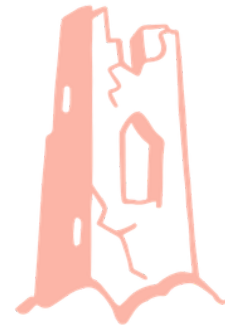


Orienting Futures

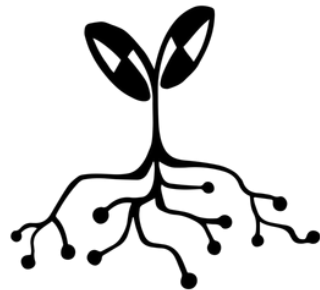
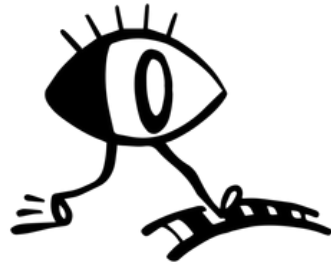
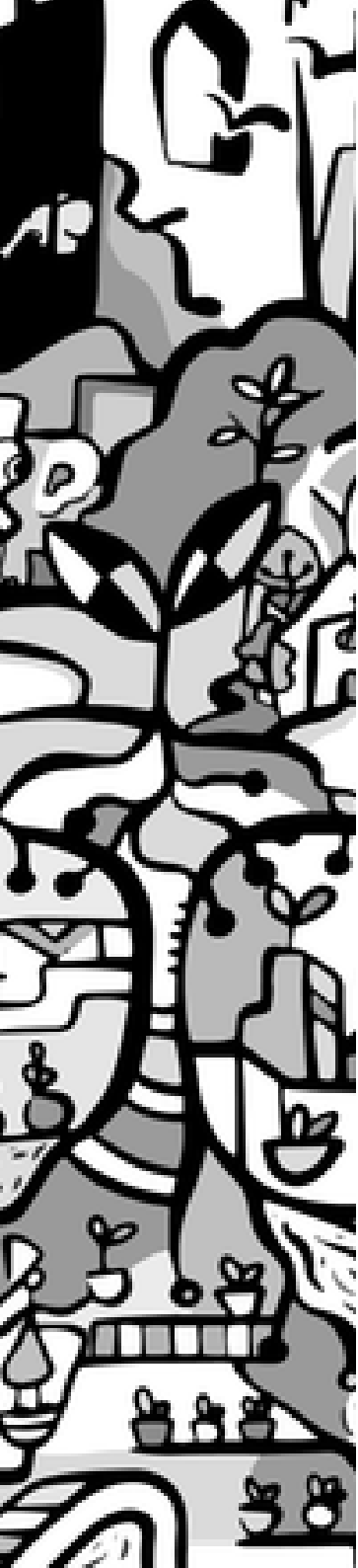
Emerging Culturally & Ecologically Responsive
Practice in the Social Enterprise Sector



Pre-Series Development Report

For PermaQueers Social Enterprise Development
Initiative (SEDI) Deep Experience (DE) learning community

4th August 2025
Prepared by Guy Ritani
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Acknowledgements

Our highest gratitude & acknowledgement to the indigenous custodians, past, present & emerging upon whose lands, seas & skies we have benefitted from in conducting this work. We have deeply considered indigenous sovereignty, decolonial practice, ecological regeneration & equitable practice across many levels in designing & delivering this learning community. We hope these considerations emerge in this learning community & enact much needed change across the social enterprise sector.

To Sherryl & everyone at Social Enterprise Australia, we thank you for your investment in the SEDI program & in PermaQueer to develop this learning community. Our horizons for systemic change have lifted as a result.

To our incredible artist Joana Mendiola, we thank you for visualising our intentions so beautifully for this program & inspiring us with your work. To our awesome team at PermaQueer it is a joy to walk alongside you everyday on the pathway to liberation.

To our soon to convene Orienting Futures Learning Community. We are deeply grateful for your interest, time & commitment to this space. We are blown away already & look forward to what will emerge.



