Final report to Community Sector Banking

community sector banking

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Developing a model of care to support trans and gender diverse people experiencing homelessness

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Acknowledgements

Project team

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Drummond Street Services	Karen Field and Kate Foord
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Community reference group

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Key terms and acronyms

AIHW   Australian Institute of Health and Welfare *www.aihw.gov.au*

GALFA   Gay and Lesbian Foundation of Australia *www.galfa.org.au*

Gender diverse   A broad term that encompasses a wide range of gender identities and gender expressions, such as bigender, trans, transgender, genderqueer, gender fluid, gender questioning, gender diverse, third gendered, two-spirit, sistergirls, brotherboys, agender, non-binary, and many more. Gender diverse refers to identities and expressions that reject the belief that gender is determined by the sex someone is assigned at birth.

GLHV@ARCSHS   Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria @ Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University *www.glhv.org.au*

Homelessness   Multifaceted concept with multiple definitions. The framework we use includes 'rough' sleeping in public places, temporary accommodation (such as emergency accommodation and couch-surfing), as well as medium to long-term accommodation that does not meet certain standards[1].

LEAG   Lived Experience Advisory Group
                         The LEAG is a group of 12 people with a lived experience of homelessness, which provides an important perspective to the operation of Launch Housing.

LGBTIQ   Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex Questioning/Queer
                         There are several variations of this acronym employed in this report including LGBI, LGBTI and LGBTQ. This is purposeful and represents the different groups that are being specifically referred to in each case. Though these terms are in the one acronym, it is important to acknowledge that sexual orientation (e.g. lesbian, gay, bisexual) differs from gender identify (e.g. trans, gender diverse, non-binary) and biological sex (e.g. intersex variation).

Misgender   To describe or address someone using language that does not match that person's gender identity or expression.

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[1] Chamberlain, C. & MacKenzie, D. (2003). 'Counting the Homeless 2001', cat. no. 2050.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Non-binary   Someone whose gender is not defined by the male/female binary. Some non-binary people may also identify as trans and/or gender diverse.

QIP   Quality Improvement Plan
A QIP is a document that identifies service goals for quality improvement and notes strategies for achieving those goals.

QSIG   Quality and Safety Integration Group
QSIG reviews information collected by the major safety and quality systems of the organisation. The group develops and reports on benchmarks, provides a level of assurance and make quality improvement recommendations for system improvements to the Launch Housing Executive.

SRS   Service Record System
A client management database in which housing service providers record, manage and view client data. It is accredited for data collection through the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

TGV   Transgender Victoria *www.transgendervictoria.com*

Trans / transgender   Umbrella term to describe someone whose gender identity or expression differs from the one they were assigned at birth.
The terms male-to-female (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may prefer the term sistergirl) and female-to-male (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may prefer brotherboy) may be used to refer to individuals who are undergoing or have undergone a process of gender affirmation. Not all people who have undergone this process, however, describe themselves as trans. And although some gender diverse and non-binary people also describe themselves as trans, not all do. Also, for some trans and/or gender diverse and non-binary people the social context of transition may be more important than the physical aspect of transitioning[2].

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[2] Adapted from The Rainbow Tick guide to LGBTI-inclusive practice (2016) GLHV@ARCSHS La Trobe University, and National LGBTI Health Alliance Inclusive Language Guide (2013).

Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to present findings on the trans and gender diverse (TGD) homelessness pilot model of care project to the funding body, Community Sector Banking.

Furthermore, the report is designed to inform the homelessness and housing sectors of a model of care to support TGD people. It describes the content and process of developing the model within one urban homelessness service.

Project background

The idea for this project was informed by the findings of an earlier LGBTQ homelessness research project based at the University of Melbourne[3]. Among other things, this project highlighted a rapid increase in trans and gender diverse (TGD) people presenting to homelessness services in recent years. A number of drivers of homelessness that TGD people are particularly vulnerable to were identified, including family rejection; discrimination in the housing sector, employment, and education; and complex intersecting mental health, substance use and trauma issues. Homelessness services staff recognised their need to better understand TGD-specific needs, and improve their responsiveness; however, they did not have access to any LGBTIQ specific guidelines for the homelessness sector.

