



2020 Annual Report



#StrongSafeFabulous

WHAT'S Inside



WHO WE ARE



03	Who we are
04	What we do
06	From our co-chairs
07	From our executive officer
08	Board of directors
09	Committees
10	Programs and impact
12	How we influence
13	Our volunteers
14	Resources and publications
15	Financials

Our mission: To build a community that fosters resilience by connecting, supporting, and empowering LGBTQ+ families.

Rainbow Families is the peak organisation supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) parents and children. Our community of volunteers and partners deliver a range of programs including seminars, parenting education, and playgroups, as well as social gatherings for community and cultural events.

We are a voice for LGBTQ+ parents and their children, providing advocacy, support and opportunities to celebrate our families. We are governed by a Board of Directors and supported by volunteer committees comprised of professionals and experienced advocates.

As a not-for-profit organisation, we rely on fundraising, community grants, and private donations to ensure our quality programs continue. We were first convened in early 2015, and incorporated in April 2016. In 2020 Rainbow Families became a registered charity under Commonwealth law and we continue to develop our welfare division to further assist those in need to receive assistance.



Connect

support



- Support families to raise their babies, children and teenagers, via parenting programs and activities that connect the community.
- Support children and young people to celebrate their shared experience and build social networks through our Youth Advisory Council, playgroups and social events.
- Empower and celebrate diverse cultures and genders in all programs.
- Advocate for the equality of our community and reduce systemic and social discrimination experienced.
- Build parents and children's resilience; celebrate and nurture the diversity of our community.
- Empower parents to provide the best care for their children through quality parenting programs and education.
- Reduce poverty by increasing pride, reducing shame and promoting community inclusion.
- Work with other organisations and welfare agencies to enable safe access for Rainbow Families.



empower

What we do:

from OUR CO-CHAIRS



We have come full circle, as founding members of Rainbow Families to this year celebrating five years as an organisation. Apart from our children, nothing makes us more proud than seeing this organisation thrive and grow.

It started with a premise that our diverse community had a lot to share with each other and others; that we are at our best when we work together as gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans and queer parents; and, that keeping our children, parents and community at the heart and centre of all that we do, will make us stronger.

We have matured in the past year, transitioning from a committee structure to a professional Board, following a change to our constitution to better reflect our mission. We now are a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC), and most recently we've been recognised as a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) in recognition for our work.

Our newly established committees focus on Community Welfare and Education, Events, Finance Audit and Risk, Marketing and Communications. These committees are about 'the doing' and are driven by passionate community volunteers and partners who give their time and share their skills. Thank you to all of our lovely community who volunteer their time as committee members.

The Board meets every month with an emphasis on governance, organisational sustainability and ensuring that Rainbow Families continues to build a community that supports and empowers LGBTQ+ families. Our Board meetings are characterised by robust discussions, collaboration, and strategic thinking.

As a grass roots community-led organisation, the challenge remains to secure ongoing funding for the many services we offer. This year, due to the COVID-19

pandemic, many of our events were cancelled, leading to a significant decrease in corporate funding and constraints in fundraising efforts. We continue to look for ways to offer some level of certainty and growth for the services we offer the community.

The world we live in is changing rapidly, and there are many challenges we continue to face. However, one thing is certain: we depend on one another to survive and thrive.

The world we live in is changing rapidly, and there are many challenges we continue to face. However, one thing is certain: we depend on one another to survive and thrive.

A healthy community means that we are well connected and supported by each other, our families and neighbourhoods. This year we have heard from people who tell us they are stressed, isolated, and missing community. Our message, and the message we are hearing all around us, is how important friendship, caring and connection are to us all.

It's an honour to be part of an organisation that creates such an impact and changes so many lives for the better.

We want to thank board members Kylie, Dror, Cathy, Bern, Morri, and Lisa. Special mention goes to Board member Morri Young and Kylie Gwynne, who shared their invaluable experience in working with non-profit charities to help us achieve our charity and PBI credentials. Particular thanks also to Ashley Scott who works incredibly hard as our Executive Officer to empower children and families and our community to be proud and resilient.

