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## **Australian Story: About a Girl**

**Airs Monday August 15 at 8pm on ABC & iview –  
introduced by Victorian Premier, Hon. Daniel Andrews**

Teenager Georgie Stone is taking on the system to try to help save the lives of other transgender teenagers.

*"I feel like I can actually help people," she says. "I'm hoping after seeing my story they can see a happy, free 16-year-old who came out the other side."*

Georgie, 16, went through harrowing court ordeals to get permission for treatment that would enable her to transition and she doesn't want other teenagers to go through the same ordeal.

*"We all know that transgender children are more at risk of suicide and self harm between the time of coming out and then accessing treatment," she says.*

The Family Court is expensive and often delays mean that teenagers cannot get into court before it's too late and they hit puberty.

*"I would have killed myself if my voice had broken. It would have meant people could no longer take me on face value."*

The director of the Gender Service at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne, Dr Michelle Telfer, says many of her clients feel the same way.

*"The court process causes delays, it's very stressful, it's pathologising for them. Going to court usually means that there's something wrong, you've done something wrong or there's something wrong with your family, and in these situations it's just not the case."*

*Australian Story* follows Georgie's race against her biological clock to get a court order before her voice broke and she developed further masculine traits.

Georgie is now lobbying politicians in a bid to have them introduce legislation that would overturn the need for young transgender people to go to court.

Australia is the only country in the world where children must be assessed by a court as to their competency to consent to treatment.

The Gender Service at the Royal Children's Hospital has 200 new referrals this year.

Melbourne lawyer Paul Boers, who has appeared in eight *pro bono* cases this year, says he does this because many families cannot afford treatment and kids' lives are at stake.

*"If they don't get treatment, well they're in trouble so I guess I do the cases for humanitarian reasons but I don't have the resources to do them all," he says.*

Paul Boers said the court “just rubber stamps” the recommendations of the teenagers’ treating specialists.

*“My hope is that sooner rather than later there’s going to be an end to this madness having to go the Family Court,” he said.*

*“I know the Family Court wants an end to these cases. I’ve appeared before many judges who have said to me from the bench ‘I don’t believe this should be in the Family Court, I don’t believe that these children’s parents and these children should have to come to court.’”*

The Chief Justice of the Family Court, Dianna Bryant, said “perhaps the matter needs to be reconsidered”.

*“Well the law’s the law at the moment and there’s only the two circumstances in which it can be altered. I can’t do anything about it unless someone’s prepared to challenge the existing case law, or unless the government is prepared to legislate,” she says.*

The program features home video footage following Georgie from a toddler through to the present.

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Join the conversation: **#AustralianStory**

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