



South Australian Rainbow Advocacy Alliance

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24 May 2020

Honourable Stephen Wade MLC
Minister for Health and Wellbeing
GPO Box 2555
Adelaide SA 5001

Dear Minister Wade,

Re: Improving access to healthcare for young trans and gender diverse South Australians

I'm writing to you today to follow up regarding a topic we discussed at the launch of the Better Together conference on 11 March this year. In recent weeks, the South Australian Rainbow Advocacy Alliance (SARAA) has heard from South Australian clinicians and parents concerned about the limited specialist health services for trans and gender diverse people in this state, especially for children and young people.

At the same time, Federal Health Minister Greg Hunt has recently called for 'a nationally consistent standard of care' for trans and gender diverse children and young people.¹ While we're pleased to see support for improving the quality of care for our community, we're concerned that **trans and gender diverse children and young South Australians aren't currently getting the vital care they need** due to overstretched and under resourced public health services, and a lack of suitable/accessible private options.

We appreciate that with the current COVID-19 crisis you have other pressing issues to attend to and we thank you for the diligence that the South Australian government has shown during this period. Nonetheless we believe that essential improvements in the care available for young trans and gender diverse South Australians are long overdue.

Through conversations with trans and gender diverse South Australians, their families, and the practitioners who assist them, we've heard time and time again of the barriers the community faces when trying to access support. Whether it's the struggle of a parent trying to find a GP who understands gender diversity, the exasperation faced by a teenager waiting 12 to 18 months to see specialists who can diagnose gender dysphoria, or the frustration faced by transgender and gender diverse people of all ages when they're forced to educate their medical professionals about gender diversity - change is required. These delays,

¹ The Sydney Morning Herald, '[Hunt rules out trans inquiry, wants nationally consistent care](#)', 18 April 2020.

misunderstandings and, in some instances, experiences of discrimination can have devastating consequences in both short and long term health outcomes of children and young people who are trans and gender diverse and their carers/support people.

While there are many areas of reform needed to fully address the issues I have just mentioned, SARAA believes that priority should be given to **increasing the funding for the Women's and Children's Hospital's gender clinic in the upcoming 2020 state budget.**

We're thankful for the hard work of the passionate clinicians at the WCH gender clinic to date, but based on the feedback we've received from parents it's clear that this clinic is unable to meet the increase demand for its services that it is experiencing. With greater social acceptance of the trans and gender diverse community, more people are seeking support to affirm their gender identity today than even 2 years ago when the Marshall Government took office. Indeed, it's as a direct result of this increased demand that additional resources are urgently required to ensure that evidence-based care can be provided in a timely manner for all those who need it.

Our call for improved access to healthcare for trans and gender diverse children and young South Australians echoes that of many others in our community. We note that the Commissioner for Children and Young People recommended in 2019 that 'gender-affirming health services be available to children when they need them, increasing resources and reducing waiting lists'.² Further, we understand that clinical practitioners and two groups representing families of trans and gender diverse children (Parents of Gender Diverse Children and Transcend SA), have written to you in recent months. We wish to add our voices to theirs in calling for these improvements to the health system.

We are prepared to offer our support and assist with community engagement should you require it, and we are certain that the groups mentioned above would be prepared to do the same. We look forward to your response, and we hope that urgent action will be taken to ensure the health and wellbeing of trans and gender diverse South Australian youth.

Kind Regards,

Matthew Morris
Chair, South Australian Rainbow Advocacy Alliance

² Commissioner for Children and Young People, 'First Port of Call', report, November 2019.