

# 2011/2012 Annual Report



## 2012 FAIR DAY

**The Gender Centre Inc.**  
*Sydney Australia*

Celebrating 29 years of service

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## Our Mission Statement

The centre is committed to developing and providing services that build the capacity of the transgender and gender questioning community 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 and, acknowledges human rights and ensures respect and confidentiality.

We are a Specialist Homelessness and Health related service providing services to the transgender and gender questioning community of NSW (SHS) which provides supported transition housing and health related services.

We endeavour to provide a high quality, professional psychological/ counselling, case-management and supported transitional housing services that promotes best practices to the community of NSW.

We are committed in providing a high quality service which acknowledges human rights and ensures respect and confidentiality.

## Our principles

The Gender Centre operates within a strong, transparent and accountable governance framework consistent with its Constitution, Vision Statement, Principles, Policies and Procedures and Service Agreements and, complies with the state's legislative and policy directions.

- efficient and effective governance
- ethical practice
- professional Practice
- social Justice and human rights
- respect
- client centred practice
- strength based practice
- active engagement
- building skills and knowledge to enhance client independence
- cultural capability
- social inclusion
- multidisciplinary approach & collaboration with other services
- collaborative partnerships
- continuous quality improvement & evidence based practice.

# Our Strategic Plan

The Gender Centre achieves its mission through a strategic approach to planning our three year strategic plan 2012-2015 provides the strategic framework for the centre to achieve its vision and mission for the next three years.

Our Strategic plan identifies 4 priority areas

- 1 effective & efficient governance
- 2 strengthening the transgender and gender questioning community
- 3 capacity building, networks, partnerships & advocacy
- 4 building organisational capacity

Hours of operation

- Monday to Friday 9am to 4.30pm
- Wednesday night inner Metropolitan Street outreach 6pm till 12 midnight
- first Wednesday of each month outer western suburbs outreach 6 pm till 12
- first Thursday of each month, 6pm till 10 pm L8 clinic at the Kirketon Road Centre
- first Thursday of each month 10pm till midnight combined outreach with Swop to the inner metropolitan area of Sydney

Gender Centre staff are available twenty-four/seven on call to all residential clients of the Gender centre's residential program

# Our Services

- Counselling:
- Outreach:
- Night Outreach:
- Gaol Outreach:
- Court & Cell Outreach:
- Support groups:
- Residential Case Management:
- Residential Program:
- Community Case-Management:
- Transitional Housing Program:
- Resource Development:
- Drug and Alcohol Counselling Service:
- Support to Partners Family-Members and Friends:
- TAV Project:
- Training for Clients, Service Providers and Others:
- Special Events:

## President's Report

This year has been one deeply imbued with a sense of the future. The Board and staff have spent a significant amount of time looking at where the NSW Gender Centre is heading and what we need to do as an organisation, alone and in partnership, to achieve the Centre's vision.

The year under review saw the conclusion of the current Strategic Plan and the development of a new Strategic Plan. Following consultation with clients, community and stakeholders, the new plan is designed to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of our programs and services while building a stronger sense of community both for the Centre and for the transgender people we serve.

All of the work that is presented in this report is the fruit of the labours of the Gender Centres management and staff. They excel at what they do, and we love them for their energy, creativity and commitment. A more dedicated and enthusiastic group of people you could not find.

I would like to thank each and every one of them for the many hours of effort they expend in delivering programs and services to promote and support the Transgender community's health and wellbeing. I would also like to thank Phinn Borg, our Executive Officer.

This year has not been without its challenges and Phinn's strong leadership of the day to day operations of the organisation have helped us to continue to achieve great things and to continue to move forward.

I would also like to thank our Board members for their many hours of devotion to the Centre over the last 12 months. Board members voluntarily give of their time and work quietly behind the scenes to provide direction and ensure the Centre operates responsibly and with due accountability to our members, community, donors and funders. This year we say a very sad farewell to Elizabeth Riley who has served the Centre over many years as both an Executive Officer and Board member. Elizabeth has brought enormous skill, passion and dedication to her work and I would like to pay tribute to Elizabeth and thank her sincerely for everything she has done to help the NSW Gender Centre pursue its mission. Enjoy your retirement Elizabeth but we shall miss you! Thank you also to the Transgender community their families and supporters who entrust the board with the organisation and empower us to pursue the Centre's mission. We value your support and encouragement.

The Gender Centre could not do what it does without the support of its funders – notably NSW Health and the Department of Community Services. I thank them for their support and encouragement. I would also like to acknowledge the businesses, local government and individuals who provide in kind and financial support to help us do things which we are not funded to do through any other source.

They help the Centre address unmet needs in the community, and specifically enable us to be trailblazers in Transgender health and wellbeing.

The Gender Centres development as an effective and dynamic health and social welfare agency continues apace in 2011/12. The evolution of the organisation has largely been influenced by the evolving response to the HIV epidemic and social determinants of health and the ongoing challenge for the Centre is to continue to adapt to meet the medical, social, cultural, economic and technological issues which impact on the people and community we serve.

