

# The Gender Centre's Annual Report



**2015-2016**



services for the transgender gender diverse and gender questioning community of NSW

## Our Patron



### **Professor The Honourable Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO**

Professor The Honourable Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO served as Governor of New South Wales from 1 March 2001 to 1 October 2014 and was the first woman to be appointed to the role. Born in Narrandera in the Riverina district of New South Wales, and educated at the Narrandera Public School and Sydney Girls High School, Marie Bashir completed a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery at the University of Sydney in 1956.

Professor Bashir taught at the Universities of Sydney and NSW, increasingly working with children's services, psychiatry and mental health services, and Indigenous health programs. At the time of her appointment as Governor of New South Wales, she was Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Sydney; Area Director of Mental Health Services Central Sydney; and Senior Consultant to the Aboriginal Medical Service, Redfern and to the Aboriginal Medical Service, Kempsey. She was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia in 1988 for her services to child and adolescent health, and was invested by Her Majesty, the Queen, with the insignia of a Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (CVO) in 2006.

In June 2014, Professor Bashir was named as a Dame of the Order of Australia for extraordinary and pre-eminent achievement and merit in service to the administration, public life, and people of New South Wales, to medicine, particularly as an advocate for improved mental health outcomes for the young, marginalised and disadvantaged, to international relations, through the promotion of collaborative health programs, and as a leader in tertiary education.

We believe her long and brilliant experience with young people and those marginalized by society will prove to be significant factors in her patronage of the Gender Centre.

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# The Gender Centre

The Gender Centre has been providing services to the transgender and gender diverse communities of NSW for over thirty years.

We are committed to providing services that build the capacity of the transgender and gender diverse communities of NSW to make informed choices through the provision of a wide range of services, activities, information and resources.

Our mission is to operate within a social justice context where equity and diversity are embraced and strength based practice is applied.

The Gender Centre is a Specialist Homelessness and Health related service providing supported transitional housing and health related services to the transgender and gender diverse communities of NSW.

## The Services We Provide

- Counselling (including drug and alcohol counselling service);
- Outreach (including night outreach, court, cell and gaol outreach);
- Crisis accommodation program;
- Transitional accommodation program;
- Homelessness prevention and early-intervention program;
- Tenancy support program;
- Case management (including to residents, community clients and inmates)
- Aged and ageing support care services;
- Resource development service (library, kits and fact sheets, magazine, website);
- Transgender Anti-Violence Project;
- Training and support for clients, service providers, partners and loved ones;
- Social events and workshops;
- Advocacy service
- Youth & Family services
- Rural & Regional support services
- Greater Western Sydney support services
- Policy development
- Support groups for men, women, youth, over 55s and transgender parents); and
- Safe Space Project.

# 1.0 President's Report 2015-2016

*“A world that is inclusive and accepting of an empowered transgender and gender diverse person.”*

The Gender Centre continues to proudly work with the transgender and gender diverse community of New South Wales. The Gender Centre has been in operation for over 30 years, making it one of the longest running services of its kind in the world.

This could not have been achieved without the ongoing dedication and hard work from the staff, the tireless efforts of the wonderful volunteers and amazing clients and community support. Everyone working together on a common goal: trying to make this world a better place for the transgender and gender diverse community. The dream being that one day services like The Gender Centre will not need to exist, people would all just be people regardless of a person's gender or identification. Everyone could live together in acceptance, respect and safety.

Unfortunately that world and dream remains just a dream so I think The Gender Centre will continue to be around for quite a long time. The work and reach of the service just keeps growing. This past year has seen an amazing and dynamic range of new challenges, needs, services and roles for The Gender Centre.

An area of need for a very long time is the community in rural and regional areas of New South Wales. The Gender Centre, in its commitment to providing support and equity for all, has extended services to the South Coast and rural areas. Staff drive long distances or fly to these outlying centres and provide support, case management, counselling and information. The days are always fully booked and staff receive nothing but positive feedback from the clients and community.

The Gender Centre has expanded its role in providing education and support for other public services to increase understanding, care and access to the transgender and gender diverse community. Areas such as the development of partnership with Central & Eastern Sydney Public Health Networks in providing training for GPs to be more transgender friendly and inclusive.

The service has increased collaboration with schools in providing best practice for students transitioning, offering invaluable support, education and guidance for the staff at schools. A new partnership with Headspace allows the Gender Centre to assist this organisation in providing support and best outcomes for young people with mental health concerns such as depression and anxiety.

The parents group at the Gender Centre just keeps getting better and better. The number of parents contacting the service is ever increasing. Parents and families are seeking and receiving support at an often highly stressful and pivotal times in their families' lives. These groups have gone so well parents are setting up their own networks of support and have online contact groups now reaching interstate. I would sincerely like to thank the parents and say you are amazing and please keep being passionate about keeping your/ our kids safe, loved and accepted.

The access to support, information and acceptance to parents and families can never be underestimated. Giving families a safe environment to work together during a transgender or gender diverse child or youth's journey has a direct impact on the outcome for all involved. Things that continue to burden the community such as homelessness, depression, violence, vulnerability and all other things that come with those, can be and are reduced by keeping families together, safe and supported. Early intervention and support has proven positive outcomes. The fact that the parents are so enthusiastic, hardworking and dedicated to not only support their own child but parents and families of other children is not just an

amazing credit to them but also a sign that the service is helping make things better for people.

The work that The Gender Centre does with individuals has always made an impact. This work will always continue and be a key role in the service provision. The increasing work the service does at supporting other groups and services, to capacity build, to assist others be more transgender and gender diverse inclusive hopefully allows a much larger amount of people to benefit from the services. Increasing others knowledge and skills should always have a flow on effect for the community.

I would again like to thank the tireless staff at The Gender Centre and the Executive Director Phinn Borg for running a service I am endlessly amazed by and proud of. I would like to thank the volunteers who put in such time and commitment to the service. Services like The Gender Centre would fall apart without volunteers. Finally I would like to thank the members of the transgender and gender diverse community including friends and families for their ongoing support and working together. One step at a time, working together we can make a difference.

