



Impact Report

2024-25



Acknowledgement of Country

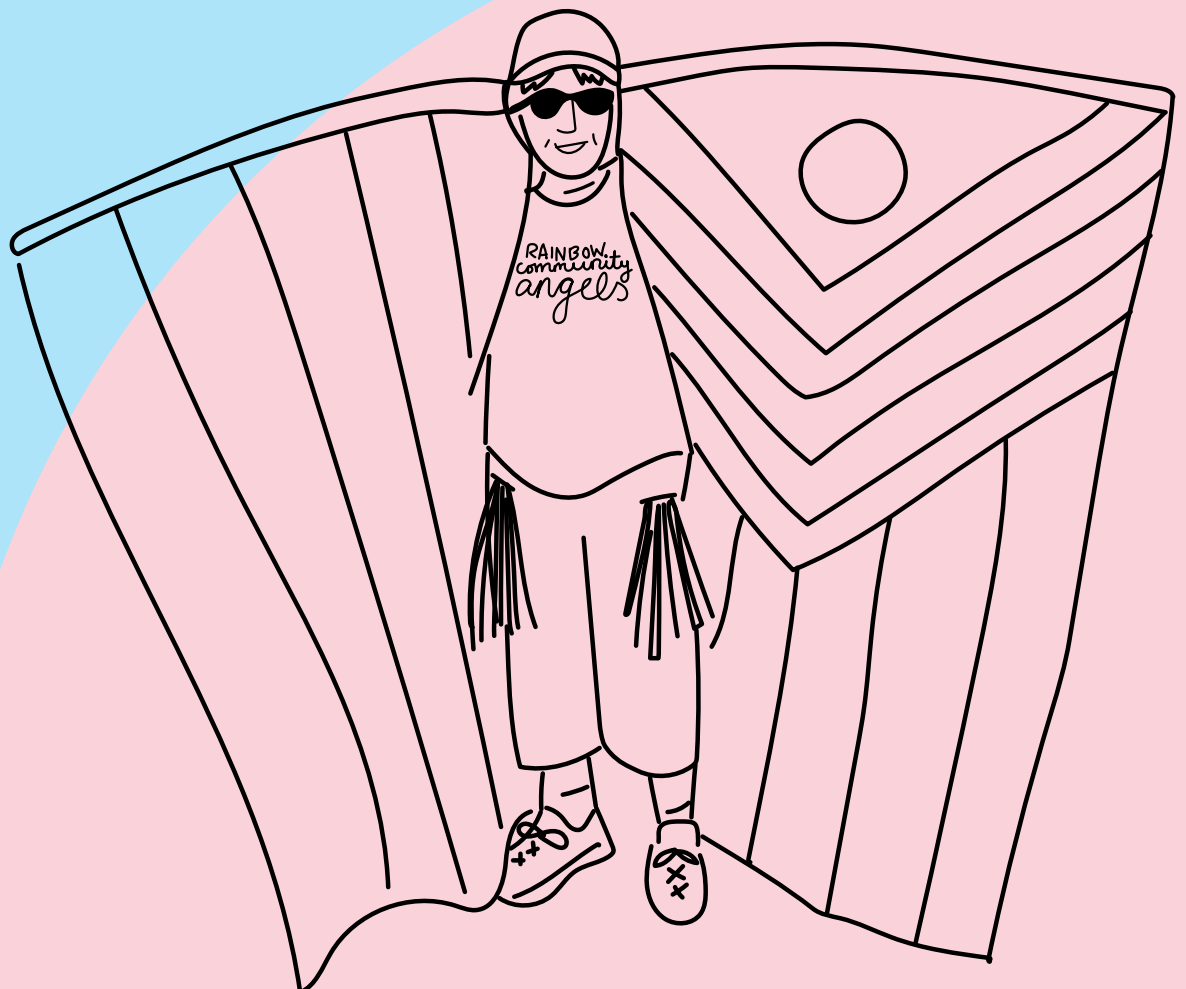
Rainbow Community Angels acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the traditional custodians of the many lands across which we work. We pay respects to indigenous LGBTQIA+ people, including Brotherboys and Sistergirls, and stand in solidarity, supporting efforts for self determination and working towards a stronger future together.



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About Rainbow Community Angels

RCA is a community safety initiative aiming to train and support the community, provide safety and risk management and be a vibrant, visible presence at events, celebrating pride and queer joy!

We believe that as a community, we are capable of organising to protect ourselves. We are working to create the alternative strategies that our communities need, providing **support** and **protection**.

