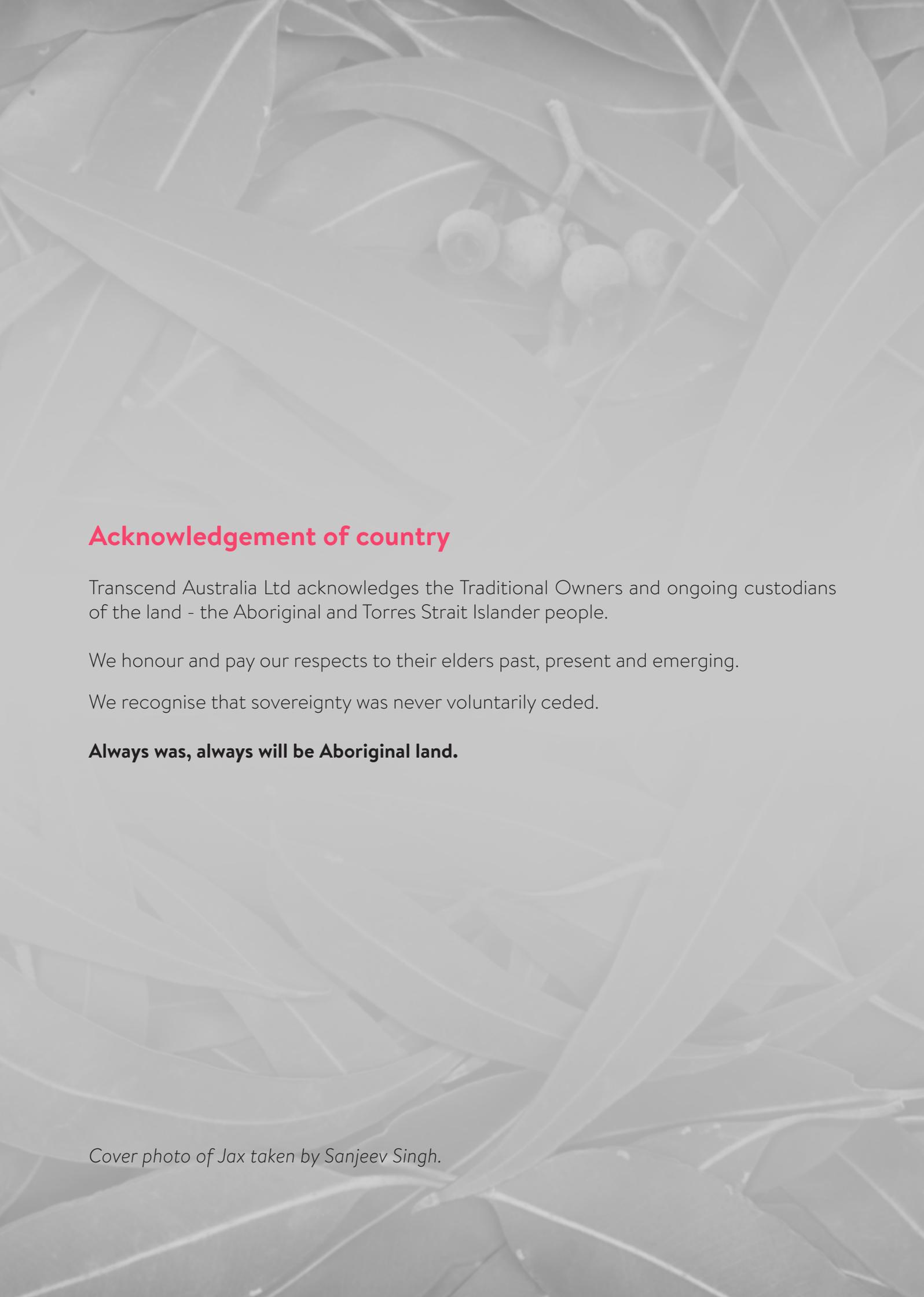




# TRANSCEND



STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2024



## Acknowledgement of country

Transcend Australia Ltd acknowledges the Traditional Owners and ongoing custodians of the land - the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

We honour and pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging.

We recognise that sovereignty was never voluntarily ceded.

**Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.**

*Cover photo of Jax taken by Sanjeev Singh.*

## Introduction

Transcend was founded in 2012 by Rebekah Robertson when she was desperately searching for information that would help her to support her child Georgie. Since then, Transcend has been operating as a volunteer-based peer support and advocacy group for parents with trans, gender diverse and non-binary (TGDNB) children.

This support network was named Transcend to positively affirm that families and the children they love and support could overcome the difficulties they may face in raising a TGDNB child and not simply survive, but transcend them and thrive. Since 2012 Transcend has connected hundreds of families to medical, legal and educational support services and parent/carer communities around Australia. In this time, there has been an increased awareness and improved understanding of the needs of trans, gender diverse and non-binary people. Service systems are improving and there is a greater acceptance and celebration of TGDNB people. But there is still a long way to go and Transcend is determined that TGDNB children<sup>1</sup>, their families<sup>2</sup> and carers are embraced and given every opportunity to thrive and flourish.