Despite rising concern about the prevalence of trans and gender diverse (TGD) homelessness, at present there are no TGD-specific homelessness services in Victoria (and only 1 LGBTIQ specific service), nor have most homelessness services had any training in the provision of TGD-inclusive services. To address this serious gap in knowledge and service response, the current project was established, and sought to develop and trial a model of care within a mainstream homelessness service to support TGD people who are experiencing, or are at risk of homelessness.

Project aims

The two overarching aims of the TGD Pilot Model of Care project were to:
- Increase the capacity for one homelessness organisation to provide inclusive care and promote better health outcomes for TGD clients; and
- Improve access to culturally aware and inclusive services for TGD people in their interactions with one homelessness organisation.

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[3] McNair, R, Andrews, C, Parkinson, S. & Dempsey, D. (2017). 'LGBTQ Homelessness: Risks, Resilience, and Access to Services in Victoria – Final Report'.

The intention was to make the resources developed at the selected mainstream organisation available to any homelessness service provider via the LGBTIQ homelessness project website.

Project team

The TGD model of care project was a partnership between researchers at the University of Melbourne (Ruth McNair and Cal Andrews), the philanthropic Gay and Lesbian Foundation of Australia (Ian Gould), Transgender Victoria (Brenda Appleton, Sally Goldner and Andrew Eklund), Drummond Street Services (Karen Field and Kate Foord), and mainstream homelessness service provider Launch Housing (Tony Keenan and Anna Wark).

Using co-design principles, the community reference group for this project included individuals and representatives from a range of organisations: Brenda Appleton (Transgender Victoria), Marie August (Drummond Street Services – queerspace), Ari Dunphy (Drummond Street Services – queerspace), Andrew Eklund (The Shed), Sally Goldner (Transgender Victoria and Transfamily), Tina Healy, Jami Jones (Rainbow Network), Darcy Lovely (Redefining Androgyny), Starlady (Zoe Belle Gender Collective), and Budi Sudarto (Australian GLBTIQ Multicultural Council).

Timeline

2016

October

- Steering group meeting
- Pre/post surveys drafted

November

- Ethics application submitted to Melbourne University and Launch
- TGD inclusive model of care drafted
- Project website developed

December

- Ethics approval received
- Community reference group first meeting
- Preliminary survey and client recruitment

2017

January

- Preliminary survey and client recruitment
- Steering group meeting
- Development of training resources and finalising model.

Feb –Aug

- Initial audit of 4 pilot sites
- Staff training and systems change
- Consultation on policies and quality improvement plan
- Further updates to training resource and initiate development of additional resources (posters)

Sep-Dec

- Post survey, client recruitment, and interviews with site managers
- Preparing final report for Community Sector Banking
- Final community reference group meeting
- Distribute report to funders and other services.

Project methods

Preparation

A community reference group was formed, involving twelve TGD consumer representatives. They met twice during the project to contribute ideas about resources, training, and community needs.

A set of TGD-specific training resources for the homelessness service sector was developed and made available on the lgbtihomeless.org.au website.

A matrix of the model of TGD inclusive practice was also developed. This was informed by the six standards of care and framework of the Rainbow Tick accreditation for LGBTI inclusive practice established by GLHV@ARCSHS (access and intake processes, consumer participation, cultural safety, disclosure and documentation, professional development, and organisational capacity)[4], with critical feedback from the community reference group at the initial meeting.

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[4] Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria @ Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, 2016 www.glhv.org.au/LGBTI-inclusive-practice

Ethics approval for the pilot evaluation was granted by the Health Sciences Human Ethics Sub-committee at the University of Melbourne on 16 December 2016 (ID number 1648170), and subsequently by the Launch Housing ethics committee.

Launch Housing and pilot sites

Launch Housing is an independent, Melbourne-based community organisation, which brings 75 years' experience of working with people who are at risk of, or experiencing homelessness.

Launch Housing provides housing and support services to individuals, young people, families and children experiencing homelessness. This includes crisis accommodation, transitional, medium and long term supportive housing, and access to private rental. The organisation also provides flexible, specialist services that directly assist and improve the lives of people experiencing homelessness every year. This includes outreach support, family violence assistance, education programs, financial skills and access to health services.