RCA is a network of ~150 volunteers across Victoria, metro and regional. We provide training so that all participants can have a shared understanding and approach to our work – we are strictly **non-violent and non-confrontational** – we do not engage with far right protestors beyond cheering to drown them out. Our training is community building through discussions, sharing experiences, and bringing together diverse people with a shared goal of ensuring the safety of our young people and cultural events. We show up in direct action because it works and because community is powerful.

Behind the scenes: we provide risk management and supportive community for events who are targeted or are at risk of being targeted by groups who wish to erase queer people from community life.

What you see is big angels wings, proud, visible solidarity and unabashed queer joy. This is powerful in of itself – to **show up despite threats, fear and intimidation** with a smile, a daggy playlist, glitter and some joyfully dorky dance moves, to **demonstrate the existence of queer families, trans joy, that there is a future** and intergenerational support.

We work with organisers to ensure events go ahead, making it clear that hate isn't welcome here.

We provide practical and community support to ensure staff feel supported, safe, and culturally informed when running rainbow events.

The most powerful role of the RCA is one of hope, of refusing to disappear, and of magnifying the LGBTQIA+ people and events that happen in communities across Victoria. The more visible we are, despite threats, hateful rhetoric, moral panics, wedge politics and misinformation, the better. When we stand in solidarity as a community, we send a crucial message: ***we're here, we're safe, we're not going anywhere, and we will protect each other.***

No matter where people are on their journey, whether they're out, or still closeted, or figuring it out – we're here for you. We are actively inclusive of allies.

Our Purpose and Values

Purpose

Our mission is to help other organisations to create and maintain spaces for their local LGBTQIA+ communities. Bringing rainbow presence and support to communities that are under threat, outside of metro areas, or that don't have traditional resources to manage intra-community conflicts that arise as they deliver diverse and inclusive events. We defend rainbow families and young people from street harassment, and we amplify organisations' messages of welcoming and joy.

We believe that action is the best form of community care – our LGBTQIA+ communities need allies to stand up, be visible, and help us do the work of defending everyday people from harmful media narratives, and the cancellations of our events that are important for LGBTQIA+ community connection and pride.

Our Values



radical trust

We place trust in our community of angels that we will keep one another safe, and treat each other with compassion, and kindness. Despite any differences in our lives, in our roles as angels we are united and we come together to protect our community members.



solidarity

We are stronger together – it is empowering to stand as a collective of queer people and allies alike, for queer people and the wider community. We stand together for our rainbow young people, families, and LGBTQIA+ community in love and protection.



queer joy

We are a community of people living joyful, meaningful lives. We will not leave people behind, and we will not let negative or inaccurate narratives dominate or represent us.

What we do

consultation

Providing guidance and support to organisations planning youth events, and contributing our expertise towards policy development

training

3 hours of community sharing, discussion and practical activities with LGBTQIA+ people and allies, including hearing from established Angel volunteers

supporting events

Our volunteer Angels and our organiser travel and attend events to shield guests and staff from harassment – as well as lifting spirits



RCA provides a full service from initial research, liaison and planning, to training, attending events, and debriefing. The focus is on directly protecting our community, not on confrontation or general advocacy. RCA feels unique in how safe and effective it is – and in how it doesn't feel like a trade-off between safety and effectiveness. I like that there's such a strong emphasis on communication, safety and consent."

RCA board member

Case Study

We attended an outer suburban area that was hosting its first LGBTQIA youth event. The organisers had concerns, and we provided consultation to reassure them and make recommendations. We attended the event to provide visible, joyous support and enhance the safety of attendees, and we received feedback from parents that they were grateful that we were there. In the end, we got to see a community try something new, and deliver support to their local young people with a queer formal right in their neighbourhood.



As our first Pride Formal ...we were quite nervous, and your suggestions and guidance – and even knowing that we would have your support on the night – was incredibly supportive, and enabled us to deliver Rainbow Promenade, engaging 80 young people! We are incredibly thankful for the support you provided in the planning and risk management of Rainbow Promenade. "

Local government organiser



Our Growth

When Rainbow Community Angels was founded in 2023, LGBTQIA+ youth events were getting programmed, but then cancelled due to threats. As members of the queer community, our founders knew the pain of discrimination, and wanted to show up for the next generation of queers.

The motif of angels has been used since the death of Matthew Shepard, when his friends dressed as angels during the trial of his killers to block his family from having to pass by members of the Westboro Baptist Church who were picketing. Since then, some of our founders were also involved in dressing as angels to protect a youth formal in 2017 which was targeted by far right activists. This motif was readopted when Rainbow Community Angels was formed in 2023.



