

Using career development services to strengthen student retention and attainment

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Recommendations

1. **In partnership with State and Territory governments strengthen school accountability requirements for provision of high quality and accessible career services**
2. **Strengthen programs that encourage parental engagement**
3. **Improve teacher engagement activities**
4. **Fully implement the Australian Blueprint for Career Development**
5. **Undertake a review of the marketing strategies to increase awareness of its career programs amongst young Australians**
6. **Enhance Career Information Centres and *myfuture* by piloting a national careers helpline targeting young Australians and parents**
7. **Improve access to the evidence base and to examples of best practice by expanding research and establishing a clearing-house**
8. **Investigate processes for improving national infrastructure and delivery to secondary school students via better cooperation between providers in the secondary and post-secondary sectors**
9. **Establish a national careers taskforce with a specific focus on improving career interventions and outcomes for young people completing Year 12 or equivalent and responding to key issues rising out of COAG discussions**

Australia has been a leader in the development of career services but progress has stalled.

Introduction

This paper has been developed by the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) to contribute to and inform discussions regarding the further development of career services in Australia with a focus on retention and attainment for young people undertaking Year 12 or equivalent¹.

CICA represents the interests of all major career associations and their members at the national level. CICA's vision is to enhance participation and productivity by advocating the individual, social and economic benefits of quality career development for all Australians.

This discussion paper focuses on young people, with a particular emphasis on improving career service infrastructure that supports young people to attain positive learning outcomes as a foundation to maximise their life goals.

Australia has been a leader in the development of career services but progress has stalled and it is at serious risk of falling behind many other OECD countries. It is CICA's view that now is the time to further strengthen and reinvigorate DEEWR career services to meet Australia's priorities at a time when these are most needed.

The OECD has recognised career development as one of the six characteristics of an effective transition system². Effectively delivered career development services are important for all Australians, but also have important additional benefits for at-risk young people and the potential to improve retention and increase completion rates by 10 to 20%³.

Programs and services that focus on student retention and attainment can mostly be characterised under the heading of career development services⁴.

Career development services can⁵:

- Help to reduce dropouts and backtracking and improve flows between different levels of education
- Improve transitions from education to the labour market and help to strengthen links between education systems and the labour market
- Widen access to learning throughout all stages of life, including by those who have been away from formal learning for many years
- Widen access to learning by groups who are under-confident in, unskilled in, or unused to negotiating access to complex learning systems.⁶

Increasing school and training retention rates among 15 to 24-year-olds to 90% would:

- Have the same positive impact on the economy as increasing Australia's total migrant intake by 180,000 over the period to 2040;
- Boost annual GDP by 1.1% by 2040⁷.

In 2008 Australia ranked 18th out of 29 OECD countries for high school completion rates. Rates are lower for 19-year-olds in regional and remote locations and for Indigenous students across Australia⁸. The situation is worse for those undertaking trade training, with nearly half the apprentices who start failing to complete their training.

The recommendations contained in this paper support this government's priorities in relation to student engagement, attainment, retention and early transition.

Background

Career development is the lifelong process of managing progression in learning and work. The quality of this process significantly determines the nature and quality of individuals' lives: the kind of people they become, the sense of purpose they have and the income at their disposal. It also determines the social and economic contribution they make to the communities and societies of which they are part.

The provision of quality career development services is a significant part of a suite of interventions that are required to ensure that:⁹

- Every young person will attain Year 12, or over time, a vocational equivalent at AQF Certificate III
- Every young person will be engaged in full time work or learning or a combination of these
- Every young person will have access to career services, resources, relationships and integrated pathways needed to maximise their potential and life work satisfaction.

Some 55 countries have now completed reviews of their career services with a view to improving them to more effectively meet national policy agendas, with particular emphasis on early transitions. All have adopted the OECD definition for guidance¹⁰.

