



PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills
Committee

Inquiry into career advice activities in Victorian schools

Parliament of Victoria
Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee

Ordered to be published

VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT PRINTER
August 2018

PP No 430, **Session** 2014-18
ISBN 978 1 925703 60 3 (print version)
978 1 925703 61 0 (PDF version)

Committee functions

The Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee is constituted under section 8 of the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003* (Vic).

The Committee's functions are to inquire into, consider and report to the Parliament on any proposal, matter or thing concerned with:

- a. economic development, industrial affairs or infrastructure
- b. the provision of services to new urban regions
- c. the development or expansion of new urban regions
- d. education or training.

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This report is available on the Committee's website.

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Terms of reference

Inquiry into career advice activities in Victorian schools

Received from the Legislative Assembly on 7 September 2017:

That, under section 33 of the *Parliamentary Committees Act 2003*, an inquiry into career advice activities in Victorian schools be referred to the Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee for consideration and report no later than 30 September 2018 and, the inquiry should include, but not be limited to:

1. examining the relationship between career advice activities and workforce participation of young Victorians;
2. investigating the extent to which career advice activities meet the needs of school leavers;
3. examining the challenges advisers face helping young Victorians transition from education to the workforce;
4. considering strategies to improve the effectiveness of career advice activities for school leavers;
5. investigate the career advice needs of young people in regional Victoria and ways to address these needs; and
6. exploring what other jurisdictions both in Australia and overseas have in place that could be implemented in Victoria.

Chair's foreword

Secondary school is a time when students have to make important decisions about their future direction. They need the skills, knowledge and confidence to choose between further education, training or employment and the capacity to modify their direction as needed throughout their professional life. This Inquiry considered how well Victorian schools are preparing students to navigate the world of work and where they could improve.

As the target group of school career development, young people's opinions were vital to the Committee's deliberations. The Committee invited young people to share their views through an online survey as well as by giving evidence at public hearings. A broad range of students and recent school leavers presented their experiences and suggestions for improvement at public hearings including young people from Melbourne, regional and rural Victoria and young people from groups facing disadvantage. The Committee also took evidence from school career practitioners and principals from each education sector as well as from employers, industry groups and higher education providers.

Common themes emerged in the evidence; students want tailored guidance earlier and more often, and school career practitioners want more time and resources to provide this guidance. It was also clear that some schools do not prioritise career development. The report's recommendations aim to elevate the profile of school career development, give career practitioners adequate time and resources to do their job, and improve students' access to career development services and opportunities. Schools must view career development as one of their core functions and start preparing their students earlier for their future after school.

Starting career development early does not mean forcing students to choose a career from a young age or restricting their future options. It involves exposing them to a wide range of occupations before they have to make any binding decisions and gradually building their capacity to make effective career decisions, a skill which they will need to draw on throughout their life as their interests and circumstances change. We may not be able to predict the jobs of the future, but we are able to impart to students the skills and confidence they need to successfully manage their career.

On behalf of the Committee, I thank the many young people, school career practitioners, educators, employers and other organisations who wrote submissions, gave evidence at public hearings or responded to the online survey. The Committee appreciates the time and effort of all who contributed their views and experiences during the Inquiry.

Chair's foreword

I sincerely thank the Committee's Deputy Chair, Ms Dee Ryall MP, and my fellow Committee members, Mr Jeff Bourman MLC, Mr Peter Crisp MP, Mrs Christine Fyffe MP, Ms Jane Garrett MP and Mr Cesar Melhem MLC for their commitment and contributions throughout the Inquiry. The Committee also wishes to extend its gratitude to the Secretariat, Ms Kerry Riseley, Dr Marianna Stylianou and Ms Janelle Spielvogel, for their hard work and support throughout the Inquiry.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nazih Elasmr', written in a cursive style.

Nazih Elasmr MLC
Chair

Executive summary

Career development is an ongoing process that develops individuals' skills and knowledge to make decisions about their education, work and career throughout their lifespan. Secondary school is a pivotal time when students make choices about their direction following school. This Inquiry's terms of reference asked the Committee to investigate how well school career development is meeting the needs of Victorian students and how it could be improved. The Committee was also asked to consider the specific needs of regional students and during the course of the Inquiry, the Committee also chose to explore the career development needs of students facing disadvantage.

Career development is not currently meeting the needs of Victorian students

When done well, school career development improves students' self-confidence, school engagement and educational attainment. The skills they learn to manage their career also enhances students' employment outcomes in the future. Evidence indicates that career development in Victorian schools is not meeting the needs of students. Young people reported their dissatisfaction with the guidance they receive and asked for tailored support, more workplace exposure and the earlier introduction of career development at school. Employers were also critical of school career development, which they believe is not preparing students for the workplace and is directing some students to unsuitable pathways.

The nature of work is changing and young people are finding it harder to secure full-time work and it is taking them longer to do so than young people a decade ago. These statistics suggest that school career development may be failing students, but there is no robust tool to measure the effectiveness of career development services. Current data collection in Victoria provides limited information on how well school career development improves students' capacity to manage their study and career choices. Longitudinal studies that track school leavers' satisfaction with career development services at their school and their perceived career management skills would provide a more meaningful measure of effectiveness. The Department of Education and Training (DET) should also hold schools accountable for the career development services they provide and the way they spend funding allocated to career development.

Career development must involve the whole school

Secondary schools in all sectors must prioritise career development. They should adopt a whole-of-school approach that involves developing a career development strategy and communicating it to the school community, incorporating career development throughout the curriculum from junior years and involving parents in their children's career development.

School career practitioners need more resources and support

The Committee heard that school career practitioners face multiple challenges to provide adequate guidance to students. Many career practitioners are under-resourced, time poor and struggle to keep up with the frequent changes in their field. Some schools also poorly define and undervalue the role of school career practitioner and allocate little time and few resources to career development. There are no mandated requirements for how schools provide career development services to their students.

Students want career guidance that is tailored to their individual circumstances. For school career practitioners to provide individualised support, they need time to spend with students, keep their knowledge current and connect with employers and higher education providers. The Committee heard many school career practitioners have high workloads and competing responsibilities that compromise their ability to provide high quality services. The Committee recommends that DET support secondary schools to employ a ratio of one career practitioner for every 450 enrolled students as recommended by the career development profession. This will enable school career practitioners to provide students with more individualised support throughout their secondary schooling.

DET should also provide school career practitioners additional support by funding a secondary school career development coordinator at each Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) throughout the state. The coordinator's role would involve supporting all young people aged 12–21 within the LLEN's catchment area by delivering career development workshops and activities at schools, facilitating links between schools, employers and higher education providers and providing independent advice to students and recent school leavers via email, telephone and online chat.

Career development services must be delivered by qualified professionals

The quality of the advice students receive depends on the skills and expertise of the school career practitioner. There is no requirement for school career practitioners to have a qualification in career development and some schools assign the role to staff who have no experience in the field. The Committee believes that all school career practitioners should have a Graduate Certificate in career development and hold registration with the Career Industry Council of Australia. Registration ensures that the career practitioner is qualified, practises in accordance with the profession's code of conduct and ethics and undertakes continuing professional development. Schools should also ensure that career practitioners are remunerated appropriately and that at least one career practitioner at the school is a registered teacher so that career development can be delivered in classrooms by someone who has experience in curriculum development and delivery.

Students need more opportunities for workplace exposure

Workplace exposure and work experience are crucial components of career development. Not all Victorian students have the opportunity to participate in these activities. The administrative processes and legal requirements for work experience are burdensome for schools and employers, which can dissuade their participation in the program. The Committee recommends the creation of an online portal for work experience that can streamline the process as well as help students and career practitioners to find placements. Schools should also offer their students the opportunity to participate in industry taster or immersion days from Year 7 onwards and employers and industry groups should be encouraged to participate.

The value of vocational education and training should be better promoted

Students should also have more exposure to vocational education and training (VET). The Committee heard that the wider community has a poor perception of VET and considers it to be an inferior option to university pathways. This view is perpetuated by the emphasis the media and community place on Australian Tertiary Admission Ranks (ATARs) and first-round university offers when comparing schools. However, the high demand for occupations requiring a VET qualification and high university attrition rates suggest that more students should be encouraged to consider VET. Schools and DET should educate students, teachers and parents about the labour market opportunities and potential career trajectories available through VET.

Career development faces more challenges in regional areas

Victorian students in regional areas have added challenges when deciding on their post-school destination. Their distance from work and higher education opportunities can limit their choices especially due to the costs and disruption of relocating from home. Transport and accommodation costs can also affect students' ability to attend and participate in career development opportunities, and the smaller local economies in regional areas can limit students' education options and opportunities for work experience. Students in regional areas may also have low career aspirations compared with metropolitan students.

DET should establish a career development fund to improve regional students' access to career development activities. Similar to the existing Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund, money should be paid to schools to subsidise transport and accommodation costs for eligible students to attend career development events. A similar fund should also be created for career practitioners in regional schools to attend professional development activities outside of their region. Career practitioners in regional schools told the Committee they struggle to access opportunities for professional development, which affects their ability to stay up to date with developments in their field.

Enhancing the knowledge of regional school career practitioners will also help them to lift their students' career aspirations and educate parents and the wider community of the opportunities regional students have. Mentoring programs have also proven to be successful in broadening the horizons of regional students and DET should support existing programs as well as future ones.

Students facing disadvantage need services tailored to their circumstances

School career development services are also not meeting the needs of Victorian students facing disadvantage, such as culturally diverse students, young people with disability, young people in out-of-home care and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. There is often a culture of low expectations for these students. They also may have lower education participation rates, smaller networks to link them to work opportunities, financial pressures, additional responsibilities and less access to career development services. Schools should have processes in place to identify these students and offer them support tailored to their circumstances. DET should also assist students facing disadvantage by setting up a fund to help them access career development opportunities as well as by supporting current and future mentoring programs.

Career development is an essential school function

The Committee considers career development to be a core function of secondary schools and believes the recommendations in this report will raise the profile of career development and career practitioners in schools, allocate adequate resources for service delivery and provide students with the capacity to better manage their transition from school and their future career.

Glossary

ABCD	Australian Blueprint for Career Development, a national framework to guide the design, implementation and education of career development services.
ATAR	Australian Tertiary Admission Rank, a rank given to students completing VCE or the equivalent, showing a student's achievement in relation to other students. The ATAR is the primary criterion for entering most undergraduate university programs in Australia.
CAP	Career Action Plan, a planning document designed to be used by young people and intended to reflect their increased career development learning.
Career advice	Advice that helps students plan for their transition to work, such as choosing a career that suits their interests and skills, developing a career pathway, selecting suitable subjects, writing résumés and preparing for interviews.
Career development	The Australian Government's National Career Development Strategy defines career development as 'the ongoing process of a person managing their life, learning and work over their lifespan. It involves developing the skills and knowledge that enable individuals to plan and make informed decisions about education, training and career choices'. ⁱ
Career development services	A range of activities such as career education, career exploration, career information, career advice, career counselling and career guidance.
Career education	The development of knowledge, skills and attitudes to assist students to make informed decisions about their career.
Career exploration	Learning about working in a particular field through researching industries and occupations, work experience, industry visits and industry guest speakers.
Career information	The provision of print and electronic information that supports career choices, such as salaries, employment rates and employment pathways for various jobs.
Career counselling	One-to-one or small group interaction between a career practitioner and students that helps students consider personal issues related to career decisions, develop learning and work plans, and manage the transition from school to work.
Career guidance	A range of activities including career education and counselling that help students understand the study and work options that are available to them.
CEAV	Career Education Association of Victoria, a not-for-profit association that supports and trains career practitioners.
CEF	Career Education Funding, a new Victorian Government funding model to be implemented in 2019 which will support an expanded set of career education services delivered by schools.
CHESSN	Commonwealth Higher Education Student Support Number, a unique identification number given to students who are Commonwealth supported, accessing a HELP loan, or receiving certain scholarships.
CICA	Career Industry Council of Australia, the national peak body for the career industry, which is comprised of 10 professional career development associations across Australia.
CSEF	Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund, a Victorian Government fund that provides students from low socioeconomic backgrounds payments to attend camps, excursions and swimming, sports and outdoor education programs.
DEDJTR	Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, the Victorian Government department responsible for transport and ports, investment attraction and facilitation, trade, innovation, regional development and small business, as well as key services to sectors such as agriculture, the creative industries, resources and tourism.

ⁱ Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australia, *National career development strategy* (2013), 3.

DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, a former Australian Government department superseded by the Department of Education, Training and Employment.
DET	Department of Education and Training, the Victorian Government department responsible for learning and development support, services and resources for all Victorians.
EPICC	Engaging Parents in Career Conversations, an online program that provides resources for career practitioners to engage parents in the career development of their children.
ES	Education Support, an employment classification for staff providing support services to schools such as human resources, finance, grounds maintenance, library, canteen and classroom assistance.
Higher education	Post-secondary education including university, TAFE and college.
FYA	Foundation for Young Australians, a non-profit organisation focused on improving the learning outcomes and life opportunities of young Australians.
LLEN	Local Learning and Employment Network, a statewide network of 31 incorporated associations that create partnerships between employers, schools, training organisations and community agencies within their geographical region.
MIPs	Managed Individual Pathways, funding provided by the Victorian Government to government schools to provide career development services to students in Years 10–12.
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research, the national body responsible for research and statistics on the Australian VET sector.
NDS	National Disability Services, the peak body for non-government disability service organisations.
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme, a national program providing services and support to people with permanent and significant disability.
On Track	On Track survey, a Victorian Government initiative which surveys school leavers from all school sectors six months after they leave school.
RTO	Registered Training Organisation, an organisation that delivers and assesses VET courses. RTOs can be a TAFE, adult and community education provider, group training company, private provider or school.
SbATs	School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships, a pathway within VETiS that enables a student to undertake an apprenticeship while enrolled in either VCE or VCAL.
SWL	Structured Workplace Learning, a one- to four-week work placement students complete when undertaking a VET course as part of their VCE or VCAL.
TAFE	Technical and further education, institutions providing vocational courses, under the National Training System, the Australian Qualifications Framework and the Australian Quality Training Framework.
TIS	Tertiary Information Service, a not-for-profit collective of higher education providers that organises career events.
USI	Unique Student Identifier, a unique reference number used to track a student's vocational education and training enrolments and completions.
VACC	Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce, an employer organisation representing automotive businesses in Victoria.
VAEAI	Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, the peak Koorie community organisation for education and training in Victoria.
VASSP	Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals, the professional association for principals, assistant principals and leading teachers in Victorian government secondary schools.
VCAL	Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning, a hands-on option for Victorian Year 11 and 12 students, offering practical work-related experience and literacy and numeracy skills.
VCOSS	Victorian Council of Social Service, the peak body for the social and community services sector in Victoria.

VCE	Victorian Certificate of Education, a certificate available to Victorians on satisfactory completion of their secondary education.
VCCF	Victorian Careers Curriculum Framework, provides the basis of a career education program for students in Years 7–12 in Victorian schools, as well as young people studying with VET and Learn Local providers.
VET	Vocational education and training.
VET Cluster	A group of schools participating in VET that share facilities and staff expertise.
VETiS	Vocational Education and Training in Schools, where students undertake a VET course within a school.
VFF	Victorian Farmers Federation, an organisation representing the interests of Victoria's farmers.
VMC	Victorian Multicultural Commission, an independent statutory authority that represents Victoria's culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
VSN	Victorian Student Number, a nine-digit student identification number assigned by the Victorian Department of Education and Training to all students in government and non-government schools, and students up to the age of 25 enrolled in VET.
VTAC	Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre, the central office that administers the application process for places in tertiary course at higher education providers in Victoria.
YDAS	Youth Disability Advocacy Service, a core agency of the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria which provides policy and individual advocacy to young Victorians aged 12–25 with a disability.

Findings

Chapter 2 How effective is current school career development?

FINDING 1: Career development services at Victorian schools are not meeting the needs of students who want ‘hands on’ experience and tailored guidance from career practitioners who have the time and expertise to support them. 27

FINDING 2: Employers and industry groups are concerned that school career practitioners are not providing students with accurate and current information about the opportunities and nature of jobs in their industry. 31

FINDING 3: Data from the Department of Education and Training’s On Track survey and Managed Individual Pathways reporting do not allow for a comprehensive assessment of the quality and effectiveness of career development services provided at Victorian schools. 36

Chapter 3 Improving career development services in schools

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FINDING 8: Many school career practitioners in Victoria do not have adequate time to provide career development services to students due to high workloads and competing responsibilities. 60

FINDING 9: It is difficult for many school career practitioners to access time in the curriculum to deliver career development services. 61

FINDING 10: Many Victorian schools do not allocate adequate human resources or funding to career development, which diminishes the quality of career development services they deliver to students. 63

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FINDING 12: It can be difficult for young people, parents, teachers and career practitioners to find out about the work and study opportunities, scholarships and other support programs available to school leavers. 66

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FINDING 21: Young people and their parents are not receiving enough information about labour market trends and emerging industries to inform students’ career choices. 89

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FINDING 23: Employers recognise the value of work experience but the legal and other compliance requirements dissuade some of them from participating.. . . . 92

FINDING 24: Many schools, parents and students have an unwarranted poor perception of vocational education and training and consider it inferior to university study. 97

FINDING 25: The emphasis the media and community place on Australian Tertiary Admission Ranks and first-round university offers lets down young people by not recognising the merit of vocational education and training and possibly directing students to unsuitable pathways. 100

FINDING 26: The Victorian Government’s decision to provide free TAFE training for 30 priority courses could encourage students to leave school and enrol in TAFE instead, which would have an adverse effect on schools that have made a significant investment in vocational education and training. 102

Chapter 4 Addressing the career development needs of regional students

FINDING 27: Students in regional Victoria have less access to career development opportunities because of their location. The cost and availability of transport and accommodation can be a barrier to attending events and activities away from home. .107

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FINDING 29: Career practitioners in regional schools find it difficult to undertake professional development due to the required travel time and transport and accommodation costs.. . . . 110

FINDING 30: Regional schools and industry are not relaying the diversity of local employment opportunities available to young people resulting in a lack of awareness of these opportunities among students, parents and the wider community. 113

FINDING 31: Due to smaller economies and populations in regional areas, young people have fewer education options and less access to career development events and opportunities. 116

FINDING 32: Students in regional Victoria often struggle to secure work experience placements in their region and can find it challenging to secure placements and accommodation outside their region. 119

FINDING 33: Compared with their metropolitan counterparts, some young people in regional areas have lower career aspirations, which can be strongly influenced by the views and expectations of their families and the wider community. 124

FINDING 34: Mentoring programs that provide regional students with experiences in larger urban centres can inspire young people to develop higher career aspirations. 125

Chapter 5 Tailoring career development for young people facing disadvantage

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FINDING 36: Schools need to be able to identify students facing disadvantage to provide them with tailored support and career development services.141

FINDING 37: Mentoring programs that connect students facing disadvantage with mentors from similar backgrounds can inspire young people to develop higher career aspirations and help them to successfully transition into education, training or employment.. . . .152

Recommendations

Chapter 2 How effective is current school career development?

- RECOMMENDATION 1:** That the Department of Education and Training expand On Track to also survey school leavers at one year and five years after leaving secondary school. 40
- RECOMMENDATION 2:** That the Department of Education and Training use On Track to measure school leavers' satisfaction with career development services at their school and their perceived capacity to manage their career. 40
- RECOMMENDATION 3:** That the Department of Education and Training investigate using data linkage to track, analyse and report on student destinations. 41
- RECOMMENDATION 4:** That the Department of Education and Training separate Career Education Funding from schools' global budgets and ensure schools are accountable for spending the funding solely on career development services. 42
- RECOMMENDATION 5:** That the Department of Education and Training require government secondary school principals to report on their school's career development services in their Annual Implementation Plan. 43

Chapter 3 Improving career development services in schools

Adopting a whole-of-school approach

- RECOMMENDATION 6:** That the Department of Education and Training require each school to publish its career development program on the school's website for students, parents, teachers and employers to access. 48
- RECOMMENDATION 7:** That the Department of Education and Training make career development an explicit component of the school curriculum in Years 7–12 by designating career management as a 'capability' within the Victorian Curriculum. 52
- RECOMMENDATION 8:** That the Department of Education and Training encourage Year 7–12 subject teachers to incorporate careers content in the curriculum so students can connect classroom learning to potential jobs. 53
- RECOMMENDATION 9:** That the Department of Education and Training require teacher-training courses to include a career development unit in the syllabus. 54
- RECOMMENDATION 10:** That the Department of Education and Training encourage all secondary teachers to undertake training in career development relevant to their specialisation as part of their annual professional development. 54
- RECOMMENDATION 11:** That secondary schools ensure their career practitioner is available for consultation at parent-teacher interviews and other parent information sessions. 57

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- provide add-on support to career practitioners at all secondary schools within the network’s catchment area
- deliver career development workshops and activities to local secondary schools
- coordinate industry, employers, higher education providers and schools to run presentations and taster and immersion days for local secondary students
- provide local secondary students and recent school leavers with one-to-one career counselling via email, online chat and telephone
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On 7 September 2017, the Parliament of Victoria's Legislative Assembly gave the Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee terms of reference to conduct an inquiry into school career development. The terms of reference asked the Committee to investigate how well career development is meeting the needs of Victorian students and how school career development could be improved. The Committee was also required to consider the career development needs of young people in regional Victoria and how to address those needs.

According to the Australian Government's National Career Development Strategy, career development is:

the ongoing process of a person managing their life, learning and work over their lifespan. It involves developing the skills and knowledge that enable individuals to plan and make informed decisions about education, training and career choices.¹

During secondary school, students consider a range of careers, select subjects and decide on their post-school destination, which could be training, higher education or employment. Effective career development assists young people to gain employment by helping them to understand the labour market, set realistic career goals, and develop education and work plans.

High rates of youth unemployment, university attrition and non-completion of apprenticeships in recent years implies that career development in Victorian schools may not be meeting the needs of students.² Skills shortages in many industries requiring vocational education and training also suggest that school career development is not reflecting current and future labour market needs.

Many school career practitioners in Victoria struggle with a lack of time and resources to provide adequate services to students. The Committee heard that some school leadership teams do not consider career development a priority and assign practitioners to the role irrespective of qualifications or experience. In addition, regional students and young people with additional needs provided evidence that identified gaps in how schools deliver career development to individuals facing disadvantage.

The Committee considers career development to be an important and core role of schools and the recommendations in this report aim to raise the profile of school career practitioners, provide schools with adequate career development resources and give students more opportunities to explore career options and develop the skills they need to successfully manage their professional life.

1 Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australia, *National career development strategy* (2013), 3.

2 Year13, *Inquiry into career advice activities in Victorian schools—Year13 strategy*, supplementary evidence received 8 May 2018, 2.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 This report uses the profession's preferred terminology

The Inquiry's terms of reference refer to career advice and career advisers; however, stakeholders made it clear in their evidence that these terms are outdated and that the profession's preferred terms are career development and career practitioner. The Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA), the national peak body for the career industry, is comprised of 10 professional career development associations across Australia. CICA has agreed to use the umbrella terms of career development and career practitioner to encompass the multiple roles of the profession and to provide consistency.³

For example, CICA acknowledges that different schools use different titles for people working in career development such as career counsellor, career adviser, guidance officer, guidance counsellor, school counsellor, and career teacher.⁴ In its 2012 survey of career practitioners, CICA also noted that respondents' job titles 'were so diverse as to defy meaningful categorisation' and displayed:

little uniformity in the spelling. In some instances it was "careers adviser" while in other instances it was the "career adviser" (singular). Sometimes the words were spelt differently such as "adviser" or "advisor". It may seem that these are trivial observations but it is considered that they reflect an underlying lack of coherence in the field of career development.⁵

CICA, therefore, uses the term career practitioner for consistency. In recognition of the importance of clear and consistent terminology in this field, this report uses the terms career development and career practitioner to align with CICA's terminology. It also uses the term 'career development services' instead of 'career advice activities'.

1.1.2 Career development services encompass a range of activities

Career development services include a range of activities such as career education, career exploration, career information, career advice, career counselling and career guidance.⁶ There is some inevitable overlap between these activities, which are defined in Table 1.1.

³ Ms Bernadette Gigliotti, Chief Executive Officer, Career Education Association of Victoria, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 18.

⁴ Career Industry Council of Australia, *A snapshot of career practitioners in Australia*, infographic prepared by McCrindle Research (2015).

⁵ Career Industry Council of Australia, *Career development practitioner survey analysis*, report prepared by James A Athanasou (2012), 2.

⁶ Career Industry Council of Australia, *School career development service: benchmarking resource* (2014), 2.

Table 1.1 Types of career development services

Career development service	Definition
Career advice	advice that helps students plan for their transition to work, such as choosing a career that suits their interests and skills, developing a career pathway, selecting suitable subjects, writing résumés and preparing for interviews
Career education	development of knowledge, skills and attitudes to assist students to make informed decisions about their career
Career exploration	learning about working in a particular field through researching industries and occupations, work experience, industry visits and industry guest speakers
Career information	provision of print and electronic information that supports career choices, such as salaries, employment rates and employment pathways for various jobs
Career counselling	one-to-one or small group interaction between a career practitioner and students that helps students consider personal issues related to career decisions, develop learning and work plans, and manage the transition from school to work
Career guidance	a range of activities including career education and counselling that help students understand the study and work options that are available to them

Sources: Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, *Australian blueprint for career development*, report prepared by Miles Morgan Australia (2010), 79; PriceWaterhouseCoopers, *Career and skills pathways: research into a whole-of-system approach to enhancing lifelong career support mechanisms for all Australians: final report*, report for Commonwealth Department of Education and Training (2017), 53.

In Victorian school settings, teaching or education support staff can deliver career development services in the classroom and during individual counselling sessions between a career practitioner and student. These services can also be provided in work and training settings, at career information days and expos, and through presentations from industry, employers and higher education (university, TAFE and college) providers.⁷

1.1.3 A snapshot of career development in Victorian schools

Victorian schools have significant autonomy over how they provide career development services to their students, including the number and qualifications of the career practitioners they employ and how to structure classes and subjects to deliver career development. This autonomy allows schools to tailor career development to the needs of their students.⁸

The following sections outline how Victorian schools are currently delivering career development services.

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ Ms Katy Haire, Deputy Secretary, Early Childhood and School Education, Department of Education and Training, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 29.

Managed Individual Pathways

The Victorian Government provides Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) funding to government schools to provide career development services to students in Years 10–12. This includes developing an individualised career action plan with each student, providing career education and counselling, and following up with each student six months after they leave school.⁹

MIPs funding is based on the number of students aged 15 and over enrolled at the school and the school's Student Family Occupation density, which is derived from parental occupation data and correlates with students' socioeconomic status. Each school's approach to career development varies depending on the funding and resources they can dedicate to it. Most schools use MIPs funding to employ career practitioners. While the funding is primarily for senior students, most schools begin providing some form of career development in earlier years.¹⁰

Many Victorian secondary schools include one or two weeks of work experience in their Year 9 or 10 program to expose students to the workplace. It is not mandatory for schools to offer work experience, but the Victorian Government encourages its inclusion in each school's mainstream curriculum program.¹¹

Independent and Catholic schools do not receive MIPs funding and must fund the provision of career development services themselves resulting in wide variations in service delivery between schools.

Victorian Careers Curriculum Framework

In 2010, the Victorian Government commissioned the Career Education Association of Victoria (CEAV), a not-for-profit association that supports and trains career practitioners, to develop the Victorian Careers Curriculum Framework (VCCF). The VCCF provides the basis of a career education program for students in Years 7–12, as well as young people studying with vocational education and training (VET) providers or Learn Local (adult community education) providers. It is based on three stages of career development: self development, career exploration and career management. Each stage has learning outcomes and activities for students at each year level. However, it is not compulsory for schools to use the VCCF, so it is up to each school whether they adopt it.¹²

⁹ Department of Education and Training, Victoria, *Managed Individual Pathways (MIPS)* (2017), <<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/careers/Pages/mips.aspx>> viewed 15 September 2017.

¹⁰ Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals, *Submission 22*, 3.

¹¹ Department of Education and Training, Victoria, *Work experience manual for Victorian secondary schools* (2017), 9.

¹² Mr Frank Thompson, President, Career Education Association of Victoria, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 17.

The current Victorian Curriculum does not refer specifically to career development. There is one unit in the economics and business learning area that covers ‘work and work futures’, but according to CEAV, it ‘does not cover everything that needs to be covered in a comprehensive career education curriculum’.¹³

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria supports the VCCF and produces an annual publication for Victorian Catholic secondary schools to guide the provision of career development and workplace learning.¹⁴ There are no guidelines for the delivery of career development services in independent schools; however, many independent schools use CEAV resources, which have been mapped against the VCCF, to support their career development programs.¹⁵

Quality and quantity of career development services

A 2017 review of career education in Victorian government schools for the Department of Education and Training (DET) found that the provision of career development varied significantly between schools in both quality and quantity. It found that:

- 10% of schools spend 45 minutes or less on career education per student per year
- 10% of schools spend 12 hours or more per student per year
- the median school spends two hours per student per year
- 82% of these hours are spent on senior students (Years 10–12)
- some schools only provide information to students whereas other schools focus on activities that provide the most value to students
- some schools do not see career education as a priority whereas others include the career practitioner in their school leadership team
- the variation between schools is not explained by school size, location or socioeconomic status, but by the extent schools choose to prioritise career education.¹⁶

School career practitioners

There are no data specifically on Victorian school career practitioners; however, every second year, CICA runs a national survey of career practitioners. According to the 2014 CICA survey, which had 937 respondents, most Australian schools (80%) have one or less than one full-time equivalent career practitioner.¹⁷ Of Australia’s school career practitioners in 2016:

¹³ Ms Bernadette Gigliotti, *Transcript of evidence*, 17.

¹⁴ Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, *Submission 78*, 4.

¹⁵ Independent Schools Victoria, *Submission 62*, 1.

¹⁶ Dandolo Partners, *Review of career education in Victorian government schools*, report for Department of Education and Training, Victoria (2017), 4.

¹⁷ Career Industry Council of Australia, *The role of career practitioners in our schools*, infographic prepared by McCrindle Research (2015).

- 81% were female
- 52% did their role on a part-time basis:
 - of these, 42% were able to devote all their time at work to career development
 - the remaining 58% also had classroom teaching (64%), middle management (22%), senior management (7%) and student counselling (7%) responsibilities
- 26% had less than \$1000 to spend on career development across their school that year
- 24% had the time allowance for their position reduced in the past three years
- 13% did not have formal career development qualifications.¹⁸

Local Learning and Employment Networks

In addition to school career development services, Victoria has a unique network of community associations that work with local schools to improve the education, training and employment outcomes of young people, especially those who are at risk of disengaging, or have already disengaged, from school and are not in meaningful employment. The Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) is a statewide network of 31 incorporated associations that create partnerships between employers, schools, training organisations and community agencies within their geographical region. Each LLEN's aims are to increase the number of young Victorians who complete Year 12 or its equivalent and to create transition pathways for vulnerable young people.¹⁹

1.1.4 Career development provision interstate and overseas varies

In recognition of the need for effective career development, the Australian Government and CICA have developed national frameworks and guidelines to support the delivery and evaluation of career development services. However, it is not compulsory for schools to use these, so service delivery is not consistent across Australian schools. The career development measures that governments in Australia and overseas have implemented are discussed below.

Australian Government

In 2010, the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs developed the Australian Blueprint for Career Development (ABCD), to guide the design, implementation and evaluation of career development services. The ABCD is a national framework that career practitioners can use

¹⁸ Career Industry Council of Australia, *Equipping the next generation: insights into our school based career practitioners*, infographic prepared by McCrindle Research (2017).

¹⁹ Victorian Local Learning and Employment Networks, *Submission 21*, 3.

to develop and assess programs for young people and adults. It has 11 career management competencies grouped into three areas: personal management, learning and work exploration, and career building.²⁰

A 2012 review of the ABCD found that awareness and usage of it were high among schools. School career practitioners were using the blueprint to help identify career development opportunities, adopt a whole-school approach to career education, link career competencies with employability skills, develop coursework and new resources, and judge the appropriateness of existing resources.²¹

The Australian Government has led the creation of several online career information resources such as the myfuture website and the Labour Market Information portal. The Government has also supported the professionalisation of career practitioners. It funded CICA to develop professional standards for career practitioners, which CICA published in 2006 and revised in 2007 and 2011.²² The standards establish quality benchmarks, minimum entry-level qualifications and requirements for continuing professional development. CICA is also responsible for the registration of career practitioners. Registration is not mandatory, but some schools are including it in their key selection criteria for career practitioner positions. In 2014, CICA developed a benchmarking resource for schools to review their career development service delivery and use as a quality improvement tool.²³

In 2013, the Australian Government developed the National Career Development Strategy, which provides a broad vision for career development in Australia and outlines key priorities and guiding principles.²⁴ It is designed for jobseekers of all ages and stages of their career. The Government is currently working on another strategy specifically for the transition from school to further education, training or employment, known as the National Career Education Strategy.

New South Wales

In New South Wales (NSW), career development services vary between schools due to educational reform in 2013 that gave government schools the authority to manage up to 70% of their budget. Therefore, each school principal determines the time, staff and resources allocated to career development services. The Careers Advisers Association of NSW and ACT has produced guidelines for career practitioners in government schools, but their use is not mandatory. There are no career development guidelines for Catholic and independent schools in NSW.²⁵

20 Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs, *Australian blueprint for career development*, report prepared by Miles Morgan Australia (2010), 15.

21 Atelier Learning Solutions, *Report of the review of the Australian Blueprint for Career Development* (2012), 2.

22 Career Industry Council of Australia, *Professional standards for Australian career development practitioners* (2011).

23 Career Industry Council of Australia, *School career development service: benchmarking resource*, (2014).

24 Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australia, *National career development strategy*.

25 Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, report prepared by Gabrielle Brown and Eliza Kidd (2017), 19–20.

The Department of Education has a School to Work program for government school students that schools can adopt, but its use is not widespread. It includes a Student Pathways Plan that students can develop online via a portal as well as an online logbook to document their employability skills.²⁶ The Department also offers students a free career advisory service after the release of the Higher School Certificate results that enables students and their parents or carers to speak to a career practitioner via phone, email or webchat.²⁷

Unlike in Victoria, career practitioners in NSW government schools must have qualifications in both teaching and career development. The NSW Department of Education's Sponsored Training Education Program funds current secondary teachers to complete an approved postgraduate qualification in career development so they can gain employment and accreditation as a school career practitioner.²⁸

Queensland

Similar to Victoria's MIPs, most Queensland schools work with students to develop a career plan in Year 10. Students develop their Senior Education and Training plan in consultation with their school and parents or carers. The plan sets out students' learning goals for their senior phase of learning, which could include completing Year 12, vocational education and training, or an apprenticeship or traineeship.²⁹

South Australia

Career planning is compulsory for all students in South Australia who are working towards the South Australian Certificate of Education (SACE). To gain their SACE, students must complete a Personal Learning Plan (PLP), which is worth 10 credits out of the 200 credits required to complete the SACE.

The PLP helps students to explore further education and career options and to design a career plan. Students are assessed on how well they can identify their strengths, focus on developing their capabilities, investigate potential pathways and determine how they will achieve their goals.³⁰ Students usually begin their PLP in Year 10 and they must achieve a C grade or higher to attain their SACE.³¹

26 New South Wales Department of Education, *About School to Work* (2017), <<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/vetinschools/schooltowork/index.html>> viewed 28 May 2018.

27 New South Wales Department of Education, *Careers advisory service: about* (2017), <<http://www.careersadvisoryservice.com/about>> viewed 28 May 2018.

28 New South Wales Department of Education, *Careers advisers*, <<https://www.teach.nsw.edu.au/exploreteaching/types-of-teachers/specialist-teachers/career-adviser>> viewed 28 May 2018.

29 Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority, *Pathway planning: information for parents and carers* (2015), <<https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/parents-carers/senior/pathway-planning>> viewed 28 May 2018.

30 Career Education Association of Victoria, *Submission 26*, 10.

31 SACE Board of South Australia, *Stage 1*, <<https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/web/personal-learning-plan/stage-1>> viewed 28 May 2018.

