



**REPORT OF THE REVIEW OF  
THE AUSTRALIAN BLUEPRINT FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

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**Atelier Learning Solutions Pty Ltd**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Australian Blueprint for Career Development (the Blueprint), which has been in place nationally since 2008, was developed through work undertaken to adapt the Canadian *Blueprint for Life/Work Designs* to the Australian environment. The Blueprint constitutes a national response to the recognised need for a national framework to guide and inform approach and practice in career development for all Australians. The Blueprint consists of a conceptual framework and a range of support materials and resources that can be accessed online through the Blueprint website.

At the time of the introduction of the Blueprint, a commitment was made for it to be reviewed in 2012. The review was asked to consider: who is using the Blueprint and for what purpose; the extent of usage across Australia; how users found out about the Blueprint; if the Blueprint could be improved; the degree to which the Blueprint website supports and encourages use of the Blueprint; and, possible options for the future of the Blueprint.

The review took place over September and October 2012. The methodology involved an online survey and interviews with stakeholders in the career development industry in all States and Territories. Some 250 respondents participated in the survey and interviews were conducted with over 70 stakeholders who agreed to participate in the review.

### Awareness

While there are particular situations in which awareness of the Blueprint is high, especially within the schooling and tertiary sectors, overall awareness nationally is limited. Awareness can be most accounted for by the legacy of work from the time when the Blueprint was transposed into the Australian environment and from the subsequent national rollout. The absence of a strategy since that time to broaden awareness of the Blueprint by potential users within the career development industry has limited its usage.

### Usage

In relation to who is aware of and using the Blueprint and for what purposes, the review found that it is being used in particular instances in the schooling sector by strategic leaders in curriculum as a reference to develop initiatives, programs and resources so that career education can be supported in schools. At best practice level, much of this work involves the deconstruction of the Blueprint into a curriculum framework, benchmarking instruments and supplementary resources. The National Partnership for Youth Attainment and Transition is enabling and contributing to this work in instances where a career development element has been included in the Agreement.

At the school level, the review identified instances where the Blueprint is being used by careers advisers as a reference to: map existing career development opportunities; plan a whole school approach to careers education; develop courses and units of work for particular Years and classes; and develop new resources and make judgments about the suitability of existing resources. Where careers advisers also have responsibility for VET programs and courses, the Blueprint is also being used to make connections between career competencies and employability skills.

In the tertiary sector the Blueprint is being used in a number of student services units to enable staff to work more effectively with individual students in a counselling context. This work has particularly formed part of the response to the Bradley Review of Higher Education, strengthening the capacity of students to make informed career-related decisions as they progress through their studies and into their post-tertiary destinations. There are instances where the Blueprint is being used to map competencies against courses and to use this information within professional decision making and also to improve the quality of advice to students. The Blueprint is also incorporated into certificate, diploma and post-graduate degree courses. This incorporation is proving a prominent means by which career based practitioners are becoming aware of the Blueprint and developing the knowledge and skills to use it effectively.

In the private practice sector the Blueprint is being used predominantly by practitioners as part of counselling services for individual clients or when working with small groups. Usage predominantly involves reference to the Blueprint to develop competency check lists so that gaps can be identified and strategies developed to address them. In some instances, practitioners are using the Blueprint as a reference in the development of short courses. Much of the private practice usage of the Blueprint is in the context of clients who are unemployed or who are looking to move towards a new vocation. Usage is similar in community-based organisations, particularly those located in regional areas.

Usage of the Blueprint in business and industry is mainly limited to instances where large corporations and entities have a strategic approach to human resource development. They become aware of the Blueprint through arrangements with high capability consultancies, especially those operating from the tertiary sector.

### **Factors affecting usage**

Awareness and usage of the Blueprint are most readily discernible in the schooling and tertiary sectors, but less so in the other sectors. Overall, the extent of usage of the Blueprint has fallen well short of what was envisaged for it at the time of its inception and rollout. While a number of factors account for this, four are especially prominent.

First, the evidence suggests that while those who became aware of the Blueprint at the time of its development and launch invariably have comprehensive knowledge of it, there has not been a sustained strategy since that time to broaden awareness and usage across the career development industry as a whole. Second, there is a perception that the Blueprint is oriented primarily to the schooling sector, and this has had the effect of limiting awareness and understanding of it more broadly. Third, unless there is an explicit career development policy context within the jurisdiction, the Blueprint is unlikely to have attached to it the structures and resources required for practitioners to engage with it. Finally, at a strategic level there has been insufficient identification and articulation of the alignments and connections between the competencies set out in the Blueprint and, for example, employability skills and the capability statements contained in the Australian Curriculum.

### **The Blueprint website**

The Blueprint website is endorsed as a well managed site. For experienced users, it is regarded as a valuable repository of understanding, information and resources to support application of the framework. However, no website can be expected to constitute of itself a strategy that encourages and promotes use, or that facilitates the professional dialogue required for awareness and understanding to be broadly based. There is a view that making a series of adjustments to the website in response to practitioner suggestions will have only limited value. Rather, the place and function of the website needs to be considered in a strategic context, and this best would be done within the leadership of a national career development strategy.

### **Effectiveness**

While effectiveness can be shown in particular contexts and situations, the envisaged impacts for the Blueprint have fallen short of the goals that were attached to it. The Blueprint has yet to achieve the broader effectiveness that was envisaged initially across the full spectrum of the career development industry.

### **Potential for improvement**

The conceptual underpinnings of the Blueprint remain strongly endorsed by those who are familiar with it. There is continuing respect for the quality and rigour of the initial developmental work. Many practitioners use the Blueprint in ways that indicate it is central and integral to their practice. They value it highly. While suggestions were made about desirable improvements to the Blueprint, in the main these are instrumental. Somewhat ironically, the most powerful advocacy for improvement comes from those who have been involved with the Blueprint since its inception. The view is held

that the Blueprint was never meant to be static, and that it was always envisaged that it would evolve in response to changing national circumstances, both economic and social. In particular, there is a view that the Blueprint needs to be placed and connected strategically so that it can respond to these circumstances and so that its application is more universal across the sectors that constitute the career development industry.

### **Implications**

There is a number of implications that arise from the review. Into the future, they should be addressed at a strategic level. In particular, awareness and usage of the Blueprint falls well short of being commensurate with the status of a framework that carries a national imprimatur. The goals attached to the Blueprint, however laudable, require both revision and reduction so that greater clarity is attached to the purposes of the Blueprint. The Blueprint is perceived as 'disconnected', both within the career development industry and from related agenda areas.

There are critical questions about where responsibility for the Blueprint should be vested and whether its current placement within education and the youth transitions area should continue.

### **Possible options**

The review proposes five possible options for the Blueprint into the future, ranging from maintaining its current form and placement to creating around it the conditions that may lead to a new iteration of it. The latter option carries perhaps the greatest potential to realise the value of the original investment in the Blueprint and to secure for it the strategic placement within the career development industry that was originally envisaged.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Background .....	7
The framework.....	8
The Review.....	9
Review methodology .....	9
<b>2 FINDINGS: AWARENESS OF THE BLUEPRINT .....</b>	<b>12</b>
Learning about the Blueprint.....	12
Factors enabling awareness of the Blueprint.....	13
Factors limiting awareness of the Blueprint .....	15
Awareness of wider usage of the Blueprint.....	19
Conclusion .....	21
Awareness of the Blueprint: summation of the key findings .....	21
<b>3 FINDINGS: USAGE OF THE BLUEPRINT .....</b>	<b>22</b>
Extent of usage .....	22
Categories of usage .....	23
Patterns of usage.....	27
Applications of the Blueprint .....	32
Other resources and frameworks .....	43
Factors impacting usage of the Blueprint .....	44
Conclusion .....	46
Usage of the Blueprint: summation of the key findings .....	47
<b>4 FINDINGS: THE BLUEPRINT WEBSITE .....</b>	<b>49</b>
The website .....	49
Usage of the website .....	49
Benefits of the Blueprint website .....	52
Effectiveness of the Blueprint website.....	52
Factors impacting usage of the Blueprint website .....	58
Conclusion .....	59
The Blueprint website: summation of the key findings .....	60
<b>5 FINDINGS: EFFECTIVENESS .....</b>	<b>61</b>
The Goals .....	61
Overall effectiveness .....	62
Factors impacting effectiveness .....	63
Outcomes .....	65
Elements of best practice .....	69
Conclusion .....	70
Effectiveness of the Blueprint: summation of the key findings .....	70
<b>6 FINDINGS: IMPROVEMENT OF THE BLUEPRINT.....</b>	<b>72</b>
Appropriateness of the Blueprint .....	72
Improving the Blueprint .....	73
Conclusion .....	76
Improvement of the Blueprint: summation of the key findings .....	76
<b>7 IMPLICATIONS AND OPTIONS.....</b>	<b>77</b>

Implications.....	77
Options .....	78
<b>APPENDIX 1 .....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2 .....</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3 .....</b>	<b>89</b>

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## Background<sup>1</sup>

The Australian Blueprint for Career Development has its genesis in work undertaken going back to at least the last decade of the previous century. The Youth Action Plan Taskforce in its report of 2001, *Footprints to the Future*, put the proposition that there was an imperative in Australia for a unitary career development framework. One of the findings of the Taskforce was that there was inconsistency in career and transition opportunities and services, and that the quality of provision was inconsistent nationally.

In the 2002 review of career development and services in Australia undertaken by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (the OECD) the argument was put that there should be improved co-ordination and integration of services across jurisdictions and between States, Territories and the Commonwealth. The OECD recommended that Australia have a quality career development framework. There was endorsement by the OECD of the decision taken by Commonwealth and State and Territory Ministers in 2001, to take the Canadian *Blueprint for Life/Work Designs* as the basis for a unitary career development framework for Australia.

The Career and Transition Services Working Group of the Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) recommended to Ministers that:

- a national framework for career development be developed
- the *Canadian Blueprint for Life/Work Designs* should be used as its starting point.

In 2003, MCEETYA approved this course of action. Subsequently, responsibility for the development of the framework was contracted to Miles Morgan Australia.

The developmental work that was undertaken through the leadership of Miles Morgan included participation by leading academics and career development professionals. An issues paper, *Managing Life, Learning and Work in the 21st Century*, provided a major platform for the developmental work that led to the Australian Blueprint for Career Development (the Blueprint). The paper:

- established the context in which the Australian Blueprint was written
- provided a rationale for using a lifespan career development framework to guide career policy and practice
- raised awareness about the need for and usefulness of a career development framework for Australia.

An extensive national consultation process engaged stakeholder organisations and practitioners. From this process, a prototype framework was developed. Authorisation was then given by MCEETYA for the testing of the prototype framework with a range of service providers and client groups.

*In 2005, at 26 trial sites throughout Australia, public and private sector organisations, including schools, universities, training organisations and companies, many of them with multiple partners, worked with Miles Morgan staff to test the Blueprint's utility for creating effective career and transition programs and products for both young people and adults.<sup>2</sup>*

In 2008, following refinement, the Blueprint was rolled out nationally.

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<sup>1</sup> The Review acknowledges the Australian Blueprint for Career Development website as the information source for the Background.

<sup>2</sup> [www.blueprint.edu.au/](http://www.blueprint.edu.au/). Accessed 10 September 2012

## The framework

The Blueprint is a multi-layered framework, around which a suite of information and resources is provided to support implementation and professional practice. It acknowledges the shared responsibility for career development that exists across individuals, career development practitioners, schools, education and training providers, parents, employers and community learning organisations.

The goals of the Blueprint include:

- providing a common language across the career development domain
- enabling greater coherence in accounting for initiative outcomes
- contributing to a reduction in service overlay and duplication
- enabling gaps to be identified in service delivery
- facilitating smooth linkages between career development programs and services
- providing a basis for producing quality career development resources for use with and by different client groups
- contributing to a better match between individuals' skills and job aspirations, and their actual employment choices
- enhancing human resources practices within both public and private sector organisations
- enabling individuals to manage their careers and work/life balance more effectively, particularly in rapidly a changing labour market
- encouraging people of all ages to engage in purposeful learning
- supporting a culture of lifelong learning and development in Australia.

A set of potential applications associated with the Blueprint indicate the breadth of its goals. These applications include:

- using the Blueprint as a platform to facilitate discussion with key stakeholders
- mapping existing school-wide career development activities to determine which Blueprint competencies it helps to develop
- designing a comprehensive career development program
- determining individual student competencies and developing plans to address gaps
- reviewing a career development resource to determine the career competencies it targets
- evaluating an existing career development course or curriculum
- creating a short career development course
- incorporating employability skills into learning programs.

The Blueprint is structured into *11 career management competencies*, across three areas: *personal management; learning and work exploration; and, career building*. Performance indicators are identified for each competency at each of the four developmental phases. These cover a four-stage learning 'taxonomy', namely: *acquire; apply, personalise; and, act*. The Blueprint outlines how *locally-appropriate standards* can be developed for the performance indicators.

The Blueprint is supported by a substantial body of resources to assist in application and usage of the framework. These include: professional development resources; curriculum worksheets; case studies of usage; links to related websites; and, promotional material to raise awareness of the Blueprint in organisations and networks.



## The Review

In 2009, the Australian Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs Senior Officials Committee (AEEYSOC) agreed to a review of the Australian Blueprint for Career Development to be undertaken in 2012. Consequently, the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) commissioned a review to determine the extent to which it is contributing to the desired outcomes of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) and the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC).

While there are up-to-date reported data on access to and within components of the Blueprint website, as well as access and usage data with some local contexts, these data of themselves do not provide understandings about the extent of awareness and usage or the nature and effectiveness of application.

The review was to consider:

- how users found out about the Blueprint
- the extent to which the Blueprint is used across Australia
- who is using the Blueprint and for what purpose
- whether the Blueprint is meeting its stated goals
- the degree to which the Blueprint website supports and encourages use of the Blueprint
- if the Blueprint could be improved
- possible options for the future of the Blueprint.

## Review methodology

Data gathering for the review took place over the period from 17<sup>th</sup> September to 19<sup>th</sup> October 2012. An initial stakeholder contact list was provided by DEEWR and this was expanded over the course of the review to more than 100 organisations and individuals.

A set of draft key research questions was developed and the questions were finalised with DEEWR to guide the conduct of the review. The questions were provided to stakeholders when contact was made with them. The key research questions are included at Appendix 1.

The methodology for the review comprised:

- telephone and face-to-face interviews with identified stakeholders
- an online survey.

Data from the interviews and the online survey were triangulated through analysis as a basis for the reporting. Reference was also made to a number of relevant reports and papers. (See Appendix 3)

### Stakeholder interviews

Contact was made with a range of stakeholders, inviting them to contribute to the review through interview. Where arrangements could be made, the interviews were conducted either *via* telephone or on a face-to-face basis. In total, 74 people contributed to the review through participation in this aspect of the methodology. Of these, 27 participated through a face-to-face interview and 45 *via* telephone, with 2 *via* an email response.

A copy of the key research questions was emailed to each participant prior to the interview. Interviews typically took the form of a discussion that explored the issues raised by the questions from the perspective of the interviewee. The majority of face-to-face interviews involved two members of the review team as an approach to strengthen engagement and support data analysis. The approach was also an aspect of internal quality management. Face-to-face interviews were conducted in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Canberra.

Participants in the stakeholder interviews, who were drawn from all States and Territories, covered:

- the career development associations
- policy and curriculum areas in the government, Catholic and Independent schooling sectors
- the tertiary sector
- the business and industry sector
- the VET sector
- private career development practitioners
- school-based career development practitioners
- consultants in the career development domain.

### Online survey

An online survey was developed against the key research questions and was structured to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. Following approval by DEEWR, a total of 37 agencies and organisations was contacted, requesting their support to bring the survey site to the attention of those working in the career development field. An outline of the online survey is provided at Appendix 2.

The agencies and organisations through which information about the survey was provided covered:

- the schooling systems and sectors
- the VET sector
- the tertiary sector
- career development and human resource professional associations
- the business sector
- peak parent groups.

Information about the survey was distributed through the agencies and organisations primarily through their website, email or electronic newsletter facilities. The link to the survey was also placed on the Australian Blueprint for Career Development website and the *myfuture* website. Additionally, information about the survey link was provided to stakeholders who were invited to participate in an interview. The survey site was active for the period from 18<sup>th</sup> September to the 19<sup>th</sup> October 2012.

Table 1.1 below sets out information about access to and participation in the online survey.

**Table 1.1 Survey access and participation**

Access and Participation	Count
Accessed the survey site	748
Participated in the survey	295

For survey respondents, the three items that were the most frequent exit point are set out in Table 1.2 below.

**Table 1.2 Respondent exit points**

Item	Percentage
Introduction	27%
Item 4: Do you use the Blueprint?	12%
Item 14: To what extent are you aware of why and how others use the Blueprint?	15%

Table 1.3 below sets out information about the self-identified backgrounds of respondents to the survey.

**Table 1.3 Survey respondent categories**

Category	Count	Percentage
Career development practitioner in the schooling sector	156	52.88%
Career development practitioner in the training sector	12	4.07%
Curriculum developer in the schooling sector	7	2.37%
School leader	11	3.73%
VET or university lecturer	9	3.05%
Career development practitioner in the private sector	19	6.44%
Human resource professional or recruitment officer	13	4.41%
Employer or senior manager	9	3.05%
Employment services provider	13	4.41%
Past or current client of a career development program	4	1.36%
Parent or caregiver	8	2.71%
Other	34	11.53%

Table 1.4 below provides information about the sectoral context for those respondents working in school education.

**Table 1.4 School education respondents**

Schooling sector	Count	Percentage
Government education sector	112	65.50%
Catholic education sector	26	15.20%
Independent education sector	28	16.30%
Not applicable	5	2.92%

## 2 FINDINGS: AWARENESS OF THE BLUEPRINT

This chapter of the review report sets out the principal findings arising from analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data that relate to awareness of the Blueprint.

The discussion seeks to identify and illuminate the factors associated with the findings. The concluding section of the chapter canvasses the key implications, linking to the overview of the implications in chapter 7. At the end of the chapter, a summation of the key findings is provided.

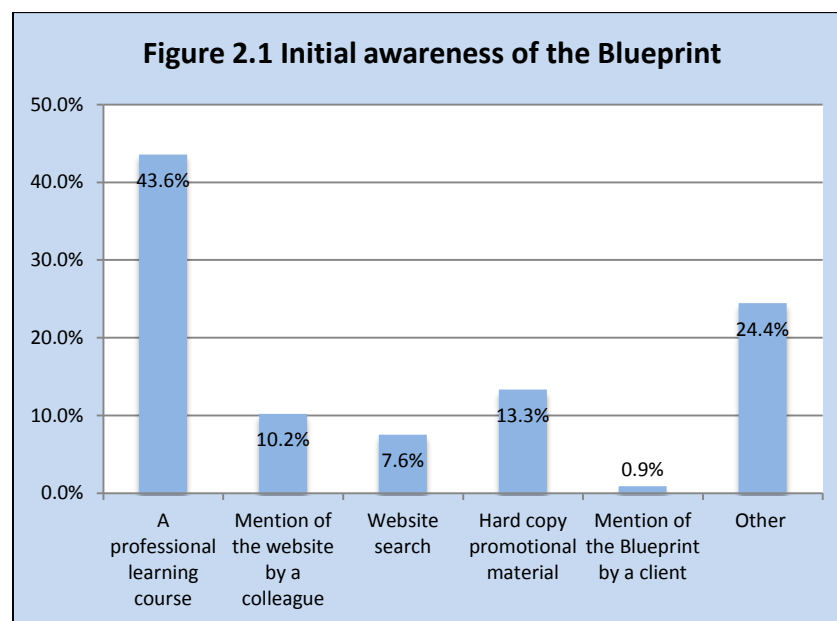
### Learning about the Blueprint

The review was asked to consider *how users found out about the Blueprint*.

The evidence indicates that the most common means by which people first learnt about the Blueprint was through a professional learning course. In the main, these were courses conducted in association with the national rollout of the Blueprint. The evidence suggests that professional learning courses in the period since that time have not been extensive nationally and, therefore, have not been a major means by which people have learnt about the Blueprint.

Within the 'Other' category in Figure 2.1 below, a number of respondents stated that they first learnt about the Blueprint while undertaking formalised learning, in either a Certificate IV or graduate diploma course in career development. This is confirmed by wider evidence about the opportunity that formalised study in career development provides for practitioners to become aware of the Blueprint.

In the evidence, a number of participants observed that the Blueprint should be supported by a stronger culture of professional dialogue. The evidence in Figure 2.1 for the relatively low level of initial awareness arising from a colleague mentioning the Blueprint website suggests that the professional dialogue associated with the Blueprint has not necessarily been a robust one.



In addition to determining the pattern of how users found out about the Blueprint, the broader issue of awareness is also relevant, beyond how people first learnt about the Blueprint. Insights into the nature and extent of awareness are likely to provide the parameters for understanding the nature and extent of usage.

## Factors enabling awareness of the Blueprint

From the evidence, there is a set of discernible factors that account for awareness of the Blueprint within the career development industry.

### *Legacy from the national rollout*

Amongst the factors accounting for awareness, contact either directly or indirectly with work associated with the introduction of the Blueprint into Australia, including trialling of the framework, is especially prominent. During the review, those who had such contact referred to the knowledge that they were able to gain about the framework.

*We were involved in initial trialling of the Blueprint so our knowledge of it and how it could be used goes back to that time. (Curriculum officer in the schooling sector)*

The legacy of this introductory awareness-raising remains identifiable to this day, even if not extensive nationally. Many of those associated with the development of the Blueprint during this initial period hold influential positions, particularly in the schooling sector and in the career development professional associations. Invariably, their awareness of the Blueprint and their often comprehensive knowledge of its rationale and structure enables continuing advocacy of the framework and reference to it in work they lead in the career development domain.

*I was involved in the developmental and trialling work for the Blueprint. I became immersed in it, and have always advocated for its use as an important resource in career education. (Curriculum officer in the schooling sector)*

Typically, the level of awareness of those who were closely connected to the introductory work, whether in the development or the trialling of the Blueprint, are those who are amongst its strongest advocates. Interestingly, these people were invariably the same as those who also argued for the further development of the Blueprint and for a new national approach to its placement within the career development agenda.

### *Initial promotion*

A number of participants in the review, especially those holding leadership positions within the schooling sector, cited the effort that their agencies made at the time of the rollout of the Blueprint to bring it to the notice of school-based career practitioners. Additionally, the professional associations generally appear to have promoted awareness of the Blueprint amongst members by providing information in newsletters and referring to it in discussion forums. During the review, comment was made by a number of school-based practitioners affirming their continuing use of the Blueprint since becoming aware of it at the time of the national rollout.

*I started using the Blueprint from the day of the launch. At the launch I happened to be standing next to a colleague from another school and we both had the same reaction, that career development in our schools needed a good shake-up and here was something that we could use to do it. (School-based career practitioner)*

*I became aware of the Blueprint when it was sent to my school. I have been passionate about it ever since. It is the basis of much that I do in my work as a careers adviser. (School-based career practitioner)*

The provision of a hard copy of the Blueprint to schools and to key officers in the schooling systems and sectors as part of its rollout is a discernible legacy. A number of participants in the review cited this provision as causing them to become aware of and engage with the Blueprint in a way that an

electronic format could not match. Some contrasted the “activity” of a hard copy of the Blueprint being physically handed to them with what they regarded as the “passivity” of a website. The evidence indicates that awareness was likely to be consolidated and lead to engagement in those instances where:

- a practitioner was provided with a hard copy of the Blueprint
- attention was drawn explicitly to the Blueprint by a school, sector or system leader
- opportunity was provided to understand the underlying rationale for the Blueprint and its potential applications.

### *An explicit delivery structure*

In the period since the rollout of the Blueprint, the evidence indicates that awareness of the Blueprint is most likely to occur where there is an explicit structure to deliver and support career development. The evidence indicates that effort invested in developing and providing tools and resources that are referenced to the Blueprint, along with building capacity for practitioners to engage with these tools and resources, has potential to broaden awareness of the Blueprint.

*I had never heard of the Blueprint until we did some professional learning sessions with the regional consultant about the new curriculum framework in careers. (There was explanation of how) the framework had been developed, and the Blueprint was mentioned as one of the resources they had used. (School-based career practitioner)*

Such an approach raises awareness of the Blueprint by placing it in the broader context of career development rather than being about its promotion *per se*. A number of school-based practitioner participants in the review indicated that while they were not using the Blueprint directly, they had become aware of it through tools such as curriculum frameworks and benchmarking instruments that linked to it.

### *Professional studies*

As indicated above, access to professional studies in career development has contributed to awareness of the Blueprint across the career development industry. The evidence indicates that the increasing proportion of private practitioners who have undertaken study in the area, substantially at Certificate IV level, has contributed to increased awareness of the Blueprint. It is likely that the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners, launched under the auspices of the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) in March 2012, will give further impetus to participation in professional studies by private practitioners in particular, and, therefore greater overall awareness of the Blueprint.

A similar pattern is discernible in relation to post-graduate studies, at either diploma or degree level. Evidence was provided about the extent to which some of these courses focus on the Blueprint and explicitly address the expansion of students’ knowledge about career development through the framework as a key prism.

*I first came across Blueprint when doing a Masters in career development that I started in 2008. (Practitioner in the private sector)*

Additionally, where Study Grants have been made available for teachers to undertake further study related to career development, there is evidence that teachers have increased markedly their awareness of and familiarity with the Blueprint. The evidence suggests that professional study not only increases individual capacity but has a flow-on effect at the school level by building the confidence of school-based career practitioners to extend the parameters of their work and engage others.

### Identification of an imperative

While strategic leaders in the career development industry identified and articulated the imperatives for a national approach to the area, the evidence suggests that these imperatives are not necessarily seen at other levels. For example, observations were made that in the contested space of the school curriculum and with the reality of resource limitations, many principals decide that career development has a low priority.

That said, where an imperative is identified to strengthen the quality of career development practice and service, the evidence indicates that a resource such as the Blueprint can become part of the effort that occurs.

Two examples of this are identifiable in the review evidence.

Firstly, the Review of Australian Higher Education in 2008 contributed to recognition within the tertiary sector that employability of graduates and career development competencies needed to be made more explicit in the student services area. It became apparent that there was an imperative to respond more fully to the needs of a broadening spectrum of young people in tertiary studies. As shown in the evidence, consequently there is now a discernible level of awareness of the Blueprint within the sector insofar as student service provision is concerned.

*The Centre uses the Blueprint extensively. ... the university is using the Blueprint on a system wide basis for student career development. An argument in the decision to implement the Blueprint at the university was that students were 'career' ready but not 'job' ready. The Blueprint provided the means to resolve this. The decision was made that that career development should be embedded across courses rather than having separate career development units.*

*We also use the Blueprint when in contact with individual students. All students who come to the Centre for assistance are assessed against Blueprint competencies, all students seeking course changes are also assessed. (Practitioner in the tertiary sector)*

Secondly, the imperative to provide more effective support for adults who access community-based employment services has led to instances where service providers have recognised the desirability of a more holistic approach. Evidence was provided about how awareness of the Blueprint has enabled approaches to be developed that strengthen the capability of clients to understand and address the competencies that will underpin their employment over time, "... not just the next job".