**Vanessa Gonzalez & Scott Brunelle
Co-Chairs 2020**

The curve ball that is 2020 has been met with resilience and optimism from our community. The foundations that have been built over the previous five years have positioned our organisation to meet the needs of the LGBTQ+ community during the COVID pandemic, while putting in place the structure to grow into the future.

In November 2020, we received our Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status which enables our organisation to increase funding capacity in new areas, and access additional financial resources that will allow us to grow the programs and support we offer our community. We are well positioned for 2021, with opportunities to positively impact our Rainbow Families community through advocacy, education, and community engagement.

Our advocacy initiatives focus on inclusion and removing the discrimination our families face from both the state and federal governments. These obstacles come in the form of legislation such as The Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 (NSW Religion Bill) which aims to restrict children from sharing their family's experiences at school. We will continue to collaborate with other organisations to oppose the Bill and gather support to show how harmful and divisive this Bill will be.

Our families face many forms of discrimination, but none so extreme as the Australian law which does not recognise parents who have children through international surrogacy, as legal parents. The law states that a parent is the person who gives birth, and their partner at the time. For many families created

through surrogacy this means that parents are not legally recognised, leaving children vulnerable and families at risk. Our Legal Parentage Campaign aims to reform the law and ensure these children and parents have equal rights.

Our education programs will expand in 2021 to include classes for prospective parents, education classes for new parents and antenatal classes. Our Family Violence Prevention Program will enter year two with a focus on family, following this year's focus of children. We have a suite of training packages for health and education workers, as well as our corporate partners, to increase understanding for our community and promote inclusion in the workplace and schools.

While COVID has prevented a lot of our community building events this year, in 2021 we will launch COVID safe playgroups, a peer support program, and bring our exciting calendar of events back as soon as it is safe.

We thank our dedicated volunteers for their time during this challenging year, and our new Board of Directors who have committed to the mission of Rainbow Families into the future. Our community is full of love and hope, and will continue to grow stronger.

**Ashley Scott
Executive Officer**



from OUR EXECUTIVE OFFICER

board OF DIRECTORS

A new board of directors was nominated this year to see through the organisational transition to charity status.



Ashley Scott
Executive Officer



Scott Brunelle
Co-Chair



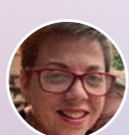
Vanessa Gonzalez
Co-Chair & Community Welfare & Education



Catherine Brown
Advocacy



Bern Foley
Events



Kylie Gwynne
Governance



Dror Hazy
Finance



Lisa Story
Treasurer



Morri Young
Secretary

With the naming of the new board of directors, our active volunteers were appointed to committees who oversee the delivery of community welfare and education programs, events, finance, and marketing and communications.

COMMUNITY WELFARE & EDUCATION

- Jolene Evans
- Justine Field
- Vanessa Gonzalez, Lead
- Alison Gould
- Bridget Muir
- Sarah Tucker

EVENTS

- Bern Foley, Lead
- Belinda McLean
- Sarah Tucker
- Dianne Van Dulken

FINANCE AUDIT & RISK

- Drew Browne
- Kylie Gwynne
- Dror Hazy
- Ali Saad
- Lisa Story, Lead

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

- Willow Aliento
- Drew Browne
- Scott Brunelle
- Steve Jenkins
- Julie Jensen
- Caroline Martinez
- Mikayla Muller
- Will Pascoe
- Robbie Robertson, Lead
- Kristy Swan
- Dianne Van Dulken

committees





The year commenced optimistically with a full calendar of events and programs. As we moved deeper into the pandemic and nationwide COVID safety restrictions, it became evident that many of our events would not proceed. The community rallied to provide online events and continue to connect in meaningful ways.

PARENTING EDUCATION & WELFARE

We strive to 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, playgroups, camp experiences, groups for parents raising teenagers, and groups to support emerging leaders from among our own children.