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The OECD review of career services in Australia was undertaken in 2002. Since then a range of new initiatives has been implemented but significant gaps remain. Many of these gaps have been identified together with examples of good practice in numerous government reports over the past two decades or so¹¹. The recommendations in this paper reflect the actions put forward in these reports which are yet to be implemented. Overall, these reports recognise that a cohesive and comprehensive range of career services is a basic infrastructure requirement to support young Australians. For example, the House Standing Committee on Education recommended that careers education be a mandatory part of the core curriculum for the compulsory years of secondary schooling¹². To this important recommendation CICA would add that the career services provided be of sufficient quality to meet the complex and diverse needs of young Australians.

Matching inclusive approaches with access to quality career services

While most young Australians have access to some level of career services (albeit mostly information based¹³), the services available to many are inadequate in both quality and a capacity to assist them to develop the skills to manage their future learning and work choices and reach their potential.

Over the past 5 years CICA has made improvement in the quality and access to career services its priority particularly through the implementation of the professional standards guides guidelines for practice¹⁴.

What remains a concern to CICA is that in many cases career services fail to address the most basic of student needs. For example, a Smith Family report¹⁵ found that a significant number of students surveyed expressed incompatible education and career intentions. Around half of the students surveyed planned a different level of education than was required for their career interests.

This report found that a large proportion of young people surveyed did not know how to get the job they would most like. Importantly, it also noted that those students who perceived themselves as being low in ability found that access to high quality careers advice was particularly beneficial.

This viewpoint is confirmed in the most recent *Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth* report¹⁶ which highlights the importance of effective careers advice for disadvantaged students. The report also noted that intention to leave was very strongly related to the final decision to leave school and that intentions may be amenable to cognitive interventions through more effective and expanded range of career development services – and therefore an increase in Year 12 completion or its equivalent could be achieved. These kind of interventions are outside of the scope of current teacher training and require the availability of qualified career practitioners.

A large proportion of young people surveyed **did not know how to get** the job they would most like.

Information is necessary for good-quality career development, but it is not sufficient. If individuals are to be able to find the information they need, to understand this information and relate it to their personal needs and circumstances, and then to convert it into personal action, many will need some form of personal support.

Studies show¹⁷ that young people leaving school early, without career paths, are likely to face long-term disadvantage by having higher levels of unemployment and part-time and casual work, shorter working lives, lowered incomes and the increased probability of finding themselves in jobs with poorer working conditions and fewer opportunities for advancement. They also more often experience poorer physical and mental health, higher rates of crime and less often engage in citizenship activity¹⁸.

The Productivity Commission estimated that for each additional year of education, the earnings of an Australian worker increase by between 5.5% and 11.0%¹⁹.

It is estimated that more than 15% of young people aged 15–19 fail to make a successful transition from school to work in Australia¹⁹ and unfortunately this situation is not improving quickly²⁰. Other findings indicate that disengagement is more likely to occur amongst disadvantaged groups of young people²¹.

There is an economic benefit to improving career services for young Australians. The Productivity Commission estimated that an additional year of schooling increases the workforce participation rate by around 0.5% for males and 4% for females, and that for every additional year of education the earnings of an Australian worker increase by between 5.5% and 11.0%²². It is estimated that improvements in transition from school are likely to improve participation rates in the labour market by 0.37% and provide productivity increases of around 0.45%²³. This effect of improved transitions equates nationally to an increase in productivity of around \$1 billion.

Careers Scotland had a similar finding. It found that there is clear and systematic evidence that school pupils with career goals have higher attainment levels than those without²⁴. Another study (*The Effects of Career Education Interventions on Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analysis*) found that a positive gain in academic achievement was produced when students were provided with career education interventions as compared to situations in which students were not provided with career education. It also found that results increase in the second year of operation with the same students²⁵.

For young people with a disability or mental health issue the evidence is clear. Full participation in education and employment is yet to be achieved. The percentage of people with a disability accessing some form of vocational employment and training activity or a New Apprenticeship remains significantly below the broader community²⁶.

In effect, the Australian community is already paying twice for the learning that should have occurred in high school and at colleges.

Within higher education, the Bradley Review provides a clear illustration that when career development services are not sufficiently developed in high schools and colleges there is a negative flow on to post-compulsory education with regard to retention and attainment. The level of remedial support programs in higher education is increasing and in effect the Australian community is already paying twice for the learning that should have occurred in high school and at colleges.

