



The Rainbow  
Lodge Program

# ANNUAL REPORT 2017

The background features a large white triangle pointing downwards from the top-left corner. The top-right corner is a yellow triangle. A small green triangle is located at the intersection of the white and yellow triangles. The bottom-left corner is a light blue triangle, and the bottom-right corner is a darker blue triangle. The text is positioned in the white area.

SAFETY  
HOPE  
EFFORT  
DIGNITY



## WHO WE ARE

The Rainbow Lodge Program is a not-for-profit organisation providing secure housing and a range of community support services for men as they re-enter the community after a period of incarceration.

The men who undertake our residential program are assessed as having many complex needs. To give them every chance at success, we aim to provide a responsive, intensive and supportive service that helps our men successfully recover, rehabilitate, and reintegrate into the community.

Operated by the Judge Rainbow Memorial Fund Inc. since 1964, Rainbow Lodge was the first half-way house for people leaving custody in Australia. Our patron is Lynn Rainbow AM.

## WHAT WE DO

Our residential program consists of two phases: residential and outreach. During the residential phase, residents live on-site in a self-contained house for a maximum of 12 weeks. Only eight places are available at any one time, and these are in high demand. During the outreach phase, ex-residents are supported for up to a further 24 months while living in the community.

We operate from a position of everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. What does this mean in practice? We persevere. We encourage personal growth and responsibility. We are open, flexible and transparent. We provide quality programs, services, and advocacy. Our approach is to use evidence based - and client centred - harm minimisation strategies that help our men to manage the enormous challenges in their lives following release from prison.

## OUR RESIDENTS

Assessed at high risk for recidivism, all of our residents have multiple needs. We offer accommodation to those who would otherwise be homeless. Nearly all have addiction problems with alcohol and other drugs as well as a range of mental health issues. Most have limited connections to their families and the broader community. All have unresolved trauma from past events in their lives. Many of our residents are Aboriginal as well as from a range of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

## OUR FUNDING

The majority of our funding is provided by NSW Corrective Services, with additional funding for buildings and grounds from the NSW Department of Family and Community Services (FACS). We actively seek other sources of financial support.

## OUR VISION

A fresh start for men leaving custody. All people deserve to have a healthy, happy and fulfilling life.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

We are a small organisation – a full time staff equivalent of six, although more than six persons are involved, who, together with visiting presenters, seek to re-settle into the community men who have been incarcerated for a significant period of their lives. Our clients openly acknowledge issues with one or more of drug addiction, mental health, social disruption, social disadvantage, homelessness, and overwhelming poverty.

Corrective Services pays Rainbow Lodge to provide a 12 week residential respite, recovery and supported accommodation period for each client. Our skilled staff have long recognised the vulnerability of each of our clients presents an important challenge for us. What has become apparent is that the vulnerability of each client is such that a 12 week residential program for men in their situation is insufficient to ensure reasonable chances of a successful return to community living.

For the past three years, but particularly in the past 12 months, the Rainbow Lodge Program has been at the cutting edge of post incarceration rehabilitation of freshly released prisoners, who in addition to any other issues they may have had before entering custody, now present as traumatised by jail, bewildered by the enormity of changes made to the world in which their life's journey was set and society generally.

It is an established fact that the most risky period for a newly released prison inmate is the first three months after release. Old friends, old haunts, and old temptations too frequently offer a pathway to recidivism. At Rainbow Lodge we have come to a view that important as the residential program is, it is still a structured environment – not as rigid as a prison – but far more restrictive than the life that beckons beyond the residential stay and programs have been satisfied.

Men who have spent several years in a disciplinary, structured, tough, predominantly male environment where drug use is rife, risk-taking is high, value and moral judgments are warped, home and emotional support are remote or non-existent, and traumatic and stressful incidents can be a frequent occurrence are unlikely to be clear of life habits formed in such an environment by a mere 3 month sojourn among six or seven others who have shared a similar experience.