Launch Housing operates across 14 sites and 18 local government areas from Whittlesea in the north to Greater Dandenong in the south east of Melbourne.

Four sites were chosen at Launch Housing for this pilot project. The sites were selected for diversity of service type, support and client demographics, and included:

- *A mixed gender crisis accommodation service:* A 51 bed accommodation service located in the southern metropolitan area of Melbourne. The service provides crisis accommodation and case management support for couples and single adults experiencing housing crisis and homelessness for up to 8 weeks. The service has staff on site 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and responds to the needs of residents through the provision of onsite health and wellbeing support and activities.

- *A female only crisis accommodation service:* A crisis accommodation service located in the southern metropolitan area of Melbourne. The service provides accommodation and case management support for single adults who identify as female and are experiencing homelessness or housing crisis. The service has staff on site 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and individuals can reside at the service for up to 8 weeks.

- *A youth support service:* A support service for young people experiencing housing crisis and homelessness aged 16 – 25 years. This service offers support for young people, assisting the person to get and keep housing through addressing health, education, social connections and other areas impacting on the young person's

wellbeing. This service is located in southern metropolitan Melbourne and while no accommodation is provided on site, it offers a space where young people can drop in between Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

- *An Initial Assessment and Planning service:* The service provides housing information and assistance to individuals, couples and families experience homelessness or housing crisis. This service is located in the northern metropolitan Melbourne area and helps people prevent and end homelessness by providing accommodation assistance, advice and referrals for additional support. A person can drop in for advice and assistance, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Key steps

Step 1: Audit tool

As a first step, managers at the four pilot sites were asked to complete a TGD-inclusive practice audit. This audit tool was adapted from the LGBTI inclusive practice audit developed by GLHV@ARCSHS, and considers six areas: organisational capability, workforce development, consumer participation, welcoming environment, disclosure and documentation, and cultural safety (Appendix 1). The audit was designed to raise awareness amongst managers of current practice as well as inform the project team of service gaps.

Step 2: Quality Improvement Plan

Launch Housing's Service Development team developed a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for TGD inclusive practice. The QIP was based on the 6 key areas outlined in the audit, with actions and service improvements informed by the TGD Resource Guide[5]. The QIP identified organisational wide improvements that could be made beyond just those impacting pilot sites and as a result was developed to be overseen by Launch Housing's Quality and Safety Integration Group (QSIG). As the QIP identified a number of different areas of Launch Housing requiring improvements, the operationalisation of the QIP required collaboration with a number of areas of the organisation including Client Services, Human Resources, Information Technology, Communications and Business Development.

Step 3: Staff training

Training was then offered to staff at all four sites, which was delivered by Transgender Victoria over 4 training sessions, each of 3 hours in duration. 69 members of staff participated in total (see table below).

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[5] TGD Resource Guide available at: www.lgbtihomeless.org.au

Training date	Number of participants
1st February 2017	17
21st March 2017	18
29th March 2017	24
15th August 2017	10

Step 4: Evaluation

The initial evaluation plan included pre and post surveys and focus groups with TGD clients who were current service users or who had used the service in the previous 6 months. The purpose was to ascertain the experience of being a client at Launch Housing, and especially as a TGD person. However, this part of the evaluation was not possible due to the low response rate (both pre and post). Possible explanations for the lack of response include lack of visibility of the surveys, uncertainty about the purpose or confidentiality of the surveys, and the competing priorities of clients experiencing crisis. Instead, the evaluation included an initial informal interview with an anonymous TGD service user who had accessed multiples services at Launch. Informal interviews with Managers of the four pilot sites were also conducted towards the end of the project. The initial interview with the service user asked a range of questions about indicators that Launch Housing services are inclusive of TGD people, negative experiences, and what specific supports and improvements could be made for TGD clients. In addition to feedback from the community reference group, this initial client feedback was important in developing the training resource guide for service providers. Interviews with site managers sought to determine the main changes at each location following the resource guide development, training, and QIP, as well as major facilitating factors and any barriers to implementation in each case, and ideas to improve implementation of the model in other services. Interviews were conducted by the research team over the phone.

Project outcomes

The following outcomes encompassed in the TGD model of care can be adapted for use in any mainstream homelessness service:

1. A TGD inclusive practice training resource, which is a comprehensive set of freely available tips, networks and references for staff and managers on TGD inclusive practice in homelessness services. This resource was utilised and referred to in the face-to-face training sessions.