High remediation rates represent a broken promise to students and their families. They also represent a colossal waste of national resources. For example, the United States spends an estimated \$1.4 billion on remedial courses at community colleges alone²⁷.

CICA has been particularly impressed with career development systems in Scotland and New Zealand and regards the approach taken by these two countries as excellent models for the next steps Australia needs to take.

Careers Scotland has a centralised approach to career services within schools and provides services to 450 schools and 50,000 students across the country. Every school leaver is followed up by Careers Scotland. This approach provides some valuable opportunities to manage quality of service delivery because it brings together 1150 trained and qualified staff across 35 centres. It collects data across all aspects of service delivery and mines the data to improve marketing strategies. It has been careful to avoid what it terms the 'lasagne effect' – where too many programs sit on top of each other.

Career Services **New Zealand** is described in a 2007 review²⁸ as having the world's most fully integrated example of an all-age organisational structure favoured by the OECD career guidance policy review. Its aim is to provide all people living in New Zealand with access to the best careers information, advice and guidance to achieve their life goals. The mission of the service is to 'maximise New Zealand's potential through quality work in life decisions' and because it is an integrated approach it can support a young person's network including parents, employers and peers. For example in working with Maori youth the service can focused around the extended, intergenerational family rather than on the individual alone.

Other countries are also improving the quality of services to support retention. **Canada** has funded a \$60 million social research program under the auspices of the Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation. Two of the pilot projects involve researching interventions aimed at improving retention and completion²⁹.

Denmark has introduced a program aimed at identifying students with special career development needs at Grade 6. The program provides mentors for students with little contact and support from adults and study plans for all students. It has systematic programs in place to reach out to dropouts from its education system including mentor arrangements connected to the transition from Grade 9 to vocational education and training. Local government has implemented a 'Project Youth Education for All' program which aims to increase the percentage of youth education participation from 80% to 95%.

Funding is provided for schools to increase their career guidance provision.

The UK is embarking on new educational reforms designed to move toward providing a tailored program for each young person and intensive personal career guidance and support.

Finland is embarking on programs that will make the graduation period shorter to reduce the percentage of young people without vocational qualifications. Educational opportunities for immigrants and people at risk of exclusion are under development. It is also reviewing factors which affect the employability of individuals.

In **Ireland**, schools are expected to develop a career guidance plan as part of their school plan. The focus is on development of student self-management skills that will lead to effective choices and decisions throughout their lives. Funding is provided for schools to increase their guidance provision. Since 1995 Ireland has had a national centre for guidance on education whose role is to support improvements in quality and develop research to provide an evidence base.

The **Netherlands** is conducting a program called 'Operational Young' which seeks to strengthen communication links between various service providers. Preventing students from leaving school early is a priority. Significant funding has been provided to supervise and support premature leavers. There is a focus on ensuring that young people up to the age of 23 either be studying or at work, or combining work and study.

In **Norway** the government has introduced a statutory right to career services for all young people.

Improving access and quality: What needs to be done in Australia?

Central to effective career services is support for the strengthening of the skills required for students to manage their career and make informed choices about their learning and work³⁰. In doing so, it is important to ensure that a wide variety of career activities are available within a strong supportive school culture where a commitment to improvement is in place; where school-wide strategies addressing quality of provision of career services are addressed; and student-focused strategies focusing on individual needs are supported³¹.

Lamb and Rice found that pathway planning and quality career guidance and counselling in schools have been successful key initiatives in promoting engagement and reducing early leaving. They suggested a number of student-focused strategies as a way forward³².

A review of the Managed Individual Pathways Scheme (MIPS) in Victoria found that many schools reported that MIPS had improved student engagement and staff-student relations, increased the responsiveness of school staff to the needs of all students, and raised completion. However, the quality of implementation in schools was variable³³.

Putting in place more effective structures and services will inevitably mean that fewer young Australians will fall through the cracks and all students will develop the capacity to manage their learning and work choices more effectively.

To raise the level of retention and attainment CICA recommends that DEEWR make significant changes to its current suite of career programs to ensure that all young Australians have access to career services of the highest quality affordable.

