities in a flourishing inner-west community.

This year we also focused our advocacy on the rights and needs of trans and gender diverse parents and the ongoing exclusion created by government forms that don't fit our families.

We also have made a submission to the Australian Law Reform Commission's review into the family law system, and we coordinated a national response to the Religious Discrimination Bill 2019, the Religious Discrimination (Consequential Amendments) Bill 2019 and the Human Rights Legislation Amendment (Freedom of Religion) Bill 2019.

Playgroups still continue to be the safe and friendly introduction for new parents and babies.

We're a strong, beautiful community with stories of love and hope. We encourage all to be part of it, participate and become involved.

Ashley Scott
Community Worker

MESSAGE FROM OUR CO-CHAIRS

We know that growing up healthy, safe and well relies on a number of essential things: loving parents or carers, a home to live in, a good healthy environment, healthy food, a safe community, opportunities to thrive and a sense of belonging and inclusion.

Rainbow Families' role in the community is to celebrate the strengths in families, to nurture inclusion and participation, and to find a way to build resilience and support. Where there are social changes needed, we will provide our community with a voice and advocate for change.

We have advocated for changes to family law, the Australian Census, and to services provided for new parents and their babies. In the last year we have been successful in making visible and celebrating trans and gender diverse parents in our community.

We strongly advocated against changes that would provide religious organisations with a licence to discriminate against others, including LGBTIQ+ people, and women. We are working with other state and federal organisations to continue the fight against this inequality.

Inclusion is so important to wellbeing and a sense of belonging. We are proud to have increased participation of trans and gender diverse parents in our committee,

and in return have also seen an increase in participation in social and educational events.

We have sought to be accessible to all parents and children with a disability. We now have a collection of social stories to help introduce children to our events. We have also commissioned a fully accessible website, launched July 2019.

We are also proud to be listening to the smallest voices. In 2018 we convened a Youth Advisory Council (YAC). The YAC has a membership comprising only of children and young people aged between 10 to 21 years, who have LGBTQIA+ parents.

We now employ a community worker a coordinator, Ashley Scott, who is a dynamic, relentless, hardworking and talented community builder. We praise him for building strong partnerships that have sustained many programs for our community.

Our work was recognised this year with the Rainbow Families Antenatal and Postnatal Cclass being awarded a Sydney Local Health District AGM award for diversity and inclusion. Our co-chair Vanessa also received a Women's Day Award for her contribution to the LGBTQIA+ community.

We can't do this work alone. At Rainbow Families our motto is "Together we Sparkle". We work to engaged, and support volunteers; we work with community partners and private providers. We work in collaboration and partnership.

Love and gratitude,
Mat Howard & Vanessa Gonzalez
Rainbow Families Co-Chairs

CURRENT COMMITTEE

Vanessa Gonzalez and Mat Howard CoChairs
 Charmaine Flood - Secretary
 Lisa Story - Treasurer
 Cathy Brown - Advocacy
 Cec Busby - Photography
 Bern Foley – Mardi Gras and Social Events
 Nicholas Stewart - Legal
 Alison Gould – Inclusion, Regional Groups and IT
 James Hart - Governance
 Dror Hazy – Gay Dads and Volunteers
 Bridget Muir - Welfare Programs
 Sarah Tucker - Social Media and Antenatal Class
 Belinda McLean - Monthly Social Group
 Dianne van Dulken - Teenagers Social Events & IT
 Jolene Evans - Drag Story Time and Fundraising
 Justine Fields - Advocacy

We pay gratitude to previous 2019 members

Rica Seeto - Treasurer until August 2019 and a dedicated, hard-working member of our team who is missed dearly.

Sam Frain - Funding and Welfare until October 2019 and also a dedicated, hard-working member of our team who is missed dearly.

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FUNDING

Rainbow Families is a volunteer-led community organisation that is able to provide a range of services through fundraising, generous grants and donations. That said, we have been faced with financial pressures and many of you would know that the need is greater than our available funds allows us to meet. We aim to deliver professional quality programs and support. We have achieved this so far from small one-off grants, but in order to sustain our work, it is imperative that we secure long term funding.