2. A quality improvement plan for TGD inclusive service at a major mainstream homelessness organisation.
3. Reflections on the successes and pitfalls of system change.
4. Dissemination of the model within the homelessness sector.

The content of each of these outcomes is outlined in further detail below.

1. TGD inclusive practice training resource for service providers

This resource sets out a specific model for organisations that provide services to TGD people who are experiencing, or are at risk of homelessness.

There are several sections in the resource including:

- **Organisational culture**
- **Consumer participation**
- **Respectful communication**
- **Confidentiality**
- **Safe environment**
- **Changing identity documentation**
- **Diversity inclusion**
- **TGD-specific support and advocacy**
- **Facilitating social engagement**

Each section includes tips and examples, templates for modification, and web-based resources. Several Victorian-based TGD-specific referral networks are listed including health and community services, and peer support groups.

The table of contents for the resource is provided in Appendix 1, and the full resource is available at www.lgbtihomeless.org.au

2. TGD inclusive service achievements

Several system-wide initiatives were identified and undertaken at Launch Housing, which were directed by the QIP, and approved at the senior leadership level. While many areas for improvements were identified in the QIP, the 10 month period of the trial meant that not all of these were feasible within the short timeframe. The following improvements were identified as key areas for improvement and as a result were undertaken at Launch Housing:

a. Organisational Capacity and Culture

Launch Housing worked to embed TGD-inclusive practice across the organisation, and was open to opportunities for continued improvements.

- ***Review of organisational policies***

Key organisational policies were identified and reviewed. These included the privacy policy, code of conduct, and the equal opportunity policy. These policies were revised to overtly include TGD people, and avoid gender binary language.

- ***Staff recruitment and selection to encourage TGD-inclusive attitudes***

The organisation sought to improve and facilitate TGD inclusive attitudes amongst staff, including in recruitment and selection. This was supported through the addition of a TGD inclusive bi-line to job advertisements and position descriptions, as well as the addition of TGD inclusive questions to the 'Interview Question Library', a resource managers can access in developing questions to be asked during interviews.

TGD inclusive recruitment bi-line:

> *"Launch Housing is an Equal Opportunity employer and supports accessible working arrangements for all. This includes people with a disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, culturally, religiously and linguistically diverse people, young people, older people, women, and people who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, gender diverse, intersex or queer. We acknowledge Lived Experience as a unique expertise, and encourage people with a Lived Experience of Homelessness to apply."*

Recruitment interview questions
- *"What barriers might a person who identifies as trans and/or gender diverse face in accessing a Specialist Homelessness Service?"*
- *"Many different people access Launch Housing services including people of diverse gender identities. Tell me about a situation when you worked effectively with a person who had a previous experience of discrimination, how did you build trust and rapport?"*

What to look for in a response:

- Awareness and understanding of the discrimination experienced by people who identify as TGD.
- Able to identify barriers to service and access such as discrimination, misgendering, binary gendered facilities (bathrooms, gendered services) previous experiences of harassment or transphobia from peers and/or staff.
- Non-judgemental approach to work
- Acknowledgement of the importance of respectful communication, confidentiality and privacy, safe environment, and appropriate referrals.

b. Workforce development

Launch Housing sought to ensure all staff understand their responsibilities and are trained to deliver TGD inclusive services. In addition to staff participating in the LGBI/TGD training as part of the pilot, the training was added as a regular, 6-monthly item on the Launch Housing training calendar. This will assist in training new staff that join the organisation, while also ensuring existing staff have relevant knowledge, skills and confidence to work effective with trans and gender diverse people.

c. Consumer participation

Despite having an established Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG), which provides an important perspective, including lived experiences, to the operation of Launch Housing, it was recognised that TGD people were not formally involved in meaningful development or review of services. The existing LEAG did not include a specific TGD position, so in recognition that TGD people experience disproportionate risk of homelessness and can have specific needs in the housing and homelessness system, a designated position was created. This position was advertised and successfully recruited. This will enable ongoing involvement of a TGD consumer in the planning and development of Launch Housing services, supporting direct feedback on the level of TGD inclusive practice.

d. Welcoming and accessible organisation

The organisation sought to ensure physical and virtual environments, including information, structures, resources and processes are welcoming for TGD people. The Transgender Pride Flag and Rainbow Flag, along with an inclusive statement[6], have been added to the email signatures of all Launch Housing staff.

