

The TEN YEAR EVOLUTION of TRANSGENDER HEALTH CARE IN A FAR NORTH QUEENSLAND SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICE

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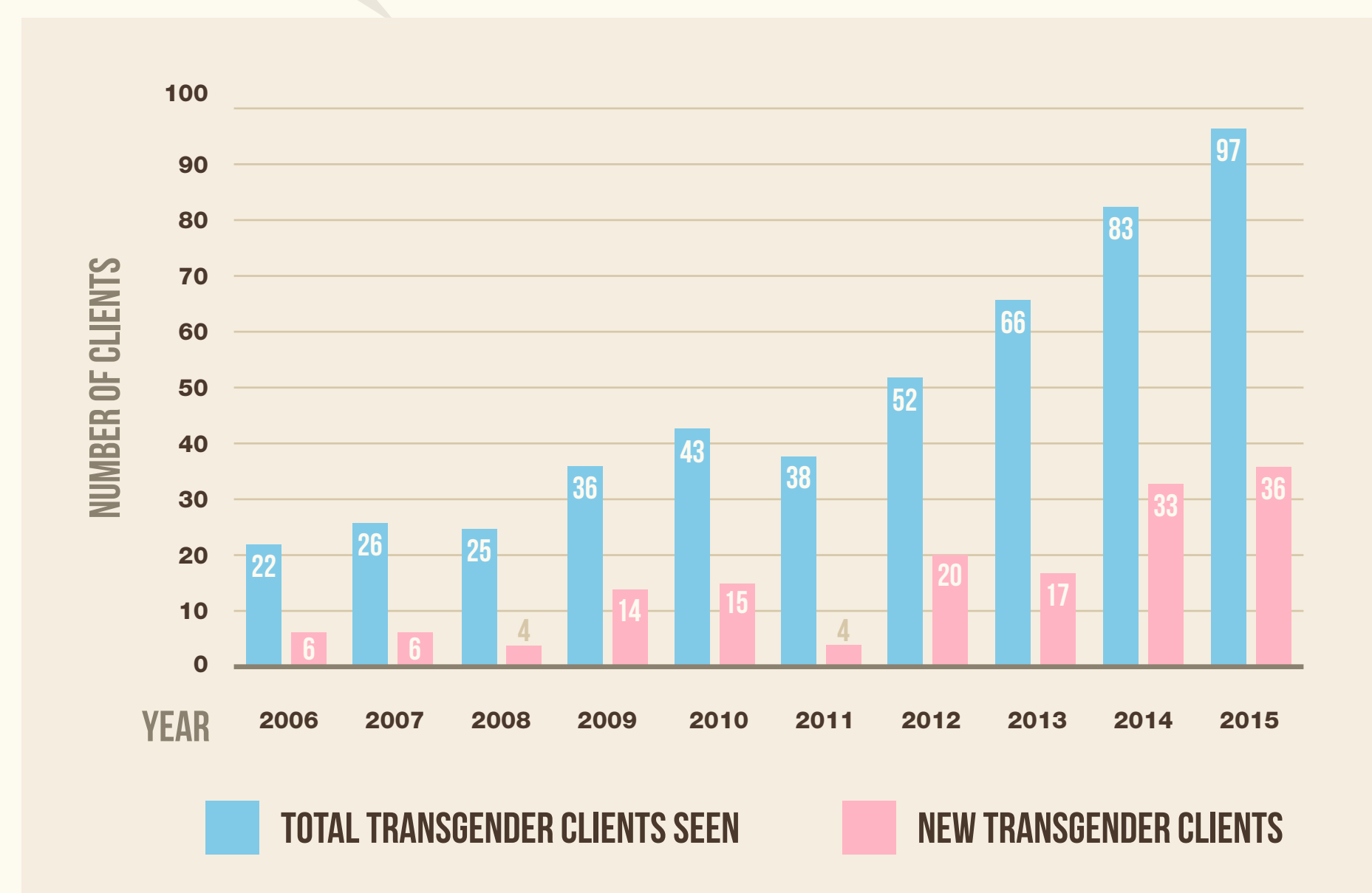
BACKGROUND

Social stigma attached to gender nonconformity has led to the systematic oppression and devaluation of transgender people. They are also at increased risk of harm due to discrimination, social exclusion, bullying and physical assault. The associated stress results in poorer mental health including depression, anxiety, self-harm and suicide.¹ Changing social attitudes towards gender diversity and increasing awareness of effective gender affirming health care has led to increasing demand for transgender services.^{2 3 4 5}