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AWARDS

2019 Sydney Local Health Districts AGM Awards for the Rainbow Families Antenatal and Postnatal Class

2019 Inner West Council Women's Day Award: our Cochair Vanessa Gonzalez was recognised for her work to support the LGBTQI community

Mardi Gras Community Commendation Award 2017

ACON Honour Award Winner 2017

LGBTQI Award Finalist 2018

LGBTQI Award Finalist 2017

ACON Honours Award Finalist 2016

Inner West Council LGBTQI Community Organisation "Pride Seat" recognition 2018

PARENTING EDUCATION & WELFARE

We provide a comprehensive calendar of welfare and parenting programs for our community. It starts with support and education before a baby arrives, to post-natal care groups, to playgroups, camps during the primary years, groups for parents raising teenagers, and groups to support emerging leaders from among our own children. Some of our programs deserve special mention here:



BOUNCE RESILIENCE CAMP

This was our second resilience camp for school-aged children and their families. Again, the camp was supported by LUSH which allowed half of the families to attend free or at a subsidised rate or at a subsidised rate.



NEW PARENTS' GROUP

Facilitated by Sydney Local Health District, the focus is on supporting LGBTIQ+ parents and their babies. The group has been very well attended with around 18 families accessing this pilot program.

LGBTQIA+ANTENATAL CLASS

This year we delivered four classes in partnership with Sydney Local Health District and Macquarie Bank. We are extremely proud of this much-needed resource for our community.



WINE CHEESE & RAISING TEENS

This was a well-attended eight-week closed group, based on emotion coaching for parents raising teenagers.



PARENTING EDUCATION & WELFARE

CHILDREN'S RESILIENCE CAMP

When we talk about a child's resilience, we mean a child's ability to cope with ups and downs,, and their ability to and bounce back from the challenges they experience during childhood, such as . For example, moving home, changing schools, studying for an exam or dealing with the death of a loved pet or even the rejection of a friendship.

This year we hosted the second annual Children's Resilience Camp. With the support from LUSH, we were able to offer many free and subsidised places for families that would not otherwise have been able to attend the camp.

Building resilience helps children not only to deal with current difficulties that are a part of everyday life, but also to develop the basic skills and habits that will help them deal with challenges later in life, during adolescence and even in adulthood.

Our camp offered opportunities for children to build these skills in spades.

Children were invited to challenge themselves and take part in new things like archery, facing fears through the like the flying fox and , working in teams with activities like raft building. The 2020 camp is already being planned.



RAINBOW FAMILIES' ANTENATAL CLASS



The Rainbow Families Antenatal Class is Australia's first LGBTQIA+ specific antenatal class. It is a partnership with Sydney Local Health District and supported by Macquarie Bank. Run quarterly, it is perfect for LGBTQIA+ parents and carers expecting a baby within the next few months. The class has won a Local Health District Award for diversity and inclusion.

