

WASEC LEARNING COMMUNITY · CASE STUDY

Queer and Diverse Pathways: peer-led support, by community, for community



[Queer and Diverse Pathways](#) is a peer-led micro social enterprise providing inclusive, affirming support to Queer, Trans and Gender Diverse (TGD), and neurodivergent communities across WA. It was founded by Stacie Mēi Laccohee-Duffield, who shared its story as a speaker on WASEC's Learning Community panel, Leading Change: Diverse Voices in Micro Social Enterprise.

The problem

Mainstream healthcare and disability support services can be difficult for Trans and neurodivergent people to navigate safely - support is often designed without lived experience of the communities it aims to serve, and workers delivering peer-led or culturally competent support are frequently paid well below the value they create.

The model

- **Peer support:** emotional and practical support delivered by people who draw on their own lived experience as queer, TGD or neurodivergent individuals, reducing isolation and making support genuinely relevant.
- **NDIS service navigation:** helping clients understand, access and manage their NDIS plans and connect with queer, TGD and neurodivergent-friendly services.

- **Professional support for contractors and partners:** enabling the peer workers who deliver services to run thriving small businesses of their own, on a higher schedule of rates than typically offered by larger providers - so more of the funding reaches the people doing the work.

Founder story

Stacie Měi is a woman with a transgender experience who brings a background in project management within the mental health sector, along with experience in peer work, advocacy and board leadership across several organisations. On WASEC's panel, she spoke about what it takes to build a peer-led model from scratch - one where queer and neurodivergent people support each other, and revenue is reinvested directly back into community rather than extracted by intermediaries.

Why it works as a micro social enterprise

By keeping decision-making and service design inside the community it serves, and by paying the peer workers who deliver support fairly, Queer and Diverse Pathways builds trust and quality into the model from the ground up. Its NDIS registration gives it a stable, government-linked revenue stream, while its peer and professional support offers keep the organisation genuinely community-owned rather than just community-facing.

The choice of a social enterprise model over a charity model is itself significant: it recognises the skill and value the community brings, rather than treating it as a group to be served, and it channels profit back into purpose rather than out to shareholders. That's what makes fair pay for peer workers more than a value-add - it's the mechanism through which the value the community creates stays with the community.

What it means for the sector

Queer and Diverse Pathways is a strong example of 'By Community, For Community' in practice - showing how a founder's own lived experience of navigating a system can become the basis for a viable enterprise that improves that system for others, and how fair pay for peer workers can be built into a sustainable business model rather than treated as an afterthought.

Case study prepared as part of WASEC's Learning Community for micro social enterprises, delivered with support from Social Enterprise Australia under the Social Enterprise Development Initiative (SEDI).