The South Australian Department for Education and Child Development is planning to introduce a Navigating Future Pathways strategy that will integrate career development into the classroom, provide more professional development for teachers and require all secondary schools to implement a career development strategy.³²

Northern Territory

The Northern Territory adopts a similar approach to South Australia; students must complete a PLP worth 10 credits to achieve the Northern Territory Certificate of Education and Training. Ms Amanda Siva, a career practitioner at Academy of Mary Immaculate, a Catholic girls school in Melbourne, described the value of the PLP for Northern Territory students:

I have had experience teaching this subject as a Careers Practitioner in Darwin and it is incredibly effective because it gives student[s] the timetabled space and time to focus on their future. If taught and resourced well the subject can help a student make a solid plan for their progression though Year 11 and 12 and beyond. The PLP has its issues. It is only effective when taught by teachers who have a genuine interest in the subject matter and the skills and knowledge to deliver it effectively. It requires professional development to upskill teachers in career education and development, however, it places career education in the mainstream curriculum and legitimizes its value in schools.³³

Western Australia

Students in Western Australia have the option of studying Career and Enterprise units in Years 11 and 12 as part of the Western Australian Certificate of Education. The syllabus covers work skills, entrepreneurial behaviours, career development and management, and how to gain and keep work.³⁴

Some secondary schools in Western Australia require students to undertake a career development course in Year 10 to prepare them for life after school. The course assists students to identify their strengths and goals and to explore employment and higher education pathways.³⁵ However, career development is not a compulsory part of the Western Australian curriculum.

Tasmania

Prior to 2015, each Tasmanian high school had a Pathway Planning Officer who worked with Year 10 students to develop a Pathway Plan. The Pathway Plan helped students identify their strengths, interests and aspirations and decide

³² Department for Education and Child Development, South Australia, *Public education action plan (2017)*, 16.

³³ Academy of Mary Immaculate, *Submission 10*, 8.

³⁴ School Curriculum and Standards Authority, *Career and enterprise (2014)*, <<https://senior-secondary.scsa.wa.edu.au/syllabus-and-support-materials/humanities-and-social-sciences/career-and-enterprise>> viewed 29 May 2018.

³⁵ Name withheld, *Submission 5*, 3.

whether they will pursue education, training or work in the following year. The planning officer provided students with information and opportunities for career exploration, as well as helped them to develop a career plan.³⁶

The Tasmanian Government discontinued support for planning officers in 2015 and introduced the My Education program in their place. Teachers deliver My Education to students from kindergarten to Year 12. The program includes an online career planning system for secondary students.³⁷ The Tasmanian Government has commissioned the CEAV to provide Tasmanian teachers with accredited training in career development to deliver the program.³⁸

Australian Capital Territory

In the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), every government secondary school has a Transitions and Career Officer to provide career development services to students. The ACT Education Directorate has developed a Pathways website for young people to create and update an individualised career plan from Years 5 to 12.³⁹ The ACT Education Directorate is also developing guidelines for career practitioners in the territory.⁴⁰

New Zealand

Career development services in New Zealand schools vary because each school board decides how it allocates its budget and resources. The Ministry of Education gives Career Information Grants to schools and requires that schools offer career advice from Year 7 onwards, but there is no requirement to use the grant exclusively on career development.⁴¹

Many schools use the services of Careers New Zealand, a national external careers provider established in 1989. Careers New Zealand works with government agencies, schools, higher education providers, community organisations, industry and businesses to assist the transition from school to work. Its website provides work and higher education information, interactive career planning tools, a job database and one-to-one career counselling on the phone or via online chat. It also provides schools with teaching materials, quality benchmarking tools and extra support for disadvantaged students. In addition, career consultants are available nationwide to deliver workshops and activities to schools.⁴²

³⁶ Tasmania Department of Education, *Your future: information for students and parents* (2011), 5.

³⁷ Tasmania Department of Education, *My Education in Tasmanian government schools* (2018), <<https://www.education.tas.gov.au/parents-carers/parent-fact-sheets/myeducation>> viewed 29 May 2018.

³⁸ Career Education Association of Victoria, *Submission 26*, 10.

³⁹ Education Directorate, Australian Capital Territory, *Careers, transitions and VET* (2018), <https://www.education.act.gov.au/school_education/transitions-careers> viewed 28 May 2018.

⁴⁰ Ms Bernadette Gigliotti, *Transcript of evidence*, 22.

⁴¹ Careers and Transition Education Association, *Operational funding—general*, <<http://www.cate.co.nz/funding>> viewed 29 May 2018.

⁴² Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, 40.

Careers New Zealand's online portal has made career development services more accessible to the public and most users have assessed the portal as easy to use and understand.⁴³ A Nielsen survey measuring public trust and awareness of Careers New Zealand found that 50% of respondents knew of Careers New Zealand. Of these:

- 48% had interacted with the organisation in the past year
- 88% stated Careers New Zealand is a trusted organisation
- 81% currently in study or training stated it had influenced their study or work choices.⁴⁴

In addition, 90% of schools and tertiary organisations found Careers New Zealand's career development support useful.⁴⁵

United Kingdom

Schools in the United Kingdom (UK) are required to provide career guidance to all students in Years 8–13. They are required to have a career guidance strategy, which should include work experience, links with employers, face-to-face advice and guidance, and information about the range of education, training and work options. It is not sufficient for schools to rely on online tools to deliver these services. Schools also must measure the effectiveness of their career development services using students' attainment and post-school destinations. The Department of Education provides destination measures data for schools to assess the quality of their career development.⁴⁶

A House of Commons Joint Business, Innovation and Skills and Education Committees' report in 2016 found the destination data the UK Government provided to schools was not timely and limited in coverage. It recommended the Government also consider how to present its destination data so that schools are not judged chiefly on the proportion of students continuing on to higher education.⁴⁷

The UK also has a publically funded National Careers Service that provides career information and professional career advice to adults and young people aged 13 and over and their parents via telephone and online chat. Schools can also seek additional support from National Careers Service contractors to engage with employers and industry.⁴⁸

⁴³ Department of Education and Training, Australia, *Career and skills pathways: research into a whole-of-system approach to enhancing lifelong career support mechanisms for all Australians: final report*, report prepared by PriceWaterhouseCoopers (2017), 16.

⁴⁴ Careers New Zealand, *Annual report 2016/17* (2017), 8.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁶ Department for Education, United Kingdom, *Careers guidance and inspiration in schools: statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff* (2017), 4–6.

⁴⁷ House of Commons, Business, Innovation and Skills and Education Committees, Sub-Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy, *Careers education, information, advice and guidance* (2016), 13.

⁴⁸ Department for Education, United Kingdom, *Careers guidance and inspiration in schools: statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff*, 10.

Canada

Education in Canada is a provincial responsibility so the provision of career development in Canadian schools varies between provinces. Three provinces in Canada have made career development a compulsory part of the school curriculum. For example, in British Columbia there is a comprehensive career development curriculum from Years 3 to 12 and students must complete two career education courses (eight credits out of a total of 80) to attain their Certificate of Graduation.⁴⁹

Germany

The provision of career development services is a statutory requirement in Germany. The Federal Employment Agency (FEA) delivers career development to young people through its career practitioners who visit schools, make class presentations, run small-group guidance sessions and provide one-to-one career counselling during students' penultimate year of compulsory schooling. The FEA also produces labour market information at the local level and online career development materials for young people. Employer engagement with schools is very strong in Germany, with both individual employers and employer networks greatly involved in a wide range of school activities.⁵⁰

Finland

Career development is well integrated in Finnish schools and includes on-demand career counselling from qualified practitioners, a structured program of career lessons, work experience and the inclusion of career exploration in regular science, mathematics and technology lessons.⁵¹ There is a compulsory career development curriculum for Grades 7–9 and a set minimum number of hours of career development for students in upper secondary years. The curriculum also includes a structured work experience program for all students in Grades 7–9.⁵²

School career practitioners are highly regarded in Finland. They must be qualified teachers who have additional qualifications in career development.⁵³ In addition, every secondary teacher in Finland must be aware of the career opportunities related to their subject specialisation and incorporate this into lessons. Teachers are provided with professional development opportunities to keep their career knowledge current, but they are not always able to take these up due to time and resource constraints.⁵⁴

49 Career Education Association of Victoria, *Submission 26*, 11; Province of British Columbia, *Certificate of Graduation—new graduation program requirements*, <<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/graduation/certificate-of-graduation>> viewed 29 May 2018.

50 Gatsby Charitable Foundation, *Good career guidance: appendices 1–5* (2014), 19–21.

51 *ibid.*, 13.

52 *ibid.*, 14.

53 *ibid.*, 13.

54 *ibid.*, 15.

1.1.5 The Victorian Government has a new focus on career development

In July 2017, DET commissioned a review of career education in Victorian government schools. The review considered best practice career development services, assessed how well career development services in Victorian schools matched this and proposed potential areas for change.⁵⁵

In response to the review's findings, the Victorian Government announced that from 2018 government schools will have access to:

- a revised Victorian Careers Education Framework to provide guidance on how to deliver career development in Years 3–12
- resources and professional development to deliver career exploration workshops in Years 7 and 8
- a careers e-portfolio and professional diagnostic career assessment for Year 9 students
- resources and support to improve the work-readiness of students with disability
- a program of industry immersion experiences for Years 7–10 students in rural, regional and disadvantaged metropolitan schools.⁵⁶

In addition, the 2018–19 Victorian Budget allocated:

- \$108.6 million over four years and \$26.7 million per year ongoing to reform career development in Victorian government schools
- \$2.9 million over four years and \$150 000 per year ongoing to ensure that each government school has at least one qualified career practitioner.⁵⁷

1.2 Scope of the Inquiry

1.2.1 What was the Committee asked to consider?

The terms of reference for this Inquiry required the Committee to investigate career development services in Victorian schools. The Committee was asked to consider:

- the relationship between school career development and young Victorians' workforce participation
- the challenges school career practitioners face to provide students adequate services

⁵⁵ Dandolo Partners, *Review of career education in Victorian government schools*, 2.

⁵⁶ Department of Education and Training, Victoria, *Transforming career education in Victorian government schools: connecting today's learning with tomorrow's jobs* (2018), 4, 6.

⁵⁷ Department of Education and Training, Victoria, supplementary evidence, response to questions on notice received 4 May 2018, 1.

- the extent to which school career development services meet the needs of school leavers and how they can be improved
- the career development needs of regional students and how to address them
- interstate and overseas career development measures that could be implemented in Victoria.

1.2.2 What did the Committee examine?

The terms of reference for this Inquiry were contained to career development services in Victorian schools. The Committee acknowledges that people require career development services throughout their professional life and that the terms of reference limit the Inquiry's focus to career development needs at just one life stage. However, career development during secondary school is a vital service at a critical point when individuals make decisions about their future. Therefore, the Committee was satisfied to focus this Inquiry on students, especially considering the time limitations of tabling before the expiry of this Parliament. Its investigation covered government, Catholic and independent schools.

In addition to broader considerations, the Committee was asked to specifically investigate the career development needs of regional students. Submissions also identified other student groups that are not receiving career development to meet their needs. These groups include students with disability, Aboriginal students, students from culturally diverse backgrounds, young carers and students in out-of-home care. These students have fewer opportunities and resources to access study and work opportunities and they require more individualised support from school career practitioners. While the Inquiry's terms of reference do not specifically refer to students facing disadvantage, the level of concern about this issue in submissions prompted the Committee to explore this area as part of the Inquiry.

1.3 Inquiry process

The Committee called for submissions to this Inquiry in October 2017. Advertisements appeared in *The Age* and on Facebook. The Committee also arranged for notice of the subsequent public hearings to be included in the Parliament of Victoria's Twitter feed and Facebook news feed.

The Committee Chair wrote directly to over 650 key stakeholders inviting submissions to the Inquiry. These stakeholders included professional organisations, LLENs, business groups, parent groups, higher education providers, state government departments and 503 government and non-government secondary schools.

The Committee received 91 submissions. Appendix 1 lists the stakeholders who made a submission.

To obtain the views of young people and school career practitioners, the Committee ran an online survey on SurveyMonkey from 24 October to 15 December 2017. The survey was open to secondary students, recent school leavers, teachers and school career advisers. The Committee used a series of seven advertisements on Facebook and Instagram to invite survey respondents, as well as posting a link to the survey on the Committee's website.

The online survey had 485 valid responses, which were split evenly between young people (247) and teachers/school career practitioners (238). Most of the young people were secondary students (86%) rather than recent school leavers (14%), and 67% of the teachers and school career practitioners who responded were employed to provide career development at their school. Of the respondents that specified their school location, most were located in Melbourne (76%). Of those who specified their school sector, 58% were at government schools, 15% at Catholic schools and 27% at independent schools. Results from the survey are interspersed throughout this report and a summary report of the survey is available on the Committee's website.

The Committee held four days of public hearings between February and May 2018. Three days of public hearings were held in Melbourne and one was held in Mildura. Appendix 2 lists the witnesses who gave evidence to the Committee at the public hearings. The public hearings held on 26 March were broadcast on the Parliament of Victoria's website.

1.4 Report outline

This report consists of six chapters:

- This chapter, Chapter 1, introduces the Inquiry by outlining the Inquiry's context, scope and process.
- Chapter 2 considers how well school career development is meeting students' and employers' needs and outlines how effectiveness could be measured and tracked.
- Chapter 3 presents strategies to improve the quality of career development services in schools.
- Chapter 4 examines the needs of regional students and proposes ways for improving career development in regional schools.
- Chapter 5 considers students facing disadvantage and how career development services can be tailored to improve career outcomes for these students.
- Chapter 6 provides a short conclusion to the report.

Examples of overseas and interstate career development measures that the Victorian Government could implement are interspersed throughout the report.

How effective is current school career development?

There is a lack of evidence to demonstrate how effective career development is in Victorian schools. According to the information presented to the Committee in submissions and public hearings, there is consensus that career development services in schools are not meeting the needs of students. Parents and employers are also not convinced that young people are receiving suitable advice to match students' capabilities and the current job market. This chapter considers how satisfied young people and employers are with school career development and how school career development has to adapt to labour market changes. It then examines how to better measure the effectiveness of career development services and track school performance.

2.1 Good career development benefits students in the short and long term

Numerous studies have shown that good quality career development helps students to navigate their professional life as well as improve their engagement with school.⁵⁸ The short-term benefits of career development for students include:

- increased motivation at school
- improved self-confidence and self esteem
- higher school attainment and reduced drop-out rates.⁵⁹

In the long term, good quality career development at schools can:

- improve students' awareness of career possibilities and opportunities
- increase students' understanding of the world of work
- make students more future-oriented and better able to proactively manage their career

⁵⁸ Gatsby Charitable Foundation, *Good career guidance* (2014), 6; Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australia, *Rationale and options for National Career Development Strategy*, report prepared by Nous Group (2011), 3; Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy, University of Melbourne, *Career development: defining and measuring quality*, report prepared by Suzanne Rice, et al. (2015), 8.

⁵⁹ Gatsby Charitable Foundation, *Good career guidance*, 43; Miles Morgan Australia, *The National Career Development Strategy research project: element 1, final report* (2013), 5; Elnaz T Kashfepakdel and Matteo Schleicher, *The impact of career development activities on PISA mathematics tests: an analysis of data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)*, Education and Employers Research, Occasional Research Paper 12, (2017), 3; Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy, University of Melbourne, *Career development: defining and measuring quality*, 8.

- enhance students' employment outcomes, including higher wages and job satisfaction.⁶⁰

In addition to the benefits experienced by the individual, society also profits from good career development through increased labour productivity and a reduction in public expenditure due to less university attrition and welfare dependency.⁶¹ School career development can also benefit the economy and workforce by providing students current and accurate labour market information to help them align career and education choices with labour market needs.⁶²

Cost-benefit modelling in the United Kingdom (UK) found that for every student prevented from becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training) through career development, the government would save enough money to deliver career development services to 280 students.⁶³

Studies have also shown that the fewer career development activities young people participate in, the more likely they are to be uncertain about their careers, disengaged from education or training, and unemployed.⁶⁴ A recent study using data from the Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth found that in 2006, 22% of adolescent men and 17% of adolescent women did not have a clear career plan.⁶⁵ The study went on to show that these adolescents were 45% more likely to still be uncertain about their career plans seven years later, were less likely to have completed a university degree and had lower expected lifetime earnings.⁶⁶

In addition, career development services can help to reduce inequality by providing students facing disadvantage with information and contacts to access work and education opportunities.⁶⁷

⁶⁰ Gatsby Charitable Foundation, *Good career guidance*, 6; Joanna Sikora and Lawrence J Saha, *Lost talent? The occupational ambitions and attainments of young Australians*, report for Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australia (2011), 44; Miles Morgan Australia, *The National Career Development Strategy research project: element 1, final report*, 5; Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australia, *Rationale and options for National Career Development Strategy*, 4; Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy, University of Melbourne, *Career development: defining and measuring quality*, 8.

⁶¹ Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australia, *Rationale and options for National Career Development Strategy*, 4.

⁶² Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy, University of Melbourne, *Career development: defining and measuring quality*, 8.

⁶³ Gatsby Charitable Foundation, *Good career guidance*, 43.

⁶⁴ Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy, University of Melbourne, *Career development: defining and measuring quality*, 8; Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, report prepared by Gabrielle Brown and Eliza Kidd (2017), 8.

⁶⁵ Joanna Sikora, 'Aimless or flexible? Does uncertainty in adolescent occupational expectations matter in young adulthood?' (2018) *Australian Journal of Education*, 7, doi: doi.org/10.1177/0004944118776463

⁶⁶ *ibid*, 11, 13.

⁶⁷ Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy, University of Melbourne, *Career development: defining and measuring quality*, 8.

2.2 Victorian students' career development needs are not being met

In a 2017 review of career education in Victorian government schools for the Department of Education and Training (DET), many stakeholders reported that career development in schools is not useful.⁶⁸ Similarly, stakeholders in this Inquiry also expressed concern that school career development services were outdated and not adequately preparing students for life after school. For example, Professor James Bright, a Professorial Fellow in Career Education and Development at the Australian Catholic University, stated:

Simply measuring somebody's interests and saying 'These jobs match your interests' has been shown and has been known for 20 or 30 years to be totally ineffective. It disregards the fact that people change and the labour market is continually changing as well. So learning how to deal with that change and spot opportunities, and to be resilient in the face of that change, I think is a really important and central part of effective career education. We are not simply about transitioning students out of school into their next training opportunity or into employment; we are trying to equip them with the decision-making capacity to make effective decisions about their career throughout their life span, in the same way that we educate people with English or mathematics so they develop foundational skills that they can apply in lots of different ways throughout their lives.⁶⁹

Mr Steve Shepherd, Chief Executive Officer of TwoPointZero, a private career service provider that provides coaching and guidance to students, graduates and young people, added that 70% of young Victorians aged 16–24 found it difficult to find a job that matched what they wanted to do when they were still at school. In addition, 65% believed that their schools and higher education providers had not adequately prepared them to successfully transition to employment.⁷⁰ He stated parents seek his company's services because their children are unable to find work after exiting education or are struggling to stay engaged while in school or higher education because they cannot identify a career path.

Another indication that students' needs are not being met is the apparent mismatch between the current job market and students' career choices. Ms Kate Torii, Policy Analyst at the Mitchell Institute, a Victoria University think tank on education and training, noted:

we have this situation of young people who disengage from education, who fail to re-engage and who stay behind over their lifetimes, but we also have this situation of young people who are in education for longer, reach higher levels of qualifications but still find challenges finding work. We see this with the increasing number of bachelor graduates who are taking longer to find work, but we also see a bit of a mismatch in terms of there being fewer young people taking vocational pathways and

⁶⁸ Dandolo Partners, *Review of career education in Victorian government schools*, report for Department of Education and Training, Victoria (2017), 5.

⁶⁹ Professor James Bright, Professorial Fellow, Career Education & Development, Faculty of Education and Arts, Australian Catholic University, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 61.

⁷⁰ Mr Steve Shepherd, Chief Executive Officer, TwoPointZero, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 2.

fewer young people who are interested in that pathway ... That is a bit of a problem that we see, because job projections show that of the 950 000 new jobs over the next five years, half of those will require a vocational qualification.⁷¹

The Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA), the national peak body for the career industry, has also highlighted national statistics suggesting that students are not receiving adequate information when making career and study choices. For example:

- There was a 4.1% increase in apprentice and trainee cancellations and withdrawals from 2015 to 2016.
- One in three university students do not complete their qualification within six years of enrolling.⁷²

Charities such as the Brotherhood of St Laurence and The Smith Family have found in their surveys of young people that students have unrealistic knowledge of available career options, employer expectations and the education or training pathway they need to take to work in the job they want.⁷³

The views of these stakeholders point towards a failure of career development in schools to adequately prepare students for their professional life. During the Inquiry, the Committee devoted considerable effort to gather students' opinions on whether they feel their needs are being met. The following sections outline the views of young people about the career development they received at school and what career services they would like from their school.

2.2.1 Many young people do not find school career development useful

Young people's views on career development presented to the Committee highlighted that in many cases young people are not satisfied with the way their schools and career practitioners prepare them for life after school. This section covers young people's views on their school career practitioners, their schools' focus on university pathways and the types of career development services they find useful.

Satisfaction with career development services varies between young people

A 2011 study of the career development needs and wants of young people aged 5–24 for the former Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) found that the level of young

⁷¹ Ms Kate Torii, Policy Analyst, Mitchell Institute, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 26.

⁷² Career Industry Council of Australia, *What's happening in our schools: insights into our school based career practitioners*, infographic prepared by McCrindle Research (2017).

⁷³ Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Submission 29, 20*; Career Industry Council of Australia, *Using career development services to strengthen student retention and attainment*, report prepared by Peter Tatham (2009), 2.

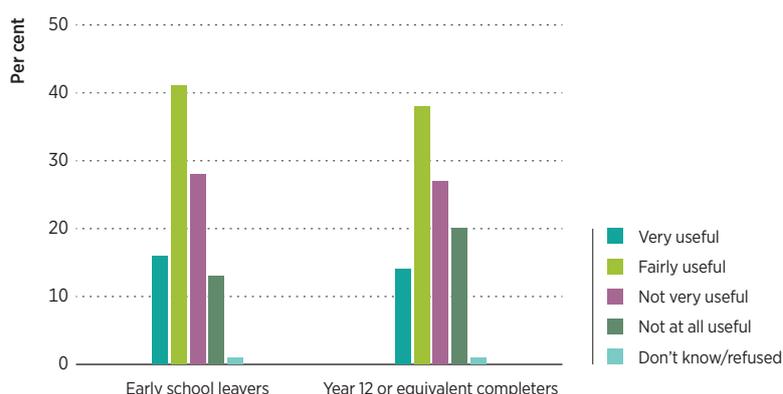
people's satisfaction with school career development varied. The study found that the young people least satisfied with the access, quality and timing of career development in secondary school were those who:

- have left school
- went to government schools
- went to small schools (fewer than 500 students)
- went to schools in regional, rural and remote areas
- went to schools in low socioeconomic status areas.⁷⁴

Students' main concern was the timing of school career development services rather than access or quality.⁷⁵

Victorian Government research from the same year surveyed 2346 Year 12 graduates and 1130 early school leavers who had left school four years earlier about their career development and destinations.⁷⁶ Figure 2.1 presents each cohort's perceived usefulness of the career development they received at school.

Figure 2.1 Perceived usefulness of school career development services among 2007 Year 12 completers and early school leavers, 2011



Source: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, *The On Track survey 2011 longitudinal report: the 2007 cohort 4 years on (2012)*, 35, 63.

The survey found that Year 12 graduates currently at university and apprentices were the most positive about the career development they received at school. The least positive responses were from early school leavers who were currently employed part-time, looking for work or not in the labour force, education or training.⁷⁷ Young people in apprenticeships and at university might have been the most positive about their school-based career development because they probably felt that their pathway was leading towards a job.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Urbis, *National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) research project element 2: synthesis report*, report for Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australia (2011), 30, 61–62.

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, 62.

⁷⁶ Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria, *The On Track survey 2011 longitudinal report: the 2007 cohort 4 years on (2012)*, 1.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, 35, 63.

⁷⁸ Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Submission 29*, 8–9.

A large proportion of students are not seeking advice from their school career practitioner

Several studies have shown that the greatest influence on young people's career planning is their parents rather than their school career practitioner. A 2016 survey of 320 Year 9–12 students in Western Australia for CICA asked students to identify the top two people they felt most comfortable approaching about career advice. The results showed 75% of students identified their parents, followed by career practitioner (54%), friends (29%) and teachers (22%).⁷⁹

Other surveys of Victorian students found that career practitioners ranked even lower in terms of their influence on students' career choices. For example, Mission Australia's 2016 Youth Survey, which surveyed over 4170 Victorian young people aged 15–19, found that career practitioners ranked the sixth most common influence on young Victorians' post-school plans. The most commonly cited influences were parents (84.1%), the internet (73.6%), other family members (71.9%), friends (66.5%), teacher (53.6%), and then career practitioner (52.6%).⁸⁰

Year13, Australia's largest online resource for high-school leavers, came across similar results in its 2017 survey of over 7300 young people. It found Victorian secondary school students were more likely to nominate their parents as the most trustworthy source of career advice than their career practitioners (45% compared with 33%).⁸¹ Respondents in the Skillsroad 2017 Youth Census of 13 227 young people aged 15–24 also ranked their parents as the most likely people they would turn to for career advice, followed by friends and teacher/career adviser.⁸²

Some young people who provided evidence to the Committee stated that their school career practitioner was difficult to access. For example, Mr Joe Collins, a university student who went to school in Sea Lake, stated:

There was just never enough time, especially for us Year 12 students ... The careers adviser at our school was always too busy helping Year 10s fill out a [Managed Individual Pathways] form or something ...⁸³

Mr Sam Rice, a Year 12 student from St Arnaud added:

It was always just, 'Come back later. We'll talk about it another time. I've got a class in 5 minutes. I'll see you after that'—that sort of thing.⁸⁴

Some Melbourne students also found it hard to access their career practitioner. For example, Ms Shannon Bone, a Year 12 student at Westall Secondary College, stated, 'it is really hard to get a one-on-one meeting with my careers counsellor

⁷⁹ Career Industry Council of Australia, *What's happening in our schools: insights into our school based career practitioners*, infographic.

⁸⁰ Mission Australia, *Submission 68*, 3.

⁸¹ Year13, *Submission 1*, 1.

⁸² Skillsroad, *Skillsroad 2017 youth census*, report for Apprenticeship Support Australia, (2017), 21.

⁸³ Mr Joe Collins, University student, Country Education Partnership, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 36.

⁸⁴ Mr Sam Rice, Year 12 student, Country Education Partnership, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 36.

because there are just so many students who ... need to speak to her.⁸⁵ In the Committee's online survey, another Year 12 student from a Melbourne government school stated, 'Due to the high demand and need for the career teacher, it is sometimes hard to ... catch her.'⁸⁶

Other young people complained that their school career practitioner did not provide quality advice. Ms Alice Whitford, a Year 12 student from Myrtleford, stated that the business teacher at her school ran career development and he did not have up-to-date careers knowledge.⁸⁷ A recent school leaver from a Catholic school in regional Victoria who responded to the Committee's online survey on the Inquiry also identified a lack of knowledge among school career practitioners:

I always went to the sessions knowing much more than the advisor, maybe because they didn't have enough resources to get a good grasp of the many different avenues out there. It was my classroom teachers who knew me as an individual who gave the best advice ...⁸⁸

According to career practitioners at the Australian Catholic University, students commonly report that they did not receive enough support at high school because their career practitioner was too busy with teaching loads or did not have time to consult with them.⁸⁹

Students feel that schools are more focused on results than individuals

Young people have expressed that schools focus too much on the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) and university pathways and fail to provide students with individualised support. For example, Mr William Stubleby, Chief Executive Officer of Year13, presented results of Year13's national survey of over 7000 young people:

55 per cent of young people believe that their school cared more about their ATAR than them, the individual student. This is an ongoing type of response that we are seeing from young people. There is significant disengagement from the school system due to the fact that a lot of young people feel they are not getting what they need—whether it is career advice or support—as individuals. Rather, they feel like they have to fit into a system that is driving them towards the agenda of the school or the agenda of the parents, and they are just not feeling that they are actually getting supported on an individual level.⁹⁰

85 Ms Shannon Bone, Year 12 student, Victorian Student Representative Council, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 23.

86 Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, *Inquiry into career advice in Victorian schools*, online survey, SurveyMonkey Inc., California (2017), <<https://www.surveymonkey.com>> for summary results see <<https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/eejsc/article/3883>>.

87 Ms Alice Whitford, Year 12 student, Country Education Partnership, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 36.

88 Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, *Inquiry into career advice in Victorian schools*, online survey.

89 Australian Catholic University, *Submission 41*, 5.

90 Mr William Stubleby, Chief Executive Officer, Year13, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 13.

The Young Workers Centre, an organisation that assists young workers with their rights at work and resolving workplace issues, also provided evidence from a 23-year-old worker from Footscray who did not feel school career development was adequate preparation for life after school:

The school training about careers is also extraordinarily tertiary-focused—the discussion was about what [university] do you want to go, and what do you want to study? There was little discussion about [students] who wanted to do TAFE or vocational education, or for [students] who wanted to go straight into a job.⁹¹

Another young worker aged 20 from Brighton East stated:

I think we need to be shown that there are a lot of other options not just university and not just specific universities ... We were all pushed in one direction and not shown options including TAFE, or industry experience or travel. It was just “if you want a good job you need to get a degree” but also, they never mentioned that even a degree may not be good enough [to get a job].⁹²

A school leaver who responded to an online survey based on the Inquiry and run by youth organisations Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Affairs Council Victoria added:

I found my careers advisor and school board were solely focused on results rather than ‘careers’. I found from year 10 (or equivalent) onwards; they would rather talk students out of career goals if they did not think their grades would match those the school intended to acquire as an average. Several students were told they were better off not attempting VCE and rather quitting, to aim for ‘full time employment’. Personally, the advice I received was not tailored to my interests, talents or abilities. Rather, I received a questionnaire for career paths I may like to follow based on which boxes I ticked in relation to my interests. I received no information regarding studies, universities, mentors, scholarships, relocating (my VCE was based in rural VIC), etcetera. I was not guided beyond passing exams.⁹³

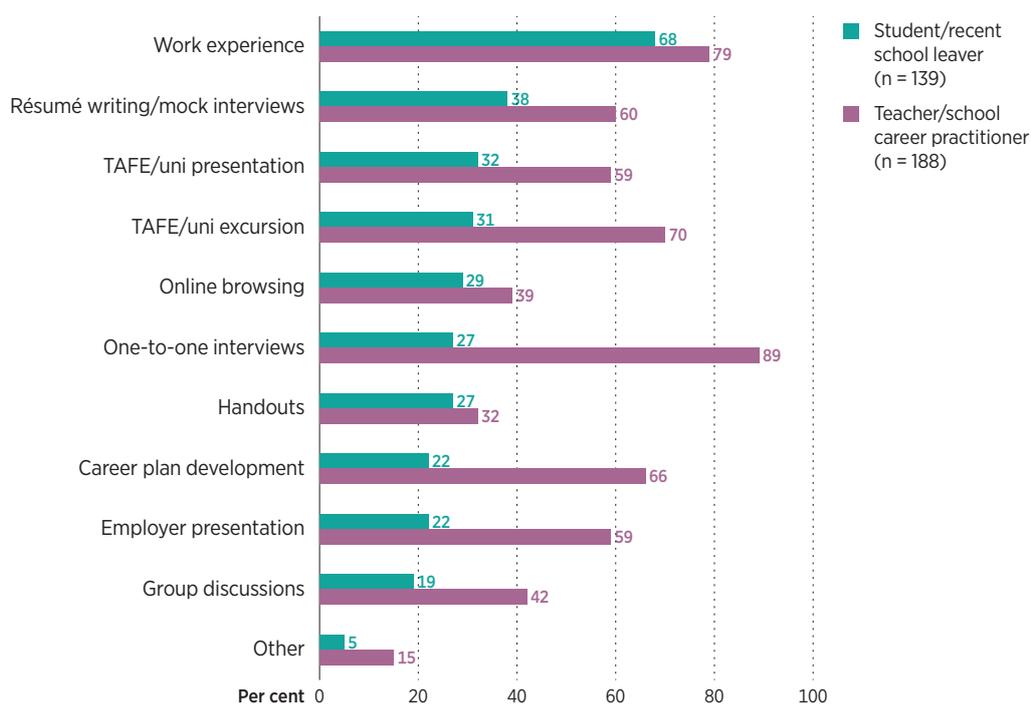
Students find work experience the most useful school career activity

In its online survey for the Inquiry, the Committee found that young people consider work experience to be the most useful career development activity they participate in at school. The survey results also showed discrepancies between which career development services young people find the most useful and which ones teachers and school career practitioners consider the most useful. Figure 2.2 shows the differences between each group.

91 Young Workers Centre, *Submission 53*, 8.

92 *ibid.*, 9.

93 Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Submission 29*, 19.

Figure 2.2 Career development services at school considered the most useful

Note: Respondents could choose more than one answer.

Source: Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, *Inquiry into career advice activities in Victorian schools*, online survey (2017).

The starkest contrast was the difference between young people and school staff in the perceived usefulness of one-to-one interviews. Young people rank these interviews the sixth most useful service, whereas teachers and career practitioners rank them first. The development of career action plans was also a point of difference as 22% of young people found them useful compared with 66% of teachers and career practitioners.⁹⁴

Students' dislike of career action plans also emerged in the submissions and public hearings. Mr Izaak Luitjes, a Year 12 student at Mildura Senior College, found career action plans to be the least useful career activity. He said:

The current career action plan set up for me was not entirely useful, and I think a lot of students had difficulty relating to it because it is set up in a system of surveys and you have your résumé but a lot of students there already were working part-time or casual jobs and thinking, 'Well, why do I need to do this now?'.⁹⁵

Several students stated that career action plans were not useful in early secondary school when students are not clear on the career options they want to pursue.⁹⁶ A Year 10 student from a Catholic school in Melbourne commented in the Committee's online survey:

⁹⁴ Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, *Inquiry into career advice in Victorian schools*, online survey.

⁹⁵ Mr Izaak Luitjes, Year 12 student, Vice Captain, Mildura Senior College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 45.

⁹⁶ Ms Kaycee Fleming, Year 10 student, Merbein P-10 College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 33; Ms Jade Aitken, Year 10 student, Chaffey Secondary College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 32; Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, *Inquiry into career advice activities in Victorian schools*, online survey.

Asking students to complete a ‘Career Action Plan’ only serves to stress students who aren’t sure what they want to do. Other methods that aren’t so selection-based and more about exploring different options are more beneficial.⁹⁷

The principal of Wallan Secondary College was also not convinced of the value of career action plans stating:

Students cringe when confronted with these each year because there is very little difference between them year to year. CAPS [career action plans] need to be reinvigorated or reinvented.⁹⁸

2.2.2 Students want more ‘hands on’ experience and tailored guidance

The disconnect between students and school career practitioners in the perceived usefulness of different types of career development services suggests that schools are focusing on services that students do not want or they are providing services of poor quality that students do not feel they are getting a benefit from. The 2011 study of young people’s career development needs for DEEWR came to a similar conclusion:

At present, the evidence suggests young people are getting less of the career development they find most useful, including ‘hands on’ activities such as work experience/work placement and visits to or by universities and TAFEs, and more of the career development they currently find least useful such as discussions with a school career practitioner.⁹⁹

A strong message that came across in the evidence presented to the Committee was the value students place on ‘hands on’ experience in the workplace and direct contact with employers. Young people feel that these experiences help them to work out whether a job suits them as well as how to get a job in the field that interests them.¹⁰⁰

While the Committee’s online survey found that one-to-one interviews with a career practitioner ranked poorly among young people, other evidence presented to the Committee suggested that if done well, students find these interviews valuable.¹⁰¹ It became clear that students want support that is tailored to their individual needs.

Responses from Year 11 students to the Committee’s online survey question on how to improve career development services included: ‘A more holistic view of what is out there and going into further depth. More teacher student discussions

⁹⁷ Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, *Inquiry into career advice activities in Victorian schools*, online survey.

⁹⁸ Wallan Secondary College, *Submission 16*, 2.

⁹⁹ Urbis, *National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) research project element 2: synthesis report*, 62.

¹⁰⁰ For example, Ms Tnaysha Halemba, Former student, Hester Hornbrook Academy, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 59; Mr Tom Saxton, Year 12 student, Victorian Student Representative Council, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 22; Ms Dallas Gange, Year 11 student, Red Cliffs Secondary College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 38; Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, *Inquiry into career advice in Victorian schools*, online survey.

¹⁰¹ For example, Mr Izaak Luitjes, *Transcript of evidence*, 45; Ms Wren Gillett, Year 11 student, Victorian Student Representative Council, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 21.