It was also identified that many of the organisational communications, both internal and external, used language that was gender binary and would act to exclude people who identify as gender diverse. The communications team at Launch Housing worked to identify and rectify examples of this. The team is currently working to develop an inclusive language guide to support appropriate use of language[7].

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[6] For example: *"Launch Housing is a place where people of diverse genders and sexual orientations are welcomed and supported"*.

[7] For example: *"Launch Housing works with men, women, children and their families"* can be improved to read: *"Launch Housing works with individuals, couples, children and their families"*.

e. Disclosure and documentation

Launch Housing is working to ensure TGD clients feel supported to provide personal information, including their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or intersex status, and improve systems to ensure sensitive information is treated respectfully and confidentially.

A key barrier identified by staff interviewed as part of the LGBTQ homelessness project was the inadequacy of the client management system as it contained no sexual orientation questions and no gender identity questions beyond that of the binary male or female option. As a result staff are unable to record in a systematic way how many clients accessing the service identify as TGD. This binary field is managed and controlled by Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). Following consultation with the TGD community reference group members, additional gender identity, sex and sexual orientation questions were built into the Launch Housing client management system *Service Record System* (SRS). These changes will be introduced at Launch Housing from early 2018. Despite the changes being made internally, however, for all external reporting to AIHW these must still be mapped back to the binary male or female. Launch Housing consulted with the Council to Homeless Persons (CHP), the peak body representing homelessness organisations in Victoria, and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), to advocate for improvements to be made to the mandatory external reporting fields.

The new SRS data fields:

Following the final consumer reference group meeting, it was noted that 'queer' should be added to both the gender identity and sexual orientation options. And that 'questioning/unsure' should be included in gender identity. It was also recognised that a number of other identities are missing from the drop-down options (for example, agender, bigender, genderfluid) and that there can be differences in the spelling of some identities (such as Sistagirls). However, it was acknowledged that the 'Prefer to self-describe' free text box was important for clarifying and capturing some of this information, and that although the ideal level of detail (in drop-down boxes of the database for instance) was still being debated, the inclusion of a wide array of choices at present could serve an important educational purpose for staff and non-TGD clients as well.

A guide to staff was created to support appropriate collection of this information.

'A person should never feel pressure to disclose trans or gender diverse (TGD) status or sexual orientation, and staff need to understand the significance of people disclosing their identity.'

'It is also important not to assume that someone identifies as TGD based on their appearance. It is best to ask how someone describes their gender and what pronouns they use. At Launch, we will ensure we address a client using the gender and name they identify with, regardless of whether they have changed these legally or undergone surgery. Neglecting to use a person's gender pronoun can be an example of discrimination.'

'The reason for asking about gender identity and sexual orientation will be clearly communicated to the person. It will not be asked in a way that could be perceived as voyeuristic.'

An example script was also developed to support sensitive questioning:

Having information about your gender identity and sexual orientation will help ensure you receive the most appropriate services and support. This will also influence the advocacy work the organisation undertakes in regards to gender identity, sexual orientation and homelessness. I would like to respect your gender and sexuality.

What pronouns, if any, do you use for yourself?

Can you please tell me your gender identify/expression?

Do you have an intersex variation?

What is your sexual orientation?

Thank you for telling me. Do you consent for this information to be recorded in your client record?

f. Culturally safe and acceptable services

A range of strategies were developed to improve the service environment for TGD clients and work to ensure they experience a welcoming and inclusive environment. Posters displaying an inclusive statement were created and displayed at the four pilot sites. These were created by adapting existing resources with input and feedback provided by the project team and the TGD LEAG member (Appendix 3). Although TGD-friendly posters, other signage and literature can seem like a small step, the importance of this in communicating inclusivity at access points – where conditions can be particularly stressful and it helps to have something to read – was noted by a TGD service user during the preliminary interview.

