

5 February 2025



Dear Medical Services Advisory Committee,

[Working It Out](#) (WIO) has prepared this submission for the *MSAC Consultation Survey - Application 1754, Surgical Procedures for Gender Affirmation in Adults with Gender Incongruence*. As Tasmania's sole dedicated support, advocacy, and education service for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, and asexual (LGBTIQ+) community, WIO is committed to fostering change through education grounded in lived experience. Our goal is to empower LGBTIQ+ Tasmanians to lead fulfilling lives.

As an LGBTIQ+ advocacy and support service, and from listening to the voices of the trans and gender diverse community, we know medically recognised gender affirmation surgeries are essential for the mental health and wellbeing of some trans and gender diverse people. Denying access to medical interventions causes significant emotional distress, withholds recognised medical care access, and impedes individuals from equitable participation in society at full opportunity and living as their authentic selves.

A 2023 report, *Knowledge, Autonomy, and Respect: Trans and nonbinary people's experiences of medical gender affirmation in Tasmania* (Grant et al. 2023), surveyed trans and gender diverse Tasmanians and found:

- costs of services are a common barrier to medical gender affirmation.
- affordability is a pertinent issue for a community that experiences greater financial instability because of societal discrimination and exclusion.
- access issues to medically recognised healthcare. With some patients travelling interstate and reporting services in Tasmania as inaccessible or poor quality.
- many participants believing Medicare should cover gender affirming surgeries.

The current lack of access to gender affirmation surgeries is both unfair and unjust, placing an unnecessary financial burden on individuals who already face significant barriers to employment, education, housing, and income stability. Incorporating gender-affirming care into public healthcare would reduce stigma, improve access to necessary treatments, and lower financial burdens for trans and gender diverse individuals. It would enhance quality of life, support legal and social gender recognition, and improve mental health outcomes.

In alignment with the position by the Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons Inc's application (n.d.), WIO recognises that the proposed MBS items would:

- simply provide medical access in Australia for interventions which are already available to Australians undergoing gender affirmation.
- the request is not for new types of medical interventions, but for funding existing interventions through the MBS.

As evidence-based gender-affirming medical interventions are already provided in clinical settings (such as general practices, surgeries and hospitals), including these services in Medicare would simply uphold the fundamental principle of universal healthcare for a medically recognised need. This inclusion further delivers on a national commitment that all Australians have access to essential, evidence-based healthcare.

With Regards,  
Andrew Badcock

**Policy & Research Officer**  
**Working it Out**

#### **References:**

Grant R, Dane S, Russell, A, & Croome, R (2023). *Knowledge, Autonomy, and Respect: Trans and nonbinary people's experiences of medical gender affirmation in Tasmania*, Equality Tasmania University of Tasmania, The University of Queensland; Tasmania. <<https://equalitytasmania.org.au/reports-and-resources/>>

Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons Inc (n.d.), MSAC Application 1754 Patient consultations and surgical procedures for gender affirmation in adults with gender incongruence. <[https://www.msac.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-12/1754\\_redacted\\_application\\_summary.pdf](https://www.msac.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-12/1754_redacted_application_summary.pdf)>.