Maggie Smith  
President

## 2.0 Manager's Report

This year the Gender Centre's goals and projects were achieved and again the Centre exceeded all aspects of our funding agreements and obligations. While maintaining our normal services the Gender Centre has also:

- established and maintained strong and positive relationships with a wide range of agencies and service providers in rural and regional areas of NSW;
- continued to review the ways in which services are delivered to ensure the relevance of the programs and publications to our community;
- continued to advocate on behalf of the community across a wide range of issues with a special emphasis on issues facing transgender and gender diverse people in prison;
- responded to family and youth issues through the provision of early intervention support;
- continued to promote the issue of equity in employment for transgender and gender diverse people particularly with the NSW Public Sector;
- continued to promote policy development in external agencies with regard to transgender access and equity;
- continued to update our range of resources and policies;
- Continued to provide placements for students and engage in onsite training at both TAFE and universities;
- worked closely with the Board of Directors and through *Polare* magazine to ensure every opportunity for community input;
- conducted numerous training sessions for both NGO's and government organisations as well as training in the corporate and private sectors;
- continued to overhauled the Centre's processes, including the redesign of standard forms and documents;
- reviewed all client data collection systems; and
- continued to monitor and improve service delivery with the implementation of quality management services to ensure ongoing quality improvement in the provision of all services provided by the Centre.

As always the agency collects a comprehensive range of data across all aspects of service delivery from clients entering the Gender Centre for Counselling, case-management, groups, community awareness, workshops, courses, information sessions employment training, outreach and so on, this data is collected every day and at the end of each session the data is then compiled on our data base system this, data is used to inform the direction of service provision and determine outcomes for clients.

This data covers all clients who have a relationship with the agency where service provision has a bearing on ensuring their Health & Welfare needs are met and therefore include early intervention and post crisis support

## Client Statistics

All visitors entering the Gender Centre are entered onto our database, which enables us to accurately reflect the numbers of episodes of service provision delivered to each client accessing the service for support.

Between July 2015 to June 2016 the Gender Centre provided over 24'744 occasions of service provision provided to 1945 individual transgender gender diverse gender questioning people and their family members and work colleges .

During the 2015-2016 financial the Gender Centre's client group was made up of:

- 189 individual counselling clients;
- 179 individual outreach client;
- 205 community and residential clients;
- 90 individuals accessing the over 55s support group;
- 60 individuals attending the FTM Connect group;
- 30 teenagers accessing Transtopia youth support group;
- 100 parents accessing the parents support group on a monthly basis;
- 35 individuals accessing the Young Women's support group;
- 30 individuals accessing the woman's support group
- 20 families accessing the Wollongong parents group
- 35 individuals accessing the Dubbo support group
- 11 individual clients residing in gaol.
- 661 attending training provided by the Gender Centre
- 30 individuals attending the Queer Agenda group
- 100 individuals attending Day of Remembrance
- 20 individuals Transgender Day of Visibility

## Dubbo Sexual Health Clinic

On site face to face services continued during the 2015-2016 financial year with Dubbo Sexual Health Clinic providing specialised outreach to transgender and gender diverse people in this region on a regular basis, Gender Centre staff fly in and conduct services with pre-arranged clients.

## Residential & Community Clients

The database for residential and community client services has been analysed from the Specialist Homelessness Client Information Management System and is as follows:

- Individual clients having recorded contact through our homelessness programs: 176
- Total recorded homelessness contacts made by The Gender Centre: 4532
- Total recorded travel time involved in working with these clients: 567 hr 28 min
- Total recorded time working with these persons 7347



## 3.0 Service Report

### 3.1 Funding Bodies

The Gender Centre would like to thank our funding bodies, the Department of Family and Community Services (Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS) program), Sydney Local Area Health District for their ongoing financial support during the past year, and the Department of Social Services for the Over 55s Support program.

#### NSW Department of Family & Community Services Funded Projects

- Homelessness prevention and community awareness of homelessness;
- Early intervention homelessness support (i.e. case-management);
- Post crisis support;
- Supported homelessness accommodation; and
- Supported independent living (i.e. case-management).

#### NSW Health /Sydney Local Health District Funded Projects

- Supporting and providing services to clients experiencing gender and health related issues;
- Providing services that raise awareness of gender and health related issues;
- Maintaining a clear and accountable organisational structure;
- Service evaluation; and
- Maintaining links with other support organisations

#### Department of Social Services Funded Projects

- Developing links with mainstream aged care services
- Provision of appropriate and relevant entry and exit points to aged care support services
- Front line support to aging transgender clients

We look forward to continuing these partnerships to continue to enhance and improve service delivery to the transgender and gender diverse communities into the future.

#### One-Off Grants

- City of Sydney
- Aroura

### 3.2 Board of Directors

The directors are constituted in the terms of the "Associations Incorporation Act 1984" and the organisation in general, including the directors functions as provided by the act and the regulations.

The constitution and rules of the organisation comprise the "Model Rules" provided in the regulations, and these provide clear statements of structure, election and conduct of office bearers and committee, rights and responsibilities and the like, and provides the delegation of day-to-day managerial matters to the Executive Director by the directors through the Gender Centre's *Policy and Procedures Manual*.

The directors hold the ultimate legal and managerial responsibility for the Gender Centre Inc.

The Gender Centre recognises the importance of maintaining an effective and active board.

As such, clarity in the roles and responsibilities of members is essential.

The board is primarily responsible for the management of the affairs of the Gender Centre, including financial management and accountability, funding agreements and contracts, administration and accountability in matters relating to incorporation. internal operational policy development and implementation, ensuring adherence to legislation and other binding rules and regulations as well as staff employment and supervision.

Members of the management committee accept a fiduciary relationship with the organisation, and recognise and comply with their responsibilities.

In order to ensure that management committee provides adequate support to the Gender Centre's staff and manager, the Gender Centre's manager ensures that the management committee is regularly and adequately informed of the activities of the Gender Centre and of any issues facing the Gender Centre, both internally and externally and informs the committee of any situations where a judgement or decision made by the Manager is contentious or may have repercussions for the Gender Centre Inc.

Copies of the constitution are held in the office and are available to all members and staff of the Gender Centre.

No service can function well without an effective and committed Board, and as Executive Director of the Gender Centre I look forward to many more years of committed and dedicated Board members assisting the service to function effectively.