The Cairns Sexual Health Service (CSHS) has been providing health care to transgender clients for over ten years. This service has evolved in response to the needs of the transgender clients and the demand for various evidence based treatments related to the transitioning process.⁶

FIGURE 1

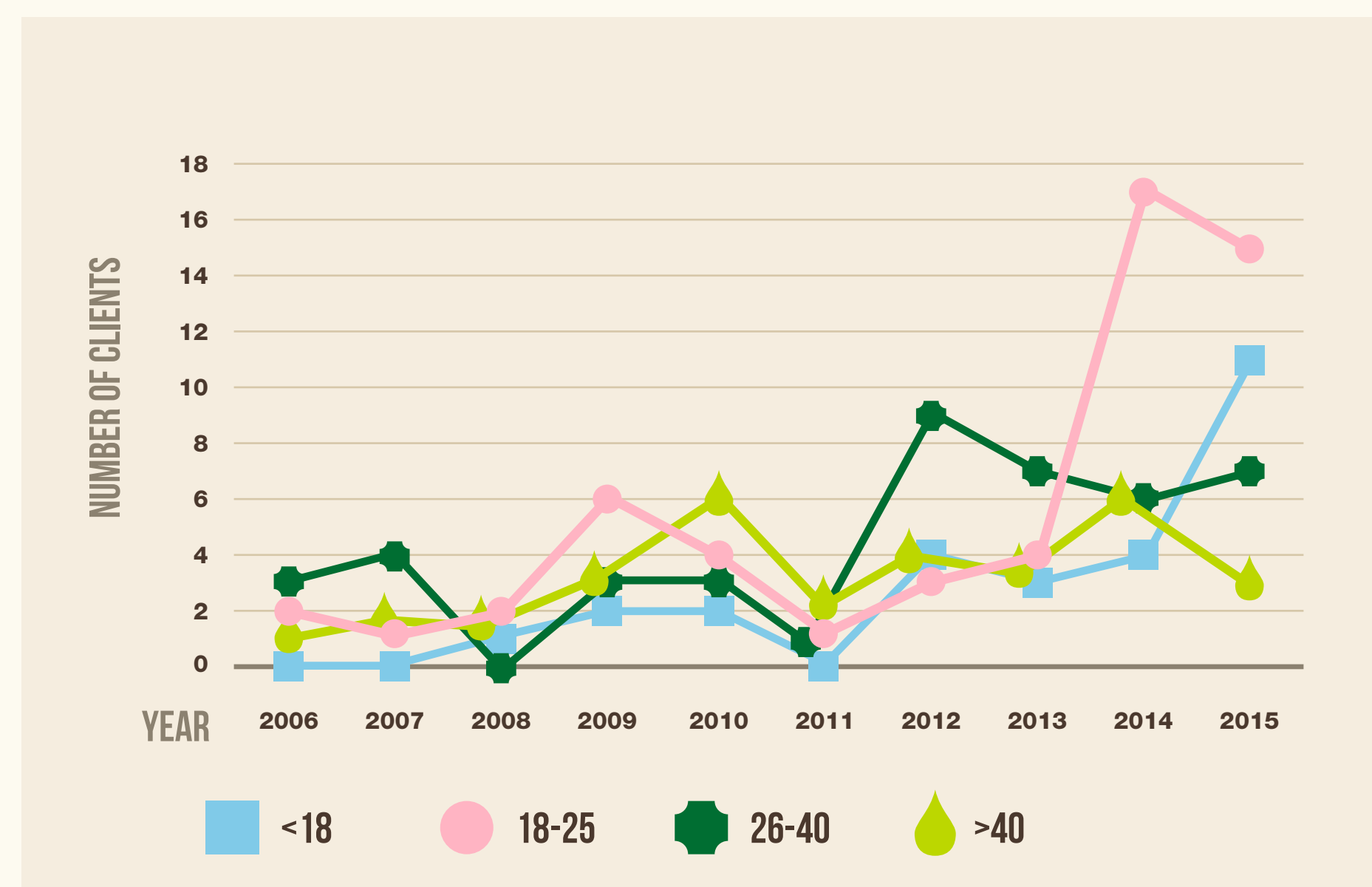
TOTAL NUMBER OF TRANSGENDER CLIENTS SEEN AND NEW REFERRALS 2006 - 2015.