LGBTQ+ Antenatal Class

The February Rainbow Families LGBTQ+ Antenatal Class welcomed 14 expectant parents. Hosted by Macquarie Bank, and run by midwife educators from Sydney Local Health District (and members of our community) the day covers everything expectant parents need to know. The Rainbow Families Antenatal Class is run quarterly and continued to be delivered via Zoom throughout the pandemic.

New Parents Group

The New Parents Group offers support for LGBTQ+ parents with new babies. Facilitated by the Sydney Local Health District, the group runs like a traditional new parents group for the first four weeks with education and information for new parents.

The group then continues to meet for the rest of the term as a place for LGBTQ+ parents to connect in an inclusive and supported environment. As babies become more mobile, they graduate and are welcomed to one of the playgroups.

Due to COVID safety restrictions the group was reduced in size this year, which has led to a waiting list for the program.

Playgroups

When someone in our community first becomes a parent, a Rainbow Families playgroup is often their first connection to people with like experiences. Some families may be isolated or not know many other parents, and this is where we can offer a supportive environment. It's a place for first time parents, those with a new baby, and for children to have a sense of community through friendships and play.

The Inner West Playgroup has been running in various forms for over 12 years, and has been passed on from one active volunteer parent to another. This year, Gill Stokie has volunteered her time each week to host and welcome the families, and we thank the City of Sydney for its support.

While Playgroup was suspended during COVID safety restrictions, the need has become even greater, and meetings have resumed October 2020 with safety measures in place.

Rainbow Families volunteers also facilitate playgroups in the Central Coast and Illawarra regions.

REGIONAL CATCH UPS

For many community members living in regional areas it can be difficult to connect with other members of the LGBTQ+ community. To support these families we run a number of regular social catch-ups across the state where people can meet other diverse families, share knowledge and build community.

Parent Peer Support Program

This new program is in development with social work students from Australian Catholic University. An initial community consultation and focus groups have been undertaken to scope the experiences, fears, challenges and joys of becoming a new parent. The community consultation will guide the direction of the program that aims to support new parents and will be launched in 2021.

Lactation Project

The pilot program will commence in 2021 and will involve education classes and the launch of resources specific to LGBTQ+ families who are looking at human milk feeding and lactation. We are so excited about this opportunity and having evidence based information and support that is specific to our community.

Rainbow Families Family Violence Prevention Project

Rainbow Families and Prosper (Project Australia) have received funding via the Australian Government's Community-led Projects to work within the extended community of LGBTQ+ families to deliver a number of community education campaigns to prevent violence. The program runs for three years and includes the development of resources, workshops and events specific to the needs of the community. Thanks to the Department of Social Services for funding the Rainbow Families Family Violence Prevention Project.

CHILDREN'S RESILIENCE PROGRAMS

2020 Bounce! Children's Resilience Camp

The annual Children's Resilience Camp was developed for primary school children and their families, to provide a supportive environment for making friends and building children's resilience.

The program is based on resilience principles, with the goal to build supportive relationships, build autonomy and responsibility, manage emotions, and create opportunities for personal challenges.

The Camp returned for the third year in November, and was a weekend away at Sydney Academy of Sport and Recreation in Narrabeen.

Youth Advisory Council

The Rainbow Families Youth Advisory Council (YAC) was established in 2018, to ensure that the voices of children and young people in the Rainbow Families community are heard. Participants are given the opportunity to shape and participate in the development of policies and services that concern them. The YAC is open to any child or young person who has a parent or family that is part of the LGBTQ+ community.

The YAC continues in partnership with Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre, and meets each month with a cooking workshop led by chef and Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre Community Programs

Coordinator Stephen Lunny. As well as exploring healthy eating principles and cooking, the YAC develops leadership skills by discussing community relevant issues and developing a resource for young people, created by young people. The YAC was briefly put on hold due to COVID restrictions but commenced again in September.

MARDI GRAS 2020

Drag Story Time

Drag Story Time has become a regular event in the Rainbow Families calendar, and this year over 200 people attended the first Drag Story Time held at the Sydney Aquarium. The penguin family with two dads was a highlight for many of the kids in our community. We look forward to continuing this celebration of diversity in 2021.