It is well understood that the health and social welfare system in NSW and Nationally is faced with many challenges - what those challenges often bring us however are innovation, initiative and new models of care that improve the journey and experience of our clients and staff.

The Centre provides safe and high quality care to Transgender people in NSW – we have a lot to be proud of. In order to provide the best possible care to our clients we must take the best possible care of our staff. Areas of focus for me in 2012/13 include supporting the development and maintenance of an appropriately skilled and sustainable staff who can work in an environment where organisational culture is of paramount importance. I am also particularly keen to ensure that transgender issues are part of the health and social welfare reform agenda and that the Centre continues its focus on client centred care.

Measuring the general health and wellbeing of Transgender people presents a range of challenges due to a lack of relevant statistical data. However, clients using our services and people involved in our programs consistently report increased levels of wellbeing as a result of their participation.

Working together with our staff, clients and community members to ensure we meet their needs by continuously improving our programs, services, policies and procedures continues to be a key focus for the Board. We recognise that the best way to do this is to always be open to criticism, be honest about our ability to address an issue and do whatever we can to rectify a problem. Over the next 12 months, the Board looks forward to continuing to work together with all the inspirational people who are part of the Gender Centre family, and to leading an organisation which plays such a vital part in building the health and wellbeing of the Transgender community.

Best wishes

Jo Holden  
President

# Managers' Report

This year has been something of a challenge for myself and for all the staff and Management Committee members of the Gender Centre.

My commendations to all the staff of the centre for their efforts in promoting the Gender Centre's positive and committed approach to the transgender and gender diverse community, and for promoting a positive image of the centre to the wider community.

While maintaining normal services we have also:

- Established & maintained a strong and positive relationship with a wide range of agencies.
- Worked in close collaboration with our funding bodies to improve services and maintain strong standards in service delivery.
- 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 and with a special emphasis on issues facing transgender people in prison and issues of early intervention with families and youth
- Continued to promote the issue of equity in employment for transgender 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.
- Re-designed and continued to improve and update our website at [www.gendercentre.org.au](http://www.gendercentre.org.au)
- Continued to provide placements for students and engage in on site training at both TAFE and Universities.
- Worked closely with the Management Committee and through Polare 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.
- Seen important extensions to the service in relation to outreach activities.
- Been involved in advocacy across a wide range of issues.
- Upgraded our computer and data collecting systems.
- Improved the presentation and content of Polare.

- Overhauled the centre's systems, including the redesign of standard forms and policy documents,
- Review of all client data collection systems.
- 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

I take pleasure in providing the following report outlining the events that have occurred over the last financial year and the endeavours and contributions of the Centre and its staff in promoting the health, well-being and human rights of all members of the community.

As from July 2011 to June 2012 the Gender Centre provided **9'006** occasions of service provision to **435** individual transgender and gender questioning clients.

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, counselling, case management resources information and so on.

During 2011-2012 there were

- 120** Individual Counselling Clients
- 145** Individual Outreach clients
- 95** Individual Community and Residential Clients
- 65** Individual clients attending support groups
- 10** Clients in Correctional Facilities

Data breakdown of the 435 clients, during 2011-2012 financial years

- 90** male identified
- 345** female identified,
- 33** of Aboriginal decent
- 1** Torres Strait Islander,
- 225** are culturally and linguistically diverse,
- 176** identified as other

A further breakdown from the above data,

There were **87** episodes of service provision provided to clients between the ages of 14 to 25,

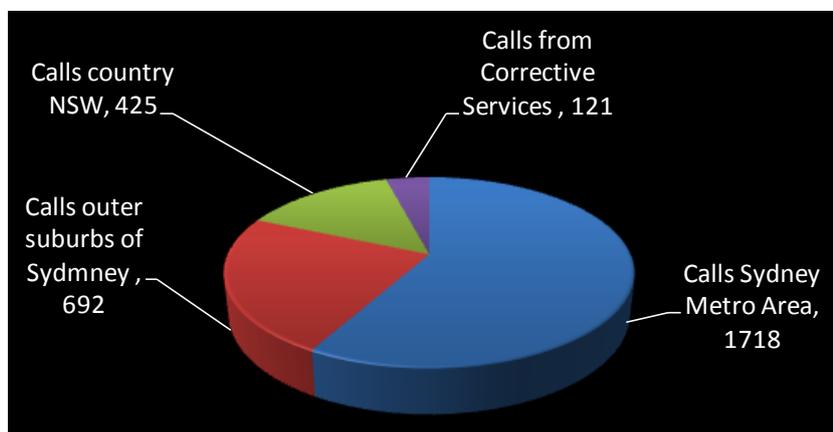
**76** episodes of service provision was provided to clients between the ages of 20 to 30,

**177** episodes of service provision was provided to clients between the ages of 30 to 55,

**95** episodes of service provision was provided to clients over 55

74 of the above clients presented with a current mental health diagnosis confirmed by their GP or psychiatrist and 28 presented with a physical disability

## Occasions of service provision via the phone



Calls from the Sydney Metro area	1'718
Calls from the outer suburbs of Sydney	692
Calls from Country NSW	425
Calls from Corrective Services	121
<b>Total calls for 2011-2012</b>	<b>3086</b>

## Funding Bodies

The Gender Centre would like to thank our funding bodies, Department of Family and Community Services (SHS program), and Sydney Local health District for their financial and ongoing support during the past year.