Between 2006 - 2010, both the number of transgender clients being seen and number of new referrals at CSHS doubled. In the second 5 years (2011-2015), the number of transgender clients more than doubled and there was a 5 fold increase in the number of new referrals.

FIGURE 2

AGE GROUPS OF NEW TRANSGENDER CLIENTS PRESENTING FROM 2006 - 2015.



Between 2006 and 2015, the highest number of new referrals was from the 18-25 year old cohort. 2015 saw a sharp rise in new referrals of clients aged under 18 years.

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CAIRNS SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICE Transgender PROGRAM MENU

Please choose which service best meets your needs

- ☐ MEDICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF GENDER DYSPHORIA
- ☐ PROVISION OF INFORMATION ABOUT GENDER
- ☐ OPTIONS FOR GENDER EXPRESSION AND EXPLORATION
- ☐ MEDICAL INTERVENTION OPTIONS, INCLUDING ASSESSMENT OF ELIGIBILITY, PREPARATION AND PROVISION OF HORMONE TREATMENT
- ☐ PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT, TREATMENT FOR CO-EXISTING MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES AND OTHER PSYCHOSOCIAL STRESSORS
- ☐ COUNSELLING SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUAL, PARTNERS, FAMILIES AND CARERS
- ☐ PSYCHOLOGIST FACILITATED SUPPORT GROUPS, YOUTH + OVER 25'S
- ☐ ASSISTANCE WITH IDENTITY CHANGE DOCUMENTATION
- ☐ ASSESSMENT OF ELIGIBILITY, PREPARATION, REFERRALS AND SUPPORT LETTERS FOR SURGICAL TREATMENTS
- ☐ CONSULTATION, EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR OTHER GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICE PROVIDERS
- ☐ IN-HOUSE TRAINING FOR DOCTORS, REGISTRARS, NURSES, PSYCHOLOGISTS, ALLIED HEALTH AND HEALTH WORKERS
- ☐ PROVISION OF TRANSGENDER SERVICES TO DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

GENDER AFFIRMING HEALTH CARE

"assisting gender dysphoric individuals with affirming their gender identity, exploring different options for expression of that identity, and making decisions about medical treatment options for alleviating gender dysphoria".⁶

World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) Standards of Care (SOC) Version 7 provide a benchmark for provision of services.⁶ The CSHS has endeavoured to provide gender affirming health care to adolescents, adults and older persons within a public health care system. CSHS has implemented a range of initiatives and developed strategic relationships in response to community demands and the absence of other service providers.