### Factors limiting awareness of the Blueprint

When the qualitative and quantitative data are triangulated, the conclusion must be formed that the extent of awareness of the Blueprint nationally is limited. Indeed, the survey data provide an indicative insight into the level of awareness. A total of 748 people accessed the website. Of these, 295 proceeded to participate in it.

These data indicate that promotion of the survey link through organisations gained the attention of a sizeable pool of people within the career development industry, and that almost 750 people were sufficiently interested that they accessed the survey link. However, that 60 per cent of these did not proceed beyond the survey introduction indicates a discernible lack of confidence on the part of many to have sufficient awareness and understanding to participate in it.

Interestingly, this figure approximates the view that some strategic level participants in the review proffered about the extent of awareness, albeit with the caveat of the view being indicative.



*(... what's the extent of awareness?) ... the industry's very diverse so care is needed about being too emphatic... but, every indication is that it's low in the circumstances ... from my involvement, if I had to put a figure on it, a best guess, I think ... more than 50 per cent of people in the industry would have no awareness of it ... and people who are informed users of it would be probably about 20 per cent. In between would be people who know about it, may have looked at it, picked out bits of it, but wouldn't use it as such ...* (Professional association executive)

Analysis of the data about awareness of the Blueprint suggests that there is a number of principal factors that has acted, and continues to act, to limit awareness of the Blueprint across the career development industry.

### **Orientation to the schooling sector**

Work associated with the development and rollout of the Blueprint had a profile that was especially strong within the schooling sector. While the trialling and national rollout took place across the career development industry sectors, operationally the education portfolio area had prominence. A number of participants in the review expressed the view that the Blueprint was conceived largely as a framework that would especially guide practice in schools to address the career development needs of students in the secondary years. It was intended to assist schools in strengthening the competence of students as they made the transition from school to employment, training or further learning.

The view was expressed that the low awareness of the Blueprint in the training sector, the adult and community education sector, and in business and industry is attributable at least in part to this orientation. Because the orientation from the outset was stronger towards the schooling sector, for other areas there were limited conduits through which awareness could be created and extended. In particular, the connection of the professional associations was markedly stronger into the schooling sector than into other areas.

In this regard, a number of participants in the review commented that the language of the Blueprint would almost certainly resonate with educators in the schooling sector to an extent that would not be the case within other sectors of the career development industry. In this view, 'the language' of the Blueprint took insufficient account of the non-school sectors of the career development industry.

*... it is language for schools ... the audience is people who know about and work in schools ... its use for adults looks like an add-on.*  
(Professional association executive)

### **Promotion within the career development industry**

From the evidence, as for orientation, promotion appears to have been substantially largely contained within the schooling sector. A number of participants from the schooling sector cited promotional resources that were designed to raise awareness of the Blueprint and saw these as intended primarily for schools. Participants in the review from other sectors did not convey any particular awareness of targeted promotional activities that had penetrated at different levels. To the extent that there was promotion into the non-schooling sectors as part of an overall strategy, from the evidence it did not gain substantial traction.

*It is not called the 'Australian Blueprint for Career Development in Schools'. While knowledge of it in schools is ... limited ... , in other areas it has ... gone under the radar, barely noticed. We are now living with the consequences of not promoting it widely because there is a view locked in that it's only a framework for school career advisers...* (Lecturer in the tertiary sector)



For a framework that in the Australian context was envisaged as relevant to the full spectrum of career development practice, inclusive of but extending beyond the schooling sector, the review evidence is unambiguous that promotion has not been encompassing of the career development industry as a whole. Additionally, the available promotional materials that can be accessed from the website were rarely cited over the course of the review.

In the evidence, one of the views expressed was that a well developed marketing strategy should have accompanied the rollout, and been repeated over time, with a distinction drawn between marketing and promotion.

*The Blueprint has never been marketed. It should have been sold to all the different areas in a way that would have grabbed their attention and tapped into their self-interest. It should have had simple, straightforward material, easy to pick up, something that could be read quickly ... postcards, bookmarks, that sort of thing ... simple and eye-catching ... make it look different from the swathe of stuff going across people's desks ... the promotion has been too dense and hasn't worked ...*  
(Curriculum officer in the schooling sector)

### **Articulation to business and industry**

The evidence indicates particularly little discernible legacy of awareness within business and industry that can be attributed to the introductory period of the Blueprint. As noted by a number of review participants, the initial low level of awareness across business and industry has become entrenched through the absence of a subsequent strategy to articulate explicitly to the sector the alignments and synergies between employability skills and the competencies set out in the Blueprint. In situations where it may be expected that the Blueprint would at least be known, even if not referenced as a major resource, the lack of awareness appears to be widespread.

*I have never heard of it (the Blueprint). (National training manager)*

*The Australian Blueprint for Career Development? What's that? Never heard of it. What was it again? I'll google it. (Training consultant)*

Disconnection from the employability skills agenda has tended to reinforce a view within business and industry generally that career development competencies are peripheral to improving national productivity. Within such a view, there is no explicit driver that would cause awareness of the Blueprint to be extended.

*Think of the number of people employed in Australia. Think of the number of people moving from one job to another, or from one position to another. Think about the number of people who may be contemplating such a move. Think about people who are unemployed, whatever the period. How many of these do you think will ever come into contact with an initiative or program that in any way touches on their career development or that what is provided for them can be traced back to the Blueprint? ... there is so little awareness of the Blueprint in the big picture of workforce development that you might as well say there is no awareness. (Practitioner in the VET sector)*

The evidence indicates that opportunities for people in relevant positions in business and industry to become aware of and familiar with the Blueprint may be better described as occurring by happenstance rather than systematically. Instances were cited during the review about awareness and reference to the Blueprint in major entities and corporations, but it was also noted that they are few when contrasted to their number operating in Australia.

In the human resources area, the lack of awareness was identified by a number of participants across different state and territory schooling authorities as also including those working in the HR area of their organisation.

*Not one person in our HR area would know anything about the Blueprint ... and our core business is developing young people for life and a career ...* (Curriculum officer in the schooling sector)

### **Connection to career industry professionalisation**

Analysis of the evidence suggests that building awareness of the Blueprint has not always been prominent in effort and activities to build professionalism within the career development industry. While the Blueprint is incorporated in the Certificate IV course and a number of review participants referred to its prominence in post-graduate programs, in practice the level of exposure appears to vary. While evidence was provided about extensive and intensive engagement with the Blueprint in particular course work, commentary was also provided of experiences in career development courses where the Blueprint had no particular profile or status.

*It (the Blueprint) was one of the resources in a list that was provided of useful (web)sites (in a Certificate IV course). (Practitioner in the private sector).*

While a number of private practitioners who participated in the review strongly endorsed the Blueprint and outlined their approach to its application, concurrently the view was expressed that across private practitioners nationally awareness is relatively low. Some commented that a professional colleague had been responsible for alerting them to the Blueprint, or that they had come across it “by chance”. While some participants identified the role that a professional association had played in bringing the Blueprint to their notice, others observed that they were not aware of anything that had been communicated through an association that had especially highlighted or elaborated on the Blueprint, prompting them to learn more about it.

The apparently overall low level awareness of the Blueprint in the private practice sector appears to be unaffected by the increased representation of private practitioners in professional associations in recent years. In one instance, this representation has increased in a relatively short period from being quite limited to a figure in the order of 40 per cent, driven by the increasing professionalisation of the industry linked especially to accreditation against practice standards. The irony, insofar as the Blueprint is concerned, is that the increased representation of private practitioners in professional associations has coincided with a declining focus on the Blueprint across the associations generally.

### **Access to professional learning**

One of the recurring themes in the evidence is that, in general, opportunities for professional learning through which awareness and understanding of the Blueprint could be gained have been insufficient in the period since the national rollout. In relation to the schooling sector, the evidence shows that those who have taken up roles as career practitioners in the period subsequent to the rollout have not necessarily had opportunities comparable to those available at the introduction of the Blueprint to become aware of and familiar with it.

By way of corroboration, a number of respondents to the survey exited it prior to completion after commenting that they had never heard of the Blueprint.

*I began responding to the survey but it has become a little meaningless as I have never heard of the Blueprint. I am a careers adviser at a ... high school and have been in the position for almost two years.*

*The Blueprint has never been mentioned at any gatherings of career advisers. I didn't want to scrap the survey without advising you. Do careers advisers in schools know about it? (School-based practitioner)*

Similarly, a number of practitioners who responded to the survey said that the survey was the first time they had heard of the Blueprint. Additionally, as the survey was promoted across associations and organisations, there was a noticeable increase in the number of people accessing the Blueprint website. It is probable that a substantial proportion of this increased access of the website was related to promotion of the review survey.

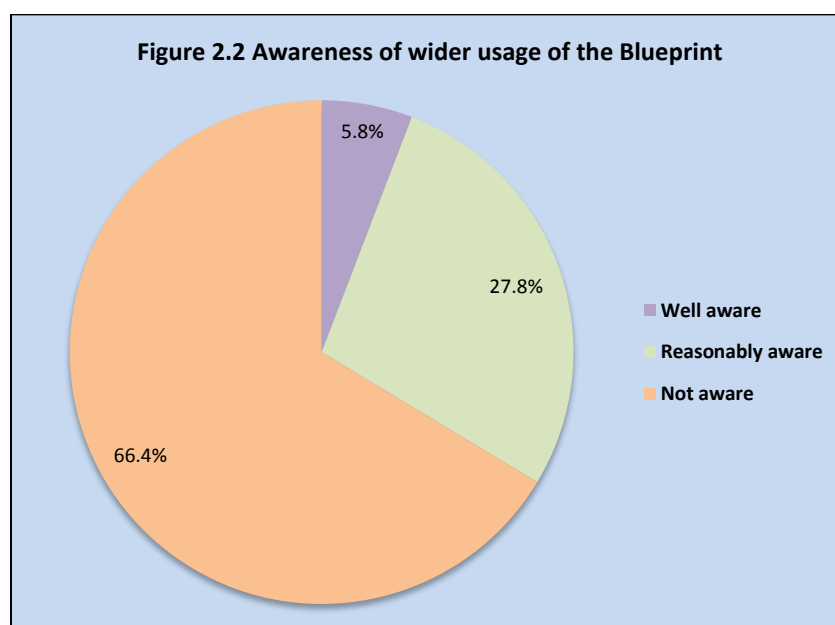
The evidence suggests that in an environment characterised by competing priorities, changing policy settings in the jurisdictions and limited resource capacity, there seemed in some situations no particular imperative to draw attention to the Blueprint amongst school-based practitioners, including those new to the role.

*We don't refer to the Blueprint in the induction course we run for new career education teachers. They are entering into such challenging and demanding roles, that making them aware of the Blueprint would overwhelm them. (Professional association executive)*

Moreover, as noted above, the evidence suggests that the initial focus on the Blueprint within at least some professional associations diminished after the rollout activities came to an end. Consequently, the professional space in which school-based practitioners could have been expected to engage with the Blueprint was given over to other professional priorities.

## Awareness of wider usage of the Blueprint

Through both the interview and survey components of the review, data were gathered about the awareness amongst participants of usage of the Blueprint in contexts and settings other than their own. These data contributed to the construction of an indicative national picture of awareness of the Blueprint, suggesting where awareness is most readily identifiable and where it is not.



Insofar as the data enable construction of a national picture about the level of wider awareness of the Blueprint, the resulting picture is clear. It is one of a low level of awareness nationally. This is confirmed in Figure 2.2 above. Some two-thirds of respondents to the survey indicated that they had

no awareness of usage of the Blueprint beyond their own situation. Only some 6 per cent responded that they were well aware of wider usage.

Even those participants in the review who would be amongst the most committed advocates for the Blueprint conceded that from a helicopter view the conclusion had to be that awareness was limited. There is a clear consensus around this view, with no participant in the review suggesting otherwise.

*When you look at what the current picture is nationally about practitioners being aware of and using the Blueprint, the picture is generally discouraging. For all the work that was done to get it off the ground, and the great commitments that have been made to it by people in different places, it is hardly front-and-centre*

*... of course there are people who are aware of it, someone's mentioned it or they've heard about it at a course or they've still got their hard copy... but if you look at the full picture of what's happened, I think the level of awareness of it is very low ... (Curriculum officer in the VET sector)*

Item 14 of the online survey asked respondents: *To what extent are you aware of how others use the Blueprint?* As set out in Table 1.2 in chapter 1, 15 per cent of respondents exited the survey at this item. This is the highest proportion of respondent exits except for those who exited at the survey Introduction. In a sense, the evidence suggests that no item in the survey challenged respondents to such an extent as the item seeking information about their wider awareness of the Blueprint. As the survey sought information beyond immediate awareness and application, a significant proportion of respondents appear to have felt that they could not proceed to the remaining items.

The commentary of a number of respondents during the review, across the spectrum of backgrounds, indicated that only those at more strategic levels in agencies, organisations and associations were likely to be aware of the Blueprint in contexts beyond their own. At the practitioner level, this wider awareness was markedly lower. While some practitioner participants cited best practice information available through websites, including the Blueprint website, more typically the observation was made that they had little or no awareness of how the Blueprint was used beyond their own immediate work environment.

*I learnt about the Blueprint when I came across the website last year, and I've gone back to it a few times, but I have never heard anyone talking about the Blueprint or how they use it. After I got onto the website, I mentioned the Blueprint to people in a network meeting, but none of them had any idea about it or had ever heard anyone talking about how they used it in their school. (School-based practitioner)*

Another participant referred to a particular consequence of having no wider awareness of practice related to the Blueprint in the following terms:

*I know about the Blueprint ... but I know nothing about how other schools are using it and what the issues are ... I don't feel confident myself without knowing more ... (School-based practitioner)*

Analysis of the evidence suggests that there is a connection between awareness of wider practice and confidence in the efficacy of the framework. Making this connection has potential to lift 'awareness' into practice that is more extensive and more effective.

One of the suggested applications for the Blueprint is that it will be '*a platform to facilitate discussion*'. Even though a number of review participants acknowledged the power of the Blueprint in such an application, and cited instances where it was used to generate professional engagement,

the broader evidence indicates that there has not been the sustained level of professional dialogue around the Blueprint that would have generated wider awareness.

## Conclusion

The review evidence highlights situations and contexts where the Blueprint enjoys awareness and recognition as a valuable resource in career development effort and programs. It is possible, from the evidence, to identify a number of key factors that has contributed to awareness as a precursor to understanding and using the Blueprint effectively. Principally, these factors are locally determined and are often associated with the capability of strategic level leaders who understand where the Blueprint fits into the wider career development agenda. In the main, this understanding arises from the time during which the Blueprint was transposed into the Australian environment and rolled out nationally.

However, the level of awareness of the Blueprint identified through analysis of the evidence is not commensurate with its status as a framework of national importance, with potential to contribute to consequential outcomes in the context of the national productivity agenda. The framework was intended to capture and express the imperative for all Australians to have, over the course of their lives, the skills and competencies to build successful careers and to be engaged in the economy and society. Because awareness is not more extensive, the Blueprint is perceived to lack the authority that it requires to influence practice and secure envisaged outcomes through a nationally coherent and consistent approach.

## Awareness of the Blueprint: summation of the key findings

Table 2 below sets out in summary form the key findings from analysis of the review evidence about awareness of the Blueprint.

**Table 2 Awareness of the Blueprint: Summation of the Key Findings**

Awareness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is a legacy of awareness of the Blueprint within schooling systems and sectors from the initial developmental work and its rollout.</li><li>• Awareness of the Blueprint is most prominent in those situations where an explicit delivery structure for career development is being implemented, including opportunities for professional learning and participation in accredited study courses.</li><li>• Placement of the Blueprint primarily within the schooling sector has tended to limit awareness of it more broadly across the career development industry.</li><li>• The lack of an explicit and articulated connection between employability skills and career development competencies has limited the awareness of the Blueprint across business and industry.</li><li>• Within the career development industry there is limited awareness amongst practitioners of how the Blueprint is applied in other contexts and settings.</li><li>• Awareness of the Blueprint falls well short of being commensurate with the status of a framework that carries a national imprimatur.</li></ul>

### 3 FINDINGS: USAGE OF THE BLUEPRINT

This chapter of the review report sets out the principal findings arising from analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data that relate to usage of the Blueprint.

The discussion seeks to identify and illuminate the factors associated with the findings. The concluding section of the chapter canvasses the key implications, linking to the overview of the implications in chapter 7. At the end of the chapter, a summation of the key findings is provided.

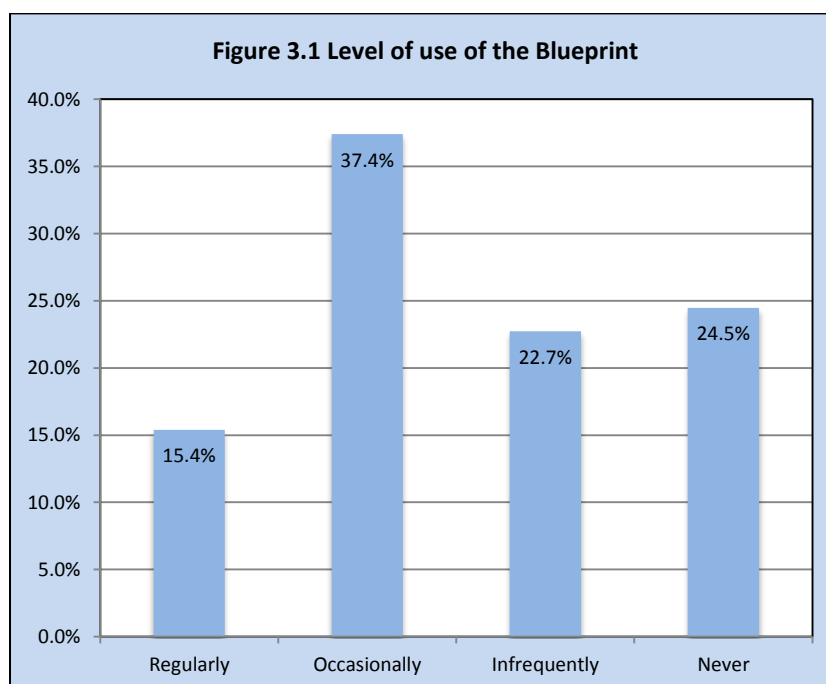
#### Extent of usage

The review was asked to consider *the extent to which the Blueprint is being used across Australia*.

To a very considerable extent the findings in relation to 'Awareness' set out and discussed above relate to and shape findings about the extent of usage of the Blueprint. Just as analysis of the evidence led to the conclusion that the overall level of awareness of the Blueprint is limited, a similar finding flows with regards to its usage. As suggested by some strategic-level participants in the review, the indicators point to the reality that explicit and visible usage, maintained over time, is decidedly more in the exception than the rule. Analysis of the triangulated review evidence supports such a view.

Again paralleling the national picture of awareness, the usage picture is one of identifiable concentrations arising from mainly local factors rather than a broadly based pattern of usage. This was evidenced when review participants explored the extent of usage. The observation was made frequently that there is a contrast between particular contexts where local circumstances have led to usage of the Blueprint, often perceived as involving high quality work, and a broader picture of limited usage.

*When you take the helicopter view over career education, there are places where the Blueprint is being used, but ... across the country as a whole, usage of it is low. It is disappointing that so much good work was done to get the Blueprint up and running, but that now it seems so under-used. (Curriculum officer in the schooling sector)*



The survey data in Figure 3.1 above provide an indicative understanding that supports this view. It indicates that even amongst those who are aware of the Blueprint, that only some 15 per cent use it regularly. Almost 50 per cent use it either infrequently or never. This is even though they know about it.

Table 3.1 below sets out the survey data for level of use of the Blueprint by the three largest respondent groups, covering the schooling sector, the private practice sector and the tertiary sector. The data indicate that amongst those who use the Blueprint it is used most regularly in the schooling sector, although 43 per cent of respondents from this sector used it either ‘infrequently’ or ‘never’. The Blueprint is not used regularly within the private practice sector, although the level of ‘occasional’ use is markedly high by comparison. This may suggest its use as an intervention tool depending on individual client needs, a usage that is corroborated by the wider evidence from the review.

Supporting the evidence gained through interview about awareness and use of the Blueprint in the tertiary sector, some 55 per cent of sector respondents indicated that they used the Blueprint either regularly or occasionally.

**Table 3.1 Usage of the Blueprint in the sectors**

Sector	Regularly	Occasionally	Infrequently	Never
Schooling sector	19.2%	37.8%	27.5%	15.5%
Private sector	4.9%	34.4%	14.8%	45.9%
Tertiary sector	12.9%	41.9%	9.7%	35.5%

## Categories of usage

Analysis of the evidence suggests that there are three principal categories that describe usage of the Blueprint. These relate to use of the Blueprint as:

- a background reference
- a tool that is applied directly in different aspects of practice
- a framework that is deconstructed as a basis for local approach, practice and resource development.

### *A background reference*

There is commentary in the evidence indicating that practitioners who are aware of the Blueprint often use it more as a generalised background reference, something about which they have a level of understanding appropriate to their needs, rather than as a working tool. In a sense, this use of the Blueprint involves leveraging from awareness of it in a way that generalises the key information set out in the framework. A number of practitioner participants in the review spoke of “*internalising*” the Blueprint or using it “*subconsciously*”.

Their commentary typically indicated that they had not necessarily looked at it for quite some time or even referenced it when developing or implementing activities. For example, some participants observed that they had implemented career education programs that incorporated the concept of competency development drawn from the Blueprint but had not used the Blueprint explicitly to do this. Others observed that they had selected resources to use with students by thinking about the competencies and ideas set out in the Blueprint, but had not done a specific mapping exercise.



*I am aware of the Blueprint but I couldn't separate ... what the Blueprint has given me and what I have gained from other sources. It has melded into how I approach my work, so my awareness is more than saying 'I've heard about it', but could I get the Blueprint out and say at the moment I'm looking at something in it or using it, no I couldn't. (School-based practitioner)*

The evidence does not suggest that such use of the Blueprint involves a de-valuing of it. Invariably, practitioners who used the Blueprint as a background reference commented along the lines that it was a “great resource” and had been a major influence on their thinking and practice. In the context of their work, however, they had determined that the concepts contained in the Blueprint were where its value resided rather than in its detail. Indeed, a number of participants observed that once the principles of the Blueprint had been “absorbed” there were no obviously compelling reasons to use it more explicitly. This was the case in instances where school-based career practitioners had full-time allocations, suggesting that the approach was a considered one rather than being driven by local capacity issues.

However, a number of participants observed that they referenced the Blueprint in a general way to inform their work but that its more explicit use was precluded by the limitations that applied in their work context. In particular, school-based practitioners commented that use of the Blueprint in applications such as program development, curriculum mapping and determining the suitability of resources, however desirable, was impracticable in “the real world” of their working lives as career advisers. The evidence contains numerous references to this issue, including:

- the amount of time allocated to career development in the school
- teaching commitments in other areas
- the level of support provided by the school leadership
- the extent of opportunities for professional learning in career development
- fulfilling additional roles within a limited allocation, including acting as the VET coordinator.

*... there is a two day a week allowance for careers. I don't have a qualification, but I am interested in the area, ... have an economics background. I know about the Blueprint and have downloaded it ... it's excellent and have gotten a lot from it ... have used it in the Year 10 program, ... as something to help me in how I work with students and where they need to get better skills in making decisions ... time beats using it regularly ... looking for practical resources like worksheets that will appeal to the kids ... (School-based practitioner)*

A number of instances that illustrate limited local capacity to use the Blueprint was brought to the attention of the review. One was an instance where the career education teacher had an allocation equivalent to one day per week in a school with some 1,200 students. Another was cited where supplementary time was provided for a teacher only as needed, such as organising work experience or arranging for students to attend career expos. In yet another, career advice was included in the role statement for student Year advisers and was seen as part of their individual counselling responsibility.

Other instances were cited where principals regarded career development as a lesser priority and had atomised supplementary allocations to support other areas of the curriculum and school life. In each of these instances the Blueprint was known, but its use, at best, was as a generalised background reference with no explicit application.

The evidence indicates that use of the Blueprint as a background reference constitutes the largest category of use at the individual practitioner level overall, and within the schooling sector.



### *A directly applied tool*

Analysis of the evidence indicates that there is a category of individual practitioners who directly incorporate the Blueprint into their work. These practitioners are characterised by high level of familiarity with the framework and are experienced in career development. Such usage occurs especially in the schooling sector, the tertiary sector and in private practice. While limited in extent, there is also evidence suggesting that the Blueprint is used directly as a key tool in community-located centres that form part of effort to address the needs of clients, especially in regional areas.

Direct application appears to have two discrete dimensions. The first is a developmental dimension, while the second is an intervention dimension. The evidence suggests that where the Blueprint is used directly, this use occurs predominately within only one of these dimensions, governed by context.

The developmental dimension is most apparent in the schooling and tertiary sectors. In schools, use in this regard appears to be characterised most frequently by:

- developing courses and units of work that explicitly address the competencies set out in the Blueprint, including sequencing them to support continuity in competency development
- mapping programs and units of course work against the competencies set out in the Blueprint
- mapping resources against the Blueprint to determine their appropriateness and to guide resource acquisition to address identified gaps.

The evidence indicates that the use of the Blueprint as a direct tool in the tertiary sector can be associated typically with the work of practitioners in the student services area. The Blueprint has been used in approaches and practices supporting students to identify and understand the competencies that can be developed as they progress through their studies, and how these can be connected to their aspirations.

*The Blueprint has been used directly in developing strategies that will assist students to see a relationship between their personal and academic progress, and to project from this into a coherent view of the knowledge and skills for soundly-based career decision making ... a focus has been to improve the quality of support for students whose background experiences may have been far removed from a university environment. (Lecturer in the tertiary sector)*

The intervention dimension occurs most typically in situations where there is an immediate practitioner-client relationship. It is especially visible amongst private practitioners given that their predominant working context is the relationship they have with individual clients. In the evidence there is a number of illustrations of the Blueprint being used directly in the context of work oriented to support clients and assist their understanding of the importance of the competencies set out in the Blueprint.

*... using it (the Blueprint) has helped clients broaden their perspectives, helped create self awareness, helped to reconcile the differences between home and Australian culture, for example in the area of parental expectations. It has helped clients to understand their learning and work expectations and helped them to form strategies for their future. ... there is often a belief that by just having a degree they will walk into a job. It teaches them the realities of what else is required and what else they may need to deal with. (Practitioner in the private sector)*

Evidence was also provided about the legitimacy of the Blueprint in professional practice that addresses the needs of unemployed adults. One of the arguments put was that the Blueprint is valuable because it provides a means to focus explicitly on the key underpinning competencies that contribute to longer term engagement in the workforce, even while concurrent job search work is undertaken.

The view was also expressed that where clients start to see the value at a personal level of the competencies set out in the Blueprint, there is increased likelihood of their commitment to continuing contact with the provider even after securing a job.