Contents

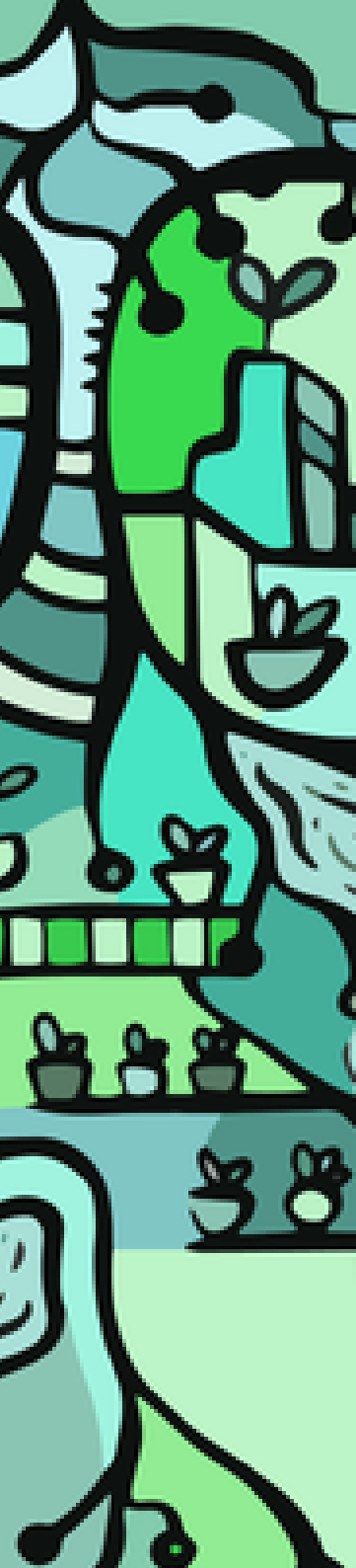
Acknowledgements	2
Report Summary	3
Measurement Evaluation & Learning	4
Logistics	5
Learning Community Promotion	5
Content Development	6
Terms of Reference	6
Participant Engagement	6
Meeting the Learning Community	7

Summary

This report outlines the design, promotion, content development, participant engagement strategies & Participant initial responses for the Orienting Futures Learning Community.

The Measurement, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) framework is structured around emergent, community-determined metrics, utilising relational data collection methods like Padlet, Zoom, surveys, and discussion spaces. The community's promotion strategy involved a successful social media campaign, with adjustments being made to address the perceived value of the program. The content was specifically recontextualised for social enterprises, with a focus on tangible activities and co-design resources. With 28 accepted participants, out of 35 applications, representing diverse backgrounds and organisations, the program is designed to track ongoing learning, with insights shared through series reports and co-design resources.

The updated activity workplan can be [found here](#)



Measurement Evaluation & Learning

As the practices focussed on in this learning community are deeply emergent & have no industry standard we have designed an emergent MEL framework from a community development lens. The measurement metrics we're interested in are community determined so we have provided a range of relational based data collection methods using Padlet, Zoom commentary, surveys, breakout rooms, worksheets & discussion spaces as data collection.

Each of our online sessions utilises these methods except for the surveys which are structured as 1x pre-learning community baseline survey, 3x post series surveys & 1x post-learning community baseline survey. As the measurement metrics are emergent, our evaluation has been structured at scaling levels in consistent frequencies. We have structured our evaluation process at 3 levels.

- 12 x Session level: to evaluate the immediate padlet responses, discussion trends & commentary, worksheets & relational impact.
- 5 x Series level: before, between & after each series. To evaluate connections between the co-design resources & trends/discussions within the sessions.
- 1 x Learning Community level: To evaluate all of the trends in data collected & to view the frameworks, intentions, learnings & co-design resources to understand their relationships.

Our learning will be made available through the series reports (pre-series, series 1, series 2, series 3, post series) & the co-design resources that emerge from the convening. We look forward to what these might be.





Logistics

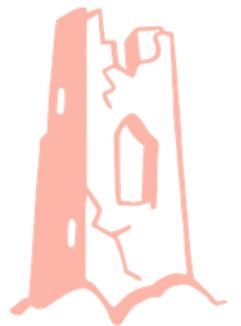
We have designed, structured & implemented the logistical processes for the smooth delivery of our Orienting Futures learning community & look forward to seeing what emerges in this space.

Promotion

A critical contributor was an external artist, Joana Mendiola who visualised the program graphics for our social media, program & all the graphics involved. This was an important framing point to relocate this content within an outside perspective as we began to redesign our content for the whole program. Our social media promotion was very successful with high engagement running our campaign on Facebook, Instagram, Email & in small ways on LinkedIn. Additionally peer sharing & word of mouth contributed significantly. Our EOI applications were slow to trickle in as our audience has not historically been social enterprises or organisations. Additionally, the values proposition was something to navigate adjusting our narrative from a 'free course' to a 'scholarship' based one. This perceived value has been affirmed through a number of participant responses.

