



**A BLUEPRINT
FOR IMPROVING
THE HEALTH &
WELLBEING OF
THE TRANS &
GENDER DIVERSE
COMMUNITY IN NSW**

Download the Blueprint at:
acon.org.au/TGDblueprint



INTRODUCTION

In 2019 ACON launched the *Blueprint for Improving the Health and Wellbeing of the Trans and Gender Diverse Community in NSW* (the Blueprint).

The Blueprint outlines the key approaches required to improve the health outcomes of trans and gender diverse (TGD) people in NSW and to strengthen the inclusion of TGD people within ACON's programs and services.

The Blueprint was developed with the support of ACON's TGD Community Health Advisory Group, which comprised members of the TGD community, clinicians and community organisations.

The development of the Blueprint was informed by a comprehensive review of national and international literature, and an extensive consultation process. This consultation process included a community survey of over 450 people, six community meetings across NSW (Sydney, Newcastle, Lismore, Wollongong, Wagga Wagga and Liverpool) and key stakeholder interviews with trans and gender diverse community leaders, GPs, endocrinologists, sexual health physicians, NSW Health officials, and human rights lawyers.

ABOUT ACON

ACON is Australia's largest health organisation specialising in community health, inclusion and HIV responses, for people of diverse sexualities and genders.

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PRIORITY AREAS

A Blueprint for ACON, Government, Health Practitioners, Service Providers and NGOs to Improve the Health and Wellbeing of the TGD Community in NSW

PRIORITY A:

Clear and easy pathways for accessing gender-affirming care

TGD people face significant, unnecessary barriers in navigating the health system when seeking medical care to affirm their gender.

SOLUTIONS

1. Develop plain-language resources on trans and gender diverse health and human rights, and establish a peer worker program to support trans and gender diverse people in navigating the health system, including when seeking gender-affirming care.
2. Provide ongoing GP training, information and support so trans and gender diverse people can access gender-affirming hormone therapy through primary healthcare, using an informed consent model, and gender-affirmation treatment plans that are based on the individual needs of the patient.
3. Increase the availability of specialists who are inclusive and have expertise in gender-affirming care, for those who may need specialist care as part of their gender affirmation.

PRIORITY B:

Affordable and available gender affirming healthcare

Most gender-affirming healthcare is not covered by the public health system which presents significant barriers to improved health and wellbeing for many TGD people.

SOLUTIONS:

1. Cover gender-affirming healthcare as medically necessary services under Medicare and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.
2. Provide an exemption for trans men and nonbinary assigned female at birth people from the 2015 Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee restrictions on how testosterone is prescribed under the PBS.

3. Amend the NSW Health Waiting Time and Elective Surgery Policy to remove “gender reassignment surgery” as a discretionary procedure and conduct a review to ensure that all gender-affirming surgeries are included within one of the three clinical urgency categories.
4. Remove gendered categories in health services or programs, such as Medicare billing codes, where there is no clinical need for them.

PRIORITY C:

An inclusive and knowledgeable NSW health sector

TGD people have historically been invisible across the health sector, which means they often do not receive appropriate services that are responsive to their specific needs.

SOLUTIONS

Create a NSW health sector strategy to improve the health and wellbeing of TGD people across their lifespan, including the adoption of best practice, consistent collection of clinical data on gender identity across the sector. Meaningfully integrate trans and gender diverse issues into existing NSW Health strategies.

1. Include TGD people as a priority population in the next NSW HIV strategy.
2. Undertake training and develop targeted resources for health professionals working in parts of the health sector that are key to addressing specific issues facing TGD people. This includes:
 - a. for GPs and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services about the specific health needs of Sistersgirls, Brotherboys and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of the trans and gender diverse community.
 - b. for GPs about the specific needs of TGD people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
 - c. for mental health professionals to ensure that TGD people are treated for their presenting mental health issue, and not pathologised because of their gender identity.
 - d. for doctors, nurses and support staff to ensure that TGD people receive appropriate, respectful and supportive care when presenting to hospital.
3. Strengthen the evidence base on TGD community health in NSW by supporting the inclusion of

demographic indicators on gender identity in population-based surveys and investing in credible TGD community-led research projects.

4. Ensure that the diversity of the TGD community is explicitly included in all health campaigns, programs and services.



PRIORITY D:

Official government I.D.s and records that reflect TGD people's gender through simple administrative procedures

The current processes for changing NSW birth certificates requiring surgery, and passports, Medicare records and other Commonwealth Government documents requiring medical intervention are restrictive and deny the basic human rights of TGD people.

SOLUTIONS

1. Enable people to change the legal sex classification on their NSW birth certificate or recognised details certificate through a simple administrative procedure that does not require any medical intervention or verification by medical professionals.
2. Enable people to change the legal sex classification on Commonwealth documents and records (such as Passports and Medicare records) through a simple administrative procedure that does not require verification by medical professionals.

PRIORITY E:

Workplaces, education settings and other environments that are inclusive and respectful of the needs of TGD people

TGD people face stigma and discrimination across many aspects of their daily lives, which can impact their health and wellbeing and ability to participate.

SOLUTIONS

1. Equip employers with resources and training needed to address discrimination in recruitment and employment practices and ensure that workplaces are inclusive of trans and gender diverse employees.
2. Implement TGD-specific and equitable anti-discrimination and anti-bullying policies and awareness across educational settings.
3. Ensure that TGD people in NSW custodial settings have access to healthcare and support that meets their specific needs.

PRIORITY F:

A vibrant, resourced trans and gender diverse community advocating for its own needs and priorities.

There are limited spaces for trans and gender diverse communities to meet, particularly in regional and rural areas, and limited resources to support the development of TGD-led community in NSW.

SOLUTIONS:

1. Provide physical spaces and resources to enable the development of TGD community groups, particularly in regional and rural areas.
2. Provide resources to support the development of TGD-led advocacy organisations and individual advocates.

Anyone can access and use the full version of the Blueprint to support their local, state-wide and even national advocacy efforts that seek to progress and improve the rights, health and lives of TGD communities at: acon.org.au/tgd

ACON is proud to support this work and to continue raising the visibility of TGD community priorities and needs.

