



The Mental Health Experiences of Trans and Gender Diverse Australians who have Undergone Phalloplasty in Australia

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT (V2)

Researchers:

Name:	Position:	Division:
Associate Professor Rachel Rossiter	Principal Supervisor	School of Rural Medicine
Liam Devlin	Student researcher	School of Rural Medicine
Ms Jo Hunter	Research Assistant	School of Rural Medicine

INVITATION

You are invited to participate in a research study on the mental health experiences of trans and gender diverse Australians who have undergone phalloplasty in Australia.

The study is being conducted by A/Professor Rachel Rossiter and Liam Devlin from the School of Rural Medicine at the Charles Sturt University. Charles Sturt University is an Australian University, TEQSA Provider Identification: PRV12018. Charles Sturt University CRICOS Provider: 00005F

Before you decide whether or not you wish to participate in this study, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of the study is to explore the experiences of mental wellbeing and mental ill health that trans and gender diverse Australians who have undergone phalloplasty surgery/ies in Australia prior to, during and after phalloplasty surgery.

We believe this research is important as currently there is no published literature that includes a mental health focus of those undergoing phalloplasty using interviews to elevate the voices of people with this lived experience. There is a lack of research which focuses exclusively on a group of Australians who have undergone phalloplasty in Australia; the majority of studies have been conducted overseas.

We believe that sharing your experience with healthcare and allied health professionals will better prepare them to look after the healthcare needs of the trans and gender diverse people that they work with who are preparing to undergo or who have undergone phalloplasty surgery/ies. We anticipate the findings from this project will add to a growing body of research on the efficacy of gender affirming healthcare and that publications from this research may inform state and federal policy decisions in Australia regarding the allocation of funding to the public healthcare system for the provision of gender affirming surgery.

Why have I been invited to participate in this study?

We are seeking participants who meet the following criteria to participate in the research:

- Adults 18 years and older.
- Identify as trans or gender diverse.

- Are able to speak English fluently.
- Have undergone phalloplasty surgery/ies in Australia for gender affirmation purposes.
- Intend to have no more gender affirmation surgeries (excluding surgery for complications).
- At least two years have elapsed since their last gender affirming surgery (excludes surgeries for complications).
- Feel that they are mentally well enough to take part in an interview.

You are not eligible to participate in this research if:

- You are under the age of 18 years.
- You do not identify as trans or gender diverse.
- You are unable to speak English fluently.
- You have not undergone a phalloplasty surgery in Australia for gender affirmation purposes.
- Your phalloplasty surgery/ies including surgery for complications were not performed in Australia.
- You intend to undergo more gender affirming surgeries (excluding for complications).
- It has been less than two years since you had what you consider to be your final gender affirming surgery (excludes surgeries for complications).
- You do not consider yourself to be mentally well enough to participate in an interview.

What does this study involve?

You will be asked to participate in an interview on Microsoft Teams or Zoom at a time convenient to you during November or December 2025. You will have the opportunity to have a support person present during the interview. The interview will be conducted with Researcher Rachel Rossiter who will ask you questions about your mental health experiences leading up to phalloplasty, while going through the surgical process and post-operatively. You get to choose how much of your experience you disclose, and can postpone or end the interview at any stage. It is anticipated that the interview would take no longer than one hour.

Rachel has conducted a lot of interview-based research in the past, including with LGBTIQ+ people. She is an experienced mental health clinician. Rachel has undertaken sensitivity training with an accredited mental health social worker with lived experience of phalloplasty to prepare for the interviews. Rachel has also completed a practice interview with a gender diverse person with lived experience of phalloplasty.

If you take part in the interview you will be emailed a copy of your interview transcript to review, and make changes to it if you wish to. You will also be given an opportunity at this time to withdraw from the study. If we do not hear back from you within two weeks we will assume that you still consent to the use of your data.

No access to your medical records is being sought by any researcher. This research is about hearing your experiences.

Are there risks and benefits to me in taking part in this study?

