

Who We Are

Currently being established, Zoe Belle Gender Centre (ZBGC) will be a centre to support and improve the health and wellbeing of Victoria's sex and gender diverse population.

What We Want (Our Vision)

A society that values people of all sex and gender identities and expressions

Our Role In Achieving This (Our Mission)

To support and improve the health and wellbeing of people of all genders. We view health holistically to assist, inform, enliven and advocate for our communities

What We Do

Provide support, information and referrals

Run events, workshops and campaigns to inform, enliven and strengthen our communities

Host groups and services that are complementary to our Mission

Improve the healthcare of trans* and gender variant people

Advocate and educate about issues of gender diversity

ZBGC Working Group

ZBGC is being established by a crew of people called the ZBGC Working Group. The Working Group spans a wide range of fields including health promotion, community development, law, psychology, communications and accountancy.

Attend a ZBGC Event

ZBGC sometimes stages events. These events attract attendees from many different sections of the community. Events we've held so far include an afternoon

tea on the rooftop of our current premises and a workshop for lovers and partners of transfolk. A great way to find out about ZBGC events is to subscribe to our eNews.

<http://tinyurl.com/ZBGC-mailinglist>

Volunteer

Are you interested in joining the ZBGC Working Group or helping ZBGC as a casual volunteer? Twice a year, we call for expressions of interest to join the Working Group. Please contact us for more information about volunteering.

contact@gendercentre.com

Donate Money to ZBGC

The goal of establishing a gender centre in Victoria has been discussed within the local transgender community for many years. Help us to realise this vision by donating money to ZBGC. You will be able to make tax-deductible donations via our website soon! For now, please contact us if you'd like to donate.

contact@gendercentre.com

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Thanks to {also} foundation



Proud member of



The Need for a Gender Centre in Victoria

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Discrimination and Disadvantage is Widespread

Australian sex and gender diverse people (that is, transgender, transsexual and other gender diverse people) people have reported experiencing widespread disadvantage and discrimination in their daily lives. The 2007 Tranznation report prepared by the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARC-SHS) revealed that of the 253 transgender participants¹:

- ✦ 87.4% had experienced at least one incident of stigma or discrimination on the basis of their gender identity
- ✦ 50% reported verbal abuse, social exclusion and the spread of defamatory rumours
- ✦ 33.33% had been threatened with or were victims of violence.

It has also been estimated that:

- ✦ the suicide rate for sex and gender diverse individuals (particularly transgender people) is around 125 times that of the general Australian population²; and
- ✦ about 40% of Australian sex and gender diverse people are rejected by their families, and a third are rejected by their friends, leading to extreme social isolation³.

Acceptance by health practitioners is a fundamental part of addressing discrimination and disadvantage experienced by transgender people.

"One Stop Shop" Required

A recent study showed that the uninformed and discriminatory attitudes of medical and health professionals are an ongoing and prevalent problem for people in the trans community, leading many to seek 'trans friendly' services⁴. All of the participants in this study agreed that:

- ✦ The transgender community would benefit greatly from a transgender specific service in Melbourne, ideally staffed by members of the transgender community and empathetic professionals
- ✦ A Gender Centre should be a comprehensive service offering medical and allied health services, with legal, crisis and employment services on hand at regular times
- ✦ The facility would also communicate with the wider community and media through education and training programs, while serving as a safe and supportive hub for the trans community.

The Tranznation report indicated that for many transgender people, the best experiences in the health system involved encounters where they felt accepted and supported by their practitioners.

Gender Centre Needs to Provide a Range of Services

A 2007 community consultation by the Zoe Belle Gender Centre Working Group surveyed 82 people within the transgender community in Melbourne, with the following results (Zoe Belle Gender Centre Working Group (2007). Community Consultation for a Gender Centre in Victoria. Melbourne: Author):

- ✦ 82.2% of people would use the services of a Gender Centre themselves
- ✦ 80.9 % of people saw it as important that the centre provide information, advice

and referral about gender identity and options for transitioning

- ✦ Also rated highly as being 'important' or 'very important' were the provision of on-site counselling (86.3%), legal advice (76.8%), support/drop-in groups (72.6%), social events (65.8%), housing assistance (41.1%), employment advice (57.5%), alternative therapies (49.3%) and provision of educational materials related to transitioning (58.9%)
- ✦ The centre would, for 65.8% of respondents, ideally be located within the city or city fringes.

References

1 Couch, C., Pitts, M., Mulcare, H., Croy, S., Mitchell, A., & Patel, S. (2007). Tranznation: A Report on the Health and Wellbeing of Transgender People in Australia and New Zealand. Melbourne: Australian Research Centre in Sex Health and Society.

2 Hyndal, P. (2009) Beyond boxes: Sex and gender diversity and health service provision, Unpublished Paper, presented at "National Mens Health Gathering 2009".

3 National Transgender HIV/AIDS Needs Assessment Project (Australia) (1994). Transgender Lifestyles and HIV/AIDS Risk: National Transgender HIV/AIDS Needs Assessment Project. Sydney: School of Sociology, University of New South Wales.

4 McLean, A. (2011). A 'gender centre' for Melbourne? Assessing the need for a transgender specific service provider. *Gay and Lesbian Issues and Psychology Review*, 7 (1), April, 33-42