## Members of the Board during 2015-2016

|                 |                 |                |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Maggie Smith    | Col Eglington   | Lorenzo Vasser |
| Eva Karagiannis | Virginia Mackay | Caroline Bugg  |
| Kimmi Eversson  | Eloise Brook    | Sarah Hawes    |
| Danielle Miller |                 |                |

## 3.3 Staff

Staff, contractors and volunteers for 2015-2016 were:

|                      |                            |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Manager:             | Phinn Borg                 |
| Senior Case Manager: | Elizabeth Ceissman         |
| Case Workers:        | Elias Christofi            |
|                      | Viola Leyshon              |
|                      | Rosie Westland (resigned)  |
|                      | Ashley Caccamo (resigned)  |
|                      | Louisa Roberto             |
| Housing Officer      | Oliver Bendeich (resigned) |

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
|                                   | Soda De   |
| Counsellor:                       | Anthony Carlino (resigned)<br>Candy Jacques<br>Nicola Williams (volunteer Counsellor Mondays) |
| Outreach Education Workers:       | Nicola Sloane<br>Ekarach Thirapat (Birdie)  |
| Over 55s Support Worker:          | Laurel Walter   |
| Resource Information Worker:      | Katherine Cummings  |
| Greater Western Sydney Caseworker | Rosie Westland (resigned)   |
| Volunteers:                       | Rachel Smith<br>Laura Wright<br>Nathaniel Quinto  |
| Students                          | Stacey Perkett<br>Michelle Yim  |
| Contractors                       |   |
| Hornsby I.T.                      | Russel Cox<br>Tim Kitto   |
| Bookkeeping                       | Serena Cooray   |
| Webmistress                       | Nicole Moore (resigned)<br>Aquila Wolf-Wild No Trees  |
| Handyman                          | Dave Harvey   |

### 3.4 Staff Training & Development

Staff have attended the following training, seminars and forums during 2015-2016:

- Domestic Violence and A.D.V.O.s –
- Clinical and Research Updates in Alzheimers and Fronto-Temporal dementia
- 2<sup>nd</sup> National LGBTI Ageing and Aged care forum
- Case discussion complex trauma and co-occurring issues
- Principles in practice-Supporting Survivors of Complex Trauma
- Working Collaboratively to address the social and emotional wellbeing of older LGBTI people
- Case discussion Dissociative Identity
- Mental Health practitioner Course
- Working together to support people who self-harm
- Working collaboratively to manage comorbid mental health and methamphetamine use
- Timely diagnosis of Dementia
- Working with Clients with Hepatitis C - Hepatitis NSW;

- LGBTI Aging - Australian Association of Gerontology;
- The Aged Rights Service Forum;
- Living Well, Living Longer Seminar;
- The Suicide Closet Workshop;
- Fire Training
- Governance workshop
- Hoarding Workshop
- Mental Health Recovery Workshop
- Jung Society Workshop: Ageing;
- Planning Ahead Seminar;
- Client Information Management Systems;
- Trauma-Informed Care for Caseworkers;
- First Aid Course
- Mental Health First Aid

Clinical supervision is provided for all staff involved in client service delivery.

Staff training is conducted with the aim of strengthening staff skills in major areas of client service delivery and organisational development.

### 3.5 Education & Training for Service Providers

The Gender Centre has continued to provide training to a broad range of services regarding a variety of issues relating to gender and to transgender and gender diverse persons.

The aims of the education packages are:

- To encourage service providers in all areas to work effectively with transgender and gender diverse clients, and provide support to employers in workplaces where a staff member is in transition.
- To encourage employers to uphold anti-discrimination legislation and employ transgender and gender diverse persons who present as the best person for a position.
- To encourage all organisations to treat all people, including transgender and gender diverse people, equitably.
- To support organisations to develop policy and procedures with the intent of affording transgender and gender diverse people equitable rights, opportunities and access.

The steady demand for education and training from the Gender Centre has served to reinforce the improved commitment of the wider community to become informed about transgender and gender diverse people.

The response from those attending the training has been overwhelmingly positive.

During the 2015-2016 financial year training was provided to 1,126 individuals through the corporate sector, specialist women's services, universities, and employers.

Gender Centre staff also spoke at the forums, conferences listed below and provided "webinar" (a seminar conducted over the Internet) sessions.

## Education and Training Conducted by the Gender Centre

**Table 1:** Training provided and people attending during the 2015-2016 financial year.

|  | <b>Attendees</b> |
|--|------------------|
| Wollongong University Medical Students                           | 25               |
| Hunter Valley Community Mental health Services                   | 11               |
| Dianella Cottage: Katoomba                                       | 7                |
| Winmalee High School   | 45               |
| Menai High School  | 8                |
| University of Sydney Masters of Sexual Health                    | 26               |
| University NSW Indigenous students                               | 22               |
| Dubbo Headspace  | 6                |
| Child protection integrated violence prevention response service | 38               |
| Elizabeth MacArthur High School                                  | 42               |
| Mosman Hospital  | 31               |
| RPA training x 3 sessions  | 55               |
| Oak Flats High School  | 39               |
| Family planning Ashfield   | 51               |
| Centre for clinical excellence NSW health                        | 33               |
| Headspace Newcastle  | 12               |
| Marie Bashir Centre RPA Hospital                                 | 9                |
| Stanhope Gardens Catholic School                                 | 37               |
| Hamilton public school   | 18               |
| Museum of Contemporary Art                                       | 44               |
| Toronto High School  | 29               |
| De identified employer   | 112              |
| De identified employer   | 101              |
| GLLO 25 <sup>th</sup> anniversary conference                     | 100              |
| Pride in diversity conference                                    | 200              |
| CBA  | 25               |

There were also three student placements during 2015-2016

### 3.6 Committees & Consultation

Staff have maintained their representation on or liaised with a number of committees, interagency groups and working parties that address issues of priority to the client group of the Gender Centre. These include:

- SHS Interagency meetings;
- Safe Relationships Project meetings;
- Consumer & Community Advisory Council (SLHD);
- Professional counsellors meetings;
- Show-net meetings.
- Central & Eastern Sydney PHN Community Council Member

- Health Interagency

### 3.7 Agency Networking

Staff at the Gender Centre have continued to network with a wide range of services over the 2015-2016 year. Some of these services include:

- Royal Prince Alfred (RPA) Sexual health
- St Bede's Home South Hurstville
- Anglicare
- Wise Employment, Marrickville
- APM Employment Services Ingleburn
- Community Care Northern Beaches SW Sutherland Hospital
- SW ACAT South Care
- Department of Corrective Services
- Westmead Children's Hospital
- Resource and Education Program for Injecting Drug Users (REPIDU)
- Taylor Square Medical Clinic
- The Asylum Seeker Centre
- NSW Department of Education & Training
- Sex Workers' Outreach Project (SWOP)
- NSW Anti- Discrimination Board
- Youth Block
- Catholic Care (ALIVE Program)
- NSW Department of Housing Burwood
- NSW Police Surry Hills
- NSW Department of Housing Surry Hills
- Taylor square medical centre
- Dr Hespe
- Cerebral palsy association
- Wentworth Housing
- Hume Housing
- The Marie Bashir Unit
- Concord Hospital Mental Health Centre
- The Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Renal Dialysis Unit
- NSW Federal Police
- Bobby Goldsmith Foundation
- Employers Federation
- NSW Police Service
- Homelessness NSW
- Salvos

- Gorman House
- The Women's Housing Company
- YWCA
- Centrelink
- Dubbo Sexual Health
- Haymarket centre
- AIDS Council of NSW (ACON)
- NCOSS
- Oasis program
- Sydney Women's homelessness alliance
- Menai High School
- National Parks & wildlife services
- Inner City Legal Centre
- Twenty 10
- Ashfield Community Health Centre
- Uniting Care
- Marrickville Community Health Centre
- Marrickville police
- Aboriginal medical service
- Aboriginal legal service
- Tony Merritt (ATAPS program)
- Long Bay Jail
- Head Space
- City of Sydney Council
- LGBTI National Alliance
- TAFE NSW
- Wesley Mission
- Medicare CAPS program
- Women And Girls' Emergency Centre (WAGEC)
- Vinnies Burwood

### 3.8 Media Liaison

The Gender Centre has enjoyed a strong presence in the media and in public resources with the following contributions:

- SBS world news
- ABC Radio
- Guardian
- 2SER Radio
- ABC

## 3.9 Donations

I would like to thank all the individuals and organisations who kindly donated their time, effort, patience, goods and services and/or cash donations to the Gender Centre throughout this financial year including:

- Seahorse Society of NSW;
- Stephan
- Vincent Choy (Atlassian Art Gallery)
- Sebastian Uri
- Nam Nguyen
- Alice Wang (Atlassian Art Gallery)
- Otto Jongerius
- Homebush Boys High School
- Commonwealth bank
- Savannah Jackson

Your efforts and assistance are greatly appreciated.

## 4.0 Services Provided

### 4.1 Residential Service

The Gender Centre maintains three supported crisis housing facilities providing thirteen bed spaces and 21 supported transitional housing facilities providing twenty one bed spaces for transgender and gender diverse people who find themselves in need of our residential service.

#### Residential Service Statistics for the 2015-2016 Financial Year

*Table 2: Residential Service Statistics for the 2015-2016 financial year shows how critical this service is to the ongoing well-being of transgender and gender diverse individuals*

|   | 2015-2016 |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Short term emergency accommodation</b>                                   |           |
| Total number of bed nights provided within the reporting period             | 3592      |
| Residents housed in short-term emergency accommodation                      | 44        |
| Average length of accommodation for completed accommodation periods (night) | 120.4     |
| <b>Medium term/transitional accommodation</b>                               |           |
| Total number of bed nights provided within the reporting period             | 5943      |
| Residents housed in short-term emergency accommodation                      | 27        |
| Average length of accommodation for completed accommodation periods (night) | 303.3     |

### 4.2 Tenancy Support Program

Very often transgender people are excluded from the opportunity to access long-term housing, including private rental, because of the pre-conceived ideas and assumptions that others might have about transgender people or their appearance may not be as expected.



A transgender person's capacity to manage a tenancy is often based on these superficial assumptions and not on the more important issues of having the capacity to manage a tenancy, paying the rent, maintaining the property to a high standard and being a good neighbour.

The Gender Centre can assist with referrals for tenancies and by providing a commitment to support the new tenant in preserving their tenancy.

We can provide early intervention support for tenancy providers such as landlords, real estate agents and community housing providers when they have identified issues that place their tenant at risk of becoming homeless, as well as early intervention and support for tenants who are experiencing difficulties with rent or rental arrears by arranging brokerage for the tenant.

We can also provide support for tenants who are experiencing life issues that place their tenancy at risk - such as difficulty with neighbours.

The successful management of tenancies means long-term tenants, lower vacancy rates and less need for turnaround in occupancy.

The risk of issues arising within the tenancy such as poor property maintenance issues lessens as our case workers support tenants who may be struggling to manage a property due to life issues or changes.

By providing training to prospective tenants on how to preserve a tenancy, so that housing providers can be assured that the applicants referred by the Gender Centre have a solid knowledge of the skills and issues they need to give consideration to when undertaking a tenancy.

Benefits can also include tenancies being more successfully managed so that any tenant who may be struggling can be provided with support before issues become too problematic or require tribunal or other legal action, and the engagement of private enterprise in working with marginalised populations such as transgender people is good corporate citizenship and global corporate social responsibility.

### 4.3 Counselling Service

The Gender Centre provides a high quality professional psychological service to the transgender and gender diverse community, including residential clients, community clients, partners, family members and friends of transgender and gender diverse people, five days per week at no cost.

The values underpinning our counsellor's work include integrity, respect and compassion. We offer:

- a commitment to assisting clients reach their full personal potential through the provision of our psychological counselling services and programs;
- a commitment to achieving this with fairness and integrity;
- acknowledgement of human rights and respect, dignity and confidentiality. It is of particular concern to remove any barriers to a clients' achievements resulting from their gender, age, cultural , national and/or socio-economic background or disability;

an assurance that our counselling service operates within the bounds of ethical guidelines, and the relevant codes of behaviour for psychologists, counsellors and social workers, including the maintenance of client confidentiality; and

- an assurance that access and equity issues are met for all.