During my term as President, with the support of the Board of Management, the skill and ingenuity of our Manager and his dedicated staff, we have changed the paradigm. Our residential program is still vitally important. It is the first opportunity for men to enjoy freedoms - long restricted.

We at Rainbow Lodge recognise that the program's 12 week residential support is but a beginning. The Rainbow Lodge Program now offers an on-going Outreach Program in which we encourage our graduate residents to keep pursuing programs with, and obtaining support from, our staff. These programs and support take a number of forms that are covered in Brook's report and elsewhere in the Annual Report. We now have four times more Outreach clients than residential clients – and the total number of clients involved in one aspect or the other at Rainbow Lodge now exceeds 40 men. I do not believe any other post-release service, other than the Probation Service, offers this kind of service. Of course there is an important distinction in the Outreach Service we offer – it is non-compulsory, always supportive and non-judgmental. Of necessity, the Probation Service differs in each of these categories.

If I can use baseball analogy, graduating residents have entered the batting box and successfully made first base. But there are more bases to be reached and passed before our graduating residents are securely home.

# MANAGER'S REPORT



I am proud to present my third annual report as Manager of The Rainbow Lodge Program.

This year was our 53rd year of supporting our clients as they make a fresh start in our community. We operate from a simple but courageous vision that offering a fresh start can -and often will - change lives.

When I reflect on the year that has passed, I am amazed at how much such a small organisation like the Rainbow Lodge Program has achieved. I am proud of the results we have delivered this year, and excited by the ongoing development and consolidation of our services planned for the coming year.

We are often the ambulance at the bottom of the cliff, offering care and support to the fallen. We have limited rock climbing equipment to climb back up the cliff. Unfortunately, no one has built a fence around the top of the cliff.

We try and treat each client with dignity and respect, no matter how reactive or traumatised they are. We use harm minimisation and restorative processes to support our clients and gain their trust. The foundation glue of our service is to build relationships with our clients. Rainbow Lodge is 'no 'bed of roses.' We expect to be tested by our clients. We welcome positive and negative feedback. Most of our clients are moving forward towards their goals. Some of our clients leave us early because of their addiction or mental health issues, or because their volatile behaviour is too unsafe. Our Aboriginal clients generally face the most significant challenges.

Moving from an institutionalised to a self-reliant mindset is a difficult task for our high needs clients. To help them achieve this, we provide a healthy mixture of structure, routine and free time. Even so,

‘To rescue the fallen is good, but ‘tis best to prevent other people from falling.’

**JOSEPH MALINS 1895**

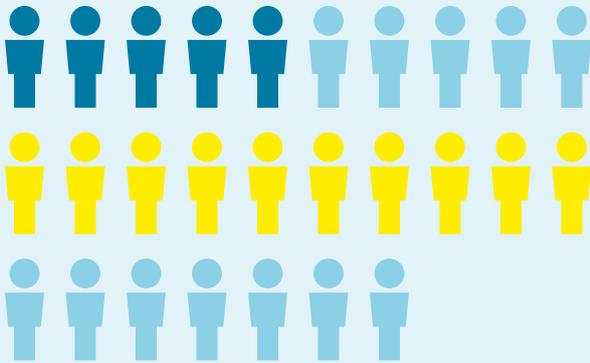
a minority of our clients are not ready or able to move on from institutionalised thinking and subsequently sabotage their efforts.

Our outreach service has grown to over 12 properties where we are nominated as the tenancy support providers. We desperately need more funding to continue offering support to our clients after they leave their residential phase with us. I am proud of our Board who have prioritised the need to provide outreach support.

I want to thank Anntonia, Wade, Andrea, Gail, Cameron, Trinkka, Cath, Ben and Ken for their support of our men. We only have the equivalent of 5.5 full time workers to keep our service operating, 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. Without their commitment our service would flounder.