In the 2024-2025 financial year, we weathered the impacts of the US election, the Queensland directive against gender affirming care for trans young people, and the attempts during the Australian Federal Election to use trans people for political division. Rainbow Community Angels responded to the tensions and fears within the community by coming together, training people in our culture of non violence and community care.

We will keep on showing up for LGBTQIA+ young people and families when events are threatened, the new threat now is that events simply won't be programmed.



We wanted to offer a point of difference to de-escalate through queer joy and celebration and in recognition of the types of events we were largely protecting. We wanted families to feel safe to bring children to hear stories read to them and we didn't want kids or parents and carers to feel any negative sentiment.

Claire - one of the founders of RCA

Our Impact

From June 1 2024 to May 31 2025 we:

Delivered 7 training sessions across Victoria, in urban, peri-urban and regional areas:

- Ballarat
- Mildura
- Bendigo
- Frankston
- Castlemaine
- Melbourne

Delivered 19 actions, thanks to our volunteers contributing approximately 1252 volunteer hours

- Minus 18 Queer Formal 2024
- Yarra Ranges Youth Formal
- Minus 18 Wear It Purple party
- Frankston Pride Formal
- Echuca Regional Queer Formal
- Minus18 x Scienceworks Spooky Spectacular
- TGV Gender Revel Gala
- Brimbank & Maribyrnong LGBTIQ Soiree
- Beechworth Drag'd Out Festival
- Park Lounge @ Wyndham
- Maroondah Poolside Pride
- ArtPlay x Midsumma theatre performances x2
- Minus 18 Night at the Immigration Museum
- Melbourne Protect Trans Young People rally
- Shepparton Protect Trans Youth rally
- Daylesford Library Rainbow Storytime
- Morwell and La Trobe region youth formal
- Qwids Drag Party

And we received requests coming from interstate and internationally!



We influenced and supported over 14,000 people through the 2024–2025 Financial Year, with our volunteers contributing over 1252 volunteer hours

We connected with and consulted to organisations including NFPs and branches of local government, responding to varied needs with flexibility and adapting our presence according to diverse situations.

As part of our onboarding process for organisations and events we provide a presence at, we share our accumulative learning from past events, outlining our requirements for safety plans, providing support to groups about safely programming and promoting events and influencing organisation's policy decisions about programming safe, inclusive and joyful LGBTQIA+ events for young people.



At a glance:

 **2 trans people employed, plus other LGBTQIA+ consultants**

 **96 volunteers trained**

 **7 training sessions held**

 **18 consultations provided**

 **18 events supported**

 **9 committee members elected for our first ever board**

and countless hours of dancing and joy

In the media

 **Rainbow Community Angels launch fab new wings at Queer Formal**

[Read here >>](#)

 **Youth get their glow on**

[Read here >>](#)

Volunteers

Our volunteers come from all walks of life; there are parents and grandparents of LGBTQIA+ people, siblings, queer young people themselves, and folks from all suburbs and areas, including rural and regional Victoria.

Inclusion and diversity is at the core of Rainbow Community Angels, beyond connection with the LGBTQIA+ community our volunteers represent a range of lived experiences, often including being multiply-marginalised, including through:

- Disability
- Chronic illness
- Mental ill health
- Economic disadvantage.

Every training, mobilisation, and rainbow community angels event has flexibility and accommodations embedded in our planning and structures to provide opportunities for participation to all members of our community. They contribute to this movement in many ways, through fundraising, through local advocacy for events in their local communities, helping us sew and construct our wings and now sitting on our Committee to steer Rainbow Community Angels forward.



These wings make me feel so empowered"

Attendee at training about the new angel wings, Oct 2024



Volunteer outcomes

At events our LGBTQIA+ and ally volunteers help in a range of ways:

- Some will wear magnificent rainbow angel wings, shielding attendees entering the event from seeing or hearing any hostile protesters who are present
- Some will act as marshals, assisting with communication and safety for Rainbow Community Angels, event staff and participants.
- Some will liaise as needed with media, event organisers, performers, security, police and the public
- Together, we show up to be proud and joyful, showing the wider community that we are here in every community, and we deserve to be celebrated.



Thank you for giving me, as an ally, a way to support and signal boost queer joy. Thank you for your activism, your vulnerability, your dedication. Thank you for standing for what you believe in and organising it so that it reflects your values of inclusivity and diversity, making it accessible and welcoming to all of us no matter our ability or identity. Love you RCA!"

