

Slaying the foundation for LGBTIQ+ inclusive hospital systems and health care – from community for community

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Background

The LGBTIQ+ community experience poorer health outcomes than the general population and face significant barriers to equitable healthcare - including discrimination, inadequate support structures, and apprehension about health service inclusivity.

In 2021, The Royal Melbourne Hospital (RMH) established Australia's first, hospital-based LGBTIQ+ Patient Liaison Service (LPLS).

The service provides multifaceted direct support to LGBTIQ+ consumers, assists RMH staff to provide safer and more inclusive care and drives continual improvement in systems, practices and facilities.

Service Structure

The service model embeds LGBTIQ+ lived-experience clinical roles to provide specialised support “from community for community.”

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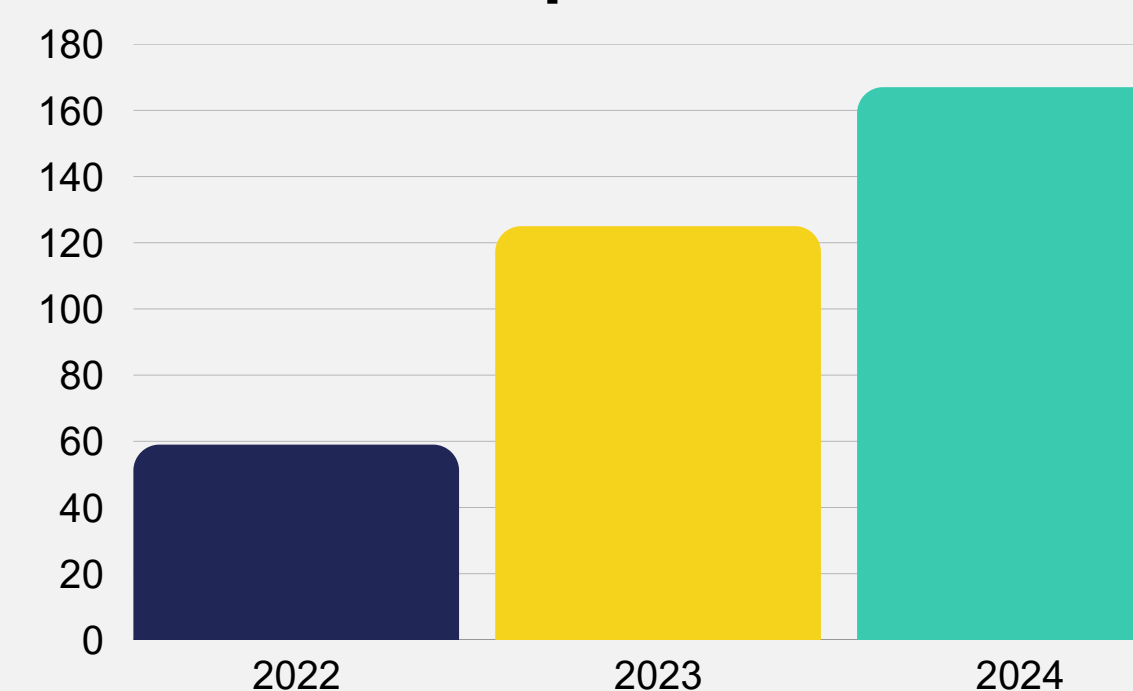
Allied health clinicians
Grade 4 Social Worker (0.85EFT)
Grade 3 Social Worker (0.85EFT)



Inpatient Referral Data

Current service data shows a steady increase in utilisation of the LPLS and provides insights into population demographics and referral context

Number of Inpatient Referrals



Gender identity
70.07% Trans and Gender Diverse
16.88% Male
9.24% Female
3.83% Not Listed