Fair Day

Fair Day saw us knee deep in craft and kids activities thanks to Reverse Garbage and our network of community volunteers. It's an important day to be part of the network of organisations providing information and resources to a wide range of families as well as future families, who may not know of about the work of Rainbow Families and our supportive community. It was a brilliant day and great to see more and more Rainbow Families every year. We thank Mardi Gras for creating a family friendly space at Fair Day.

Luna Park Rainbow Families Day

The Luna Park Rainbow Families Day was a huge success, with LGBTQ+ families watching the drag shows, and making the most of the rides and space to enjoy the day in a safe and inclusive space. Due to popular demand, this will become an annual event on the Mardi Gras calendar.

Mardi Gras Parade

The Mardi Gras volunteer sub-committee liaised with Mardi Gras organisers, developing float costumes and themes, and working with Reverse Garbage on an amazing float. The result was slick, colourful and a fitting representation of our community.

Approximately 225 parents and children marched with Rainbow Families in the parade, which is always an invaluable experience. The sense of community is palpable and the diversity of the floats and other marchers shows our next generation that they are part of a larger community that is loving and accepting. It is a night full of dancing, high fives, and joy—to be remembered forever.

In response to the overwhelming call for tickets, the Rainbow Families Events Committee secured viewing space for an additional 100 people to join us and celebrate Mardi Gras from our dedicated viewing area. We are working with Mardi Gras to increase capacity of this area for next year.

HOW WE INFLUENCE

A critical and valued element of the work we do is to work for equal rights of LGBTQ+ parents and their children. Our Advocacy team regularly prepares and distributes submissions, after first gathering comment and experiences from the community.

LEGAL PARENTAGE CAMPAIGN

Our families face many forms of discrimination, but none so extreme as the Australian law which does not recognise parents who have children through international surrogacy, as legal parents. The law states that a parent is the person who gives birth, and their partner at the time. For many families created through surrogacy this means that parents are not legally recognised, leaving children vulnerable and families at risk. Our Legal Parentage Campaign aims to reform the law and ensure these children and parents have equal rights. We are currently collecting stories and experiences which will be used in a submission to advocate for our children, and better recognition of our families.

NSW RELIGION BILL

The Education Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 (NSW Religion Bill) will harm trans and gender diverse students by denying their existence and preventing teachers and counsellors from supporting them. Rainbow Families is collaborating with other organisations to oppose the Bill as it will have a massive impact on our kids and our families, in that our kids are effectively being told there is something wrong with their families and their community. Rainbow Families will be making a submission detailing the potential dangerous effects of this legislation.

SURROGACY ENQUIRY

The current approach to surrogacy in Australia creates discrepancies across state and territory jurisdictions, and the ban on commercial surrogacy forces the practice underground, exposing children, surrogates and intending parents to risk. In 2020, Rainbow Families submitted a paper outlining recommendations which would provide legality and transparency around surrogacy.

FAMILY LAW SYSTEM

Rainbow Families has made a submission to the Federal Parliament's Joint Select Committee on Australia's Family Law System, to ensure that the needs of our community are considered within this framework. The Committee is specifically reviewing the financial costs to families of family law proceedings, the impact of family law proceedings on the health safety and wellbeing of children and families, and the avenues to improve the performance and monitoring of professionals involved in family law proceedings. The committee will present their final report in early 2021.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM REFORM BILLS

Rainbow Families does not support the Religious Freedom Reform Bills in their current form. In crafting our response, we have considered the Bills 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. Given these considerations, we are unable to support the Bills as they stand, and a submission was prepared in late 2019.A

Rainbow Families is a volunteer-led community organisation that is equipped to provide a range of services by way of fundraising events, corporate grants and sponsorships, and generous donations.