The safety of TGD clients in residential services is of particular importance, furthermore, so staff were trained to ensure that accommodation options were suitable for the person's affirmed gender and/or personal preference. It was emphasised at the final consumer reference group meeting that staff should never assume the preferred accommodation option based on a person's gender presentation. For example, a trans man might feel very uncomfortable in men's only accommodation, and prefer a mixed or women's only space.

In addition, staff were trained to understand how to assist TGD clients navigate the service system including using affirmed pronouns and names, and change their gender on identity documentation. TGD clients often require referrals for peer support or to TGD-affirming services such as general practice, mental health or substance use services. Staff were provided with lists of such services through the LGBTI homelessness website (see TGD resource guide).

3. Reflections on successes and challenges

Keys to success

An important facilitator for change was thought to be the existence of an authorising environment, where staff from senior management to front-line supported and understood

the changes needed. This organisational commitment was supported by the clear perceived need to improve inclusive practice for TGD clients driven by the increased presentations. This commitment was also noticed by the pilot site managers who specifically remarked on how helpful it was that staff at multiple locations in the organisation were not only in support of the changes, but working from the same framework, and using the same tools. The organisational commitment to change was also exemplified by allocating dedicated project development time to a Service Development staff member to facilitate the process. Having prior research evidence from TGD consumers and staff at other services added to the need for inclusive service provision. Finally, the co-design approach ensured that the changes made were informed by the wider community.

The pilot site managers discussed several other aspects of the project that assisted with improving TGD inclusive practice:

- *Training:* This was very well received, and was felt to have been one of the most useful drivers of change, in that it helped build staff confidence (including letting them know it is alright to ask questions) and reflective practice. The fact that it was agency-wide and embedded in the training calendar was also thought to be helpful, particularly in sending a message to staff about the organisation's approach and values.

- *Existing values, policies, and facilities:* Site managers commented that having client-directed, inclusive and equitable service delivery as existing values within the organisation helped. For example, staff were already mindful of the need to create a safe environment (for instance by aiming to give trans clients a contained and private room with their own bathroom and kitchen), not allowing harassment between clients, having clear complaints pathways in place, and adhering to consent policies that are comfortable with the client. The youth service also already had gender neutral toilets.

- *Resources:* Having TGD-specific information on display and other relevant information handy for TGD clients (such as knowing where to refer for specific support) were further examples of ways that the site managers felt the project resources were useful. One manager suggested, furthermore, that learning how to assist clients to change their identity documents – and provide step-by-step information about those processes – helps clients feel that this is a normal part of work.

Challenges and Suggestions for Management

- *Organisational change:* Staff turnover generates the need to repeat training opportunities at regular intervals, so it was decided to offer TGD training every 6 months. Maintaining momentum for change was another challenge, as was prioritising this group of clients amongst many competing demands. One suggestion was to have regular reminders and more frequent communication with frontline staff

about TGD inclusive practice initiatives (such as updates and information about next steps) coming from a high level. This would have helped keep the work feeling current and fresh in the minds of all staff (especially given time constraints), as well as continuing to encourage feedback and suggestions (that could be further explored at team meetings, for instance).

- *Data collection:* This is a constant challenge in the sector, given that there is only a binary gender option of male or female on the client database for reporting to the funding body. As a result, the additional items constructed in SRS will be utiliised internally to inform service responses and, for the first time provide an understanding of the number of TGD people accessing the service. This will assist to inform the research and advocacy work of the organisation.

- *Awareness-raising and support:* As noted by the TGD service user during the preliminary interview, extra understanding and leniency from staff may be required for TGD clients accessing homelessness and housing services, due to the complexity of physical and mental health challenges that they may be grappling with - particularly if they are expected to remain in study or employment in order to maintain their accommodation. Sometimes extra assistance in preparing for work or study may be needed, and support for access to a range of other social and health-related services. A further difficulty is that casual staff from temp agencies may not have not received TGD-specific training. To help increase understanding and foster connections among permanent staff and clients, however, further suggestions were to invite TGD speakers to attend staff meetings or some of the existing group work contexts, and give staff an updated quarterly list of existing support groups in the TGD community.