The following are the core objectives under which the Gender Centre has been funded.

### NSW Department of Family & Community Services

- a. Homelessness Prevention & Community Awareness
- b. Early Intervention support
- c. Post crisis support
- d. Supported transitional housing
- e. Supported independent living

b and e are in the context of case management

## NSW Health /Sydney Local Heath District

- a. Provide a service that supports clients experiencing gender & health related issues
- b. Provide a service that raises awareness of gender and health related issues
- c. Ensure the organisations structure is clear and accountable
- d. Ensure ongoing evaluation of the service
- e. Maintain service links with support organisations

We look forward to continuing these partnerships to enhance and improve service delivery to the transgender community, in the future.

### **The Committee**

The Gender Centre is a community based organisation governed by an elected committee of management who are committed to developing and providing services and activities which enhance the ability of people with gender issues to make informed choices

No service can function well without an effective and committed Management Committee.

As Manager of the Gender Centre I wish to record my gratitude to all members of the 2011/2012 board for their commitment to the aims of the organisation.

Board members give freely their time and expertise; I would also like to thank the board for the support they have demonstrated towards the manager, to the staff and the centre itself.

I look forward to many more years of committed and dedicated Management Committee members assisting the service to function effectively.

### Members of the Committee during the 2011-2012 Financial year:

Ms Joanne Holden  
President

Mr Col Eglinton  
Vice President

Ms Kimmi Everson:  
Treasurer

Ms Maggie Smith:  
Secretary

Ms Lesley Findlay:  
Committee member

Ms Elizabeth Riley  
Committee Member

## Staff

I take this opportunity to thank the staff for their continuing commitment to community development and in raising the perceptions of clients and other services regarding the Gender Centre

## Staff/Contractors/Volunteers for 2011-2012

A mix of Part Time /Full Time & Contracts

Manager	Phinn Borg
Financial Administrator	David Burke (Retired)
Senior Case Manager	Elizabeth Ceissman
Counsellor	Anthony Carlino
Residential Case Worker	Anna Rica Floro
Outreach Education Officer	Nicola Slone
Outreach Education Officer	Ekarach Thirapat (Birdie)
Outreach Education Officer	Ruth Bearpark (Casual 6 month contract maternity Leave)
Resource Information officer	Katherine Cummings
Reception	Rust Nannup
Volunteers	
	Belinda Marchesello
	Teddy Cook
	Ashley Caccamo
	Che Bishop
Contractors	Web-design Nicole Moore
	I.T. Specialist Russell Cox

## Committees and Consultations

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:

Inner West SAAP Interagency meetings	Sydney South West Area Health Interagency meetings
GLBT Carers' Support Group	GLLAM Committee [Marrickville Council]
Health Promotion & Partnerships Meetings	Shownet meetings
ACON GLBT Ageing Forum	Pride in Colour working group
Transgender Day of Remembrance	Mind out
Inner City Legal Centre	COTA- aging consultation paper
Safe Relationships Project [Inner City Legal]	TAV project steering group
GP, Psychiatrists, Endo's Counsellors therapist and other professionals working group	Peace of Mind project
National LGBTI Health Alliance Round table	

## Agency Networking

Gender Centre staff continue to network with a wide range of services and service providers

The following services are a few of the services we have worked with over the past year

The Ant-Discrimination Board of NSW

City of Sydney Council

Marrickville Council

Aurora Group

Street Smart

Oz Harvest

Hepatitis C Council of NSW

Inner City Legal

Marrickville Legal

Women's and Girls' day drop-in  
emergency centre

City Women's Hostel

B Miles

Twenty Ten

Samaritan House

Foster House

CRC Broadway

Stepping Out

Marrickville Youth Centre

Vincillian Village

Metropolitan Community Church

YWCA

PFLAG

Tafe's, Meadow Bank, Nirimba ,Ultimo  
& Petersham Tafe

G P's , Psychiatrists, Counsellors

Endocrinologist

ACON

Sex Workers' Outreach project

Bobby Goldsmith Foundation

Probation and Parole

NSW Police Force

Redfern Community Health

Ashfield Mental Health

Marrickville Mental Health

The Missenden Unit

RPA Sexual Health

Sydney Sexual Health

Kirketon Road Centre

Community Health Clinics

Langton Centre

Albion Street Clinic

Schools & school counsellors

### **Social workers at the following**

#### **hospitals**

St Vincent's Hospital

Royal Prince Alfred Hospital

Prince of Wales Hospital

Concord Hospital

Liverpool Hospital Brain Injury Unit

Positive Living Centre

Office of Community Housing Redfern

NSEP

Homelessness NSW

#### **Correctional Institutions**

Mulawa

MRRC

Silverwater

Long Bay

Junee

Kirconnel

Bathurst

Dept of Housing

Broadway, Surry Hills, Burwood,

## Specialist Homelessness Service Funded Programs (SHS)

Homelessness Prevention  
Community Awareness  
Case Management Early Intervention  
Case Management Post Crisis  
Supported Transitional Housing

### Residential program

The Database for the residential service has been analysed from the Specialist Homelessness Information Platform and is as follows.