WITH A TEACHER WHO KNOWS THE STUDENT WELL' and 'Have compulsory career interviews, with someone checking up on you and what you wish to become.'¹⁰² Students on the Victorian Student Representative Council executive also stated they 'Would like careers counsellors/advisors/educators to have a more holistic idea of the students' journey rather than based on a transactional experience.'¹⁰³

The DEEWR study found:

young people have personalised and unique career development needs and wants. The ways in which young people approach and respond to career development varies from individual to individual. Young people have unique career aspirations, which are influenced by different sources and experiences. They begin thinking about their career options at various ages and have different preferences on when and how they want career information and advice communicated to them.¹⁰⁴

Providing such tailored career development services requires time and resources that many school career practitioners do not have. This issue is addressed in more detail in Chapter 3.

FINDING 1: Career development services at Victorian schools are not meeting the needs of students who want 'hands on' experience and tailored guidance from career practitioners who have the time and expertise to support them.

2.3 Employers are also dissatisfied with school career development services

Employers also expressed their concern that career development at schools is providing inaccurate information that is directing students to make poor career choices. This section presents employers' views on the effectiveness of career development services in Victorian schools and the skill gaps they are observing in young people.

2.3.1 Employers are concerned that students are being misdirected

The Career Education Association of Victoria (CEAV), a not-for-profit association that supports and trains career practitioners, reported that employers are concerned school career practitioners are not providing students with up-to-date information about their industry.¹⁰⁵ Employers and industry groups presented similar and other concerns to the Committee and these are outlined below.

¹⁰² Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, *Inquiry into career advice in Victorian schools*, online survey.

¹⁰³ Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Submission 29*, 10.

¹⁰⁴ Urbis, *National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) research project element 2: synthesis report*, 2.

¹⁰⁵ Career Education Association of Victoria, *Submission 26*, 14.

School career practitioners have a superficial understanding of industries

Employers and industry groups are concerned that career practitioners at schools are unaware of all the career options available within industries and how the nature of work in industries is changing. Without this knowledge, career practitioners are unable to provide the best guidance to students. The Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce (VACC), Victoria's peak automotive industry association, argued:

The nature, breadth and scope of the automotive industry is something that is understood over time and through direct employment and engagement in key roles in the industry. This is not something that should be undertaken by a multi-tasking careers advisor, who is likely to be heavily reliant on career manuals, web sites and snippets of information found in career guides ... Poorly conceived careers advice based on a scant understanding of an industry is misleading and has the potential to see students bounced around the employment market, with some school leavers losing their footing very early in their career journey.¹⁰⁶

Both VACC and the Victorian Farmers Federation (VFF), which represents the interests of Victoria's farmers, noted that the nature of their industries has changed to be more reliant on technology rather than manual labour and that students are not aware of the opportunities this offers. Ms Meg Parkinson, President of the VFF Industrial Association and Chair of its Workplace Relations Committee, maintained:

There seem to be an awful lot [of career practitioners] who think we are still back on Old MacDonald's farm, which does not help. They are not aware of modern agriculture; they are not aware of intensive agriculture ... There is definitely a lack of understanding.¹⁰⁷

The automotive and agricultural industries are experiencing skills shortages, which they believe could be addressed if school career practitioners promoted these industries better to students. Restaurant & Catering Australia, the national hospitality industry association, recommended providing training to career practitioners on the employment opportunities in hospitality, which is also struggling to recruit and retain workers.¹⁰⁸ Its representative, Ms Jonty Low, Project Manager at the Tourism and Hospitality Careers Council, stated:

I think it is just [career practitioners] having the up-to-date information and a comprehensive amount of information in relation to not just the sector broadly, but the jobs available within the sector, because they are many and varied.¹⁰⁹

Some employers expressed their concern about the lack of communication between schools and industry. For example, Mr Robert Wheatley, General Manager, Almond Orchards at the Sunraysia-based Olam Orchards Australia, claimed:

¹⁰⁶ Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce, *Submission 14*, 2-3.

¹⁰⁷ Ms Meg Parkinson, President, Victorian Farmers Federation Industrial Association and Chair, Workplace Relations Committee, Victorian Farmers Federation, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 4.

¹⁰⁸ Restaurant & Catering Australia, *Submission 80*, 12.

¹⁰⁹ Ms Jonty Low, Project Manager, Tourism and Hospitality Careers Council, Restaurant & Catering Australia, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 4.

It astounds me that the education institutes do not seem to be connected at all to industry, which is really at the end of the day the driver of the economy. We have got to somehow connect and get work groups going together to help the core career advisers. I feel sorry for them because they have not got a clue of what is going on. I have got meetings with shires in both New South Wales and Victoria who have not got a clue of what is going on within their own shire even. There is a real disconnect between what people believe is happening out there versus what the reality is.¹¹⁰

Industry groups want more engagement with schools to reach students and inform them of the opportunities in their field. Industry engagement is considered further in Chapter 3.

Employers feel that trades are seen as a second-rate option

Trade employers and industry groups are also troubled that schools appear to direct students towards university rather than apprenticeships and vocational education and training (VET). They recognise there is a community-wide perception that apprenticeships and traineeships are inferior to university degrees.¹¹¹ For example, VACC suggests:

many students are still directed into trade occupations, based on a perceived lack of academic ability. There still persists, in the Australia psyche, an entrenched view that academic students should first strive for an academic career and only fall back on a trade career as a second or last option ... trade roles are still seen by many teachers, as the dumping ground for students who have a poor 'fit' into more academic career roles and professions.¹¹²

Industry groups believe this perception leads students to make poor career choices, which is not only damaging to students but also to employers who lose staff they have invested in or have trouble recruiting staff, and to industries that are experiencing worsening skills shortages.¹¹³

2.3.2 Employers are noticing skill gaps in young people

Employers also told the Committee that young people are leaving school without adequate employability skills, such as communication, self-management and presentation. Ai Group, a peak association representing the interests of businesses across a range of industries, regularly surveys employers about the skills of job seekers. In 2016, the survey found that only 20% of employers were satisfied with school leavers' self-management, planning and organisation skills.¹¹⁴

110 Mr Robert Wheatley, General Manager, Almond Operations Australia, Olam, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 22.

111 Ms Jonty Low, *Transcript of evidence*, 3; Mr Peter Devilee, Managing Director, Devilee's Air Conditioning & Refrigeration, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 17.

112 Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce, *Submission 14*, 2.

113 *ibid*; Ms Jonty Low, *Transcript of evidence*, 3.

114 Ai Group, *Submission 50*, 13.

Industry representatives reiterated the lack of employability skills among school leavers. For example, Mr Nigel Muller, Executive Manager of Training, Auto Apprenticeships and Skills at VACC, stated:

For most of our small businesses their biggest turn-off out of the apprenticeship system now is that kids sort of turn up there willy-nilly. They do not seem to have an employable attitude. Those individuals that have had part-time jobs throughout their school life are chalk and cheese to the ones who do not. They get snapped up pretty quickly.¹¹⁵

Ms Tracey Jeffery, Skills and Jobs Centre Adviser at The Gordon, one of the largest regional TAFEs in Victoria, added that employers in Geelong:

are screaming for engineering apprentices, and even though there are some that are interested, they are just missing that next step with employability skills ... Communication, literacy, numeracy—just even basic employability skills like getting to work on time, working hard, where you have got to be and what you have got to wear. They have just never had a job before ... they just do not understand what it means to work.¹¹⁶

The Ai Group survey found that only 24% of employers were satisfied with school leavers' knowledge of their chosen career.¹¹⁷ Mr Muller has also found that automotive apprentices are not knowledgeable about their chosen pathway. He argued:

Some of the basic concepts they do not seem to understand. Doing a trade does not mean you can leave school, because the first thing we do is put you back in school to do your trade schooling. So they do not have any concept of where they are going and where there have been.¹¹⁸

He added that school leavers are not recognising that apprenticeships can lead to a long-term career:

At the moment they are just jumping from job to job, hence the apprenticeship model is suffering—it is because they just see it as a job and not a career. They do not see that an apprenticeship is a start to a career—and a very rewarding career, especially with our skills shortages, because wages are pushed through the roof.¹¹⁹

Ms Low and Mr Muller recommended the use of aptitude or personality tests to give students and employers a better idea of young people's strengths and direct students to a career they are well suited to.¹²⁰ However, other stakeholders disagreed with the notion of aptitude testing, arguing that it pigeonholes young people too early and limits their perceived potential.¹²¹

115 Mr Nigel Muller, Executive Manager, Training, Auto Apprenticeships and Skills, Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 6.

116 Ms Tracey Jeffery, Skills and Jobs Centre Adviser, The Gordon, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 18.

117 Ai Group, *Submission 50*, 13.

118 Mr Nigel Muller, *Transcript of evidence*, 6.

119 *ibid*, 7.

120 Ms Jonty Low, *Transcript of evidence*, 5; Mr Nigel Muller, *Transcript of evidence*, 6–7.

121 Ms Vicki Bawden, Cluster Coordinator, North Melbourne VET Cluster and South East VET Cluster, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 29; Ms Fleur Goulding, Executive Officer, Office of the Chief Executive and Board Secretary, Holmesglen Institute, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 29.

FINDING 2: Employers and industry groups are concerned that school career practitioners are not providing students with accurate and current information about the opportunities and nature of jobs in their industry.

2.4 Career development must adapt in response to labour market changes

In 2015, the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA), a non-profit organisation focused on improving the learning outcomes and life opportunities of young Australians, produced its report *The new work order*, which identified three major economic forces that are changing work in Australia:

- automation—machines are performing more complex tasks
- globalisation—jobs are moving offshore
- collaboration—technology is enabling more flexible ways of working.¹²²

Career development services provided at schools need to adapt to these changes to better prepare students for their working lives. The 2017 review of career education in Victorian government schools found that while students and career practitioners are aware of these challenges, they do not feel well equipped to navigate them.¹²³

This section discusses how changes to the labour market are affecting young people and the importance of developing transferable skills in students.

2.4.1 Finding work is becoming harder and taking longer for young people

As the nature of work in Australia is changing, young people are finding it harder to secure full-time work and they are taking longer to do so.¹²⁴ Youth unemployment is high in Australia. In August 2017, the Australian unemployment rate for young people aged 15 to 24 was 12.5% and the corresponding Victorian rate was 13.5%.¹²⁵ The national unemployment rate for the population (aged 15 and over) in comparison was 5.6%. Figure 2.3 shows that the youth unemployment rate in Australia has remained above 10.0% since the Global Financial Crisis in 2008.

¹²² Foundation for Young Australians, *The new work order: ensuring young Australians have skills and experience for the jobs of the future, not the past*, report prepared by AlphaBeta (2015), 7.

¹²³ Dandolo Partners, *Review of career education in Victorian government schools*, 6.

¹²⁴ Sarah Pilcher and Kate Torii, *Crunching the number: exploring the use and usefulness of the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)*, Mitchell Institute Paper No. 01/2018 (2018), 1.

¹²⁵ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Labour force, Australia, August 2017*, cat. no. 6202.0 (2017), <<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6202.0Aug%202017?OpenDocument>> viewed 15 September 2017.

Figure 2.3 Unemployment rate, persons aged 15–24, Australia, August 1987 to August 2017

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Labour Force, Australia, August 2017*.

Another trend affecting young people is the falling rate of full-time employment while part-time employment rates are increasing. FYA has shown that full-time employment rates for young people aged 15–19 and 20–24 decreased between 1986 and 2013, especially following the Global Financial Crisis.¹²⁶ In 2013:

- 42.1% of young people aged 15–19 and 59.2% of those aged 20–24 were in full-time employment (the lowest rates since 1986 when the time series began)
- 26.7% of young people aged 15–19 and 18.3% of those aged 20–24 were in part-time employment (the highest rates since 1986)
- females in these age groups were more likely to be working part-time than males.¹²⁷

A more recent FYA study found that while young people are more likely to have a post-school qualification now than in the past, fewer of them are working full-time. In 2016, nearly 60% of people aged 25 had a post-school qualification but only 50% were working full-time—compared with 57% of people aged 25 working full-time in 2006.¹²⁸

In addition, the age when young people find full-time work is increasing. In 2013, the average age for young people to transition into full-time work was 23.4 years compared with 21.8 years in 2008.¹²⁹ In 1986, the average time it took for a young person to transition from education to work was one year compared with 4.7 years now.¹³⁰ The Mitchell Institute also identified that young people are finding it difficult to find work in the field they studied for. For example, in 2016, only one in three VET graduates (33.2%) were employed in the field they trained in.¹³¹

¹²⁶ Foundation for Young Australians, *How young people are faring in the transition from school to work*, report prepared by John Stanwick, et al. (2014), 13.

¹²⁷ *ibid.*

¹²⁸ Foundation for Young Australians, *The new work reality*, report prepared by AlphaBeta (2018), 4.

¹²⁹ Foundation for Young Australians, *How young people are faring in the transition from school to work*, 18.

¹³⁰ Foundation for Young Australians, *The new work reality*, 3.

¹³¹ Mitchell Institute, *Submission 67*, 4.

Young people's employment prospects are worsening because employers are increasingly seeking workers with qualifications and experience even for entry-level jobs.¹³² In addition, high unemployment rates are creating greater competition for jobs and young people are struggling to compete with applicants who are more skilled and have more experience.¹³³

2.4.2 Developing transferable skills helps young people navigate work

The uncertainty caused by changes in the nature of work requires young people to develop skills that will help them to navigate their working life. Career development at schools can help students to think differently about jobs by moving them away from the notion of a linear career trajectory to a more dynamic pathway.¹³⁴

FYA has created a series of 'job clusters' to help shift people's mindset from focusing on a specific job to a cluster of jobs that require similar skills.¹³⁵ These skills are often transferable between multiple jobs within a cluster. The seven job clusters are 'The Generators', 'The Artisans', 'The Carers', 'The Informers', 'The Coordinators', 'The Designers' and 'The Technologists'. Young people can use this mindset to identify the job clusters that align with their interests and strengths and consider the types of education and training that will help them develop the skills required for work in that cluster. Since these skills are transferable to other jobs within the cluster, they will enable young people to navigate between roles and industries throughout their career and better cope with changing circumstances.¹³⁶

Research institutes and employer groups have received FYA's job clusters favourably.¹³⁷ In addition, broad transferable skills or 'soft skills' such as flexibility, creativity, resilience, communication and collaboration, are widely recognised as necessary for workers in the current and future labour market.¹³⁸ Therefore, career development that focuses on one job or pathway is outdated. Instead, career practitioners should focus on transferable skills and capabilities and the range of jobs available to people with a particular skill set.¹³⁹

As well as focusing on skill sets rather than specific job pathways to help young people navigate their working life, it is also important to recognise that no one knows what the future will hold. The Futures Foundation, a not-for-profit

¹³² Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, 11.

¹³³ *ibid.*

¹³⁴ Foundation for Young Australians, *Submission 72*, 2.

¹³⁵ Foundation for Young Australians, *The new work mindset: 7 new job clusters to help young people navigate the new work order*, report prepared by AlphaBeta (2016), 7.

¹³⁶ *ibid.*, 8.

¹³⁷ For example, Ms Megan O'Connell, Institute Director, Mitchell Institute, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 30; Victorian Council of Social Service, *Submission 54*, 12; Futures Foundation, *Submission 89*, 2.

¹³⁸ Sarah Pilcher and Kate Torii, *Crunching the number: exploring the use and usefulness of the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)*, 1.

¹³⁹ *ibid.*; Foundation for Young Australians, *Submission 72*, 2; Foundation for Young Australians, *The new work mindset: 7 new job clusters to help young people navigate the new work order*, 22.

organisation that promotes greater understanding of the future, argues that recognising this uncertainty is necessary for young people to develop the flexibility and confidence to successfully manage their life after school.¹⁴⁰

2.5 The effectiveness of career development services is difficult to measure

The previous sections of this chapter have presented anecdotal evidence and proxy measures such as university attrition rates to demonstrate that career development services at Victorian schools are not as effective as they could be. However, there is no robust tool to measure the effectiveness of career development services. The delivery of services is so varied, the value placed on particular outcomes is subjective and the ability to separate the influence of career development on student destinations from other factors such as parental aspirations and the labour market is difficult to determine. The data that are collected tend to be simplistic measures such as the number of career plans developed or student destinations, where indicators such as student satisfaction or career management capability would be more meaningful.¹⁴¹

This section considers current measures of career development service effectiveness used in Victoria and elsewhere, how data collection could be improved and possible approaches to track school performance.

2.5.1 Current measures of effectiveness vary in sensitivity

Most governments do not have adequate data to show how schools are providing career development services to students, how schools are spending public money on career development and whether the services schools provide are effective.¹⁴² The Victorian Government collects some data and these are described below along with other measures of effectiveness used in other jurisdictions.

The Victorian Government's surveys provide limited information

The Victorian Government monitors school career development services by running a survey for school leavers (On Track) and collecting data from government schools that receive Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) funding. The Government provides MIPs funding to government schools to provide career development services to students in Years 10–12. From 2019, MIPs funding will be redirected through the new Career Education Funding (CEF).

¹⁴⁰ Futures Foundation, *Submission 89*, 3.

¹⁴¹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Career guidance: a handbook for policy makers* (2004), 60.

¹⁴² *ibid.*

On Track surveys Victorian school leavers from all school sectors six months after leaving school. The survey is conducted every year from late April to mid-July and school leavers are invited to participate through a letter that provides them with a username and password to access the survey online. The first On Track survey was conducted in 2003.

On Track asks school leavers (both Year 12 completers and early school leavers) about their destination, the career development activities they participated in while at school and how useful they thought the career development they received at school was. The Government reports the results at the state and Local Government Area (LGA) levels. However, from 2016, the Government has not included the career development results in the statewide reports and has only provided these results at the LGA level.

In 2015 (the last year career development measures were reported at the state level), 63.5% of Year 12 completers (35 227 out of 55 504) and 22.1% of early school leavers (3512 out of 15 959) participated in the On Track survey. Of these:

- 1.7% of Year 12 completers and 7.5% of early school leavers reported not participating in career development activities at school
- 49.8% of Year 12 completers and 38.4% of early school leavers had prepared a career action plan
- 86.4% of Year 12 completers and 67.3% of early school leavers had undertaken work experience.¹⁴³

Of the school leavers who received career development at school:

- 32.7% of Year 12 completers thought it was very useful and 55.1% somewhat useful
- 19.2% of early school leavers thought it was very useful and 38.8% somewhat useful.¹⁴⁴

In 2017, less than 50% of Year 12 completers completed the survey.¹⁴⁵ Low response rates limit the accuracy of On Track data and participation depends on students' consent and up-to-date contact details. Also, the reports do not disaggregate the career development data by school sector, socioeconomic status, country of birth, Indigenous status or disability status to provide greater insight into how well career development is meeting students' needs.

In addition, tracking a school leaver's destination and thoughts about career development within six months of leaving school may not accurately reflect the effectiveness of school career development services. School leavers may not

¹⁴³ Department of Education and Training, Victoria, *On Track survey 2015: The destinations of school leavers in Victoria, statewide report* (2015), 29, 41.

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Ms Katy Haire, Deputy Secretary, Early Childhood and School Education, Department of Education and Training, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 30.

complete their course, traineeship or apprenticeship or may come to a different conclusion about the quality of the career development they received at school further down the track.

Longitudinal studies that track participants over a longer period could address this issue. The Government has conducted two longitudinal studies through On Track—one tracked 2003 school leavers from 2004 to 2007 and the other tracked 2007 school leavers from 2008 to 2011. However, the Government has no plan to conduct another longitudinal study through On Track.¹⁴⁶

DET also requires schools that receive MIPs funding to report on the following measures in the Mid-Year Supplementary Census:

- number of students with a current career action plan
- number of early school leavers, and of these:
 - number who were counselled about their options in a formal exit interview
 - number whose destination was tracked six months after leaving school and
 - of these, number who were not in education, training or secure employment and
 - of these, number who were referred to a program or agency for assistance to reengage with education, training or employment.¹⁴⁷

While the collection of these data provides some impetus for schools to provide the services measured, it does not provide an accurate picture of the quality of career development services at each school and how effective students find them.

FINDING 3: Data from the Department of Education and Training's On Track survey and Managed Individual Pathways reporting do not allow for a comprehensive assessment of the quality and effectiveness of career development services provided at Victorian schools.

The career development profession has developed benchmarking resources for schools

In 2014, CICA produced a benchmarking resource for Australian school career development services. School principals and leadership teams can use the resource to reflect on the services they provide, whether the services are achieving their aims, and how to adapt the service to meet student needs as the nature of work changes. The benchmarking resource has four elements: service aims and objectives, student focus, people and resources, and partnerships and

¹⁴⁶ Department of Education and Training, Victoria, supplementary evidence, response to questions on notice received 4 May 2018, 4.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*

community participation. The four elements have nine outcome statements and for each statement schools assess whether they are ‘developing’, ‘establishing’ or ‘embedding’ the outcome.¹⁴⁸

The CEAV also has a benchmarking tool for practitioners and organisations providing career development services to people of all ages, not just students. It used the tool to assess 60 Victorian schools from all sectors as part of a benchmarking program and found that none of the schools met the quality benchmarks. CEAV determined this was due to school leadership teams not recognising the importance of a comprehensive career development program and not resourcing career development appropriately.¹⁴⁹

Some New Zealand schools actively monitor the quality of their services

In its evaluation of career development in 10 schools that demonstrated good practice, New Zealand’s Education Review Office found that most of these schools collected destination information and had procedures in place to review aspects of their career development services. Several schools had established systems to monitor the delivery and quality of career development services and to ensure that every student participated. While most schools obtained student feedback on events or experiences, some also sought student feedback on their overall career development program. In some cases, schools also asked parents and staff to provide feedback.¹⁵⁰

School inspection reports in the United Kingdom must comment on career development

In the UK, the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects and regulates schools and colleges every five years. The inspection framework includes a graded assessment of four areas, one of which is ‘personal development, behaviour and welfare’. Under this area, schools are assessed on how they promote and support ‘choices about the next stage of [students’] education, employment, self-employment or training, where relevant from impartial careers advice and guidance’.¹⁵¹

Schools in the UK must also report on their students’ destinations in the year after they leave school. Using destination measures data from the Department of Education, schools report on the percentage of their students that are in employment, education or training, and those that are not. The data can be broken down by student characteristics and schools can use the information to determine how successful students’ transitions have been and whether their students are receiving enough support.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Career Industry Council of Australia, *School career development service: benchmarking resource* (2014), 5–6.

¹⁴⁹ Career Education Association of Victoria, *Submission 26*, 8.

¹⁵⁰ Education Review Office, *Career education and guidance: good practice* (2015), 32.

¹⁵¹ House of Commons, Business, Innovation and Skills and Education Committees, Sub-Committee on Education, Skills and the Economy, *Careers education, information, advice and guidance* (2016), 11.

¹⁵² Department for Education, United Kingdom, *Careers guidance and inspiration in schools: statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff* (2017), 17.

Ofsted also considers the quality of career development services and student destinations when assessing the leadership and management of the school.¹⁵³

2.5.2 Long-term studies and data linkage could provide greater insight

Current evaluations of the effectiveness of career development services at Victorian schools are too simplistic to assess service quality accurately. At the same time, each stakeholder's measure of effectiveness differs. For example, employers want someone who is work ready, parents want their child to have a clear direction and students want guidance to pursue their dreams even if there might be few jobs in that field.¹⁵⁴ This section considers ways to measure the effectiveness of school career development that go beyond providing a mere snapshot of a school leaver's destination at a particular point in time.

More robust evidence is needed to judge effectiveness

The first limitation that needs to be considered when judging the effectiveness of career development is that it is just one input of many that influences a school leaver's career trajectory. It is hard to separate the influence of career development services at school from a school leaver's place of residence, personal circumstances, the local labour market, parental aspirations and advice, peer pressure and community expectations.¹⁵⁵ The influence of these aspects on a person's decision making is also hard to quantify.

Measuring a school leaver's participation in a career development activity also does not say whether the activity was of high quality or if the school leaver found it useful.¹⁵⁶ Professor Bright from the Australian Catholic University argued that effectiveness should not be measured in terms of destination but career management skills, stating:

we need to move away from this idea that it is simply about transitioning the students out of the school system but rather equipping them with the capacity to make these decisions repeatedly throughout life, because they are going to have to. The idea that they are simply going to leave, complete a trade, complete a degree and then work in the same occupation for the rest of their lives is pretty much outmoded now.¹⁵⁷

More robust evidence is needed to measure the quality of services provided and to separate their effect from other career influences.¹⁵⁸ Measures of service quality should incorporate student satisfaction and capacity for career management.

¹⁵³ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ Mr Lionel Parrott, *Submission 19*, 7.

¹⁵⁵ Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy, University of Melbourne, *Career development: defining and measuring quality*, 12; G21-Geelong Region Alliance, *Submission 34*, 2.

¹⁵⁶ Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australia, *Cost benefit analysis of the National Career Development Strategy*, report prepared by Deloitte Access Economics (2011), 15.

¹⁵⁷ Professor James Bright, *Transcript of evidence*, 6.

¹⁵⁸ Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australia, *Cost benefit analysis of the National Career Development Strategy*, 15.

Long-term studies are a better indicator of service quality

The Victorian Government's On Track survey is largely focused on school leavers' destination within six months of leaving school. However, this only captures a snapshot of where the school leaver is at that particular time, which may not accurately reflect where they will be in one year or in five years.¹⁵⁹ For example, On Track does not capture course or apprenticeship dropouts, course transfers or changes in school leavers' perceptions of their post-school choices.

Schools may also track their students' exit destinations but this can be time consuming and difficult.¹⁶⁰ While schools may be able to accurately capture most of their students' destination in the immediate transition, long-term studies are required to assess whether the transition was successful.¹⁶¹ The Australian Education Union stated:

a research study which provides longitudinal data by following up students over ideally a 5 year period would be useful in gathering a more comprehensive and accurate picture of the destinations of students in their post-school existence. This could provide a greater understanding of the relationship between the stated end-of-school intentions of young people, their immediate post-school destinations and where they end up after a few years ... While a school's data may indicate that each school leaver has been allocated to a particular post-school pathway, there needs to be more knowledge about the experience of students on that pathway and whether or how long they stay on it.¹⁶²

Several stakeholders called for longitudinal data to help schools provide support to students who are struggling in the post-school transition and to identify areas of their career development services that need improvement.¹⁶³ A study into defining and measuring the quality of career development by the Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy at The University of Melbourne found that large-scale longitudinal studies 'would provide the best possible basis for informed policy development'.¹⁶⁴

In addition to assessing career development services by tracking destinations over the long term, data on school leavers' satisfaction with career development services at their school would help schools to review and improve their career development program. School leavers' satisfaction with service delivery could include evaluations of:

- how useful specific activities were and how well they were followed up
- how accessible their school career practitioners were

¹⁵⁹ Mr Lionel Parrott, *Submission 19*, 5.

¹⁶⁰ Mr John Graham, Research Officer, Australian Education Union, Victoria, supplementary evidence, response to questions on notice received 15 March 2018; Hallam Senior College, *Submission 12*, 1-2.

¹⁶¹ Mr Phil Newnham, Treasurer, Career Education Association of Victoria, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 19.

¹⁶² Mr John Graham, Research Officer, Australian Education Union, Victoria, supplementary evidence, response to questions on notice received 15 March 2018.

¹⁶³ *ibid*; Hallam Senior College, *Submission 12*, 1-2.

¹⁶⁴ Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy, University of Melbourne, *Career development: defining and measuring quality*, 28.

- how well career development at their school reflected the required pathway and current labour market of their chosen field
- how confident they feel to find the information they need to make career choices
- how confident they feel with managing changes in their education or work life.

Evaluating school leavers' satisfaction also avoids the potential of falsely attributing course and apprenticeship dropouts on poor quality career development services. A school leaver may change their mind about their chosen pathway for reasons other than the career development they received at school. In addition, young people aged 16–18 may lack the maturity and experience to make complex career decisions so it is understandable if their transition is not smooth.¹⁶⁵ A school leaver's confidence and ability to respond to changes is a more accurate measure of the quality of school career development services in this instance.

Expanding On Track so that it also surveys school leavers at one year and five years after leaving school about their destination and satisfaction with school career development would provide a more meaningful measure of effectiveness. Staying in touch with school leavers over the long term can be difficult, but DET could address this by selecting a smaller cohort of school leavers who give their permission to participate in a longitudinal study.

To improve school services, DET should provide schools with a non-identifying breakdown of their ex-students' responses.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That the Department of Education and Training expand On Track to also survey school leavers at one year and five years after leaving secondary school.

RECOMMENDATION 2: That the Department of Education and Training use On Track to measure school leavers' satisfaction with career development services at their school and their perceived capacity to manage their career.

Data linkage can assist in tracking the journeys of school-leavers

Another method to track destinations, dropouts and labour force participation is data linkage. Data linkage or record matching is the process of combining information about people across different databases to tell a larger story while at the same time maintaining confidentiality. Government departments and other organisations keep a range of databases for their own use and combining information in these datasets can help to uncover a more complete description of a person's journey.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁵ Haileybury College and Haileybury Girls College, *Submission 74*, 3.

¹⁶⁶ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *Data linkage services for clients* (2014), ii.

For example, each student in a government or non-government school or a vocational education or training institution has a Victorian Student Number (VSN) that is assigned by DET. The VSN remains with the student until the age of 25. A school leaver's VSN could be linked with their Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) number, Commonwealth Higher Education Student Support Number (CHESSN) or Unique Student Identifier (USI) to track their further education and training journeys including course applications, enrolment and completion.¹⁶⁷

Data linkage has been used overseas to track the outcomes of university graduates. In New Zealand, tertiary education data from the Employment Outcomes of Tertiary Education dataset was linked with employment data from the Linked Employer–Employee Database to examine the influence of tertiary education on earnings at one and three years after graduation. Researchers have also linked tax records with education records in Canada and the United Kingdom to measure student outcomes.¹⁶⁸

While data linkage can be a powerful tool for tracking student destinations, it is limited by privacy and ethics concerns, the cooperation of data custodians and the legal requirements attached to each dataset. The linkage process can be lengthy requiring cooperation between data custodians and in the case of some government departments, a third party authority that is accredited to undertake high-risk data integration.¹⁶⁹ However, it has the potential to better inform education policy and practice and improve the return on investment in school career development services.

RECOMMENDATION 3: That the Department of Education and Training investigate using data linkage to track, analyse and report on student destinations.

2.5.3 Schools should be accountable for the career development services they provide

Surveying school leavers about their destination and satisfaction with school career development will provide the Victorian Government with an idea of service quality and outcomes. However, it will not provide an indication of the services schools are currently providing and how they are spending funds allocated to career development services. The 2017 review of career education in Victorian government schools found that school accountability is currently weak since schools only need to report on the number of completed career

¹⁶⁷ Associate Professor Andrew Harvey, Director, Centre for Higher Education, Equity and Diversity Research, La Trobe University, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 62; Mr John Graham, Research Officer, Australian Education Union, Victoria, supplementary evidence, response to questions on notice received 19 March 2018.

¹⁶⁸ National Centre for Vocational Education Research, *Focus on data linkage in education research* (2018), <<http://www.voced.edu.au/focus-data-linkage-education-research>> viewed 12 June 2018.

¹⁶⁹ National Centre for Vocational Education Research, *Data linkage in VET research: opportunities, challenges and principles*, report prepared by Kristen Osborne, Craig Fowler and Michelle Circelli (2018), 9–10.

action plans.¹⁷⁰ Despite having to provide school leavers with support to identify further education and employment options, it is unclear how schools are held accountable for this and how they evaluate their services.¹⁷¹

Several stakeholders suggested that schools be required to report on the career development services they provide and their expenditure on career development.¹⁷² Mr Colin Axup, a Committee Member of the Victorian Association of State School Principals, reasoned:

if we were given specific money around careers education, I could envisage that we could report against that as well ... every school will have different needs, so the cookie-cutter approach will not work. But if you [the Government] fund and expect it to be accounted for and you demonstrate what you are spending that money on that is career focused and providing careers, then you have achieved your aim, plus you are getting some visibility, if you like, of return on your investment.¹⁷³

From 2019, the Victorian Government will give government schools Career Education Funding (CEF) to provide career development services to students. It is unclear whether the funding will be kept separate to schools' global budgets, unlike the current MIPs funding which schools do not have to demonstrate is spent solely on career development. The Committee believes it is essential that schools be held accountable for the funds they receive for career development services so as to ensure service delivery and track schools' performance in this area. Government schools should be required to report on how they specifically use their allocated Career Education Funding.

RECOMMENDATION 4: That the Department of Education and Training separate Career Education Funding from schools' global budgets and ensure schools are accountable for spending the funding solely on career development services.

Moreland Darebin Careers Network, which consists of career practitioners in a number of schools in the inner northern suburbs of Melbourne, noted that government schools used to be required to report on post-school transitions in their Annual Implementation Plan and that this should be reinstated.¹⁷⁴ Annual Implementation Plans specify annual targets and actions to track progress towards goals for improved student outcomes identified in a government school's strategic plan. DET monitors and evaluates the annual implementation planning process.

The Annual Implementation Plan is based on the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes model that has four priorities—one of which is community engagement in learning. Career development services could be linked to this priority as it involves students engaging with employers, higher education

¹⁷⁰ Dandolo Partners, *Review of career education in Victorian government schools*, 5.

¹⁷¹ Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, *Submission 61*, 5.

¹⁷² Moreland Darebin Careers Network, *Submission 44*, 11; Mr Colin Axup, Principal, Suzanne Cory High School and Committee Member, Victorian Association of State School Principals, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 43; Mr Ron Broadhead, Executive Officer, Northern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 15.

¹⁷³ Mr Colin Axup, *Transcript of evidence*, 43.

¹⁷⁴ Moreland Darebin Careers Network, *Submission 44*, 11.

providers and community organisations as they explore education and career options. Requiring secondary schools to report against career development in their Annual Implementation Plan will ensure that school leadership teams consider it a key priority.

Using the Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy's framework for measuring the quality of career development services as a basis,¹⁷⁵ secondary schools could be required to report on the following indicators as part of their Annual Implementation Plan:

- what types of career development materials and resources are provided to students, including their availability and ease of access
- how career development services are delivered, used and targeted
- how many students access or participate in key services
- how schools have engaged with community organisations, employers and higher education providers to provide career development
- how student behaviours have changed (for example, fewer subject changes, greater participation in work experience)
- how many students feel competent at finding relevant career information and making career choices
- how many Year 12 graduates and early school leavers have successfully made a transition to employment, higher education or training within six months of leaving school.

While Annual Implementation Plans apply to government schools, non-government schools could also report on these measures in their annual reports or on their website so that their career development services can be tracked transparently. Requiring schools to report on the career development services they provide to students will keep them accountable to the Department and the community. It will also provide schools with baseline data on their service delivery and enable them to continually monitor their progress in this area.

RECOMMENDATION 5: That the Department of Education and Training require government secondary school principals to report on their school's career development services in their Annual Implementation Plan.

¹⁷⁵ Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy, University of Melbourne, *Career development: defining and measuring quality*, 11.

3

Improving career development services in schools

Career practitioners in Victorian schools can face multiple challenges to provide students with career development services that meet their needs. These challenges include a lack of time and resources, inadequate support from school leadership teams, the diminishing status of their role and keeping up to date with changes in the field. This chapter considers these issues and proposes ways to improve school career development services to meet the needs of students and the labour market. In addition to adopting a clear career development strategy, schools can improve career development by allocating more time and resources, hiring qualified practitioners, providing students with greater workplace exposure and supporting vocational education and training (VET).

3.1 Schools should adopt a whole-of-school approach to career development

Career development must be a priority for schools in both policy and practice. Without a clear mandate for how schools provide career development services to their students, it is up to school principals and councils to decide how much value they will place on career development, and ultimately how much time and resources they allocate to it. This explains why the delivery of career development services is not consistent across Victorian schools. This section discusses the importance of a clear career development strategy and program for each school, considers where career development should fit in the school curriculum and outlines ways of involving parents in school career development.