*"Transcend has helped us understand the needs of our daughter, particularly at a time when it was just beginning to happen and was overwhelming. By being connected to a welcoming and informed community it has helped us gain knowledge and provided peer support."  
-Transcend parent*

This strategy is the next step in the life of Transcend Australia Ltd (Transcend) and is our commitment to TGDNB children and young people and their families and carers to continue to walk alongside them.

This plan outlines Transcend's strategic goals for the next five years. In this time, we aim to:

1. Establish **good governance** and organisational policy and procedures
2. Expand on the provision of **peer support**
3. Develop an **ambassador and leadership program** with and for young people
4. Become a trusted source of **accurate information** for parents and carers, and TGDNB people through the development of **resources and tools**
5. **Advocate** strategically to improve services and systems for TGDNB children and young people

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<sup>1</sup> Transcend supports families and carers who have TGDNB children of all ages.

<sup>2</sup> We recognise that families are not always supportive of TGDNB people and so we make our own families. Transcend broadly defines "families" because at times people must choose who we trust because of the care, friendship, support and advocacy they provide to us. These people may be direct relations to us, or they may be people we choose, or who have chosen us.

## Research context

Parental and family support is crucial to positive outcomes for TGDNB children and young people and can have important long-term positive mental health, wellbeing and social benefits. But the journey from finding out that your child is trans, gender diverse or non-binary to finally being able to accept and celebrate them can be a difficult one. Many parents and families, even if they are supportive of their child, can struggle with this process and this can be distressing for the child who may feel rejected by their family.

The Trans Pathways report found that:

“65.8% of trans young people have experienced a lack of family support and have higher rates of suicidal thoughts, wanting to hurt themselves, suicide attempts, self-harming, reckless behaviour, and diagnoses of eating disorders, anxiety, depression and PTSD than those who did not experience a lack of family support.” (Strauss, P., et al., 2017 p 85)

We also know from this report that TGDNB young people experience poorer mental health outcomes than other young people.

Trans Pathways found that:

- Almost three-quarters (74.6%) of Trans Pathways participants have at some time been diagnosed with depression,
- 72.2% have been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder.
- Self-harm and suicidality are also very high, with 79.7% of Trans Pathways participants ever having self-harmed, and
- 48.1% have attempted suicide at some point in their life. (Strauss, P., et al., 2017 p 25 and Smith, E., et al, 2014, pp 65-69)

***"I spoke with Transcend in my hardest week. I was lost trying to find someone to talk to who had some understanding of what I was going through. Transcend was amazing." -Transcend parent***

Research focussed on expert treatment and social support for trans young people (Olson, et al., 2016), shows that the risk for these negative life outcomes can be effectively diminished or eliminated altogether when young trans people have access to supportive home and social environments alongside affirmative care approaches.

The findings demonstrate the importance of the work of Transcend and we are proud to be one part in a greater movement to ensure that TGDNB people are empowered to live contributing lives.

Transcend hopes that the strategic direction laid out in this plan will enable us to enhance our support for families and carers and continue to provide them with the information and resources they need to support and advocate for and with their children.



*"My family was empowered by the guidance of the Transcend community.  
I was empowered to use my voice" -Oliver*



## Vision

Trans, gender diverse and non binary children are embraced and given every opportunity to thrive and flourish

*"Transcend has put 'success' into the experience of being trans." -Isabelle*

## Purpose

Transcend's purpose is to support, affirm and celebrate the lives of trans and gender diverse and non binary (TGDNB) children and their families and carers.

Transcend aims to help young TGDNB lives flourish by providing opportunities for:

- peer and family support,
- the development and dissemination of information and resources, and
- advocating for change to services and systems.

## Values

### Kindness and authenticity

Kindness and authenticity will underpin/guide/motivate all our interactions including:

- within our peer support groups
- in our relationships with organisations and our partners
- how we advocate and
- with our allies and supporters

***"We are a courageous community. We understand that there is strength in vulnerability, and we are authentic."  
-Transcend parent***

### Collaboration and partnership

- We will have a “nothing about us without us” approach in all that we do with young people and their families and carers
- We will commit to an intersectional approach to ensure that all TGDNB people, including First Nations peoples, people of colour, people with different faiths, people with disability and people born with intersex variations<sup>1</sup> are welcome and active participants in the support we provide and the work that we do.
- We will create respectful, purposeful partnerships with organisations
- We will work with allies and supporters

### Integrity

- We are committed to the ongoing development and delivery of high quality, trustworthy, evidence-based and up-to-date resources, training and advocacy.
- We will cultivate a culture of transparency within our organisation, in our relationships with our community as well as partnerships and those with which we collaborate.

### Justice

We will work for a just, equitable society for and alongside trans, gender diverse and non binary young people, their parents, families and carers.