Over the course of 2011/2012 there were **34** clients housed within the Gender Centre's residential program.

**2** were short term emergency accommodations totalling **14** bed nights.

**32** were medium term/transitional accommodations totalling, **3596** bed nights.

In total there were **3611** bed nights occupied during the financial year of 2011-2012.

### Residential and Community Clients

The Data below reflects the number of Community \* and Residential clients supported and episodes of service delivery provided through our SHS funding (Specialist Homelessness Services Funding)

*\*community clients are those people seeking early intervention and post crisis supports to clients in order to sustain a tenancy or prevent a tenancy breakdown*

There were a total of 99 distinct persons (clients) accessing SHS services through the Gender Centre over the course of the 2011-2012 financial year.

Of the 99 clients 20 were male identified and 79 were female identified.

9 clients were of Aboriginal decent receiving 362 episodes of service delivery

1 client was both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander receiving 6 episodes of service delivery

83 clients were neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander receiving 1284 episode service delivery

6 clients were not recorded receiving 110 episodes of service delivery

<b>Contact type</b>	<b>Total Distinct Contacts</b>	<b>Distinct Contact Time</b>
Client walk ins	79	103, hours and 22 mins
Transport	7	25, hours and 5 mins
File notes	155	37, hours and 15mins
Group work	24	82, hours 16 mins
Client meetings	1058	899, hours 30 mins
Correspondence	9	5, hours 10 mins
Outreach	197	526, hours 35 mins
Case coordination	79	87, hours 25 mins
Informal interaction	10	24, hours 30 mins
Phone	846	773 ,hours 56 mins
Home Visits	121	210, hours 51 mins
Meetings	77	295, hours 26 mins
Referral to other accommodation	2	3, hours 30 mins
<b>Total</b>	<b>2975</b>	<b>3586, hours 55 mins</b>

All clients in residence receive a high degree of support in applying for public housing and several of our ex-residents have been successful in securing long-term public housing.

The service is divided into three separate parts, each with its own level of support and responsibility. Clients entering the residential service are inducted at the first level and progress to the third level during their stay.

The first level offers the highest level of support, the second level is medium support and the third level, in our exit units, is the lowest level of support.

The third level of the program is the level that most reflects independent living and assists clients to make a smooth adjustment into independent living when they exit the program. All residents attend case-management as part of their residence with the Gender Centre and develop individual support and case-management plans.

Residents are also encouraged to attend workshops designed to facilitate their progress.

## **Case–Management Services**

Case-management is provided to all clients who access the Gender Centre, whether they are residing in accommodation provided by the Centre or living in the wider community.

The role of case management is to assist and empower people to resolve issues that impact on their quality of life. In case management a comprehensive client assessment is used to develop a case plan which encompasses seven key aspects to an individual's life.

The case plan may involve referrals to other service providers with the Case Manager coordinating and monitoring the process.

The seven aspects cover a diverse range of areas including independent living skills, employment/training, accommodation, health, self-esteem/identity, recreation/ leisure and social supports. Case management involves assessment/risk management, planning and the implementation of service arrangements, and co-ordination of supports both formal and informal.

Following are the statistics for the in-house case worker (residential clients of the Gender Centre and all Gender Centre clients in our exit housing program)  
Summary breakdown of data for the residential case worker

## Episodes of service provision Residential Case Management

Case management with residential clients	304
Case Management with residential exit program	89
Case Management via the phone with residential clients	309
Case management via the phone with exit program clients	483
Home visits	139

Total episodes of service provision provided by the In house residential Case Worker 1441

There was a total of 25 completed In-Take Assessments for our residential program

## Episodes of service provision provided by the Community Case Manager (community clients within the borders of NSW)

Case management with community clients	665
Episodes of service provision Homelessness prevention	176
Episodes of service provision Early intervention	188
Episodes of service provision Post crisis	72
Episodes of service provision Community awareness	49

Total Number of service provision 1'150

Number of Contacts with schools 13, and 111 contacts with Probation and Parole

The case-management team will continue over the coming year networking with a wider variety of service providers, so that the issues of people who access the Gender Centre are better understood.

In this way a greater variety of quality resources can be made available to anyone who seeks help at the Gender Centre.

## Sydney Local Area Health District Funded Services

Counselling

Outreach

Resource Development

Condom & Lube Program

Support

During the 2011-2012 financial year, our Local Area Health funded services had a total of 340 distinct individual clients accessing health services provided by The Gender Centre Inc.

Of the 340 clients:

- 120 Were individual counselling clients
- 145 Were individual outreach clients
- 10 Were residing in correctional facilities across NSW
- 65 Clients attending support groups

Staff at the centre provided 223 occasions of support to assist clients in accessing outside specialist medical, psychiatric, counselling and endocrinology services and provided 1418 occasions of support and general health information to clients during 2011-2012.