3.1.1 Each school should have a clear career development strategy

For a school to resource career development so it adequately meet students' needs, it must make it an explicit priority. It is too easy for schools to cut resources from the area otherwise. Professor James Bright, a Professorial Fellow in Career Education and Development at the Australian Catholic University, acknowledged that some school career practitioners in Victoria are delivering exceptional services to students but:

there is possibly a lack of consistency in career education delivery. There is I think turnover in staff who are assigned to provide career development services in schools, and the role is not always seen as a particularly prestigious one or a career track for further promotion in such school settings. This may have some implications in terms of the quality of staff who are seeking to work in this role and the influence that they may have more broadly within a school to effect change.¹⁷⁶

176 Professor James Bright, Professorial Fellow, Career Education & Development, Faculty of Education and Arts, Australian Catholic University, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 60.

The extent of inconsistency between Victorian schools is outlined below. This is followed by a discussion on the need for schools to have a structured career development program that the school community can easily access.

There is too much inconsistency in the delivery of career development in schools

The delivery of career development services in schools is subject to the discretion of each school creating inconsistencies. These inconsistencies occur between schools and also within them as a high turnover of career practitioners at a school can disrupt service delivery. Frequent changes in practitioners or school management also prevent the review and improvement of services.¹⁷⁷ Turnover of school career practitioners is high; the Career Education Association of Victoria (CEAV), a not-for-profit association that supports and trains career practitioners, states that it ‘trains up to 60 new careers practitioners in schools each year because of the high dropout rate of practitioners appointed to the position.’¹⁷⁸ Service delivery is also compromised when the career practitioner is not experienced.¹⁷⁹

Aitken College, a P–12 independent school in Cragieburn, highlighted the risk that inconsistent delivery poses to students:

Victorian students deserve better than the current ‘hit and miss’ scenario operating in schools across the sectors. It is patently unfair that the quality and quantity of Careers support offered to students is so patchy. The discrepancy in time allocation, resources, management support, experience and quality of careers professionals in schools can contribute to vastly different outcomes for students. Time constraints can see practitioners delivering programmes en masse unable to cater for individual needs or offer one on one advice. In catering to the mainstream, the unusual, more challenging or “difficult” cases fall through the cracks. It must be remembered that these ‘cases’ are people and early setbacks can steer them toward a vicious cycle of failure, disengagement and unemployment.¹⁸⁰

A 2017 review of career education in Victorian government schools for the Department of Education and Training (DET) found that the provision of career development varied significantly between schools in both quality and quantity and that the differences could not explained by school size, location

¹⁷⁷ Doncaster Secondary College, *Submission 31*, 1.

¹⁷⁸ Career Education Association of Victoria, *Submission 26*, 13.

¹⁷⁹ Ms Vicki Bawden, Cluster Coordinator, North Melbourne VET Cluster and South East VET Cluster, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 24.

¹⁸⁰ Aitken College, *Submission 70*, 5.

or socioeconomic status.¹⁸¹ Instead, service delivery was found to depend on the value that schools place on career development, which was a view commonly held by stakeholders in this Inquiry.¹⁸²

A 2011 study on career development for the Australian Government also found the delivery and quality of career development in Australian secondary schools was ‘patchy and inconsistent, both across and within States and Territories and education sectors (Independent, Catholic and Government)’.¹⁸³

FINDING 4: The quality and frequency of career development service delivery varies greatly between Victorian secondary schools.

Schools should develop a structured career development program and share it with students, parents, teachers and employers

Ms Bernadette Gigliotti, Chief Executive Officer of the CEAV, is concerned that:

Careers education is often marginalised by school principals and administrators, and there is a view that the service is not necessarily core business in the school: it is nice to have, but it is not essential.¹⁸⁴

The Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals (VASSP), the professional association for principals, assistant principals and leading teachers in government secondary schools, countered that school principals take a wide range of approaches to career development because:

there does not seem to be any practical systemic support for career advice activities in schools at either a central or regional level of the Department of Education and Training.¹⁸⁵

The Committee was presented with evidence that stressed the importance of school principals and administrators valuing career development as an integral part of the school program and having a distinct career development policy.¹⁸⁶ As explained in Aitken College’s submission:

¹⁸¹ Dandolo Partners, *Review of career education in Victorian government schools*, report for Department of Education and Training, Victoria (2017), 4.

¹⁸² *ibid.* For example, Year13, *Submission 1*, 2; Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Submission 29*, 20; The Gordon, *Submission 30*, 2; North-West Careers Group, *Submission 35*, 5; Holmesglen Institute, *Submission 57*, 2; Ms Louise Walsh, Member, National Career Development Committee, Career Development Association of Australia, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 17; Ms Jodee Price, Manager, Skills and Employment, Goulburn Ovens TAFE, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 14; Ms Fleur Goulding, Executive Officer, Office of the Chief Executive and Board Secretary, Holmesglen Institute, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 25; Ms Gail McHardy, Executive Officer, Parents Victoria, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 2.

¹⁸³ Urbis, *National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) research project element 2: synthesis report*, report for Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australia (2011), 61.

¹⁸⁴ Ms Bernadette Gigliotti, Chief Executive Officer, Career Education Association of Victoria, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 16.

¹⁸⁵ Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals, *Submission 22*, 1.

¹⁸⁶ Mr Keith Brownbill, *Submission 86*, 1; Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, report prepared by Gabrielle Brown and Eliza Kidd (2017), 24.

Principal support is vital as it endorses the role and contributes to an environment whereby other staff are encouraged to see work done in this space as relevant and worthwhile. This can encourage the school to develop a holistic approach whereby Career Development is embedded in the curriculum and accepted as being as important as any other discipline area.¹⁸⁷

Ms Gigliotti reiterated the need for a holistic approach to career development in schools:

it needs to be a whole-school approach. There needs to be an understanding from the top levels and from within the community and the teachers that it is not the domain of one individual; it is actually the whole school that needs to come on board and have a very focused vision as to what they want the career development of all their students to look like. We have schools now with vision and mission statements. It is not a quantum leap to ask the schools to start to look at a way of quality assuring the process from point of entry, from when they come into school, until they transition out and that these staged processes of career development commence at an early age.¹⁸⁸

In the United Kingdom (UK), schools are required to have a career development strategy that outlines how they provide services and tailor them to individuals' interests, strengths and vulnerabilities.¹⁸⁹ Schools in Victoria should also have a clear strategy for career development and a structured program that outlines how they deliver services to students. Each school's program should be made available to students, parents, teachers and employers so that the school community is clear on the school's ethos and practice in relation to career development.

RECOMMENDATION 6: That the Department of Education and Training require each school to publish its career development program on the school's website for students, parents, teachers and employers to access.

3.1.2 Career development should be explicitly incorporated into the curriculum

There was overwhelming support among stakeholders to make career development a mandatory part of the school curriculum in Victorian schools.¹⁹⁰ The common view was that making career development compulsory would ensure that it would be valued by the whole school and that schools would resource it adequately.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ Aitken College, *Submission 70*, 8.

¹⁸⁸ Ms Bernadette Gigliotti, *Transcript of evidence*, 21.

¹⁸⁹ Department for Education, United Kingdom, *Careers guidance and inspiration in schools: statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff* (2017), 4–5.

¹⁹⁰ For example, Mr Mithat Demir, *Submission 2*, 1; Victorian Parents Council, *Submission 15*, 2; Ms Catherine Armstrong, *Submission 25*, 4; Career Education Association of Victoria, *Submission 26*, 2; The Gordon, *Submission 30*, 2; Moreland Darebin Careers Network, *Submission 44*, 9; Victorian Council of Social Service, *Submission 54*, 20; Northern Melbourne VET Cluster and South East VET Cluster, *Submission 55*, 1; Holmesglen Institute, *Submission 57*, 4; Parents Victoria, *Submission 82*, 1; Associate Professor Andrew Harvey, Director, Centre for Higher Education, Equity and Diversity Research, La Trobe University, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 64; Ms Melyssa Fuqua, supplementary evidence, response to questions on notice received 16 March 2018, 1; Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, *Inquiry into career advice in Victorian schools*, online survey, SurveyMonkey Inc., California (2017), <<https://www.surveymonkey.com>> for summary results see <<https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/eejsc/article/3883>>.

¹⁹¹ Professor James Bright, *Transcript of evidence*, 63.

There are a range of ways of including career development in the curriculum

While DET's School Policy and Advisory Guide requires government schools to provide career development services to students, it is up to each school to decide how it does this.¹⁹² The 2017 review of school career education for DET found:

Career education is not explicitly incorporated in the Victorian curriculum, however some of the skills and capabilities associated with career education can be found in different areas of the curriculum. The comprehensiveness of the coverage is difficult to assess.¹⁹³

In 2010, the Victorian Government commissioned the CEAV to develop the Victorian Careers Curriculum Framework (VCCF), which outlined a career education program for students in Years 7–12. However, it was not compulsory for schools to use the VCCF.¹⁹⁴ DET has announced that from 2018, schools will be provided a 'renewed and expanded Victorian Careers Education Framework' that will provide guidance on how to deliver career development as part of the Victorian Curriculum in Years 3–12.¹⁹⁵ Catholic schools, which follow the Victorian Curriculum will also have access this resource. Independent schools follow the Australian Curriculum so they are not bound to DET's requirements.¹⁹⁶

As mentioned in Chapter 1, South Australia and the Northern Territory require students to complete a semester-long subject in Year 10 on career exploration and management to gain their Year 12 certificate. While some schools saw the value of introducing a similar subject, other approaches were also suggested such as:

Dedicated Career Education classes from Year 7 onwards—this could be a series of three–five lessons/sessions per year; showcasing particular industries and the careers/jobs within these. This could be done through subject areas, linking what's learnt in maths or science with an industry and the range of jobs within that industry.¹⁹⁷

A study into defining and measuring the quality of career development by the Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy at The University of Melbourne found that delivering career development as a separate subject or within another subject such as social studies or health and physical development were effective models. Infusing career development throughout the curriculum so that it is delivered by subject teachers was not considered as effective.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹² Department of Education and Training, Victoria, supplementary evidence, response to questions on notice received 4 May 2018, 5.

¹⁹³ Dandolo Partners, *Review of career education in Victorian government schools*, 6.

¹⁹⁴ Ms Bernadette Gigliotti, *Transcript of evidence*, 15.

¹⁹⁵ Department of Education and Training, Victoria, *Transforming career education in Victorian government schools: connecting today's learning with tomorrow's jobs* (2018), 6.

¹⁹⁶ Ms Katy Haire, Deputy Secretary, Early Childhood and School Education, Department of Education and Training, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 32.

¹⁹⁷ Name withheld, *Submission 5*, 3. See also, Academy of Mary Immaculate, *Submission 10*, 7; Hallam Senior College, *Submission 12*, 1.

¹⁹⁸ Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy, University of Melbourne, *Career development: defining and measuring quality*, report prepared by Suzanne Rice, et al. (2015), 19.

Mandating career development may not guarantee quality outcomes

While many stakeholders supported making career development compulsory in schools, others such as some Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) were not convinced that it would deliver quality services to students. LLENs are a network of education and training providers, businesses, industry groups and community agencies within a geographical region. Their aim is to improve the education, training and employment outcomes of vulnerable young people by supporting initiatives and creating partnerships between stakeholders. There are 31 LLENs across Victoria covering the entire state.

When asked if career development should be mandatory in schools, Ms Jerri Nelson, Executive Officer of the North Central LLEN, commented:

You could put fully qualified careers advisers in every school and make it mandatory. That does not actually put a quality overlay over it and it does not make it relevant in the community in which those young people, if they do not transition onto university, will actually be living and working. It may or may not set them up for the best outcomes. It is a pretty tricky answer because I would like to see careers advice available to every young person in every school in Victoria, but I do not know about the mandatory part. It does not necessarily in and of itself solve the problem.¹⁹⁹

Mr Ron Broadhead, Executive Officer of the Northern Mallee LLEN, noted that the school curriculum is already crowded:

Schools are drowning in the responsibilities placed on them. Parents, society, employers—everybody expects schools to do 1000 per cent more. The ‘crowded curriculum’ are words that are used, and we think that is happening. Not only do they have to deliver the Victorian education curriculum but we have school camps, we have arts camps, we have trips overseas to visit other schools, we have Safe Schools policies, programs against bullying, respectful relationships programs, teaching kids to swim, teaching kids to drive—schools are expected to do lots, lots more.²⁰⁰

President of VASSP, Ms Sue Bell, was also wary of mandating career development, stating that the curriculum is already crowded and that other subjects would lose out.²⁰¹ Mr Colin Axup, a Committee Member of VASSP and the principal of Suzanne Cory High School, suggested using:

the competencies that we now report against in the curriculum. With the competencies we overlay what we currently do, so we are embedding them in existing subjects and, as Sue said, one of the answers is to how do you take the aims of careers education and connect it to what we are already doing, without having to set up yet again a separate subject or something else to fit into that crowded curriculum.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Ms Jerri Nelson, Executive Officer, North Central Local Learning and Employment Network, Victorian Local Learning and Employment Networks, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 50.

²⁰⁰ Mr Ron Broadhead, Executive Officer, Northern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 11.

²⁰¹ Ms Sue Bell, President, Victorian Association of State School Principals, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 40.

²⁰² Mr Colin Axup, Principal, Suzanne Cory High School and Committee Member, Victorian Association of State School Principals, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 41.

The Victorian Curriculum is designed to include both knowledge and skills, which are defined as learning areas and capabilities respectively. There are 17 learning areas such as English, history and mathematics and four capabilities: critical and creative thinking, ethical, intercultural, and personal and social.²⁰³ Career management could be added as a fifth capability that schools must teach.

There is strong consensus that career development should begin earlier

Another common theme the Committee heard, especially from students, was the need to start career development earlier at school.²⁰⁴ Stakeholders mentioned that in many schools, career development often starts in Year 10, which can be too late for subject selection or choosing VET and has the added disadvantage of neglecting disengaged students and early school leavers.²⁰⁵ For example, Ms Vicki Bawden, Coordinator of the Northern Melbourne and South East VET Clusters, explained:

by the time a student has to make those important decisions about courses, about subjects—and they have to start making those decisions by Year 9, because really a VET subject is best begun at Year 10 ... how on earth do they make their minds up if they have not learned about the world of work? They should have had careers education from Years 7, 8 and 9, where they are immersed into a whole lot of activities—role plays, simulation games, excursions, incursions, opportunities to learn, having guest speakers—to learn about all the options out there and how pathways work.²⁰⁶

Many stakeholders suggested that career development should even begin in primary school so students start exploring the world of work.²⁰⁷ Career exploration in primary school can help to limit biases students may absorb from parents, friends and society, such as gender stereotypes.²⁰⁸

While there are advantages to starting career development early, it should also be remembered that students will vary as to when they want information and guidance. Some students will be ready to take on career development earlier than others. As identified in Doncaster Secondary College's submission:

203 Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, *Curriculum design: learning areas and capabilities*, <<http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/overview/curriculum-design/learning-areas-and-capabilities>> viewed 22 June 2018.

204 For example, Mr Nathan Grigg, University student, Country Education Partnership, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 40; Mr Joe Collins, University student, Country Education Partnership, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 40; Ms Wren Gillett, Year 11 student, Victorian Student Representative Council, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 24.

205 Career Education Association of Victoria, *Submission 26*, 6; National Centre for Vocational Education Research, *Submission 36*, 2; Ms Gail McHardy, *Transcript of evidence*, 4.

206 Ms Vicki Bawden, *Transcript of evidence*, 25.

207 Ms Judy O'Donohue, Director/Career Practitioner/Consultant, Career Me Now, *Submission 23*, 1; Ms Catherine Armstrong, *Submission 25*, 3; G21–Geelong Region Alliance, *Submission 34*, 2; Victorian Council of Social Service, *Submission 54*, 6; Foundation for Young Australians, *Submission 72*, 6; Mr Tom Saxton, Year 12 student, Victorian Student Representative Council, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 23; Ms Jan Owen, Chief Executive Officer, Foundation for Young Australians, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 11; Mr Justin Mullaly, Deputy President, Australian Education Union, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 53; Ms Bernadette Gigliotti, *Transcript of evidence*, 21.

208 Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Submission 29*, 14; Ms Megan O'Connell, Institute Director, Mitchell Institute, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 30.

their readiness to take on the information within career education is very much linked with “it will only seem important when it is relevant to me”—ie. preparing or updating a resume can seem a tedious task until suddenly I need to apply for a part time job. The aim therefore is to build upon a student’s knowledge year after year and equip them to become their own career managers by the time they are school leavers.²⁰⁹

Incorporating career development in the school curriculum from Year 7 and ensuring students have access to individual counselling in each year of secondary school will allow students to access career development when they want it.

The Committee recognises the need to have career development explicitly included in the Victorian Curriculum so that schools dedicate enough time and resources to it. At the same time, the Committee acknowledges that the school curriculum is crowded. Career management, the planning for and management of one’s working life, could be designated as a capability within the Victorian Curriculum. Designating career management as a capability would allow schools some flexibility in how it is taught while also ensuring that career development is adequately delivered to students.

FINDING 5: Starting career development early in secondary school provides students with greater exposure to the world of work before they need to make study and work decisions in senior years and ensures that early school leavers do not miss out on career development.

RECOMMENDATION 7: That the Department of Education and Training make career development an explicit component of the school curriculum in Years 7–12 by designating career management as a ‘capability’ within the Victorian Curriculum.

Subject teachers should incorporate career development in their lessons

As part of taking a whole-of-school approach to career development, subject teachers in secondary schools should be encouraged to incorporate aspects such as career exploration in their lessons. Showing how their classroom learning applies to the outside world can motivate students and help them to make connections with their interests and potential career aspirations.²¹⁰ Ms Sara Wrate, Transition and Pathways Leading Teacher at Chaffey Secondary College, explained:

building the knowledge of teachers ... [so they are] able to link their curriculum to how that works in with particular industries or particular career pathways, so that students are starting to link that maths or science looks at engineering and starting to link, ‘Why am I doing this subject in school?’, and then building their aspiration that way because they are seeing what career pathways are available in that area. For that we need skilled teachers in the areas to really understand what their subject is leading to.²¹¹

209 Doncaster Secondary College, *Submission 31*, 1.

210 The Careers & Enterprise Company, *State of the nation 2017: careers and enterprise provision in England’s schools* (2017), 37; Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, 28.

211 Ms Sara Wrate, Transition and Pathways Leading Teacher, Chaffey Secondary College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 28.

In their submission, Haileybury College and Haileybury Girls College agreed, noting that subject teachers should be aware of their influence on students' career choices and therefore have a basic understanding of career development.²¹² Ms Wrate added that if subject teachers integrated career development in their teaching, it would ease the pressure on career practitioners to cover all areas and give students more exposure to different types of careers from teachers who have greater expertise in their field.²¹³

While research has shown that secondary subject teachers recognise they have a role in students' career development, they also feel ill-equipped to provide information relating to careers in their field, labour market trends and course admission requirements.²¹⁴ Haileybury College and Haileybury Girls College suggested:

A greater focus on career development education in pre-service training and the opportunity for current teachers to undertake professional development in this area would result in consistent, high quality careers advice dispensed across the whole school.²¹⁵

Other stakeholders also agreed that career development should be included in pre-service teacher training to give subject teachers the confidence to contribute to career development and to support school career practitioners better.²¹⁶ Moreland Darebin Career Network, which consists of career practitioners in a number of schools in the inner northern suburbs of Melbourne, recommended:

In the longer term, all teacher training should include studies in career development theory, research into career implications related to their specific field of study (including an awareness of all the alternative pathways into careers in that field) and an understanding of the labour market, as well as basic training in the difference between provision of advice and counselling to ensure that everyone in a school provides support at the level at which they are qualified.²¹⁷

In addition to including career development in teacher-training courses, subject teachers should also be encouraged to undertake professional development to keep up to date with career development theory and potential careers and labour market trends in their area of expertise.²¹⁸

FINDING 6: Subject teachers can make classroom learning more relevant and interesting for students if they link the curriculum to potential career opportunities.

RECOMMENDATION 8: That the Department of Education and Training encourage Year 7–12 subject teachers to incorporate careers content in the curriculum so students can connect classroom learning to potential jobs.

²¹² Haileybury College and Haileybury Girls College, *Submission 74*, 7.

²¹³ Ms Sara Wrate, Chaffey Secondary College, *Transcript of evidence*, 26.

²¹⁴ Urbis, *National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) research project element 2: synthesis report*, 53; Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australia, *Rationale and options for National Career Development Strategy*, report prepared by Nous Group (2011), 27.

²¹⁵ Haileybury College and Haileybury Girls College, *Submission 74*, 7.

²¹⁶ Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, *Submission 78*, 8; Ms Vicki Bawden, *Transcript of evidence*, 24.

²¹⁷ Moreland Darebin Careers Network, *Submission 44*, 11.

²¹⁸ Northern Melbourne VET Cluster and South East VET Cluster, *Submission 55*, 3.

RECOMMENDATION 9: That the Department of Education and Training require teacher-training courses to include a career development unit in the syllabus.

RECOMMENDATION 10: That the Department of Education and Training encourage all secondary teachers to undertake training in career development relevant to their specialisation as part of their annual professional development.

3.1.3 Parents have an important role and should be better involved in their child's career development

As well as involving the school leadership team and subject teachers in career development, the whole-of-school approach should also involve parents. This section discusses the significant role parents have on young people's career choices and how this can be detrimental if parents have outdated views about certain careers or unrealistic expectations of their children. It then considers how to improve parents' involvement in their children's career development.

Parents are the greatest influence on young people's career choices

As discussed in Chapter 2, young people are more likely to turn to their parents than anyone else for guidance on their career choices. Several stakeholders identified the importance of involving parents in school career development to ensure that they can better assist their children.²¹⁹ Parents' knowledge of career options and pathways can have a great influence on their children's choices so parents must have access to unbiased information on the range of career pathways and their associated earning potential and labour market trends.²²⁰

Young people also identified the importance of educating parents and involving them in their children's career development. For example, Ms Shannon Bone, a Year 12 student from Melbourne, stated:

My dad is a single parent and he dropped out in Year 10, so he does not have any influence over my future career. I actually find that that is a big downer, because he knows me better than anyone knows me and I am really conflicted with what I want to do in the future. The times when I have gone to him and I am like, 'So what do you reckon I should do next year? Where do you see me as your daughter going and being successful?', his reply has always just been, 'Do what makes you happy', and I do not know what makes me happy. So I think it also really ties in with getting parents involved in ... careers counsellor sessions.²²¹

The 2017 review on Victorian career education for DET found that parental engagement in school career development can range 'from complete disengagement to intense and focused engagement' and that parents and schools can differ greatly in the expectations and aspirations they have for students.²²²

219 Goulburn Ovens TAFE, *Submission 24*, 2; TwoPointZero, *Submission 42*, 2; Ms Bernadette Gigliotti, *Transcript of evidence*, 21-22; Ms Jerri Nelson, *Transcript of evidence*, 48; Ms Judy O'Donohue, Director/Career Practitioner/Consultant, Career Me Now, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 3.

220 Skillsroad, *Skillsroad 2017 youth census*, report for Apprenticeship Support Australia, (2017), 26.

221 Ms Shannon Bone, Year 12 student, Victorian Student Representative Council, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 25.

222 Dandolo Partners, *Review of career education in Victorian government schools*, 6.

Unrealistic expectations or outdated information from parents can be detrimental

Parents' own experience of education and employment can colour their views on their children's career options and choices.²²³ Stakeholders raised how the mismatch between parents' understanding of career options and the reality of the labour market could lead to young people making decisions that are not in their interests.²²⁴ Mr Steve Shepherd, Chief Executive Officer of TwoPointZero, a private career service provider that provides coaching and guidance to students, graduates and young people, argued that parents should be educated about how the world of work has changed so they can provide more accurate advice to their children:

parents will give the kids advice, and it is usually pretty bad advice. It is based on their own experiences or their own aspirations. We are all guilty of doing it. I think that it is about giving the information and being able to hold decent career conversations and understand that some of the things have changed.²²⁵

School career practitioners from the Sunraysia Careers Network added that in their district some parents are biased against certain occupations. For example, Vice President of the Sunraysia Careers Network, Ms Nicole Clisby-Weir, said that parents might dismiss some industries despite their earning potential and the job demand in the region:

Just talking about agriculture and horticulture, as soon as you mention that to students and to parents, they do not want to be a blocky; that is what comes out. We had that conversation again two days ago with a student who is very articulate and who said, 'That's exactly what my parents would say. They would not allow me to do it because they see it as being a blocky'. So we really need to be able to educate the parents on the changes to career options that are in these industries, that they have a set thought process on and what it meant when they were young and people were going out into the employment environment.²²⁶

Ms Judy O'Donohue, a career practitioner, consultant and Director of Career Me Now, a private provider of career services, also expressed that parents might direct their children away from lucrative careers because they have preconceived ideas about university:

What we find, as careers practitioners in schools, is the career practitioners are giving students the options; it is the parents telling them, 'No, you must go to university' ... The parents do not understand. It has changed over the years. Of course we understand that many parents and many communities believe that if you get a university education, you are going to be bringing yourself out of poverty, and that is

²²³ Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy, University of Melbourne, *Career development: defining and measuring quality*, 22.

²²⁴ Ms Sue Bell, *Transcript of evidence*, 41; Ms Nicole Clisby-Weir, Vice President, Sunraysia Careers Network, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 5.

²²⁵ Mr Steve Shepherd, Chief Executive Officer, TwoPointZero, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 8.

²²⁶ Ms Nicole Clisby-Weir, Sunraysia Careers Network, *Transcript of evidence*, 5.

really an important point. But what the research is also showing is that a Certificate IV can be equivalent to having a university degree in terms of final outcomes with pay and employment.²²⁷

Evidence suggests that many parents lack confidence and believe they do not have the skills and knowledge to advise their children on career decisions. This lack of confidence is even higher among parents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.²²⁸ Mr Peter Roberts, Director of School Services at Independent Schools Victoria, which represents the interests of independent schools in Victoria, noted that the range of post-school pathways ‘is a really complicated landscape’ and that schools need to help parents to understand how the pathways are structured and the language and acronyms associated with them.²²⁹

FINDING 7: Parents are a significant influence on young people’s career choices and need accurate information on current career opportunities and labour market trends.

Schools should reach out to parents and provide them support and information

While studies have shown that parents want schools to provide them with career information and better involve them in their children’s career development, the 2017 review for DET found that schools struggle to meaningfully engage parents.²³⁰ Ms Nicole Clisby-Weir, who is also the Pathways Coordinator at Trinity Lutheran College Mildura, stated that schools are struggling to get parents to participate in ‘simple things like parent–teacher interviews, so getting them to come in for information evenings and sessions on career pathways, and what have you, is a major issue for us.’²³¹ Doncaster Secondary College also noted:

The parents who access Career information consistently in order to best support their children with decision making are often not the ones who need to most. The exploration of information for career planning may not seem important or relevant until it becomes personal and urgent.²³²

Suggestions presented to the Committee for better involving parents in their child’s career development include having school career practitioners available for consultation at parent–teacher interviews and subject selection nights and inviting parents and families to industry presentations.²³³ The 2011 study on

²²⁷ Ms Judy O’Donohue, *Transcript of evidence*, 3.

²²⁸ Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy, University of Melbourne, *Career development: defining and measuring quality*, 22.

²²⁹ Mr Peter Roberts, Director, School Services, Independent Schools Victoria, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 36.

²³⁰ Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy, University of Melbourne, *Career development: defining and measuring quality*, 22; Urbis, *National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) research project element 2: synthesis report*, 51; Dandolo Partners, *Review of career education in Victorian government schools*, 6.

²³¹ Ms Nicole Clisby-Weir, Pathways Coordinator, Trinity Lutheran College Mildura, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 53.

²³² Doncaster Secondary College, *Submission 31*, 2.

²³³ Ms Debbie Bell, Careers Counsellor, St Joseph’s College Mildura, supplementary evidence, response to questions on notice received 20 April 2018, 1.

career development for the Australian Government found that parents would like online and printed information on work, study and careers, personal meetings with school career practitioners and a careers hotline.²³⁴

Although young people want their parents to be involved in their career development, they also warned that if parents were included in career counselling sessions, they must not take over the process. For example, Ms Wren Gillett, a Year 11 student from Melbourne, said:

We do not want this to be something that actually allows the parents to actually take charge of their child's future, because in some cases that is not necessarily the best thing.²³⁵

A Year 12 student from Melbourne, Ms Clare Joseph, added:

When we involve parents, we just need to clarify with them what career counselling is ... as a kid that goes to a selective entry school, a lot of the parents want their kids to be doctors and in high, up-there professions, and a lot of the students do not want to do that. We do not want a kind of conflict based in the counselling rooms.²³⁶

Ms Catherine Armstrong, a career practitioner at a government school in the western suburbs of Melbourne, also found in a focus group session of 13 Year 10 students for the 2017 review of career education for DET that students:

were very clear in wanting the school to help them tell their parents to stop putting pressure on them to perform and to let them make their own career decisions.²³⁷

The Victorian Government's Engaging Parents in Career Conversations (EPiCC) program provides resources for career practitioners to engage parents and encourage them to have meaningful career conversations with their children. Another program run by Whitelion, a youth charity based in West Melbourne, is Parents As Career Transition Support (PACTS). PACTS is delivered over three two-hour sessions and provides parents and carers with current information on career pathways, available career resources and the labour market.²³⁸ However, it is unclear how many parents take advantage of these programs.

Each secondary school should aim to improve parents' access to its career development program. School career practitioners should be available for consultation with parents at parent-teacher interviews and other relevant school events, as well as on an as-needed basis. Schools should also keep parents informed about careers on their website and newsletters.

RECOMMENDATION 11: That secondary schools ensure their career practitioner is available for consultation at parent-teacher interviews and other parent information sessions.

²³⁴ Urbis, *National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) research project element 2: synthesis report*, 51.

²³⁵ Ms Wren Gillett, *Transcript of evidence*, 25.

²³⁶ Ms Clare Joseph, Year 12 student, Victorian Student Representative Council, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 25-26.

²³⁷ Ms Catherine Armstrong, *Submission 25*, 2.

²³⁸ Victorian Council of Social Service, *Submission 54*, 24.

3.2 More time and resources must be allocated to school career development

For school career practitioners to provide adequate services to students, they require enough time to deliver classes, meet with students and manage subject selection, work experience, VET enrolments and tertiary application processes. They also need sufficient resources, office space and administrative assistance to fulfil their role. This section outlines the current time and resource constraints experienced by school career practitioners and presents approaches for providing them with better support.

3.2.1 Some schools are cutting time and resources from career development

A common theme in the evidence presented to the Committee was the lack of time allocated to career development in Victorian schools, in terms of both the time available to career practitioners to provide services and the time allocated to career development in the school curriculum. Inadequate resourcing of school career development, including funding, staffing and educational materials, was another common concern among stakeholders.

Career practitioners say there is not enough time to provide high quality services

In their evidence to the Committee, career practitioners stated that the quality of services they provide to students depends on the amount of time they have to fulfil their role.²³⁹ Several career practitioners commented that there is not enough time to conduct individual career interviews with students because of the time needed to undertake other tasks related to subject selection, administration of work experience and VET, and tertiary application processes.²⁴⁰

As discussed in Chapter 2, some students find it difficult to access their school career practitioner individually. For example, Ms Dallas Gange, a Year 11 student from Red Cliffs Secondary College, stated:

poor Mrs Boulton is the only teacher that we can go and see about it. I do not think there has been a single occasion where I have gone to see her where there were not 30 other people also waiting to see her. It is time-consuming for everyone involved ... There is just not enough time or resources for teachers to personally cater to different career paths to give students options. It is all whatever you have access to. It is the rare occasion you can talk to someone. Mrs Boulton has a wall of brochures up in the

²³⁹ Moreland Darebin Careers Network, *Submission 44*, 5; Ms Sally Gilder, *Submission 13*, 1; Ms Judy O'Donohue, Director/Career Practitioner/Consultant, Career Me Now, *Submission 23*, 2; Ms Kerry Moloney, *Submission 32*, 2; Ms Amanda Ellwood, *Submission 45*, 3; Career Development Association of Australia, *Submission 84*, 3-4; Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, *Inquiry into career advice in Victorian schools*, online survey.

²⁴⁰ For example, Ms Anne Trickey, Executive Officer, Campaspe Cohuna Local Learning and Employment Network, *Submission 64*, 1; Academy of Mary Immaculate, *Submission 10*, 7.

careers office that was very useful; that is where a lot of information came from. But that is not the same as talking to someone and getting as much information as you can for catered career options.²⁴¹

Mr Shepherd from TwoPointZero added:

We are seeing students who are telling us that they got 15 minutes of career advice for perhaps trying to define what is one of the most important decisions that they will ever make in their life.²⁴²

Many school career practitioners also have teaching and other responsibilities that take time away from providing career development services.²⁴³ Especially in smaller schools or regional schools, career practitioners may have a substantial teaching load and other roles assigned to them.²⁴⁴ For example, Mr Andrew Willison, Careers Coordinator at Merbein P–10 College, explained:

I have a full teaching load as well as my career stuff and looking after the work experience program and also the VETiS, VET in schools program, for all our students. My time allowance over the fortnight, because we have a fortnightly timetable, is about 5 hours. So when I try and implement all that sort of stuff and career action plans and spend time with the kids trying to find work experience placements et cetera, the time thing is very, very draining. As I say, if my time allowance was much greater, then obviously I would be able to deal with the kids a lot more and hopefully open their eyes to a lot more careers.²⁴⁵

He added that the career practitioner role also takes time away from teaching duties:

It is difficult, and it is for probably all the careers advisers here. They are probably robbed of their planning and correction time and half the school time as well to try to keep up at the really busy times of the year like around work experience or at the start of the year when you are doing all your VET enrolments and stuff like that, I am robbing the time from everywhere else to get all those things sorted ...²⁴⁶

School career practitioner Ms Armstrong highlighted that extra teaching and administrative roles can have a great impact the provision of career development services:

For example, my office (Careers/Pathways/VET), in a large school (1500 students), also has to coordinate NAPLAN, On Demand and Transition Testing throughout the year—often closing our service for days at a time.²⁴⁷

241 Ms Dallas Gange, Year 11 student, Red Cliffs Secondary College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 34–35.

242 Mr Steve Shepherd, *Transcript of evidence*, 4.

243 Mr Scott Westray, *Submission 33*, 2; Australian Catholic University, *Submission 41*, 5; Mr Karl Mahr, *Submission 52*, 1; Holmesglen Institute, *Submission 57*, 3.

244 Ms Melyssa Fuqua, *Submission 58*, 2.

245 Mr Andrew Willison, Careers Coordinator, Merbein P–10 College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 29.

246 *ibid.*, 30.

247 Ms Catherine Armstrong, *Submission 25*, 1.

In other schools, career practitioners are only employed part-time, limiting their ability to fulfil their duties. As Professor Bright stated:

Most careers advisers in schools are not in a full-time load. Sometimes they are as little as 20 per cent in very large schools, and a day a week trying to cater for 1000-plus students is just absolutely unrealistic in relation to actually providing a service to those students individually or in groups and keeping on top of labour market projections, let alone doing things such as liaising with employers and getting involved in employment and community groups.²⁴⁸

According to data from the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA), the national peak body for the career industry, about half (52%) of the career practitioners in Australian schools do their role on a part-time basis.²⁴⁹

School career practitioners also find that a lot of their time is spent on administrative tasks necessary to the role, such as coordinating work experience and VET. Professor Bright noted that these administrative tasks impinge on the quality of career development services at schools:

the administrative demands of vocational education when it is being delivered through school are so immense that it completely swamps any attempts at career education because there is always some pressing issue to deal with a work placement or some other aspect of the administration of that, which soaks up an awful lot of teachers' time so that they cannot do any proactive career education work, and that gets left to the side or it is done in a fairly superficial way.²⁵⁰

On top of these time constraints, school career practitioners report that their time allocation has decreased in recent years. CICA's 2016 survey found that school career practitioners' time allowance was twice as likely to have decreased than increased in the previous three years.²⁵¹

FINDING 8: Many school career practitioners in Victoria do not have adequate time to provide career development services to students due to high workloads and competing responsibilities.

Career development is forced to compete with other subjects in the curriculum

In addition to school career practitioners not having enough time to undertake all the tasks required of their role, some schools also highlighted the challenge of accommodating career development in the curriculum.²⁵² For example, the submission from Academy of Mary Immaculate stated:

248 Professor James Bright, *Transcript of evidence*, 63.

249 Career Industry Council of Australia, *Equipping the next generation: insights into our school based career practitioners*, infographic prepared by McCrindle Research (2017).

250 Professor James Bright, *Transcript of evidence*, 67.

251 Career Industry Council of Australia, *What's happening in our schools: insights into our school based career practitioners*, infographic prepared by McCrindle Research (2017).