As the restrictions and effects of the pandemic unfolded in 2020, we have been faced with financial challenges. In order to sustain our work into the future, it is imperative that we secure long term funding. In November 2020, we received our DGR status which enables our organisation to increase funding capacity in new areas, and access additional financial resources that will allow us to increase the programs and support we offer. We are grateful for the many volunteers who have worked on this application, and we celebrate this achievement.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Rainbow Families is fuelled by passionate, committed people who have experienced first-hand the benefits of our work together, as well as extended family and friends who are allies and believe in our mission.

We have a child protection and safety policy requiring all board members and volunteers to have a clear Working with Children Check.

We thank the hundreds of volunteers that put up their hands in 2020 under the unique circumstances and challenges that have come with the pandemic.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Our supporters

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

Funding & grants

- City of Sydney
- Corporate funding & support
- LUSH
- Vasudhara Foundation
- Dowson Turco Lawyers
- Commonwealth Bank
- Macquarie Bank
- Deloitte Australia
- The Funding Network
- GiveOUT Day

OUR VOLUNTEERS



SEPARATION GUIDE

Separation is a difficult and sometimes traumatic time for families, and those in the LGBTQ+ community experience unique challenges. We found that there were few resources that focused on guiding parents through their separation journey. At the same time, there are parents who have separated in a positive way that ends up being the best for all members of their families.

The guide provides parents with practical suggestions and a sense that they are not alone in their separation journey. It is compiled with the assistance of parents who have been through the process of separation, as their experiences are invaluable to others. We are so grateful for their generosity and trust in telling their stories.

PROTECTIVE BEHAVIOURS RESOURCES

Our suite of protective behaviours resources have been designed for parents and children in our community. The resources have practical tips such as Learning to ask for help - Building a network of trusted adults both inside and outside of the immediate family, who can assist your child if they need help.

Safety signals/Warning signs—Encouraging the use of instinct, body-awareness and personal sense of safety as an important protective strategy.

Bystander behaviour—Fostering respect for and respect in the treatment of others and supporting your child in building skills to become an ally to those who may be vulnerable.

These resources have been added in 2020 to our existing range of resources available on our website:

- School Support Guide
- Early Years Support Guide
- Trans and Gender Diverse Parents Guide
- Postnatal Depression Resource
- Building Resilient Families Guide
- Love Makes A Family Report
- Love (still) Makes A Family Report

resources & PUBLICATIONS

PROFIT AND LOSS

Rainbow Families Inc (For the year ended 30 June 2020)

Trading Income	91,109.93
Donations Recieved	46,294.29
Interest Income	61.84
Operating Income: Sale of Goods/Merchandise/Tickets etc	35,544.80
Other Revenue	6,941.00
Sales	2,268.00
Cost of Sales	36,029.24
Operating COGS: Computer Expenses	4,460.05
Operating COGS: Computer Expenses	31,569.19
Operating COGS: Tickets/Merchandise etc	36,029.24
Operating Expenses	50,051.06
Accounting & Bookkeeping	3,081.00
Advertising & Promotion	1,080.85
Bank Fees	224.29
Client Support Services	330.00
Computer Expenses	713.65
Employment Support Costs	2,769.00
Fees & Permits	47.19
Insurance-Public Liability	1,050.50
Membership Fees Paid	354.18
Mobile Calls	471.00
Postage & Freight	554.45
Printing & Stationery	65.17
Publications and Information Resources	(879.30)
Superannuation	2,983.86
Travel-National	90.54
Wages and Salaries	36,758.86
Workers Comp Insurance	355.82
Gross Profit	55,080.69
Net Profit	5,029.63

BALANCE SHEET

Rainbow Families Inc (As at 30 June 2020)

Assets	59,545.45
Cash Reserve Account	55,111.61
Cheque Account	4,433.84
Current Assets	5,125.38
Deposit - Addison Road Community Centre	600.00
Deposit NSW Office of Sport	4,525.38
Total Assets	64,670.83
Liabilities	12,764.51
Current Liabilities	600.00
Accounts Payable	11,182.35
Provision for Annual Leave	(75.12)
Provision for Personal/Carer's Leave	1,657.28
Net Assets	51,906.32
Equity	51,906.32
Current Year Earnings	5,029.63
Retained Earnings	46,876.69



financials