*We use the Blueprint to assess individual client strengths, experience, training, weaknesses and gaps so services and assistance can be better focused to meet their need. The Blueprint enables us to identify in which competency area, whether personal management, learning and work exploration, or career building, they most need assistance.*

*Most people coming here do not have a plan or any notion of having or building a career. They often display symptoms of grief and loss because they have just lost their job. Often have never really thought about or made conscious decisions about jobs that they have had. They have just taken whatever was available or followed what mum or dad did or told them to do. Equipping them with some basic decision making skills is important. The Blueprint provides a tool to identify these issues and address them. (Career practitioner in the community sector)*

The section below that considers evidence about use of the Blueprint against each of the applications originally proposed for it provides further insight in regard to the direct application of the Blueprint as a tool in career development practice.

### **Deconstruction of the Blueprint**

In this category, usage involves deconstructing, or “unpacking”, the Blueprint and developing instruments and resources that will:

- fit with policy settings in the jurisdiction
- fit with associated jurisdictional effort in the career development domain
- create ‘drivers’ for engagement locally with the conceptual underpinnings of the Blueprint
- be more accessible for practitioners than the Blueprint *per se*.

Importantly, this category of usage becomes possible when the jurisdictional policy context explicitly recognises the career development agenda and enables strategic-level work to be undertaken to operationalise the policy. Without this policy context, the evidence is clear that the high order work required for the deconstruction of the Blueprint will not occur. It is the strategic-level deconstruction of the Blueprint and its transformation into a suite of local tools and resources that, ironically, has the greatest potential to carry its concepts and constructs into contexts where they will be used.

This usage, however, may involve little or no visibility for the Blueprint. In this regard, the issue of attribution becomes a vexed one. This issue is considered in the discussion about Outcomes later in chapter 5. Moreover, as the tools and resources derived from the Blueprint gain traction, the evidence indicates that the Blueprint may be perceived as having substantially served its function.

*We referenced against the Blueprint as one of the key resources in the development of a local curriculum framework and a suite of tools and resources to support its implementation. While those involved in this work are conscious of the referencing that was done to the Blueprint,*

*and we acknowledge the Blueprint, that is understandably not of particular interest to users of the material locally.*

*We have given the Blueprint a level of traction that in its form and by itself it could not achieve ... it remains as a resource but as a framework over our work we have moved on from it. (Curriculum officer in the schooling sector)*

The deconstruction usage category contributes some important elements towards understanding best practice. A model containing these elements is proposed in chapter 5.

## Patterns of usage

The review was asked to consider *who is using the Blueprint and for what purpose*.

When consideration is given to the question of who is using the Blueprint, the evidence suggests that there are particular contexts in which the Blueprint is being used more noticeably than in others. However, this evidence has attached to it the caveat established by the findings in relation to the limited extent of usage nationally, and its particularly limited usage in certain sectors. An implicit question also arises about who is not using the Blueprint, and why.

### *Strategic level usage in the schooling systems and sectors*

Because of the evidence about the primary placement of the Blueprint having been in the school education sector, understandably the greatest proportion of users of the Blueprint is to be found in that sector. Within some schooling systems and sectors, the Blueprint has been used by officers working at strategic levels in policy and curriculum areas to inform their work. A substantial number of these has an association going back to the developmental work, trialling and rollout that occurred up to 2008. A number articulated a discernible level of professional commitment to the Blueprint irrespective of any thoughts they may have had about its further development and placement.

These officers made informed and high-order contributions to the review. They spoke of how the Blueprint had been used to guide a range of work in their jurisdiction, extending across the education and training curriculum.

*... the Blueprint is used by career professionals to make sure that career management competencies are put into career and enterprise courses, introduced in 2008 (Curriculum officer in the schooling sector)*

A number of the contributions was in the context of current work related to the National Partnership for Youth Attainment and Transition and where a career development element has been explicitly incorporated within the National Partnership Implementation Plans.

However, where the jurisdictional policy settings encompassing career development were not a priority, and where the National Partnership had not incorporated a career development element, the reality was that there appeared limited apparent corporate knowledge of the Blueprint and no discernible orientation to its advocacy or incorporation of it into effort and initiatives. Thus, strategic level usage of the Blueprint across the schooling sectors nationally does not reflect the level of coherence that was envisaged for it initially.

The review found that while responsibility for career development, and the Blueprint, in education authorities was generally at a strategic level, this was not always the case. In particular, where strategic work was focused primarily on VET programs and courses, employability skills and the National Trade Cadetship initiative within the Australian Curriculum, capacity to address career development could appear limited.

By way of illustration, the following observation was made.

*The Blueprint sits out by itself and has become disconnected from the priority agenda around employability skills, foundational trade training skills and equipping young people to make effective transitions, especially from school. That's where the critical work is focused. There are no policy imperatives and no drivers for us to use ... (the Blueprint).*  
(Curriculum officer in the schooling sector)

Typically, in the smaller government schooling systems and in the Catholic schooling sector there appeared only limited strategic level capacity to undertake the level of work required to secure wider and effective usage of the Blueprint. Similarly, the structure of the independent schooling system meant that where an association consultant existed and had a brief that extended to career development, the 'space' for explicit work associated with the Blueprint inevitably appeared circumscribed.

Nevertheless, the review became aware of some cross-sectoral work in some jurisdictions, including across the three schooling sectors, that had had the effect of increasing capacity and had brought about discernible coherence in approaches and resources. Interestingly, this cross-sectoral perspective appeared to accord the Blueprint a value that was not always replicated in other contexts.

The review evidence indicates that amongst career advisers there is a discernible proportion who use the Blueprint quite explicitly. Their contributions provided insight into a range of practices that were associated directly with the Blueprint. They invariably knew the Blueprint in some detail, used it at fine discretionary levels and identified it as integrated into programs and initiatives designed to increase the career-related competencies of all students.

Many made observations about the importance of building understanding of career development amongst leaders and teachers within their schools. A number spoke of work they were doing to engage parents, highlighting how they were using concepts in the Blueprint as a basis for encouraging parental involvement and support. They cited programs and resources designed to build parent engagement, and illustrated how the Blueprint had been used to guide this work.

Comments were made that indicated a valuing of the Blueprint as foundational to their practice in career development. They were amongst the more ardent advocates of the Blueprint over the course of the review.

*The competencies in the framework are terrific, for example understanding the changing nature of work. Activities and learning around this can get a Year 7 student to start thinking about career planning. ... am using the Blueprint with the younger kids to start early to get the penny to drop. Such competencies help to develop a balanced approach when thinking about possible careers as they go through school.* (School-based practitioner)

Nevertheless, as stated above, the reality is that the proportion of career advisers who use the Blueprint nationally is limited. The following are comments by strategic level officers in three jurisdictions when asked during the review about usage in schools.

*"Nothing is happening around the Blueprint ... there is no capacity in schools to use it and little capability across teachers with responsibility for career development ... there has been no professional learning since the rollout."*

*"We are engaging a limited number of schools in some work currently through the National Partnership, but beyond that any use of the Blueprint would be incidental ... "*

*“There are some well resourced schools that do traditional career development activities and lessons very well ... their career advisers would probably know about and use the Blueprint ... in schools in low SES areas with limited resources, there would be zero knowledge and use ...”*

The evidence indicates that a majority of school-based career practitioners do not use the Blueprint in their practice. Very substantially, this is attributed to three main factors.

- There has been no sustained strategy of professional learning that would have provided opportunities for school-based practitioners to gain the level of knowledge of the Blueprint necessary to support its application.
- The resourcing of career development in schools overall is so limited that even where there is a time allocation for career development, the teacher will not have the time required to engage with the Blueprint or use it in programs.
- The perceived density and complexity of the Blueprint does not meet the need of many school-based practitioners for resources that are *“clear, straightforward and ready-to-use”*.

There is a suggestion in the evidence, indicated in the citation immediately above, that the resourcing issues impacting career development in the schooling sector particularly disadvantage students in schools serving low socio-economic status communities. Observations were made during the course of the review that while legitimacy attaches to the notion of job-readiness for students, it needs to go hand-in-hand with approaches and practices that equip them with the knowledge and skills to make sound career choices. Such knowledge and skills are perceived as critical to preclude young people being *“stuck in a job because it was their only goal”*.

### **Usage in the private sector**

This sector of the career development industry is an extraordinarily diverse one. It encompasses sole operators and relatively small business entities. It encompasses practitioners qualified in the field and those who are not. The sector includes a range of business orientations, including individual counselling that may be inclusive of career development, recruitment and the contracted delivery of local community-based programs.

Some private practitioners who participated in the review cited the Blueprint as *“an important resource”* to which they either referred regularly or used explicitly when working with individual clients. Usage of the framework was primarily as an intervention tool, including translating the competencies into a checklist as a basis for individual assessment. One of the observations made was that the national imprimatur of the Blueprint gave them confidence to use it. Some also commented that they drew its status to the notice of clients as it contributed to the credence of their work.

Other private practitioners who participated in the Review commented that they could see the potential of the Blueprint to develop programs, but that the short-term nature of their relationship with most clients largely precluded this use. The observation was made that a majority of clients were unemployed, and that few would have the ability to sustain the fees required for participation in a developmental program. Nor, having secured a job, would many have the inclination to participate in one.

A number of private practitioners who participated in the review had either no awareness of the Blueprint or, if they were aware, did not use it explicitly. The number of review participants from the private sector who had no awareness suggests that, within the sector, overall awareness is limited. Usage, consequently, displays a similar pattern.

*... private practitioners don't have opportunity to learn about the Blueprint unless they belong to a professional association and even then they may not come across it ... there are two concerns about how it's*

*used ... it is not well understood and it is misused ... even rebadged.*  
(Professional association executive, in private practice)

### **Usage in the tertiary sector**

The review evidence suggests, as considered elsewhere in this chapter, that usage of the Blueprint within the tertiary sector has been an effect particularly from the findings of the (Bradley) Review of Australian Higher Education (2008). Implications arising from the findings of the Review led to attention being given within the sector to ensuring the quality of support services for students from a widening diversity of socio-economic status and cultural backgrounds.

*The Bradley review has given impetus to work in the student services unit ... stronger focus on career development ... the Blueprint has been used as a resource.* (Lecturer in the university sector)

Evidence was provided of instances where student services units in universities and in training and further education colleges had incorporated the Blueprint in their work. It was cited as one of the resources used to develop programs and initiatives so that students were supported to “*make course choices from within a career perspective*”.

Comment was made about instances where the Blueprint was used explicitly in individual student counselling, including supporting students to identify where their course mix could be refined or extended to better align with their career aspirations. Comment was also made about counselling with individual students where reference to the Blueprint had been part of work to assist students to structure their learning program so that it would provide a strengthened basis for a career.

*The (institution) does not provide career development courses for students, other than for those who are or want to be career professionals ... recognise the importance of the competencies in the Blueprint for all students ... the team has worked through the Blueprint ... use it as a background framework. ... in counselling use it as a basis for a checklist when students are making choices or looking at options ... a different focus from ... resumes, applications and job search assistance ...* (Lecturer in the tertiary sector)

As noted in the discussion of ‘professional studies’ in the preceding chapter, the Blueprint is a resource that is either addressed explicitly or cited in diploma and post-graduate degree studies and in the Certificate IV in Career Development course. Evidence was provided about extensive work done in a diploma course that focused on the Blueprint, and a number of practitioners who had undertaken the Certificate IV course felt that they had had “*good exposure*” to the framework and were confident to use it.

However, as noted elsewhere, there are instances in the evidence where the Blueprint appears to have been only referred to in a list of available resources and where no practice knowledge was built explicitly around it.

Beyond such considerations, there is evidence within the university sector for leading-edge work in the career development field as an element of broader human resource development. This evidence is considered under ‘usage in business and industry’ as it relates to practice in the human resources domain.

### **Usage in business and industry**

The review evidence for usage of the Blueprint in the business and industry sector is limited, reflecting the evidence about its low level of awareness nationally in the sector. That said, there is reference in the evidence base to a relatively limited number of larger entities and corporations



where the Blueprint has been used as a resource within human development programs. This appears to have arisen where:

- the structure of the organisation is multi-faceted, enabling different career paths internally
- the culture is oriented to equipping management and staff with the broadest possible repertoire of skills and competencies as an underpinning of organisational performance
- expertise within the tertiary sector has been identified and accessed through a contracted consultancy arrangement.

None of these factors is about the Blueprint *per se*, and none of them guarantees that the Blueprint will be incorporated into the work done. However, they appear to be necessary for there to be any prospect of use of the Blueprint, either as a general reference or explicitly.

*There are three (major business entities) in ... (city) ... where we have worked with HR management in the design and delivery of staff development programs and where we have used the Blueprint ...*  
(Lecturer in the tertiary sector)

There is no evidence for the use of the Blueprint in business and industry training programs, beyond situations where an individual may have some awareness of the framework. Comment was made by some professional association executive participants in the review that the Blueprint had been brought to the attention of people in business and industry training programs, but when followed-up it was found that any awareness had not translated into usage with any explicitness attached to it.

While instances, albeit few in number, can be identified in business and industry where work has included a career development aspect, there is a demonstrably higher level of articulation of the imperatives for its inclusion in the broader context of human resource development within the tertiary sector. A structural instance that illustrates this is the Centre for Career Development at the Australian National University.

*The Centre for Career Development designs and delivers career development programs and resources informed by world-class research and practice. Our team has breadth of experience in leadership, mentoring, team performance, career development, online learning and coaching. The Centre works with staff to achieve success in their careers, conducts research into the impact of career and leadership development, and consults to both ANU staff and external clients on career and workforce development.*

*The Centre offers a suite of professional development programs and events for academic and professional staff. They reflect a whole-of-career and whole-of-enterprise approach, providing development for all staff from early to advanced career stages. In particular, emphasis is given to leadership and management development, performance and talent management and career renewal.<sup>3</sup>*

Such a structure provides potential for resources such as the Blueprint to be used. Recognition of the imperatives that are involved, and how the Blueprint may be a relevant resource, was also identified in evidence related to another tertiary institution.

*We are looking at providing career development for our administrative staff as a first step ... have looked at the parts of the (Blueprint) website*

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<sup>3</sup> (<http://hr.anu.edu.au>. (Accessed 26 October 2012)

*about adults ... interested in transferable skills ... (Practitioner in the tertiary sector)*

As commented upon in the preceding chapter, knowledge amongst the human resources departments or sections of the schooling sector authorities appears, at best, limited. No participant was able to provide any information about work done in the domain of career development for authority staff in these departments. None was able to provide any information about use of the Blueprint in these contexts, even though the senior staff were invariably known to them.

### **Usage in the professional associations**

The career development industry in Australia involves some 12 identifiable professional associations. The orientation of the majority of associations tends to be towards the schooling sector, although a number has a wider base. While there may be structural relationships between the different associations, and they come under the umbrella of the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA), it is, as one participant observed, “... a crowded room”. Consequently, there is no single picture to account for the place of the Blueprint or its usage amongst the career development professional associations.

In some associations, the Blueprint is articulated as an important resource, albeit within a range of resources. The Blueprint has been included in professional learning courses offered through the association and has been used as a reference in the development of resources for members. It has been promoted as a useful framework to other stakeholders within the jurisdiction. Typically, a link to the Blueprint website is provided on the association site.

In others, however, the Blueprint had no particular profile and the evidence suggested little use of it. Some participants in the review indicated, in the context of the needs of school-based practitioners, and as considered previously, that the Blueprint was “*not the sort of resource that career advisers are calling for*”, and that as a consequence the association made little reference to it in activities it developed and implemented.

Amongst some, the view was expressed that the Blueprint was no longer a leading-edge resource in the career development domain and that in critical work that had been undertaken in recent times it had not been referenced. One of the arguments put in this regard was that the lack of connection between a research agenda and the Blueprint has eroded confidence in it. Observations were made about the pace of change in the economy and in workforce needs and of how “*the Blueprint has lost touch by being static and not dynamic*”.

*It (the Blueprint) is no longer contemporary ... no consideration has been given to how its structure and the competencies needed to change to keep it relevant ... at a strategic level nationally there has been no capacity to maintain its value ... (Professional association executive)*

## **Applications of the Blueprint**

Associated with the national rollout, a set of purposes was proposed for the Blueprint, providing a basis for potential applications of the framework. The applications are:

- using the Blueprint as a platform to facilitate discussion with key stakeholders
- mapping existing school-wide career development activities to determine which Blueprint competencies it helps to develop
- designing a comprehensive career development program
- determining individual student competencies and developing plans to address gaps
- reviewing a career development resource to determine the career competencies it targets
- evaluating an existing career development course or curriculum

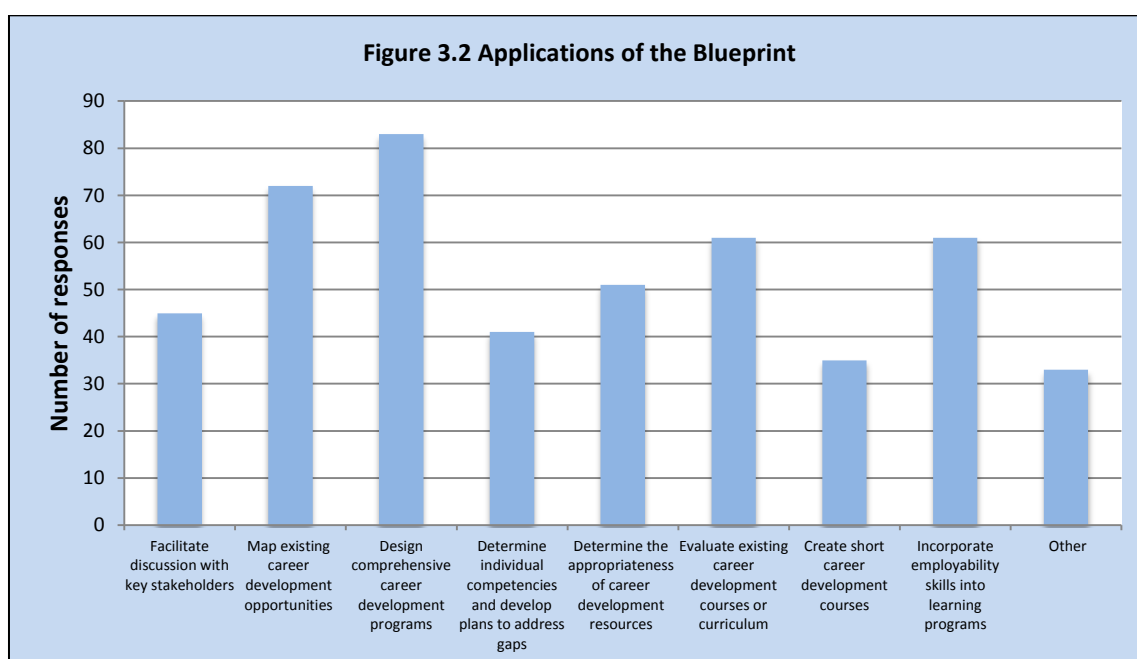


- creating a short career development course
- incorporating employability skills into learning programs.

### *Patterns of application*

The review sought information about the patterns of application against those that were envisaged for it. Figure 3.2 below sets out the response to the item that asked respondents to identify how they applied the Blueprint. These data show that there are four predominant applications, namely:

- designing comprehensive career development programs
- mapping existing career development opportunities
- evaluating existing career development courses or curriculum
- incorporating employability skills into learning.



The predominance of these applications was confirmed in the wider evidence. These applications are especially visible in the schooling sector, but markedly less so in the other sectors. A number of private practitioner participants in the review made the observation that, where the Blueprint was used, the most common applications of it were:

- a general reference to inform their professional practice
- a guide to discuss competencies with clients and to identify gaps

The other applications had little if any immediate relevance to the needs of their clients and were therefore not incorporated into their practice.

Evidence about each of the applications is discussed in the section below, 'Impacts of the applications'.

### ***Connection and alignment***

Of the four predominant applications, the incorporation of employability skills into learning programs is the one that is especially illuminated by the wider data. In the survey data, the response shown in Figure 3.2 above indicates that the Blueprint and employability skills are seemingly connected through application. Yet, as noted elsewhere in this report, there is a perceived disconnection

between the employability skills agenda and the Blueprint that can be identified in the business and industry sector and also at strategic leadership levels in a number of schooling authorities.

Analysis of the evidence shows that the disparity can be accounted for by the practical work that is being done by careers advisers in schools to bring a semblance of coherence to the relationship between employability skills and the competencies set out in the Blueprint. The fact that many careers advisers are also responsible for the coordination of VET in schools programs and courses is a contributing factor. Through their work, these practitioners are seeing the imperative to respond in a coherent way to the two areas by articulating their alignment or integration.

*... I am the full-time careers adviser but I also look after students doing VET courses ... it would be simpler if the Blueprint competencies and employability skills were in one framework ... for me, having them separated doesn't make sense (School-based practitioner)*

In the evidence there is also commentary that the applications envisaged for the Blueprint are unrealistic in many schools due to the low level of resourcing for career education. A number of participants argued that career development needed to be seen as a priority curriculum dimension. Any outcomes from the traditional approach of a weekly careers education lesson in the middle years of high school were perceived as limited. In the instances where jurisdictional work has been done to develop a curriculum framework that incorporates career development competencies, it is strongly endorsed by the practitioners. These frameworks are identified as having potential to connect all students to learning in the area.

The issue of the potential to connect the Blueprint framework competencies to the Australian Curriculum is also prominent in the evidence. One of the arguments put was that mapping the Blueprint career competencies against the Australian Curriculum would have facilitated more effective work in career development in all schools into the future. Observations were made, including by curriculum officers in the schooling agencies, that the explicit alignment of employability skills, career development competencies and the Australian Curriculum capability statements would have facilitated a coherent approach rather than “*unnecessary overlays of frameworks and statements*”. While some participants believed that the opportunity for this work has passed, others argued that this was not the case and that there was scope for it to be done.

The word “*explicit*” was used frequently by participants over the course of the review. There is a view that, however issues surrounding the Blueprint and career development generally are addressed into the future, the approach needs to be explicit. For example, the concept of integrating career development competencies into the broader curriculum was identified as potentially fraught by some in the schooling sector. That view was summed up in the following terms.

*We've seen it in the past where things have been so embedded in the curriculum that actually they were put to bed and fell asleep ... if career development competencies are important for all students, the approach has to be explicit and not generalised ... (Curriculum officer in the schooling sector)*

### ***Resourcing the applications***

One of the issues regarding application of the Blueprint that can be identified in the evidence is the view that in its design there was an overload of possible applications. An argument was put was that there should have been clarity, from the trialling, about the applications that had the greatest effect. When determined, these applications should have been the focus of the professional learning that occurred at that time and a narrower range of resources should have been developed to support effective practice in them.

*It should have been apparent that applying the Blueprint as a resource to inform program design and to analyse approach and practice in career development were where its strengths existed ... these areas have not been resourced as they should have been ...* (Professional association executive)

Another argument in the evidence that relates to the applications proposed for the Blueprint is that they are overly oriented to the schooling sector. As such, potential users within other sectors were likely to conclude that application other than in schooling was a secondary consideration. Within the evidence there is a view that a limited number of applications specific to the different areas of the career development industry should have been outlined and promoted in a targeted way.

*I have looked at the applications in the review questions. They don't especially fit with how I would use a (career development) framework ...* (Private practitioner)

### **Impacts of the applications**

This section discusses the evidence for the impacts of each of the applications envisaged for the Blueprint.

#### **Using the Blueprint as a platform to facilitate discussion with key stakeholders**

The review evidence shows that usage of the Blueprint to facilitate discussion with key stakeholders has been most marked at strategic levels within the schooling sector. It has been used particularly as a basis for the discussion of policy and approach in the career development area by program leaders.

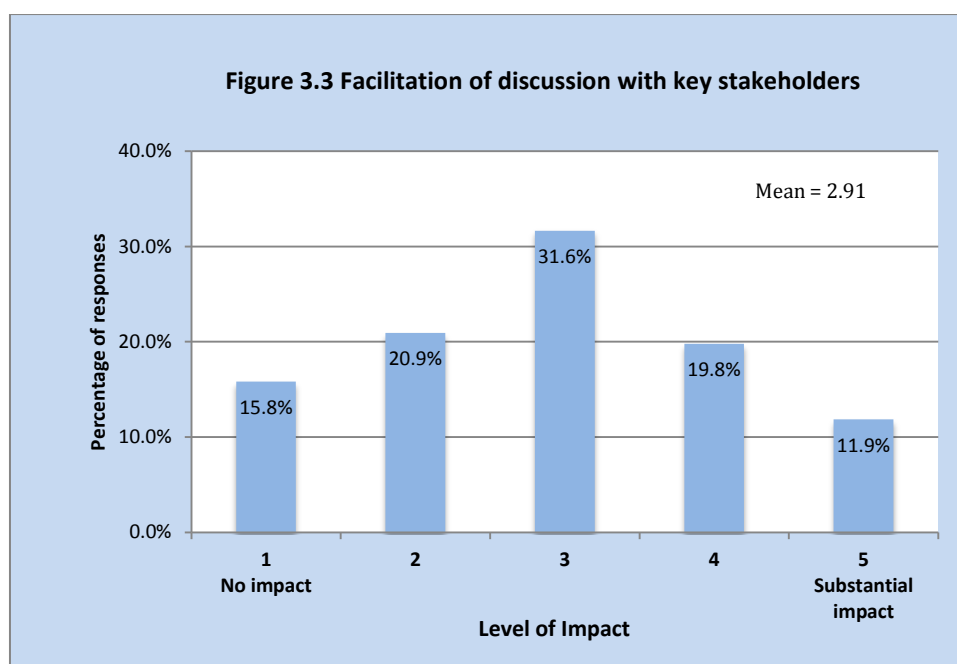


Figure 3.3 above, shows that just over 30 per cent of survey respondents believed that the impacts from this application of the Blueprint were at the higher end of the impact spectrum. These respondents were drawn substantially from curriculum officers in the schooling sector, confirming the wider evidence about the place of the Blueprint as an informing resource in at least some schooling authorities and agencies. A number of school-based practitioners observed that they had used the Blueprint to engage principals and school leaders in recognising the importance of career development.

There is also evidence for its use in this application in work done within tertiary institutions to address practice issues. While there is evidence for its use in this application where different sectors have come together, especially when focused on responding to needs for local youth, the instances are limited. In the evidence there are also instances where associations and consultants have used the Blueprint in the context of discussions with people from business and industry but, again, the instances are quite limited.