252 For example, Doncaster Secondary College, *Submission 31*, 2; Mr David Browne, Principal, Red Cliffs Secondary College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 25; Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals, *Submission 22*, 4.

In surveys from our students they often comment that they would like more time to focus on their career planning and development. The constraints of the academic timetable make it hard to deliver the career programs with the depth that they deserve.²⁵³

The Knox School agreed that it was difficult to find time in the curriculum for career development:

Time in the busy curriculum that can be dedicated to career conversations, presentations etc. can be problematic. Despite the fact that career development topics are alluded to in many classroom activities, time in the school day to address all that is not VCE related remains problematic! Too often career-specific activities have to be squeezed into a lunch break, or into after-school time, making the working hours of a Careers Advisor difficult, and misaligned with much of the remainder of the school.²⁵⁴

A common view held by school career practitioners was: ‘The curriculum and school timetable are so full, that careers takes a back seat.’²⁵⁵ Other stakeholders such as the Tertiary Information Service (TIS), which is a not-for-profit collective of higher education providers that organises career events, added that schools are reluctant to release VCE students from class for even a short period of time to attend these events.²⁵⁶

School career practitioners also voiced their frustration that school leadership teams do not support them to access class time to provide career development. For example, Eltham College’s submission stated that career practitioners are:

Not always supported by colleagues/teaching staff when trying to implement careers education program in school—difficult to access part of the curriculum to teach careers, particularly at VCE level.²⁵⁷

In addition, career practitioners are often not invited to join schools’ curriculum committees, which leaves them out of the decision-making and planning processes in regards to the curriculum.²⁵⁸

FINDING 9: It is difficult for many school career practitioners to access time in the curriculum to deliver career development services.

Some schools do not allocate enough resources to career development

In its survey of Australian school career practitioners in 2016, CICA found that one in four (26%) had less than \$1000 per year to spend on career development across their school.²⁵⁹ CICA’s 2014 survey found that 24% of school career practitioners in Australia did not know what their annual budget was and 50%

253 Academy of Mary Immaculate, *Submission 10*, 7.

254 The Knox School, *Submission 4*, 2.

255 Name withheld, *Submission 5*, 2.

256 Tertiary Information Service, *Submission 47*, 1.

257 Eltham College, *Submission 39*, 2.

258 *ibid*; Ms Sally Gilder, *Submission 13*, 2; Moreland Darebin Careers Network, *Submission 44*, 6.

259 Career Industry Council of Australia, *Equipping the next generation: insights into our school based career practitioners*, infographic.

of schools with 1000 or more students had less than \$3 per student to spend on career development services each year.²⁶⁰ The Victorian Parents Council, the peak organisation representing parents with children in non-government schools, noted that the lack of funding affects career practitioners' ability to invest in career development services such as inviting industry representatives to speak to students.²⁶¹ TIS added that funding issues have affected attendance at their events due to the cost of bus hire for schools to transport students to and from venues.²⁶²

Limited funding of career development is also evident in how schools staff the area. Several stakeholders noted that there were not enough career practitioners in each school to provide adequate services, especially in schools with increasing enrolments.²⁶³ As school enrolments increase, career practitioners are restricted in their ability to run excursions and provide individual counselling to students.²⁶⁴

The CEAV presented statistics to show how under staffed school career development programs are in Victoria:

In 75% of CEAV member schools the number of students per full-time careers adviser is greater than 1,000. In schools with enrolments of between 900 and 1,000 students, the careers staff allocation ranges from 0.2 to 1.57, and the number of students for each equivalent full-time careers adviser ranges from 633 to 1,688. In all schools the case load is greater than 1 EFT to 500 students and in many government schools is worse than this. This is well above OECD requirements for effective delivery of careers services in schools.²⁶⁵

Some school career practitioners also noted that they lack administrative support to process paperwork for work experience and VET programs, send electronic mailouts of relevant information, advertise employment opportunities and organise resources for students.²⁶⁶ Moreland Darebin Careers Network added that it is an inefficient use of resources to have qualified career practitioners doing paperwork and data entry tasks.²⁶⁷

In studies of students' perceptions of the effectiveness of school career practitioners, students rated practitioners who spent most of their time in direct service delivery as highly effective whereas practitioners who spent more time on administrative tasks were rated below average.²⁶⁸ Administrative support for school career practitioners would allow them to focus on providing individualised services to students and keeping their knowledge up to date.

²⁶⁰ Career Industry Council of Australia, *A snapshot of career practitioners in Australia*, infographic prepared by McCrindle Research (2015).

²⁶¹ Victorian Parents Council, *Submission 15*, 1.

²⁶² Tertiary Information Service, *Submission 47*, 1.

²⁶³ Rosehill Secondary College, *Submission 6*, 8; Victorian Parents Council, *Submission 15*, 1; Moreland Darebin Careers Network, *Submission 44*, 8.

²⁶⁴ Australian Catholic University, *Submission 41*, 5.

²⁶⁵ Career Education Association of Victoria, *Submission 26*, 13.

²⁶⁶ Ms Sally Gilder, *Submission 13*, 1; Ms Kerry Moloney, *Submission 32*, 2; Eltham College, *Submission 39*, 2.

²⁶⁷ Moreland Darebin Careers Network, *Submission 44*, 8-9.

²⁶⁸ Sheldon Rothman and Kylie Hillman, *Career advice in Australian secondary schools: use and usefulness* (2008), 2.

FINDING 10: Many Victorian schools do not allocate adequate human resources or funding to career development, which diminishes the quality of career development services they deliver to students.

3.2.2 Tailored guidance, more staff and better support will improve the delivery of career development services in schools

There was strong consensus among stakeholders that schools could improve the quality of career development services through better resourcing. This section discusses ways to increase the capacity of school career practitioners to spend more time delivering professional services to students such as tailored guidance in one-to-one meetings.

Students should have access to individual guidance throughout secondary school

Research suggests that students want and benefit from individual career guidance delivered in a private session with a school career practitioner.²⁶⁹ In these sessions, career practitioners can explore students' interests and skills, help students to align their interests with job opportunities and identify career goals and plans.²⁷⁰ Ms Gillett explained:

I think probably the most productive element of my school's career advice program would be the private sessions with a career consultant. You talk with them about what you are most skilled at and basically kind of figure out that perhaps if you do want to go to university, there are some courses you could take and you look at your prerequisites, because it is quite important to know your course outline before going into Year 11. So these interviews are quite important, and I think they helped me clarify the direction that I wanted to take respectively.²⁷¹

School career practitioners also see the value of one-to-one counselling. For example, Mr Mithat Demir, a career practitioner at Sirius College, stated that it is:

of monumental benefit to any student since there is a world of difference between the attitude of a student before and after the one on one session ... [the student realises] not only that there are so many possibilities and opportunities out there, but even the simple fact that there is some one that cares about their future gives them the confidence and us the ability to empower them to move forward and make informed choices for their career.²⁷²

School career practitioners who responded to the Committee's online survey agreed with the benefit of one-to-one sessions but noted that they do not always have enough time to dedicate to each student. One career practitioner at a Melbourne government school wrote:

²⁶⁹ Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy, University of Melbourne, *Career development: defining and measuring quality*, 20; Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, 29; Urbis, *National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) research project element 2: synthesis report*, 30.

²⁷⁰ Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, 29.

²⁷¹ Ms Wren Gillett, *Transcript of evidence*, 21.

²⁷² Mr Mithat Demir, *Submission 2*, 1.

one-to-one interviews are difficult in a large school, and we tend to prioritise the higher year levels. It would be good to extend this to younger year levels, although this is currently available to them on a voluntary basis.²⁷³

Since students and career practitioners recognise the value of one-to-one sessions when they are done well, the Committee believes that every secondary school student should have the opportunity to meet with their career practitioner each year. The meetings should start in Year 7 and continue each year so that a relationship between the student and the career practitioner can be established and discussions can be built upon. Providing individualised support at least once per year for junior students will help reach early school leavers and increasing the frequency of sessions to at least twice per year for senior students will enable career practitioners to provide more support as students' needs increase.

On top of the mandated number of meetings each year, schools should ensure career practitioners have the capacity to meet with students on an additional as-needed basis to clarify issues and consolidate pathway planning.

FINDING 11: Secondary students benefit from one-to-one meetings with their school career practitioner when they are held regularly throughout their schooling.

RECOMMENDATION 12: That the Department of Education and Training require school career practitioners to conduct one-to-one meetings at least once per year with each student in Years 7–9 and at least twice per year with each student in Years 10–12.

The ratio of career practitioners to students in schools must be improved

To provide quality service delivery, including one-to-one meetings, schools must employ an adequate number of career practitioners. Improving the ratio of career practitioners to students will also enable better use of career resources and materials. As explained by Moreland Darebin Careers Network:

As with all resources, regardless of their quality, the key [to] whether they are utilised to their full potential relies on buy-in from stakeholders. In schools, this comes right back to time, money and perceived value when compared with other items in the crowded curriculum and staff members' own competing priorities and/or level of expertise in using these resources. Currently, many excellent resources are being under-utilised; not because careers practitioners are unaware of them or unskilled in their use, but because there is no opportunity for them to use them.²⁷⁴

A study into defining and measuring the quality of career development by the Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy at The University of Melbourne acknowledged this but noted the difficulty of quantifying an appropriate staff-to-student ratio due to the variation in work undertaken by career practitioners in different schools.²⁷⁵

²⁷³ Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, *Inquiry into career advice in Victorian schools*, online survey.

²⁷⁴ Moreland Darebin Careers Network, *Submission 44*, 3.

²⁷⁵ Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy, University of Melbourne, *Career development: defining and measuring quality*, 24.

The CEAV recommends a ratio of one career practitioner for every 450 students at a school.²⁷⁶ Several stakeholders stated that few schools implement this ratio because it is not compulsory and suggested principals would only increase staffing if the ratio was mandated.²⁷⁷ In recognition of the importance of providing tailored guidance to students, the Committee recommends the implementation of the CEAV ratio in Victorian secondary schools. This will enable school career practitioners to conduct the recommended number of one-to-one meetings with students in Years 7–12. When implementing this ratio, principals should ensure that career practitioners do not have heavy teaching loads that would impair their capacity to provide adequate services to students.

RECOMMENDATION 13: That the Department of Education and Training mandate secondary schools employ one career practitioner for every 450 students enrolled.

RECOMMENDATION 14: That the Department of Education and Training commit ongoing funding to support government schools to employ one career practitioner for every 450 students enrolled in a secondary school.

RECOMMENDATION 15: That the Department of Education and Training support schools to limit the teaching loads of career practitioners to enable more time for career development and student counselling.

Online resources should be optimised to deliver better career information

School career practitioners can struggle to keep track of all the opportunities available to students especially as admission requirements regularly change and more post-school pathway options become available. Several stakeholders called for the creation of a central platform that would enable the exchange of information between industries, government, higher education providers and schools.²⁷⁸ For example, Melbourne City Mission education staff mentioned:

the impact of changing government and institutional regulation and funding on their ability to provide accurate and relevant careers advice. For example, changes to prerequisites and pathways into certificate courses, university degrees and employment need to be communicated to young people so they understand what is required of them to enter into their preferred post-school option. One educator reflected that they “don’t want to send a young person down a pathway that is a dead end.”²⁷⁹

They wanted ‘a seamless exchange of information between government, education providers and schools, particularly those offering vocational education options.’²⁸⁰ A La Trobe University study on tertiary admission practices also found that school career practitioners:

²⁷⁶ Career Education Association of Victoria, *Submission 26*, 2.

²⁷⁷ Ms Kerry Moloney, *Submission 32*, 3; Moreland Darebin Careers Network, *Submission 44*, 10; Career Development Association of Australia, *Submission 84*, 3.

²⁷⁸ Ms Meg Parkinson, President, Victorian Farmers Federation Industrial Association and Chair, Workplace Relations Committee, Victorian Farmers Federation, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 2; Melbourne City Mission, *Submission 81*, 6.

²⁷⁹ Melbourne City Mission, *Submission 81*, 6.

²⁸⁰ *ibid.*

believe that many of their students are unaware of the role of tertiary admissions centres, of their eligibility to apply for educational compensation, and the extent of the early offer schemes available.²⁸¹

It added that school career development services need to be better resourced to reflect the need for more complex career and pathway advice.²⁸²

The Geelong Region LLEN has recognised this need and developed an online resource to share this information. It created Geelong Careers, an online app for young people, through a partnership between local employers, industry, education and training providers, health and wellbeing providers, employment providers, councils, community groups and government agencies. The ‘one-stop shop’ app provides labour market information, pathways information and career resources as well as opportunities for workplace exposure and a live jobs feed. All local secondary schools are trained to use the app, which has over 33 000 page views each month. The app has the potential to be scaled up for use across Victoria.²⁸³

The creation of a central online career information resource could alleviate pressure on school career practitioners to maintain up-to-date resources for their students. It will also prevent unnecessary duplication of work among individual career practitioners and help newly appointed staff who need access to information.

There would be great benefit in the Victorian Government creating and maintaining an online resource that career practitioners, students and parents could use as a one-stop shop for information on employment, education and training opportunities as well as relevant scholarship and support programs available to students. Both DET and the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) should be involved with the development of the resource, which could use the Geelong Careers app as a template. LLENs, via a dedicated position created through a recommendation in Section 3.2.3, should supplement the information by providing details and opportunities relevant to their region. This online resource would complement the information and guidance provided by school career practitioners.

FINDING 12: It can be difficult for young people, parents, teachers and career practitioners to find out about the work and study opportunities, scholarships and other support programs available to school leavers.

RECOMMENDATION 16: That the Victorian Government create and maintain an online portal advertising relevant scholarships, support programs and employment, education and training opportunities for secondary students and that each Local Learning and Employment Network update the portal with local opportunities for students.

²⁸¹ La Trobe University, *Submission 85, Attachment A*, 8.

²⁸² *ibid.*

²⁸³ Victorian Local Learning and Employment Networks, *Submission 21*, 9.

Current Victorian Government resources should be reviewed

DET has developed a range of online career development resources for schools such as:

- EPiCC, a suite of online resources for school career practitioners to encourage and empower parents to talk with their children about subject selection, courses and career opportunities
- Victorian Careers Curriculum Framework, an online resource to guide the delivery of career development in schools, which also includes learning and teaching resources
- Victorian Skills Gateway, an online one-stop shop that provides information on the vocational training options available in Victoria.²⁸⁴

It is unclear how many parents, teachers, career practitioners and students use these online resources and how useful they find them. The Department should assess these and other resources they provide for their effectiveness and impact on students' career management skills and modify them as necessary.

RECOMMENDATION 17: That the Department of Education and Training evaluate the level of uptake and usefulness of the current and future career development resources it offers young people and parents.

3.2.3

External coordinators should be appointed to provide add-on support

It is difficult for school career practitioners to keep on top of changes relating to industry, university and VET due to the time and resource pressures they face. They are also limited for time to make connections with local employers and industry to give their students opportunities for workplace exposure. This section considers how external coordinators could help school career practitioners to provide better services to students.

School career practitioners cannot be expected to do everything on their own

Several stakeholders commented on the unrealistic pressure placed on school career practitioners to be familiar with every industry and higher education opportunity and to build relationships with employers. For example, Mr Nigel Muller, Executive Manager of Training, Auto Apprenticeships and Skills at the Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce (VACC), stated:

A careers adviser in a school cannot know all the industries; it is just a bottomless pit of all the intricacies and all the thin markets within every industry. Industry is probably best placed to provide that information ...²⁸⁵

²⁸⁴ Department of Education and Training, Victoria, *Submission 88*, 3–5.

²⁸⁵ Mr Nigel Muller, Executive Manager, Training, Auto Apprenticeships and Skills, Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 3.

Dr Jessie Mitchell, Policy Manager at Youth Affairs Council Victoria, added that school career practitioners need the time, networks and professional supports ‘to build strong relationships with employers, higher education and training providers, community services, unions and industry associations’.²⁸⁶ She suggested that schools should not be expected to build and manage these relationships on their own and that outside agencies such as LLENs could provide support to make connections with such a diverse range of stakeholders.²⁸⁷

Respondents to the Committee’s online survey also agreed that external support is required to provide better career development services. School career practitioners who responded to the survey added that some teachers have ‘never been out of the school system’ so they may not have a realistic or accurate view of careers and training in other industries.²⁸⁸

An external coordinator for a cluster of schools could strengthen connections

While many stakeholders recognised that a number of quality resources and opportunities exist for school career development, they noted that it is difficult to get schools to use these resources on their own. For example, Ms Tracey Jeffery, Skills and Jobs Centre Adviser at The Gordon, one of the largest regional TAFEs in Victoria, said it was:

an issue about resourcing. There are already amazing programs. We have girls’ days, and you have got your boatbuilding. We have got Skilling the Bay, and there are lots of people working on these amazing taster programs, but it is really hard to actually get them into the schools ... the schools are not appropriately resourced with their careers professionals, so they are already really struggling. So then you have got someone knocking on your door saying, ‘Hey, how about we come along and we take all your Year 7 students out for the day?’, and they are like, ‘How on earth am I going to pull this together while I’m already really snowed under?’ ... that is probably where the issue is—about getting enough people in the school or getting people that sit outside of the school just having enough resources there that you can actually get the program running ... All of the TAFEs have got things and teachers that are ready to run things, but it is just that connection—getting into the schools and having the schools that have time to build the relationships.²⁸⁹

An external coordinator who could take on the role of pooling resources or organising events for a cluster of schools was suggested as a way of taking better advantage of available opportunities.²⁹⁰ For example, VASSP recognised the need for a strategy to improve information sharing between schools, industry and businesses:

²⁸⁶ Dr Jessie Mitchell, Policy Manager, Youth Affairs Council Victoria, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 11.

²⁸⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸⁸ Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, *Inquiry into career advice in Victorian schools*, online survey.

²⁸⁹ Ms Tracey Jeffery, Skills and Jobs Centre Adviser, The Gordon, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 17.

²⁹⁰ Mr Justin Mullaly, *Transcript of evidence*, 57; Professor James Bright, *Transcript of evidence*, 63–4.

This may include, for example, forms of brokerage between schools, or clusters of schools, and local industries in order to share information as well as provide opportunities for work experience placements, mentoring and the like, which can strengthen the employment outcomes for young people.²⁹¹

Professor Bright added that employers would also value some type of coordination:

employers will say, ‘We don’t hear from schools’, and the next minute they say, ‘We’re just being pestered by every school in the area for work experience, or what have you, and we need some coordination, because it’s taking up too much of our time trying to deal with individual inquiries’.²⁹²

FINDING 13: School career practitioners and employers would value assistance from external coordinators who could form relationships and share information between schools, employers and industry groups.

Career development from an external coordinator eliminates the potential for bias

In addition to coordinating events and brokering partnerships between schools, higher education providers, employers and industry, an external coordinator appointed to a cluster of schools could also be another touchpoint for students and parents to access career guidance. A range of stakeholders including students were concerned that receiving career guidance solely from the school career practitioner could result in biased advice. The bias could be from the career practitioner’s own experience, as explained by Mr Sam Rice, a Year 12 student from St Arnaud:

when you get a careers adviser who also doubles as your Year 12 teacher or a teacher of a specific subject or area within the school, their opinion is always biased. They are always pushing you a certain way.²⁹³

The bias could also come from schools that might focus more on university entry, or alternatively on VET, which might disadvantage some students.²⁹⁴ Another issue, particularly for small or regional schools, is that directing students towards apprenticeships or VET could affect school enrolments, which subsequently affects the school’s funding allocations.²⁹⁵

²⁹¹ Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals, *Submission 22*, 5.

²⁹² Professor James Bright, *Transcript of evidence*, 64.

²⁹³ Mr Sam Rice, Year 12 student, Country Education Partnership, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 41.

²⁹⁴ Mr William Stublely, Chief Executive Officer, Year13, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 14.

²⁹⁵ Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy, University of Melbourne, *Career development: defining and measuring quality*, 17.

Dr Arnaldo Barone, Director of Policy and Advocacy at the Victorian TAFE Association, noted that some schools have a vested interest in demonstrating that a high proportion of their students are accepted into university.²⁹⁶ To avoid the bias towards university entry, he suggested a model where career development was embedded in the school but not part of it:

Perhaps you have a third party. Take the schools and job centres, which are embedded within TAFEs, but if you expanded that to include universities, industry, community, it is a third-party model. It does not have a vested interest in the school. Schools can access it. They can do outreach to the schools, but they do not have that tension that the school has between doing what is best for the student but also these marketing pressures.²⁹⁷

In the UK, schools are legally required to use ‘independent and external sources’ of career development in addition to in-house support when providing services to students as a way of ensuring good practice.²⁹⁸

An external coordinator would increase access to career development services

A problem with concentrating career development for young people within the school system is that early school leavers and recent school leavers who might need assistance do not have access to services. In addition, students in schools with poor quality career development do not have another avenue to access support. Researchers have argued for a career development service that has multiple entry points to allow young people who are no longer in the school system to access support.²⁹⁹ The North West Careers Group, a group of 62 school career practitioners practising in the north-western suburbs of Melbourne along with 24 tertiary provider representatives and five LLEN representatives, also highlighted the need to change the remit of external agencies so that they can better cater to the needs of young people both before and after leaving school.³⁰⁰

In the UK, the National Careers Service is an external provider that provides free information and professional advice about education, training and work to students and their parents through a website, helpline and online chat.³⁰¹ The National Careers Service is a publicly funded careers service for adults and young people aged 13 and over that was established in 2012. In 2017, the National Careers Service’s website received 20 million visits, its call centre dealt with over 200 000 calls, online chats and emails, and it provided face-to-face advice to 474 000 individuals.³⁰²

296 Dr Arnaldo Barone, Director, Policy and Advocacy, Victorian TAFE Association, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 14.

297 *ibid*, 15.

298 Department for Education, United Kingdom, *Careers guidance and inspiration in schools: statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff*, 5.

299 Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy, University of Melbourne, *Career development: defining and measuring quality*, 21.

300 North-West Careers Group, *Submission 35*, 6.

301 Department for Education, United Kingdom, *Careers guidance and inspiration in schools: statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff*, 10.

302 Career Development Association of Australia, *Submission 84, Attachment A*, 6.

In addition to providing external advice to young people, UK schools can commission the National Careers Service to provide additional career support. It can broker relationships between schools, local communities and employers to provide students with opportunities for workplace exposure.³⁰³ The UK Government also established The Careers & Enterprise Company (CEC) in 2014, which focuses on young people aged 12–18. The CEC has a network of over 2000 Enterprise Coordinators that work with schools to develop career development plans and engage with local businesses and employers.³⁰⁴

New Zealand also has a similar external body that offers schools additional support. Careers New Zealand, a national career development provider, has a website with work and higher education information, interactive career planning tools and a job database as well as career consultants that deliver workshops at schools. It also offers young people and adults one-to-one career counselling on the phone or via online chat.³⁰⁵ In Germany, career development is a statutory requirement for young people, which is delivered in schools by career practitioners from the Federal Employment Agency (FEA). The FEA also runs career information centres in each province where students can book one-to-one career counselling interviews.³⁰⁶

Victoria can establish a similar system of external coordinators to improve young people's access to career development services. Some stakeholders suggested that LLENs could be used to provide coordination support to clusters of schools.³⁰⁷ As the submission from Victoria's LLENs explained:

In establishing its government *Regions* and *Areas* within them, the Victorian Government has already resourced the infrastructure in which LLENs can deliver on these four priority areas [providing career development, labour market information and work experience opportunities to students and addressing the weakening and devaluing of VET]. Further investment in LLENs, to add a specific careers education focus, and to universalize the related parts of its work, could radically transform the delivery of careers education in schools across Victoria.³⁰⁸

Victoria's system of LLENs is unique in Australia, and its coverage of all Victorian schools and regions makes it an ideal candidate for providing school career practitioners with add-on support. Currently, LLENs focus on students who are disengaged from school or employment; however, their sphere of activity could be broadened to provide career development services to all secondary students and recent school leavers. DET should fund each LLEN to employ a secondary school career development coordinator to provide add-on support to school career practitioners as well as information and guidance to young people, parents and employers within their catchment area.

³⁰³ Department for Education, United Kingdom, *Careers guidance and inspiration in schools: statutory guidance for governing bodies, school leaders and school staff*, 10.

³⁰⁴ Career Development Association of Australia, *Submission 84, Attachment A*, 5, 11.

³⁰⁵ Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, 40.

³⁰⁶ Gatsby Charitable Foundation, *Good career guidance: appendices 1–5* (2014), 19–20.

³⁰⁷ Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Submission 29, 27*; Victorian Council of Social Service, *Submission 54, 23*; Ms Jerri Nelson, *Transcript of evidence*, 48.

³⁰⁸ Victorian Local Learning and Employment Networks, *Submission 21*, 3.

RECOMMENDATION 18: That the Department of Education and Training fund each Local Learning and Employment Network to employ a secondary school career development coordinator to:

- support all young people aged 12–21 within the network’s catchment area (not just those disengaged from school or employment)
- provide add-on support to career practitioners at all secondary schools within the network’s catchment area
- deliver career development workshops and activities to local secondary schools
- coordinate industry, employers, higher education providers and schools to run presentations and taster and immersion days for local secondary students
- provide local secondary students and recent school leavers with one-to-one career counselling via email, online chat and telephone
- provide information and resources to parents, schools and employers
- supplement the Victorian Government’s online portal with information about local employment and education opportunities and available scholarships and support programs for young people in their region.

3.3 High quality career development services can only be delivered by qualified practitioners

On the first day of public hearings for the Inquiry, two witnesses posed rhetorical questions to highlight the importance of having a qualified career practitioner in each school. Mr Axup from VASSP asked:

It comes down to, ‘Do you have a careers person?’. We can talk about curriculum, we can talk about all of those other aspects, but do you have that warm body with the expertise and the time to provide that advice, one on one, in small groups, to work consistently with them over a period of time to give them that advice?³⁰⁹

And Ms O’Donohue of Career Me Now asked, ‘We would not allow teachers to teach without teaching qualifications, so I wonder why we allow careers advisers in schools who are not qualified as careers advisers?’³¹⁰

As school career practitioner Ms Armstrong pointed out, despite the CEAV recommended ratio of career practitioners to students and the CICA benchmarking resource:

principals in schools are able to employ whomever they wish into career education positions in schools. This needs to change. It should be mandated that suitably qualified staff are managing the Careers/Pathways/VET areas in schools.³¹¹

This section considers the current lack of clarity and prestige around the role of the school career practitioner before discussing how to ensure that practitioners have the qualifications and professional development they need to work with students.

³⁰⁹ Mr Colin Axup, *Transcript of evidence*, 41.

³¹⁰ Ms Judy O’Donohue, *Transcript of evidence*, 3.

³¹¹ Ms Catherine Armstrong, *Submission 25*, 1.

3.3.1 The role of the school career practitioner is unclear and undervalued

A common thread in the evidence presented to the Committee was how poorly valued career practitioners are in some schools. As explained in the ACU's submission:

Career education also does not appear to have very high "status" in many schools; it has been informally reported to ACU that the role is not considered a good career move for ambitious teachers wishing to develop their teaching career. As a result, there tends to be a high turnover in this role in many schools, and the person holding the position is unlikely to be able to influence school policy on careers advisory activities.³¹²

The Moreland Darebin Careers Network and other stakeholders also noted that school career practitioners are leaving the government system and the quality of candidates applying for these positions will ultimately diminish because of the 'lack of professional respect' and de-professionalisation of the role.³¹³ It drew attention to a growing trend of schools employing school career practitioners as education support (ES) staff at much lower pay scales than teaching staff.³¹⁴ The disparity between schools in how they classify career practitioners confuses the role's definition:

For example, career adviser roles are currently being advertised on Recruitment Online as anywhere between ES1.2 and Leading Teacher levels. In most cases the expectations of the person doing the role are almost identical.³¹⁵

ES staff provide support services to schools such as human resources, finance, grounds maintenance, library, canteen and classroom assistance. Ms Gigliotti of the CEAV highlighted that the reduction of the role to an ES position in some schools has relegated school career development to administrative tasks:

The careers position appears as an education support officer role in government and Catholic schools, with no mandatory qualifications for the position. The introduction of mandatory Managed Individual Pathways has also meant that in government schools at least a lot of the careers role has now become administrative and focusing very much on the transition points.³¹⁶

Mr Scott Westray, the Career Development Coordinator at Sirius College, said that school career practitioners are relinquishing their roles due to the lower pay offered when the role is reclassified as an ES position:

Career Advisors are being squeezed out of their roles by Principals who are using the 'auxiliary' nature of Career Advising as a way to save money in a school's budget, by demoting the remuneration for postgraduate-trained professionals to that of a

³¹² Australian Catholic University, *Submission 41*, 5.

³¹³ Moreland Darebin Careers Network, *Submission 44*, 7; Aitken College, *Submission 70*, 7; Australian Education Union, Victorian Branch, *Submission 79*, 5; Ms Bernadette Gigliotti, *Transcript of evidence*, 17.

³¹⁴ Moreland Darebin Careers Network, *Submission 44*, 7.

³¹⁵ *ibid*, 8.

³¹⁶ Ms Bernadette Gigliotti, *Transcript of evidence*, 15.

low-range Education Support staff member. Career Advisors are having to forego working in their field of expertise to take teaching roles on board, simply to make ends meet ...³¹⁷

The Moreland Darebin Careers Network added that most career practitioners hold postgraduate qualifications in career development and many are experienced teachers, yet ‘this level of skill and knowledge is not acknowledged or rewarded in a school setting’.³¹⁸

In some schools, the role is allocated to a new teacher each year disrupting the delivery of career development services. Ms O’Donohue explained:

Some schools will say to a teacher, ‘You’re the careers adviser this year’, and put them into a role where they have no training and no support ... Because there are no rules and regulations—there is nothing in writing to say this is what needs to happen; it is just recommendations—then any teacher can just be told, ‘You’re the careers adviser’.³¹⁹

Ms Melyssa Fuqua, who taught at a rural Victorian P–12 school for 10 years, where she was the Pathways Coordinator and managed the school’s career development services, described how she felt when she was placed in that position:

One of the first challenges I faced in being appointed my school’s careers advisor was not being qualified to be one. I did not hold any sort of Certificate or postgraduate degree in careers advising or access any professional learning from organisations like the CEAV. There was no time for this and I had many other responsibilities on top of my regular teaching work. Being a careers advisor was one of the most stressful things I have done—I saw it as important work, most of my students and their families saw it as important work, but there was little time in the school day/ curriculum devoted to careers education and little support for professional learning. There were few professional development opportunities in my area ...³²⁰

While some schools employ their career practitioner in a Leading Teacher capacity, the variation between schools in how they view the position contributes to the uncertainty and devaluing of the role across the education system. Depending on how they are classified, school career practitioners can earn between \$52 212 annually as an ES1.2 and \$107 687 as a Leading Teacher.³²¹

FINDING 14: There is a lack of clarity and prestige around the role of school career practitioner due to the inconsistent way the position is defined and classified across schools.

317 Mr Scott Westray, *Submission 33*, 2.

318 Moreland Darebin Careers Network, *Submission 44*, 6.

319 Ms Judy O’Donohue, *Transcript of evidence*, 6.

320 Ms Melyssa Fuqua, *Submission 58*, 1.

321 Moreland Darebin Careers Network, *Submission 44*, 10.

3.3.2 Only qualified career practitioners should provide career development services in schools

Currently, there is no requirement for school career practitioners to have a qualification in career development. However, due to the complexity of the role and the significant influence school career practitioners can have on students' career choices, many stakeholders called for career practitioners to have achieved a minimum standard of training in order to practise in schools.³²²

All school career practitioners should have a Graduate Certificate in career development

To be registered as a professional career development practitioner with CICA, a person must have a Graduate Certificate in career development as a minimum qualification. A person who holds a Certificate IV in career development can apply for affiliate registration, which is a non-professional registration category for people working in the field. Four Australian universities also offer a Master of Education with a specialisation in career development.

In other jurisdictions, such as Finland, Denmark, the United States of America and Canada, school career practitioners are required to hold a Masters degree in career development.³²³ Professor Bright from ACU and Ms Gigliotti from the CEAV also recommended that school career practitioners should hold or be working towards a Masters qualification due to the advanced skills required of the role.³²⁴

Since the minimum qualification for registration as a professional career development practitioner is a Graduate Certificate, the Committee believes that all school career practitioners should hold this qualification as a minimum as well as hold professional registration with CICA. Ensuring that school career practitioners hold professional registration gives the school community confidence that they are qualified, practising in accordance with the profession's code of conduct and ethics and keeping their skills updated through mandatory continuing professional development. DET should phase in the requirement for professional registration to give school career practitioners time to attain a Graduate Certificate in career development.

While VASSP acknowledged the importance of having qualified career practitioners working in schools, it also noted the difficulty school principals face finding qualified staff in both metropolitan and regional schools. It stated in its submission:

³²² For example, Ms Catherine Armstrong, *Submission 25*, 4; Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre, *Submission 43*, 1; Aitken College, *Submission 70*, 8; Australian Education Union, Victorian Branch, *Submission 79*, 6; Ms Bernadette Gigliotti, *Transcript of evidence*, 17; Ms Sue Bell, *Transcript of evidence*, 39; Ms Jerri Nelson, *Transcript of evidence*, 46; Ms Debbie Bell, Careers Counsellor, St Joseph's College Mildura, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 53.

³²³ Career Education Association of Victoria, *Submission 26*, 13.

³²⁴ Professor James Bright, *Transcript of evidence*, 60; Ms Bernadette Gigliotti, *Transcript of evidence*, 17.

A key issue for principals is having staff available, or having sufficient applicants when positions are advertised, who are suitably experienced or qualified. While some staff employed in these positions have qualifications such as a Graduate Diploma in Careers Education, many have no formal qualifications.³²⁵

The Committee welcomes the Victorian Government's announcement that from 2019, it will subsidise the training of more than 400 career practitioners to gain a Graduate Certificate in career education so that every government secondary school has at least one qualified career practitioner.³²⁶ However, the Committee believes that all career practitioners in secondary schools should hold this qualification as a minimum.

In addition, the Committee was warned that an unintended consequence of subsidising this training for government school career practitioners is that once qualified, these practitioners may leave the government system. When a similar scheme was running in 2009–2014, practitioners in government schools took up most of the Victorian Government grants but many of them did not stay at their school afterwards.³²⁷ As Mr Frank Thompson, President of the CEAV, explained:

Many of them have moved on to independent schools who see the value of that additional qualification and that additional edge, if you like, that it might give their students to have someone with that experience and knowledge and expertise. We have had people who have come through the state system and been trained at the state government expense to do that program and a couple of years later said, 'There's a better job with maybe a full-time careers load rather than being a mix of teaching and so on'. That is where a lot of the shift has happened.³²⁸

For this reason, the Committee recommends that DET explore ways to retain career practitioners who take up the Government grant to gain a Graduate Certificate in career development in the government school sector. The Committee's other recommendation requiring all school career practitioners to hold a Graduate Certificate and professional registration will go some way towards government schools valuing this qualification and retaining qualified staff.

RECOMMENDATION 19: That the Department of Education and Training require all school career practitioners to have, or be working towards, at least a Graduate Certificate in career development.

RECOMMENDATION 20: That the Department of Education and Training require all school career practitioners to hold professional registration with the Career Industry Council of Australia.

RECOMMENDATION 21: That the Department of Education and Training explore strategies to retain in the government sector the school career practitioners it funds to attain a Graduate Certificate in career development.

³²⁵ Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals, *Submission 22*, 1.

³²⁶ Department of Education and Training, Victoria, *Transforming career education in Victorian government schools: connecting today's learning with tomorrow's jobs*, 5.

³²⁷ Career Education Association of Victoria, *Submission 26*, 13.

³²⁸ Mr Frank Thompson, President, Career Education Association of Victoria, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 17.