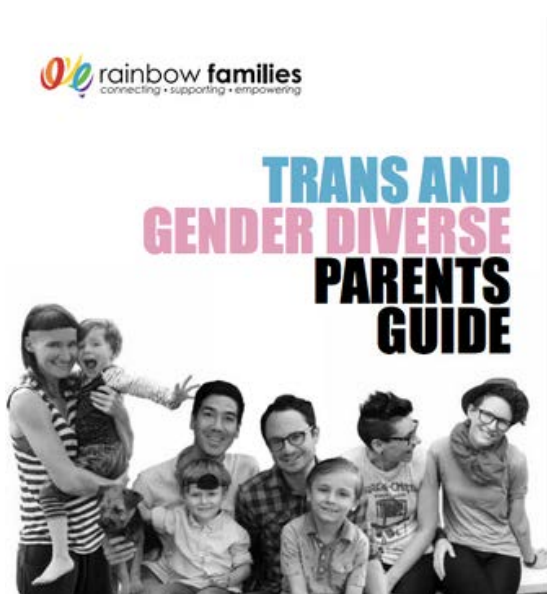
PARENTING EDUCATION & WELFARE

LACTATION PROJECT

Human milk feeding and lactation can look different to different families, yet a lot of information and support out there is geared towards cis heteronormative families. The reality is that every family is unique and diverse, even within our community. Having great information and support to reflect that is key. Within NSW, there is currently no classes specifically for LGBTIQ+ parents to learn how to feed their child/children in a safe and inclusive environment. Our community should be able to ask specific questions and share their personal stories related to their unique circumstances and our Lactation Project has paved the way. Rainbow Families and the Australian Breastfeeding Association have partnered to develop a lactation education program for LGBTIQ+ families. In late 2018, Rainbow Families secured funding from the Vashudara Foundation and LUSH. The project includes an education resource that is inclusive of LGBTIQ+ families, as well as four 4 pilot lactation education classes to be delivered in 2020.



TRANS & GENDER DIVERSE PARENTS GUIDE



2019 was a special year for our trans and gender diverse (TGD) community as the Trans and Gender Diverse Parents' Resource was officially launched.

The launch took place at the Family Pride Day. The resource was crowdfunded by the community in 2017, and is a collection of personal stories reflecting the journeys of TGD parents, their partners and children. This resource reflects the diversity of the TGD community. The key message is – you are not alone. This resource has been shared Australia-wide and internationally. It is downloadable from our website and hard copies are available upon request.

CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS



SGLMG 2018 PARADE FLOAT

The highlight of the calendar is Mardi Gras Parade. With a record 250 people marching with Rainbow Families this year it was a fabulous evening thanks to Bern Foley and her team.



FAMILY PRIDE 2018

Over 500 people attended Family Pride in May this year. The day was sponsored by Commonwealth Bank and saw the launch of the Trans and Gender Diverse Parents' Guide.



MARDI GRAS FAMILY VIEWING AREA

For families that didn't want to march, our family viewing area was a safe inclusive space to watch the parade and all of its colour..

FAIR DAY

The family friendly beginning to Mardi Gras season. Queer parents were able to pick up resources, connect with community and find their nearest playgroup.



DRAG STORY TIME

"I'm against drag queens being exposed to children. A lot could go wrong. Nails could be broken, wigs pulled off, someone could get knocked off her heels."

~ William Slayers

You won't see that at our Drag Story Time!

CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS



RAINBOW FAMILIES SNOW TRIP

Our annual snow weekend saw 15 families come together for games in the snow, family dinners and lots of board games.



HALLOWEEN DISCO

Jumping castles, dancing, face painting, sugary snacks – what more could you want at our annual Halloween Disco. Thanks to Macquarie Bank for supporting this annual event.

FAMILY FUN DAY AT LUNA PARK

Mardi Gras Family Fun Day was a wonderful event for families to enjoy the fun of the fair!



BIG GAY WEEKEND AWAY



The Big Gay Weekend Away just keeps getting bigger each year. In October we added a program of events to allow new families to be introduced to the group.

PLAY GROUPS



MONTHLY CATCH UP

Gay Dads, Inner West, Macarthur, Northern Beaches, Newcastle, Central Coast, Illawarra, Penrith, Blue Mountains



GAY DADS CATCH UP

This catch up is open to all GBTIQA+ Dads, their families and friends, including dads in planning, dads through fostering; adoption; surrogacy; donor; co-parents and those of us who play a father figure role in a child's life

RAINBOW FAMILIES' PLAY GROUPS

Central Coast, Currans Hill, Illawarra, Inner West

Rainbow Families playgroups are often the first connection to community for a new parent. Some parents may be isolated or not know many other families. They arrive to a warm welcome from Gill, Hayley, Jasmin or Charlene and meet their new queer community.



REGIONAL PLAY GROUPS

Central Coast, Currans Hills, Penrith



VOLUNTEERS

Passionate, committed people are at the heart of a good community and together, we help enrich the energy and culture of our community.

The most heartening part of our volunteer program is the number of parents and children who come looking to give back after experiencing firsthand the benefits of our programs.

