



# **2025 Review of the CICA Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners**

## **Briefing Paper 1**

### **Why the Professional Standards Were Reviewed**

This paper is the first in a series of briefing papers distributed by the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) to career development practitioners who belong to the member associations of CICA and other stakeholders. The purpose of these papers is to provide readers with an overview of the 2025 review of the CICA Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners and the changes that were introduced as a result of the review.

#### **Background**

The CICA Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners were first published in 2006 and implemented nationally in 2012. The Standards provide the framework that defines professional practice for career development practitioners in Australia.

The Professional Standards apply to practitioners who are members of CICA Member Associations and who are listed on the Australian Register of Professional Career Development Practitioners.

The Professional Standards provide guidance for the profession in relation to:

- terminology used within the profession
- membership of the profession
- the Code of Ethics
- entry-level qualifications
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- competency guidelines including Core Competencies and Specialised Competencies.

The Standards help define the profession, guide entry into the field, and provide guidance for practitioner education and professional development. They also provide assurance to governments, employers, and the public that career development practitioners operate within a recognised professional framework.

#### **Why the Standards Were Reviewed**

Professional standards must evolve as professional practice evolves. Since the previous review of the Professional Standards, the context in which career development services are delivered has changed significantly.

Across education and employment systems, there has been a rapid digital transformation. New technologies have emerged, including Artificial Intelligence and Generative AI tools that are increasingly used by individuals seeking career information and by practitioners delivering services.

At the same time, labour markets have become more dynamic and complex. Career pathways are less linear; individuals are expected to transition between roles more frequently, and lifelong learning has become an essential feature of modern working lives.

There have also been growing expectations regarding equity, accessibility, cultural responsiveness, and the quality of career development services.

In response to these developments, CICA undertook a review of the Professional Standards to ensure that the framework continues to reflect contemporary professional practice and supports the ongoing development of the career development profession in Australia.

## **Establishment of the Working Group**

To support the review, the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) formed a dedicated working group to assess the Professional Standards and consider the implications of technological change, evolving service delivery models, and increasingly complex client needs.

The working group examined how Artificial Intelligence influences career development theory, service delivery, and practitioner-client interactions. It also looked at how the Professional Standards can continue to guide high-quality professional practice in a rapidly changing environment.

Membership of the working group included representatives from CICA leadership, CICA Member Associations, and an international expert with experience in Artificial Intelligence and career development practice. This ensured a wide range of professional perspectives and expertise to inform the review.

## **Purpose of the Working Group**

The working group was established to:

- Review the existing Core and Specialised Competencies within the Professional Standards
- Examine how Artificial Intelligence is influencing career development theory, service delivery, and practitioner–client interactions
- Consider emerging knowledge and skills required for effective and ethical practice in an AI-enabled environment
- Develop recommendations for potential updates to the Professional Standards
- Ensure that any proposed changes align with principles of ethical practice, inclusion, and client-centred approaches

## **Participation in the Working Group**

Individuals nominated to participate in the working group were selected based on their professional expertise and their ability to contribute to informed discussion about the future of practice. Participants:

- Held professional qualifications in career development
- Had experience using AI tools or technologies within career development practice, education, or program delivery
- Demonstrated a strong commitment to ethical, inclusive, and client centred practice
- Contributed to collaborative and forward thinking discussions about the evolving role of career development practitioners

## **Consultation and Engagement**

CICA recognised the diverse contexts in which career development practitioners operate across Australia, including schools, higher education, employment services, community organisations, and private practice.

Consistent with previous reviews of the Professional Standards, CICA adopted a process that aimed to be:

- respectful
- inclusive
- consultative
- collaborative.

Through this process, the review sought to ensure that the Professional Standards continue to reflect contemporary practice while maintaining the professional foundations that underpin career development services in Australia.