At least one career practitioner at each school should be a registered teacher

If all school career practitioners must hold a graduate qualification in career development, schools should remunerate them accordingly. By employing career practitioners at lower ES levels, schools send the message that the career practitioner is less valued than teaching staff despite the importance of their role. ES staff who have no qualifications or experience in career development may feel overwhelmed with the demands of their role, whereas ES staff who are qualified as career practitioners may feel unsupported and undervalued if their skills are not acknowledged in their classification level.³²⁹

In addition to being undervalued, career practitioners who are employed as ES staff have little influence on the school's planning and decision-making processes and struggle to introduce career development services in the curriculum. As explained by the Moreland Darebin Careers Network:

An ES1.2 staff member, for example, is not in a position to dictate to a year level coordinator how to deliver careers curriculum in the context of a home group program, nor can they dictate to faculty heads regarding the effective integration of good quality careers education into various faculty areas. This is not to say they do not have those capabilities, as often they do. However, the status of their role takes away their voice. They are often excluded from meetings at which important decisions are made, and even when they are present, their input is often disregarded.³³⁰

Ms Felicity Wilmot, Careers Advisor at Alexandra Secondary College, added:

Being viewed only as support also hinders a more collegiate approach where support should flow both ways from career advisor to teachers and vice versa. Ready access to and support of senior staff in the school is necessary so that the careers office is adequately prioritised and promoted, and so that opportunities that arise can be leveraged to provide the best outcomes for students.³³¹

Many stakeholders considered the employment of career practitioners as ES staff as a cost-cutting measure by schools.³³² Mr Axup from VASSP acknowledged that employment at the ES classification level was due to budgeting issues, stating school career practitioners:

are either teachers or education support staff, so they are employed under two different systems, if you like, and each has its advantages and disadvantages. The disadvantage of employing teachers as your careers adviser is they cost more, and that is a staffing decision that a principal has to make. For example, after all this time

³²⁹ Northern Melbourne VET Cluster and South East VET Cluster, *Submission 55*, 3.

³³⁰ Moreland Darebin Careers Network, *Submission 44*, 8.

³³¹ Ms Felicity Wilmot, *Submission 60*, 2.

³³² For example, Name withheld, *Submission 5*, 3; Ms Kerry Moloney, *Submission 32*, 3; Moreland Darebin Careers Network, *Submission 44*, 8; Aitken College, *Submission 70*, 7; Australian Education Union, Victorian Branch, *Submission 79*, 5; Ms Tracey Jeffery, *Transcript of evidence*, 12; Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, *Inquiry into career advice in Victorian schools*, online survey.

we now employ 1.5 FTE careers counsellors, but they are ES, so I can afford that. If I employed a teacher, I would not be able to afford that, and we are a reasonably well-off secondary school in that respect.³³³

While employing career practitioners as ES staff enables schools to allocate a greater time fraction to the role, a disadvantage is that ES staff are not allowed to undertake teaching duties or supervise students. This means they cannot deliver career development in classrooms without a teacher present and they cannot take students on excursions to gain workplace or higher education exposure. Instead the role becomes an administrative one based on information dissemination.³³⁴

Ms Bawden from the Northern Melbourne and South East VET Clusters was concerned that students miss out when they cannot access career development in the classroom:

Students need time in class to discuss these [career and workforce information] and to be presented with this information in an interesting way, activities-based, within the classroom from an early age, with qualified, experienced teachers.³³⁵

An advantage of having teachers delivering career development is their experience in developing curriculum and knowing how students learn best. Ms Kerry Moloney, who has worked as a teacher in government schools for 34 years and as the career practitioner at her current school for the past four years, stated:

I sympathise with Principals in government schools who have so much to cover with so little resourcing and funding. I am a supporter of the careers practitioner being a teacher as this brings many extra skills to the role, on top of the extra qualifications that all careers practitioners should have, however this costs the school budget extra compared to employing an ES staff member. A teacher in the careers role brings the advantage of experience in curriculum writing and delivery and also means they can easily arrange and supervise excursions for students.³³⁶

The Committee believes that at least one career practitioner at each school should be a registered teacher to ensure that schools deliver a range of career development services including classroom teaching and excursions. The other benefits of having a teacher in the role of career practitioner is their experience in curriculum development and delivery and the greater bargaining power they have to introduce career development in the school curriculum.

At the same time, the Committee acknowledges the budgetary pressures schools face and does not expect all career practitioner roles in schools to be held by registered teachers. However, to recognise the qualifications and professionalism of the role, a school that also employs a qualified career practitioner who is not a registered teacher should remunerate them based on their qualifications and experience.

333 Mr Colin Axup, *Transcript of evidence*, 40.

334 Name withheld, *Submission 5*, 2.

335 Ms Vicki Bawden, *Transcript of evidence*, 28.

336 Ms Kerry Moloney, *Submission 32*, 3.

Recognising the profession and remunerating qualified school career practitioners accordingly will signify the priority schools and the Government place on the role and attract better quality candidates, which will ultimately improve the delivery of career development services.

RECOMMENDATION 22: That the Department of Education and Training ensure that at least one career practitioner at each school is a registered teacher.

3.3.3 School career practitioners need support to keep up to date

The quality of services provided by school career practitioners depends on the currency of their knowledge and skills. As industries transform, new jobs and courses are created and course admission requirements change, career development becomes more complex. Career practitioners need to be aware of current job trends and prospects, know how to access information on available opportunities and navigate the systems of work of study.³³⁷ In recognition of this need, registration as a professional career development practitioner with CICA requires the completion of 25 hours of continuing professional development each year.

School career practitioners noted that they find it challenging to stay up to date with available job, education and training opportunities.³³⁸ The main barrier was a lack of time to undertake professional development and deal with changes to admission requirements and course changes. As explained by Academy of Mary Immaculate:

Time is also needed to read and process all of the correspondence that comes into the office and to keep up to date which changes in the tertiary sector. The number of changes, and/or proposed changes, in the last year alone has been astronomical and if the careers practitioner does not keep up to date with them, the impact can be catastrophic for the student. One example of this is the late introduction of CASPer Testing for potential education students. Put simply, if a career practitioner does not keep up to date, they may provide the incorrect advice to students and this could impact on their choices after school and the potential for litigation as a result.³³⁹

Aitken College agreed that time for career practitioners to network and complete professional development was essential:

Staying up to date with course and career information is challenging but of utmost importance. Careers practitioners must have time to access opportunities for professional development and networking. To meet the above challenges, careers practitioners must be proactive learners, access professional development and be active in local careers networks.³⁴⁰

³³⁷ North-West Careers Group, *Submission 35*, 3; Mr Tony Sheahan, *Submission 73*, 2; Dr Jessie Mitchell, *Transcript of evidence*, 14.

³³⁸ Mrs Tracy Marr, Assistant Principal, Transitions and Pathways, Mildura Senior College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 42.

³³⁹ Academy of Mary Immaculate, *Submission 10*, 7.

³⁴⁰ Aitken College, *Submission 70*, 7.

Students are aware that career practitioners struggle to keep up to date.³⁴¹ For example, Ms Emily Turnbull, a university graduate who went to school in the Mallee, stated:

our career adviser, as much as she was lovely and trying hard, I think keeping up to date with career advice in this day and age is quite complicated as the job market we know is quite complicated, and I think she was probably just a little bit out of touch with that.³⁴²

Higher education providers and industry groups have also found that school career practitioners are not across all the study and work opportunities available to their students. For example:

At a recent Careers Practitioner Seminar run by Holmesglen, the focus of the day was on trades. The attending career advisors were astounded by the options available to their students. For example, in plumbing they were unaware of the specialisations within the trade for both their male and female students. The same was identified in furniture making. They were equally unaware of the skills gaps in areas such as digital printing. It also enabled them to discuss with our staff the options for students to undertake VET programs for their students as part of their VCE studies and therefore explore options other than university post year 12.³⁴³

Ms Emma King, Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Council of Social Service, the peak body of the social and community sector in Victoria, added that in conversations she has had with school career practitioners, they were not aware of the range and increased demand for jobs in the health and social assistance sectors.³⁴⁴

In addition to not having enough time to keep their knowledge up to date, some school career practitioners were not satisfied with the professional development and information provided by higher education providers. For example, career practitioners told the Australian Education Union that there are not enough professional development activities that focus on 'Labour Market information, future jobs and job outlooks'.³⁴⁵ They said most of their professional development is delivered by universities, which are 'promoting their own courses without the context of what is happening in the job market'.³⁴⁶ School career practitioners were also concerned that universities release information about admission requirements too close to when Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre applications are due leaving them little time to provide their students with up-to-date information.³⁴⁷

³⁴¹ Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, *Inquiry into career advice in Victorian schools*, online survey.

³⁴² Ms Emily Turnbull, University graduate, Country Education Partnership, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 37.

³⁴³ Holmesglen Institute, *Submission 57*, 3.

³⁴⁴ Ms Emma King, Chief Executive Officer, Victorian Council of Social Service, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 45.

³⁴⁵ Australian Education Union, Victorian Branch, *Submission 79*, 7.

³⁴⁶ *ibid.*

³⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 9.

FINDING 15: It is essential for school career practitioners to keep up to date with education, training and employment opportunities so they can provide the best service to their students.

FINDING 16: Many school career practitioners struggle to find the time to attend professional development courses, meetings and events.

To enable school career practitioners to attend professional development, information sessions, network meetings and seminars, they need support from school leadership and release from their duties.³⁴⁸ Due to the necessity of keeping up to date with work and study opportunities, the Committee recommends that school career practitioners are released from their duties to attend professional development courses or events for at least two days each year in addition to the professional practice days they already are entitled to.

Several stakeholders also called for compulsory professional development for school career practitioners.³⁴⁹ The Committee's recommendation for all school career practitioners to hold professional registration with CICA will ensure that they have to complete 25 hours of professional development annually. The Committee also recognises that a wider range of professional development courses and activities is required so that school career practitioners are not receiving most of their professional development from higher education providers.

RECOMMENDATION 23: That the Department of Education and Training support schools to release career practitioners to attend professional development courses or events for at least two days each year in addition to existing professional practice days and student-free days.

RECOMMENDATION 24: That the Department of Education and Training support the Career Education Association of Victoria to develop and run professional development activities that focus on labour market trends and emerging industries.

3.4 Schools should provide students with more workplace exposure

Witnesses at public hearings for the Inquiry highlighted the importance of exposing students to the workplace. Ms Vicki Bawden from the Northern Melbourne and South East VET Clusters summed it up when she said:

Ultimately the best careers advice comes from doing: from the student's participation in work experience, school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, and structured workplace learning within VET courses. The life experiences from these are crucial in teaching them about the world of work and allowing them to trial possible career pathways.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁸ North-West Careers Group, *Submission 35*, 5; Eltham College, *Submission 39*, 2; Aitken College, *Submission 70*, 3, 8; Dandenong High School, *Submission 71*, 2.

³⁴⁹ For example, Mr Allan Moyle, National Vice President, Career Development Association of Australia, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 18; Eltham College, *Submission 39*, 2.

³⁵⁰ Ms Vicki Bawden, *Transcript of evidence*, 23.

Ms Keelie Hamilton, Director of Student and Industry Engagement at The Gordon, added that workplace exposure is what students want; it engages them and starts meaningful conversations. She stated:

the Victorian Careers Curriculum Framework is actually boring, and that is the feedback that we get—it is a paper-based boring framework basically ... It is not experience based. It is not getting that hands-on learning. It is not saying to a kid, ‘Here’s a pair of scissors, have a go at cutting the hair over here’ and ‘Here’s a brick and whack it down and make a brick wall with that’. It is not actually showing you that that brick might not just be bricks and mortar that you do anymore; it might be technology that you might bring into that. It might be automated bricklaying. It is not showing the full scope of things for our students; it is literally, ‘Here’s a paper plan. Let’s talk about your career and what you want to do’. How do you have a meaningful conversation, particularly with a young person, about what they want to do when they do not know what is out there to be done?³⁵¹

This section discusses the benefits of workplace exposure for students, the barriers schools face to provide it and how to increase opportunities for students to gain a greater understanding of work in different industries. It then considers the work experience program offered by secondary schools and how it could be improved to ensure all students are able to participate.

3.4.1 Students benefit from exposure to a range of workplaces

There is strong evidence to show that school career development works best when it has an experiential component that enables students to familiarise themselves with work through workplace visits, work experience and/or VET.³⁵² Workplace exposure helps students:

- gain a realistic understanding of work, which improves their career decision making
- build networks that could connect them to other opportunities
- link classroom learning to employment, increasing their motivation and engagement at school.³⁵³

Respondents to the Committee’s online survey echoed the benefits of workplace exposure. For example, a school career practitioner responded:

Work Experience: a brief experience of adult employment. Game changer for many. Broadens perspectives, inspires or sometimes alarms or horrifies.³⁵⁴

³⁵¹ Ms Keelie Hamilton, Director, Student and Industry Engagement, The Gordon, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 13.

³⁵² Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australia, *Rationale and options for National Career Development Strategy*, 21; Gatsby Charitable Foundation, *Good career guidance* (2014), 24, 26; Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy, University of Melbourne, *Career development: defining and measuring quality*, 18.

³⁵³ Victorian Local Learning and Employment Networks, *Submission 21*, 6.

³⁵⁴ Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, *Inquiry into career advice in Victorian schools*, online survey.

Responses from students and recent school leavers included:

‘From my experience (even for university) the only way to understand industries is from direct interaction with companies and the industry, these points [work experience and employer presentations] did expose me to them.’

‘They [work experience and mock interviews] helped me understand what job I would want in the future and how to present myself properly towards a potential employer.’

‘Work experience allowed me to gain a sense of—not only the career path I would enjoy pursuing, but also—the ‘real’ word.’

‘They [work experience and excursions to higher education providers] were useful due to them helping me realise and experience the true environment of a certain career and definitely [sic] influenced my decision on whether a certain career was something I wanted to take on in the future.’

‘Far more hands on, most of the time. They [work experience and excursions to higher education providers] also allow us to experience the profession, rather than just being told about it.’³⁵⁵

The 2011 study on career development for the Australian Government found that young people:

want [secondary] schools to provide: more practical hands-on work experience; more direct contact with universities, TAFEs and employers; and more detailed and specific information on the range of jobs and pathways available to them.³⁵⁶

While schools recognise the value of workplace exposure, creating such opportunities for students faces barriers such as legal and other compliance requirements, loss of funding for VET, and obtaining support from teaching staff to release students to attend activities.³⁵⁷ Other hurdles include finding employers who are willing to take on students and putting together memorandums of understanding with VET providers.³⁵⁸

FINDING 17: Workplace exposure is an important component of career development that helps students understand the reality of work, make career choices, build networks and link classroom learning to employment.

Schools can set up a range of activities to give students workplace exposure

Many stakeholders recommended that schools provide students with more opportunities for work experience.³⁵⁹ For example, in their submission, youth organisations Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service suggested:

³⁵⁵ *ibid.*

³⁵⁶ Urbis, *National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) research project element 2: synthesis report*, 30.

³⁵⁷ Career Education Association of Victoria, *Submission 26*, 8.

³⁵⁸ Ms Judy O'Donohue, Director/Career Practitioner/Consultant, Career Me Now, *Submission 23*, 2.

³⁵⁹ For example, Notre Dame College, *Submission 3*, 8; Name withheld, *Submission 5*, 3; The Gordon, *Submission 30*, 3; Mr Peter Devilee, Managing Director, Devilee's Air Conditioning & Refrigeration, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 20.

Provide students with a wide range of work experience and “tasters” that enable them to build skills and networks and find out more about the day-to-day activities of particular jobs, the roles and career structures that exist in different industries, and the kinds of qualifications needed to get there. These experiences could include bringing employers and other experts into school spaces to engage with students, as well as facilitating students to explore different places of work.³⁶⁰

Mission Australia, a charity that provides community services to disadvantaged families, children and young people, noted that work experience and tasters help students to better understand the demands of a job before they make a financial commitment to study a course for an occupation they may or may not want to pursue.³⁶¹

Some LLENs, VET providers and industry groups run ‘try a trade’ programs that give young people the opportunity to try a number of trades over a day and talk to apprentices, trainers, local employers and industry representatives.³⁶² The target audience is usually students in Year 9 or 10. At some events, representatives from the Australian Defence Force, Victoria Police and local universities also attend.³⁶³

Mr Peter Devilee, Managing Director of Devilee’s Air Conditioning & Refrigeration in Mildura, advocated industry visits for Year 10 and 11 students:

We need to give the kids the opportunity to get out and see what is out there a little bit earlier—I mean, we do not do enough—big options like industry visits out to employers, out to places like Olam [an agribusiness]. I know of the few times when it does happen, the eyes open on the kids and they just go, ‘Oh, my God’. They see things that they just have not imagined were even there. There are definitely kids that intend to go to university, and we absolutely need that, but then there are a massive group of kids that have no idea what they want to do ... these kids during this Year 10, or Year 11 particularly, need to get out and see what is available and what is out there.³⁶⁴

Young people also found presentations from industry representatives helpful.³⁶⁵ For example, Ms Bethany Simpson, a graduate of Mildura Senior College, said:

I always loved it when we had representatives from industry come in and speak to us, so in subjects like accounting and legal studies quite often, perhaps once or twice a term. They were different people that were actually working in a field. So we had a chance to ask them questions—what it was like—and, yes, probably the most useful thing to me was finding out about the job and asking someone that is in it. So that was one of the best things that I got out of it.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁰ Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Submission 29*, 27.

³⁶¹ Mission Australia, *Submission 68*, 6.

³⁶² *ibid*; Name withheld, *Submission 5*, 3.

³⁶³ City of Casey, *SE careers expo and Try a Trade*, <<https://www.casey.vic.gov.au/business/employment-training/try-a-trade>> viewed 26 June 2018.

³⁶⁴ Mr Peter Devilee, *Transcript of evidence*, 20–21.

³⁶⁵ Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, *Inquiry into career advice in Victorian schools*, online survey.

³⁶⁶ Ms Bethany Simpson, 2017 graduate, Mildura Senior College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 45.

Stakeholders also offered other ways to expose students to work settings such as:

- industry immersion days where students can gain exposure to current work practices and emerging technologies in fields such as medical technology, agriculture, construction, transport and renewable energy
- VET taster days where students can choose from a range of trades or disciplines and spend half or one day gaining hands-on experience and learning about the relevant VET pathways
- career expos where young people can meet with industry groups and education and training providers
- industry tours and workplace visits
- ‘speed-dating’ sessions where students can have short one-to-one discussions with employees from various roles within an industry or across a range of industries.³⁶⁷

Ms Jan Owen, Chief Executive Officer of the Foundation for Young Australians, a non-profit organisation focused on improving the learning outcomes and life opportunities of young Australians, presented the Committee with a novel take on a career expo organised by a young woman in regional Victoria that was very successful:

She was 16 and from the local high school—a big high school, 1200 students—and what she did was she created a day where she invited every single employer to open their doors for students to come and visit them and talk to them about what they did. That entire day the high street was open. Students went in small groups—this was across Years 9, 10 and 11—to go and visit employers. They were all open, they had coffee and buns and God knows what else, and they had conversations. A whole range of young people, like 30 per cent of young people, got part-time jobs out of that day, and that was because they went and visited and had this face-to-face meeting. That was a tiny program, by the way, that cost \$200. A career expo costs thousands of dollars. If we repurpose that kind of spend into that kind of model that this young woman ... set up across Victoria, it would be super interesting.³⁶⁸

The Committee was informed about the work of the Beacon Foundation, which is a non-profit organisation that helps young people make career decisions through community involvement. It has fostered partnerships between 2650 businesses and 147 schools to provide career development activities to 15 750 young people across Australia. The vast majority of participants from Beacon schools (over 90%) report having more skills and confidence, and a greater understanding of available jobs, employer expectations and how to enter the workforce.³⁶⁹

Mr Graeme Forrester, Executive Principal of Chaffey Secondary College, was involved with the Beacon program in Castlemaine, which ran a careers speed

³⁶⁷ Box Hill Institute Group, *Submission 20*, 6; Victorian Council of Social Service, *Submission 54*, 22; Department of Education and Training, Victoria, *Submission 88*, 5; Ms Vicki Bawden, *Transcript of evidence*, 26; Ms Tracy Marr, Assistant Principal, Mildura Secondary College, supplementary evidence, response to questions on notice received 20 April 2018, 2.

³⁶⁸ Ms Jan Owen, *Transcript of evidence*, 16.

³⁶⁹ Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, 41.

dating event involving 200 businesses as one of its activities. He found the program lifted student aspirations and increased student awareness of available job opportunities.³⁷⁰

These events are directed at students in Years 9, 10 and 11; however, in some jurisdictions students are given regular exposure to workplaces from Year 7. For example, in Finland, Grade 7 students spend three days at their parents' workplace or at a business from the school's local database and one day with people who work at the school such as cooks, cleaners or maintenance staff. In Grade 8, students undertake five days of work experience at a local business or in the public sector, which they organise themselves following lessons from the school. The number of work experience days increases to nine in Grade 9, and in senior years, students can choose to undertake work experience for credit towards their studies.³⁷¹

While most immersion and taster days centre around VET, they could be expanded to other industries and occupations.³⁷² Not all Victorian schools provide students with the opportunity to attend a taster or immersion day or a career expo. These events can help students to gain a deeper understanding of work in a particular field, which can help them decide if they wish to pursue a career in this area. In 2018, DET announced that it would run a program of industry immersion experiences for Year 7–10 students in rural, regional and disadvantaged metropolitan schools.³⁷³ The Committee commends this but believes that students at all schools should have greater access to these events.

The Committee recommends that all schools offer their Year 7–10 students the opportunity to attend at least two of these events each year. Students can choose to attend these events based on their interests. The secondary school career development coordinator recommended for each LLEN can help schools to locate these opportunities and organise student attendance. DET and DEDJTR should work together to encourage industry groups, professional associations and public sector organisations to participate in these events.

FINDING 18: Schools can adopt a range of measures to expose students to work including taster and immersion days, workplace visits, career expos and career 'speed dating'.

RECOMMENDATION 25: That the Department of Education and Training require schools to offer at least two taster or immersion days per year to Years 7–10 students.

RECOMMENDATION 26: That the Victorian Government encourage industry groups, professional associations and public sector organisations to participate in taster or immersion programs or offer workplace visits to secondary students.

³⁷⁰ Mr Graeme Forrester, Executive Principal, Chaffey Secondary College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 28.

³⁷¹ Gatsby Charitable Foundation, *Good career guidance: appendices 1–5*, 14–15.

³⁷² Name withheld, *Submission 5*, 3.

³⁷³ Department of Education and Training, Victoria, *Transforming career education in Victorian government schools: connecting today's learning with tomorrow's jobs*, 6.

Links are needed between schools and employers and industry groups

Links between schools and employers and industry groups need to be strengthened to increase the number of opportunities available to students to gain exposure to the workplace.³⁷⁴ Through its survey of employers, the Ai Group, a peak association representing the interests of businesses across a range of industries, found that only 18% of employers had links with secondary schools. Of these, the relationship was most commonly the provision of work experience (35%) and work placements (33%) and only 19% reported that the relationship was established and long term.³⁷⁵

Stakeholders informed the Committee that engagement between schools and industry is not very common and is largely dependent on the individual school career practitioner. For example, VACC stated:

While, in some schools concerted efforts are made to engage industry and other professionals to help inform students on different industry career paths, in other schools this is poorly achieved. In most cases the energy and capability around industry engagement, and the coordination of subject experts to discuss specific industry careers with students, comes down to an individual in a school who is highly motivated and dedicated to the career aspirations of students.³⁷⁶

Others noted that school career practitioners would like to form stronger links with industry but they do not have the time and resources to do so.³⁷⁷

Mr Muller from VACC stated that schools need to cluster and attend career days to help industry groups to reach out to students because ‘industry cannot get around to everywhere’.³⁷⁸ Other stakeholders suggested that an external coordinator could facilitate relationships between schools and employers.³⁷⁹ A coordinator would be able to take over this role from individual school career practitioners and would give employers more control over how they choose to present their business and when. The employment of a secondary school career development coordinator at each LLEN, as recommended in Section 3.2.3, could facilitate links between schools, employers and industry groups.

FINDING 19: Many school career practitioners lack the time and resources to form relationships with employers and industry groups. Employers would welcome external coordination of links between school clusters, businesses and industry groups.

As discussed in Section 3.3.3, school career practitioners struggle to keep up to date with emerging industries and the changes in work practices occurring in other industries. Without this knowledge they are unable to impart this information to students to help them make informed decisions. One way to get this information to students is the creation of online videos that provide

³⁷⁴ Year13, *Submission 1*, 4.

³⁷⁵ Ai Group, *Submission 50*, 18.

³⁷⁶ Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce, *Submission 14*, 3.

³⁷⁷ Ms Tracey Jeffery, *Transcript of evidence*, 12; Associate Professor Andrew Harvey, *Transcript of evidence*, 63; Ms Jerri Nelson, *Transcript of evidence*, 48; Ms Anne Trickey, Executive Officer, Campaspe Cohuna Local Learning and Employment Network, *Submission 64*, 1.

³⁷⁸ Mr Nigel Muller, *Transcript of evidence*, 5.

³⁷⁹ Victorian Council of Social Service, *Submission 54*, 22; G21–Geelong Region Alliance, *Submission 34*, 2.

a snapshot of work in these industries. DET and DEDJTR should work with industries to create and publish these videos online and via social media for young people to access.

RECOMMENDATION 27: That the Victorian Government work with industries to create online industry snapshot videos presenting typical workdays and relevant career pathways for a range of jobs within an industry.

Mentors and previous students can also increase students' understanding of work

Several stakeholders noted the benefit students get from hearing about the experiences of past students.³⁸⁰ Exposure to these experiences can inspire students and help them make informed choices. Ms Bell told the Committee about one of VASSP's projects that links students with alumni from their school:

Each year past students come back to the school and speak and impart their knowledge about the world of work. But that is not the norm for students in every school. This project is running this year as a pilot with eight schools, and so far over 1400 students have had sessions with younger and older alumni from their schools. There are even alumni who are aged in their 70s who actually come back and talk about work, but obviously much younger people as well. That has been incredibly well received by those schools.³⁸¹

Mr Sebastian McNabb, a Year 11 student from Red Cliffs Secondary College, also suggested that it would be useful to hear from former students about how they found their work experience placement:

I think the kids that are going in Year 10 to do work experience, some of them do not really have a great idea of what they want to do. I think having a system where you can talk to kids that have done it the year before about what they thought about it and what they have done would probably be more beneficial to the kids going through so they are not wasting a week on something they are not going to look at ever again.³⁸²

Mentoring programs run by The Smith Family, Salvation Army and Rural Youth Ambassadors were also identified as useful for providing students with career support, advice and guidance.³⁸³ Mentor programs are covered in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

FINDING 20: Hearing from former students about their study and work trajectories inspires young people and helps them make more informed career decisions.

RECOMMENDATION 28: That the Department of Education and Training encourage secondary schools to invite guest speakers and former students to meet with current students to discuss the education and employment path they took.

³⁸⁰ For example, Name withheld, *Submission 5*, 3; Balwyn High School, *Submission 7*, 2; Ms Gail McHardy, *Transcript of evidence*, 3; Mr Lionel Parrott, *Submission 19*, 9.

³⁸¹ Ms Sue Bell, *Transcript of evidence*, 39.

³⁸² Mr Sebastian McNabb, Year 11 student, Red Cliffs Secondary College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 34.

³⁸³ Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, 20–21; Ms Rose Vallance, University student, Country Education Partnership, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 44.

Students need more information on emerging industries and labour market trends

In addition to being exposed to workplaces, students need up-to-date information about the labour market so they can make more informed decisions about study and careers. As explained by Ms Megan O’Connell, Director of the Mitchell Institute, a Victoria University think tank on education and training:

it is an absolute challenge for the career space between what young people want to do and what is seen as the right and prestigious, to some degree, thing to do, and where the economy says the jobs are as well, and how we start to have those discussions with young people. Because to a degree you do want young people to be able to pursue whatever they want to pursue in life, but then if you end up training five times the amount of people you need in that job, is that a fair thing to be not telling young people about as they go along?³⁸⁴

Victoria’s LLENs agreed that the lack of labour market information provided to students has created a skills mismatch where students are not gaining qualifications in emerging industries and areas of high worker demand.³⁸⁵ As mentioned in Chapter 2, finding full-time work is getting harder and taking longer for young people in recent years compared with ten years ago.

A 2017 review of career development for adults for the Australian Department of Education and Training found that career information nationwide usually consists of outdated descriptions of occupations and labour market conditions.³⁸⁶ Up-to-date labour market information gives young people a more accurate picture of what awaits them after school or higher education. The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, which is responsible for the education of students at Victorian Catholic schools, recommended that LLENs disseminate information on labour market trends as an independent body.³⁸⁷

The Committee agrees that LLENs are well placed to synthesise and present this information to students and tailor it to opportunities in their region. LLENs should present local labour market information on the online portal recommended in Section 3.2.2 in an accessible way for students and parents to grasp easily. School career practitioners could assist students to find and interpret the information during classes.

FINDING 21: Young people and their parents are not receiving enough information about labour market trends and emerging industries to inform students’ career choices.

RECOMMENDATION 29: That Local Learning and Employment Networks publish labour market data for their region on the Victorian Government’s online portal for young people and parents to access.

³⁸⁴ Ms Megan O’Connell, *Transcript of evidence*, 28.

³⁸⁵ Victorian Local Learning and Employment Networks, *Submission 21*, 8.

³⁸⁶ Department of Education and Training, Australia, *Career and skills pathways: research into a whole-of-system approach to enhancing lifelong career support mechanisms for all Australians: final report*, report prepared by PriceWaterhouseCoopers (2017), 5.

³⁸⁷ Catholic Education Commission of Victoria, *Submission 78*, 8.

3.4.2 All students should undertake work experience

Work experience is a one or two-week placement of students, usually in Year 9 or 10, with an employer. Students largely observe different aspects of work and may assist their supervisor with simple tasks. Through work experience, students gain an insight into the industry and workplace, develop employability skills and see whether they are interested in pursuing a career in that field.³⁸⁸

Industry groups recognise the value of work experience as much as young people. For example, Mr Muller from VACC believes:

work experience is paramount to engagement, especially to make sure the individual actually knows what they are getting themselves into. They might love cars but hate working in a workshop.³⁸⁹

Ms Jonty Low, Project Manager at the Tourism and Hospitality Careers Council who represented Restaurant & Catering Australia, agreed, saying:

I think work experience is wonderful. In our sector I would say a hotel environment would be ideal because you can go from the laundry to the kitchen to the front desk. You can get exposure to all sorts of jobs in the one building with the one work experience. So yes, we are very keen on work experience.³⁹⁰

While there is general consensus that work experience is valuable, not all students get the opportunity to participate in it. This section outlines the reasons why some students are missing out and then suggests ways to increase the uptake of work experience.

Not all students get the chance to participate in work experience

According to the Boundless Foundation, which connects students from outer-suburban and regional schools with work experience opportunities, fewer than one in two Victorian students (46%) can access work experience during secondary school.³⁹¹ Students from outer-suburban and regional schools are the least likely to find work experience.³⁹²

The lack of access to work experience for some students was echoed in submissions.³⁹³ In some schools, work experience is not offered to students and in other schools, it is optional. For example:

³⁸⁸ Department of Education and Training, Victoria, *Work experience manual for Victorian secondary schools* (2017), 7.

³⁸⁹ Mr Nigel Muller, *Transcript of evidence*, 9.

³⁹⁰ Ms Jonty Low, Project Manager, Tourism and Hospitality Careers Council, Restaurant & Catering Australia, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 9.

³⁹¹ Boundless Foundation, *Expanding students' horizons through challenging work experience* (2014), <<http://www.boundless.org.au>> viewed 27 June 2018.

³⁹² Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Foundation, *Submission 90*, 5.

³⁹³ For example, Name withheld, *Submission 5*, 2; Mr Bruce Connor, *Submission 37*, 4; Eltham College, *Submission 39*, 1; Moreland Darebin Careers Network, *Submission 44*, 2.

The time involved in organising Work Experience is significant and therefore not often undertake[n]. At present Geelong Grammar School offers Work Experience to Year 10 and 11 students but due to time constraints is not compulsory.³⁹⁴

The reasons given as to why some schools do not offer students work experience include burdensome paperwork, legal and other compliance requirements and the difficulty finding placements. These issues are discussed below.

The administrative burden and legal requirements around work experience can be prohibitive

There are several legal and other compliance requirements that must be met before a student can undertake work experience with an employer. These include:

- the employer obtaining a Child Employment Permit if the student is under 15
- the supervisor obtaining a Working with Children Check if the student is under 15
- the student, employer, parent/guardian and principal completing and signing the one paper Work Experience Arrangement Form before the placement begins.³⁹⁵

The employer must provide certified copies of the Child Employment Permit and the Working with Children Check (if needed) to the principal before the placement can be approved.³⁹⁶ While recognising the need for meeting Victoria's Child Safe Standards, several stakeholders noted that the legal requirements have an impact on employers' willingness to take on work experience students.³⁹⁷

School career practitioners also find the administrative process involved with work experience overwhelming due to the amount of paperwork, data entry and photocopying required.³⁹⁸ Coordinating the work experience program is also very time consuming, as explained by Ms Anne Trickey from Campaspe Cohuna LLEN:

School career advisers must coordinate the work experience program, help students find host employers, ensure the workplaces are suitable, complete all paperwork and follow up with employers. There is little time to do this comprehensively, and certainly little time to help any vulnerable or at risk students who need additional support to have a positive experience.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁴ Geelong Grammar School, *Submission 56*, 4.

³⁹⁵ Department of Education and Training, Victoria, *Work experience manual for Victorian secondary schools*, 10–11.

³⁹⁶ *ibid*, 11.

³⁹⁷ Doncaster Secondary College, *Submission 31*, 2; Hallam Senior College, *Submission 12*, 1; Australian Education Union, Victorian Branch, *Submission 79*, 12; Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee, *Inquiry into career advice in Victorian schools*, online survey; Mr Peter Roberts, *Transcript of evidence*, 37; Mr Peter Devilee, *Transcript of evidence*, 17; Ms Gail McHardy, *Transcript of evidence*, 6.

³⁹⁸ Hallam Senior College, *Submission 12*, 1; Ms Kerry Moloney, *Submission 32*, 1; Moreland Darebin Careers Network, *Submission 44*, 11; Australian Education Union, Victorian Branch, *Submission 79*, 12.

³⁹⁹ Ms Anne Trickey, Executive Officer, Campaspe Cohuna Local Learning and Employment Network, *Submission 64*, 1.

FINDING 22: The administrative processes and legal requirements involved with work experience are burdensome and some schools have decided not to offer work experience or to make it optional for students.

Finding employers willing to take on work experience students can be difficult

In addition to the legal requirements, employers also struggle with the limitations placed on what students can do on work experience due to the potential risks.⁴⁰⁰ For example, Mr Devilee stated:

Students can virtually now only observe the work taking place. These students are getting less of a taste for work, and the employer cannot see how the student may perform. Many employers either break the rules, letting the students participate, or do not bother at all.⁴⁰¹

Another difficulty school career practitioners face is finding work experience placements for the number of students they are responsible for.⁴⁰² For example, one career practitioner told the Australian Education Union:

Finding work experience for my Year 10s can be a challenge as there are only so many businesses willing and able to take on students and we have approx. 10 secondary schools all trying to offer work experience. Often employers will say that they have had several students over the weeks and need a break!⁴⁰³

Mr Thompson from the CEAV added:

because many of the tertiary and VET-level courses, post-school courses, have increasing amounts of industry-based learning many industries, many employers, have tended to say, 'Well, we don't take as many secondary-age school students anymore because we have a commitment to industry-based learning' ...⁴⁰⁴

The Committee recognises the need for employers and schools to comply with the Child Safe Standards but understands that these compliance measures can dissuade employers from taking on work experience students. This creates a greater burden on employers who do offer work experience as they will experience greater demand for placement opportunities. DET and DEDJTR should consider ways of encouraging more employers to participate in work experience. They should also create a scheme that recognises the contribution of participating employers, such as a certificate or other badge or symbol, which employers could use as a marketing tool to promote their business in the local community.

FINDING 23: Employers recognise the value of work experience but the legal and other compliance requirements dissuade some of them from participating.

400 Mr Ron Broadhead, *Transcript of evidence*, 15.

401 Mr Peter Devilee, *Transcript of evidence*, 17.

402 Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals, *Submission 22*, 4.

403 Australian Education Union, Victorian Branch, *Submission 79*, 12.

404 Mr Frank Thompson, *Transcript of evidence*, 20.

RECOMMENDATION 30: That the Victorian Government create a recognition scheme for businesses that take on work experience students, which businesses could use to promote themselves in the community.

RECOMMENDATION 31: That the Victorian Government investigate how to encourage more employers to take on work experience students.