I want to thank John and the Board for their guidance and active involvement, and our wonderful patron, Lynn Rainbow AM. I also want to thank our primary funders Corrective Services and Family and Community Services. Finally, I wish to thank our many and diverse service provision partners.

## Our achievements

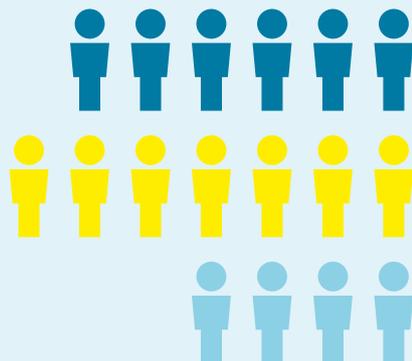


**27 men completed the program in total. Of these,**

5 were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

10 were from Aboriginal backgrounds

## Onward destinations for participants who completed the program



**17 men did not complete the program. Of these,**

6 either didn't show up, or left within the first week

7 were evicted

4 were arrested or re-entered the criminal justice system

## Participant feedback

	<b>MOST NEGATIVE</b>	<b>POOR</b>	<b>GOOD</b>	<b>MOST POSITIVE</b>
<b>Overall stay at Rainbow Lodge</b>	1	2	8	20
<b>Standard of bedding and furniture</b>	1	3	13	14
<b>Cooking, cleaning, residence care</b>	1	5	10	16
<b>General cleanliness of Rainbow Lodge</b>	1	2	14	15
<b>Terms and Conditions of the program</b>	1	2	9	20
<b>Other Residents</b>	2	7	7	15
<b>Support and assistance from case worker</b>	1	1	5	24
<b>Support and assistance from after-hours workers</b>	1	1	6	23
<b>Activities program</b>	1	2	13	15
<b>Safety and support</b>	1	0	4	26

## Our achievements

- ▶ We provided support to 68 men in the full time residential program, and through our outreach efforts to support men reintegrating into the community
- ▶ We kept Rainbow Lodge open and staffed 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- ▶ We provided immediate supportive accommodation for those exiting the prison system, and also helped others find affordable accommodation on departure from the program
- ▶ We delivered a range of assertive strengths-based case-management and activities. These included:
  - + Lessons on budgeting, cooking and nutrition
  - + Counselling and therapeutic groups
  - + Assistance to access medical, mental health and dental services
  - + Referrals to other support and advocacy services
  - + Helping program members reconnect with family and children
- ▶ We provided social support and recreational activities
  - + We assisted our participants in their efforts to access affordable accommodation in the community, such as social housing and boarding houses
- ▶ We delivered outreach client support to program participants who have completed the residential phase, assisting their transition into the community
- ▶ We provided Aboriginal cultural support through our Aboriginal staff and links to the community



## A practitioner's perspective from Uncle Ken, Aboriginal Support Worker

The key aspect to communicating with any person, Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal is to adhere to a simple formula of problem solving from a common-sense basis. On dealing with my own people, a First Nation's People, it is important to note that my age 64 is of great importance.

In our mindset people of my age are considered Elders and are listened to. This is more so in the world of institutions, for despite whatever crimes an individual may have committed, it is in this world of imprisonment where the respect of Elders are more strictly adhered to.

To gain trust, is to always be truthful with a client, once more this is very important when dealing with an Aboriginal person, for many feel the system has already be dishonest with them. The same rule of honest applies when attempting to change the thinking pattern of a client. For too many years many of our men have been made to feel totally worthless.

In order to overcome this, it is necessary to be one on one with a client and let them tell you of aspects in their life when a job or project they undertook was in fact successful. From there, with the client, you are then able to analyze the functions the client undertook to reach a successful task. It is in this, together you can discover the abilities that were required to complete the said project or job.

I have found this is a means of positive reinforcement but the power of this is the re-enforcement comes from the client's own deeds and experiences that you able to extract from his background.