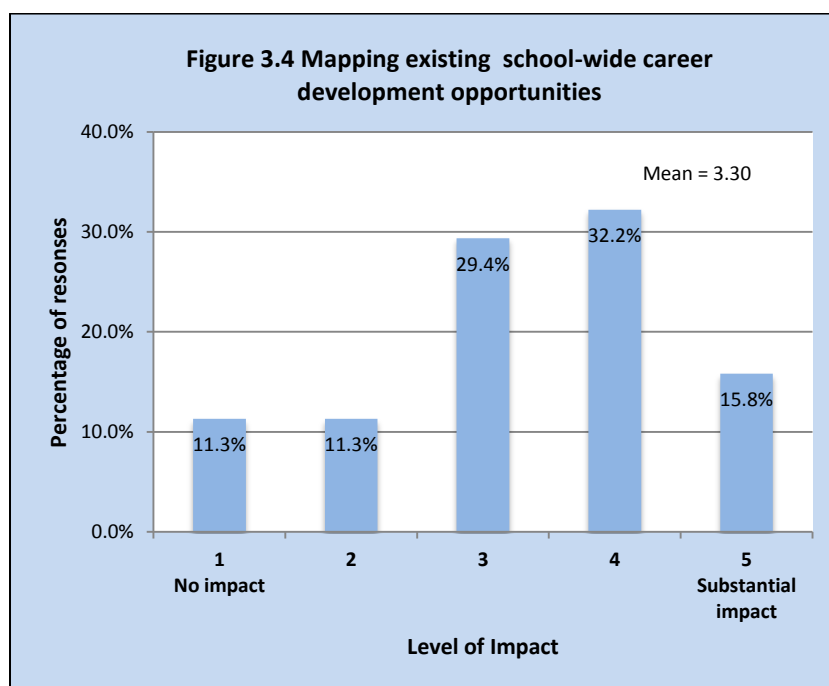
There is no strong evidence for use of the Blueprint in this application in other sectors.

***Mapping existing school-wide career development activities to determine which Blueprint competencies it helps to develop***

During the course of the review, a number of school-based practitioners referred to use of the Blueprint in this application. They were invariably in situations where the role of the careers adviser was a full time one and where the principal and other school leaders accorded their work importance.

*The school used the Blueprint to understand where different subjects were contributing to students' competencies and the areas where more effort could be made ... to ensure they could develop the competencies in the Blueprint. We were doing a lot of it without realising. (School-based practitioner)*

Figure 3.4 below indicates that for almost 50 per cent of survey respondents, this application was at the higher end of the impact spectrum.



The mapping of school-wide career development opportunities, however, was identified as both resource intensive and complex. Observations were made that in order to be done effectively, a school-wide mapping needed to be well planned and appropriately resourced.

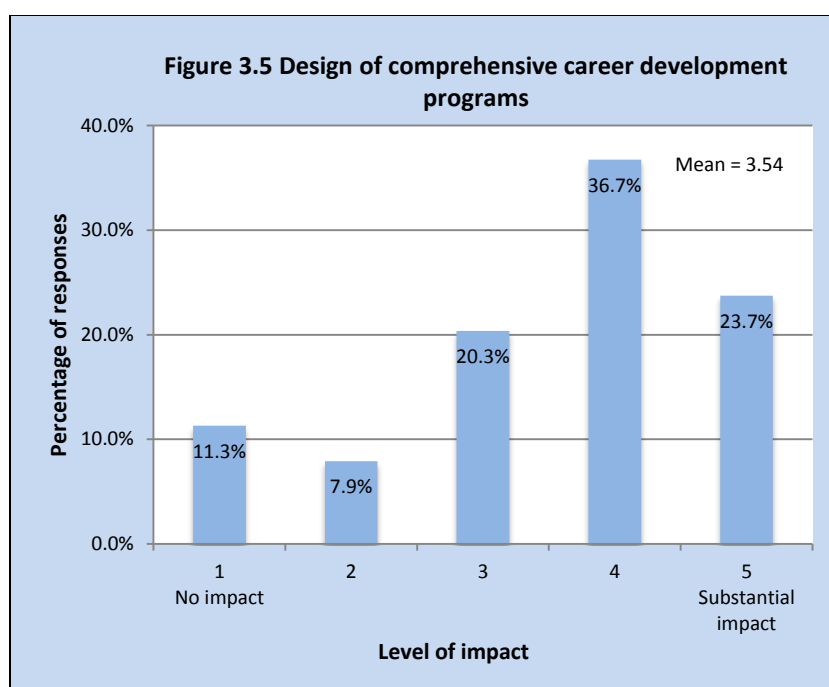
*We started to map the curriculum against the Blueprint ... it was never finished, it was a very difficult task ... people lost interest and other things became more pressing ... (School-based practitioner)*

### ***Designing a comprehensive career development program***

This application was perceived as an especially valuable one by survey respondents, with some 60 per cent indicating that it was at the higher end of the impact spectrum (Figure 3.5 below).

This application, substantially within the schooling sector, features with some regularity in the wider review evidence. The Blueprint has been identified in a number of schools, where there is scope for work in career development, as a valuable resource to bring focus and clarity to initiatives and programs. Observations were made about the value of the Blueprint in that it “*brings into one place*” the key understandings about career development that should be incorporated into a career education program. There is also evidence suggesting that the Blueprint has value for schools where there may not be sector-wide programs in career development.

*... some (Independent) schools that have a full-time careers adviser have used the Blueprint when developing their careers education program for Years 9 and 10 students ... and I have had comments back that it is something that could also be used in the primary years. (Curriculum officer in the schooling sector)*



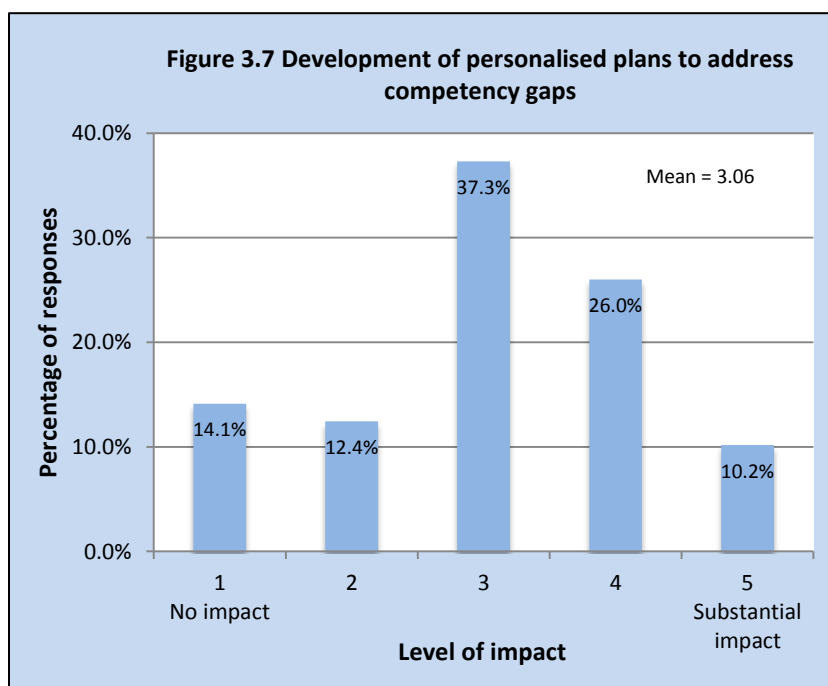
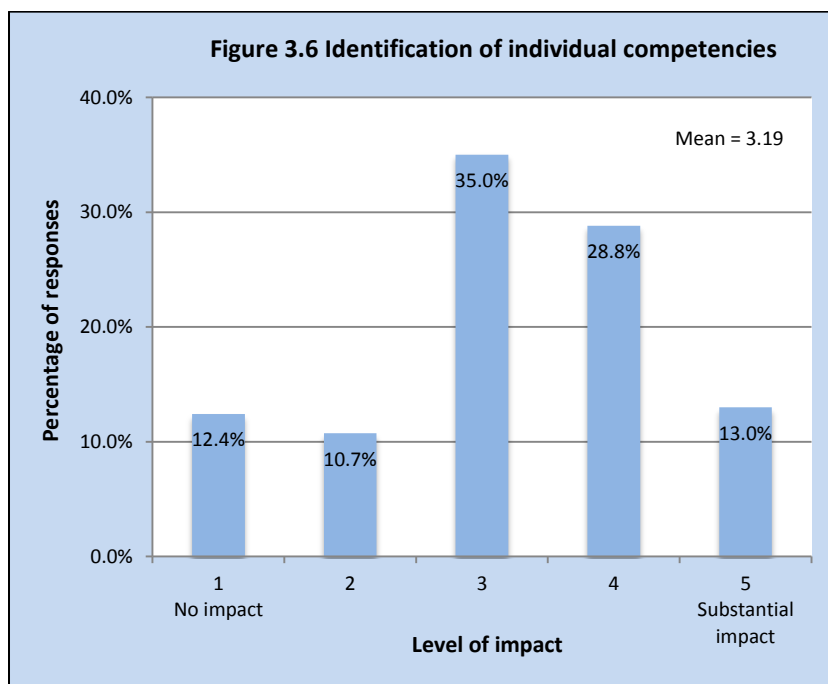
A number of curriculum officers in the schooling sector acknowledged that the Blueprint had been an informing resource in system and sector initiatives and programs in the career development domain.

*... we are doing some intensive (career development) work with pilot schools and have used the Blueprint as one of the resources in designing the program ... the Blueprint is embedded in the program and the materials that are being used ... (Curriculum officer in the schooling sector)*

### ***Determining individual student competencies and developing plans to address gaps***

From the wider evidence, this application appears to be more prominent in the private sector of the career development industry than in the other sectors. While there is evidence for this application in the schooling sector, primarily in an individual counselling context, the overall incidence is limited. Figure 3.6 below shows that over 40 per cent of respondents identified impacts for this application as

being at the higher end of the spectrum. Very substantially, in this application the evidence indicates that the Blueprint has been deconstructed into what is essentially a competency checklist format.



During the review, a number of participants expressed discernible unease about some of the practices associated with using the Blueprint as an assessment tool at the individual level.

*“... working through the competencies with a client can be very worthwhile, ... (if done) over a period of time. I would never use it as the basis for an assessment done in a single session ... that approach would have the risk of me misinterpreting their position ...the contexts I deal with are too complex to use something like the Blueprint so simplistically ...”* (Private practitioner)

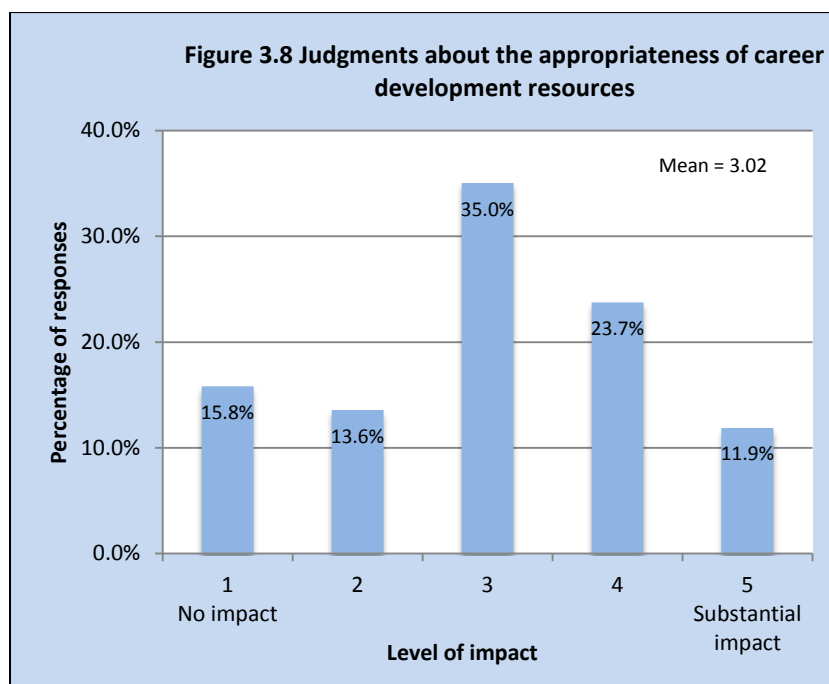
It is not surprising that the evidence about use of the Blueprint to develop personalised plans to address gaps is similar. This is illustrated by the survey data shown in Figure 3.7 above. In general, the evidence indicates that there is a suite of resources that effective practitioners use when developing individualised plans. While the Blueprint may be a valuable tool in this regard, it would appear that few practitioners rely on it even primarily and would be reluctant to attribute any impacts arising from it solely.

#### ***Reviewing a career development resource to determine the career competencies it targets***

During the review, a number of curriculum officers in the schooling sector and school-based career practitioners identified this as an important application of the Blueprint. As considered earlier, at a strategic level in the schooling systems and sectors there is evidence for processes whereby the appropriateness of career development resources is determined against the Blueprint framework.

A number of review participants in these strategic-level positions observed that, over time, this had become an important application of the Blueprint. One of the reasons for this was that by applying the Blueprint in this way a degree of consistency was brought to bear in relation to the resources that were used in programs and initiatives. Comment was also made that because of the importance to many career advisers of up-to-date resources, knowledge that a particular resource ‘fitted’ with a program was often a major determinant in school-based people preferring it to other resources that did not carry such an endorsement.

*There are instances where we become aware of new resources and we’ll sit them alongside the Blueprint and see the extent of coverage ... this has probably had more influence on schools than the actual Blueprint itself ... (Curriculum officer in the schooling sector)*



Similarly, a number of school-based practitioners observed that the Blueprint was a valuable reference point when making judgments about the suitability of career development resources. In the main, it would seem that such judgements are not necessarily made against the Blueprint directly, but there is a consciousness of its competencies and structural concepts when thought is given to resource acquisition.

*I haven't looked at the Blueprint for a while ... don't have the time ... but when I come across a new resource, I think about the Blueprint competencies and where the resource could best be used, for which Year or class. (School-based practitioner)*

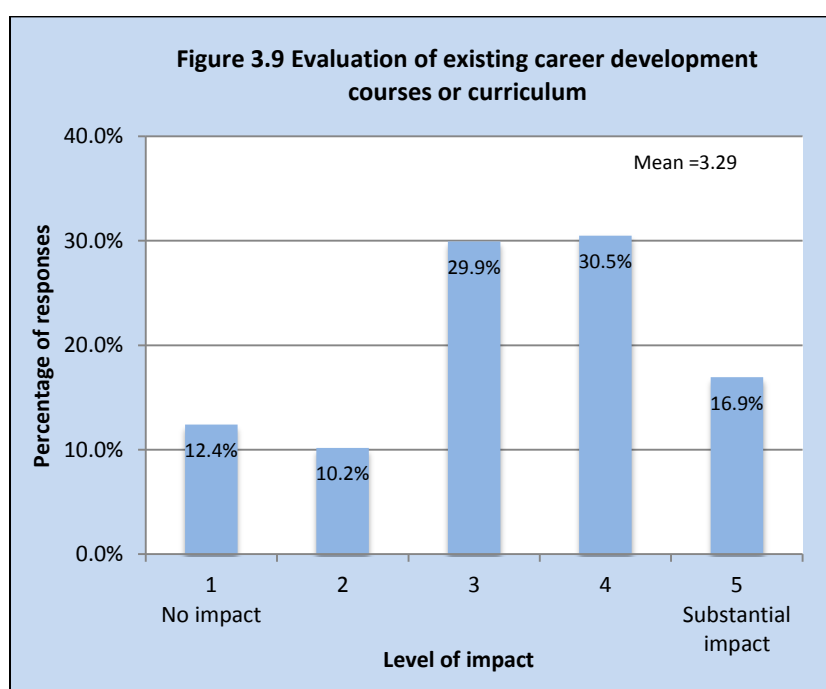
Other participants expressed the view that they preferred the guiding principles available on the CICA website to inform their decision making about resources.

### ***Evaluating an existing career development course or curriculum***

This application and the application involving the '*design of comprehensive career development programs*' (see discussion above and Figure 3.5) are perceived as having a comparable level of impact. When considered, the two are closely related. In this sense, their correlation in the evidence is understandable. The correlation may also confirm that where the Blueprint is identified as having capacity to add a level of value to work that could not otherwise be achieved, the applications will be sustained and have discernible effects.

Thus, program design emanating from the Blueprint has potential to involve sustained work that is perceived to have impacts. There is an overt value in this application. Similarly for its application in evaluation. As an explicit point of reference, the Blueprint has value in guiding evaluation and provides the structure within which judgments can be made.

Across these two applications, and where they are part of the effort to strengthen career development opportunities, the evidence suggests that the Blueprint can be a particularly powerful tool.



Although the instances where the Blueprint has been used in an evaluation application are not extensive in the review evidence, and are limited to the schooling sector, they provide understandings about how the Blueprint can enable evaluation to be conducted in the career development domain for discernible impact. As Figure 3.9 above shows, almost 50 per cent of respondents identified this application as having impacts at the upper end of the spectrum.

In the evidence base there is an instance where a jurisdiction has undertaken work to deconstruct the Blueprint as an aspect of a major curriculum initiative. The concept of benchmarking as part of



the approach to evaluation was integrated from the outset. Through its application, the benchmarking tool was identified as one of the key “drivers” for engaging schools and wider communities in career development. It gives them an informed and appropriately detailed picture from which decisions can be made about future directions and effort.

*The benchmarking works because it is an evaluation of what is happening in career development that is done cooperatively and in partnership. It gives schools information of value to them, they can see the implications ... a basis for strengthening what they do in career development and where they need to go ... a way to ensure that their practices are quality practices ... is contributing to changed practice in schools ... links directly to the Blueprint.*  
(Curriculum officer in the schooling sector)

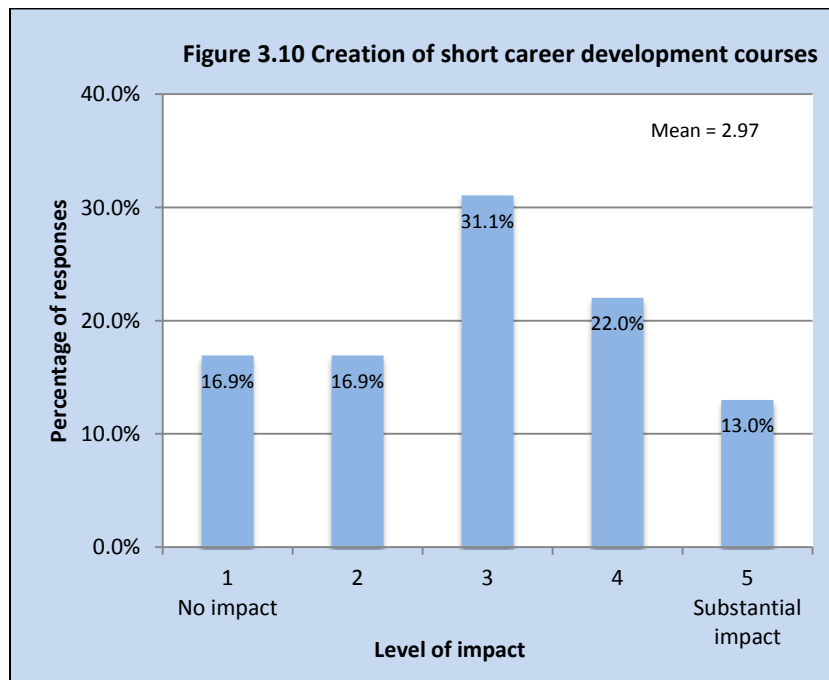
### **Creating a short career development course**

As indicated above, the incidence for this application in the review evidence is relatively limited, so that impacts need to be considered in the context of this caveat.

Some private practitioners referred to short programs that they had developed through reference to the Blueprint.

*I have used the Blueprint for designing short courses and programs for groups. I have also used it to develop a short course for (practitioners) involved in retraining injured workers.* (Practitioner in the private sector)

In the evidence there are instances where private practitioners cited use of the Blueprint as part of their preparation to provide support for clients where more than one or two counselling sessions were involved. However, in the main in this sector the Blueprint appears to have been used more as a means to judge the appropriateness of off-the-shelf courses and resources.



Beyond, this limited application in the private sector, the evidence for this application relates principally to the schooling sector. Once again, however, the concept of ‘course’ is problematic when considering the evidence for this application. While school-based practitioners who provided evidence about this application spoke about courses, they also spoke about ‘units of work’. The

pattern of application from the evidence indicates use of the Blueprint both as a resource to develop these courses or units and as a means to determine the appropriateness of off-the-shelf lesson units

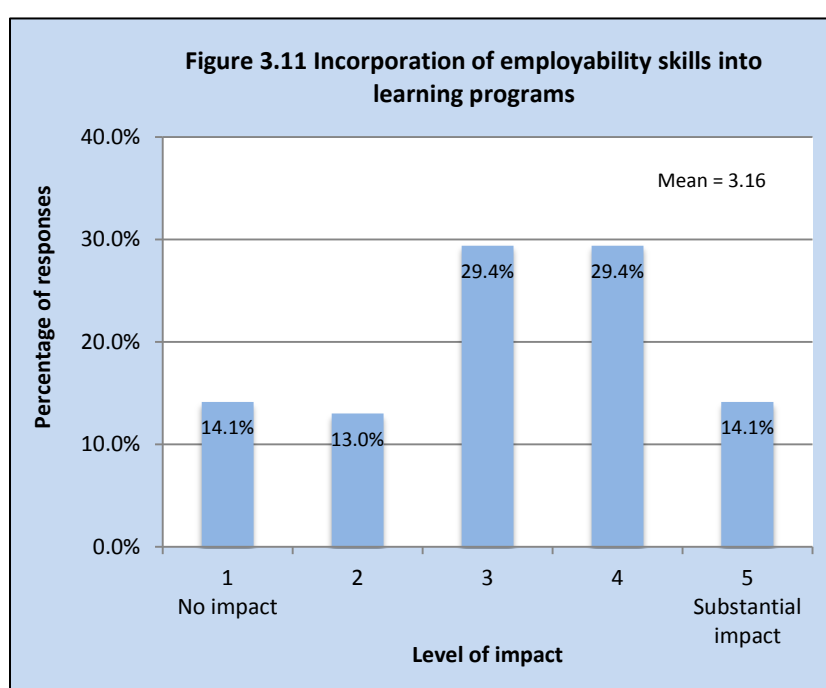
### ***Incorporating employability skills into learning programs***

The survey data in Figure 3.11 below indicate discernible impacts arising where this application occurs in schools.

The survey data, and the wider evidence, show that in instances where there is capacity and capability, school-based practitioners have applied the Blueprint in a way that contributes to the incorporation of employability skills into learning programs. Instances were cited where careers advisers with responsibility for VET programs had brought the attention of the teacher to the Blueprint and had supported its use so that there was a ‘fit’ between career development competencies and employability skills. One of the observations made was that the term ‘competency’ facilitated this work as it *“resonated”* with VET teachers, including reference to the *“Mayer key competencies”*.

In the evidence, a number of points is especially apparent.

- While the overlay of frameworks and statements in the broad area of career education, career development, employability skills and training is being rationalised by some highly experienced school-based practitioners, many are daunted by the work required to do this.
- There is a broadly held view that work is required at strategic levels to integrate these frameworks and statements, wherever possible, or to more effectively articulate their alignment so that practice in all schools is strengthened.



- The application of the Blueprint in the context of VET programs and courses may be impacting students in those courses, but this application may also constitute a skewing of effort linked to the Blueprint towards the VET area and away from the general student cohort.
- While the ‘competency’ terminology may resonate with teachers involved in the delivery of VET courses, for teachers generally it is not one commonly used in their work. Indeed, there is a marked distinction between the way in which ‘outcomes’ are typically assessed by

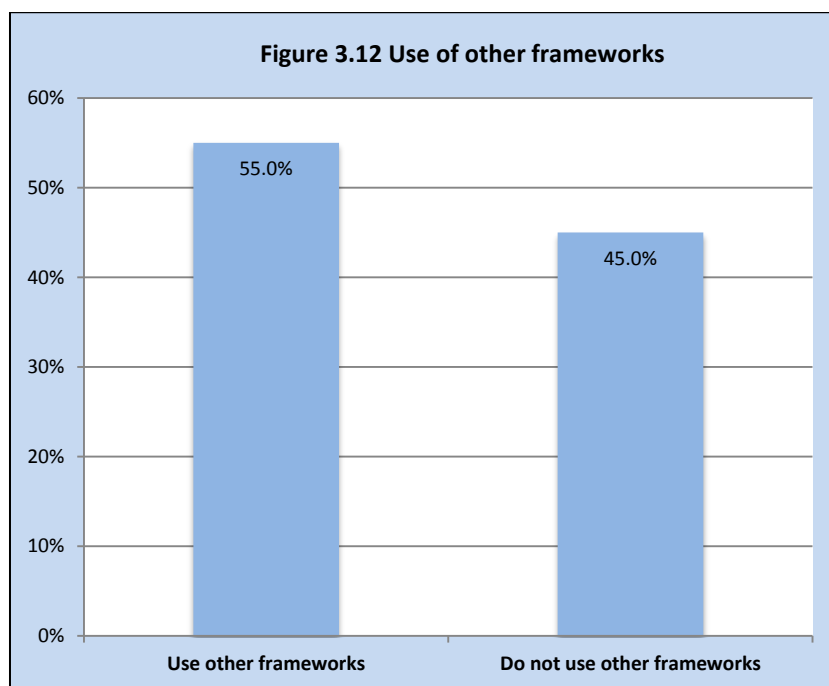
teachers, and the range of opportunities typically provided for students in VET courses to demonstrate a competency or skill.

*The practical value of the (career development) competencies for young people comes from them being assessed and reported and included in their portfolio ... this is challenging for teachers ... students should be able to demonstrate these competencies in a range of different settings, many of them outside the school ... How can that be done? How appropriate are the tools that people have? How can the assessments be moderated? ...*  
(Curriculum officer in the schooling sector)

## Other resources and frameworks

The review gathered both qualitative and quantitative data about the use by practitioners of resources and frameworks other than the Blueprint.

Many participants in the review identified the Blueprint as one of the resources that they used to inform their practice or as a tool within their practice, or both. For many, it carried no particular status and they saw no obvious imperative to use it rather than another resource. Judgments were made in relation to criteria that included: accessibility; presentation; clarity; ease-of-use; and, the degree of value added to the work undertaken. While a number of participants identified the Blueprint as their major resource, this did not mean necessarily that use of it was constant. Indeed, it could be regarded as the 'major resource' but be used only as the need arose or when people were motivated to explore aspects of it more fully.



With regard to perceiving the Blueprint as but one of a number of resources, both those involved in the design of initiatives and programs in the career development field and practitioners operating locally expressed the view that it was important to draw on a range of resources. Some expressed the view that, in any case, they were well served in this regard. Through websites such as ReCaP and myfuture they could access quality resources that made it unnecessary to refer in any systematic way to the Blueprint.