Recommendations

- Perceived value: To consider what options organisations have when contractually obliged to provide 'free' positions. This has negative implications on value & interest in the program. We noticed it & adjusted our copy & narrative it would be useful to explore & provide what other options are available.
- Provide your newsletter timeline schedule & additional promotional avenues in advance so that learning communities can align & expand their promotion. We received a lot of interest after the SEA newsletter went out but this was about a week before our EOI's closed.





Content Development

The majority of our pre-series development was spent recontextualising our program to a social enterprise context which was fruitful & created more tangible activities which we look forward to convening. Each of our series reflect the intended outcomes per each series within our contract deliverables & details/dates of this can be found in our [welcome pack](#). Much time was spent developing SE specific worksheets within our co-design resource development pathway & MEL framework. During this period we also designed all of the slides, session resources & the welcome pack.

Participant Register & Terms of Reference

Our register of participants, baseline survey data, consents & permissions have been stored securely & were collected via our EOI, baseline & welcome pack processes. We have developed an ongoing reflective Terms Of Reference that is built into our survey, worksheets & discussion space to track how the learning community changes in identifying itself as the series proceeds onwards. These learnings will be tracked & provided in our reports & learnings. The current learnings can be found in the last section of this report.

Participant Engagement

There were a steady number of enquiries, a few incomplete EOI's & significant traffic through our website & socials that wasn't reflected in the EOI's. Our EOI process was intentionally long, yet allowed accessible options to pre-vet potential participants. We received 35 EOI's & accepted 28 of these participants for this program. They applicants ranged internationally & across all states of Australia. We received a range of organisations, researchers, community organisers, peak bodies, advocacy bodies of a range of sizes. The consists of the following disclosed lived experiences: disability, LGBTQIA+, First Nations, CALD/POC, Youth, Experienced homelessness/housing insecurity & migrant/refugee backgrounds.





Meet the Learning Community

Baseline Responses

What do participants intend to get from this Learning Community?

They said – *This learning community exists to nurture a space for critical reflection, collective growth, and transformative action. It brings together individuals committed to deepening their understanding of decolonial, trauma-informed, and justice-centred practices across disciplines and sectors. Through sharing knowledge, exploring diverse perspectives, and building supportive relationships, the community aims to develop practical tools, cultural awareness, and leadership capacities that can be applied in service of equitable, sustainable, and regenerative systems. United by a desire to challenge the status quo and walk in right relation with each other, with Country, and with the more-than-human world, this community seeks to inspire ethical change in organisations, communities, and selves.*

What do they think about the change making capacity of this Learning Community?

They said – *This learning community plays a vital role in changemaking by cultivating grassroots, relational, and systems-aware approaches to transformation. It supports changemakers in bridging theory with lived experience, and action with reflection, fostering a culture of equity, compassion, and critical inquiry. The community holds space for imagining bold and irresistible futures, challenging dominant norms in the social enterprise sector, and offering the emotional support and solidarity needed to sustain deep, long-term change. By modelling alternative ways of leading, relating, and being, this community enables its members to act as cultural catalysts—seeding ideas and practices that ripple out into organisations, ecosystems, and movements. It is both a container for personal unlearning and a launchpad for collective regeneration.*





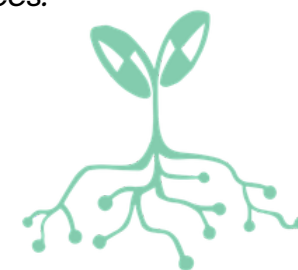
Why do they want to learn about Planetary Boundaries?

They said – Overall, there is a clear desire to learn about planetary boundaries, especially from those in fields like food systems, ecology, and community development, where these concepts are directly relevant. Many respondents are motivated by the opportunity to align their actions with ecological limits and sustainability goals, viewing it as both a personal and organisational responsibility. There is an eagerness to connect **ecological integrity** with creative and cultural practices, especially in sectors like music, arts, and community building.

However, **limitations exist**, particularly a **lack of clarity** around the concept of planetary boundaries for some. Several respondents acknowledged that they were still unfamiliar with the specifics of the framework, which makes it hard for them to understand how to apply it effectively. Some expressed a desire for **clearer language** and **concrete examples** to make the concepts actionable. For others, the challenge is not in understanding the need but in **translating that knowledge into real-world action**—especially within systems that are still largely structured around **profit-driven and colonial models**.

What are their challenges?