The self-awareness of one's own ability is a much more powerful way for a client to realise that they do in fact possess the required abilities to reach success. You then merely become the facilitator.

## OUR BOARD

**President:** John Nicholson

**Vice President:**  
Linda Ashford

**Vice President:**  
Joseph Moore

**Secretary:** Anna Robilliard

**Assistant Secretary:**  
Sarah Larney:

**Ordinary members:**  
Claude Robinson,  
Paul Adabie, Jenny Atkinson

**Treasurer:** Position vacant

## Funding Partners

NSW Corrective Services  
Family and Community Services  
Ex-offender Management Partners  
NSW Corrective Services-  
Leichhardt Community Corrections  
Justice Health and Forensic  
Mental Health Network -  
The Connections Project

## Accommodation Partners

Homelessness NSW  
Homelessness Sector Development  
Mission Australia  
METRO Community Housing  
St George Community Housing  
Link Housing  
Port Jackson Community  
Housing Project  
Wentworth Housing  
Wesley Mission  
The Salvation Army  
St Vincent De Paul  
National Regulatory System  
Community Housing  
Wesley Mission  
Newtown Neighbourhood Centre-  
The Boarding House Project

## Therapeutic and Programmatic Partners

Guthrie House  
Glebe House  
Partners in Recovery  
Independent Community Living  
Australia  
Newtown Neighbourhood Centre  
Disability Services Australia  
The Settlement  
Aftercare  
NEAMI  
Bower Centre  
Wentworth Forensic Clinic  
Community Restorative Centre  
Wesley Mission  
City of Sydney Victoria Park Gym

## Educational and Employment Partners

CMA Max Employment  
Randwick and Ultimo TAFE  
Ozanum Learning Centre  
Culturally Specific Partners  
Tribal Dreaming- New Horizons  
Camperdown Aboriginal  
Mental Health  
Gamarada Men's Program  
Redfern Aboriginal Medical Service

## Alcohol and Other Drug Services Partners

Hospitals and Institutes  
Narcotics Anonymous  
Alcoholics Anonymous  
Crystal Meths Anonymous  
Smart Recovery Groups  
NADA – Network of Alcohol and  
Other Drug Agencies,  
RTOD Camperdown Mental Health

## Medical and Mental Health Service Partners

Sydney Dental Hospital  
Exodus Dental services  
Justice Health  
St Vincent's Hospital  
Glebe Medical Centre  
Glebe Family Medical Centre  
Leichhardt Medical Centre  
Redfern Community Health  
Schizophrenia Fellowship  
Justice Health & Forensic Mental  
Health Network  
The Cancer Council

## Charity Partnerships

St Vincent de Paul  
OZ Harvest  
Food Bank Australia  
Salvation Army  
St Johns Anglican Church  
GAAP Project  
Red Cross  
Inner Sydney, Partners In  
Recovery- New Horizons

## Administrative Partnerships

Accounting For Good



## CASE STUDY – ‘GARY’

I am so grateful to Rainbow Lodge for taking me in. I was very unhappy before I stayed here. It was as if no one cared. The staff at RL have gone the extra yard to support me to be comfortable and accepted. There were times when I said to myself what's the point of leaving prison. I wanted to go back. I felt pretty hopeless. I enjoyed the structure and the activities. I enjoyed the art, the AOD groups and counselling but generally just hanging out with guys in the house. There was a good balance between time that I had for myself and being part of the Lodge. Even when things weren't going well RL staff soon helped the residents here to move on from their individual problems and keep on track. My main complaint is that it was too short a time to stay here. I would have enjoyed another 6 months that would help me to be stronger when I live elsewhere. I am not sure about my future. I enjoy meeting new people and dancing. I really want to have a stronger relationship with my son one day. If I can stay out of trouble, I hope that day comes sooner.

**Gary**





**RAINBOW**  
L O D G E

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