Figure 3.12 above shows the survey data for the incidence of the use of frameworks other than the Blueprint by respondents. It shows that more than half of respondents use other frameworks. While

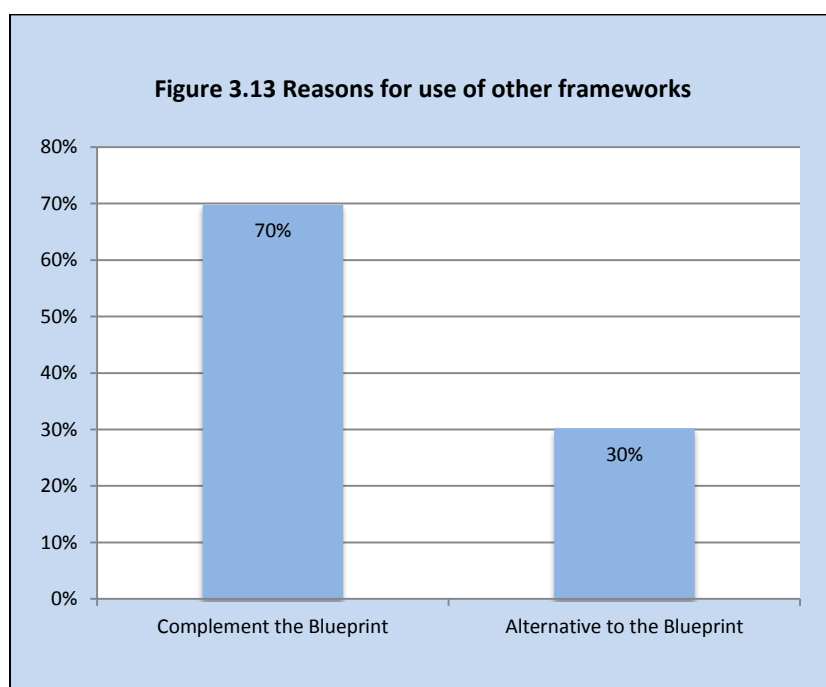
Figure 3.13 below shows that most use these other frameworks to complement their use of the Blueprint, almost a third use another framework/s as an alternative.

Where review participants commented that they used other frameworks, either as a complement or alternative to the Blueprint, there was no discernible pattern in the identity of these frameworks. That said, what was described as the “*New Zealand Framework*” (Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools, 2009) was mentioned by some. Another was the DOTS framework<sup>4</sup>.

In the evidence, participants suggested the principal desirable qualities for an effective framework. The framework:

- has a clear and simple presentation
- is contemporary by being up-dated in response to new evidence
- is sequenced over stages into adulthood
- provides clear advice about practical application
- provides clear information about effective practice.

*One of the difficulties with the Blueprint is that it is so big and contains so much detail that it cannot be kept in your head, it is hard to remember. A model developed before the Blueprint which was called the DOTS Framework, developed by Tony Watts and Bill Law in the UK, is easier to understand and to remember. (School-based practitioner)*



### Factors impacting usage of the Blueprint

From the evidence it is possible to identify a number of factors that has impacted usage of the Blueprint. These factors include the following.

- First, usage is impacted substantially by the capability of the practitioner.

<sup>4</sup> <http://nagcas.org.au/ALTC/career-development-learning/career-development-learning-educational-outcomes>). (The DOTS framework)

Capability is directly associated with the level of professional knowledge that the practitioner has about the Blueprint and the opportunities they have had for professional learning. Such learning need not be explicitly about the Blueprint. Indeed, the evidence is compelling that the Blueprint needs to be contextualised as part of broader learning in the career development domain.

That this is the case is indicated strongly by the extent to which practitioners who have undertaken formal professional studies are likely to understand the Blueprint and be confident in using it, irrespective of the application/s. The limited extent of usage of the Blueprint can be accounted for to a substantial extent by the low level of professional learning nationally that has included a focus on it. While undoubtedly high quality work was undertaken nationally in the development of the Blueprint, its trialling and rollout, the absence of a subsequent sustained strategy to broaden awareness and understanding across the career development industry has had the effect of limiting its usage. Nor can a website alone be expected to carry such a strategy.

- Second, usage is impacted by perceptions held by some about the orientation of the Blueprint.

While it is critical that the Blueprint be identified by those within the schooling sector as relevant to their contexts, a belief has arisen over time that the Blueprint was intended primarily to support career education in schools. This perception has tended to be reinforced by the 'placement' of the Blueprint within the education portfolio area.

There is a further perception in this regard that has impacted usage of the Blueprint. Where current work is inclusive of the Blueprint across the schooling systems and sectors, it is very substantially resourced through the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transition. This has tended to reinforce a belief that the primary placement of career development and, therefore, the Blueprint, is in the youth transitions area. Moreover, because the career development element is not pursued in all jurisdictions, there is no coherent national approach even in the youth transitions context.

- Third, the evidence shows a widely held belief that the Blueprint is not integrated into a national view about career development.

In this regard, the Australian Government's *National Career Development Green Paper* (June 2012) is welcomed as providing a basis for work to be undertaken through which a national framework could be placed appropriately and integrated effectively into a cohesive career development strategy. The theme of the disconnection of the Blueprint from related effort in areas covering curriculum, employability skills and training was identified especially by strategic level participants in the review.

*A fundamental concern is that there are too many generic or non-technical skills frameworks which are causing confusion. In most cases they refer to or contain the same competencies or capabilities but are labelled with different names. There is, for example, the Australian Core Skills Framework and the more recent Australian Core Skills for Work framework, ... the Employability Skills Framework, the National Trade Cadetship Framework and others.*

*Most are consistent with and draw on the Blueprint but do not acknowledge it. In Canada there is one framework. Teachers implementing career development want to know how the Blueprint fits with all these other frameworks but this is not made explicit in those documents. The Cadetship*

*Framework makes some reference to the Blueprint but it should not be used in isolation.*

Another participant in the review expressed the issue in the following terms.

*The Blueprint sits like a pebble on a rock ...* (Curriculum officer in the schooling sector)

- Fourth, it is readily apparent from analysis of the evidence that the extent and pattern of usage of the Blueprint is associated with the presence or otherwise of a coherent policy setting for career development.

While there is undoubtedly a number of functional drivers that account for usage of the Blueprint in particular instances, without an explicit policy context any reference to or use of the Blueprint is likely to be limited and incidental.

The discussion of elements of best practice in chapter 5 makes clear the importance of a policy context to support the achievement of career development outcomes, and for the Blueprint to realise its capacity to contribute to these outcomes.

- Fifth, usage is impacted by the extent to which the career development profession itself identifies the value of the Blueprint, as would be the case for any other comparable resource.

The evidence contains instances where professional associations have promoted the Blueprint to members in the context of wider professional activities. The review was made aware of an instance where a professional association had worked in partnership with the schooling systems and sectors to deconstruct the Blueprint. This work, and related effort, led to the development of a framework, associated instruments and resources to support quality practice and application at the local level.

However, such instances are in the exception rather than the rule. As noted in chapter 2, the evidence contains instances where awareness of the Blueprint was even seen as detrimental to the interests of new entrants to the profession. In other instances, the view was put that the value of the Blueprint had diminished to such an extent that what was considered as leading-edge work within the association was not even referenced to it.

One of the arguments put to the review frequently was that the value of the Blueprint would have been better sustained if an explicit research agenda had been linked to it from the outset.

*If research had been done to support the Blueprint and show what can be achieved by using it, there would have been greater confidence in it and more people would be using it ... where is the evidence that the Blueprint makes a difference?*

## Conclusion

For those who are experienced users of the Blueprint, the evidence is clear that it is strongly endorsed as a highly valued resource that informs and guides their professional practice. Where, for whatever reason, the Blueprint has gained traction, this endorsement is a prominent feature.

However, the review evidence shows that usage of the Blueprint across the Australian career development industry is not extensive when the scale of the career development industry is considered. Substantially, this can be attributed to the relatively limited awareness of it amongst many of the key constituencies. While usage can be shown in particular instances and situations, such usage does not emanate from a nationally coherent view about the place of the Blueprint in the

career development domain. The imprimatur that is explicit in the title accorded the framework has not underpinned its extensive usage.

In most situations where the Blueprint is used, this involves reference to it as a background and informing resource. The importance of such usage should be recognised, as the influence of the Blueprint on approach and practice will not always be visible. The argument put during the review that the Blueprint is a conceptual framework is supportive of its use as a background reference.

Further support for this comes from those instances where work has taken place that involves the deconstruction of the Blueprint into other forms and instruments, such that its profile amongst users must inevitably be limited. This is understandable, and enhances rather than diminishes the value of the Blueprint. In many ways, one of the most critical considerations is the way in which the Blueprint is addressed and responded to at the strategic level across the career development industry generally rather than its immediate application in localised contexts.

The Blueprint is perceived generally as oriented to the schooling sector and its usage, as a consequence, is considerably more apparent in that sector than elsewhere. The evidence for application of the Blueprint shows that the principal applications are in relation to: the development of career education programs; the mapping of existing career development opportunities; the evaluation of existing courses and curriculum; and, the incorporation of employability skills into learning programs. Other applications are not prominent.

In the tertiary sector, usage is especially associated with the counselling work of student services units. In the private practice sector, use is mainly limited to the Blueprint as a reference source and to informing intervention practices. In business and industry, to the extent that usage can be identified, it occurs principally in large business entities that have engaged highly experienced consultants from the tertiary sector.

The view that the envisaged applications of the Blueprint have unnecessarily complicated, and narrowed, perceptions of it featured strongly in the review evidence. The evidence suggests a need for greater clarity about the primary applications, supported by the research that would build greater practitioner confidence.

The Blueprint is placed within a space that, in addition to career-related competencies, extends to employability skills, VET foundational competencies and curriculum capability statements. It relates to broader issues in workforce development and the national productivity agenda. The review evidence, however, indicates that many are finding the linkages between these difficult to identify and challenging to make.

The theme of the seeming disconnection of the Blueprint from agenda areas that have national prominence featured strongly over the course of the review. There is a broadly held view that the articulation of the connections and alignments that exist needs to be prominent. The attempts of local practitioners to make these connections, however well intended, cannot be a substitute for the strategic level work that many regard as critical but yet to be undertaken.

There is a strong association between the presence of a coherent policy context for career development and the extent to which resources such as the Blueprint are likely to contribute to effective approach and practice. Without this context, reference to and application of the Blueprint appears to be problematic. The concept of a nationally coherent strategy, therefore, has potential to give the Blueprint, or any such framework, a legitimacy that it cannot have when viewed in isolation.

## Usage of the Blueprint: summation of the key findings

Table 3.2 below sets out in summary form the key findings from analysis of the review evidence about usage of the Blueprint.

Table 3.2 Usage of the Blueprint: Summation of the Key Findings

Usage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many users of the Blueprint who are familiar with it and are experienced career education practitioners regard it as a highly valuable resource.</li> <li>• Current usage of the Blueprint is most readily identifiable in sectors where awareness was greater at the time of the national rollout and in situations where explicit drivers were subsequently attached to it.</li> <li>• Usage of the Blueprint by practitioners is characterised especially by reference to the Blueprint as an informing resource so that its underpinning concepts guide approach and practice.</li> <li>• In the schooling sector, the primary applications of the Blueprint relate to program development, benchmarking, evaluation and the alignment or integration of career development competencies and employability skills.</li> <li>• Deconstruction of the Blueprint at a strategic level and its transposition into accessible tools and resources have potential to broaden usage and support effective practice.</li> <li>• The placement of career development competencies within a curriculum framework provides the greatest potential to impact the competency development of all students, associated with explicit delivery and accountability structures.</li> <li>• Usage of the Blueprint as an intervention tool is most common in the private practice sector and in organisations that address the needs of people whose competency level increases their risk of employment discontinuity.</li> <li>• Irrespective of context, usage of the Blueprint is explained largely by local factors rather than the status of the Blueprint as a national career development framework.</li> <li>• The lack of an explicit and articulated connection between employability skills and career development competencies has contributed to limited usage of the Blueprint within business and industry.</li> <li>• The lack of an explicit connection between the Blueprint and a research agenda is impacting its national status and its perceived efficacy within the career development industry.</li> <li>• A jurisdictional policy setting that explicitly incorporates career development is an essential element in enabling broader and more effective use of the Blueprint.</li> <li>• The extent of usage of the Blueprint is limited when judged against its envisaged national place in career development policy and practice.</li> </ul>



## 4 FINDINGS: THE BLUEPRINT WEBSITE

This chapter of the Review report sets out the principal findings arising from analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data that relate to the Blueprint website.

The discussion seeks to identify and illuminate the factors associated with the findings. The concluding section of the chapter canvasses the key implications, linking to the overview of the implications in chapter 7. At the end of the chapter, a summation of the key findings is provided.

### The website

The Australian Blueprint for Career Development website can be found at [www.blueprint.edu.au](http://www.blueprint.edu.au)

In addition to the framework, the website contains an extensive amount of explanatory information and resources to support the Blueprint. These include a 'Blueprint toolkit' that contains a set of resources, including:

- the Australian Blueprint for Career Development and the Appendices
- the professional development kit: Using the Blueprint with Young People
- the professional development kit: Using the Blueprint with Adults
- worksheets and activities gathered together from various users of the Blueprint and categorised by Learning Area
- a series of case studies that record the experiences of Blueprint users in a variety of contexts
- special purpose tools that can be adapted and used with clients and students, including tools provided by other users of the Blueprint
- promotional tools to be used to raise awareness of the Blueprint in organisations and networks.

The website is managed and maintained by Education Services Australia, which provides regular update reports to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

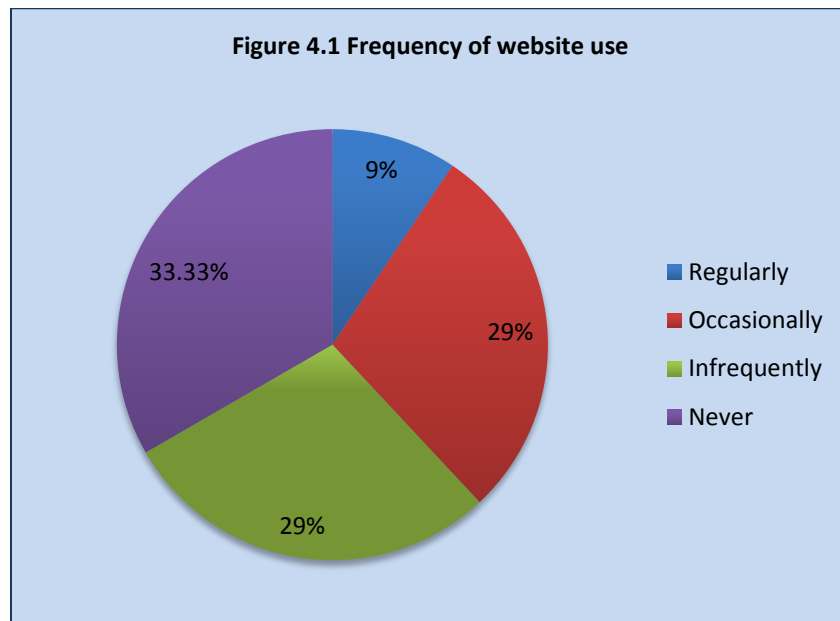
### Usage of the website

The review was asked to consider *the degree to which the website supports and encourages use of the Blueprint*.

Figure 4.1 below sets out the survey data about the frequency of respondent use of the website.

The results show that some 40 per cent of respondents used the website 'regularly' or 'occasionally', while approximately 60 per cent used it either 'infrequently' or 'never'. The contrast between 'frequent use' and 'no use' is marked, being 9 per cent compared to 33 per cent. The data in Figure 4.1 need to be considered against the fact that the respondents in the main would be aware of the Blueprint, and that a substantial proportion of those would almost certainly be users of it one way or another.

Analysis of the wider data suggest that regular users of the website are practitioners who centre much of their work around the Blueprint. Thus, use of the website on a regular basis has become intrinsically a part of their professional practice. Analysis of the respondent data indicates that many are school-based practitioners. The 'occasional' users, also largely school-based practitioners, include especially those who re-visit the website when searching for resources to support established programs or when they are planning new initiatives. The same usage pattern appears, from the wider evidence, to apply to 'infrequent' use.



The survey data also show frequency of use by respondents from the schooling, tertiary and private sectors.

**Table 4.1 Sectoral frequency of use of the Blueprint website**

Sector	Regularly	Occasionally	Infrequently	Never
Schooling	10.4%	30.6%	34.1%	24.9%
Tertiary	14.3%	14.3%	17.9%	53.9%
Private	3.7%	29.6%	16.7%	50.0%

The data in Table 4.1 above show that use of the Blueprint is greatest in the schooling sector, paralleling the wider review evidence about awareness and usage of the Blueprint in that sector. While there is a discernible element of regular usage in the tertiary sector (14.3 per cent), in the private sector this falls to 3.7 per cent.

The wider evidence suggests that people whose knowledge of the Blueprint goes back to the original developmental work, were involved in its trialling or participated in professional learning associated with the national rollout are especially represented amongst the regular users of the website. From the evidence there appears to be correlation between this deeper level of knowledge and more regular use of the website.

*I have used the website from the start, but ... think for many practitioners not overly familiar with the framework ... it wouldn't be the easiest of sites to use ... there needs to be something that will capture the attention of these people and assure them the site is worthwhile ... (Curriculum officer in the schooling sector)*

The wider evidence suggests that within both occasional and infrequent users of the Blueprint website are those who:

- primarily use the Blueprint as a general background reference rather than explicitly
- from time-to-time may search for, access or download a particular resource

- prefer to use a hard copy version of the Blueprint and perceive no need to access the related information and resources available through the website.

*I'd say I've used the website three or four times ... looked at some of the material in the toolkit ... but I use other sites to get what I want ... (School-based practitioner)*

The wider evidence suggests that primarily represented amongst those who never use the website are:

- those who are aware of the Blueprint but who prefer to use other frameworks
- those who access and use resources available through sites such as ReCaP and myfuture rather than the Blueprint website
- use only a hard copy version of the Blueprint, perhaps obtained during the time of the national rollout.

The evidence indicates that for practitioners, irrespective of sector, who have a hard copy of the Blueprint, obtained either at the time of the rollout or downloaded from the website, are amongst those who are unlikely to use the website, or who use it infrequently. This is particularly the case for school-based practitioners.

*I still have my printed version of the Blueprint that was distributed to schools. I have looked at the website, but have not used anything from it. If I want resources, there are plenty of sites where you can download off-the-shelf units. I usually look at the Blueprint when I want to double-check something ...that's easier than going to the computer ... (School-based career practitioner)*

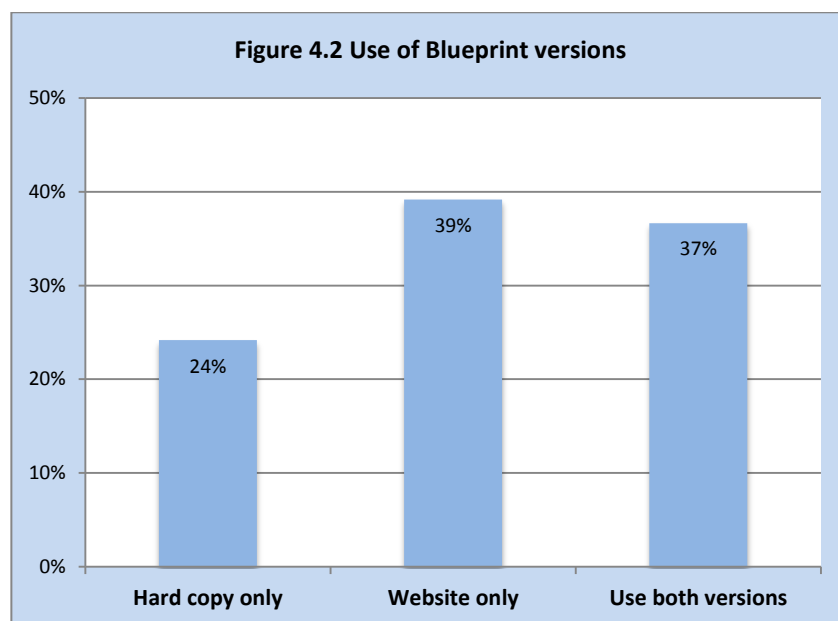


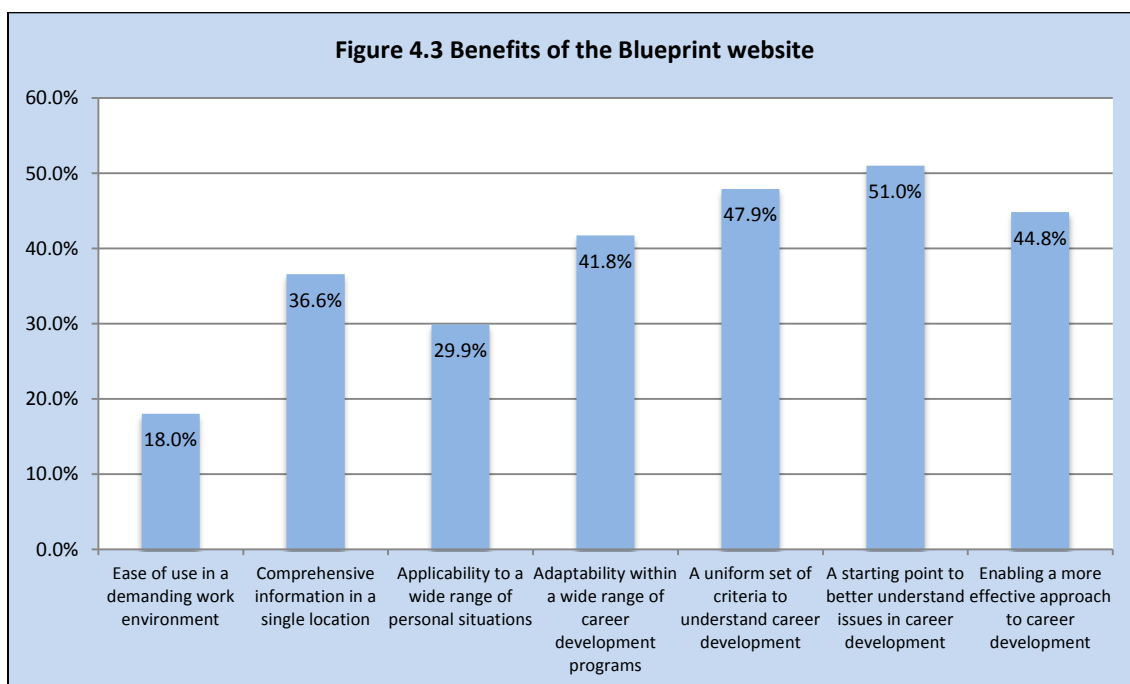
Figure 4.2 above shows respondent data against use of the hard copy version of the Blueprint and the version available through the website. The data indicate the strong residual effect of the hard copy provision of the Blueprint, with one in four respondents four years after the Blueprint rollout indicating that they used only a hard copy of the Blueprint. While 'hard copy' may have been interpreted to also include downloaded copies, the wider evidence suggested the continuing profile of hard copies distributed as part of the national roll out.

## Benefits of the Blueprint website

Figure 4.3 below provides data about the perceptions of survey respondents concerning the benefits of the Blueprint website.

The survey data are confirmed by the wider evidence from the review. Substantially, the website is perceived as enabling understandings to be gained about the concept of career development competencies and how they can be fitted into an overarching framework. It is the access to the framework itself on the website that is its most valued feature, irrespective of the usage of other pages within the site. Moreover, this confirms the predominant application of the Blueprint as a generalised background reference. Practitioners and others are going to the website to “*get their heads around the framework*” and, as such, it is a key starting point for building wider understanding of the career development domain.

The material and resources surrounding the framework on the website appear to be markedly less consequential than the framework itself. In part, that may be explained by the relatively low percentage of respondents who identified the website as enabling “*ease of use in a demanding work environment*”. Once the framework has been accessed, many appear to find the other aspects of the site to be of lesser value. It would appear what they are looking for is the connection of the framework to wider career development understandings and resources, not to those that appear, rightly or wrongly, delimited to the Blueprint. Apart from any other consideration, few have the sort of time to stay within the website or to revisit it as regular users.

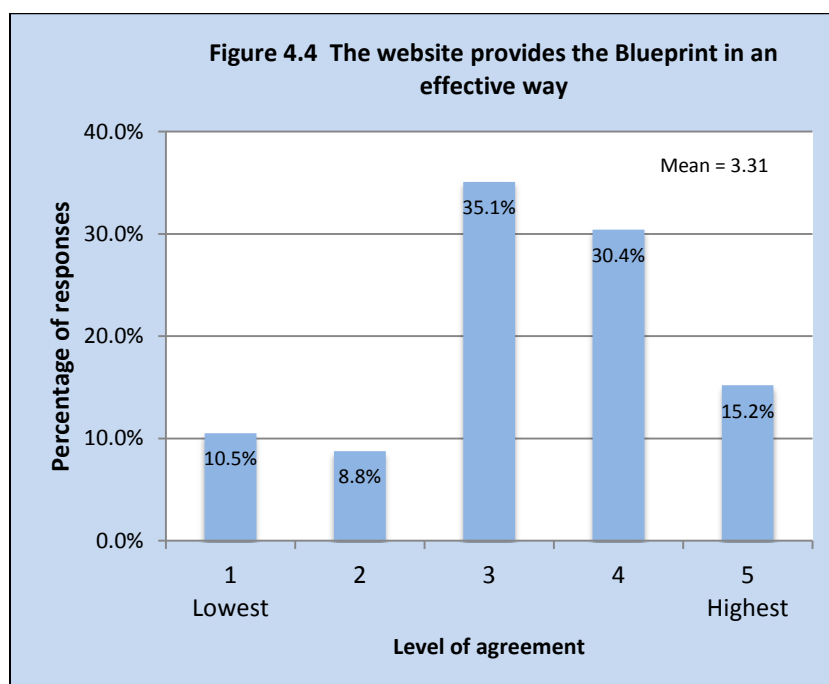


## Effectiveness of the Blueprint website

The review gathered and analysed data about the effectiveness of the website from practitioners and others who either used the website or were aware of it.

### Overall effectiveness

Figure 4.4 below provides survey data about respondent perceptions of the overall effectiveness of the Blueprint website.



The survey data in this regard are confirmed by the wider review evidence. Few participants felt that the website was an ineffective one.

*I looked at the website only when this meeting for the review was known ... it seems OK to access and use, but I think a person in a school would find it not very attractive and boring. (Curriculum consultant in the schooling sector)*

Irrespective of any such issues related to the degree of effectiveness of the website, it is perceived overwhelmingly by review participants as well managed and as providing a substantial suite of information and resources.

### **Access and navigability**

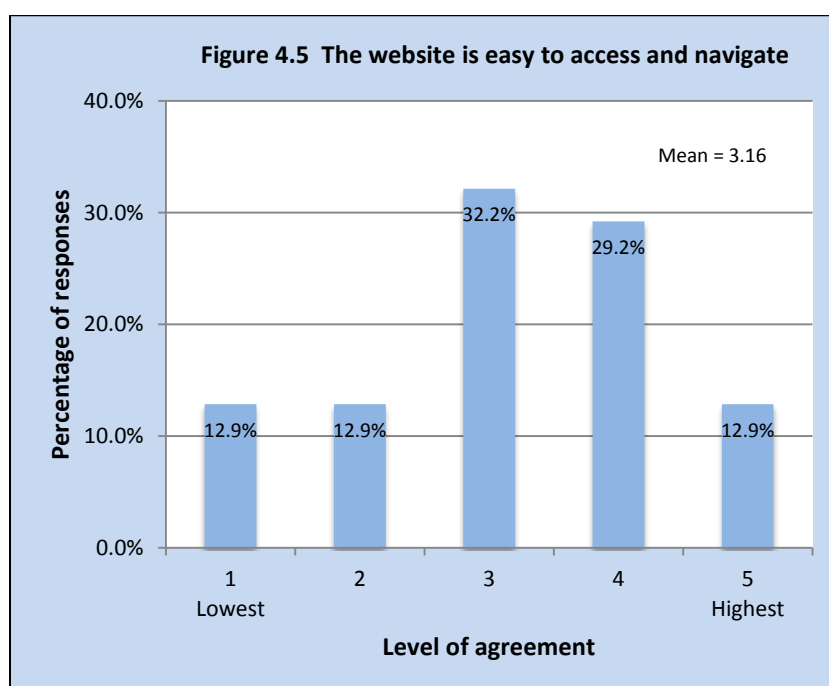
Figure 4.5 below shows survey data about the accessibility and navigability of the Blueprint website.