Specialized gender counselling also includes but not limited to:

- - referral to specialist medical services for the purpose of medical transition.

- - Guidance and referral with regards to legal transition.
- - Support in relation to social transition and associated milestones such as coming out to family, development of gender-identity confidence and self-expression.
- - Provision of specialized support and training for other mental health professionals.

The counselling service also provides support and education to school counsellors as well as counsellors in rural areas. The Gender Centre's counselling service can also provide referrals to psychiatrists, endocrinologists and other specialists; supervision to counsellors who have a transgender client; and placement opportunities to student counsellors.

Our counsellor participates in a quarterly professional meeting with other counsellor's endocrinologists, psychiatrists and GP's who have a relationship with our clients, as well as attending monthly supervision for personal development opportunities.

### Counselling statistics for the 2015-2016 Financial Year

|   | 2013-2014 | 2014-2015 | 2015-2016 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Individual counselling clients                    | 214       | 245       | 179       |
| Face to face counselling sessions                 | 699       | 731       | 635       |
| Telephone counselling sessions                    | 19        | 79        | 32        |
| Skype counselling sessions                        | 27        | 78        | 27        |
| Episodes of telephone contact counselling support | 268       | 625       | 454       |
| Episodes of email contact counselling support     | 388       | 756       | 548       |
| Clients attending counselling for the first time  | 64        | 100       | 38        |
| Counselling clients aged between 16-25            | 91        | 111       | 82        |
| Counselling clients aged between 26-30            | 58        | 74        | 48        |
| Counselling clients aged between 30 up            |           |           | 49        |
| Counselling clients at risk of harm               | 14        | 19        | 14        |
| Clients referred to Mental health Crisis Teams    | 2         | 0         | 2         |

**Table 3:** From July 2015 to June 2016 the Counsellor had a total of 179 individual counselling clients and a total of 1289 counselling sessions and contact supports.

As can be seen from the figures above, the number of clients referred to mental health crisis teams is low. This low number is a direct result of our Counsellor effectively working with the each client to effectively stabilise their particular mental health crisis.

The clients most commonly accessing the Gender Centre counselling service are those in the process of exploring their gender issues. They commonly present with a range of issues that vary widely from person to person. The more critical issues frequently experienced by clients accessing our Counselling service include suicidal ideation, family rejection, depression and anxiety.

The following list includes topics that were addressed with counselling clients during the 2015-2016 financial year:

- accommodation
- anxiety
- bullying
- cross-dressing
- depression
- discrimination
- drug and alcohol
- employment
- family issues

- fear
- violence
- isolation
- relationships
- self-harm
- suicide
- financial issues
- harassment;
- mental health
- religion
- sexual assault
- surgery options
- gambling
- hormones
- passing
- school issues
- sexuality
- transition

## 4.4 Case-Management

Case-management is provided to all clients who access the Gender Centre; this encompasses the three levels of support that FACS identified in the Going Home Staying Home reforms. Clients are able to access community early Intervention case management in order to prevent homelessness, crisis support in accommodation provided by the Centre or post crisis support to re-establish stability once a housing crisis has been resolved. Case management has been particularly useful in providing assistance to clients with a complex range of needs in the past year. Transgender people are among the most marginalised in society and many of our crisis accommodation clients, and some of the community clients present with a complex range of needs.

As a result many of these clients require and use a wide range of services and different forms of assistance including housing, income, health, employment, education and training. In order to achieve positive outcomes and sustainable futures for our clients; case management and support planning are integral parts of both the Gender Centre's residential programs and the services that we provide to the transgender and gender diverse community in general.

For clients residing in our accommodation programs, our case management process reinforces the progress-based nature of our residential service, providing a mechanism whereby realistic goals can be formulated and a comfortable level of progress can be gained by each resident. Support planning assists each client and our staff in working effectively with each other in order to facilitate progress on the part of our clients.

The case management service enables clients to formulate their own individual support plan with the assistance and encouragement of the case worker.

The support plan may encompass short, medium and long-term goals and strategies. Each support plan attempts to address the needs of the client and to work from the client's own view of progress, taking into account any current social, emotional and/or physical limitations that the client may be experiencing, while also assisting them to progress within the Gender Centre's housing program.

### Client Support Provided for the 2015-2016 Financial Year

|  | 2015-16 Frequency |
|--|-------------------|
| Number of Face to Face/ telephone Casemanagement sessions with clients | 1534              |
| Short term emergency accommodation                                     | 917               |
| Medium term/transitional housing                                       | 150               |
| Assistance to sustain tenancy or prevent tenancy failure or eviction   | 856               |
| Employment assistance  | 118               |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Family/relationship assistance                          | 159 |
| Assistance with challenging social/behavioural problems | 855 |
| Assistance to connect culturally                        | 412 |
| Culturally specific services                            | 963 |

**Table 4:** During 2015-2016, case-management statistics clearly show how vital a need this is for the transgender and gender diverse communities.

*Age Range by Distinct Persons and Contact Details*

| Age Range   | Distinct Persons | Person Contacts | Contact      | Case Work     | Total Time       |
|-------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| 9-11 years  | 1                | 9               | 10hr 12min   | 10hr 12 min   | 20hr 24min       |
| 15-17 years | 5                | 139             | 493hrs 10min | 520 hrs 30min | 1094hr 15min     |
| 18-20years  | 16               | 135             | 100hr 52min  | 83hr 23min    | 211hr            |
| 21-25years  | 23               | 428             | 325hr 37min  | 296hr 31      | 680hr 3min       |
| 26-35years  | 53               | 1359            | 756hr 33min  | 692hr 33min   | 1564hr 16min     |
| 36-45years  | 39               | 949             | 593hr 1min   | 515hr 1min    | 1208hr 17min     |
| 46-55years  | 36               | 838             | 608hr 1mn    | 519hr 28min   | 1206hr 19min     |
| 56-65years  | 21               | 251             | 167hr 45min  | 131hr 55min   | 315hr 45min      |
| 66-85years  | 10               | 313             | 353hr 24min  | 215hr 35min   | 681hr 19min      |
| 85years     | 1                | 239             | 212hr 5min   | 128hr 52mion  | 422hr 22min      |
|             |                  |                 |              |               | Total 10'523 hrs |

## 4.5 Greater Western Sydney Service

The Greater Western Sydney (GWS) position is held in partnership with Wentworth Community Housing and connects The Gender Centre more directly with clients in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains.

