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Boys in Prison

The System Has No Understanding of F.T.M.s

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My name is Tony, I am thirty-three years old and have been a female-to-male (F.T.M.) transgender person for seven years. I am currently on remand at Mulawa Women's Detention Centre. Being an F.T.M. tranny in the prison system makes it very hard for people to relate to me. The knowledge they have of transnies is of being male-to-female, never having thought at all about F.T.M.s.

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The system has no understanding of F.T.M.s. Speaking for my own life, it has been very hard for me. In here people look at me as a freak and some inmates look at me as the closest thing to male that they can sexually identify with. It gets a bit much to handle sometimes, but I cope.

As far as the police and courts are concerned I belong at Long Bay Prison for men, not giving a damn about the dangers. There is no special treatment for F.T.M.s.

When I talk to professional people, they have no idea where to start and no knowledge of what you are. We had a 'link up' day back in September where I got the chance to meet up with the Outreach Worker from the Gender Centre. We haven't had much of a chance to talk, but just knowing she is there for me and other F.T.M.s is reassuring. It's about time we got this kind of support.

When I first started out my life was hell. There was no one there to support me through my surgery and the outcome emotionally was heart-breaking. Now we have the Gender Centre for support, their magazine *Polare* and the *Boys Will Be Boys* newsletter. F.T.M.s now have somewhere to turn, things have come a long way in seven years.

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The Gender Centre is committed to developing and providing services and activities, which enhance the ability of people with gender issues to make informed choices. We offer a wide range of services to people with gender issues, their partners, family members and friends in New South Wales. We are an accommodation service and also act as an education, support, training and referral resource centre to other organisations and service providers. The Gender Centre is committed to educating the public and service providers about the needs of people with gender issues. We specifically aim to provide a high quality service, which acknowledges human rights and ensures respect and confidentiality.