Recommendations

1. In partnership with State and Territory governments strengthen school accountability requirements for provision of high quality and accessible career services

Although a recent LSAY report³⁴ highlights the fact that all students surveyed participated in at least one type of career advice activity, the quality of interventions and adequacy of services for some students is unclear. Schools should be encouraged to report on career services provided and related expenditure as a mechanism to achieve quality improvement³⁵.

Outcomes:

- Establishment of baseline data collection on outcomes of career interventions
- Higher levels of accountability for the provision of services

2. Strengthen programs that encourage parental engagement

A project conducted by the Brotherhood of St Laurence on the Mornington Peninsula (Parents as Career Transition Supports) found that a majority of students would like help from their parents when making the decision about what to do after leaving school. Parents need additional support to help their children to navigate the complex pathways available to them. This support could include improving online resources for parents, specific workshops and piloting special initiatives such as a parent helpline³⁶.

Outcomes:

- Quality improvement in parental advice
- Increased support for career exploration

3. Improve teacher engagement activities

Evidence indicates that many teachers perceive themselves as lacking the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective in career education and advice³⁷. At present, all states and territories have mandated professional development (e.g. 25 hours per year in Victoria) to maintain teacher registration. The implementation of additional professional development and requiring teachers to have a career development plan has been shown to be an effective strategy in Iowa in the US³⁸. In addition, the career education elective for pre-service teachers could be adapted as in-service professional development and available online, possibly through *myfuture*.

Pathways planning and quality careers guidance and counselling are key initiatives in schools that are successful in promoting engagement and reducing early leaving.

Outcomes:

- Strengthening of teacher student engagement
- Increased options and opportunities for career discussions

4. Fully implement the Australian Blueprint for Career Development

The Australian Blueprint for Career Development is one of only a few frameworks that have been accepted by all governments. The ABCD has been taken up very widely across the educational sector and in Western Australia guidelines have been developed for career development and transition support services by a partnership of government, catholic and independent schools. This model is successful and could be taken up as part of national curriculum for career development targeted at primary school through to senior high school. The Blueprint also offers the opportunity to map best practice in relation to enterprise, employability resilience and other important skills.

Outcomes:

- Consistent national framework
- Improved evaluation and performance options linked to the 11 Blueprint competencies
- Improved capacity to evaluate and share practice

5. Undertake a review of the marketing strategies to increase awareness of its career programs amongst young Australians

CICA proposes a re-branding of career programs under a single banner as has occurred in Scotland and New Zealand. Scotland housed more than 60 programs under the banner of Careers Scotland and the impact has been to substantially increase the level of awareness. An overarching banner of Careers Australia could result in significant marketing economies. In doing so, CICA is not proposing an upgrade of Career Advice Australia as the overarching framework.

Outcomes:

- Increased awareness
- Higher levels of access

6. Enhance Career Information Centres and *myfuture* by piloting a national careers helpline targeting young Australians and parents

There is clear evidence both from the UK and from New Zealand of the value of web based services supported by a national careers helpline. Watts and Dent found that the telephone is now being used for more complex career related enquiries and that career guidance delivered by telephone is of good quality measured when against standards used in the assessment of face-to-face guidance³⁹. They also found that both the extent and the nature of enquiries to career guidance and information services can be heavily influenced by social marketing campaigns. Career information centres with a national careers helpline responsibility and linked to *myfuture* and using appropriately trained staff would provide nationwide access to a consistent quality of career support.

Outcomes:

- Quality improvement
- Nationwide access

7. Improve access to the evidence base and to examples of best practice by expanding research and establishing a clearing-house

A clearing-house offers a national approach to sharing best practice. CICA suggests that this initiative could be undertaken as a partnership with existing research centres and also include investigation of successful international strategies (e.g. career academies, service based learning activities⁴⁰) to report on suitability for the Australian environment.

Outcomes:

- Sharing of best practice
- Increased evidence base

8. Investigate processes for improving national infrastructure and delivery to secondary school students via better cooperation between providers in the secondary and post-secondary sectors

Where cooperation exists between educational institutions significant improvements in completion and transition can occur.⁴¹ Lamb and Rice (2008) estimate that completion rates could improve by 10–20% with better coordination between providers.

