
Transgender youth disproportionately suffer mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, with more than half having attempted suicide. Lack of family acceptance is a risk factor that leads to poor long-term health outcomes for transgender youth.

Australian families with transgender young people need timely access to support from specialist trans family organisations and equitable access to medical services that could help save young lives. Trans family support organisations, in turn, need to be appropriately funded to meet the growing demand of families across Australia requesting support and assistance.

Transgender young people also require gender affirming health care without discriminatory medical consent procedures. Australian law must treat all young people equally regarding their bodily autonomy and right to consent to medical treatment.

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Supporting the National Children’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Policy recommendations support the following focus areas of the National Children’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy:

Focus area 1:
Family and Community talks about promoting mental health and wellbeing as part of parenting and how services can connect with families and communities better.

Focus area 2:
The Service System talks about the gaps in our mental health services, and how we can make it easier for children and their families to get help, especially when they have multiple complex issues or there are things preventing them from getting help.

The social & economic costs of inaction

2–3% of Australian young people identify as trans or gender diverse (trans).

Trans young people aged between 14–25 years are 15 times more likely to attempt suicide compared to the general population.

This disparity is not because of an inherent predisposition to poor mental health related to their gender identity – it is caused by a complex and unique set of drivers and risk factors associated with marginalisation, lack of family acceptance, barriers to accessing timely gender affirming healthcare and experiences of violence and harassment.

37.9% of transgender and gender diverse people aged 14 to 21 years reported that they had attempted suicide in their lifetime.
This is compared to just 3.2% of the general population aged 16 and over who reported that they had attempted suicide in their lifetime.

It is estimated that the economic cost of suicide in Australia for youth aged 15-24 years per suicide is approximately $3 million.

Policy recommendations could reduce the risk factors and unique drivers contributing to the prevalence of suicide among trans young people in Australia by ensuring that trans young people have access to timely gender affirming healthcare and family support. Moreover, recommendations to fund research and improve data collection across the health system are needed to quantify the costs of mental health issues and to monitor health outcomes.