Rainbow Families has a strong child protection and safety policy requiring all board members and volunteers to have a clear Working with Children Check. We thank the 53 volunteers that put up their hands in 2019.

This year we offered free Mental Health First Aid training to all volunteers, in an effort to give back to the people that give so much to our community.



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

We thank all funders, donors, partners, and sponsors for supporting our work and enabling us to deliver programs to the children and parents and allies we work with.

Funding & Grants

Inner West Council
Northcott
City of Sydney
Lesbian Space Project
Resourcing Parents
ACON
LINC

Corporate Funding & Support

LUSH
Vasudhara foundation
Barnardos Australia
Dowson Turco Lawyers
Commonwealth Bank
Macquarie
Deloitte Australia
Double Roasters



REPORTS AND RESOURCES

[Rainbow Families Early Years Guide](#)

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/551f12b9e4b04cf2fe218aee/t/5912e56c1b631b461eeeb1b3/1494410620797/Rainbow_Families_Early_Years_online_2.pdf

[Rainbow Families School Support Guide](#)

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/551f12b9e4b04cf2fe218aee/t/58a7d845b3db2bfa5de26831/1487394892498/Rainbow_Families_A5_final_onlineschoolsupportguide.pdf

[All Families Resource](#)

<http://www.rainbowfamilies.com.au/advocacy/2018/3/8/all-families>

[Supporting LGBTQI families in baby feeding and lactation journey](#)

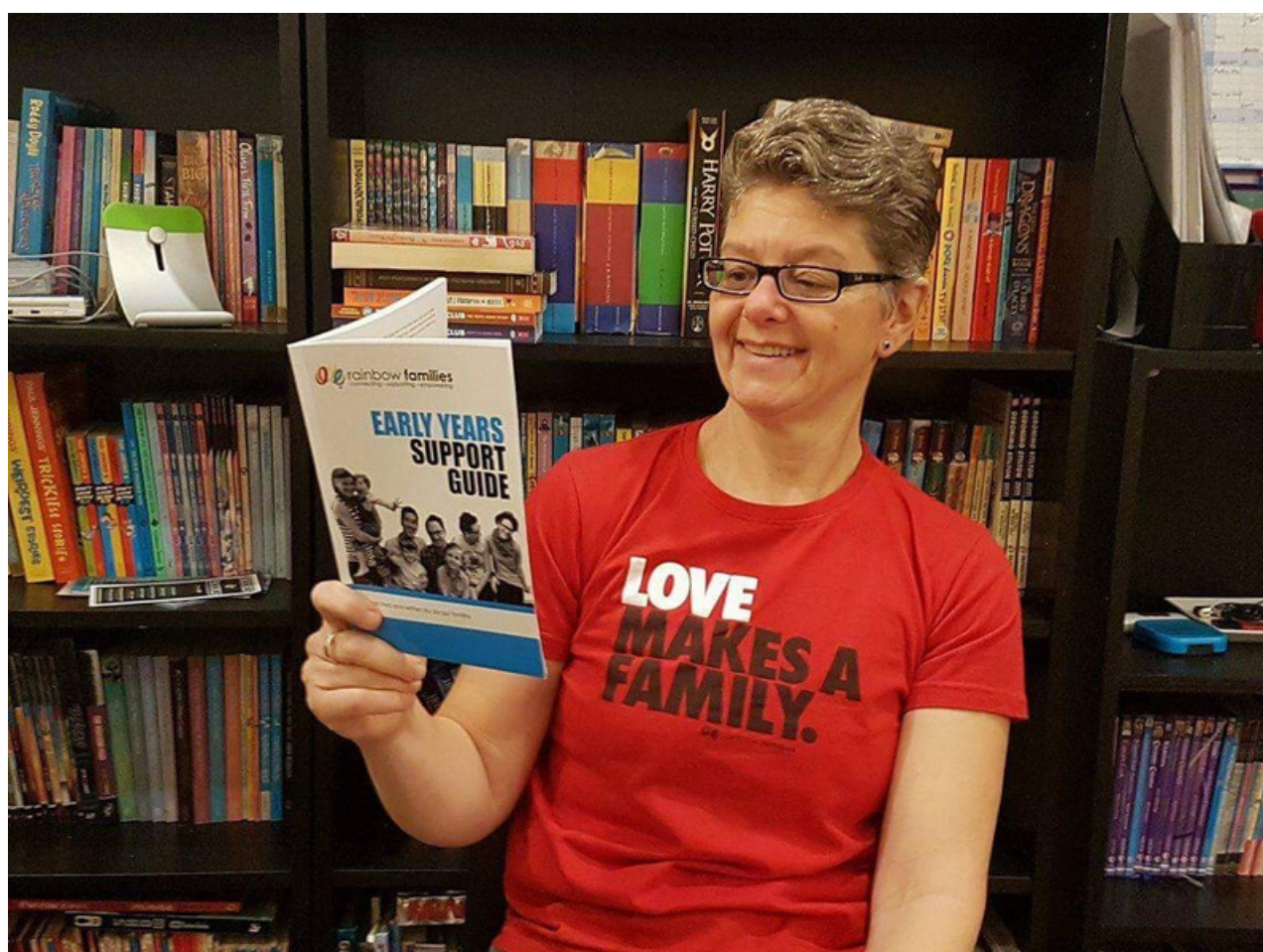
<http://www.rainbowfamilies.com.au/rainbow-families-blog/2018/11/28/supporting-lgbtiqa-families-in-their-human-milk-feeding-and-lactation-journeys>