Outcomes:

- Increased support for specific target groups
- Support for students to continue to post-secondary education and training

9. Establish a national careers taskforce with a specific focus on improving career interventions and outcomes for young people completing Year 12 or equivalent and responding to key issues rising out of COAG discussions.

Since MCEETYA reduced the number of its taskforces and NYCTAG was disbanded there has subsequently been no working group involving key stakeholders specifically focused on career development issues. Bringing practitioners, policy makers and researchers together with key stakeholders would mirror existing international models of good practice.

Outcomes:

- Improved stakeholder liaison
- Influence debate on career related issues.

Final comment

Although this paper has focused on Year 12 or its equivalent, CICA is committed to the focus of career services so that they are available across all age groups. In the current economic climate and with a focus by government on protecting Australian jobs⁴², expanding existing career services is a critical strategy of government and an important infrastructure development to support all Australians to manage their future.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), along with State and Territory Education and Training Institutions, has significant responsibility for ensuring that the goals set by COAG are met, and to fully develop Australia's human capital by:

- Increasing the proportion of young people making a smooth and successful transition from school to work or further study
- Increasing the proportion of adults who have the skills and qualifications needed to enjoy active and productive working lives
- Improving overall workforce participation, with a particular focus on income support recipients, the mature-aged, women, migrants and other groups currently marginalised within the labour market.

An expansion of career services across all ages will not only support these important goals but will tap into and inform the support structures of many young Australians (e.g. families, friends, relatives and acquaintances throughout the community) so that the quality of advice given is accurate, consistent and well informed.

¹ COAG has requested Commonwealth and State implementation plans or the equivalent retention rate to 90% by 2020 and to halve the gap for year 12 attainment or equivalent by 2020 for indigenous youth.

² See *OECD Thematic Review of the Transition from Initial Education to Working Life* at http://www.oecd.org/document/5/0,3343,en_2649_39263238_2465989_1_1_1_1,00.html.

³ Lamb & Rice (2008). *Effective Strategies to Increase School Completion Report*.

⁴ See Appendix 1.

⁵ As stated in recent CICA papers.

⁶ CICA (2008). *Toward a more Cohesive and Integrated National Career Development System*.

⁷ See Dusseldorp Skills Forum (2007). *It's Crunch Time*, Melbourne Dusseldorp Skills Forum.

⁸ Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing (2008), *Making Progress, the Health, Development and Well-Being of Australia's Youth and Young People*.

⁹ See Dusseldorp Skills Forum (2007). *It's Crunch Time*, Melbourne Dusseldorp Skills Forum.

¹⁰ Australia uses the term 'career development' as the overarching term to describe the broad range of career programs on offer. 'Career guidance' refers to services and activities intended to assist individuals of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers.

¹¹ Important reports have included: **International** – *OECD Review of Career Guidance Policy* (OECD, 2002), *OECD Career Guidance and Public Policy, Bridging the Gap* (OECD, 2004), *OECD Career Guidance: A Handbook for Policy Makers* (OECD, 2004); **National** – *A National Training Framework for Career Coordinators* (NBEET, 1992), *Career Information Needs Study* (DEET, 1996), *The Development of Knowledge and Attitudes about Career Options and Australia's Economic Future* (NBBET, 1996), *Career Education Quality Framework* (CEAV, 1999), *Footprints to the Future* (DPM, 2001), *Stepping Forward: Improving Pathways for All Young People* (MCEETYA, 2002), *Employability Skills for the Future* (ACCI, BCA, DEST, 2002), *Australian Blueprint for Career Development Draft Prototype* (DEST, 2003), *Career Services in Australia Supporting People Transitions across the Lifespan* (DEST, 2002), *Career and Transition Services Framework* (MCEETYA, 2003), *Learning to Work: Enquiry into Vocational Education in Schools* (House Standing Committee on Education and Training, 2004), *Skilling Australia, New Directions for Vocational Education and Training* (DEST, 2005), *Australian Career Development Studies* (DEST, 2005), *Getting Serious about Careers: Leadership in Career Development* (DEST, 2005), *Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners* (CICA, 2006), *Guidelines for Career Information and Career Services* (CICA, 2007) and most recently the *Review of Higher Education Career Services, and Effective Strategies to Increase School Completion* (2008). **Community** – Reports from the Smith Family, Dusseldorp forum, ACER, CICA, ACCI and AIG.