This role focusses on the key elements of the Going Home Staying Home reforms; early intervention and tenancy support. An underpinning process for the GWS role is to stop city drift by helping clients to resettle within the GWS area, reducing the strain on inner city resources.

Early intervention in the GWS area has included increasing support of families with transgender youth and working with their high schools to support transition. Transition in high schools involves working separately with the student cohort and the staff to ensure a smooth, supportive and successful transition. A Blue Mountains school has also extended its commitment to inclusivity and has invited The Gender Centre to provide professional development to their staff at the annual welfare conference.



### ***The launch of the Gender Centre / Headspace parents support program in Dubbo***

Education in the public arena has also been sought after by the University of Sydney for students in their medical courses

Our GWS worker has delivered workshops to students to deepen their understanding of transgenderism, the components of transition, transgender health and how to apply best practice in medical services.

The GWS worker has forged relationships with other key support organization in the GWS area including Platform Youth, Mission Australia, Anglicare and Katoomba Women’s Centre. Outreach engagement in the GWS area has included reaching out to clients during homelessness awareness week, and providing access to services for clients in outer suburbs areas with a high complexity of needs.



***Our staff outreached to Mudgee High School to support the teaching staff and principal to support a transitioning student***

#### ***Our school support***

*Schools continue to access the center to support their teaching staff in providing support and best practice for their students transitioning while still remaining in the school environment, this year the center supported and worked with **49** schools across NSW including schools in the Mudgee and Hunter regions*

## **4.6 Outreach Services**

The Gender Centre's Outreach Service provides specialised case management and outreach to transgender and gender diverse people who are confined to hospital or their homes, and to all correctional facilities within N.S.W. The outreach service is able to provide support to clients attending court matters within the greater metropolitan area.

The Outreach Education Service provides weekly Wednesday night outreach to “at risk” street-based sex workers in the metropolitan area of Sydney, including to the Great Western Highway and Canterbury Road areas. The outreach education officer provides referrals to

specialist medical, HIV/AIDS, education, legal, welfare, housing and other community services from Wednesday to Friday.

We provide our client group with:

- Safe using and safe sex equipment, at the Gender Centre, on the street, or wherever the need is arises;
- Health information, not just about HIV, but other relevant areas as well such as other sexually transmitted diseases, injecting hormones, safe sex work, and many other health concerns that transgender people encounter;
- Home visits: If for any reason you would like us to visit you at home, please call and we will arrange a time;
- Hospital and prison visits: Transgender people are often at their most vulnerable when in the hands of the gaol or medical system. If you or someone you know is experiencing any difficulties with these, or simply needs some support or questions answered, then this is another branch of outreach that we are here for; and
- Information. If there is something that you would like to know about H.I.V., or one of the many transgender specific health areas; then please feel free to call me. If I don't know the answer, and nobody in the Centre does either, we will do our best to find out for you.

The Gender Centre also provides a night outreach Service to William and Forbes Streets in Darlinghurst for street based sex workers and private parlours in the inner-city and surrounding areas on a Wednesday evening from 6:00pm to midnight.

The first Wednesday of each month we provide outreach to Sydney's greater western suburbs for transgender street-based sex workers, and the last Thursday of each month we provide case management at the Kirketon Road Centre, above the Darlinghurst Fire Station, entrance on Victoria Street, Darlinghurst from 6:00pm until 10:00pm.

Gaol Outreach is available to all transgender and gender questioning clients confined in a correctional centre within the boarders of New South Wales (all Gender Centre staff are authorised visitors). Court and cell outreach is available to all transgender and gender questioning clients within the inner-city and surrounding areas.

### **Condom and Lube Project**

The primary aim of the Condom and Lube Project is to ensure that those members of the transgender community who engage in high risk behaviours or lifestyles are provided with appropriate information and resources to safeguard themselves and others from the risk of contracting or spreading HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and other Blood Borne Viruses (BBVs).

### **Outreach Service Statistics**

Outreach is an integral part of the Gender Centre's service plan as it continues to provide services to a wide range of clients who may have difficulty in accessing the service otherwise.

The total number of individual outreach clients for the 2015-2016 financial year was 179. These 179 clients received a total of 1,524 episodes of service delivery during that same period.

These figures included our outreach team delivering 320 episodes of service delivery involving personalised education and information covering a range of topics including safe sex, safe injecting practices, HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C, mental health issues, blood borne viruses, alcohol and other drugs, housing, health, discrimination and legal issues.

A total of 964 safe-sex packs were distributed through the outreach service (including 81 at reception), with each pack including 20 condoms and one tube of lubricant. A total of 19,283 condoms and 964 tubes of Lube were distributed

A total of 8,554 items of injecting equipment were also distributed during the course of the year to June 30 2016. This included individual 18, 21, 22 and 23 gauge needles, syringes distributed separately from the 5 and 10 packs (5 and 10 needles, syringes and water).

## Total Combined Outreach Statistics for the 2015-2016 Financial Year

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Number of outreach occasions of service provided to street based sexworkers | 1524   |
| Number of injecting equipment distributed                                   | 8554   |
| Number of safe sex equipment distributed                                    | 19,283 |

*During 2015-2016 outreach statistic clearly show how vital a need this is for the transgender and gender diverse communities*

## 4.7 Over 55s Support Service

The aim of the Gender Centre's Over 55s Support Service is to offer support to clients who are over the age of 55. Support includes frontline crisis and case management, linking clients with other specialised aged care services that are working with transgender and gender diverse people and enable clients to feel safe and secure in accessing these services, provide psycho-social support and opportunities for engagement, enhance the quality of life in relation to independence and self-determination, to promote the needs of transgender and gender-questioning people to aged care service providers, and to provide skills development and training to other aged care service providers, especially generalist services so they can deliver good practice models of service delivery to this unique and diverse community.