[Rainbow Families Antenatal Depression Support pamphlet](#)

<http://www.rainbowfamilies.com.au/s/PND-4s4x.pdf>

[Rainbow Families A Guide to Raising Resilience LGBTQI Families](#)

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/551f12b9e4b04cf2fe218aee/t/58f9e11b1e5b6cd8b70ff45a/1492771104921/resilience+flyer+WEB.pdf>



SUBMISSIONS AND ADVOCACY

FAMILY LAW REFORM SUBMISSION

In 2018, Rainbow Families consulted with the community to contribute to the Australian Law Reform Commission's review of the Family Law system. We were invited to make a submission to the Federal Government's Joint Parliamentary Inquiry and made it clear that we believe it is vital that the inquiry hears a wide range of voices that reflect the diversity of experiences, including those of the LGBTIQ+ community.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM BILL

We have worked with Rainbow Families Victoria and Queensland on a joint submission to the Religious Freedom Reform Bill. In crafting our response, we considered the Bill through the lens of ensuring our children's rights and best interests. Our primary concern remains that our children are not discriminated against, treated unfairly, subjected to offensive or hurtful remarks or refused access to education, employment or health care because of who is in their family or how their family was formed.

More than 50 LGBTIQ+ and ally organisations including Rainbow Families have released a joint statement in support of an affirming Religious Discrimination Act that respects religion but also respects our community and women..

EVERY CHILD DESERVES A LEGAL PARENT

Rainbow Families is leading the charge with Dowson Turco Lawyers, the NSW Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby and Surrogacy Australia to campaign for law reform in relation to surrogacy laws and the status of parents whose children are born overseas. A focus for 2020, we began what will be a complex campaign for change to this important area of law for our community.

LOVE (STILL) MAKES A FAMILY REPORT



We published a report into discrimination faced by LGBTIQ+parented families when accessing Australian Federal Government services. We continue to advocate for changes recommended in this report, including changes to Census data collection.

SUBMISSIONS AND ADVOCACY

[Submission into the ABS Review of 2121 Census Questions \(2018\)](#)

<http://www.rainbowfamilies.com.au/advocacy/2018/7/25/submission-into-the-abs-review-of-2021-census-questions>

[Submission into the Enquiry into Local Adoption \(2018\)](#)

<http://www.rainbowfamilies.com.au/advocacy/2018/6/12/submission-to-the-inquiry-into-local-adoption>

[Submission to the Review of Family Law](#)

<http://www.rainbowfamilies.com.au/advocacy/2018/6/10/dqs6m43gw0nxca14jrkmt1983t9wyx>