¹² House Standing Committee on Education (2004). *Learning to Work: Report on the Inquiry into Vocational Education in Schools*.

¹³ Rothman, Hillman (2008). *Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth - Research Report 53, Career Advice in Australian Secondary Schools: Use and Usefulness*.

¹⁴ See <http://www.cica.org.au/>

¹⁵ Beavis, Curtis & Curtis (2005). *What Do Students Know About Work? Senior Secondary School Students' Perception of the World of Work*.

¹⁶ Curtis & Macmillan (2008). *Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth - Research Report 54, School Non-completers: Profiles and Initial Destinations*.

¹⁷ See, for example, *Transition Worker Review*, 2002; *Allen Consulting Group*, 2003; *Alfred et al.*, 1998; *Sears*, 1995; *Spierings*, 2005

¹⁸ Lamb & Rice (2008). *Effective Strategies to Increase School Completion Report*.

¹⁹ Sweet (1998). *Youth: The Rhetoric and the Reality of the 1990s*.

²⁰ OECD (2005). *Education at a Glance*.

²¹ These include students from indigenous backgrounds, low achievers, those from low socio-economic status backgrounds, children and families in distress, and young people living in neighbourhoods of high poverty or in remote locations. However, some level of disengagement occurs across all groups of young people. It also found that intensive career planning and support can raise completion rates for at risk young people by 10–20%²¹.

²² Productivity Commission (2006). *Potential Benefits of the National Reform Agenda*.

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ *Careers Scotland* (2002). *Career Goals and Educational Attainment: What Is the Link?*.

²⁵ Evans & Burck (1992). *The Effects of Career Education Interventions on Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analysis*.

²⁶ Macali (2006). *Contemporary Disability Employment Policy in Australia: How can it best support transitions from welfare to work?*.

²⁷ ACT (2008). *Making the Dream a Reality*.

²⁸ Watts (2007). *Career Services: A Review in an International Perspective*.

²⁹ One of the research questions asks, 'What intervention or combination of interventions (financial incentive; career development programming; information, both web and school and PSE ambassadors) results in greater participation and successful completion of year one of any postsecondary education program (university, college, vocational, up leadership, on-the-job training)?'. A second pilot project focuses on first year college students who are at risk of not completing their college program based on one or more factors. The research question is, 'What combination of academic support, career development advice, mentoring, and financial incentives will increase the likelihood that students at risk of dropping out of college will persist and successfully complete their programs?'

³⁰ These skills are often described as career management skills (OECD, 2004) personal management skills (Miles Morgan Australia, 2004) or career planning skills. Whatever the nomenclature, the clear aim according to the OECD report (2004) is that services focus on developing these skills.

³¹ Lamb & Rice. (2008). *Effective Strategies to Increase School Completion Report*.

³² For example, mentoring; earlier and more intensive pathways and careers planning careers guidance managed by appropriately qualified staff; fine-grained coordination of welfare needs; family outreach; programs to improve students social skills; tutoring and peer tutoring; targeted financial support; case management; targeted assistance for skill development among low achievers.

³³ Lamb & Rice (2008).

³⁴ LSAY research report 53

³⁵ For example, Careers Scotland uses a mix of evaluation tools including interviews and surveys with individuals, parents and employers. More recently, it has implemented evaluation of impact measures including learning outcomes from career planning and related services (e.g. learning about the demands of jobs or about self-awareness); the changes or decisions which individuals may make following their learning experience (e.g. application to a course at college); and the sustainability and robustness of that decision over time (e.g. that they complete the course)

³⁶ Note that family structures are changing and becoming more diverse, further impacting on the perspectives through which information and advice is understood. From 1996 to 2006, couple families with children decreased from 50% to 45% of all families and one-parent families increased from 14.5% to 15.8% of families (Census 2006, cited in Pro Bono Australia 2006).

³⁷ Myrick & Carrow (1987). *Teacher Involvement in Career Education and Advisement: Ready or Not?*.