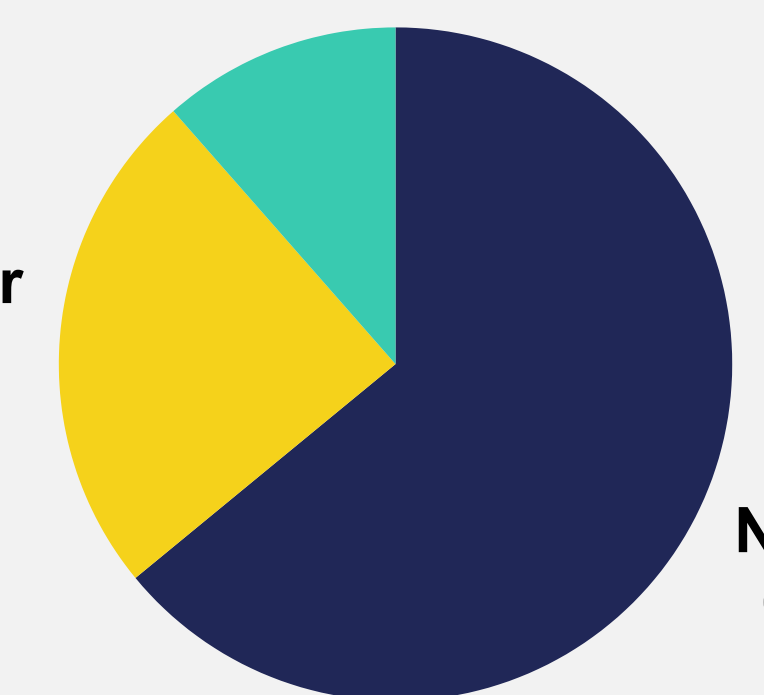
Age range
17-29 years 43.52%
30-49 years 42.82%
50-69 years 10.65%
70-89 years 3.01%



Role of Referrer
Doctor 11.5%



Most common reasons for referral
• LGBTIQ+ safety and inclusion in a hospital setting
• Patient requesting review



Reason for hospital attendance
31.5% Mental Health
15.5% Trauma



Ward at time of referral
50.6% Emergency Department
23.6% Acute Mental Health

Direct Patient Support

- Medical record updates
- LGBTIQ+ safety and inclusion support in the hospital setting
- Information and/or referral to LGBTIQ+ supports
- Advocacy
- Lived experience support
- Family/carer support
- Complaints and feedback navigation

Organisational Change and Staff Support

- Tailored, multi-format education and ongoing capacity building
- Joint patient reviews, secondary consults, and specialist support
- Inclusive data collection and electronic medical records
- LGBTIQ+ co-design in resources, policies, and processes
- Enhanced visibility through flags, pronoun pins, inclusive facilities, digital environments, and recognition of days of significance
- Research and quality improvement projects

Summary and Recommendations

The RMH LPLS combines clinical and lived-experience expertise to provide an approach to safer and more inclusive LGBTIQ+ healthcare that is shaped by those it serves. The model creates a precedent for an adaptable framework for implementation of similar services across diverse health settings.

- Authentic investment in LGBTIQ+ lived-experience clinical services is vital in tailoring pathways and improving access and outcomes for the LGBTIQ+ community.
- Adaptable role structures that allow for direct patient contact, development of staff education programs and provision of input at structural and systemic levels are vital to ensuring effective and sustained organisational change and improvements in care.
- Inclusive electronic medical records that allow for accurate collection of patient information are crucial in the ability to deliver responsive, affirming and evidence-based support.
- Strong and active support from leadership is imperative in ensuring sustainability and continued evolution of services like the RMH LPLS.

The vision: A LGBTIQ+ Patient Liaison Service in every hospital – rolling out the rainbow carpet for inclusive care, everywhere.

Acknowledgments and Contact Details

We wish to acknowledge the strength of the LGBTIQ+ community with special appreciation to our patients and remembrance of those no longer with us. We encourage others to join the RMH on the continual journey to improve health outcomes for the LGBTIQ+ community and promote visibility, safety and inclusion.



Scan the QR code for LGBTIQ+ Patient Liaison contact details, service info, and resources.

