

# Sexual and gender diversity among youth: health sector responses



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# Sexual and gender diverse young people: health status

- Compared to young people generally:
  - **Additional barriers to SRH care**
  - **Poorer wellbeing, mental health and physical health**
  - **SSA youth less likely to use condoms & more likely to be sexually active at an earlier age, contract an STI and have an unintended pregnancy**
- Strong links between homophobic and transphobic abuse and excessive drug use, self-harm and suicide attempts
- Intersections with disability, Indigenous status, CALD, rural & remote

*Leonard, W., Pitts, M. et al. Private Lives 2 (2012), Adam P, de Wit J et al. Debrief survey (2018)*

*Robinson, KH, Bansel, P. et al. Growing Up Queer: Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre (2014)*

# Sexual and gender diverse young people: health service interactions

Positive interactions crucial to ongoing healthcare engagement and to foster resilience and wellbeing

- BUT negative experiences commonly reported
- marginalised young people perceive and experience multiple forms of discrimination
- ACCESS 3 SGDYP participants expressed ambivalence about their healthcare journeys



*Robards F, Kang M et al. Health care equity and access for marginalised young people: a longitudinal qualitative study exploring health system navigation in Australia. Int J for Equity in Health (2019)*

# Sexual and gender diverse young people: health service interactions

## Obstacles to care:

- confidentiality concerns
- access and costs
- health literacy
- **assumptions of heterosexuality**
- **professional discomfort (transphobic stigma, prejudice, discrimination and abuse)**
- **lack of health professional knowledge and skills**
- **lack of resources and referral networks**



*Kang M, et al. (2018). Access 3: young people and the health system in the digital age. Dept of General Practice Westmead, The University of Sydney and the Australian Centre for Public and Population Health Research, UTS.*

# Sexual and gender diverse young people: what do optimal health services look like?

- Accessible, affordable, flexible
- Non-judgmental confidential care by knowledgeable trained staff
- **Up to date evidence-based practice which allows young people to engage in decision-making**
- **Culturally safe and inclusive, comfortable and friendly**
- **Youth participation in service planning**
- Recognition of multiple vulnerabilities - coordinated services, referral pathways and navigation supports
- Inclusive systems approaches and use of technology



*Heard E. How can HIV/STI testing services be more accessible and acceptable to gender and sexually diverse young people? Health Promot J Austral. (2019)*

*Robards F, Kang M at al. How Marginalized Young People Access, Engage With, and Navigate Health-Care Systems in the Digital Age: Systematic Review. J Adolesc Health (2018)*

# Sexual and gender diverse young people: high level health sector responses

SRHR Frameworks and Position Statements:  
Youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health care acknowledges a young person's right to pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.

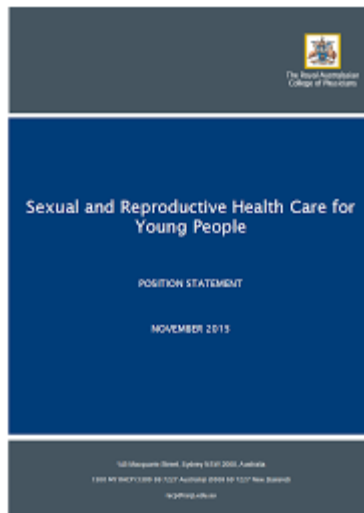


World Health Organization

**GUTTMACHER-LANCET COMMISSION**  
ON SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS



The Royal Australasian  
College of Physicians



**Advocating for GLBT-  
inclusive practice in  
all government funded  
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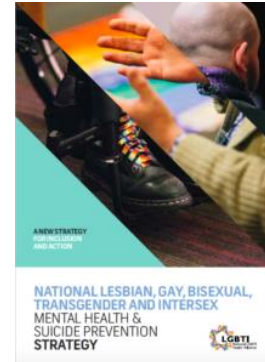
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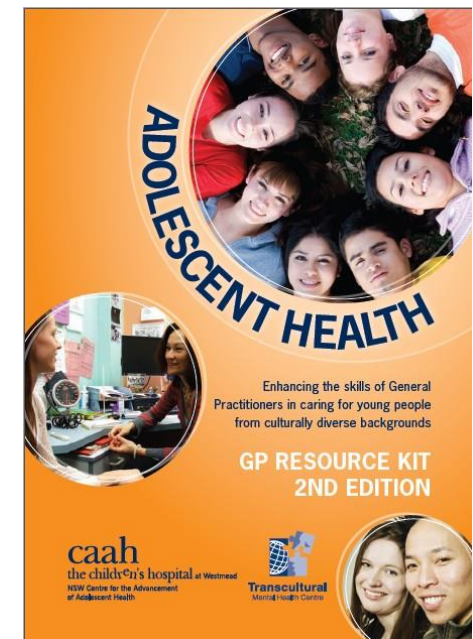
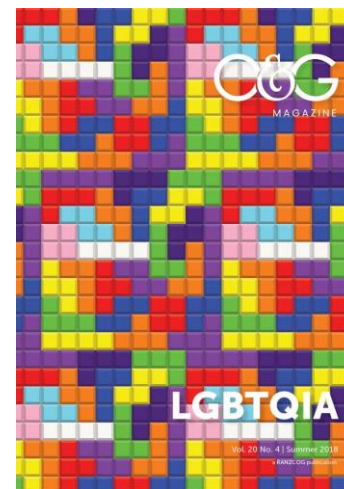
# Sexual and gender diverse young people: policy frameworks, guidelines and standards of care