One RCA volunteer trained in 2024



Training and Workshops

Training is our chance to meet local people who want to stand up for the LGBTQIA community in their towns and show young people in particular that their community wants them and will protect them.

Over 3 hours we come together to reflect on what community care is in action, and engage in practical activities to rehearse what being a Rainbow Community Angel can look and feel like.



While I would never understate the risks imposed by taking on an RCA activation, especially when there is likely to be any opposition in attendance, safety for our participants is always RCA's first consideration and the training that is being conducted to equip participants is simple, effective and empowering."

- RCA President, Tony Lee

Wing making workshops

We also run Wing Workshops, where community members can contribute to our cause by working on our iconic angel wings. We have a range of sizes of angels wings, which come in handy for the different types of events that we do and the different situations Angels are required in.



Events

- **Youth Formals** – We've travelled to regional communities to ensure that young people get to participate in queer formals and be celebrated for who they are, without having to leave their hometowns.
- **Inclusive Swim events** – Trans people are particularly under attack right now regarding our right to participate in sports. Many councils are showing up for LGBTQIA+ people by putting on inclusive swim events, and this deserves to be celebrated and defended. We show up to make it clear that we just want to swim like everybody else.
- **Rainbow Storytimes** – Libraries change and save lives. Our stories and messages of inclusion and acceptance are important, and we are proud to support the work of librarians making rainbow families welcomed.



There is also nothing like the feeling of finishing an event, knowing the lasting, positive impact of your contribution. "

– RCA President, Tony Lee



Successful strategies and tools:

- Online communications in the lead up to events
- A welcoming approach towards volunteer contributions
- Briefings at the start of events, and debriefings at the end
- Events and spaces to connect socially and solidify our community
- Material support for marginalised people to attend events safely; accommodation for regional appearances, assistance with travel costs
- The diversity of our volunteers bringing a range of perspectives
- Networking with other grassroots groups to skillshare
- And of course, snacks!

What's next

In May 2025 we were able to become an incorporated association, meaning we now have a board of volunteers to represent and guide Rainbow Community Angels into the future.

Officer Bearers:

President: Tony Lee

Vice President: Cam Cutts

Treasurer: Julie Holland

Secretary: Roslyn Quin

Extra-ordinary members:

Renee Sturtevant

Luciella Scarlett

Em McGowan

Ingrid Smith



I am feeling optimistic about the potential for our future and our growth. We are just getting started. I want to see RCA have a presence wherever we are needed including in regional and metro areas all across Australia and I want us to be funded in a way that gives us agency and self-sufficiency to achieve this goal. Every activation we take part in takes a lot of organisation and people-power and like all LGBTIQA+ community-led services, the work we do is not commensurate with the size of the population that needs us. A shift from project-based funding and grants to a recurrent funding model that is values-aligned and politically agnostic will ultimately secure that future. I think RCA has a lot of potential to achieve this, and it will be through grassroots support and advocacy that the organisation finds the recognition and funding priority it deserves within the community. "

- RCA President, Tony Lee



I'm extremely proud to count myself as part of the team and be on the Committee of Rainbow Community Angels! I'm proud to be an asexual and aromantic person in this position; it's still rare to see a-spec representation in positions of power, even within queer organisations. I feel like I've become a role model to my younger self.

Over the last year, Rainbow Community Angels has gotten bigger, and there are now members from across Victoria, not just Melbourne. That brings both opportunities and challenges. Temporary funding has also made it possible to hire some part-time staff; I don't think this need has gone away. The political environment around us has also changed. RCA is still very much needed, and likely will be for the foreseeable future. "

- Luciella Scarlett, board member.

**We will keep training, keep coming to events,
and keep spreading joy.**



Thank you

Thank you to everyone who has been a part of Rainbow Community Angels so far. Our founders, Flis Marlowe, Claire Flynn, Sarah Marlowe, Dean and Sean, created something that resonated with the community, and we are so grateful to them.

Thank you to the council workers who continue programming vibrant, inclusive events for the LGBTQIA+ community; we are proud to support and protect you and these events.

Thank you to our kindred spirits, Dykes on Bikes Melbourne, for your unwavering support and generous fundraising.

Thank you to the rainbow families and the young people who show up to events, we hope that our presence makes you feel as loved as you are.

And thank you to every person who has spent time with us in training, who has contributed to making wings, who has told others about us, and who has donated to our cause. To all our Rainbow Community Angels volunteers, thank you.





Rainbow Community Angels – the community-led safety initiative ensuring LGBTIQ+ events are safer, loud and visible for everyone!

www.rainbowcommunityangels.org.au