Challenges for front-line staff and in the sector

The lack of guidelines for the sector on LGBTIQ best practice is currently a constraint. The staff generally had limited knowledge about TGD clients, their culture, and their needs. A fear of 'getting it wrong' may still be a barrier to discussing gender diversity with clients, leading to continued misgendering, and the tendency to adopt a 'one size fits all' approach, among other things. Individual training sessions can only provide a small amount of information, and skills training is also important but can be time-consuming. Further, as terminology continues to evolve, there is a need for staff to continue updating their knowledge.

The homelessness sector continues to operate on a gender binary model in a number of respects, and this can mean limited accommodation options for clients who do not identify with binary gender identities. Other ongoing gaps and challenges identified by site managers and the service user are the lack of TGD-specific vacancies (and rejection from transitional

housing and the private rental market), as well as the limited range of TGD-specific referral networks, particularly outside of inner urban locations.

4. Dissemination of the model within the homelessness sector

To build on this initial twelve-month pilot project, the next steps will entail:

- Ongoing quality improvement at Launch and expansion to more sites.

- Dissemination of the training resource guide to other homelessness services, and continued dialogue about TGD-specific needs, through consultation, conferences, and the project website.

- LGBTIQ and TGD-specific training for the homelessness and housing sectors

  - Expanded opportunities for homelessness and housing service providers, as well as more opportunities for a range of organisations and individuals that can provide this specific training

  - Regular feature on state-wide training calendar

  - As part of another LGBTIQ housing project (a safe housing network pilot, funded by Vic Health), the status of services in Victoria that have undergone (or are interested in) receiving inclusivity training (LGBTIQ and TGD) will be mapped.

- Development of national LGBTIQ inclusive practice guidelines for homelessness and housing sectors (funded by National LGBTI Health Alliance and GALFA – details and resources to be available through the website). Participants from the TGD pilot model of care community reference group have also been invited to join the community reference group for this larger project.

Conclusion

This report has outlined a twelve-month pilot project – made possible through a grant from Community Sector Banking and the Bendigo Bank Social Investment Grants program – to implement a new model of care for trans and gender diverse clients at one mainstream homelessness service provider in Victoria. Responding to perceived gaps in the current system and rising concern for TGD clients, the aim of this pilot was to increase capacity for improved service delivery at four pilot sites, with a view towards better interactions and outcomes for TGD clients who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness in this service and beyond.

The project built on previous research based at the University of Melbourne, and was ultimately a collaboration between researchers, service providers, community organisations, and other individuals with relevant experience. The main outcomes include a set of resources that are now freely available at www.lgbtihomeless.org.au and a range of system-wide initiatives that will continue to inform the policies and practices of Launch Housing in future. We also hope the model will inspire other service providers to reflect on their practices in working with TGD and LGBTIQ clients; undertake similar processes of community consultation, quality improvement, and training; and seek to strengthen connections with other social support groups and inclusive services that are able to meet the specific needs of this population.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Table of contents of the TGD inclusive practice resource for services

Appendix 2: TGD inclusive practice audit tool for homelessness services
About the audit tool

This audit tool has been adapted by the LGBTI homelessness project team (www.lgbtihomeless.org.au) from the LGBTI-inclusive practice audit tool developed by GLHV@ARCSHS, La Trobe University with their kind permission. The content is informed by the literature, research findings from interviews with homelessness services and LGBTI people, and advice from a broad range of TGD individuals and organisations in Victoria.

It is designed for services to understand how trans and gender-diverse (TGD)-inclusive they are, and as a preparation for TGD training. It can assist to identify achievements and to determine where improvements are required. The results of the audit can inform forward planning including change management, systems redesign/improvement and cultural reform.

The audit tool follows the six Rainbow Tick Standards. Each of the Standards is accompanied by its own set of quality-based indicators that organisations can use to gauge how well their current systems, practices and protocols are meeting the intent of that particular standard. (www.glhv.org.au/LGBTI-inclusive-practice).

The six LGBTI-inclusive practice Standards are:

- Organisational capability
- Workforce development
- Consumer participation
- A welcoming and accessible organisation
- Disclosure and documentation
- Culturally safe and acceptable services

Please tick one of the three columns for each indicator: Achieved / Needed / Not needed

We will ask you to complete the tool again after staff training and a period of time to embed any changes, and reflect on improvements and further developments needed.

