



GATEWAY HEALTH GENDER SERVICE: AN EVALUATION

The following is an overview of the Gateway Health Gender Service evaluation. To read the full report, please contact Sarah Roberts on 02 6022 8888 or sarah.roberts@gatewayhealth.org.au


The Gateway Health Gender Service

The Gateway Health Gender Service provides holistic care for trans and gender diverse¹ young people aged 17 and under, and their families.

The Wodonga based service is the result of four years of tireless advocacy and hard work from passionate community members, project staff, Gateway Health management, and key stakeholders. It:

- is co-designed with local community members.
- uses a nurse-led model of care.
- works closely with local specialists and the Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) Gender Service.

The focus for the first phase of the Gender Service is on children, young people and their families due to complexities in accessing services for this group and limited funding for staffing an all ages service.



*"...evidence shows us...
that if you give people
access to social and medical
affirmation processes, trans
and gender diverse people,
they have better long term
health outcomes"*

THE EVALUATION

The Centre of Excellence in Rural Sexual Health carried out an evaluation of the process undertaken to get the Gender Service up and running including what is working well, and what could be improved. The evaluation was funded by DHHS North East.

THE FINDINGS

The evaluation demonstrated that the Gender Service is an effective model of care in regional Victoria with potential for being rolled out across other communities.

KEY TO THIS SUCCESS INCLUDED:

- A dedicated project worker² to drive advocacy and to be a link between key stakeholders, community members and Gateway Health
- Community members input into co-designing the service
- Support from Gateway Health management and Board
- Partnership with the RCH Gender Service and local specialists

RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDED:

- Securing funding for increased staffing of the service
- Growing and expanding the service including:
 - Expanding age to 18 and over
 - Increasing support for families, siblings and carers
- Ensuring ongoing monitoring of the Gender Service

THE SERVICE USERS



Appointments with the Gender Service nurse opened in March 2017 and monthly specialist clinics started in June 2017.

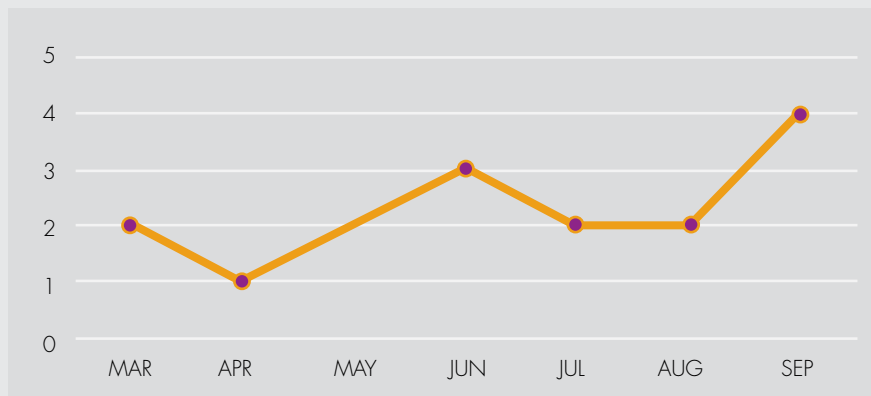


From March to September 2017, 16 clients attended the service with a total number of 40 appointments



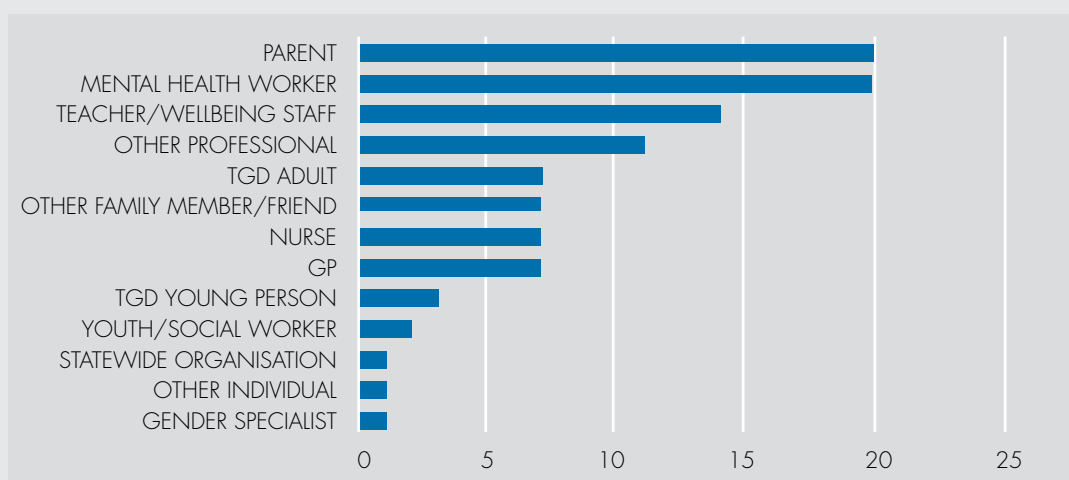
Client numbers are steadily growing

CLIENT APPOINTMENTS AT THE GENDER SERVICE, MARCH-SEPTEMBER 2017



- The Gender Service nurse also responded to 115 separate enquiries from January to September 2017
- Most of the enquiries were from parents and mental health workers

CONTACT MADE BY INDIVIDUALS WITH THE GENDER SERVICE NURSE, JANUARY – SEPTEMBER 2017



The nurse spoke to 356 participants through delivering group training sessions alongside the project worker and at least one person with lived experience

Co-design and Community Reference Group

- Individuals with lived experience and parents of trans and gender diverse young people had been involved with Gateway Health since October 2013
- CRG members felt very positive about their involvement in the opening of the Gender Service, however there are personal and professional costs that can lead to burn out

“If you want to set up a service it is important that you make sure you have good representation from people with lived experience. The best intentions sometimes just don’t help in this space. You need people who know what it means to be parents of a TGD young person or who is a young person themselves”

Dedicated GHGS staff

The project worker, who had been the initial driver and facilitator of service development since 2013 was identified as crucial to the existence of the service.

“They’ve [project worker] developed a model that clearly articulates that everybody is on the same page with where they’re heading, what they’re doing, why they’re doing it, how they are going to do it. I think that clarity is incredibly powerful.”

External and internal stakeholder involvement and support

The involvement of key stakeholders locally and state-wide were crucial in enabling the Gender Service to open.

‘Trailblazer’ model

The Gender Service model is a trailblazer; there is nothing like it in urban or regional Australia

“There was no precedent for that work in Australia. So the fact that it has happened and it has happened in a way that is so directed by and engaged in the community is incredibly ground-breaking”

Positive media coverage

All media articles and reports relating to the Gender Service have been positive which was attributed to processes put in place by the project worker and CRG.

Gender Service location in a mainstream community health service

- The location of the service provided a great opportunity to work with other programs including headspace, parenting team and counselling
- Gateway Health Board, CEO and management supportive of the Gender Service, including the Board funding the nurse role until December 2018

In preparation for the Gender Service, Gateway Health made the following changes:

- Created access to All Gender Restrooms
- Provided staff training including front of house/reception
- Updated client registration forms with more inclusive gender options
- Included more posters, books etc in waiting rooms



1. Umbrella term to describe people with a diverse range of gender histories and expressions
2. The project worker is funded by the Victorian Government through the Healthy Equal Youth (HEY) Partnership

For access to the full report, please contact sarah.roberts@gatewayhealth.org.au or further details phone 02 6022 8888.



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