Risks:

There is a possibility that some of the questions we ask may remind you of difficult or distressing experiences. If you do not wish to answer a particular question, you may simply state that this is not a question that you can respond to. If you do become emotionally distressed during the interview, the interview can be stopped. Rachel has experience in trauma-informed care and can provide initial support if required.

You will be provided information on support services available with contact details for peer-run and general hotlines that can offer mental health and crisis support.

Benefits:

While we cannot promise any direct benefits to you as an individual, taking part in this research provides you with the opportunity to share your experiences that can be used to advocate for changes to health care delivery. The learning from this research may be presented at a relevant conference, as a presentation delivered to community and potentially published as a journal article. In doing so, we would be elevating your voice (anonymously) as a patient with lived experience of phalloplasty.



How is this study being paid for?

This is an unfunded project.

Will taking part in this study (or travelling to) cost me anything, and will I be paid?

Taking part in the study will not cost you anything. You will receive a \$50 Woolworths voucher (provided by the School of Rural Medicine) as a token of acknowledgement for the time and emotional labour involved in taking part in an interview on this topic. The \$50 Woolworths voucher will be emailed to you on completion of the interview.

What if I don't want to take part in this study?

Participation in this research is entirely your choice. Whether or not you decide to participate is your decision and will not disadvantage you in any way. Only those who give their informed consent will be included in the research.

What if I participate and want to withdraw later?

If you participate in the interview and want to withdraw your interview data within two weeks of being emailed your interview transcript your data will be withdrawn from the project and deleted. However, if you attempt to withdraw more than two weeks after we email you your transcript for review you will not be able to do so as your data will have been de-identified, analysed and incorporated into the findings.

How will my confidentiality be protected?

Your personal details, interview recordings and interview transcripts will be stored in a secure password-protected folder on the Charles Sturt University (CSU) file server. Your interview transcript will be deidentified by replacing your name with a pseudonym of your choosing, or a pseudonym that you and Rachel agree on together if you don't have a preference.

A document linking your name and pseudonym will be generated and stored in a secure password-protected file on the CSU file server that is separate from other documents. Deidentified transcripts will be stored in a separate secure password-protected folder in the CSU file server. Only the researchers listed on this information sheet will have access to the data discussed above unless you consent otherwise and except as required by law, for example if research data is subpoenaed for legal proceedings.

Any interview quotes that we publish will be chosen discerningly and with a view to not disclosing so much information that your identity is revealed, but enough that readers can understand the themes present in the data. Data will be retained for a period of 5 years on the Charles Sturt University file server before being destroyed.

What will happen to the information that I give you?

You will be emailed a copy of your interview transcript to review and edit.

We plan to publish the research data in the form of a paper in an academic journal, in a Doctor of Medicine project report, at research and health professional conferences and in an online presentation that is advertised to members of the trans and gender diverse community.

Individual participants will not be identified in any reports arising from the project.

If you enrol in the study you will be asked whether you would like the research results sent to you when the research project is completed. If you indicate yes, you will be prompted for an email address. If you indicate no, you will not be sent the research results at the completion of the project. Your decision regarding study results will be documented alongside your contact information to ensure that this is respected at the end of the project.

What should I do if I want to discuss this study further before deciding?

If you would like further information, please contact Rachel Rossiter on (02) 6365 7245 or rrossiter@csu.edu.au



Who should I contact if I have concerns about the conduct of this study?

Charles Sturt University's Human Research Ethics Committee has approved this project [Approval number: xxxxxxxx]. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this project, you may contact the Committee through the Research Integrity Unit via the following contact details:

The Presiding Officer
Human Research Ethics Committee
Research Integrity Unit
Locked Bag 588
Wagga Wagga NSW 2678
Phone: (02) 6933 4213
Email: ethics@csu.edu.au

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated thoroughly, and you will be informed of the outcome.

Conclusion

Thank you for considering this invitation. This information sheet is for you to keep.