They said – Across this learning community, organisations share a clear vision for systemic, decolonial, and justice-oriented change—but face significant challenges in turning vision into practice. **Funding constraints** were a major issue for many, with organisations highlighting the difficulties of finding financial support for **slow, relational work** that doesn't fit easily into traditional funding models. **Burnout** and **capacity gaps** are also persistent concerns—many organisations are under-resourced, often relying on **volunteer staff**, which limits their ability to scale their efforts or sustain their commitment to these principles. Additionally, some noted that their **work is limited by existing institutional structures** that resist change, either through **bureaucratic inertia** or **traditional power dynamics** that favour top-down, **performance-based models** over **culturally safe, bottom-up practices**. The tension between **holding onto values** while needing to secure **funding** and meet **KPIs** is another recurring issue that complicates the shift toward more equitable practices.





What are their approaches to systems intervention?

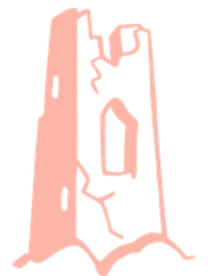
They said – Systems thinking is clearly present in many organisations, especially those engaged in **community building, regenerative design, and trauma-informed practices**. The organisations that embrace systems thinking tend to prioritise **holistic solutions** and aim for **interconnected change**, often through **co-design, asset-based community development, or futures thinking**. Many also focus on **intercultural literacies** and **addressing the power dynamics** that exist within systems, understanding that change must be approached from multiple levels—personal, cultural, and structural.

However, the **challenges** to embedding systems thinking more deeply are also significant. Some organisations mentioned **siloed structures, lack of internal alignment, and difficulty in integrating systems thinking across different departments or work streams**. A few respondents pointed out that their work feels more **reactive** than proactive, as they struggle with **time constraints** and **resource limitations** that prevent them from making long-term, systemic changes.

There was also recognition that organisations often **lack the leadership or structured frameworks** to fully realise systemic interventions. Some expressed that although they want to implement systems thinking, there is a **lack of internal tools** or knowledge to **navigate complexities** in practical ways.

What topics are they most interested in?

They said – They are excited to dive into a wide range of topics including **planetary boundaries, decolonial obligations, trauma-informed design, queer ecology, and regenerative systems thinking**. There is a strong desire to explore **intercultural literacies** and **collective transformation**, with a particular interest in **applying decolonial practices** to community-based initiatives and **creative sectors**. Participants are especially motivated by the idea of integrating these concepts into their **own practice**, developing new tools and language for navigating power, harm, and accountability.





It's important to note that **challenges** also arise when trying to implement these concepts practically. Many respondents acknowledged that while they are excited to learn, **the gap between theory and practice** remains a significant hurdle. For example, some expressed a desire to **deepen their understanding** of decolonial practices but found that their existing frameworks or personal experiences weren't fully aligned with these approaches. For others, there's the challenge of **introducing these ideas in a way that doesn't alienate people** who are not yet familiar with them or who may have **limited understanding** of concepts like trauma-informed care or systems thinking. Additionally, some organisations expressed a desire to **incorporate these values** into their **organisational culture**, but they're unsure about how to navigate **resistance** from staff or stakeholders who may feel hesitant about **shifting away from established practices**.

How open are they to change?

They said - There is widespread openness within many organisations to engage in **deep, reflective processes**, with many organisations actively committed to **unlearning** and **transforming their practices** to be more **decolonial, trauma-informed, and equitable**.

Many respondents expressed that this work is at the **core** of their organisation's values, with teams already engaged in **collective transformation** and **accountability** practices. There is a real commitment to creating spaces that are **safe, healing-centered, and community-driven**, and many organisations feel that this is an ongoing, **lifelong process**.

Several organisations mentioned the **limitations they face** when trying to implement these practices. For instance, while some teams are **eager and ready** for this transformation, others are **less familiar** with the concepts or find them **challenging to apply practically**. Issues such as **capacity, leadership, and institutional resistance** still create barriers for full organisational transformation. Some respondents noted that while their organisations are **open**, the process can sometimes be **fragmented**, with only certain individuals or departments truly embracing these changes. Additionally, there's a strong recognition that these shifts require **time, resources, and support**, and that without these, true decolonial or trauma-informed change is difficult to sustain.





A Few Acceptance Responses <3

'BOO YAH'

'I really look forward to being part of these sessions.'

'oooooooooooo I'm SOOOOOO excited for this! Fridays are soon to be my most favourite days'

'I'm really excited about taking part in this project'

'Thanks for the warm welcome, I'm so excited to be part of the program'

'Thank you! WoW. A full scholarship to learn from the greats! I am IN! '

'thank you so much for accepting me to the Orienting Futures program, I'm so looking forward to it!'

'I am delighted to be accepted'

'OMG! I'm beyond excited! Thank you so much for choosing me.'

'Amazing, so so so ready!'

