



Doing what I feared **the most**

Jenny Scott (above right) is a retired Archivist and member of COTA SA's Rainbow Hub Advisory Group and shares a little of her story below.

This year I celebrate 27 years of being 'out' as a transgender person, but my experience of being 'Trans' dates back 62 years to when I was five years old. That was the year I first attempted to 'come out'. Innocently I dressed in my mother's wedding dress and paraded into the kitchen to show her how pretty I looked. My memory is that I was told to get out of the dress. Years later when I discussed it with my mother, she claimed no memory of it.

But this experience drove me into a closet of fear that my secret would be discovered and led me to being shy and socially awkward. In 1973 I met a young woman with whom I could

speak easily that I eventually 'came out' to. With acceptance came love, we married and had three daughters. I always hoped and prayed this would 'cure' me, but it did not and despite desperate efforts to be 'normal', my feminine gendered self demanded regular expression.

In the 1980s my anxiety resulted in a series of panic disorder breakdowns, such that in 1993 while a student at the University of South Australia, studying the Graduate Diploma in Library and Information Management I confronted the need to come out to myself and the world as transgender. I was supported by a group of wonderful women who created a safe space for me to transition, the first of many who have shown me love and support over the past 27 years, including my partner, Anthea, who I met in 1996.

I have participated in many LGBTIQ community-based organisations since, including the Gay and Lesbian Health Ministerial Advisory Council and was twice elected to head the Gay and Lesbian Counselling Service.

The Australian Democrats asked me to stand as a candidate for the Australian Senate in 2004 and the South Australian Parliament in 2006. In 2017 I was honoured to have my name added to the South Australian Women's Honour Roll as a "passionate activist for the LGBTIQ community".

Based on 'Doing what I feared the most', published in Breaking the Boundaries, Yvonne Allen and Joy Noble (Eds), Wakefield Press, 2016.