

**MEDIA RELEASE
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**YOUTH SERVICE WORKING OVER CAPACITY
IN MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT AND COUNSELLING**

Twenty10 launches Counselling Service Needs Assessment

An alarming number of young people are not receiving the counselling and mental health support they need because of long waiting lists and over-stretched staff, according to a leading youth service for young people of diverse gender, sexes and sexualities.

Twenty10 today launched their *Counselling Services Needs Assessment* in Green Park in Darlinghurst, the site of its original outreach work in 1982. The report details the large number of requests for support that the agency receives and the number of young people who have to be turned away. Managing Director of Twenty10, Rebecca Reynolds, explains that the report confirms a dire situation. "Twenty10 has a very talented, committed and passionate team of staff. For the last four years we have self-funded a counsellor role that has capacity for 12 clients at a time, but who currently, due to high demand, is seeing 20 clients."

The report author, Raina Jardin, found that 93% of young people contacting the service for counselling support were unable to have their needs met by the service due to service limitations. Additionally, 80-90% of clients accessing welfare services reported mental health concerns, but only 50% of those clients were connected with some form of mental health support service.

The report sets out recommendations for increasing the Counselling Team to include psychologists and counsellors experienced and skilled in working with young people of diverse genders, sexes and sexualities. The report also recommends that education campaigns be funded to promote help seeking behaviours among this marginalised population group and to increase the capacity of the mental health sector to meet their needs.

"Twenty10 has, for 28 years, provided much needed services to young people at risk of homelessness", explains Reynolds. "This work has made it clear to us that the experience of marginalisation, discrimination and isolation can have a long and hard impact on the mental wellbeing of these young people. We want to ensure that appropriate and accessible services are available to young people when they need them most and before issues become too big. We are seeking the support of state and federal health departments to help us to help these young people."

For more information about Twenty10, visit www.twenty10.org.au.

**Copies of the full report are available.
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