- Frameworks to improve health service delivery for LGBTIQ people overall
- Youth health frameworks recognise LGBTIQ as a vulnerability indicator
- Proposed NZ mental healthcare framework includes need to reduce stigma and enhance young people's safety
- Australian standards of care and treatment guidelines for trans and gender diverse children and adolescents.  
*Telfer et al. MJA (2018).....*



# Sexual and gender diverse young people: workforce training and development

- Medical schools, nursing, midwifery training
- GP resources and accredited training (Becoming more Gay Friendly in Your Practice (ASHM))
- National LGBTI Health Alliance - training by members in local regions
- Specialist colleges





# Sexual and gender diverse young people: health sector responses

- Online information about SGDYP inclusive services
- Online STI testing services
- Dedicated gender identity service for children and adolescents Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne

*Tomnay JE et al. infection testing for rural young people in Victoria. Aust J Rural Health 2014*



# Sexual and gender diverse young people: meaningful engagement



HeadSpace National Reference Group is made up of a diverse group of young people of varying ages, genders and cultural backgrounds



# Sexual and gender diverse young people: accreditation for inclusive practice and service delivery

- Rainbow Tick national Accreditation Program a benchmark
- Used as part of QIP accreditation
- National register

## Six Standards:

- *Organisational capability*
  - *Workforce development*
  - *Consumer participation*
  - *Welcoming and accessible*
  - *Disclosure and documentation*
  - *Culturally safe and acceptable services*
- Provides a welcoming signal and reassurance to the community



# Sexual and gender diverse young people: Medicare and other systems

- Understanding Medicare
  - own Medicare card from 15
  - 2013 pledge to delink system from gender
  - doctors letter required to update gender marker
- MyHealthrecord
- Practice-based and pathology data collection systems
- A gender mismatch between systems does not prevent processing of Medicare billing



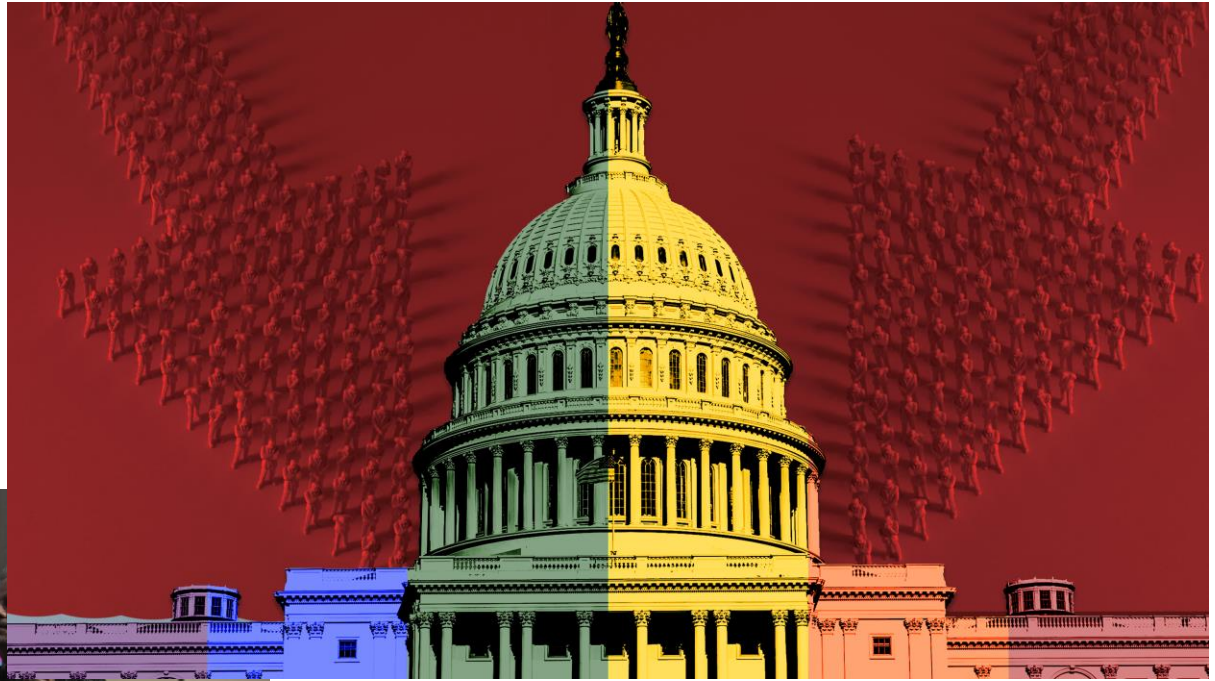
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## Summing up

- Awareness increasing at all levels of health sector
- Increasing training and professional development opportunities
- Quality improvements occurring linked to accreditation
- Systems improvements underway

**But still much room for improvement  
and no room for complacency.....**





# Thank you!

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