The centre provided 24 specialized support groups for transgender and gender diverse youth and for parents of transgender and gender diverse youth.

The counsellor provided 729 face to face counselling sessions during 2011-2012

The outreach team provided 1270 episodes provision to street based sex workers working in and around the Darlinghurst, Surry Hills areas as well as the Great western Highway (Eastern Creek and along the long stretch of Canterbury Road

- 43 occasions of service was provided to G P's school counsellor's teachers, case workers general counsellors and mental health workers.
- 5980 safe sex packs were distributed, 3740 injecting equipment was distributed and
- 1000 used injecting equipment was returned

## Outreach Services

The outreach education services are an important avenue for the Gender Centre to take its services out into the wider community.

Outreach is delivered to sex workers working on the streets or in parlours, to prison inmates and to transgender people confined in hospital or in their homes

Outreach services to prison inmates and those confined to their homes play a major role in reducing the levels of isolation experienced by these individuals. At other times they may

involve accompanying an individual to a medical appointment or advocating for inmates who feel they are being unfairly treated.

## Outreach to Jails

During 2011/2012 there were 31 outreach visits conducted to correctional centres within N.S.W

Staff, work with Probation and Parole, and social work staff to facilitate appropriate health and welfare services and supports prior to release of the transgender inmate.

During the course of 2011-2012 the centre provided support to 8 transgender clients newly released from correctional centres across NSW, of these 8 clients 5 were of Aboriginal decent and were housed within the Residential program of the Gender Centre, 3 were non Aboriginal and not housed within the program but were provided with ongoing support to maintain their independence and health needs.

There were 121 episodes of service provision to corrective services and Probation and Parole on behalf of the newly released inmate in the provision of ongoing wrap around support and service provision (Health, Education Accommodation).

## Street Outreach

The outreach team provided 1270 episodes of service provision to 145 distinct street based sex workers working in and around the Darlinghurst Surry Hills kings cross and The Great Western Highway (Eastern Creek) as well as Canterbury Road (Bankstown area), and provided 236 health related information and education sessions on HIV/AIDS STI's BBV's harm minimization, correct hormone usage and testing as well as referring clients to appropriate services providers.

## Outreach statistics

Episodes of service provision Street Based Sex Workers	401
Service provision to private clients	109
Clients accessed through KRC	48
Clients accessed through SWOP	7
Face to Face with Case Management with outreach clients	59
Phone contact case management	318
Outreach to jails	31
Home & Hospital Support	60
Court Support	1
Health/Education/Advise and Support provided	236

The outreach team see on average ten to fifteen street-based workers per outreach shift The team know most of these workers and offers a range of services, as well as providing information on services offered by the Gender Centre on health, accommodation,

The outreach team services the streets and when permitted the local brothels in the area. There are regular client bases working in these areas to which they are now familiar with the services The Gender Centre offers and express their appreciation of the support.

## Outreach to KRC

There has been a steady increase in Thai clients accessing the Gender Centre through the Kirketon Road Centre. Clients are accessing us for support with employment, education, sexual health advice, immigration and laws in relation to working on a student visa and homelessness support. There is now an on-going regular clientele who meet with the outreach team at Kirketon Road once a month as it is more accessible for them and their routines.

## Outreach partnership with S.W.O.P

The Gender Centre partnered with S.W.O.P for a combined outreach on the first Thursday of each month from 10pm – 12am in the Kings Cross and Darlington areas.

## Counselling Service

The Counselling service had another very busy year on the counselling front from clients and service providers. Clients and potential clients access the service via the phone or in person.



Throughout the year the counselling service receives multiple enquiries from other service providers requesting information, consultation and referrals in order to better assist their clients. Supervision, consultation and information are provided on a regular basis to school counsellors who are working with young transgender children and their families as well as counsellors working in the community.

Clients of the Gender Centre come for counselling on a regular basis, for gender counselling but also for more generalised assistance in reforming their lives and bringing their social and emotional conflicts into harmony. Many clients feel alienated from society and from their families and this can lead to depression and even despair.

Many clients attending our counselling service have multiple issues and are in need of access to more than just our counselling service.

When necessary and with agreement from the client concerned, clients are linked up with other services, provided by the Gender Centre and services provided in the wider community

Below are the counselling statistics for 2011/2012 these figures need to have added in May and June numbers

## Individual clients attending counselling service during for 2011/2012 120 clients

Face to face counselling sessions	729
Phone counselling	3
Counselling inquiries and Support	352
Total combined episodes of service provision	<u>1'084</u>
Total number of Individual clients accessing the counselling service	<u>120</u>
<b>Client demographics</b>	
Episodes of service provision to new clients	63
Episodes of service provision to clients under 25	83
Episodes of service provision to clients in the age range of 25 to 30	76
Episodes of service provision to support counsellors within NSW	15
Episodes of service provision provided to GP's	5
Episodes of service provision provided to Psychiatrists	17
Episodes of service provision to School Counsellors	7
Support provided to distressed clients at risk of harm	13
Clients referred to crisis teams	4
Support provided to out-of state service providers	24

Clients who most commonly access the counsellor are those in the process of exploring their own gender issues, through a range of presenting issues. The more critical issues including suicide ideation, family rejection, transition depression, isolation, and sex reassignment surgery.