An online portal for work experience could streamline the process

Some stakeholders asked the Committee to find a way to streamline the work experience process so that it is easier for schools and employers. For example, Mr Allan Moyle, National Vice-President of the Career Development Association of Australia said employers: 'are not set up for it, and they need assistance in terms of developing their forms and processes and that sort of stuff.'⁴⁰⁵ Ms Gail McHardy, Executive Officer of Parents Victoria, which represents parents of students in Victorian government schools, added:

I would say there is a little bit of a missing link in a sense about how that explanation goes, about why we have to fill in these forms and why we have to do this. That, to me, is very off-putting to business because they do not have the time and to schools because they are left the job to facilitate it. So again I think there are other opportunities for other external parties to help to be a bridge for those people. Why should it be all the school's responsibility? Why should it be all the business's responsibility? I am sure there are other ways, a holistic approach that governments could look at—different ways—in communities and networking about how we could do that all together.⁴⁰⁶

Students were also keen for a process that would improve communication between schools and employers. Mr McNabb from Red Cliffs Secondary College suggested:

if the companies that are willing to take work experience students are aware of when the work experience period is for that school, they can send their inquiries: 'We are happy to take students for work experience' instead of having the kids putting effort into their application and getting turned down because they are not going to take anyone. It would probably be more beneficial for kids' confidence as well to go and ask at the next place.⁴⁰⁷

The Victorian Government has an online portal for Structured Workplace Learning (SWL), which is a one- to four-week work placement students complete when undertaking a VET course as part of their Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) or Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). Students and teachers can use the SWL portal to find SWL placements, which are sourced and advertised by LLENs and searchable by interest and location.⁴⁰⁸ When asked whether a portal could be developed for work experience, Ms Katy Haire, Deputy Secretary of Early Childhood and School Education at DET, responded:

⁴⁰⁵ Mr Allan Moyle, *Transcript of evidence*, 20.

⁴⁰⁶ Ms Gail McHardy, *Transcript of evidence*, 6.

⁴⁰⁷ Mr Sebastian McNabb, *Transcript of evidence*, 38.

⁴⁰⁸ Department of Education and Training, Victoria, *Submission 88*, 4.

we have set up over the last two years an online portal for Structured Workplace Learning opportunities, and so far the feedback has been that that has worked very effectively. So we do think that that is a good model to use. We do not currently have a portal for work experience ... But our experience of the [SWL] portal is that it has worked very well.⁴⁰⁹

School career practitioners agree that an online portal would be helpful to streamline the work experience process. Some had attempted to create their own, such as Ms Wrate from Chaffey Secondary College:

we have attempted at times to come up with something similar to that [SWL] portal that employers come to, where they put their interests and how many positions they can have in a work experience across the year, that students and schools can log into to look at that interest.⁴¹⁰

The Moreland Darebin Careers Network suggested the creation of an online portal where the student, parent/guardian and employer could each fill in their relevant fields and supply the relevant documentation. A staff member at the school could then print one form for principals to sign their approval of the work experience arrangement.⁴¹¹

The Committee sees the value in such a portal, especially if employers are able to fill in their details and supply the relevant documentation once and the fields could be automatically populated for each student working with that employer. This would eliminate the administrative burden employers face and encourage more of them to participate in the program. Therefore, the Committee recommends that DET establish an online portal for work experience, similar to the SWL portal, that enables students and teachers to search for placements and to streamline the administrative processes for all parties.

RECOMMENDATION 32: That the Department of Education and Training develop an online portal for work experience to help students find placements and ease the administrative burden for schools and employers.

3.5 Vocational education and training needs better promotion and support

Students can complete VET courses in Years 10, 11 and 12 as part of their VCE or VCAL. Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) deliver and assess these VET courses, which can contribute to:

- VCE at the Units 1 and 2 or Units 3 and 4 level as well as the Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR)
- VCAL by satisfying the requirements for the Industry Specific Skills or Work Related Skills strands.⁴¹²

⁴⁰⁹ Ms Katy Haire, *Transcript of evidence*, 31.

⁴¹⁰ Ms Sara Wrate, Chaffey Secondary College, *Transcript of evidence*, 27.

⁴¹¹ Moreland Darebin Careers Network, *Submission 44*, 11.

⁴¹² Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, *An overview of VET in the VCE and VCAL*, brochure (2017), 1.

The RTOs can be a TAFE, adult and community education provider, group training company, private provider or school. VET within schools is known as Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS). School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SbATs) are a pathway within VETiS that enable a student to undertake an apprenticeship while enrolled in either VCE or VCAL.

In 2017, there were 50 504 Victorian secondary students participating in VET and 3031 of them were undertaking a SbAT.⁴¹³ Data from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), the national body responsible for research and statistics on the Australian VET sector, show that between 2015 and 2016, the number of Victorian students enrolled in VETiS fell by 1.0% and the number enrolled in a SbAT fell by 7.7%.⁴¹⁴

Nationally, the number of young people aged 15–19 enrolled in a government-funded VET course fell from 203 600 to 193 400 over the last two years.⁴¹⁵ The Mitchell Institute finds the declining participation of young people in VET concerning because Australian Government projections suggest that about 443 000 of the almost 950 000 new jobs created between 2018 and 2022 will require a VET qualification.⁴¹⁶ This section considers why students are shying away from VETiS and suggests ways to encourage more participation in VET. It then discusses how the Victorian Government could better support VETiS.

3.5.1 The community has a poor perception of vocational education and training

According to a 2017 national survey of over 2000 young people aged 15–21 by Year13, Australia's largest online resource for high-school leavers, 74% of respondents would not consider doing an apprenticeship or traineeship.⁴¹⁷ Mission Australia's 2017 Youth Survey also found that 77.3% of young people aged 15–19 planned to go to university after school, 7.7% intended to go to TAFE or college and 5.8% had plans to do an apprenticeship.⁴¹⁸ Two-thirds of respondents to the Year 13 survey did not consider apprenticeships to be equal to university degrees, and most of the stigma around VET appeared to be influenced by the views of young people's parents and teachers.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹³ Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, *Senior secondary certificate statistical information 2017, Section 4: vocational education and training delivered to secondary students* (2018), 2.

⁴¹⁴ National Centre for Vocational Education Research, *VET in Schools: data slicer* (2017), <<https://www.ncver.edu.au/data/data/all-data/vet-in-schools-2016-data-slicer>> viewed 28 June 2018.

⁴¹⁵ Mitchell Institute, *Submission 67*, 1.

⁴¹⁶ *ibid.*, 2.

⁴¹⁷ Year13 and YouthSense, *After the ATAR: understanding how Gen Z transition into further education and employment* (2017), 33.

⁴¹⁸ Mission Australia, *Submission 68*, 2.

⁴¹⁹ Year13 and YouthSense, *After the ATAR: understanding how Gen Z transition into further education and employment*, 33.

Schools, parents and students often consider VET the fall-back option

Many stakeholders informed the Committee that schools, parents and students consider VET to have a lower status than university.⁴²⁰ A study by NCVET found that the negative perception of VET exists even among primary school students and can strengthen during the later years of secondary school.⁴²¹ Although many students are interested in VET-related jobs, there is less interest in VET pathways suggesting a misalignment between students' study and work aspirations.⁴²² Research indicates that the lack of clarity is due to outdated perceptions of VET.⁴²³

School career practitioners noted that parents have a poor understanding of VET programs and their potential. For example, Ms Clisby-Weir from the Sunraysia Careers Network stated:

our parents do not necessarily understand VET programs and what they actually mean—that they are just as important as the pure academic program—and we also have challenges with parents understanding what the VCAL program actually means, how it is different to VCE and how it is just as important as VCE for some students.⁴²⁴

However, Mrs Julia Lewis, VET Coordinator at St Joseph's College Mildura, acknowledged that parents' perceptions are slowly changing as they realise that there are more pathways other than university.⁴²⁵

Other stakeholders mentioned the perception among the community that VET is for students who lack academic ability.⁴²⁶ Despite many trades requiring high-grade technology skills—for example, automotive technicians now need to be highly skilled in mechanical diagnostics—the perception is difficult to change and can create a negative self-perception among students.⁴²⁷

The 2017 review of career development for the Australian Department of Education and Training noted the importance of eliminating the misconception that VET has poorer employment and income outcomes than university. It highlighted that within six months of completing their qualification, VET graduates have a higher rate of employment and higher median income than Bachelor's degree graduates. It added that VET qualifications are required for nine out of ten occupations predicted to be the fastest growing in the next five years.⁴²⁸

420 For example, Mr Peter Devilee, *Transcript of evidence*, 17; Mr Justin Mullaly, *Transcript of evidence*, 54.

421 National Centre for Vocational Education Research, *Choosing VET: aspirations, intentions and choice*, report prepared by Jo Hargreaves and Kristen Osborne (2017), 2.

422 *ibid*; Ms Vicki Bawden, *Transcript of evidence*, 22.

423 National Centre for Vocational Education Research, *Submission 36*, 3.

424 Ms Nicole Clisby-Weir, Sunraysia Careers Network, *Transcript of evidence*, 2.

425 Mrs Julia Lewis, College VET Coordinator, St Joseph's College Mildura, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 54.

426 Doncaster Secondary College, *Submission 31*, 2; Box Hill Institute Group, *Submission 20*, 3; Mr Phil Loveder, Manager, Stakeholder Engagement, National Centre for Vocational Education Research, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 30; National Centre for Vocational Education Research, *Choosing VET: aspirations, intentions and choice*, 5.

427 Box Hill Institute Group, *Submission 20*, 3; Doncaster Secondary College, *Submission 31*, 2; Victorian Council of Social Service, *Submission 54*, 8.

428 Department of Education and Training, Australia, *Career and skills pathways: research into a whole-of-system approach to enhancing lifelong career support mechanisms for all Australians: final report*, 35.

TAFE Directors Australia, the peak national body representing publicly owned TAFE institutes and university TAFE divisions, asserted that students who may be better suited to VET are being directed to university because parents and teachers make pathway comparisons based on inaccurate information and school career practitioners ‘have limited knowledge of and experience with VET and TAFE’.⁴²⁹ It recommended that data on starting salaries, student debt, and short and long-term career pathways be presented to young people so they could better compare VET and university outcomes.⁴³⁰

The Committee is also concerned about the poor perception of VET in the community and recommends that the Victorian Government develop an education campaign to correct the misconceptions surrounding VET and promote the opportunities it can offer young people.

FINDING 24: Many schools, parents and students have an unwarranted poor perception of vocational education and training and consider it inferior to university study.

RECOMMENDATION 33: That the Department of Education and Training develop a program to educate students, teachers, school career practitioners and parents about the labour market opportunities and potential career trajectories available through vocational education and training.

Another way of dispelling the misconceptions surrounding VET is exposing students to VET earlier in their schooling.⁴³¹ This could include presentations from successful VET graduates, TAFE visits and industry immersion days.⁴³² Exposure should begin well before Year 10 because students may have formed strong negative views about VET by their senior years minimising their options.⁴³³ It also gives students the chance to decide whether they want to pursue a VET qualification prior to selecting subjects for their senior years.⁴³⁴

The focus on ATAR and university entry narrows students’ options

When asked if school career practitioners should place less emphasis on ATAR and university and focus on students’ passions, Mr Thompson from the CEAV responded:

I would argue that most careers teachers are doing exactly what you are suggesting they should be doing, but of course they are working within an atmosphere where the ATAR is the thing that is not only promoted by the school but by media, by everybody, so they do have to battle against that.⁴³⁵

⁴²⁹ TAFE Directors Australia, *Submission 28*, 5.

⁴³⁰ *ibid*, 6.

⁴³¹ Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Submission 29*, 26.

⁴³² Mr Frank Thompson, *Transcript of evidence*, 23; Mr Justin Mullaly, *Transcript of evidence*, 54.

⁴³³ Mr Phil Loveder, *Transcript of evidence*, 22.

⁴³⁴ Mr Justin Mullaly, *Transcript of evidence*, 56.

⁴³⁵ Mr Frank Thompson, *Transcript of evidence*, 23.

Other stakeholders agreed that teachers, the education system and the wider community are too focused on the ATAR and university entry rather than aiming for students to take the pathway that best suits them.⁴³⁶ Business owner, Mr Devilee, argued:

Whilst it varies from region to region, approximately 50 per cent will go to university, which is fantastic, but from where I sit I estimate that probably 80 per cent of effort, resources and time is being spent getting that 50 per cent of students to university. For some students I am convinced that better and earlier career advice and a greater focus on the value of vocational education and training would set them on a more suitable pathway one or two years earlier, resulting in their education better matching their needs and wants and their being better prepared for work.⁴³⁷

A common reason provided for schools placing too much emphasis on ATARs and university entry was principals' desire for students to achieve high ATARs in order to boost the image of the school.⁴³⁸ As explained by Ms Trickey from Campaspe Cohuna LLEN:

The media focus on ATAR and VCE results, and first round offers, as measures of success and achievement. Schools cannot avoid this and the general public see the media reports and gauge schools by the results.⁴³⁹

Ms Bell from VASSP added:

It is very difficult, though, because as a parent who is not involved in education, how do you judge a school? And if you do not know the educational lingo, you do not understand education in primary schools and secondary schools, you judge it on facilities, you judge on the outward-looking things. Once you get to that tertiary level, you tend to judge it on the score that is in the newspapers, which is your ATAR. So it is about changing perceptions in our society.⁴⁴⁰

She also noted that the importance placed on ATARs varies between government and non-government schools.⁴⁴¹ Mr Shepherd from TwoPointZero gave his son's school as an example:

My own son went through the private education system. He now works as a bricklayer in the construction industry. But his school was being measured by parents who were saying, 'We're spending a lot of money to send them here; we want to see them go to universities'. It is important it is not just a message that comes through the schools but also that we educate parents as well within that.⁴⁴²

436 Mr Peter Devilee, *Transcript of evidence*, 17.

437 *ibid.*

438 Northern Melbourne VET Cluster and South East VET Cluster, *Submission 55*, 2; Holmesglen Institute, *Submission 57*, 2; Australian Education Union, Victorian Branch, *Submission 79*, 8; Ms Vicki Bawden, *Transcript of evidence*, 23; Professor James Bright, *Transcript of evidence*, 67; Mr Colin Axup, *Transcript of evidence*, 44; Ms Keelie Hamilton, *Transcript of evidence*, 16.

439 Ms Anne Trickey, Executive Officer, Campaspe Cohuna Local Learning and Employment Network, *Submission 64*, 1.

440 Ms Sue Bell, *Transcript of evidence*, 44.

441 *ibid.*

442 Mr Steve Shepherd, *Transcript of evidence*, 5.

Students also recognise that the emphasis placed on university entry stems from the influence of the media and family perceptions. For example, Ms Gange from Red Cliffs Secondary College stated:

There is a lot of emphasis put on uni and going to uni as the traditional path in schools. That is not just schools perpetuating it, that is parents and relatives and the media as well. I think there is way too much emphasis on uni as the only pathway ...⁴⁴³

Professor Bright warned of the danger in placing too much importance on ATAR scores such as people dismissing suitable courses with low ATAR admission scores because they are considered less intellectually demanding. He said:

People believe this stuff, and that has all kinds of implications in terms of what people enrol in, and they often do not see beyond that. You hear people worrying about wasting an ATAR by doing something as 'lowly as teaching' when they could be doing psychology or something else. It creates a whole bunch of completely erroneous problems for students and for teachers and also for schools, and it has impacts on subject selection.⁴⁴⁴

TAFE Directors Australia also warned that university study does not guarantee good employment outcomes for young people:

A university degree should not be seen as a panacea for young people. The current demand-driven funding model for universities risks supply of higher education graduates outweighing the jobs in the economy needing those levels of skills and knowledge. Like with any market, higher supply means decreasing value ... According to a recent report by the Skilling Australians Foundation, VET (and TAFE) graduate outcomes are comparable if not better than for graduates of university programmes.⁴⁴⁵

Several stakeholders suggested that the way school success is measured should change so that less weight is placed on ATAR achievement. For example, Ms Trickey said:

there are so many other measures of learning success and achievement that can be publicised and celebrated. This would also be more in keeping with the world of work where success isn't a score, but an outcome or output.⁴⁴⁶

And Mr Shepherd argued:

from a government perspective we do need to look at how we measure the effectiveness of career outcomes for these students, not just what ATAR they got and how many of them got into university—because what that is doing is actually pushing a lot of people into university who probably should never be going there with fairly low ATAR scores—but helping to find the right path for them. There are still plenty of trades opportunities as well. There are different pathways. For me that is a key measure, and I think if principals were being measured on an outcome there we would start to see different actuals.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴³ Ms Dallas Gange, *Transcript of evidence*, 33.

⁴⁴⁴ Professor James Bright, *Transcript of evidence*, 67.

⁴⁴⁵ TAFE Directors Australia, *Submission 28*, 5–6.

⁴⁴⁶ Ms Anne Trickey, Executive Officer, Campaspe Cohuna Local Learning and Employment Network, *Submission 64*, 1.

⁴⁴⁷ Mr Steve Shepherd, *Transcript of evidence*, 5.

Retired career practitioner, Mr Lionel Parrott noted that schools concentrate on academic success when publicising their achievements and rarely mention the destinations of students who do not continue on to higher education.⁴⁴⁸ Mr Axup shared that his school presents students' results differently so as not to focus on ATAR:

So, for example, when I talk about the success of a year at Suzanne Cory High School I talk about it in terms of the percentage of students who get their first, second or third university course preference, which is ATAR-neutral, because a student might desperately want to do a particular course that needs—I am going to say 'only'—only an ATAR of 85 ... So it is about the education. It is about the message we send as schools as much as anything else.⁴⁴⁹

The Committee agrees that the media's publication of ATARs and first-round university offers distorts the community's view of the value of VET and university. The Government should consider different ways of publishing destination data so that the community places less emphasis on how many students enter university as a measure of a school's success.

FINDING 25: The emphasis the media and community place on Australian Tertiary Admission Ranks and first-round university offers lets down young people by not recognising the merit of vocational education and training and possibly directing students to unsuitable pathways.

RECOMMENDATION 34: That the Department of Education and Training consider how destination data is presented so that schools are not primarily judged by the proportion of their students entering university.

3.5.2 More support is needed for VET in Schools

Several stakeholders mentioned that the capacity of schools to incorporate VETiS programs is limited by running costs, the hurdles of establishing a memorandum of understanding with RTOs and the availability of teachers.⁴⁵⁰ Haileybury College and Haileybury Girls College added that students who want to pursue a VETiS course:

are often faced with barriers beyond the perception of educational value. The enrolment process for vocational courses is lengthy and labyrinthine, a confusing process that presents an obstacle for prospective students to overcome. Simplifying and streamlining the process would make the vocational sector more accessible.⁴⁵¹

Students also incur extra costs when participating in VET courses, which can be an additional disincentive.⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁸ Mr Lionel Parrott, *Submission 19*, 9.

⁴⁴⁹ Mr Colin Axup, *Transcript of evidence*, 44.

⁴⁵⁰ Ms Judy O'Donohue, Director/Career Practitioner/Consultant, Career Me Now, *Submission 23*, 2; Doncaster Secondary College, *Submission 31*, 2; South Gippsland Bass Coast Local Learning and Employment Network, *Submission 40*, 2; Ms Vicki Bawden, *Transcript of evidence*, 30.

⁴⁵¹ Haileybury College and Haileybury Girls College, *Submission 74*, 4.

⁴⁵² Ms Vicki Bawden, *Transcript of evidence*, 23.

In the Sunraysia district, school career practitioners are faced with the challenge of finding enough teachers to run VETiS courses. For example, Ms Clisby-Weir stated:

there is a shortage of VET teachers, which makes it quite difficult for staffing, which can have an effect on the programs that are offered. Within this district it actually does limit, at times, student options and also their subject selections.⁴⁵³

Timetabling VETiS is another issue that creates a challenge for employers who would prefer consecutive workplace learning days rather than splitting up workplace learning over the week to fit in with the VCE timetable.⁴⁵⁴ Ms Hamilton from The Gordon also noted the difficulty schools face to timetable VETiS and SbATs around VCAL and VCE requirements.⁴⁵⁵

VETiS is expensive for schools

While schools recognise the value of VETiS, Mr Axup noted that some of them limit VETiS programs because they are too expensive to run:

The pressure on schools around VET is ... [the] expense. It is expensive, and schools bear that cost, so you have to be prepared to do that. But I think most schools just do it because we know it is the right thing to do, because you have to provide options.⁴⁵⁶

Schools have created VET clusters to increase access to VET for their students. A VET cluster is a group of schools participating in VET that share facilities and staff expertise. Clusters enable viable class sizes because they increase the number of students studying a particular VET program. VET students from one school may attend another school within the cluster for their training. VET clusters provide significant support to school career practitioners but they do not receive government support and are largely funded by member schools.⁴⁵⁷

Some stakeholders also raised the withdrawal of government funding for VCAL coordinators in schools as a reason for declining VETiS participation.⁴⁵⁸ VCAL coordinators supported students and teachers delivering VCAL and also fostered relationships between schools and businesses, industry groups and other training providers.⁴⁵⁹

Industry groups also called for greater government investment in VET.⁴⁶⁰ The 2018–19 Victorian Budget allocated funds to VET including:

- \$172 million over four years to provide free TAFE training for 30 priority courses in areas such as infrastructure, family violence, aged care and disability support and 18 apprenticeship courses

453 Ms Nicole Clisby-Weir, Sunraysia Careers Network, *Transcript of evidence*, 2.

454 Mr Peter Devilee, *Transcript of evidence*, 17.

455 Ms Keelie Hamilton, *Transcript of evidence*, 15.

456 Mr Colin Axup, *Transcript of evidence*, 44.

457 Northern Melbourne VET Cluster and South East VET Cluster, *Submission 55*, 3.

458 For example, Australian Education Union, Victorian Branch, *Submission 79*, 9; Ms Vicki Bawden, *Transcript of evidence*, 23.

459 Mr Justin Mullaly, *Transcript of evidence*, 54.

460 Ms Jonty Low, *Transcript of evidence*, 3.

- \$25.9 million over four years to improve the quality of VETiS and increase access to VETiS programs
- \$50 million for 1700 new Head Start Apprenticeships and Traineeships at 100 Victorian government secondary schools that will give students the option of doing an extra year at school and graduating as a fully qualified apprentice or trainee.⁴⁶¹

Despite welcoming these announcements, some VET stakeholders were concerned that making 30 TAFE courses free would encourage secondary students to leave school and enrol at TAFE instead where they would not incur extra costs.⁴⁶² An exodus of students from VETiS would make the programs unviable and leave trade training centres in schools empty adversely affecting schools that have invested in staff, training, equipment and facilities. It would also have an impact on school enrolments and potentially Year 12 retention rates.⁴⁶³

The Committee acknowledges that making 30 TAFE courses free could encourage secondary students interested in VET to leave school, affecting schools that have made a significant investment in VETiS. The Victorian Government should subsidise equivalent VETiS courses to prevent these students from leaving school to enrol in TAFE.

FINDING 26: The Victorian Government's decision to provide free TAFE training for 30 priority courses could encourage students to leave school and enrol in TAFE instead, which would have an adverse effect on schools that have made a significant investment in vocational education and training.

RECOMMENDATION 35: That the Department of Education and Training subsidise VETiS courses that correspond to the 30 priority TAFE courses it plans to make free in order to keep students who are interested in vocational education and training enrolled at their school.

⁴⁶¹ Department of Education and Training, Victoria, *State budget highlights 2018/19* (2018), <<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/educationstate/Pages/budget.aspx#link54>> viewed 28 June 2018.

⁴⁶² For example, Ms Vicki Bawden, *Transcript of evidence*, 30.

⁴⁶³ Northern Melbourne VET Cluster and South East VET Cluster, supplementary evidence received 4 May 2018, 1.

4 Addressing the career development needs of regional students

Young people in regional Victoria face similar issues with their career development as their counterparts in Melbourne but they have added challenges including less access to services and opportunities due to their location and the need to relocate for study or work. It is not only physical distance that creates fewer work, education and career development opportunities for these young people but also the smaller local economies and populations in regional areas. Less exposure to a wide range of occupations and industries can also limit the aspirations of regional students and influence their career choices. This chapter considers the additional career development needs of young people in regional Victoria and how they can be better met.

4.1 Isolation from services and opportunities disadvantages regional students

The most noticeable barrier that regional students face in terms of career development is their distance from education and employment opportunities in Melbourne and large urban centres. Transport to and from home to access these opportunities can be time consuming, costly and sometimes difficult to come across. Regional school career practitioners also face similar issues when trying to participate in professional development. This section considers how distance affects the career development of regional students, how the need to relocate can influence students' decisions and how location affects school career practitioners' work.

4.1.1 Regional students often miss out on opportunities due to distance

Stakeholders informed the Committee that regional students, particularly those in more remote areas, often miss out on career development opportunities because of the difficulty and cost of organising transport and accommodation to attend events away from home. For example, Eltham College stated:

We are a city fringe school so do have students from rural areas. Transport is a big issue and also funding for accommodation at University as they often choose the closest institution! They are less likely to attend Open Days farther afield, which limits their knowledge and the basis of their decision making.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶⁴ Eltham College, *Submission 39*, 2.

Several schools and students in rural Victoria raised the difficulty of attending university open days. As explained by Kaniva College, located in the Wimmera region of Victoria:

With extremely limited public transport options students need to be able to go with parents who may not have the time or resources to get them there. Accommodation would also be required in most circumstances due to distances involved for our students, this can make the difference of a student going to an open day or not.⁴⁶⁵

Mr Joe Collins, a university student who went to secondary school in the Mallee region, added:

Where I am from in Sea Lake it is 4 hours to Melbourne, and it is further the other way if you want to go to Adelaide to see what is there. It is extremely hard to get to open days and things like that, especially when they are all in a bunch of weekends in that August time of year. If you are committed to sports in your local towns, it is just impossible to get away and see the universities. Most universities you might be interested in are all on the same days anyway. So you might be interested in looking at Deakin in Geelong, but on the same day Melbourne University's open day is here in Melbourne.⁴⁶⁶

In addition to the difficulty of attending open days, the low likelihood of higher education providers attending schools to give presentations was also noted. Ms Linda Snoxall, VET Coordinator at Mildura Senior College, said:

one of the challenges that we do have being in a remote location is that we get limited buy-in from universities or other training providers ... we have got our local ones but we do not get a lot of information from the likes of Melbourne University, Swinburne, RMIT ... I guess if we were located in Melbourne, you can go and attend expos and the different universities and training providers have open days. There are lots of different things we could also be taking students to, and I guess that is a challenge for us—that is, to take students down there is a very expensive exercise. We do have tertiary trips to both Melbourne and Adelaide ... but that again is not always open to us.⁴⁶⁷

Even when trips to metropolitan universities are offered, they are not always useful. As explained by Ms Alice Whitford, a Year 12 student from Myrtleford:

In Myrtleford we have not had anyone [higher education providers] come to us. Although we are an hour away from Albury, which has two or three universities, they have never visited us. They do not make the effort. For a school camp we came to Melbourne in Year 11, and we did visit two unis, but it was not helpful at all. It was just like, 'This is where you go to sleep'. It was not anything about the courses or anything; it was just the physical features of the university.⁴⁶⁸

465 Kaniva College, *Submission 63*, 5.

466 Mr Joe Collins, University student, Country Education Partnership, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 37.

467 Ms Linda Snoxall, VET Coordinator, Mildura Senior College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 46–47.

468 Ms Alice Whitford, Year 12 student, Country Education Partnership, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 37.

Issues with transportation and accommodation are significant barriers

Many stakeholders recognised that transport access was a significant barrier for regional students to access education and career development services.⁴⁶⁹ The availability of public transport in some regional areas can be limited and some young people may not have many private transport options.⁴⁷⁰ In addition, the cost of transport in terms of money and time can be prohibitive for some young people. For example, Mr Nathan Grigg, a university student from St Arnaud, stated:

The school would provide transport to open days if you could convince enough of your friends to pay the \$30 for the bus. You would have to get the numbers before you could go to an open day with the school, which rarely happened. I think I went to one open day with the school because no-one wanted to go. No-one had an idea of what uni was. I would rather stay at home and go to footy training later than go to a place that I have never been to. Travelling is really difficult ... It is 3 hours there and 3 hours back. That is a 6-hour day just in driving, and then you have got to come back the next week, the next week and the next week just to get an understanding of all the universities because you cannot just go and check one—or none. It does make it difficult for getting an understanding about what you are going to do with the rest of your career ...⁴⁷¹

The Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals (VASSP), the professional association for principals, assistant principals and leading teachers in government secondary schools, noted that transportation difficulties also influence the career guidance regional students receive:

The distance that young people in rural areas may need to travel to continue on to tertiary education and the availability of transport is seen as a significant barrier. It will clearly have an impact on the advice that is given to young people in rural areas about their pathways and options and/or on how young people and their families might receive advice about the necessity to pursue tertiary education in order to get the best possible employment outcome.⁴⁷²

Regional schools also find transportation costs for excursions to higher education providers or industry visits expensive.⁴⁷³ As Ms Melyssa Fuqua, who taught at a rural Victorian P–12 school for 10 years, where she was the Pathways Coordinator and managed the school’s career development services, stated:

There are a number of career expos that happen in Melbourne across the year. Again, if it is a 5-hour drive in, it is an overnight if you are going to take students, and it costs I think about \$1500 to rent a bus to put students on. That is quite ... significant.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁶⁹ For example, Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals, *Submission 22*, 6; Career Education Association of Victoria, *Submission 26*, 10; Australian Catholic University, *Submission 41*, 9; Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, *Submission 61*, 5.

⁴⁷⁰ Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, *Submission 61*, 5.

⁴⁷¹ Mr Nathan Grigg, University student, Country Education Partnership, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 38–39.

⁴⁷² Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals, *Submission 22*, 6.

⁴⁷³ Baw Baw Latrobe Local Learning and Employment Network, *Submission 75*, 2; Ms Nicole Clisby-Weir, Vice President, Sunraysia Careers Network, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 6.

⁴⁷⁴ Ms Melyssa Fuqua, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 12.

Year 10 and 11 students from several schools in Mildura also highlighted the impact of finding accommodation on their ability to take up opportunities away from home. For example, Mr Campbell Griffiths, a Year 10 student at Chaffey Secondary College, said:

I think for kids who want to go and do something in Melbourne or away it is really hard to arrange, because you have got to arrange accommodation and how to get there and how to come back and all that.⁴⁷⁵

Travel and accommodation expenses were also an issue for Ms Dallas Gange, a Year 11 student at Red Cliffs Secondary College, who had to turn down a work experience placement in Melbourne:

There was a program running in Melbourne where students could sign up to get a chance to do work experience at an information technology festival thing. I had my heart set on it. I really wanted to apply to this gaming firm. They were going to run a week of work experience in a gaming firm. I was like, 'That sounds amazing', but I could not do it, because just paying for a plane ticket would have been \$137 out of my pocket. I would have had to find a place for accommodation where I would have been either staying with people who I would be a hassle for ... or staying by myself with no way to get anywhere, because I am hopeless with public transport systems—it is terrible to witness me trying to navigate buses. Not having access to go and do something that I was super keen on was a limitation for me. It is Mildura, so I have got this, this, this or this to choose between for work experience.⁴⁷⁶

However, Ms Gange was able to go on a regional exchange to John Monash Science School in Melbourne because her school offered a scholarship for camps and she also had access to money from the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF).⁴⁷⁷ The CSEF is a Victorian Government fund that provides students from low socioeconomic backgrounds payments to attend camps, excursions and swimming, sports and outdoor education programs. The money is allocated to each child but paid to the school, which subsidises the activities.

Several stakeholders called for the Victorian Government to provide financial support for regional students to attend career development events and activities.⁴⁷⁸ Since schools can only use the CSEF for excursions related to the curriculum, another funding source is required. The Committee recommends that a fund similar to the CSEF be established to assist regional students from low-income families to attend open days, career expos, university programs or undertake work experience outside their region. As with the CSEF, the money should be allocated to each child but paid to the school to cover the costs incurred.

⁴⁷⁵ Mr Campbell Griffiths, Year 10 student, Chaffey Secondary College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 38.

⁴⁷⁶ Ms Dallas Gange, Year 11 student, Red Cliffs Secondary College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 38.

⁴⁷⁷ *ibid*, 33.

⁴⁷⁸ For example, Eltham College, *Submission 39*, 1; Kaniva College, *Submission 63*, 5; Ms Amanda Boulton, Pathways Coordinator, Red Cliffs Secondary College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 30; Ms Tracy Marr, Assistant Principal, Mildura Secondary College, supplementary evidence, response to questions on notice received 20 April 2018, 1.

FINDING 27: Students in regional Victoria have less access to career development opportunities because of their location. The cost and availability of transport and accommodation can be a barrier to attending events and activities away from home.

RECOMMENDATION 36: That the Department of Education and Training establish a career development fund for regional students from low-income families to cover the costs of attending career development events or activities outside their region.

4.1.2 The disruption and cost of relocation can limit regional students' choices

To take advantage of some higher education and employment opportunities, regional Victorian students may need to relocate to Melbourne or another urban centre. The decision to remain in their hometown or relocate is often a difficult one for economic reasons as well as emotional ones as young people will have to leave their support networks and move to an unfamiliar environment.⁴⁷⁹

There are significant tuition, travel and accommodation expenses for students who need to relocate to access higher education, which can be challenging for students and their families.⁴⁸⁰ As explained by Ms Kathryn Champness, the Careers Adviser at Kaniva College:

Every student that I have counselled over the past six years has found the financial transition to university stressful for both them and their parents. Even with knowledge of government support, many need to take gap years to earn extra income and gain part-time employment at university to offset the costs to parents.⁴⁸¹

Some regional young people told the Committee they would not have relocated to Melbourne for university without a scholarship. For example, Ms Turnbull stated:

when I finished Year 12 we had had two years of drought and unless I got a scholarship I was not going to university, because I could not put that on my parents, as farmers, to pay for my accommodation and that. There are a lot of other factors as well that helped me make the decision, and I think scholarships are definitely one of them as well.⁴⁸²

Mr Xavier Healy, a university student originally from Ouyen, added that he would not have been able to attend The University of Melbourne without scholarships or financial assistance. He noted he was lucky he was aware that the university's financial assistance program existed because many regional students are unaware of these programs and do not apply.⁴⁸³

⁴⁷⁹ Career Education Association of Victoria, *Submission 26*, 9; Kaniva College, *Submission 63*, 6.

⁴⁸⁰ Northern Melbourne VET Cluster and South East VET Cluster, *Submission 55*, 3; Kaniva College, *Submission 63*, 6; Ms Bethany Simpson, 2017 graduate, Mildura Senior College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 46.

⁴⁸¹ Kaniva College, *Submission 63*, 5.

⁴⁸² Ms Emily Turnbull, University graduate, Country Education Partnership, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 39.

⁴⁸³ Mr Xavier Healy, University student, Country Education Partnership, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 39.

Other young people take a gap year to save money for attending university away from home. The risk with taking a gap year is that students often choose not to return to study afterwards. Several regional school principals have told Mr Peter Roberts, Director of School Services at Independent Schools Victoria, the body representing independent schools in the state, of this issue. He said that regional students:

have certainly got the appropriate score or whatever to get into a tertiary institution but that would mean they would have to pack up and move to Melbourne or some other capital city. There is the cost of that at a personal level so they say, 'I'll take a year off. I'll save some money and then I'll go to Melbourne next year', and then they never do because they are enjoying their lifestyle in the country with their mates and all the rest of it. The principals have said to us there is then that lost opportunity in that community, where the person who might have gone off to Melbourne to become the lawyer or the accountant, the doctor, the specialist, the scientist or whatever ... and return to that regional area down the track at some stage is the opportunity that has been lost.⁴⁸⁴

Moving away from the familiarity of home can be a pivotal factor as to whether regional students relocate for higher education, apprenticeships or employment.⁴⁸⁵ For some young people, living in Melbourne can seem daunting, as Mr Grigg explained:

if you had asked me if I would stay on res [university residence] two years ago, I would have said no just because I had no idea how the trains, trams and all this worked. I would have gone to Bendigo and just gone to uni there ... For a rural student coming to a metropolitan place, it is very scary. You cannot get in contact with your family easily. You get a phone call maybe once a night if you are lucky. No-one knew what it was going to be like before they came down here.⁴⁸⁶

Relocation barriers can also sway school career practitioners to encourage regional students to stay within their community for work or study.⁴⁸⁷ However, this limits students who want to go to university, which was the experience of Ms Rose Vallance, a university student originally from Ouyen:

I think in a small town sometimes the emphasis is to stay, so sometimes that is why there are opportunities for TAFEs and those sorts of things. We went to the TAFE career expo in Mildura, but it was plastering, beauty—I cannot remember—tiling, whatever else was there. But we did not do a university tour or anything, so it was all well and good for the vocational stuff and for the hands-on trades, but we found for all the people who wanted to be uni students where we were the emphasis was not there; it was on staying. So managing that and then having to move out on your own is ... a slap in the face.⁴⁸⁸

484 Mr Peter Roberts, Director, School Services, Independent Schools Victoria, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 34–35.