The over 55 support project:

- works with and on behalf of older trans people;
- works with trans people of any age who are dealing with matters related to negotiating aged care services;
- works with other services providing support to trans people over 55 years old; and
- is an advocacy service supporting people navigating aged and ageing issues;

Transgender or Gender Diverse people of any age may be having difficulties negotiating services for an aged person who is in your care, or as an older trans person:

- you could be intimidated by, or uncomfortable with negotiating your way through mainstream services;
- you could be in need of help or support to access and negotiate appropriate services;
- you are in need of residential care support, or you are thinking about it;
- you'd like assistance to attend routine health checks or screenings;
- you may be feeling more vulnerable as you age;
- you could be fearful about loss of independence;

- you may just want to talk or you would like someone to advocate on your behalf; or
- you are in need of products or equipment such as incontinence aids or mobility aids.

As a service provider you may wish to provide services to transgender people but you are uncertain how to go about it and:

- you could use some clear information;
- you'd like to know how you can provide sensitive care to transgender elders; and/or
- you'd like some training for your staff in working with transgender and/or gender diverse older people.

### Over 55s Support Service Achievements 2015-2016

Key achievements of the over 55s support program during the 2015-2016 financial year have included:

- Effective liaison and promotion to have mainstream media present and generate a positive story, highlighting the journey of an ageing transgender person including the joys and the challenges that show the uniqueness of this population
- Establishing new links to aged care services in outer western Sydney to support more transgender people
- Supporting multiple transgender persons to enter appropriate aged care accommodation programs in a manner that allows them to feel safe, supported and comfortable within their new living situations;
- Supporting and facilitating the over 55 support groups over the past 12 months
- Providing intensive ongoing support to two very isolated elderly clients
- Provided support and education to other aged care facilities
- Provided support to agencies in obtaining their rainbow ticks

### Over 55s Support Service Statistics 2015-2016

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Number of connections with mainstream aging services  | 188 |
| Number of press releases  | 59  |
| Number of episodes of individual and specialised case management meetings including hospital, home, and nursing home visits | 396 |
| Number of over 55 groups held 2015-2016   | 11  |
| Number of referrals to main stream services   | 79  |
| Number of referrals to specialised services   | 26  |
| Number of clients seen per month  | 31  |
| Number of requests for assistance from family members of transgender ageing persons   | 39  |

The over 55 support worker participated in a number projects and consultations including FACS roundtable discussion on LGBTI ageing, Leichhardt LGBTI action group Marrickville aged services interagency meetings, Uniting Care Australia interagency meetings CAG group, NSW police

Formal training and information sessions were delivered to the Community Visitors Scheme CALD, Australian Unity, UPA Wahroonga, Uniting Care Ageing LGBTI staff interest group Canterbury HACC, CCNB, Community Care Northern Beaches and Uniting Care Emu Plains



## 4.8 Resource Development

### Library

The library continues to purchase new books that are of interest to the community. The library collection will continue to be selected in order to maintain a balance between fiction and non-fiction lay writing such as autobiographies, and professional books relating to gender studies.

We have also received a number of books donated by members of the community and we thank those people concerned for contributing to our resources.

### Information Kits

Information kits play an important role in providing information or raising awareness of the issues facing transgender people.

While a number of kits are available, there is an encouragingly high demand for kits from employers, students and professionals. This demand signals an improving response from non-transgender individuals in a range of capacities to recognising and acknowledging the needs and rights of transgender people.

Again overwhelmingly, people seeking information, including those representing employers, are doing so with a clear commitment to being inclusive of transgender people and this signifies a clear shift in attitude from those exhibited in the recent past.

### Polare Magazine

Polare magazine is a primary source through which clients have access to community information as well as comprehensive health information with regular contributions provided by health professionals. The response to the magazine in the past year has been extremely positive and reflective of its importance in reaching many clients who would otherwise be isolated.

### During the course of 2015-2016 there were:

3'300 magazines printed during 2015-2016

900 magazines delivered to 25 outlets across the Sydney metropolitan area;

1180 magazines posted to subscribers through our mailing list;

600 magazines distributed through the centre

800 magazines emailed to subscribers on our email mailing list;

### Website

The website has become arguably the most comprehensive website of any transgender organisation in the world and is the key area for distributing information via kits and information sheets, news of upcoming events, support for clients and loved ones, latest news and services provided by the Gender Centre.

It continues to be an extremely valuable resource which is available to the wider transgender and gender diverse communities, their allies, other service providers, the media, the medical profession, students and the wider community.

The website provides other service providers with information about the services provided by the Gender Centre and is therefore useful for networking purposes and to assist other service providers should they have contact with a transgender client of their own.

The website also provides access to previous editions of Polare with key articles from the first edition through to our current edition available.

The site also serves as an essential way to promote events and workshops to clients who access the Centre.

### **During the course of 2015-2016**

|                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| Unique visitors  | 476,642    |
| Number of visits | 576,512    |
| Pages            | 899,378    |
| Hits             | 18,833,561 |

As well as the website, the Gender Centre operates a Twitter account, Facebook account, and the Transgender Anti-Violence website clients are now able to access this site to obtain instant updates of what's happening on a daily basis at the Gender Centre.

### **Facebook, Twitter and Transgender Anti-Violence websites**

- Gender Centre Facebook page increased from 893 to 1,507 likes
- Transgender Anti-Violence Project Facebook page increased from 580 to 650 likes
- Queer Agenda Facebook page increased from 108 to 165 likes
- F t M Connect Facebook page increased from 905 to 1,236 likes
- Gender Centre twitter account increased from 638 to 661 likes

## **4.9 Community Support Services**

The Client Support program plays a crucial role in providing assistance to clients whose needs are less intensive than those provided through counselling or who require more direct assistance in their support needs in situations that warrant mediation and/or advocacy.

During the 2015-2016 financial year, clients were assisted through a range of individual needs including, accommodation assistance with the Department of Housing and other agencies, Centrelink assistance, assistance dealing with courts and the legal system, employment assistance, advice on transition, referral advice and advocacy.

The Gender Centre provided a wide range of support groups, workshops and events throughout the 2015-2016 financial year.

These services were provided through the Centre's Client Support Program and aimed to provide clients with access to meaningful support and information.