The following table indicates some of the issues that were addressed in the counselling sessions for the period of 2011/2012

Issues for the under 25 age group	Issues for the 25 to 30 age group
Anxiety	Support entering full time employment
Support during transition	Impact of depression on relationships
Lack of family support	Family acceptance or lack thereof
Support in coming out to family	Depression
Low self-esteem	Anxiety
Depression	
Relationships with peers at school	
Issues for the age range of 30+	Harassment/violence
Cross-dressing	
Transition	Financial
Passing	Accommodation
SRS	Relationships
D & A / Gambling	Family
Suicide	Health
Sexual assault	Anxiety/fear
Depression	Sexual issues
Isolation	Religion
Employment	Information

By issues addressed we mean that the client actually discussed the issue directly or the issue was the reason behind the client accessing the counselling service even though they may not

have discussed the details in that session. It is obvious from both observation and client feedback forms, that clients gain enormous benefit from the Gender Centre's counselling program.

The educational role of the Gender Centre's counselling service in the provision education information, supervision and assistance to Rural & Regional service providers in the provision of service delivery to transgender and or gender questioning people is enormous. Listed below are some of the service providers that accessed the counselling service throughout the year for information support and supervision

Better Life Solutions  
Brain Injury Unit, Liverpool Hospital  
Brisbane Gender Clinic  
Psychologist (outside of Sydney metropolitan area))  
Resident doctors (rural hospitals, NSW)  
Seahorse (transvestite organisation)  
Sexual Health Clinics  
Social workers at various hospitals  
Youth Services  
Various Community Health Services  
Wellbeing Clinic  
Accommodation Services

Community nurses  
Counsellors, High schools  
Counsellors, Primary schools  
Counsellors/Therapist  
Mission Australia  
Department of Ageing, Disability & Homecare  
GPs  
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Centres  
Mental health workers  
Probation & Parole officers  
Psychiatrist  
Childcare centres

## Service Magazine (*Polare*)

The 92<sup>nd</sup> edition of *Polare* was published in June of 2012



*Polare* has now entered its twentieth year of publication.

1060 *Polare*'s were delivered to 25 outlets across the metropolitan region

1052 *Polare*'s were posted to subscribers through our mailing list

368 *Polare*'s were emailed out to subscribers on our email mailing list

Over 3'293 copies of *Polare* were viewed in PDF form from our website at [www.gendercentre.org.au](http://www.gendercentre.org.au)

*Polare* continues to be a valuable source of information, towards the end of 2011 we sent out a survey to the community to gain feedback on *Polare* and what people wanted to see in the

magazine. We received about 10% of the surveys back. A special thanks to all those community members and interested stakeholders who took the time to complete the survey.

## Our Library

The Library continues to grow but is used by only a small subset of the Gender Centre's community. Access remains a problem, with the Resource Development Worker on site only on Mondays and Wednesdays.

The library continues to purchase new books for the library 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.

## Our Website

The Gender Centre website has undergone several appearance and structural changes since it was first commissioned in and has now grown to become arguably the most comprehensive website of any Gender Centre in the world.

By the time this Annual Report is published, the Gender Centre's new website should have been launched. The new website has been a long time in the making and is being donated to the organisation by our long-standing website contractor, NixDesign.

The old website had some limitations regarding its ability to be easily updated and generally "keep up with the times" in the quickly moving area of online information provision. The new website features several necessary, however previously unacknowledged online areas of information including the Centre's "Roles and Functions", "Management Structure", "Who Funds Us?", "Positions Vacant", "Client Confidentiality" and an "Historical Timeline" which features major achievements and news stories in relation to the transgender and gender diverse communities over the years since the Gender Centre's opening as Tiresias House in 1983.

The new website also features an extensive "Support" section and draws support for MTF, FTM, Intersex, Youth, Androgynous, Cross-Dressing, Family & Friends, Employers, Legal and Health from the hundreds of articles that have appeared in Polare Magazine since its creation in 1993. The old editions of Polare Magazine contain a wealth of information both current and historical that is still of immense value to those undergoing a gender transition, those exploring their gender identity options and our supporters. All other information that previously appeared on the old website has been dramatically improved and brought up-to-date in a way that should be aesthetically pleasing to our wide ranging client base.

Overall, the new website continues our commitment to provide a valuable source of information to our immediate clients and the wider community both within New South Wales, Australia and Internationally, information that might not otherwise be available in hard copy form. It contains much of the current information relevant to the Centre including articles from Polare, kits and fact sheets, what's on and what's happening at the Gender Centre on a week

to week basis. This information has been invaluable in providing assistance and support by reducing the sense of isolation felt by those within the transgender and gender diverse communities including those exploring their gender identity options and their family and friends.

The site 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.

During the course of 2011/2012 the website had over 12 million hits and show's a large proportion of the visitors are located within Australia this further reinforces the reach of the Gender Centre as a national centre not only servicing NSW.