[Federal Government Services Survey](#)

<http://www.rainbowfamilies.com.au/advocacy/2018/3/22/federal-government-services-survey>

[Our Community Says No to more discrimination](#)

[Submission into Religious Exceptions](#)

<http://www.rainbowfamilies.com.au/advocacy/2018/2/8/say-no-to-more-discrimination-against-our-community>

[Submission into Inquiry into the Arrangements of the Postal Survey](#)

<http://www.rainbowfamilies.com.au/advocacy/2018/2/8/rainbow-families-tell-parliament-what-it-was-like-to-have-the-postal-survey-inflicted-on-us>

2017

[Report “Love Makes a Family: A report into experiences of discrimination faced by LGBTIQ parented families when accessing NSW State Government services. May 2017](#)

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/551f12b9e4b04cf2fe218aee/t/5983002c4c0dbfa08bbbe6da/1501757520229/NSW+REPORT.pdf>

[Submission into Senate Enquiry into Same Sex Marriage. January 2017](#)

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/551f12b9e4b04cf2fe218aee/t/58887178bf629a6f92eb4250/1485336961650/RFMarriageEqualitySubmission.pdf>

[Submission into Federal Enquiry into Surrogacy. February 2016](#)

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/551f12b9e4b04cf2fe218aee/t/56ece6af62cd9413e14d9713/1458366144614/RFNSW_SurrogacySubmission.pdf

VIDEO LINKS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hNkwASrI62E>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhgjtXhQfLk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I-Dog3hw1DQ>

RAINBOW FAMILIES INC.		FY2018	FY2019
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT			
INCOME		\$	\$
Grants	68,680	19,348	
Donations	28,879	18,725	
Interest - Unrestricted	163	167	
<i>Trading/Operating Activities Income</i>			
Membership Fees	3,282	2,120	
Sale of Goods-Tickets/Merchandise etc	29,189	42,603	
Sponsorships	12,075	12,490	
<i>Subtotal Trading/Operating Activities Income</i>	44,546	57,213	
TOTAL INCOME	142,268	95,453	
COST OF GOODS SOLD (COGS)			
Grants	68,680	18,848	
Donations	21,478	5,462	
Trading/Operating Activities COGS	24,095	27,402	
TOTAL COST OF GOODS SOLD	114,254	51,712	
EXPENDITURE			
Advertising & Promotion	85		
Amenities	125		
Bank Charges	5	20	
Board/Governance Expenses	1,282	182	
Client Support Services	142	458	
Client Support Consumables	152		
Computer Expenses	384	588	
Employment Support Costs		660	
Insurance-Public Liability	870		
Insurance-Volunteers	180		
Mobile Calls	98	246	
Membership Fees Paid	339	80	
Postage	204	185	
Printing & Stationery	58	18	
Publications and Information Resources	575		
Repairs & Maintenance	56		
Salary	18,740	26,471	
Write Off Expenses	70		
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	23,365	28,907	
NET INCOME/(LOSS)	4,649	14,834	

Balance Sheet

RAINBOW FAMILIES INC.			
BALANCE SHEET		FY2018	FY2019
		\$	\$
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash at Bank - Unrestricted Westpac:Cheque	2,593	2,952	
Cash at Bank - Unrestricted Westpac Cash Reserve	74,945	68,250	
Deposit - Addison Road Community Centre	300	300	
Inventory - Merchandise	1,782	3,451	
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	88,150	74,954	
LESS			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Provision for Annual Leave	414	1,049	
Provision for Personal/Carer's Leave	611	1,535	
PAYG Withholding Payable	1,822	2,131	
Superannuation Payable	639	635	
Accounts Payable	1,893	3,262	
Accrued Expenses	12,933	11,737	
Grants Received in Advance	53,362	23,922	
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	72,302	44,271	
NET ASSETS	15,848	30,683	
EQUITY			
Retained Surplus	11,199	15,848	
Current Year Surplus/(Loss)	4,649	14,834	
TOTAL EQUITY	15,848	30,683	



