

Q22/452

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Gender Dysphoria

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I would point one thing out to you and that is ACON—you talked about the \$12 million, that is not for kids. ACON does a whole range of other services, including STIs and so on.

The CHAIR: I know, I am well aware what the organisation does. But TransHub—and if you go to the website you will see a whole lot of material regarding trans, as they refer to young trans people, and it is all leading into the part with respect to affirmation treatment. I think that is a matter of particular concern.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Again, I hear what you say, but up until this moment, and possibly going forward, I have remained very supportive of the services of ACON, very supportive of the services offered to often very confused youngsters through the clinical and, indeed, allied health multidisciplinary teams at both Westmead and John Hunter. I think the centre that you are talking about, I am very aware of that and I was always of the view they were doing a very good job—

The CHAIR: Westmead?

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: No, sorry. Westmead too, but also—sorry?

SUSAN PEARCE: Maple Leaf.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: Maple Leaf House at Hamilton, as you have said. I have visited there.

The CHAIR: Yes. It's not been opened that long, particularly.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: It opened probably about a year ago now—and I attended the opening. So I am very aware of all the issues you are talking about, but I agree it is complex. I have to be really forthright that it is such a complex issue, I am not sure that is an appropriate issue for me as a health Minister to determine; it is more the clinicians. I will query on the issues that you have raised because I think that is my obligation. But I am certainly not going to insert myself into what is the most complex of complex issues for youngsters who might be suffering from gender dysphoria, and I think worldwide, as you have said, there are varying views on the appropriate way to put it. I have sat with mums and dads who are just beside—

The CHAIR: No, that's not what I said at all, Minister. No, I have said that there is a distinct movement away from what was hitherto seen as the—

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: I understand what you said.

The CHAIR: No, let me finish—orthodoxy to now opposing that orthodoxy and I use the example of the closure of The Tavistock Institute in the United Kingdom, the complete closure of a clinic which treated all children and young people in the United Kingdom, along with changes with respect to procedures in Finland, Sweden, and I can go on. So, don't misunderstand me. This is not just, there's different views around the world. Of course, there are different opinions on everything. But I am talking about a sea change which has taken place and while that is happening in Australia in our six States and two Territories, I submit that we—when I say "we", I mean collectively, not you or the department, but we as Australians—are asleep at the wheel.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: As I said, you have raised the issues with me, Mr Chair—

The CHAIR: Thanks, Minister.

Mr BRAD HAZZARD: And I will raise the issues with the Health people and try and get some insights into it and get a better understanding of the issues from a worldwide perspective.

The CHAIR: Just to finish, with respect to the clinicians and the private correspondence

ANSWER:

NSW Health advises it is committed to providing holistic, age appropriate, developmentally informed and evidence-based care for trans and gender diverse young people.

It indicates that evidence shows transgender and gender diverse young people are a very vulnerable population with high rates of depression, self-harm, attempted suicide and actual

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suicide. Trans and gender diverse young people are at high risk of mental and emotional distress caused by stigma, discrimination, bullying and social exclusion.

All patients referred to the Trans and Gender Diverse Health Service undergo a specialised and comprehensive assessment involving consultation with specialists in psychological medicine, adolescent medicine and endocrinology. Only once a longitudinal assessment and diagnosis has taken place are young people considered for gender affirming medical treatment. This occurs in close consultation with the patient, parents and treating medical teams, who must all agree that the treatment is in the best interest of the young person.

The Service strictly operates under international and national endorsed guidance, including the World Professional Association for Transgender Health available at: <https://www.wpath.org/publications/soc> and the Australian Standards of Care and Treatment Guidelines for Trans and Gender Diverse Children and Adolescents available at: <https://auspath.org.au/2018/02/01/australian-standards-of-care-and-treatment-guidelines-for-trans-and-gender-diverse-children-and-adolescents/>.