The website also reaches an international audience with over 25 countries accessing information from the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Germany, Netherlands, France, China, Italy and so on, as is the case with all websites the Gender Centre website creates the capacity for a number of Gender Centre resources to be available nationally and worldwide

Information kits on the Gender Centre's web page greatly improver's access for the web visitor and many enquiries are now satisfied by referral to the web page from which kits and individual hand-outs can be downloaded, as can selected items from all issues of *Polare*.



Kits & fact Sheets viewed from the website

- 250 Male to Female information kits were viewed
- 404 Female to Male information kits were viewed
- 961 Male to Female surgery kits were viewed
- 46 Intersex information kits were viewed
- 57 HIV/AIDS issues kits were viewed
- 136 Hepatitis C brochure were viewed



Polare's viewed and downloaded from the website

- Polare 91 was downloaded from the website 11 times; the HTML version was viewed 1135 times
- Polare 90 was downloaded 329 times; the HTML version was viewed 939 times
- Polare 89 was downloaded 88 times; the HTML version was viewed 1219 times

## Education and Training

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

The aims of the education packages are:

To encourage service providers in all areas to work effectively with transgender 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 persons who present as the best person for a position.

And encourage all organisations to treat *all* people, including transgender people, equitably.

In the past year we have provided training to:

- Ultimo TAFE, Welfare Students
- Pride in Diversity
- Department of Education
- Public Trustee's office
- Indigenous health students
- Sister to Sister mentor program
- Microsoft
- WIPAN
- HPIC
- IT Company at St Leonards
- Rankin Court
- University of Sydney
- Quakers Hill Tafe
- National Domestic Violence forum
- Centercare
- Nirimba TAFE Welfare Students 3 sessions
- University of NSW Medical Students on four separate occasions
- NSW Police

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

We have also opened the centre, on several occasions, to other services and to students from various disciplines who have expressed an interest in increasing their knowledge of the transgender community.

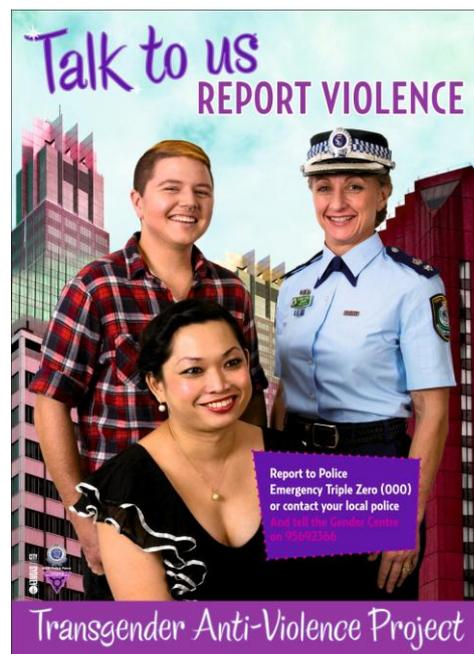
## City of Sydney Funded Transgender Anti-Violence Project

As a result of the reports the Gender centre had received over a number of years the TAVP was launched. Although launched in the previous financial year, much of the work of the project was undertaken in this year 2011- 2012. The project is run by the Gender Centre with the support of NSW police force, The city of Sydney, and the Inner City Legal Centre.

The aim of the project is to raise awareness of transphobia, provide advocacy and support to people who are victimised or discriminated against due to their gender identity and to encourage and increase the rate of reporting of incidents of violence and transphobic experiences.

The service provides on line and telephone supports by which people can report and obtain support following experiences of crime and discrimination. It also is responsible for the delivery of training and awareness raising activities to the wider community about transphobia and its effects on the transgender community.

Within this past year a research and information gathering project was undertaken to find out more about people's experiences of transphobia. The key information in this research that was considered included barriers to reporting, preferred reporting methods



### Support Groups run at The Gender Centre

As always the support groups for the year continue to be a success. The following provides an overview of the groups conducted throughout the year. **611** episodes of service provision were provided to clients attending in house events workshops and groups.

#### Parents of Gender Questioning Children



The aim of the group is to offer support to parents as they address the issues that arise for them in their role as a family member.

The group accepts all parents whether they are accepting or not of their child's diversity.

The only requirement for participants is that they come with an open mind to explore and work towards understanding their child. This may not result in acceptance, but it is hoped that through support and education parents will be able to understand their child in more open and informed way.

The group has had guest speakers throughout the year and has been integral in identifying key gaps in service delivery to the transgender community

Advice from a parent to a parent: *“discuss options, do not consider yourself a beggar, a victim, or a second class citizen; keep a sense of humour and use lots of hugging and laughter”* (Evelyn)

## FTM Connect Group

FTM Connect meets once a month on a Friday night and is growing in numbers.

Participants dictate what the theme for the next get together will focus on.

It's a mix of guys just starting out and those more experienced.

FTM connect is an open support group run monthly, the group is facilitated by the Gender Centre Counsellor Anthony Carlino.