#### **These events included:**

- Parents of transgender children metro group held at the centre;
- Parents of transgender children Wollongong group;
- Parents of transgender children Dubbo group
- Transgender youth group;
- F To M Connect group;
- Women's group;
- Young Women's group
- Over 55 group
- Queer Agenda group

- Transgender Anti-Violence Project;
- International Transgender Day of Visibility
- Barbecues
- Information talks with guest speakers; and
- Walk-ins

*In total there were 1685 occasions of individual service provision delivered to clients through a range of activities.*



**Parents from our Metro and Wollongong support groups walking in the 2016 Mardi Gras.**

## The Gender Centre and families

Every year we report in the increase in demand for services for young transgender children and their families.

This past 12 months has seen this demand increase more dramatically than ever before. The demand has shifted from just general questions and basic information to advocacy, peer support initiatives, pathways for referrals for psychological and counselling support.

In order to respond to the increase in demand from young people and their parents the Gender Centre has worked collaboratively with Headspace and Dubbo sexual Health to deliver two new parents support groups in regional NSW.

One of these groups meets monthly in Wollongong and is driven by the parents from within the local area. Two parents in particular have put up their hands to co – facilitate this monthly meeting. The second group meets on a less frequent basis, but is no less valuable, this is the parents support group that meets in Dubbo. In delivering support to families this past year the Centre has seen over **110** families contact the service.

Families however are not the only area where the Gender Centre is supporting the young transgender people within our community.

Schools from across the state have contacted the Centre asking for support to allow young students the opportunity to safely explore and express their identity whilst continuing to attend school.

What has been most exciting in the past year is that the schools contacting the centre have included schools from Greater Western NSW, Hunter region and Northern Rivers as well as Catholic schools and a few private schools

The feedback from families has been that the support offered by the Centre has helped them safely navigate the complexity of understanding their child's diversity and feeling equipped to keep their child secure and healthy.

One of the other demands placed upon the service this year that is an increasing one, is that of the need for support to young transgender people living in out of home care, who are under the care of the minister.

FACS have contacted the Gender Centre on numerous occasions throughout the year to support their service and foster families with transgender children.

Training was delivered to Life without Barriers in Orange this year to support this service in assisting three young transgender children in their care programs. This is but one example of the support offered to FACS. Another young person in out of home care was referred to us from the Northern Rivers. It is becoming apparent that future needs for the transgender community does have to include a focus on early intervention and support to limit the need for out of home care interventions. Support through our parents and family initiatives have been one of the best strategies we find to limit the risk of a young person entering out of home care.

## Transtopia Youth Group

This year we have seen the number of young people attending our transtopia youth group increase, and it has stayed fairly consistent, with attendance generally in the early to mid-20.

This year the group has been predominately trans boys, but we have also had an increase in young trans women attend, with a few identifying as non-binary.

Each month transtopia grows and grows with new comers; the group usually grows with 2-4 new kids each month, who have either heard about the group from friends who have attended or from their parents who attend our parents support groups.

## Transgender Day of Remembrance 2015



Again this year the Gender Centre held the Transgender Day of Remembrance at the Newtown neighbourhood centre.

Our keynote speaker was Valerie Wagstaff. Her story is an inspiration to the transgender community and she is a remarkable role model for transgender people wishing to make a significant contribution to society at large as well as our own smaller society.

Laura Sweeny from the Australian Human Rights Commission spoke about discrimination the community faces, including the lack of legal rights and recognition that the transgender community deserves.

Moo Baulch from Domestic Violence Australia also spoke of the problems of under-reporting in the community and Chantelle Martin, from the Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP) added insights based on her experience. Superintendent Tony Crandell contributed a solid policy statement on the determination of the New South Wales Police Force to treat transgender and gender diverse people

with understanding, fairness and an outgoing program of support, built around the concept of the Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers (GLLOs) but going further and including training for all police officers.

## Transgender Day of Visibility 2016

The Gender Centre hosted an open day for Healthcare and service providers to learn and understand about transgender issues, how to properly support gender-diverse service-users, and what services and support the Gender Centre can offer, over 20 services attended the afternoon tea from, Amnesty International, Wayside, KRC Community allies, ICLC Families Dame Marie Bashir Mental health Unit and RPA Executives to name a few

## Slipping Through the Cracks Event



In February of 2016 the Gender Centre in conjunction with the Inner City Legal centre held a queer thinking panel discussion, slipping through the cracks at the Eternity playhouse in Darlinghurst.

2016 is an Australian census year and finally it seems as if the transgender and gender non-binary community as well as intersex Australians will be included in the count.

Or will they? The Australian Government data collectors are trying to find a way to include a third category but struggling to move beyond the female/male binary. Their solution? A third 'indeterminate', 'unspecified' or 'X' category, and the exclusion of transgender children. Not surprisingly transgender, gender non-binary and intersex people do not see themselves as indeterminate or unspecified and may not take part. But, without a proper accounting, the resources and recognition to help these vulnerable communities will be as far away as ever.

## 5.0 Transgender Anti-Violence Project

The Transgender Anti Violence project addresses all forms of violence that impact on the transgender gender diverse and gender questioning community including (but not limited to) domestic violence, sexual violence, anti-transgender harassment and hate crimes, the project no longer has a dedicated staff member driving the project due to the City of Sydney funding running out, the project is still ongoing but in a different form.

The service still provides on line and telephone supports by which people can report and obtain support from all staff following experiences of crime and discrimination, the project also delivers training to service providers and NSW Police.

## 5.1 Service Evaluation

All staff at the Gender Centre have continued with the aims of providing optimal service for our clients, and in developing a strong and positive relationship with other agencies and our funding bodies. The success in achieving the service's objectives has been monitored throughout the year by a range of processes including:

- Residential data collection and analysis with particular reference to occupancy rates;
- Strengthening focus on case-management practices;
- Analysis of reasons for discharge;
- Monitoring data relating to attendance at in-house groups, resident meetings, number of clients contacted and referrals through outreach;
- Monitoring of circulation levels of print publications and resources;
- Collateral feedback from other agencies and service providers;
- Data collection relating to referral patterns;
- Level of demand for participation in key national, state and local mechanisms, strategies and activities;
- Increased awareness and focus on W.H.& S. issues;
- Feedback from clients regarding complaints, compliments and suggestions; and
- Ongoing commitment to engaging in quality improvement across all programs.