We understand that a just and equitable society means that all TGDNB people, including First Nations peoples, people of colour, people of all faiths, people with disability and people born with intersex variations are equal partners in the work that we do.

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<sup>1</sup> We understand and do not frame intersex as a form of gender diversity, and we understand that people with intersex variations are not more likely to be trans, gender diverse or non binary. We affirm that people with intersex variations like everyone else, have a diverse range of gender identities. Intersex is a form of bodily diversity. <https://ihra.org.au/style/>

## Drivers for change

What is our big picture approach to achieving our vision and making an impact?

TGDNB people their families and carers	Activities	Short term outcomes	Long term outcomes	Impact
	Establishment of good governance processes and procedures	A strategically led organisation with a functional organisational structure	Transcend is a sustainable organisation that is strategically focused on its vision	Transcend participants have the access to the information and resources that they need, to care, support and advocate for their child and that the health, wellbeing and social outcomes for TGDNB children and young people are the same as their cisgender peers
	Provide peer support network with online and face to face meetings	Supported, networked parents, families and carers	Thriving and consistent peer support groups in every state and territory	
	Ambassador and leadership programs for young people	Skilled, confident and empowered young people	TGDNB young people will see examples of other TGDNB young people living successful and contributing lives	
	Develop resources for Transcend participants	Our participants have access to reliable, evidence based resources and information	Transcend is known nationally for its accurate, up to date information. People are empowered with this knowledge to have agency over their lives	
	Advocacy projects to improve services and systems for TGDNB children and young people	Strategically chosen and supported advocacy projects in each state and territory	Consistent provision of support in all states and territories	



*"What I needed most was for my parents to be there, to know what was happening, to protect me and look after me. So, we need for parents to be supported. -Georgie"*

## Actions and outcome measures for Transcend's key activities

### Establishment of good governance processes and procedures

*We will do this by:*

- Regular Board meetings to ensure good governance and strategic operational decision making
- Arranging governance training for the Board
- Development and regular review of good policy and procedure
- Six monthly review of strategic workplan

### Outcome measures

*In 12 months:*

- All policy and procedures written and signed off.
- Board has attended Director/governance training
- Four board meetings held
- Funding plan developed

### Provide peer support network with online and face to face meetings

*We will do this by:*

- Development and communication of clear guidelines for online behaviour
- Development of a trained and confident volunteer base (including the development of volunteer position description)
- Maintenance of clear peer support network codes of conduct
- Regular (at least two times a year) face to face social meet ups
- Develop a plan for development and management of peer networks in each state and territory

### Outcome measures

*In 12 months:*

- Team of seven volunteers trained
- Volunteer roles and responsibilities clearly defined
- Peer networks in Adelaide, Sydney and Geelong established
- Develop an evaluation framework tool
- Plan developed for peer network development
- Plans for two additional peer networks in new state/territory/region

## Actions and outcome measures for Transcend's key activities

### Ambassador and leadership programs for young people

*We will do this by:*

- Working with young people on the purpose and design of this program
- Ensuring that this program is co-designed with young people
- Seek funding to support the coordination and development of this program

### Outcome measures

- First program has been developed in collaboration with young people (outline of this program will be used to approach potential funders)
- The purpose of the program has been clearly defined by young people
- Funding sought and obtained

### Develop resources for parents, families and carers

*We will do this by:*

- Working with families and carers and relevant organisations to develop content of resources
- Seeking funding to support the ongoing development of these resources

### Outcome measures

*In 12 months:*

- Four new Transcend branded resources are on the website
- Parent advisory/working group established to help in editing resource content.
- Marketing strategy to promote new resources.
- Website is updated to include new information

### Advocacy to improve services and systems for TGDNB children and young people

*We will do this by:*

- Meeting with key stakeholders and partners to help inform advocacy projects (including government, NGOs and community groups)
- Listening to parents, carers and TGD children and young people

### Outcome measures

*Ongoing:*

- Established/developed advocacy plan for next six months
- Developed relationships with key stakeholders- including those we are advocating to and those we are advocating with.



*"Transcend creates safe spaces for families that celebrate gender diversity and gives me the tools and opportunities to be my authentic self." -Korra*



**Olivia, Jane and Justin**

***"My mum found people who were like her. She found friends and information that you can't get anywhere else. To hear about other people's stories, about their kids and how they got through their struggles. My mum is always sharing the information she gets from Transcend with our families and friends. We want everyone to learn and to understand about being non binary so that they can be better people." -Olivia***

***"I felt fearful and alone when my child first identified as non binary. It was our secret but one we wanted to share and to find out more. I feared being misunderstood, judged and questioned. How could I speak up or ask for help? Finding a genuine connection with others became essential to my wellbeing.***

***I found Transcend. Transcend listened, supported and gave me the hope and courage to speak up. To share with our family our child's identity knowing that Transcend have my back and are always there especially when I struggle. Transcend is a parent's best friend; honest, supportive and loving." -Jane***



Caitlin and Kylie

## References

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