³⁸ Iowa Department of Education (2004). *Iowa District Career Development Plan*.

³⁹ Watts & Dent (2008). *The Evolution of a National Distance Guidance Service: Trends and Challenges*.

⁴⁰ Career academies have achieved significant success in achieving positive outcomes in relation to attainment.

⁴¹ Claremont College in Tasmania conducts a successful transition program which has shifted student attitude to completion and further education.

⁴² ABC interview with Kevin Rudd, 22 January 2009.

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Appendix 1: Definitions

What is career development?

Career development is the lifelong process of managing progression in learning and work. The quality of this process significantly determines the nature and quality of individuals' lives: the kind of people they become, the sense of purpose they have, the income at their disposal. It also determines the social and economic contribution they make to the communities and societies of which they are part.

What support do individuals need to manage their career development?

If individuals are to manage their career development effectively, they need support in three forms:

- help in developing their career management skills
- high-quality information on the opportunities open to them
- personal support in reviewing the options and converting information into personal action.

What are career management skills?

Career management skills include:

- the skills of understanding one's own strengths and weaknesses, and needs and wants
- of being able to identify relevant opportunities, and access information on them
- of being able to take career-related decisions
- of being able to present oneself effectively in order to gain access to courses or jobs.

Recent OECD work on human capital suggests that these career management skills may play an important role in economic growth. It points out that less than half of earnings variation in OECD countries can be accounted for by educational qualifications and readily measurable skills. It argues that a significant part of the remainder may be explained by people's ability to build, and to manage their skills. These 'meta-skills' include career management skills.

What is the role of career information?

Good-quality career information is essential for good-quality career development. It needs to include information on education and training opportunities, on occupations and their characteristics, and on labour market supply and demand. It also needs to include information on the occupational implications of educational decisions, and on the learning pathways that lead to particular occupational destinations. In addition, it needs to include information on how these opportunities relate to the characteristics and preferences of individuals, so that individuals can identify opportunities appropriate to them. Information and communication technologies need to be harnessed creatively in order to improve the quality, interconnectedness and accessibility of such information.

What forms of personal support are needed?

Information is necessary for good-quality career development, but it is not sufficient. If individuals are to be able to find the information they need, to understand this information and relate it to their personal needs and circumstances, and then to convert it into personal action, many will need some form of personal support. Some of this personal support can be provided by family and friends, or by teachers and tutors or managers and supervisors. But it is important that people also have access to individual advice and career support, offered in a variety of locations by competent and accredited practitioners who are:

- skilled in the professional techniques of career guidance
- knowledgeable about learning opportunities and labour markets
- impartial, and able in an untrammelled way to serve the individual's needs.

Such services may be provided on an individual or group basis; they may be face-to-face or at a distance (including helplines and web-based services).

How can access to career development services be provided?

Services include career information (in print, ICT-based and other forms) assessment and self-assessment tools, career counselling, career education and career management programmes, taster programmes, work integrated learning, work search programmes, and transition services.

The OECD Career Guidance Policy Review indicates that the development of career management skills is an important task for schools. It needs to be embedded in the curriculum in the form of career education programs, with a strong experiential component (work experience, work integrated learning etc.). Profiling and portfolio arrangements also have an important contribution make to this task. International experience demonstrates, however, that career development programs provided totally by schools tend to be remote from the labour market and subordinated to personal and study guidance. The OECD review accordingly concludes that school career development services needs to be supported and supplemented by specialised external career development agencies that visit the school on a regular basis.

Specific elements for effective and inclusive career development learning within schools might include:

- A school wide focus
- Access to high quality career information (eg *myfuture*, career library)
- Availability of appropriately qualified career practitioners (for career counselling, group workshops and brief consultations) and teacher involvement
- Significant focus on the development of career management skills
- A variety of career activities in place including pathway planning
- A range of self assessment tools available
- Career development learning embedded in the curriculum (ABCD)
- Links to workplaces and communities
- External support available (career helpline)
- Specific targeted career services (career academies)
- Intensive support for at risk students (mentoring, case management)
- Opportunities for parental engagement.