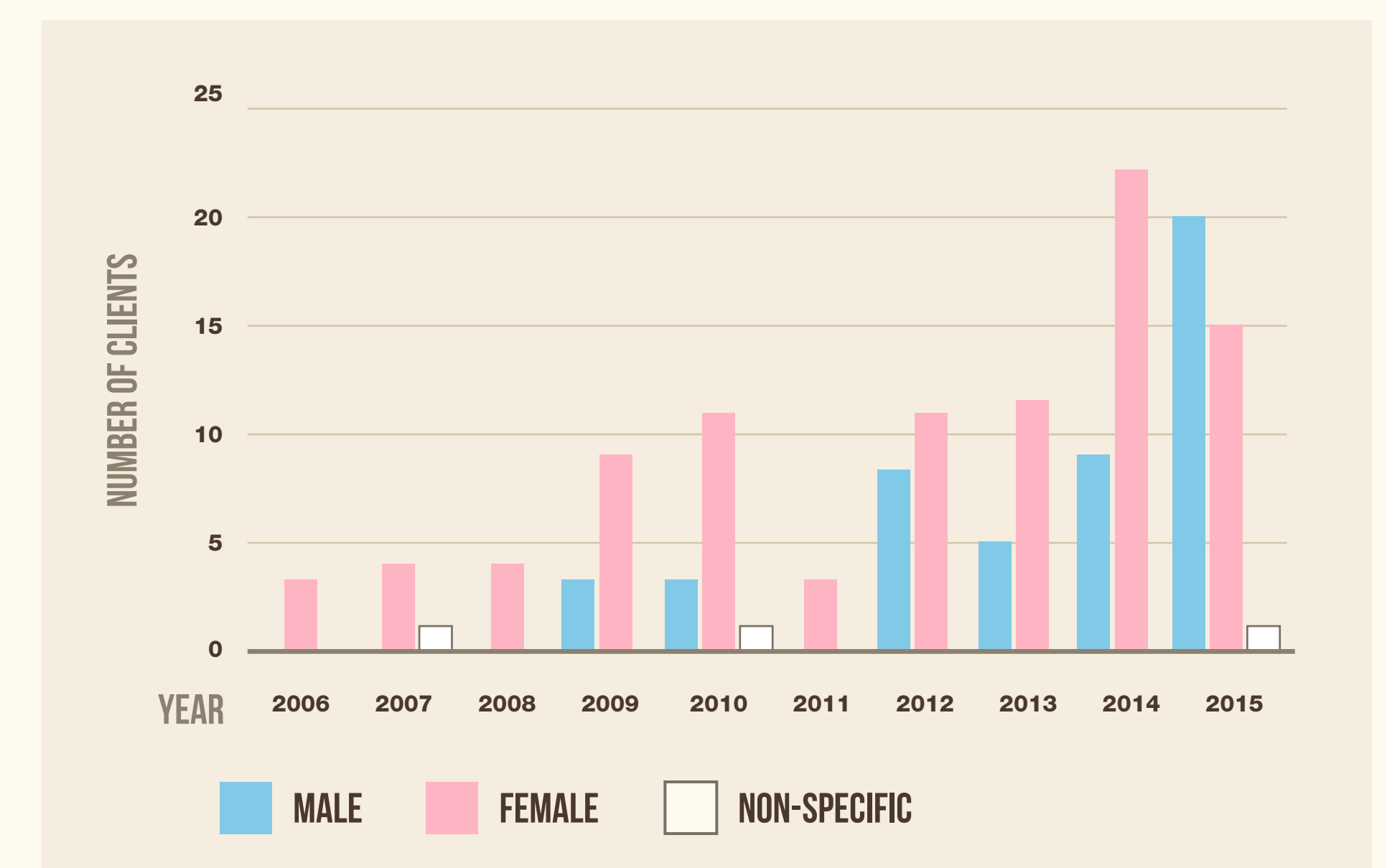
YEAR

INITIATIVES

2010 - 2013	Psychologist Assisted Peer Facilitated Trans Women's Support Group.
2011 - ongoing	Liaison between CSHS, Cairns and Hinterland Hospital Health Service (CHHHS) District and local Paediatricians, Child and Youth Mental Health Service (CYMHS) Psychiatrists, CHHHS Paediatric Endocrinologist and Legal team for Under 18 transgender clients.
2011 - ongoing	Provision of consultation, and education to CYMHS, Education Queensland and Private Schools, helping them support transgender students and their families.
2012 - ongoing	Annual Sex Essentials Community Education Program (see Poster presentation by Doyle-Adams & Rodriguez, 2016).
2012	First Queensland Transgender, Sistergirl and Gender Diverse Conference.
2013 - ongoing	Psychologist facilitated Trans Youth Support Group.
2014	Consultation with Tim Wilson, Human Rights Commissioner & local transgender community on service provision to transgender people.
2015 - ongoing	Provision of treatment, counselling & support to transgender clients, families & carers within Lotus Glen Correctional Centre.
2016	Dr Darren Russell presents "LGBT and Ageing" to the Australian & New Zealand Society for Geriatric Medicine, Annual Scientific Meeting & Cairns LGBTI Mental Health Professionals Network.
2016 - ongoing	First Family Court application-Phase 2 Hormone treatment for Under 18 year old heard in Cairns District.

FIGURE 3

NEW TRANSGENDER CLIENTS BY IDENTIFIED GENDER, CSHS 2006 - 2015.



In the first 5 years (2006-2010), most new transgender clients who accessed the service identified as Trans Female with only a small number of Trans Males. In the second 5 years (2011-2015), there was a sharp increase in the number of new Trans Males. By 2015, the number of Trans Males who accessed the service was greater than the number Trans Females. A small number of gender non-specific clients have also been seen during 2006 and 2015.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Development of a toolkit to enable parents of transgender children to independently apply to Family Court for Phase 2 treatment.
- Audit of current services provided to transgender clients against the WPATH SOC 7.
- Client Satisfaction Survey of Transgender clients who attend the Psychologist Facilitated Support Groups.