## The Women's Group



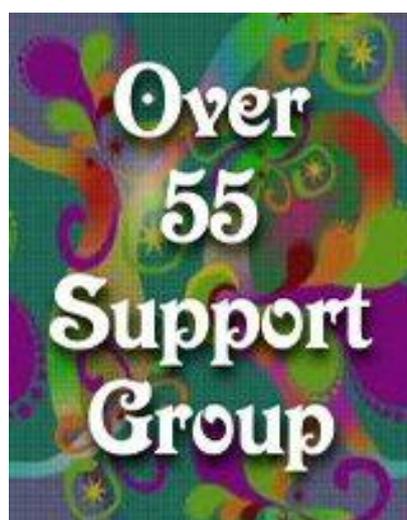
The Women's group meets on the last Monday of each month.

The Group is moderated by the Resource Information Officer and usually functions as a support group and a means of sharing experience.

Those who have questions or problems can come together and talk out their problems in an atmosphere of equality and without any suggestion that a “party line” is being imposed.

## Over 55 Groups

This group has recently started at the centre, the over 55 group aims at offering a social outlet participants come to the centre for a coffee and a chat, the group meets once a month



## Tango Classes



Tango classes were offered off site in Marrickville in a local community hall.

This activity was just a fun event offered as a way to give people an opportunity to try out an activity that may have been cost prohibitive normally.

The classes were taught by a qualified teacher who volunteered her time.

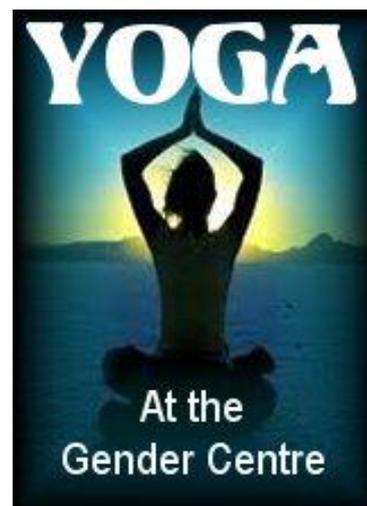
Once the class's ended participants were encouraged to join a regular class held in the inner Sydney area as a means of connecting with others who share an interest in dance.

## Yoga

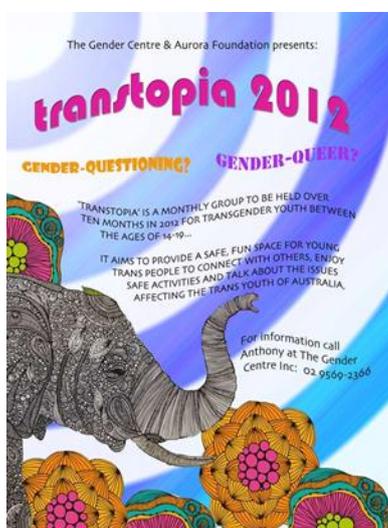
The focus on introducing healthy lifestyle practices is one which the centre sees as important as many of the clients are entering into the latter stages of life and are not currently actively involved in healthy lifestyle options.

It was hoped that the introduction of gentle exercise may stimulate and motivate people to connect with lifestyle choices that promote activity rather than inactivity.

To that end the yoga classes were offered at the centre. The classes were held both on site for a few weeks then off site at the yoga teacher's clinic.



## Transtopia



Transtopia was a monthly group formed in response to a growing number of transgender and gender questioning teenagers accessing the service.

The group aimed to provide a safe space for these teenagers to talk openly about gender and develop friendships. To foster the growth of friendships, Transtopia was a closed group, allowing these relationships to develop over time with familiar faces for those who attended. Facilitation of the group was undertaken by the Gender Centre Counsellor and 2 members of the transgender community.

Activities included:

- Separate workshops on gender, bullying and family support
- Social trips to the art gallery of nsw and Luna Park
- Art therapy
- Self Defence Classes

## Community Social Events 2011-2012

There were two BBQ's held this year at The Sargent Joseph Community hall at Erskinville with over 70 meals provided to community members at both gatherings and again a Christmas lunch was provided for residential clients of the Gender Centre Housing program.

In November of 2011 the Gender Centre held the Transgender Day of Remembrance at Parliament House with over 40 people in.

The Transgender Day of Remembrance serves several purposes. In contrast with the public media it raises public awareness of hate crimes against transgendered people, and publicly mourns and honors the lives of our brothers and sisters who might otherwise be overlooked.

The Day of Remembrance reminds non-transgendered people that we are their sons, daughters, parents, friends and lovers, and gives our allies a chance to step forward with us and stand in vigil, memorializing those who have died by transphobic violence

### Fair day

Again this year the Gender Centre provided a stall at the 2012 Mardi Gras fair day at Victoria Park the cost of the stall was kindly donated to us free of charge by Mardi Gras ,this year the stall was manned by staff volunteers .



## Service Evaluation

All staff of the Gender Centre have continued with the aims of providing optimum service to 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 OH&S issues.
- Feedback from clients regarding –Complaints-Compliments-Suggestions
- Ongoing commitment to engaging in Quality Improvement across all programs.