Standard 1 - Organisational capability and culture

The organisation embeds TGD-inclusive practice across all its systems and continuously seeks opportunities for improvements.

Indicator	Achieved	Needed	Not needed
1.1 TGD-inclusive practice is reflected in the organisation's policies and procedures including position descriptions, service contracts, performance management system, service models, quality management plan, and anti-discrimination policy.			
1.2 The organisation facilitates TGD inclusion amongst staff and volunteers, including recruitment and selection.			
1.3 The organisation has an integrated TGD client feedback system that ensures continuous TGD- quality improvement and planning**.**			
1.4 The organisation's service delivery risk management system includes strategies to identify and manage potential risks to the cultural safety of TGD clients.			

Standard 2 - Workforce development

All staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities to TGD clients and are trained and able to deliver TGD-inclusive services.

Indicator	Achieved	Needed	Not needed
2.1 The organisation has a systematic process for assessing the TGD-inclusive practice professional development needs of the Board, leadership team, staff and volunteers.			
2.2 The organisation facilitates access to professional development to the Board, leadership team, staff and volunteers that includes their legal responsibilities, TGD cultural safety and a consideration of the impact of employees' attitudes and beliefs on TGD- inclusive practice.			

Standard 3 - Consumer participation

TGD clients are consulted with, and participate in the planning, development, and review of the service.

Indicator	Achieved	Needed	Not needed
3.1 The organisation works with TGD clients and community representatives to identify TGD clients' needs and develop and continuously improve their provision of TGD-inclusive services.			
3.2 The staff is willing and able to advocate for the needs of their TGD clients within the broader health and services sector.			
3.3 The organisation engages a TGD liaison officer to assist with meeting TGD client needs.			

Standard 4 - A welcoming and accessible organisation

TGD clients can easily and confidently access services because the physical and virtual environments, including information, structures, resources and processes, are welcoming.

Indicator	Achieved	Needed	Not needed
4.1 The organisation's communication and educational materials are TGD-inclusive (e.g. inclusive language and images, and TGD specific information where relevant).			
4.2 The organisation effectively communicates its services to the TGD community.			

Standard 5 - Disclosure and documentation

TGD clients, staff and volunteers feel safe to provide personal information, including their sexual orientation, gender identity and/or intersex status, because they know information will be treated respectfully and that there are systems in place to ensure their privacy.

Indicator	Achieved	Needed	Not needed
5.1 The organisation has systems for collecting, storing, using and sharing TGD client's personal information, including their gender identity, sexual orientation, intersex status and/or relationship status,			
5.2 The organisation only collects information about a client's gender identity, sexual orientation, intersex status and/or relationship status from			

	Achieved	Needed	Not needed
5.3 Staff understand the significance to TGD people of disclosing their gender identity and that the organisation has strategies to ensure that staff respond in a respectful and affirming way to disclosure.			
5.4 The organisation ensure that TGD clients understand that their gender identity information is confidential and that they will be consulted on whether, how and why this information is recorded, stored			
5.5 Staff and volunteers can support TGD clients to change identity documentation (e.g. birth certificates, Medicare or Centrelink identity) to affirm their gender			

Standard 6 - Culturally safe and acceptable services

Services and programs identify, assess, analyse and manage risks to ensure the cultural safety of TGD clients.

Indicator	Achieved	Needed	Not needed
6.1 The organisation understands the specific needs of TGD clients and addresses these needs in the design and delivery of services and programs.			
6.2 The organisation has a code of conduct for all clients including a zero tolerance approach to discrimination and harassment on the basis of gender identity, sexual orientation and intersex status			
6.3. The organisation uses language that is TGD inclusive, including - use of client-preferred pronouns - use of client-preferred name - recognition of non-binary gender identification - recognition of diverse voices on the phone			
6.4 The organisation ensures that TGD clients are placed in residential services with sleeping and bathroom arrangements that are safe, appropriate, and acceptable to the client.			
6.5 Staff and volunteers understand and are inclusive of diversity among TGD clients including cultural, Indigenous, and faith-based identification, disability, and sex worker status.			
6.5 The staff can refer TGD clients to TGD-specific clinical, social and peer support services as needed.			
6.6 The organisation disseminates information about TGD cultural safety across its programs and services and to other organisations.			