While the data indicate that some 42 per cent of clients rate access and navigability highly, they also show that one in four respondents did not. This would tend to confirm the wider evidence that access and navigability are not an issue for experienced users of the website, but for new or infrequent users there are issues that are limiting effective use of the website. In any event, for some 60 per cent of survey respondents to rate access and navigability as being in the mid-range or lower, suggests that there are issues that could be addressed.

A number of participants observed that even as regular users of the website they believed that navigation could be better facilitated. The word “clunky” and similar was used by some participants, suggesting that consideration could be given to how users of the website could be better supported to move from one area of the site to another, or within areas.

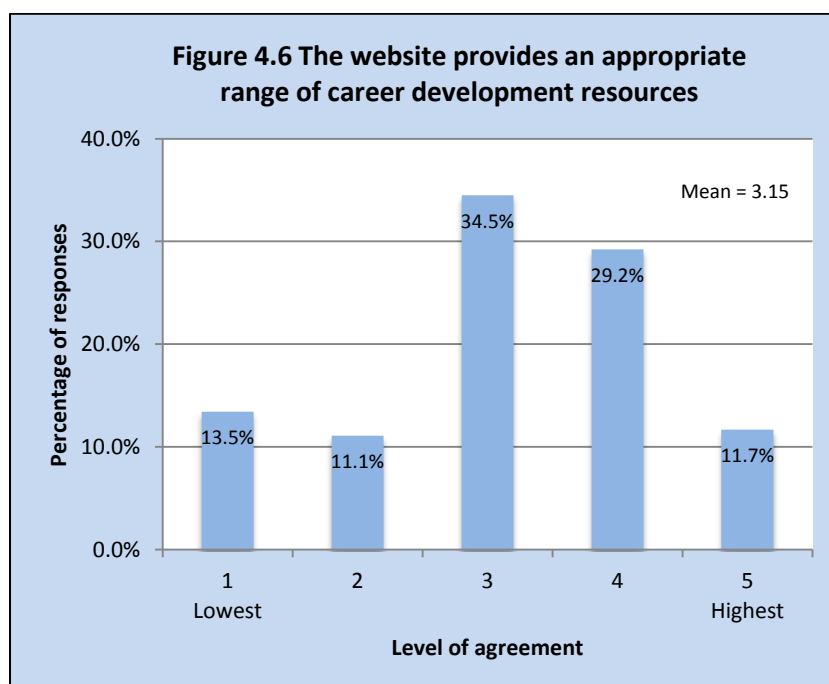
Comment was also made that while the website was a valuable repository of information, it may be timely to give it a “more up-market feel” as a means to encourage more frequent use of it.

As noted elsewhere, the possibility of differentiated portals was canvassed by a number of review participants as a means to improve user access.



### ***Appropriateness of resources***

Figure 4.6 below provides respondent data from the survey about the appropriateness of resources to support the Blueprint that are available through the website. While some 40 per cent affirmed the appropriateness of the resources, a discernible proportion of these comprised strategic level officers in the schooling agencies.

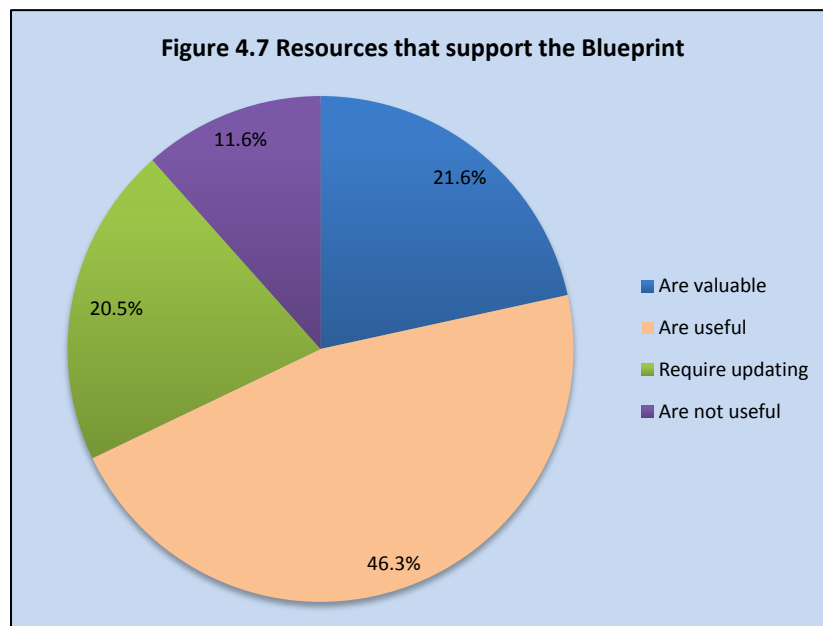


Practitioner respondents, the majority of whom were school-based, are represented more obviously in the mid-range and lower response points of the spectrum. This 'spread' parallels the wider evidence. School-based practitioners in particular often viewed the resources on the website as lacking the sort of practical application that could be found in resources elsewhere. Their principal consideration in this regard would have been "*appropriateness*" in the context of their needs A

number of calls was made during the review for the more regular up-dating of resources on the website.

As well as any adjustments to the website resource bank, there also may be implications related to how the existing resources can be identified and presented within the website so that practitioners can more readily appreciate their useability.

While not explicitly placed in the context of the website, information was also sought about the value of the resources generally that are attached to the Blueprint. For most, the website would be the location for these resources. As shown in Figure 4.7 below, some 70 per cent of respondents believed that the resources were either valuable or useful. The approximately 20 per cent of respondents who believed that the resources required updating were drawn especially from strategic level positions in the schooling sectors and the tertiary sector.



### *Meeting client needs*

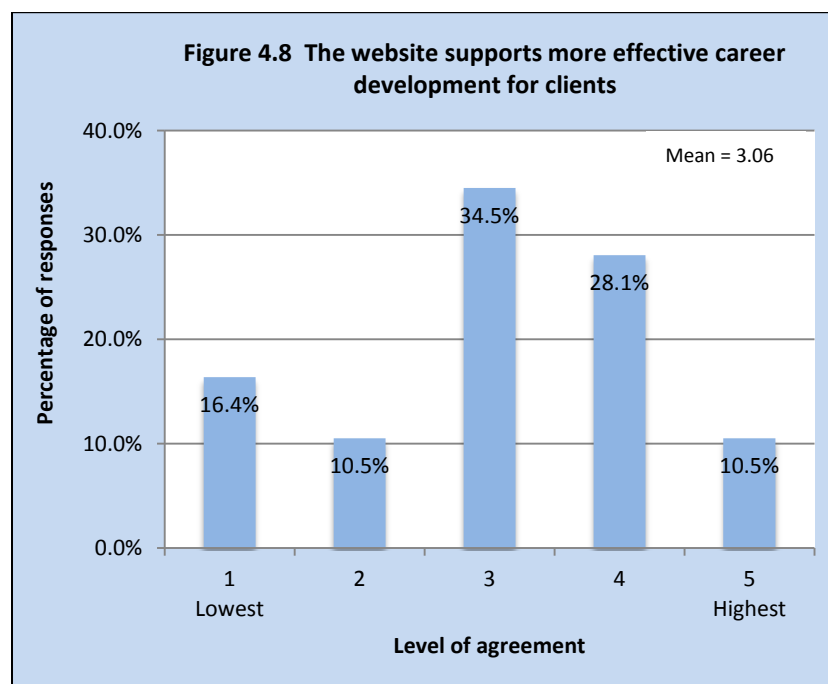
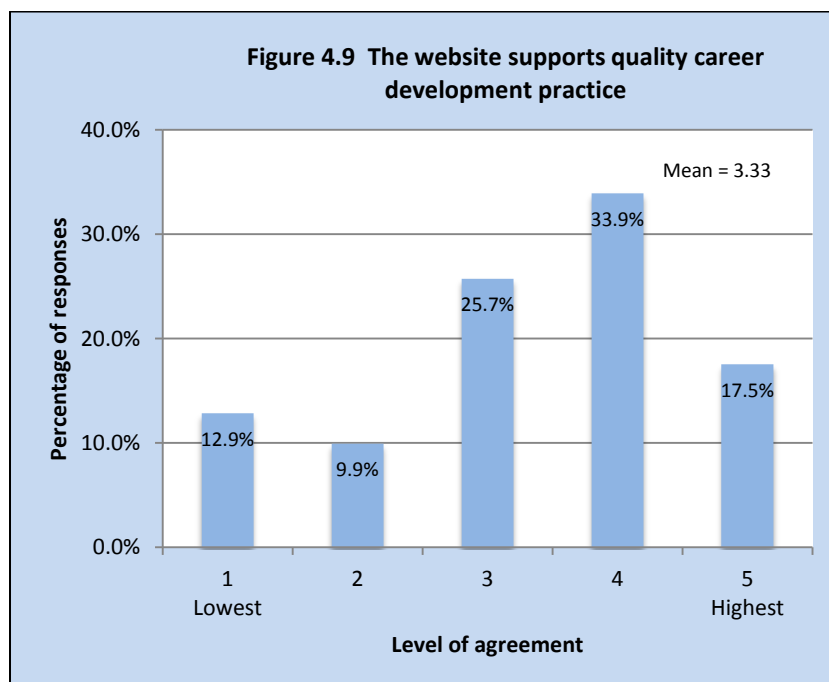


Figure 4.8 above provides survey response data about the extent to which the Blueprint website supports more effective career development for clients. The data show that almost 40 per cent of respondents believed that the Blueprint website supported client needs. The wider evidence suggests that this is substantially related to the access the Blueprint website provides to the framework for practitioners and their use of it. It is unlikely that the meaning of the upper-end response data extends substantially beyond this meaning.

At the lower end of the response spectrum, some 25 per cent of respondents did not rate the Blueprint website highly in this regard. Within this response group, private practitioners were particularly represented. This is understandable given their needs, identified in the wider evidence, related to tools and resources that would support intervention-based practice.

### *Quality practice*



The response data in Figure 4.9 above affirm wider evidence from the review that the conceptual underpinnings of the Blueprint and the levels through which it is structured make it a valuable resource. Even those likely to find accessing the website difficult because of local capacity and capability restraints recognised the reality that the website is focused on supporting effective application of the Blueprint.

Moreover, in jurisdictions where work has been undertaken involving the deconstruction of the Blueprint into other forms and instruments, the website was an important source of information. The value of the website was commented on in this regard during the review.

That said, the fact that some 48 per cent of responses were in the mid-range and lower, suggests that this aspect of the website could be strengthened. Although the site provides information about the Blueprint in practice, the evidence suggests that practitioners are looking for such information, linked to quality practice, to be presented in a form that is more accessible and relevant to their needs.

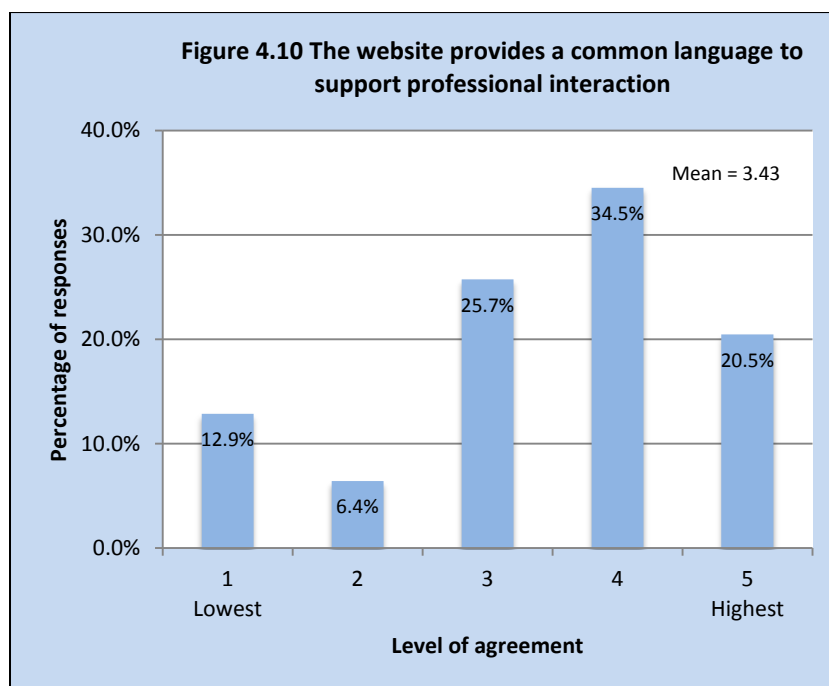
### *A common language*

One of the intended benefits of the Blueprint was that it would provide a common language to support practice within and across the career development industry. As can be deduced from the survey data in Figure 4.10 below, the material placed on the website was perceived very substantially

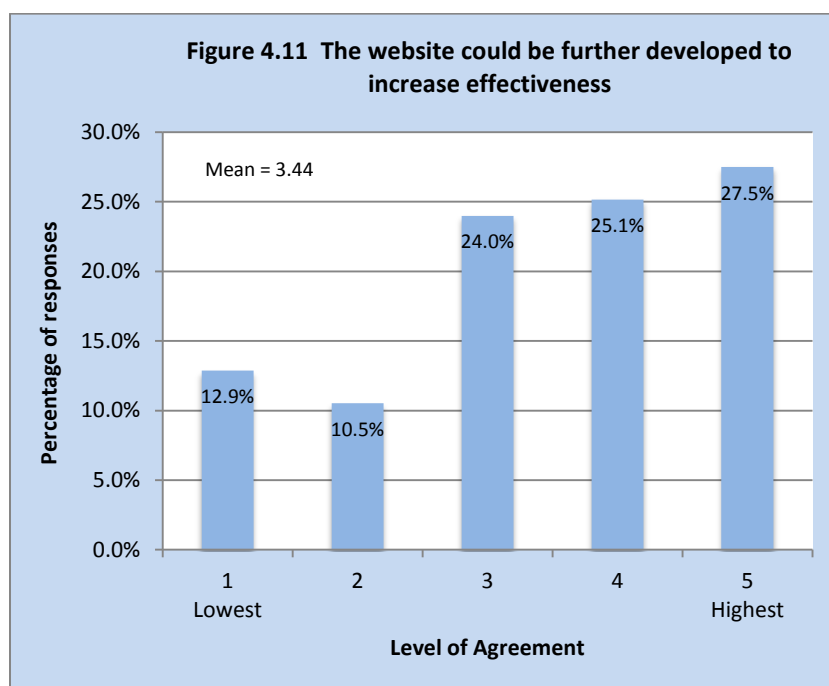


as supporting this intent. Indeed, some 55 per cent of respondents identified the website as contributing to this outcome. Nevertheless, some caution is required. Respondents from the schooling sector were substantially represented in the middle and upper end responses. Non-schooling sector respondents were more highly represented in the lower end responses.

Given that the responses at the lower end of the spectrum constituted approximately 20 per cent of the total response, one in five felt that the website did not provide the level of language commonality required to support professional interaction. This would align with the wider evidence about the perception of many practitioners in the private sector particularly that the language with which the Blueprint is associated is overly couched in terms that would resonate with educators.



### Further development



The review sought understandings from participants about whether they believed the Blueprint itself should be further developed. A number of participants, especially at strategic levels in schooling agencies, the tertiary sector and in the professional associations, put the view that it was critical for this development to occur. Similarly, respondents to the survey supported the concept that the website should also be further developed. The two are intrinsically linked.

Figure 4.11 above shows that some 52 per cent of survey respondents believed that the website should be further developed to increase its effectiveness. The following, some of which have been noted previously, were particularly mentioned in the qualitative review evidence.

- The website should provide differentiated entry portals to increase access by practitioners across the career development industry.
- There should be differentiated pathways through the website leading to the information and resources relevant to each sector.
- The language of the website should be considered with regards to its inclusivity for all sectors.
- The website should provide capacity to access current research relevant to the Blueprint.
- The website should include an interactive capacity for professional dialogue related to approaches and practices associated with the Blueprint.
- Sector-specific resources that incorporate contemporary understandings about effective use of the Blueprint should be identified and placed within the website.

### Factors impacting usage of the Blueprint website

From the evidence it is possible to identify a number of factors that particularly impact usage of the Blueprint website. These factors include the following.

- Where practitioners have capacity and capability to incorporate the Blueprint into their practice, they are more likely to access the website than where their capacity and capability are limited. In the evidence, there is considerable commentary about the practical realities confronting careers advisers in schools where there is a minimal time allocation made available.

With regard to usage of the website, review participants in such situations repeatedly stated that there was a disconnection between what was possible in their immediate context and what was available through the website. It was particularly these participants who argued that the website needed to be configured with them in mind. Their priority need was for a unitary career development website that had a simply presented framework, practical and ready-to-use resources and tools, guidance on effective practice and exemplars of best practice.

- The career development industry covers a wide range of sectors and within sectors there is often variation in needs related to practice. For example, the needs of a practitioner in a school are likely to differ markedly from those of a private practitioner. At a finer level of differentiation, the needs of a private practitioner supporting a newly arrived skilled migrant wishing to have a successful career in their field are likely to differ from those of a practitioner working in an employment placement agency. One of the recurring observations in the review was that there should be a range of portals through which users could enter the website and that once past the portal they should be able to navigate readily to the information and material most appropriate to them. The present 'universal portal' for the website was identified as not facilitating this wider usage.
- One of the issues referred to by a number of review participants was whether the Blueprint website should be a stand-alone site or whether it would be best placed within a site where it was explicitly integrated into the national career development agenda. One of the

arguments put was that by having its own website issues related to the perception that the Blueprint is not well linked to broader national agendas is exacerbated and that the “*wrong signal is sent*” about its place. It was argued that one of the consequences of placing the Blueprint within a holistic site would be opportunity to “*de-clutter*” it and strengthen the focus on the framework.

- In the evidence, there is commentary about what the website represents and how this representation could be modified to better meet a fuller spectrum of user needs. Substantially, the website is endorsed as a valuable repository of information about the Blueprint. Beyond accessing the site to download a copy of the framework, there are, especially for experienced practitioners, numerous and highly informing resources and a great deal of high value information. For many of these people, irrespective of the frequency of use, the website is simply part of their practice.

*It's a great site, I can go there and download the resources needed ... it's well managed, and easy to use.* (Curriculum officer in the schooling sector)

Other views are also part of the review evidence. In particular, observations were made that changes could be made to the website to make it more user-friendly for practitioners. One of the recurring views was that its style conveyed an impression of the Blueprint being static, and that work could be undertaken to give the site a more dynamic and interactive flavour. A number argued that the website could set out the current research being undertaken to demonstrate the efficacy of the Blueprint, especially in different contexts. Particular mention was made of research to demonstrate effective application of the Blueprint in the context of Indigenous communities. Additionally, there was also commentary about the need for wider research addressing evolution of the competencies in response to changes in the economy and the society.

*Generally, teachers find the website daunting and confusing. ... its resources are not identified as resources ... for the busy teacher looking for quality materials, access to resources is a key to engaging them in the framework.*

*The website is too static, it needs to be more interactive. It's the sort of site you look at once and may not do so again, or for quite some time. It needs to be a shared space, a place that grounds professional dialogue, that can be added to, for example, current and planned research, invitations to teachers to undertake mini-studies and action research.* (Curriculum officer in the schooling sector)

## Conclusion

The Blueprint website is viewed unequivocally as a well managed website. For those who are immersed in the Blueprint and who are aware of and use the Blueprint website with some regularity, the website by-and-large is seen as a highly valuable repository of information and resources to support application of the Blueprint.

The evidence shows that usage of the Blueprint across the career development industry has not reached the levels that were envisaged initially. The review data show that a significant proportion of people who were aware of the website use it only infrequently or not at all. A seeming legacy of the initial rollout is a reliance by a discernible number on a hard copy version of the Blueprint rather than using the website. This is not necessarily a negative consequence, except that reliance on a hard copy version alone may be precluding some practitioners from accessing and being aware of the suite of materials and information on the website that would support their practice.

The resources provided through the website are generally valued, although their orientation to the schooling sector has tended to reinforce a perception that the website is not inclusive of other

sectors in the career development industry. For private practitioners in particular, the Blueprint website appears to be not well known and little used.

There is a broadly held view by users of the Blueprint website that it needs to be a contemporary site. In this regard, there is a belief that, should a research agenda be attached to the Blueprint to underpin its continuing relevance and value, such research should be explicit within the website. In the wider evidence, there were calls for the Blueprint to be associated with a much stronger professional dialogue. The capacity of the website to facilitate such a discussion could be an aspect of its future improvement.

In the evidence, there is a discernible wish that the Blueprint website both reflect and contribute to an innovative agenda in career development nationally. An aspect of this may be that 'less is better', so that its presentation style is simple, conveying an immediate message about its value to all in the career development industry. This would accord with the views expressed about a desired model for a framework on a website. There seems, at the end of the day, little gain in having such a valuable resource as the Blueprint if it does not engage its potential constituencies at a higher level than is now the case.

Ultimately, however, issues affecting the Blueprint website are secondary to those about where the Blueprint framework should be placed in a national career development strategy. Any website is an instrument that reflects intent. If the intent is that the Blueprint be a stand-alone resource that is used essentially at the discretion of those in the industry, then the current place and structure of the website is probably appropriate. However, should there be a view that the Blueprint needs to have a more integrated place within a national career development strategy, then consideration will need to be given as to how that intent can be best realised through contemporary technologies.

## The Blueprint website: summation of the key findings

Table 4.2 below sets out in summary form the key findings from analysis of the review evidence about the Blueprint website.

**Table 4.2 The Blueprint Website: Summation of the Key Findings**

The Website
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Blueprint website is a substantial repository of valuable understandings and information.</li> <li>• The Blueprint website is regarded as enabling key conceptual understandings about career development to be formed.</li> <li>• For those experienced in and familiar with the Blueprint, the site is identified as accessible and readily navigable.</li> <li>• For those who are not immersed in the Blueprint and who are unfamiliar with it, access and navigability are not necessarily easy.</li> <li>• The capacity and capability of many school-based career practitioners to access the website is limited, with the consequence that it is disconnected from many potential users.</li> <li>• The website could be developed to provide differentiated entry portals, the identification of sector-specific resources and the provision of information about contemporary research linked to the Blueprint.</li> <li>• The website could be improved by incorporating an interactive capacity to promote professional dialogue related to effective practices associated with application of the Blueprint.</li> <li>• A simplified presentation of the Blueprint and key supporting resources could be included in a unitary Australian career development site rather than having a stand-alone Blueprint website.</li> </ul>

## 5 FINDINGS: EFFECTIVENESS

This chapter of the Review report sets out the principal findings arising from analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data that relate to the effectiveness of the Blueprint.

The discussion seeks to identify and illuminate the factors associated with the findings. The concluding section of the chapter canvasses the key implications, linking to the overview of the implications in chapter 7. At the end of the chapter, a summation of the key findings is provided.

### The Goals

The review was asked to consider *whether the Blueprint is meeting its stated goals*.

A set of goals is attached to the Blueprint. As provided also in chapter 1, the goals are that the Blueprint will:

- provide a common language across the career development domain
- enable greater coherence in accounting for initiative outcomes
- contribute to a reduction in service overlay and duplication
- enable gaps to be identified in service delivery
- facilitate smooth linkages between career development programs and services
- provide a basis for producing quality career development resources for use with and by different client groups
- contribute to a better match between individuals' skills and job aspirations, and their actual employment choices
- enhance human resources practices within both public and private sector organisations
- enable individuals to manage their careers and work/life balance more effectively, particularly in a rapidly changing labour market
- encourage people of all ages to engage in purposeful learning
- support a culture of lifelong learning and development in Australia.

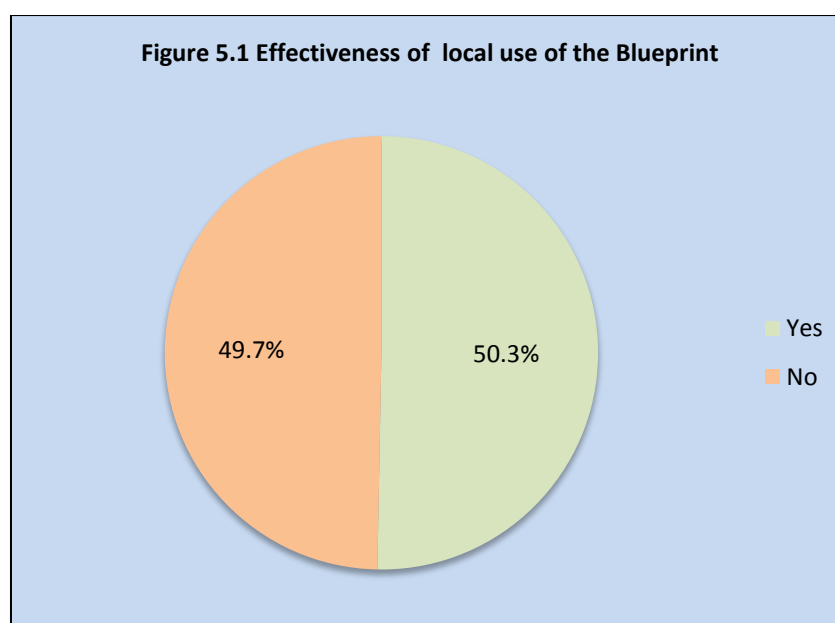
By any measure, these are ambitious goals for one framework, albeit one pitched at a national level. Over the course of the review, participants with a range of perspectives explored the effectiveness of the Blueprint and the extent to which it was addressing the goals set for it. Analysis of the evidence showed that consideration needed to be given to the perceived effectiveness of the Blueprint, in a generalised sense, and the extent to which this related to its capacity to fulfil the specific goals attached to it.

The initial goals for the Blueprint are high-order, strategic-level expectations. They are not expectations at an instrumental level. The evidence shows that, at best, a framework such as the Blueprint can 'contribute' to the achievement of such goals, but that it would be a fraught exercise to hold it accountable for them. Thus, the issue of attribution figured prominently in the evidence about *"whether the Blueprint is meeting its stated goals"*. How can outcomes at a strategic level nationally be attributed to the Blueprint? As the evidence shows, there is little scope to 'isolate' the Blueprint and believe that there can be some sort of purity attached to determining whether its goals have been achieved. The reality is that the Blueprint has been placed into such a complex set of policy and operational environments, with a multiplicity of impacting factors, that lineal attribution against the goals is unlikely to adequately represent the effectiveness of the contribution of the Blueprint to these goals.

