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FUNDING WIN FOR VICTORIA'S SEX AND GENDER DIVERSE COMMUNITY WELCOMED AS AN "HISTORIC FIRST STEP"

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Zoe Belle Gender Centre (ZBGC) and TransGender Victoria (TGV) have welcomed the allocation of funding to ZBGC for youth suicide prevention in the GLBTI community as an "historic first step" for Victoria's sex and gender diverse population.

As announced by Mental Health Minister Mary Wooldridge last Friday, ZBGC was one of seven community organisations awarded funding as part of a \$4.5 million package for the GLBTI community. ZBGC will receive non-recurrent funding of \$146,000 over 4 years. The funding will enable ZBGC to assist health service providers in reducing suicide and self-harm rates among young gender diverse and gender questioning people.

TransGender Victoria spokesperson Sally Goldner said today:

"This is the first time a transgender organisation in Victoria has received government funding. It is therefore an historic moment for our community – one that we hope will pave the way for further government support in the future."

Echoing Ms Goldner's comments, Tom Cho, spokesperson for Zoe Belle Gender Centre, hailed the funding announcement, while noting ZBGC's ongoing efforts to seek funding support:

"Young sex and gender diverse people are among some of the most vulnerable members of the Victorian community, and we welcome the Government's support to address this problem."

"We are greatly encouraged by this historic first step, and we will continue seeking funding to address the urgent needs of the sex and gender diverse community – most especially, funding to establish a permanent, full-time gender centre in Victoria."

The need to establish a community-run and controlled gender centre in Victoria has been discussed within the local transgender community for decades. Over the past four years, ZBGC and TGV have been lobbying for the establishment of such a centre. ZBGC and TGV thanked the individuals and organisations that have helped them to reach this point, adding that Victoria's sex and gender diverse community is one step closer to achieving this goal.

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