

# Monash Health

Gender Dysphoria Clinic  
Southern Community Mental Health Service  
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Victoria 3188

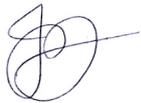
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As many of you are aware, Dr Fintan Harte decided to step down as Head of the Monash Gender Dysphoria Clinic at the end of last year. This week I met with senior management at Monash Health, and I was asked to take on this role. It is with great honour that I have agreed to this request. On behalf of the clinic, I would like to pay tribute to the dedication and compassion that Dr Harte has shown over the years, and I look forward to an ongoing working relationship with him. I do realise that I am taking over the reigns during very challenging times. With increased demand for our services, and inadequate human and financial resources, our current waiting list is unacceptably long. We are however hopeful that the State Government will deliver on its promise to assist the trans community by adequately funding our service. We also look forward to continuing our engagement and collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services. The Gender Dysphoria Clinic is committed to improving the mental health and well-being of the sex and gender diverse community of Victoria. I am confident that with the dedication of our clinical staff and the support from the community, this can be achieved.

I would now like to make a few comments regarding recent statements and views made in the media. I am concerned about the unbalanced discussion where selected pieces of information, which are outdated and irrelevant, are used in a distorted manner to promote a message of hatred and intolerance. The Gender Dysphoria Clinic strongly rejects the arguments put forward, which aim to pathologise or invalidate trans identities. This is potentially damaging and needs to be abated. There is abundant evidence showing that medical interventions aimed at aligning one's physical appearance with one's gender identity help improve quality of life and mental health. Despite the overall improvement in mental health, some individuals who embark on gender transition will continue to experience mental health problems more frequently than the general population. Invariably though, these are triggered by harassment and discrimination perpetrated by prejudiced individuals. In a time when we need more kindness and compassion let's hope that our children, with support from programs like the Safe Schools Coalition, can lead the way in teaching our whole society to be more tolerant and accepting of diversity.

Kind regards



Dr Jaco Erasmus *MBChB MRCPsych FRANZCP*

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**Community-based services across the South East**