Thus, the discussion in this chapter first considers evidence for the overall effectiveness of the Blueprint. The evidence considered relates to the framework applied in different contexts and situations. The subsequent section of the chapter considers the factors affecting the effectiveness of the Blueprint. There is then a discussion of the evidence in relation to the goals that are attached to the Blueprint. In the final section, a set of enabling factors for best practice in application of the Blueprint is identified and presented.

## Overall effectiveness

Figure 5.1 below shows respondent data from the survey when asked about the effectiveness of use of the Blueprint in their local context. As can be seen, respondents were equally divided on this issue. However, the assumption with such a question would have been, given that respondents were identifying their own context, that the 'Yes' response would have been substantially higher than was the case. These data suggest a discernible lack of confidence amongst a significant proportion of respondents that the way in which the Blueprint is being used by them, or by others with whom they are directly associated, is as effective as it could be.



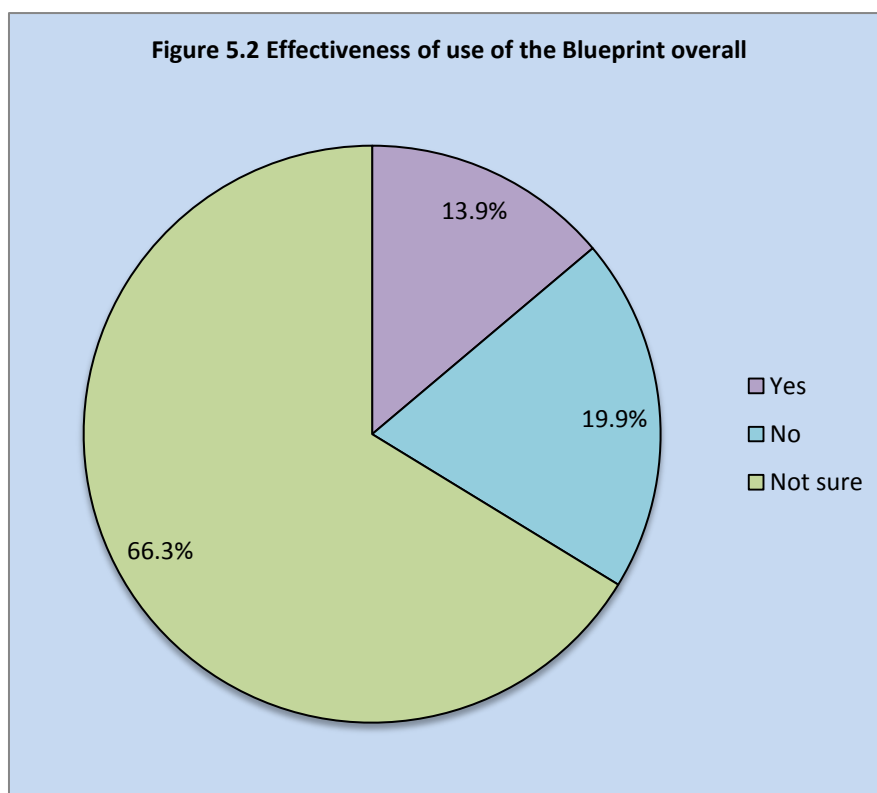
Such a finding is corroborated by the wider evidence. A number of participants in the review who used the Blueprint in their practice observed that they were not necessarily confident that they had the full suite of knowledge and skills to use it at an optimum level of effectiveness. Comments were made particularly about the desirability of opportunities for professional learning where the Blueprint would be addressed more explicitly than was typically the case. Further corroboration comes from the evidence, discussed previously, about the value attached to formal professional studies as a means to gain greater knowledge about the Blueprint.

As considered previously, those who were associated with the Blueprint during the initial trialling and the rollout are amongst those who use the Blueprint with the greatest confidence, irrespective of their current role. Very substantially, these participants in the review were drawn from the schooling sector across the states and territories. However, as a number of them noted during the review, knowledge and confidence amongst school-based practitioners who have not had comparable opportunities tends to be markedly lower.

Within the data shown in Figure 5.1 above, respondents from sectors of the career development industry not drawn from the schooling or tertiary sectors tended to be amongst the 'No' respondents. This is consistent with the wider review evidence indicating that awareness, knowledge and usage

decline the greater the distance from the initial work. For many practitioners in the non-schooling sectors of the career development industry, this distance has proven very substantial indeed.

The survey also asked respondents about their views of 'effectiveness of use' of the Blueprint more generally, beyond their own immediate situation. Figure 5.2 below shows respondent data from the survey when asked about the effectiveness of use of the Blueprint more widely.



The data in Figure 5.2 above show that the majority of respondents, some two-thirds, felt that they had insufficient knowledge to respond to the survey item. This parallels the evidence cited previously about the level of wider awareness of the Blueprint and of its usage in other contexts. The limited nature of the professional dialogue around the Blueprint since 2008 has impacted perceptions of its effectiveness. As shown in Figure 5.2, overall confidence in the effectiveness of the Blueprint is at best uncertain.

### Factors impacting effectiveness

Analysis of the evidence shows that effective use of the Blueprint is associated with a number of key factors. Of these, five are especially prominent in the evidence.

- The first factor is the background and level of expertise of those who use the Blueprint. There is a recurring theme in the evidence that the most effective use is invariably associated with people whose understanding of the Blueprint is based in the developmental work that took place or who came into contact with it in a structured way during the national rollout.

During the review, these people, irrespective of their current role, typically expressed confidence in the framework. In the early period they had opportunity, including through workshops led by the consultants from Miles Morgan, to participate in a professional dialogue around the Blueprint. They were able to gain knowledge about the structure and meanings of the Blueprint. Importantly, they gained knowledge about the approaches and practices that would underpin effective application.



- The second factor is the ability to place the Blueprint within an explicit jurisdictional policy context that encompasses career development. The Blueprint is an instrument, it is neither a policy nor a strategy. For effectiveness, it requires a policy context that will legitimise it. As shown by the evidence, the title of the '*Australian Blueprint for Career Development*', as powerful as it was no doubt intended to be, has not provided the level of legitimacy required for effective and sustained use.
- The third factor occurs where jurisdictional work has been undertaken to develop and implement an explicit implementation structure for career development. Through this structure, the Blueprint can be an influential resource that informs the detailed and tailored work required to enable effective practice at the local level. The concept of 'enabling' is critical.

The evidence shows that without an approach, structure or resources that enable use of the Blueprint, the extent of use will be limited as will effectiveness in application. While from the evidence it is possible to identify the key enabling elements for best practice, discussed below, this evidence is drawn almost solely from the schooling sector. There is insufficient evidence to establish the presence or reliability of structural elements in other sectors. Moreover, even within the schooling sector there are only limited instances where an implementation structure exists that would enable projection of the Blueprint into local situations.

- The fourth factor relates to the confidence that organisations, agencies, institutions associations and individual practitioners have in the Blueprint as a truly contemporary framework. While it has been only some four years since the national rollout, the evidence is unambiguous that the broad economic, workforce, social and educational environments within which the framework is placed are dynamic and constantly evolving. New parameters are constantly emerging, as well as heightened imperatives for all Australians to be well educated and trained, and to have the skills and capabilities that will underpin successful engagement in the economy and the broader society, now and into the future.

Confidence in the Blueprint, from the evidence, is substantially associated with the issue of whether or not it has built into it and around it sufficient capacity to align with change in these environments.

Even at the primary level of the Blueprint structure, the competencies, a number of strategic level participants in the review argued that they now looked 'static' and do not sufficiently represent the critical competencies that should be in a contemporary national framework. While other participants felt that this was not the case, the fact that there is only the most limited professional dialogue occurring associated with the Blueprint means that there is little or no intellectual or conceptual debate attached explicitly to it. The evidence shows that this is eroding confidence in the Blueprint as a framework guiding career development in Australia and causing its effectiveness to be questioned.

- The fifth factor concerns the importance of the Blueprint being explicitly connected to the broader national effort, in areas including the curriculum, employability skills, VET foundational skills, employment services and workforce planning. Account needs to be taken of how the overall effectiveness of the Blueprint can be strengthened by articulating and demonstrating its linkages to these associated domains. Equally, consideration needs to be given to the critique offered during the review that even within the career development domain the Blueprint is insufficiently connected to what is occurring both operationally and at the leading-edge of conceptualisation.



## Outcomes

As indicated in the introductory discussion about ‘Goals’ in this chapter, analysis of the review evidence indicates that the Blueprint has capacity to contribute to the goals that have been attached to it, but there cannot be a lineal attribution from it to the outcomes associated with these goals.

That said, there is evidence to suggest the nature and level of contribution made by the Blueprint to the outcomes contained within the goal statements. Additionally, the evidence provided in Chapter 3 about identified impacts of the Blueprint against its proposed applications, should be taken into account when considering the effectiveness of the Blueprint in the context of the goal statements.

### *Providing a common language across the career development domain*

As noted elsewhere in this report, the review evidence suggests that the Blueprint has contributed to a common language in career development for strategic level leaders and practitioners in the schooling sector.

*It (the Blueprint) has enabled us to use a shared language and approach which is underpinned by the appropriate theory and research. It has ensured that we are not ad hoc in our approach to careers and can see the importance of career development practices in our setting. (School-based practitioner)*

However, given the evidence about the extent of awareness and usage of the Blueprint, even within the schooling sector, the contribution of the Blueprint in relation to this goal needs to be seen as circumscribed by the factors impacting awareness and usage.

Moreover, the evidence does not suggest that the Blueprint has made anything other than a relatively limited contribution to outcomes associated with this goal insofar as the non-schooling sectors of the career development industry are concerned. While instances were identified where the Blueprint was referenced at inter-agency meetings, such usage appears to be incidental. Rather, the evidence suggests that there is a broadly held view across the non-schooling sectors of the career development industry that the language of the Blueprint and its associated materials is overtly the language of educators.

*Some of the terms in the framework and the resources aren’t ones that many private practitioners would use ... (Private practitioner)*

### *Enabling greater coherence in accounting for initiative outcomes*

The review identified instances where the Blueprint was used as an informing reference to support evaluation of programs and initiatives in career development. The number was limited and they were contained within the schooling sector.

*There will be an evaluation of the program and we have referred to the Blueprint to help make sure the focus of the evaluation is appropriate ... (Curriculum officer in the schooling sector)*

No instances were brought to the attention of the review within the other sectors that would indicate use of the Blueprint to “enable greater coherence in accounting for initiative outcomes”.

Moreover, no evidence was provided or data cited within jurisdictions that could provide a basis for forming a coherent view of outcomes associated with use of the Blueprint. Within the schooling systems and sectors across the states and territories, the levels and nature of use of the Blueprint vary so markedly that forming any coherent view of its contribution to outcomes would be a most problematic exercise.

### ***Contributing to a reduction in service overlay and duplication***

The review identified a limited number of instances where the Blueprint was one of the reference points for people whose work involved connection or liaison with providers outside their own organisation or agency. In this regard, the outcomes to which the Blueprint contributed were more obvious in relation to the goal of *“provision of a common language across the career development domain”*, discussed above, than the goal of *“contributing to a reduction in service overlay and duplication”*.

Moreover, knowledge of the Blueprint amongst providers in a range of organisations and agencies that connect or align with those explicitly operating in the career development domain is so limited that any notion of the Blueprint *“contributing to a reduction in service overlay and duplication”* seems an improbable goal to be attached to it.

*We use the Blueprint, it's a resource for us ... but I know that in (agency) and (agency) it's not something they'd ever take on board even though their services involve some of the clients we see. (Community-based practitioner)*

### ***Enabling gaps to be identified in service delivery***

Within the review evidence, the contribution of the Blueprint to outcomes associated with this goal is not apparent. There is some use of the Blueprint in programs that support students who are at risk of disengaging from school, or who have done so, and supporting them through community-based arrangements to access other learning or training programs. However, usage of the Blueprint in these instances appears not to have extended to the identification of gaps in service delivery.

Also, there is evidence that practitioners in schools may use the Blueprint to identify competency gaps and direct students to programs elsewhere where there is capacity and capability to support them. While a small number of instances of such use was cited during the review by school-based practitioner participants, such use appeared minimal. In any event, it falls well short of the envisaged goal of the Blueprint *“enabling gaps to be identified in service delivery”*.

### ***Facilitating smooth linkages between career development programs and services***

The evidence suggests instances where there is potential for the Blueprint to be used in the context of this goal statement. These are associated especially with a jurisdictional structure where, in time, it is envisaged that the non-schooling sectors, including the tertiary sector, will be included in the approach and practices. While the plans for this were shared with the review, no other instances can be identified in the evidence for the Blueprint being used *“to facilitate smooth linkages between career development programs and services”*.

### ***Providing a basis for producing quality career development resources for use with and by different client groups***

Participants in the review, especially from the schooling sector, cited instances where the Blueprint had been an informing reference in the development of resource materials. A number of these resources was sighted during the review, and they undoubtedly matched the ‘quality’ standard explicit in the goal statement. Very substantially, such work had involved the deconstruction of the Blueprint into a set of complementary tools and resources that had practical application in schools.

*The quality of resources available ... not up to expectation ... our conversations around the Blueprint and other material convinced us that we needed to develop resources that were specific to the program and that would appeal to principals, teachers and ... career advisers ... we knew the people who could do this ... got them in, over about a month we talked*

*about the Blueprint and a whole lot of other career education material, mainly downloaded from the web, and then set up the drafting projects ... what you see here is that work, now starting to be used ...* (Professional association executive)

Overall, however, such instances were notable in the exception rather than the rule. More typically, the Blueprint was used as a reference point for deciding on resource acquisition rather than for the development of new resources.

Instances were cited by some practitioners from the private sector of where they had used the Blueprint to develop resources for their own use, most usually in the form of a competency checklist to identify gaps and to target counselling.

*I have clients undertake a self analysis exercise as a starter ... we talk and then they make a judgment about the competency in relation to themselves, where they've been, where they're at and where they want to go ... used the Blueprint to help get a small, simple resource together for this ...* (Practitioner in the private sector)

In any event, such resources appear not to have any wider dissemination, suggesting their parameters were limited.

### ***Contributing to a better match between individuals' skills and job aspirations, and their actual employment choices***

There is evidence for the Blueprint contributing to outcomes associated with this goal within the schooling, tertiary and private practice sectors. Of the three sectors, it appears more limited in the schooling sector where the work of career advisers has moved towards school programs and somewhat away from individual counselling. That said, where career advisers are also the VET co-ordinator, the evidence suggests that the Blueprint may be used as a reference to support students as they make decisions about post-school training, further education courses and the fields within which they would prefer to work.

In the tertiary sector, as referred to previously in this report, the Blueprint has been used by student service units to guide and counsel students. This appears to be especially the case where they have come into a tertiary environment with little understanding of the imperative to address the continuity of their studies and their post-tertiary aspirations and opportunities.

In the private practice sector and in the community-based sector, particularly in some regional areas, one of the uses of the Blueprint is associated with this goal area. The Blueprint is used not so much as a 'checklist' but rather as a reference. Such usage enables understandings to be gained by clients about the broader competencies that are important for employment continuity, increased choice and reduced risk of discontinuity in employment.

However, while the Blueprint is used within the parameters of this goal statement, the outcomes associated with its use are not primarily about "*a better match*" of skills, aspirations and opportunities. Rather, it is the contribution that use of the Blueprint can make to understanding the broader, life-long competencies that extend beyond 'matching' a client to a job at a point in time.

### ***Enhancing human resources practices within both public and private sector organisations***

The evidence suggests that the Blueprint is making only a marginal contribution towards outcomes associated with this goal statement. The evidence indicates instances where high quality work is taking place within a number of entities and corporations in the human resources area that may involve reference to the Blueprint. However, such instances are limited.

Moreover, such instances arise from the orientation and capability of key people in leadership positions who identify imperatives to address issues in the area. Nothing suggests that even in these instances the Blueprint is anything other than one of the tools that may be accessed.

***Enabling individuals to manage their careers and work/life balance more effectively, particularly in a rapidly changing labour market***

There is nothing in the evidence base from the review that would suggest the Blueprint is contributing to outcomes associated with this goal statement, other than in an incidental way and in quite limited instances.

In the evidence, there is an instance where a school-based career practitioner used the Blueprint framework with students and their parents, from a low socio-economic status community, as part of a program to develop life-skills. The approach emphasised the relevance of the competencies set out in the Blueprint to decision-making and personal growth in all aspects of life, covering work, volunteering and leisure. However, the construct of the “*rapidly changing labour market*” was not an aspect of the approach.

***Encouraging people of all ages to engage in purposeful learning***

As evidenced elsewhere in this report, the general perception across the career development industry that the Blueprint primarily was designed for and is oriented to schools has limited its ability to penetrate other sectors. Consequently, the notion that it would “*encourage people of all ages to engage in purposeful learning*” comes across in the evidence as disconnected from the realities of its development, national placement, rollout and subsequent support.

That said, a number of practitioners in the private sector made the point during the review that the Blueprint had been “*valuable*” in opening up conversations with clients about the importance of and need for further learning so that their job and career opportunities would be enhanced.

*... when you talk about the competencies in the Blueprint with a client and start to get underneath them and then work through how the competencies connect with their lives and where they want to go, there'll be situations where you see the lights come on and they start saying things like, 'is there a course that you think would help me?' or 'I know I can do the work, but I'm starting to see why I feel stuck'. (Career practitioner in the private sector)*

Such instances fall well short, however, of providing the comprehensive evidence base that would enable the Blueprint to be identified as contributing to the high-order outcomes associated with the goal.

***Supporting a culture of lifelong learning and development in Australia***

This goal and the preceding one are demonstrably linked. The evidence cited above can be applied also to this goal. Beyond such evidence, there were no references to or commentary during the review about the role of the Blueprint in “*supporting a culture of lifelong learning and development in Australia*”. In any event, it would be highly problematic to link just one framework, even one as conceptually strong as the Blueprint, in a lineal way to such a high-order and strategic outcome.

It would be true to say, however, that participants in the review viewed effective career development practice as contributing to personal growth and as an important contribution to national productivity. Where the Blueprint is used to inform that work then it can be seen as contributing to the outcomes associated with this goal. However, the issues in this regard are ones

about the effectiveness of career development practice more broadly, not just consideration of the Blueprint or any other resource, no matter their value.

## Elements of best practice

From the review evidence it is possible to identify a suite of elements that appear essential to enable best practice that links to or incorporates the Blueprint. These elements do not constitute a model for use of the Blueprint *per se*. However, they do highlight the environment and circumstances within which effective use of the Blueprint has potential to occur.

The enabling elements for best practice are set out in Table 5.1 below.

**Table 5.1 Elements that enable best practice**

Best Practice Enabling Elements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within the jurisdiction there is a policy context that recognises the imperatives for career development for students as they progress through and from schooling. (The Blueprint has a place within this policy context.)</li> <li>• There is an explicit structure that enables policy to be operationalised so that schools and their communities can engage with it. (This structure enables the concepts of the Blueprint to be engaged with effectively at the school level.)</li> <li>• The structure provides schools with access to the expertise they require for high standard practice. (This enables schools to address capacity-building issues so that instruments and resources associated with the Blueprint can be used to secure defined outcomes.)</li> <li>• The delivery structure is cohesive and cross-sectoral. (This supports a cohesive approach to interpreting and responding to the Blueprint, both across schools and into other sectors.)</li> <li>• The structure provides capacity for an inclusive approach, engaging especially the universities, technical and further education institutions, and business and industry. (This gives capacity for the legitimisation of the Blueprint as a conceptual framework applicable across the schooling and non-schooling sectors.)</li> <li>• There is a partnership between the school systems and sectors and the professional associations. (This underpins capacity to engage the profession and harness wider professional expertise in work derived from the Blueprint.)</li> <li>• The Blueprint is deconstructed to provide the suite of instruments and resources required to engage schools and other stakeholders in effective career development practice.</li> <li>• The instruments and resources developed through the deconstruction of the Blueprint are succinct, accessible and directly applicable in schools and other settings.</li> <li>• Processes associated with the delivery structure enable a professional dialogue across practitioners and stakeholders, extending awareness of approach and quality practice in career development. (This supports informed engagement with the concepts underpinning the Blueprint and extends its usage.)</li> <li>• Within the structure there is opportunity for the benchmarking of practice. (This enables mapping in key areas against benchmarks that have their genesis in the Blueprint.)</li> <li>• Scope is provided for research to be conducted as a basis for ensuring confidence in practice. (This provides opportunity to make connections between research in career development practice and the Blueprint.)</li> <li>• Capacity is provided to evaluate progress against key performance indicators derived from deconstruction of the Blueprint.</li> </ul>

It needs to be recognised that the enabling elements proposed above are somewhat limited by the fact that they emerge from analysis of evidence predominantly associated with the schooling sector of the career development industry. While there is an attempt to address this limitation in the presentation, the elements are likely to change as knowledge emerges about enabling elements across a fuller spectrum of the career development industry.

Together with quality principles and professional standards that are now in place, what is proposed in Table 5.1 above may provide some important understandings for the scope of future work to support quality practice across the full spectrum of the career development industry.

## Conclusion

For those practitioners ‘immersed’ in the Blueprint and who bring to it a wealth of practice-based experience, there is an undoubted capability to use the Blueprint effectively. It is fortuitous for the career development industry generally, and especially for the schooling and tertiary sectors, that amongst their strategic leaders in the area are people who have this background. It is certainly the case that their influence, commitment to and advocacy of the Blueprint have been key factors in the awareness and usage of the framework in particular contexts and situations.

Without the role played by these people, both through agencies and through professional associations, awareness and usage certainly would be even less than is now the case. More critically perhaps, at this juncture, the quality practices that can be identified around the Blueprint would be much less visible and much less compelling.

While there is a range of views about the effectiveness of the Blueprint, its conceptual underpinnings were not challenged during the review. Nor was there any challenging of the capacity and rigour that was brought to the work undertaken to transpose it into the Australian environment. The imperative for a national career development framework to guide and inform career development practice in Australia, and to underpin the effectiveness of that practice, remains undiminished from the time when the first steps were undertaken to develop the Australian form of the Blueprint.

The review evidence indicates five ‘headline’ factors that particularly impact the effectiveness of the Blueprint. Tellingly, only one of these can be considered as being about the Blueprint framework itself. The other four factors are contextual to the Blueprint. They are not about the framework *per se*.

The goals attached to the Blueprint can only be regarded as high-order and strategic in their orientation. While each is eminently laudable, attaching them to the Blueprint in a way that suggests a direct causal link has not served the framework well. Too much in and about the goals appears a long way removed from the reality of the Blueprint in operation and even removed from the most effective of the practices associated with it.

Not only is the number of goals excessive for an instrument, albeit a national framework, their strategic pitch clouds understandings about the actual capacity of the Blueprint to contribute to outcomes within the career development domain.

None of this should be taken as delimiting the value of the Blueprint or the role it has fulfilled, currently fulfils and can fulfil into the future in the career development domain. In best practice application, it remains a powerful reference and resource.

This is indicated through the analysis of the evidence suggesting the elements of best practice that underpin effective usage of the Blueprint. Taken together with the recently promulgated professional standards, the elements suggested have potential to underpin greater effectiveness in use of the Blueprint.

## Effectiveness of the Blueprint: summation of the key findings

Table 5.2 below sets out in summary form the key findings from analysis of the review evidence about the effectiveness of the Blueprint.

**Table 5.2 Effectiveness of the Blueprint: Summation of the Key Findings**

Effectiveness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The effective usage of the Blueprint is strongly associated with the capabilities of those who were involved in its transposition into the Australian environment, trialling and rollout.</li><li>• Effectiveness is also strongly associated with: an explicit policy setting; an explicit implementation structure; confidence in its contemporary status; and, its explicit connection to related national agenda areas.</li><li>• Perceptions of the effectiveness of the Blueprint are more apparent within the schooling sector than within other sectors of the career development industry.</li><li>• The goals attached to the Blueprint are excessive in number and do not appropriately recognise its actual capacity to contribute to outcomes in the career development domain.</li><li>• Evidence about the effective use of the Blueprint provides a basis for understanding the key elements that enable best practice in its use.</li></ul>



## 6 FINDINGS: IMPROVEMENT OF THE BLUEPRINT

This chapter of the Review report sets out the principal findings arising from analysis of the qualitative and quantitative data that relate to possible improvement of the Blueprint.

The discussion seeks to identify and illuminate the factors associated with the findings. The concluding section of the chapter canvasses the key implications, linking to the overview of the implications in chapter 7. At the end of the chapter, a summation of the key findings is provided.

The review was asked to consider *if the Blueprint could be improved*.

### Appropriateness of the Blueprint

The review evidence suggests that the Blueprint is perceived as appropriate from two perspectives. The first perspective concerns those practitioners who use the Blueprint as an important point of reference in their practice. The second perception relates to those who identify appropriateness arising from its conceptual underpinnings and the extent to which it has informed higher level and strategic work. This is especially the case within the education and tertiary sectors.

As noted throughout the preceding chapters, the Blueprint received strong endorsement from a number of participants over the course of the review. While the majority of these, understandably, were from the schooling sector, equally strong endorsements were made by those from the training, tertiary and private practice sectors. Their commentary provided evidence about the continuing appropriateness of the Blueprint in career development professional practice and the value that it has as a framework to both guide that practice and be a basis for implementing programs and for developing resources.

Irrespective of the wider issues that may be associated with awareness and usage of the Blueprint, the review found that for many who used the framework it was a central part of their work.

*... the Blueprint has been very appropriate ... it provides a sound, logical framework ... has been used to help identify gaps. This led to a realisation that Years 8 and 9 were doing a lot on personal development but not on careers ... Since mapping career development lessons and activities against the Blueprint, lessons for Years 8 and 9 have become more comprehensive and much more structured in the way they deliver career development skills and competencies.*

*... a strength of the Blueprint is that it provides a structure for a developmental program ... it enables teachers to see how a program can build skills developmentally.*

*It has also been effective in providing an understanding about how personal management, learning and work exploration and career building interact and how each impacts on the other. Students need to be aware of this connection and interrelationship and the Blueprint can be used to do this.*

*... when I did the Certificate course I had to map out key events in my life and how they impacted on me, including work. It was a very powerful activity that actually brought the three areas together. (School-based career practitioner)*

When asked about whether there was scope to improve the Blueprint, many of these participants put the view that the Blueprint remained highly appropriate and they could think of no aspect of it that they would want to see changed or improved.



*... I do not really think there is anything major that needs improvement.*  
(School-based practitioner)

Nevertheless, suggestions for improvement were made by a number of review participants. In the main, they were suggestions about how adjustments or modifications could be made to the Blueprint that would facilitate their use of it in local situations.

Evidence related to these areas is provided in the section following.

The second perspective, relating to the appropriateness of the Blueprint as an informing reference in strategic level decision making and planning, was most readily identifiable in the evidence provided by participants from the schooling and tertiary sectors. Since 2008, it is clear that the Blueprint has impacted substantially the work of a number of agencies in the schooling systems and sectors, as well as units within tertiary education institutions.

Participants from these sectors endorsed the imperative for a national career development framework and expressed the view that the Blueprint *“was the right way to go”* in order to achieve that framework. They endorsed the intellectual rigour that had enabled its transposition into Australia, and identified its conceptual construct as continuing to be appropriate.

*... conceptually, they got it right ...* (Professional association executive)

It was amongst these participants that there was the most considered articulation of the issues related to the improvement of the Blueprint. As a number observed, the view of those involved in the initial work was that the framework was never envisaged as static, and that its evolution would be essential for its efficacy to be maintained.

Evidence related to this theme is provided in the section following.

## Improving the Blueprint

### *Possible areas of improvement*

The evidence indicates that for many local practitioners who are users of the Blueprint, there is a strong wish that its integrity be maintained. While a number observed that they thought the Blueprint should be improved, they were uncertain about what should be done specifically.

Where improvements were envisaged, in the main they were relatively contained although some have wider implications. Envisaged improvements that had a discernible level of incidence included the following.

- The framework can be perceived, especially by those coming to it for the first time, as *“dense”*. There would be value in having a simplified version of the framework that practitioners could use more immediately in their practice. However, the current form of the Blueprint framework should still be maintained and be accessible.
- Consideration could be given to consolidating the Blueprint framework by separating out from it elements that were less critical to its effective usage. These elements could be presented as background or support information.
- Consideration could be given to maintaining the current form of the framework but having *“spoke frameworks”* based on it that would be recognised as being more readily applicable in different sectors.
- The language of the Blueprint and the associated materials should be adjusted so that it is more inclusive of the non-schooling sectors of the career development industry.
- Consideration could be given to consolidating the competencies. However, suggestions were also made that questioned whether the current competencies should be changed or even expanded to cover new skills that people will require in the light of changing employment and social patterns.

- Consideration should be given to strengthening or including in the Blueprint aspects dealing with networking, financial literacy, environmental sustainability, physical and mental health, and personal integrity.
- Consideration could be given to strengthening how the Blueprint addresses the various stages of life and work. It is a framework oriented to career development at entry level but is less applicable for adults in career transition and for career management, including in the context of corporate or organisational workforce management.
- More work is required in relation to Phase 4. The view that all adults can be placed into one phase is flawed, and does not recognise the complexity of adult life. For example, there are now many more mature workers than there used to be and mature workers are going through different life phases. Consideration needs to be given to changing aspects of expression in the Blueprint to take these complexities into account.
- Work is required around the Blueprint that will ensure its relevance for use with children in the primary years, especially given the research evidence about the foundational importance of these years for later career prospects.
- Information should be provided that shows clearly the connections between the Blueprint and other national frameworks and related agenda areas.
- There is a need for the more regular up-dating of resources linked to the Blueprint.
- There is a need for a greater variety of resources, including 'practical' resources that teachers can use in lessons.
- There is a need for more resources for use by non-schooling sector practitioners. Amongst those most mentioned, were the tertiary sector and private practitioners.
- There should be a strategy to alert people to the resources available on the website, including updates from time to time.
- The website should more clearly identify the location of the resources. Suggestions were made about grouping the resources on the website so that users from different backgrounds could more quickly see what was available in their area of practice.
- A number of participants commented that the term 'toolkit' was not an appropriate one and that the word 'resources' should be used. An observation was made that some of the material in the 'toolkit' would not be regarded by teachers as resources, and perhaps there was need for another 'window' where these could be located.
- There is a need to provide best practice information in a simple, easy-to-read format. This information should cover a wide spectrum of practice contexts. Reference was made especially to contexts involving Indigenous people, recently arrived migrants and people with disability.
- The Blueprint should have a 'mailbox' attached to it, through the website, as part of encouraging professional dialogue and interaction.
- There should be increased encouragement and opportunity for people to improve their knowledge of the Blueprint through Study Grants.
- The Blueprint should have high profile 'champions' or 'ambassadors' in every State and Territory to raise awareness and to stimulate professional dialogue.

Across a range of sectors, participants repeatedly made the point that the principal 'improvement' required was not about the Blueprint *per se*, but about the access that practitioners had to the knowledge and skill development that would enable its effective use. The paucity of current opportunity for this to occur was perceived as the single greatest factor impacting the confidence of practitioners to engage with the Blueprint and use it.

*The Blueprint is a high order framework that requires a high level of expertise for effective use. It is an informing framework, one that requires engagement to develop the tools and resources that will ground its concepts. (Lecturer in the tertiary sector)*

### **Strategic considerations**

Over the course of the review, as noted above, a number of strategic positions was put with regards to the future of the Blueprint. From analysis of the evidence, the following constitute the principal themes related to these positions.

- Issues about whether the Blueprint should be improved or not are secondary considerations. Any considerations related to the future of the Blueprint, including its possible 'improvement', should not occur until a national career development strategy is in place. Through the strategic leadership of that strategy, there should then be the engagements that will address a range of critical issues in the career development domain, including the placement, form and presentation of a national career development framework. Within this theme, the argument was put strongly that no value can come from looking at the Blueprint in isolation. There should be no space for the metaphor of 'the tail wagging the dog'.
- Flowing from the theme above, a number of strategic questions need to be posed and addressed within a planned national professional dialogue:
  - Is the Blueprint the right framework?
  - What is the evidence for the efficacy of the Blueprint?
  - Where should responsibility for the Blueprint be placed?
  - What should be the shape of the Blueprint within an industry that is extraordinarily diverse, covering, for example, business and industry, immigration, population policy and planning, higher education, training, schooling and disability services?
  - What structures and processes are required to ensure its value within the career development industry and its value for client groups?
  - What is required to ensure the national legitimacy of the Blueprint?
  - What is required to support quality application of the Blueprint?
  - What structures are required to ensure that there can be accounting for the contribution made by the Blueprint to quality career development and, thus, to national productivity?
- There is a view that use of the Blueprint as an instrument has debased its value as a conceptual framework and devalued the national imprimatur that was attached to it.

*The Blueprint was never intended as a 'direct resource' that practitioners would take up and use without any adaptation or deconstruction. Some of the applications attached to it are inappropriate without deconstruction and adaptation, for example mapping an individual's competencies. (Lecturer in the tertiary sector)*

- Within the context of a national strategy, consideration needs to be given to the 'fit' of a national career development framework with comparable frameworks and statements in related agenda areas. Nationally, the time has come to take stock of whether the constant overlaying of frameworks and statements within areas and domains that are closely linked is in either the national interest or is in the interests of those who use them and have to work through the connections and alignments for themselves.
- The Blueprint has served its purpose and no value would come from making the investments required to improve it. It is now timely, in the context of the Green Paper discussions and

movement towards a national career development strategy, that the key strategic stakeholders be brought together to advise on the shape of the next iteration of a national framework in the career development domain. This work could leverage from the Blueprint, and that would be desirable to maximise continuity.

- A research agenda should be attached explicitly to the Blueprint. There is no evidence of developmental work around it, informed by the research, since its establishment in Australia. Consequently, it is probable that the Blueprint will be by-passed due to the rate of change in the workplace and due to what many recognise as dramatic economic and societal shifts affecting Australia into the foreseeable future.

## Conclusion

Amongst those who have considerable knowledge of the Blueprint, and who use it regularly in their practice, are to be found its strongest advocates. While for some there are no obvious reasons why the Blueprint should be 'improved', for others there are views about relatively limited modifications or adjustments that they feel would facilitate their practice locally. Certainly, there are good grounds for having in place a process whereby, from time-to-time, such modifications and adjustments can be made as circumstances change for practitioners.

At a more strategic level, discernible caution is expressed. It is not caution about whether the Blueprint should be improved. Indeed, many in strategic leadership positions who are also strong advocates for the Blueprint, believe that the framework should be improved to ensure its continuing value and to make that value more apparent across the full spectrum of the career development industry.

Rather, it is caution about when and how such 'improvement' should occur. From the perspective of these stakeholders, the issues are less about the Blueprint *per se* and markedly more about the wider career development agenda in Australia. While those issues go well beyond the remit of the review, inevitably they are going to impact critical decisions about the Blueprint. The arguments in this regard are compelling, not the least because the vision for the Blueprint at its inception in Australia was that it would be an evolving framework.

## Improvement of the Blueprint: summation of the key findings

**Table 6 Improvement of the Blueprint: Summation of the Key Findings**

Improvement of the Blueprint
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many practitioners who use the Blueprint in local contexts believe that it remains highly appropriate and that there are no grounds for improving or changing the framework.</li> <li>• A range of possible improvements can be identified. These concern mainly contained modifications to the framework itself or improvements to the resources associated with it and the structures and processes that facilitate effective application.</li> <li>• There is a strongly held view that more could be done to improve practitioner capability to use the framework effectively in a variety of practice contexts.</li> <li>• At strategic levels, there is cognisance of the current Green Paper process and movement towards a national career development strategy. As such, no improvements to the Blueprint should be made until key stakeholders have engaged in a planned process through which decisions can be made about the form and placement of a national career development framework.</li> </ul>

## 7 IMPLICATIONS AND OPTIONS

This chapter of the Review report provides an overview of the implications, extended from the discussion in the 'Conclusion' for each chapter where the findings were reported. The chapter also provides some possible options for the Blueprint into the future. Summations are provided at the end of the 'Implications' and 'Options' sections of the chapter.

### Implications

At the conclusion of each of the preceding chapters reporting the findings from analysis of the review evidence, implications arising have been identified. This section brings together the strategic level implications that are especially prominent.

A principal implication of the findings about awareness is that the time has passed for a strategy to better promote awareness of the Blueprint. It is unlikely that any such strategy with a singularity of focus implemented at this time would impact substantially awareness of the Blueprint. In the review evidence, the critical issues with regards to awareness are no longer about the Blueprint *per se* but about how those in the industry, and those in the future who will enter it, can be engaged at a level where they will have the knowledge and skills to practise at the highest possible standards.

In relation to usage, approaches and practices, and their quality, are inextricably associated with the extent to which there is a coherent policy context for career development. As the nation moves towards a national career development strategy, consideration needs to be given to how policy in the various jurisdictions can be supported and given maximum coherence across the career development sectors. By so doing, there will increased potential for the Blueprint, or any such framework in a future iteration, to have the level of national legitimacy that is required for it to be used effectively. A future national career development strategy should link to and support policy across the jurisdictions, enabling a unitary approach to career development for all Australians, through the years of schooling and into and through adulthood. In a society where educational, training and workplace mobility will become increasingly prominent, the imperative will become even greater for national coherence in the career development domain. Consideration could be given to whether the youth transitions area is the most appropriate placement for the Blueprint into the future.

Insofar as the Blueprint website is concerned, there can be little question that the critical, first-order questions are not about the website *per se*. As was stated in the concluding comments to Chapter 4, any website is an instrument that reflects intent. Intentions for the Blueprint into the future will need to take account of the imperative for it to have a more integrated place within a national career development strategy. Once issues associated with that intent are addressed, then consideration can be given as to how contemporary technologies can best deliver that intent.

Implications arise about whether the value of the Blueprint framework would be increased were it to be placed within a national unitary career development website, should such a site eventuate. Were this to be done, it is likely that there would be increased capacity to address and resolve the 'disconnection' issues that figured so prominently over the course of the review.

Issues of effectiveness are impacted by a number of strategic-level issues which should be taken into account. Particularly, there needs to be greater national clarity about and coherence around the issue of what is wanted from a national career development framework. The goals for it need to be better defined and articulated.

'Effectiveness' in use of the Blueprint is directly associated with practitioner knowledge and capability. Whatever the shape of the Blueprint into the future, in its present form or in another iteration, effectiveness will need to be underpinned through the engagement of the profession in sustained dialogue around it and through a range of opportunities for professional learning. The lack

of such dialogue and learning around the Blueprint has had far-reaching consequences for not only its use, but for the capability of practitioners to use it at optimum effectiveness.

Issues associated with the possible improvement of the Blueprint can be viewed in either an instrumental or a strategic way. While some of the instrumental improvements outlined in Chapter 6 may well be desirable, and bring tangible benefits for practitioners, it is the possible improvement of the Blueprint in a strategic context that carries the greatest potential. Placed in that context, there will be scope to address key questions including those attached to the major themes of responsibility, placement, form and connection that figured so prominently over the course of the review.

Table 7.1 below sets out in summary form the ‘headline’ implications arising from analysis of the evidence.

**Table 7.1 Summation of the ‘headline’ implications**

Implications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Awareness and usage of the Blueprint will be increased most effectively through strengthening knowledge and skill in professional practice across the career development industry, rather than focusing on the Blueprint <i>per se</i>.</li><li>• A future national career development strategy should link to and support policy across the jurisdictions, enabling a cohesive approach to career development for all Australians, through the years of schooling and into and through adulthood. In this way, there will be potential for increased and more effective use of the Blueprint.</li><li>• Consideration should be given to the implications of the placement of the Blueprint within the youth transitions agenda for its recognition and use across the full spectrum of the career development industry.</li><li>• Issues associated with the website need to be seen in the context of the national intent for the Blueprint rather than being responded to instrumentally.</li><li>• In the context of a national career development strategy, consideration could be given to placement of the Blueprint within a unitary website site, supporting the linkages that need to be made and articulated between the Blueprint and other related national frameworks and statements.</li><li>• There needs to be greater national clarity about and coherence around the issue of what is wanted from the Blueprint. The goals for it need to be better defined and articulated.</li><li>• Issues impacting the future placement, form and advocacy of the Blueprint should be addressed at a strategic level within the career development industry. In that regard, the national leadership body as envisaged in the Green Paper would be a highly appropriate forum.</li></ul>

## Options

The review was asked to consider *possible options for the future of the Blueprint*.

Analysis of evidence from the review suggests the following possible options for the Blueprint into the future.

### **Option 1: Maintain the Blueprint in its current form and placement**

This Option would have the advantage of providing certainty to the agencies, organisations, institutions, schools and individuals who use the Blueprint as a central aspect of their approach and practice. While the evidence shows that the extent of awareness and usage of the Blueprint does not match what was originally envisaged, the fact is that there is a very



substantial number of contexts in which it is used. Any notion of discontinuing the Blueprint, irrespective of any other consequences, would undermine confidence in these situations.

The principal disadvantages of this Option are that it would not address issues:

- associated with the limited awareness and usage of the Blueprint
- related to the imperative for the Blueprint to be an evolving framework, responsive to changes occurring in the economy and in the wider society.

### **Option 2: Develop and implement a national strategy to increase awareness, usage and quality practice**

This Option would have the advantage of maximising the value of the original investment to transpose the Blueprint into the Australian environment. It would also respond explicitly to the widely held belief that awareness and usage of the Blueprint have been negatively impacted by the absence of such a strategy subsequent to the national rollout in 2008.

A disadvantage of this Option would be that any such strategy is likely to have major resourcing implications, regardless of how the strategy may be structured. The career development industry is not only a large scale industry, it is multi-layered and complex. The strategy would need to be sufficiently comprehensive to ensure that coverage was inclusive. Additionally, disadvantage would arise if the view were to be formed into the future that there should be major changes to the form of the Blueprint or in its strategic placement.

### **Option 3: Leverage from current jurisdictional work that has involved the deconstruction of the Blueprint**

This Option would necessitate agreements about usage of a range of material and resources that have been developed in some jurisdictions and adapting them for national placement to extend and support career development professional practice.

The Option would have the advantage of addressing the fact that the nature of the Blueprint means that substantial work is required to develop the materials that would enable translation into practical application. The Option would address capacity and capability issues in some jurisdictions, especially where both are limited. It would bring greater national coherence in how the Blueprint is responded to. Economy of scale benefits would be associated with this Option.

A disadvantage of this Option would be that the deconstructed materials may not fit with policy and operational contexts in a number of the jurisdictions and there would be, in all likelihood, resistance to their adoption. The materials sighted by the review are only within the schooling sector, so issues about comparable support for the other sectors would be raised.

### **Option 4: Through an expert group, commission work to improve the Blueprint, including work to ensure its relevance to all sectors**

This Option would have the advantage of facilitating a practical and timely response to issues concerning the form and presentation of the Blueprint, while maintaining its integrity. It would have the advantage of probably being seen by the non-schooling sectors as addressing their concerns for the Blueprint to have wider relevance and applicability.

The major disadvantage of this Option is that it is likely to be regarded broadly as pre-empting the work that should properly be done within the ambit of the Green Paper discussion process and movement towards a national career development strategy. It is also likely that within this Option the more strategic issues about the future improvement of the Blueprint would be more difficult to address than through Option 5 following.

**Option 5: As part of the development and implementation of a national career development strategy, accord capacity for the envisaged strategic leadership group to make recommendations about the future of the Blueprint**

This Option would have the advantage of ensuring that the strategic level issues affecting the Blueprint that have been identified through the review will be addressed by those with the appropriate expertise and knowledge of the career development domain. The Option will have the advantage of ensuring that consideration of issues affecting the form and placement of the Blueprint are addressed within the full context of the career development domain, rather than in isolation. Further, an advantage will arise that any strategic level work associated with the Blueprint, including any possible new iteration of it, is likely to support a national response.

The disadvantage of this Option is that it will almost certainly require a developmental and consultation process involving at least some of features of the work done around the Blueprint at its introduction, with the associated funding imposts.

Table 7.2 below sets out in summary form possible options for the Blueprint into the future.

**Table 7.2 Summation of the options**

The options	
1.	Maintain the Blueprint in its current form and placement
2.	Develop and implement a national strategy to increase awareness, usage and quality practice
3.	Leverage from current jurisdictional work that has involved the deconstruction of the Blueprint
4.	Through an expert group, commission work to improve the Blueprint, including work to ensure its relevance to all sectors
5.	As part of the development and implementation of a national career development strategy, accord capacity for the envisaged strategic leadership group to make recommendations about the future of the Blueprint



## APPENDIX 1

### The Key Research Questions

1. In what circumstances did you become aware of the 'Blueprint'?
2. Why and how do you/your organisation use the 'Blueprint'?
3. What are the greatest benefits that the 'Blueprint' has brought to your work/the work of your organisation?
4. To what extent are you aware of why and how others use the 'Blueprint'?
5. *There is a set of applications suggested for the 'Blueprint'. To what extent do you believe these applications can be identified in practice? What is the extent of impacts arising from application?*
  - Use the 'Blueprint' as a platform to facilitate discussion with key stakeholders
  - Map existing school-wide career development activities to determine which 'Blueprint' competencies it helps to develop
  - Design a comprehensive career development program
  - Determine individual student competencies and developing plans to address gaps
  - Review a career development resource to determine the career competencies it targets
  - Evaluate an existing career development course or curriculum
  - Create a short career development course
  - Incorporate employability skills into learning programs
6. What do you regard as the value and strengths of the 'Blueprint'? In what ways do you believe it could be improved?
7. What observations do you have about the 'Blueprint' website in terms of supporting the 'Blueprint', including the resources that are available through it?
8. In what ways could access to and effective usage of the 'Blueprint' be increased, both in your context and more widely?
9. What approaches or strategies could be considered in relation to the future of the 'Blueprint'?
10. Other observations

## APPENDIX 2

### SURVEY

#### REVIEW OF THE AUSTRALIAN BLUEPRINT FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

A review of the effectiveness of the Australian Blueprint for Career Development (the 'Blueprint') is being undertaken over September/October 2012 by Atelier Learning Solutions Pty Ltd (Atelier) on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

A survey is available for completion by those who would like to participate in the review. The survey will be available until October 19th 2012 and should take no more than 15 minutes to complete.

Those who may wish to participate in the review through completion of the survey could include, but not be limited to:

- career development practitioners in the public and private sectors
- teachers and trainers responsible for designing, implementing or reviewing career development programs or products
- human resource, staff development and recruitment personnel
- employment service providers
- curriculum officers in the schooling systems and sectors
- VET and university lecturers
- clients who are participating in, or who have participated in, career development programs
- staff of programs that address issues of youth connection and transition
- parents and caregivers

Participants who respond to the survey should:

- note that the survey may be completed over several sessions. Click the 'Save Page and Continue Later' button to save what you have completed and return some time later.
- be sure of your responses. It is not possible to backtrack to a prior question if you change your mind.

Responses to questions marked with an \* are required.

Thank you very much for your time and support. Please commence the survey by clicking the 'Continue' button below.

**In completing the survey, which of the following categories best identifies your position or role?**

- ☐ a career development practitioner in the schooling sector
- ☐ a career development practitioner in the training sector
- ☐ a curriculum developer in the schooling sector
- ☐ a school leader
- ☐ a VET trainer or university lecturer
- ☐ a career development practitioner in the private sector
- ☐ a human resource professional or recruitment officer
- ☐ an employer or senior manager
- ☐ an employment services provider
- ☐ a past or current client of a career development program
- ☐ a parent or caregiver
- ☐ Other (please identify):

**Please indicate the schooling sector in which you work:**

- ☐ Government
- ☐ Catholic
- ☐ Independent
- ☐ Other (Please identify)

**Do you use the Blueprint?\***

- ☐ Regularly
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Infrequently
- ☐ Never

**If you do not use the Blueprint regularly, what are the reasons?**

**Do you use the Blueprint website?\***

- ☐ Regularly
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Infrequently
- ☐ Never

**If you do not use the Blueprint website regularly, what are the reasons?**

**Do you use a hard copy version of the Blueprint, but not the website?\***

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I use both

**Do you use other career development frameworks?\***

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**Is your use of other career development frameworks?\***

- ☐ as a complement to the Blueprint
- ☐ as an alternative to the Blueprint

**Why do you use other frameworks as a complement?**

**Why do you use other frameworks as an alternative?**

**(Please select one)**

**I first became aware of the Blueprint through:\***

- ☐ a professional learning course
- ☐ mention of the website by a colleague
- ☐ website search
- ☐ hard copy promotional material
- ☐ mention of the Blueprint by a client
- ☐ Other (please identify the source):

**(Please select one)**

**To what extent are you aware of how others use the Blueprint?\***

**I am:**

- ☐ well aware
- ☐ reasonably aware
- ☐ not aware

**For the Blueprint, rank the following in order of benefit ('1' least benefit - '7' greatest benefit):**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
• ease of use in a demanding work environment *							
• comprehensive information in a single location *							
• applicability to a wide range of personal situations *							
• adaptability within a wide range of career development programs *							
• a uniform set of criteria to understand career development *							
• a starting point to better understand issues in career development *							
• enabling a more effective approach to career development *							

**Are there any other benefits of the Blueprint that are not listed?**

**Select any one**

**The resources to support the Blueprint:\***

- ☐ are valuable
- ☐ are useful
- ☐ require updating
- ☐ are not useful

**In which areas could further resources be developed?**

**(Please select any of the following that apply)**

**I/my organisation use the Blueprint as a tool to:\***

- ☐ facilitate discussion with key stakeholders
- ☐ map existing career development opportunities
- ☐ design comprehensive career development programs
- ☐ determine individual competencies and develop plans to address gaps
- ☐ determine the appropriateness of career development resources
- ☐ evaluate existing career development courses or curriculum
- ☐ create short career development courses
- ☐ incorporate employability skills into learning programs
- ☐ Other. Please briefly identify the use:

**For each of the following uses of the Blueprint, from your knowledge rate its impact in practice on a scale of '1' (no impact) to '5' (substantial impact):**

<b>I believe the 'Blueprint' enables:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
• facilitation of discussion with key stakeholders *					
• mapping of existing career development opportunities *					
• design of comprehensive career development programs *					
• identification of individual competencies *					
• development of personalised plans to address competency gaps *					
• judgments about the appropriateness of career development resources *					
• evaluation of existing career development courses or curriculum *					
• creation of short career development courses *					
• incorporation of employability skills into learning programs *					

**What other impacts in practice can be identified?**

--

**Rate each of the following from '1' (lowest) to '5' (highest)**

I believe the Blueprint website:	1	2	3	4	5
• provides the Blueprint in an effective way *					
• is easy to access and navigate *					
• provides an appropriate range of career development resources *					
• supports more effective career development for clients *					
• supports quality career development practice *					
• provides a common language to support professional interaction					
• could be further developed to increase its effectiveness *					

**What aspects of the website do you believe could be developed to increase effectiveness?**

--

**Do you consider that the Blueprint is used effectively in your context?\***

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**If 'No', what is required for effectiveness to be increased in your context?**

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**Do you consider the Blueprint to be used effectively by practitioners generally?\***

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

**If 'No', how could effective use by practitioners generally be increased?**

**Please identify any approaches or strategies that could be considered to ensure effective use of the Blueprint into the future:**

**Do you have any other observations about the Blueprint?**



## APPENDIX 3

A number of reports, papers and websites was referenced to inform analysis of the evidence. These included the following.

### Reports and papers

- Australian Government, *National Career Development Green Paper* (June, 2012)
- Halliday-Wynes, S. & Misko, J., *VET Career development services: the way forward* (June, 2012) ([www.cica.org.au/uploads/research](http://www.cica.org.au/uploads/research))
- Urbis, *National Career Development Strategy (NSDS) Research Project. Element 2: Quantitative Research Report* (June, 2011)
- Urbis, *National Career Development Strategy (NSDS) Research Project. Element 2: Qualitative Research Report* (May, 2011)
- New Zealand Ministry of Education, *Career Education and Guidance in New Zealand Schools* (2009)
- McIlveen, P., Brooks, S., Lichtenberg, A., Smith, M., Torjul, P., & and Tyler, J., *Career Development Learning Frameworks for Work-Integrated Learning* (2011) (<http://eprints.usq.edu.au/18512/3/>)
- McMahon, M., Patton, W., & Tatham, P. *Managing Life, Learning and Work in the 21st Century. Issues Informing the Design of an Australian Blueprint for Career Development.* ([www.blueprint.edu.au](http://www.blueprint.edu.au))
- OECD, *Career Guidance: A Handbook for Policy Makers* (2004)

### Websites

- [www.blueprint.edu.au/](http://www.blueprint.edu.au/) (Australian Blueprint for Career Development)
- [www.blueprint4life.ca](http://www.blueprint4life.ca) (Canadian Blueprint for Life/Work Designs)
- [www.crac.org.uk](http://www.crac.org.uk) (The Career Development Organisation)
- [www2.careerswales.com/aboutus/](http://www2.careerswales.com/aboutus/) (Careers Wales)
- [www.oecd.org/ed/educationeconomyandsociety/](http://www.oecd.org/ed/educationeconomyandsociety/) (OECD)
- [www.myfuture.edu.au/](http://www.myfuture.edu.au/) (*myfuture*)
- [www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling?Careers and Transitions](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Schooling?Careers%20and%20Transitions) (Resource for Career Practitioners – ReCaP)
- [www.cda.org.au](http://www.cda.org.au) (Career Development Association of Australia)
- [www.cica.org.au/practitioners/standards](http://www.cica.org.au/practitioners/standards) (Professional Standards for Career Practitioners)
- [www.hr.anu.edu.au/carers](http://www.hr.anu.edu.au/carers) (Australian National University Centre for Career Development)
- [www.deewr.gov.au/employment/jsa/](http://www.deewr.gov.au/employment/jsa/) (Job Services Australia)
- [www.career.edu.au/](http://www.career.edu.au/) (Certificate IV in Career Development)