485 Mr Joe Collins, *Transcript of evidence*, 38; Ms Nicole Clisby-Weir, Sunraysia Careers Network, *Transcript of evidence*, 4.

486 Mr Nathan Grigg, *Transcript of evidence*, 39.

487 Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Foundation, *Submission 90*, 2.

488 Ms Rose Vallance, University student, Country Education Partnership, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 38.

To better support regional students who need to relocate, Ms Felicity Wilmot, the Careers Advisor at Alexandra Secondary College, suggested providing better housing support options and:

networking opportunities to enable them to make the move away from their small town, to find suitable accommodation and new networks of friends. This holistic approach will furnish students with the confidence to expand their horizons in either education or employment.⁴⁸⁹

Some programs, such as the Rural Youth Ambassadors program, help young people in rural and remote Victoria to develop networks and the confidence to make relocation to other cities for higher education easier. Participants in this program have found it useful to visit a university attended by a program alumnus and get a feel for what it is like to study and stay at the university.⁴⁹⁰ Section 4.3.1 presents more information about the Rural Youth Ambassadors program.

Another option that Ms Nicole Clisby-Weir, Vice President of the Sunraysia Careers Network, which consists of representatives from local schools, higher education providers and training organisations, has suggested to some of her students is undertaking the first year of their degree at the local university campus before transferring to another campus. She said:

we are talking to some of them at the moment about maybe doing the first 12 months at a course at La Trobe, Mildura, seeing how they like it, being able to settle in and then looking at whether it is an option for them to either transfer to another La Trobe campus or to another university. I have Year 9 and 10 students that are already looking at that as an option. So providing that and understanding those difficulties for them in terms of the distance from home and accommodation costs, because it does get quite expensive for them, and the fact that they really need to become an adult as soon as they leave the district, and they are in classes with students that are still living at home, having their clothes washed for them and things like that. It does become a significant point for them.⁴⁹¹

FINDING 28: The expense and loss of support networks associated with relocation can discourage regional students from taking up higher education opportunities away from home and can have a significant impact on their career choices.

4.1.3 Career practitioners at regional schools struggle to access professional development opportunities

Geographic factors not only have an impact on young people in regional areas, but also on career practitioners in regional schools who find it difficult to access professional development to keep their knowledge up to date. Especially in towns near the Victorian border, school career practitioners need to be across the higher education, apprenticeship and employment options available in Victoria as well as in neighbouring states to provide quality services to their students.⁴⁹²

⁴⁸⁹ Ms Felicity Wilmot, *Submission 60*, 3.

⁴⁹⁰ Ms Alice Whitford, *Transcript of evidence*, 43.

⁴⁹¹ Ms Nicole Clisby-Weir, Sunraysia Careers Network, *Transcript of evidence*, 4.

⁴⁹² *ibid*; Mrs Tracy Marr, Assistant Principal, Transitions and Pathways, Mildura Senior College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 43.

A common concern among regional school career practitioners was the travel time and costs to undertake professional development in Melbourne or other regional centres.⁴⁹³ Career practitioners in more remote areas also have to factor in accommodation costs and teaching relief. As Ms Fuqua explained:

To come into the city to do a professional learning opportunity for myself, for example, it was a 5-hour drive one way, so that was going to be an overnight at least. So there is time away from my family and time away from my classes, which costs me money and costs my school money to replace me. It becomes a really big burden ... It is not that they [school career practitioners] do not want to help their students; it is that there is just not physically time to do all the things they need to do.⁴⁹⁴

Ms Fuqua found that the most practical way for her to undertake professional development was to attend meetings of the local career adviser network, which focus on local issues.⁴⁹⁵ At these networks, career practitioners from schools within the region meet monthly to keep up to date and discuss changes to university requirements, vocational education and training (VET) and work experience. The networks are an important source of support to regional career practitioners who are often the only person in the school with that role.⁴⁹⁶ However, attending network meetings also requires a time and travel commitment from school career practitioners who are already time poor.⁴⁹⁷

Ms Clisby-Weir agreed that meetings of the Sunraysia Careers Network are vital for the professional development of local school career practitioners, especially because they need to stay current with developments in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia. She also acknowledged that the success of these meetings relies on the schools, which provide release time and teaching relief for career practitioners to attend.⁴⁹⁸

Several stakeholders raised the need to support career practitioners in regional schools to attend professional development opportunities.⁴⁹⁹ The Committee agrees that career practitioners in regional schools should be supported to keep their knowledge current so they can provide the best service to their students. The Department of Education and Training should create a professional development fund to assist regional school career practitioners to access professional development outside of their region.

FINDING 29: Career practitioners in regional schools find it difficult to undertake professional development due to the required travel time and transport and accommodation costs.

⁴⁹³ Ms Nicole Clisby-Weir, Sunraysia Careers Network, *Transcript of evidence*, 3.

⁴⁹⁴ Ms Melyssa Fuqua, *Transcript of evidence*, 11.

⁴⁹⁵ Ms Melyssa Fuqua, *Submission 58*, 2.

⁴⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁹⁷ Ms Melyssa Fuqua, *Transcript of evidence*, 3; Ms Nicole Clisby-Weir, Sunraysia Careers Network, *Transcript of evidence*, 4.

⁴⁹⁸ Ms Nicole Clisby-Weir, Sunraysia Careers Network, *Transcript of evidence*, 4.

⁴⁹⁹ For example, Ms Nicole Clisby-Weir, Sunraysia Careers Network, *Transcript of evidence*, 4; Independent Schools Victoria, *Submission 62*, 3; Ms Tracy Marr, Assistant Principal, Mildura Secondary College, supplementary evidence, response to questions on notice received 20 April 2018, 1.

RECOMMENDATION 37: That the Department of Education and Training establish a professional development fund for regional school career practitioners to cover the costs of attending professional development courses and events outside their region.

Some regional school career practitioners also requested changes to how professional development is delivered to make it easier for them to access. For example, Ms Clisby-Weir noted that at particular times of the year school career practitioners are busy with pathways training, subject selection and work experience so professional development that requires an ongoing commitment can be difficult. She suggested providing professional development in short-block time periods.⁵⁰⁰

Ms Fuqua asked for more professional development courses and seminars to be delivered online:

Perhaps we could encourage more flexible delivery methods and more digital methods. Do we need to drive 5 hours into the city to watch someone deliver a PowerPoint when we could watch it through a videoconference link? That sort of thing. Having the infrastructure even for that and a schools system would be really helpful and encouraging the providers of these professional learning opportunities to make that an option—to Skype in.⁵⁰¹

The Committee agrees that professional development providers should be encouraged to provide more of their programs online and through videoconferencing to enable more regional school career practitioners to participate.

RECOMMENDATION 38: That the Department of Education and Training support the Career Education Association of Victoria to provide a greater range of professional development courses and seminars online to improve access in regional areas.

4.2 There are fewer work and education opportunities in regional areas

Compared with Melbourne, students in regional areas often have less exposure to different careers, workplaces and higher education courses and providers. This not only has an impact on the post-school opportunities regional students have access to but also limits the career development services schools can offer students. These factors can create a narrow vision of career options among regional students.⁵⁰² The following sections consider the impact that smaller local economies and fewer education options have on regional students' career choices and career development services at schools.

⁵⁰⁰ Ms Nicole Clisby-Weir, Sunraysia Careers Network, *Transcript of evidence*, 3.

⁵⁰¹ Ms Melyssa Fuqua, *Transcript of evidence*, 12.

⁵⁰² Career Education Association of Victoria, *Submission 26*, 9.

4.2.1 Smaller local economies in regional areas limit students' career exploration

Regional areas often have a small economic base that reduces the diversity of occupations present in the region. Research shows that students in regional areas can have a narrow understanding of the range of available career options especially if the local economy is based on one or two local industries.⁵⁰³

In addition to the limited range of occupations within regional areas, several stakeholders raised the issue of high unemployment rates in some regional areas, particularly for young people.⁵⁰⁴ High rates of unemployment can adversely affect students' confidence and career aspirations. In addition, shrinking local economies limit the number of work experience placements available for students and the number of local work and apprenticeship opportunities open to school leavers who do not wish to pursue tertiary education.⁵⁰⁵

School career practitioners in regional areas need to adapt their guidance to reflect the changing economies and demographics of their local area.⁵⁰⁶ For example, the Regional Skills Taskforce—Mallee Region, which was led by the Victorian Skills Commissioner and developed a regional skills demand profile for the Mallee, found that while population growth in the region is low, gross regional product and workforce demand is growing. This has created labour shortages, which could be filled by young people through the collaboration of industry, VET providers and school career practitioners.⁵⁰⁷

In addition, the future prosperity of regional areas depends on their ability to create job opportunities to attract and retain workers, which will have flow-on effects across the region's economy and community. The Regional Skills Taskforce—Mallee Region recommends that regions identify local job opportunities and skills gaps and work with VET providers to promote local careers.⁵⁰⁸

While there may be fewer work opportunities in regional areas, there is also evidence that people in regional areas are unaware of the opportunities available locally. For example, VASSP stated:

Principals in one regional area recently spoke about how there was a widely held perception that three key local industries were in decline and so opportunities for employment in those industries were diminishing. However, when they attended a forum held by the Victorian Skills Commission they were provided with information indicating that these industries were doing very well and there were plenty of

503 Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy, University of Melbourne, *Career development: defining and measuring quality*, report prepared by Suzanne Rice, et al. (2015), 21.

504 Notre Dame College, *Submission 3*, 8; Mission Australia, *Submission 68*, 8; Ai Group, *Submission 50*, 5.

505 Northern Melbourne VET Cluster and South East VET Cluster, *Submission 55*, 3; Ms Melyssa Fuqua, *Submission 58*, 2; Mission Australia, *Submission 68*, 8.

506 Ms Melyssa Fuqua, *Submission 58*, 2.

507 Victorian Skills Commissioner, *Regional skills demand profile: the Mallee* (2017), 4.

508 *ibid.*

employment opportunities available to young people. While this is only one example, it illustrates the importance of schools having access to accurate information in order to provide advice which meets the needs of young people.⁵⁰⁹

Regional school career practitioners also realise the importance of identifying local needs and opportunities and relaying these to students. Ms Sara Wrate, President of the Sunraysia Careers Network, noted:

I think there is a lot of unknowns in some of the industries. Students do not actually understand what industries are, so they do not explore those industries because they do not know them ... As a careers network we have really tried to strengthen that within our region by having industry as part of that careers network and looking for opportunities for where we can work with industry and have professional development for us, but there is still a greater opportunity there.⁵¹⁰

Mr Ron Broadhead, Executive Officer of the Northern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) added that their 'largest opportunity and challenge at the moment' is communicating to young people the job prospects available in their region and creating partnerships between employers, schools, students and parents to help realise these opportunities.⁵¹¹

In their submission, youth organisations Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service suggested regional communities link school career development with regional economic development plans and identify labour shortages and training opportunities.⁵¹² The recommendation in Chapter 3 to employ a secondary school career development coordinator at each LLEN to coordinate industry presentations and taster and immersion days will help school career practitioners highlight to students the opportunities available in local industries.

FINDING 30: Regional schools and industry are not relaying the diversity of local employment opportunities available to young people resulting in a lack of awareness of these opportunities among students, parents and the wider community.

RECOMMENDATION 39: That regional school career practitioners highlight the career opportunities available in local industries to students and their parents so they can make more informed career decisions.

⁵⁰⁹ Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals, *Submission 22*, 6.

⁵¹⁰ Ms Sara Wrate, President, Sunraysia Careers Network, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 5.

⁵¹¹ Mr Ron Broadhead, Executive Officer, Northern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 11.

⁵¹² Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Submission 29*, 29.

4.2.2 Education options and career development services are limited for regional students

In addition to a shortage of opportunities for career exploration, students in regional Victoria can be restricted in their choice of subjects in senior years due to small numbers of school enrolments. For example, Mr Broadhead explained that most of Mildura's schools offer up to Year 10 and then most students transition to Mildura Senior College, which offers Year 11 and 12. He said:

The reason that model was developed a number of years ago was to enable students to access the wide variety of VCE options that no one school—individual smaller school—could offer.⁵¹³

Even the junior secondary schools in Mildura have adapted their operations to provide students with more opportunities to undertake VET in Year 10. Ms Clisby-Weir, who is also the Pathways Coordinator at Trinity Lutheran College Mildura, stated:

Because of our small size and our small year level numbers we have had to investigate and implement alternate programs to provide our students with opportunities such as VET and VCE programs and provide pathways to employment. Currently approximately a quarter of our Year 10 cohort are undertaking an additional program on top of their standard Year 10 course. We looked fairly significantly at how we could provide the same opportunities for our small number of students as some of the larger schools. We have rethought our timetable. We now structure our timetable so that students that go out to do VET programs or VCE programs do not find it too difficult to do that. We have put in place that they lose electives within the school to be able to do Certificate II programs and VCE courses at Mildura Senior College, our trade training centres and also SuniTAFE [Sunraysia Institute of TAFE].⁵¹⁴

Students in regional Victoria also have less access to higher education courses and providers than students do in Melbourne, which may limit their post-school options.⁵¹⁵ As explained in the submission from Kaniva College:

Regional universities do provide opportunities, but they are limited in the types of courses and uni experiences when compared to the capital city options, and in many cases this is what students are looking for. Without regional universities having enough funding to support regional students and keep the smaller class number classes going, many students would miss out on this option also.⁵¹⁶

In some instances, regional TAFEs offer fewer course places because there are not enough local workplaces to provide student placements. For example, Sunraysia Institute of TAFE had 280 expressions of interest for its nursing course but only accepted 25 students because it could only secure 25 placements with local healthcare providers, a necessary component for course completion.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹³ Mr Ron Broadhead, *Transcript of evidence*, 10.

⁵¹⁴ Ms Nicole Clisby-Weir, Pathways Coordinator, Trinity Lutheran College Mildura, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 49.

⁵¹⁵ Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, report prepared by Gabrielle Brown and Eliza Kidd (2017), 35.

⁵¹⁶ Kaniva College, *Submission 63*, 5.

⁵¹⁷ Mr Robin Kuhne, General Manager, Education, Sunraysia Institute of TAFE, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 59.

The range of available career development services narrows in regional areas

Regional students and school career practitioners mentioned that they often miss out on career development events such as career expos, university open days or industry presentations because they are unavailable in their local area or there are too few opportunities to attend. For example, Mr Sam Rice, a Year 12 student from St Arnaud, stated that his school has only offered students the opportunity to attend a career expo once in eight years due to ‘not enough interest from the students, and the school is not willing to take us over there and take time off.’⁵¹⁸ Mr Grigg from St Arnaud added:

It was for everyone to go to but it was never encouraged. We were encouraged to stay at school. In the end I believe it was mainly VCAL students who went. Most other students were encouraged to stay in class. Even though it is only a 1-hour drive to Horsham for us, which is very short, being in the middle of nowhere, they still would rather bring a small car full of students than a bus.⁵¹⁹

Mr Grigg also stated that while his school offered an overnight visit to Federation University to Year 10 and 11 students, not all students were able to take up the opportunity:

All the Year 10s went, but only half of the Year 11s could go due to SACs [school-assessed coursework] and other work. You could go, but you were kind of pushing it, and in Year 11 it is a little bit late for open days at the end of the year—to be going to these types of open days and starting to get used to the res [university residence]. It was only Federation University, so you were not really getting the broad statement that you would get if you came to a place like Melbourne.⁵²⁰

Due to the smaller number of higher education providers and employers in regional towns, students often have to travel elsewhere to attend career development events. Sometimes regional school career practitioners have very short notice of upcoming career development events in Melbourne and large regional centres, which makes it difficult for regional students to take advantage of. For example, Mrs Julia Lewis, College VET Coordinator at St Joseph’s College Mildura, stated:

access to city-based enrichment opportunities, such as short courses, adult lectures held at universities or industry-driven presentations that we have no hope at all of attending, and that makes it really, really difficult. Probably even more important is the very short time frame that is allotted to these. We might get something in the mail today for a session for next Thursday. There is no way that we can even do it. You put it out there, and if the parents wish to, they can take their student to it, but it becomes really, really difficult.⁵²¹

⁵¹⁸ Mr Sam Rice, Year 12 student, Country Education Partnership, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 42.

⁵¹⁹ Mr Nathan Grigg, *Transcript of evidence*, 43.

⁵²⁰ *ibid*, 38.

⁵²¹ Mrs Julia Lewis, College VET Coordinator, St Joseph’s College Mildura, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 50.

FINDING 31: Due to smaller economies and populations in regional areas, young people have fewer education options and less access to career development events and opportunities.

Regional students, school career practitioners and parents often rely on the internet for career information. A 2011 study of the career development needs and wants of young people for the Australian Government observed that teachers and parents in regional areas find the information available online to be ‘fragmented and difficult to access’.⁵²² During the Inquiry, regional students also mentioned they would like more online career information and for it to be more streamlined.⁵²³ For example, Ms Gange stated:

it would be really, really helpful to have a website you can go to where there is a list of unis that can link you and pull you to their websites. Because on the uni websites, if you can get onto them and you know how to how to navigate them, you can look at the courses, the prerequisites and how to get there, but it is also having the time to talk person to person with someone to help you understand it. In Year 10 the first time I was looking at a uni website I had no idea what a prerequisite was. I was completely lost. I had to talk to people to help understand what the courses mean or what getting into a TAFE or La Trobe course could mean.⁵²⁴

Ms Gange also suggested a website that has the functionality to enable regional students to talk to someone in real time:

So yes, websites with links to uni websites, links to alternative options to uni—links to like a video section or a bunch of careers that you can do in regional areas that are really popular, or just being given information and having a portal to give information, to receive information and to understand the information that you are being given—if we could have sessions in real time over the internet and are able to talk to someone who is in the industry.⁵²⁵

The Committee’s recommendation in Chapter 3 to create a central online portal to provide students with information on employment, education and training opportunities addresses this issue. In addition, the recommendation in Chapter 3 to establish a secondary school career development coordinator at each LLEN who is contactable via telephone, email and online chat will provide individual assistance to students to understand the information available on the portal.

The 2011 study for the Australian Government also found that young people in regional areas need greater exposure to different careers and higher education opportunities to broaden their horizons.⁵²⁶ Professor James Bright, a Professorial Fellow in Career Education and Development at the Australian Catholic University, agreed that regional students:

⁵²² Urbis, *National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) research project element 2: synthesis report*, report for Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australia (2011), 4.

⁵²³ Ms Tamsin McLean, Year 10 student, Irymple Secondary College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 36; Ms Dallas Gange, *Transcript of evidence*, 35.

⁵²⁴ Ms Dallas Gange, *Transcript of evidence*, 35.

⁵²⁵ *ibid.*

⁵²⁶ Urbis, *National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) research project element 2: synthesis report*, 48.

are at something of a disadvantage in terms of their exposure to various career opportunities and maybe the culture of going on to higher or further education. I think we need increased funding at those schools to assist specifically in targeted initiatives around career education, including travel, to allow those students an opportunity to get a breadth of experience that their metropolitan counterparts perhaps take for granted or at least have more readily available to them.⁵²⁷

Kaniva College suggested providing regional students an option to attend university as a first-year student for a week during the school holidays:

where they are buddied and mentored with a uni student and also live free with their mentor or family (or at minimal cost) at a residence for that time. This would give them the insight they need in their decision making process around tertiary education and give their parents more solid evidence of their students' suitability for tertiary education.⁵²⁸

It also advised supporting and promoting regional universities to ensure their survival because they 'can be a strong pathway for rural students, keeping them in their communities and increasing educational diversity in rural environments.'⁵²⁹

The Regional Skills Taskforce—Mallee Region also recommended structured pre-employment programs and industry tasters to expose students to the range of careers available in their region. This could be in the form of a two-week program where students rotate between a cluster of industries to observe and learn about potential careers.⁵³⁰

Some regional schools are running similar programs to expose their students to career options. For example, Mildura Senior College runs 'ACT Now', a day where they showcase the apprenticeships, careers and trades on offer at the local trade training centres and apprenticeship centres.⁵³¹ The Sunraysia Careers Network also worked with Mildura Base Hospital to run 'nursing as a career day' where a set number of students from each local secondary school rotated through different hospital departments to observe and learn about typical work days and career pathways. Based on its success, the network developed a similar program, 'A day in the life of a social worker'.⁵³²

Regional schools should also expose their students to career opportunities outside of their local region to broaden their career exploration. For example, St Joseph's College Mildura runs a STEM day to promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics careers, which involves the participation of niche industries from Melbourne such as robotics.⁵³³

⁵²⁷ Professor James Bright, Professorial Fellow, Career Education & Development, Faculty of Education and Arts, Australian Catholic University, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 61.

⁵²⁸ Kaniva College, *Submission 63*, 6.

⁵²⁹ *ibid.*, 5.

⁵³⁰ Victorian Skills Commissioner, *Regional skills demand profile: the Mallee*, 16.

⁵³¹ Ms Linda Snoxall, *Transcript of evidence*, 47.

⁵³² Ms Debbie Bell, Careers Counsellor, St Joseph's College Mildura, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 50.

⁵³³ *ibid.*, 52.

Mildura Senior College suggested that the Victorian Government support regional schools to promote pathway opportunities by having a school staff member liaise with industry and the community to arrange industry visits, guest speakers and other career opportunities. The Committee's recommendation in Chapter 3 to employ a secondary school career development coordinator at each LLEN who can provide this support to regional schools by liaising with local industry and industries in Melbourne meets this need.

Opportunities for work experience are particularly limited for regional students

Regional students and school career practitioners highlighted the difficulties they have securing work experience placements in regional areas. A major challenge is the limited number of employers available to take on students, particularly in popular fields such as allied health, social work, law, medicine and nursing.⁵³⁴ Not only do these fields experience high demand, but secondary students have lower priority than higher education students who need to undertake work placements.⁵³⁵

In these situations, schools such as St Joseph's College have found work experience opportunities for their students elsewhere, 'even Adelaide, Melbourne, Bendigo—wherever we can get it—but obviously we are taking spots from those students in those areas.'⁵³⁶ Former students from regional areas added that work experience placements away from home were difficult if they did not have family in a regional centre or city who they could stay with and their parents were unable to join them or pay for their accommodation.⁵³⁷

Regional schools often rely on the goodwill of the same group of local employers willing to take on work experience students.⁵³⁸ Ms Wrate, who is also the Transition and Pathways Leading Teacher at Chaffey Secondary College, stated that regional employers are:

inundated with numerous phone calls from students in a week or a month asking for placements. It is a real challenge to try to support those employers and to support their frustration and to try to put a collaborative approach in place ... we have as a network really tried to explore avenues to change in the last few years, to support employers to take up work experience in our area, because we do not want to lose those employers.⁵³⁹

As explained by Ms Fuqua, these employers:

⁵³⁴ Ms Amanda Boulton, *Transcript of evidence*, 26; Mrs Julia Lewis, *Transcript of evidence*, 50; Ms Melyssa Fuqua, *Transcript of evidence*, 11.

⁵³⁵ Mrs Julia Lewis, *Transcript of evidence*, 50; Mrs Jackie Horkings, Career and Pathways Adviser, Irymple Secondary College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 26.

⁵³⁶ Mrs Julia Lewis, *Transcript of evidence*, 50.

⁵³⁷ Mr Joe Collins, *Transcript of evidence*, 42; Ms Rose Vallance, *Transcript of evidence*, 42.

⁵³⁸ Ms Caroline O'Donnell, *Submission 9*, 1.

⁵³⁹ Ms Sara Wrate, Transition and Pathways Leading Teacher, Chaffey Secondary College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 26–27.

tend to be really supportive of students and take students for work experience, but if there is only one mechanic in town, for example, they cannot take the three or four students who might want to do that.⁵⁴⁰

It is also difficult for schools to have to turn down employers who have fewer than three employees from offering work experience due to child safety requirements.⁵⁴¹

Ms Fuqua noted that some regional schools offer their students work experience camps in Melbourne:

where we come down for a week and the students learn how to live in the city and do public transport and are exposed to different types of jobs. But those are incredibly expensive, and that is the main reason why a number of schools are dropping these really valuable programs.⁵⁴²

Regional students also stated that without these opportunities or somewhere to stay, ‘your opportunities for work experience were really limited’ and students who find work experience in their home town ‘probably did not get as much out of it as they would if they had gone elsewhere’.⁵⁴³

FINDING 32: Students in regional Victoria often struggle to secure work experience placements in their region and can find it challenging to secure placements and accommodation outside their region.

Kaniva College and VASSP suggested providing financial assistance to regional students so they can undertake work experience away from home.⁵⁴⁴ The career development fund for regional students recommended in Section 4.1.1 can be used for this purpose. Another suggestion was providing a comprehensive list of employers including government departments and large companies in Melbourne and larger regional centres that can provide work experience placements for regional students.⁵⁴⁵ The work experience portal recommended in Chapter 3 will enable students and school career practitioners to search for this information.

4.2.3 Career development in regional schools needs extra support to meet students’ needs

Regional students have greater career development needs than metropolitan students due to their distance from higher education providers, fewer transportation options, less exposure to higher education within their families, friends and the community and in some areas, socioeconomic challenges. For these reasons, regional students need more structured support, greater exposure to study opportunities locally and afield, and more information to make better

⁵⁴⁰ Ms Melyssa Fuqua, *Transcript of evidence*, 11.

⁵⁴¹ Ms Nicole Clisby-Weir, Sunraysia Careers Network, *Transcript of evidence*, 6–7.

⁵⁴² Ms Melyssa Fuqua, *Transcript of evidence*, 11.

⁵⁴³ Ms Emily Turnbull, *Transcript of evidence*, 41–42.

⁵⁴⁴ Kaniva College, *Submission 63*, 4; Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals, *Submission 22*, 6.

⁵⁴⁵ Kaniva College, *Submission 63*, 4; Ms Caroline O’Donnell, *Submission 9*, 2.

career decisions.⁵⁴⁶ This section considers the information gaps and resource shortages in regional areas raised by stakeholders and proposes ways to overcome these challenges.

Regional students are not receiving the information on higher education they need

A 2015 La Trobe University study on tertiary admission practices that surveyed Year 11 students in six Victorian schools and five schools in New South Wales found the students knew very little about tertiary admission centres, special education access schemes, direct admissions, subject weightings, ATARs or principal recommendation schemes. For example:

- over 40% of respondents were unaware of the existence of early offer or principal recommendation schemes
- 50% were unaware they could apply for courses through a tertiary admissions centre
- 60% were unaware of the existence of educational access schemes
- 40% were unaware of the equity and access scholarships universities offer.⁵⁴⁷

Regional students and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds were found to know even less about these options, despite being more likely to need educational access scheme compensation and equity and access scholarships than metropolitan students.⁵⁴⁸ The study also surveyed first-year university students from regional and low socioeconomic backgrounds who were also found to have limited knowledge about the support available to them. The study's authors suggested that these low awareness levels continue to drive the inequity of university access for regional students since they do not apply for the schemes that are designed for their benefit.⁵⁴⁹

Stakeholders from regional TAFEs also noted that students in regional areas are not receiving accurate information about available VET pathways from schools. For example, Ms Jodee Price, Manager of Skills and Employment at Goulburn Ovens TAFE, stated:

Secondary schools are overly focused on ATAR scores and university entrance. Most teachers do not understand VET and VET pathways. An example I would use for that is probably nursing. We have many young people present at our schools and jobs centre and also to our youth engagement officers saying that they want to be a nurse and they have to go to university, and this is in fact quite inaccurate, and schools and school careers teachers just do not really understand that. The better option for young people is to go through the TAFE pathway, stay in their community, live at

⁵⁴⁶ Australian Catholic University, *Submission 41*, 9.

⁵⁴⁷ La Trobe University, *Submission 85, Attachment A*, 8.

⁵⁴⁸ Associate Professor Andrew Harvey, Director, Centre for Higher Education, Equity and Diversity Research, La Trobe University, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 61.

⁵⁴⁹ La Trobe University, *Submission 85, Attachment A*, 9.

home for as long as they can, and obviously have lower HECS debts and ... next year, when we will have a free diploma of nursing, save themselves a lot more money. So there are a lot of advantages, but the schools just do not understand that.⁵⁵⁰

Ms Price added that some regional schools are reluctant to let TAFEs speak to VCE students because the schools' focus is on university entry for these students, despite only 25–30% of students in the Hume and Goulburn Ovens region of Victoria gaining university admission.⁵⁵¹

Other stakeholders added that a lot of the career information available to students is city-centric and that school career practitioners need support to increase regional students' awareness of career opportunities available locally and elsewhere in Victoria.⁵⁵²

Career practitioners in regional schools need more support

The different labour market, geographic and socioeconomic dynamics in regional areas require school career practitioners in regional schools to provide students with more complex types of support.⁵⁵³ Some stakeholders noted that career practitioners are under-resourced to provide this support and several of them suggested an external coordinator who could provide support to a cluster of regional schools.⁵⁵⁴ For example, Ms Turnbull, Mr Rice and Mr Collins, all young people from the Mallee region, recommended a career coordinator for the region. Ms Turnbull said:

In the Mallee cluster you could have a career adviser who is across everything from getting jobs in your local community to going to university and everything in between, and they are across that and can work with people in the local area about what the challenges and barriers might be and helping them I guess understand their own key skills, because I think sometimes we do not think we have skills in high school.⁵⁵⁵

Mr Collins added:

it would be fantastic if there was, say, a Mallee career hub or something that was dedicated to Year 7s right through, focusing on careers. Imagine if there was someone that coordinated that, so they were in Melbourne for a month and each school sent down all their Year 10s and had organised work experience in the city, and then they all met back at the hotel that night and tea was organised and things like that.⁵⁵⁶

550 Ms Jodee Price, Manager, Skills and Employment, Goulburn Ovens TAFE, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 11.

551 *ibid.*

552 Ms Caroline O'Donnell, *Submission 9*, 1; Career Development Association of Australia, *Submission 84*, 4.

553 Career Development Association of Australia, *Submission 84*, 4.

554 Ms Jerri Nelson, Executive Officer, North Central Local Learning and Employment Network, Victorian Local Learning and Employment Networks, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 46; Mr Trent McCarthy, Executive Officer, Central Ranges Local Learning and Employment Network, Victorian Local Learning and Employment Networks, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 48; Mr Colin Axup, Principal, Suzanne Cory High School and Committee Member, Victorian Association of State School Principals, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 42; Ms Caroline O'Donnell, *Submission 9*, 2; Baw Baw Latrobe Local Learning and Employment Network, *Submission 75*, 2.

555 Ms Emily Turnbull, *Transcript of evidence*, 41.

556 Mr Joe Collins, *Transcript of evidence*, 41.

The Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project piloted an Industry Links Coordinator in one of the local secondary schools to organise activities such as excursions and in-school presentations. The Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project is a local community initiative that focuses on improving outcomes for young people within the region. The pilot program was successful and is now expanding to other schools and brokering relationships between them and businesses and industries.⁵⁵⁷

The Committee's recommendation in Chapter 3 of employing a secondary school career development coordinator at each LLEN will provide additional support to regional school career practitioners to enable students to have greater exposure to higher education providers and industry representatives.

4.3 Some regional young people have low career aspirations

Another factor that has a considerable impact on the career choices of young people in regional areas is low career aspirations. Studies have shown that students in regional Australia are less likely to aspire to higher education than metropolitan students and have lower career aspirations overall.⁵⁵⁸ Regional students may have lower career aspirations because of:

- lower higher education participation rates
- limited access to mentors and role models
- limited access to information about potential careers
- fewer opportunities to gain exposure to a range of workplaces and occupations
- the cost and travel associated with accessing resources, programs and support services in metropolitan or regional centres
- low expectations of the opportunities available for regional young people among families and the wider community.⁵⁵⁹

The views and influence of families and peers can be challenging for school career practitioners who are trying to encourage their students to have high aspirations.⁵⁶⁰ The submission from River City Christian College stated:

It's difficult to overcome the somewhat low aspirations of young people and hard to find ways to create the vision and the determination needed to pursue education and training beyond what the young people's parents and peers have done.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁷ Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Foundation, *Submission 90*, 4.

⁵⁵⁸ Victorian Auditor-General, *Access to education for rural students* (2014), 31; National Centre for Vocational Education Research, *Peer-mentoring of students in rural and low socioeconomic status schools: increasing aspirations for higher education*, report prepared by David D Curtis, et al. (2012), 16.

⁵⁵⁹ Rural Youth Ambassadors, *Rural Inspire: enhancing rural young people's aspirations* (2018), 2.

⁵⁶⁰ Mrs Jackie Horkings, *Transcript of evidence*, 27.

⁵⁶¹ River City Christian College, *Submission 46*, 1.

Ms Price from Goulburn Ovens TAFE also spoke to the Committee about the lack of aspiration among regional students. She commented that young people:

come along without any aspiration, and it has got a lot to do with absolutely their teachers and their parents and everybody that influences their life and their decisions ... I think that one of the big issues in regional Victoria—particularly in our area, and I am sure that The Gordon experiences that—is that young people just do not know what the world of work is, what it looks like and what jobs are. They think that they just could not possibly do it ... I think what we really need to work on is developing some aspirations amongst young people and broadening their experiences to as many opportunities as possible ...⁵⁶²

Parents can have a significant impact on their children’s career aspirations, which at times can be limiting.⁵⁶³ As Ms Fuqua explained:

There is often an issue of parents having different opinions on work futures—for example Dad dropped out in Year 10 to become a mechanic so why can’t his son?⁵⁶⁴

Kaniva College noted:

Due to the lower cost of housing and distance from a metropolitan city, our region does attract a number of un or underemployed parents who[se] views on career aspirations for their children are extremely limiting ... Many of our students live quite insulated lives in rural Victoria, and are influenced and supported by parents whose view or career pathways and opportunities are even more so. Without finding a passion for what a student wants to do, it is hard to guide them. Students are disillusioned, parents don’t know how to help them, options seem financially challenging and it all gets too hard.⁵⁶⁵

To overcome this challenge, some stakeholders recommended getting parents more involved in their children’s career development activities.⁵⁶⁶ For example, Kaniva College suggested that parents meet face to face with the school career practitioner to discuss how to better support their children.⁵⁶⁷ Another suggestion from Ms Clisby-Weir was educating parents about the potential careers available in different industries and explaining how these industries have changed since parents were in school:

Whether it is looking at the monetary value that an industry is going to bring into the district, getting students out to actually look at the career opportunities so that maybe we can tag team with the students in terms of students starting that discussion with their parents and saying, ‘No, it’s actually not like that anymore’. It may be providing opportunities for parents to be able to go into these industries and have a look ... The other thing is that it might be with parents looking at it in terms of not understanding the training that actually goes into it now—that they see it as they

⁵⁶² Ms Jodee Price, *Transcript of evidence*, 17.

⁵⁶³ Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals, *Submission 22*, 6.

⁵⁶⁴ Ms Melyssa Fuqua, *Submission 58*, 2.

⁵⁶⁵ Kaniva College, *Submission 63*, 3, 6.

⁵⁶⁶ Ms Melyssa Fuqua, *Submission 58*, 2.

⁵⁶⁷ Kaniva College, *Submission 63*, 3.

[their children] would need to leave school and all they are going to do for the rest of their life is be out on the block, not the actual intricacies of what it means to be in agricultural or horticultural industries now.⁵⁶⁸

FINDING 33: Compared with their metropolitan counterparts, some young people in regional areas have lower career aspirations, which can be strongly influenced by the views and expectations of their families and the wider community.

The recommendations in Chapter 3 to enable parents to have a greater involvement in their child's career development will help to challenge parents' beliefs about their child's career options. These recommendations include ensuring school career practitioners are available for consultation at parent-teacher interviews, providing parents information through an online portal and having a secondary school career development coordinator at each LLEN who parents can contact via telephone, email or online chat.

4.3.1 Mentoring programs can inspire regional young people to aim higher

Greater exposure to higher education and employment opportunities in Melbourne can encourage students from regional Victoria to develop higher career aspirations.⁵⁶⁹ For example, former career practitioner Mr Lionel Parrott commented:

An initiative I was involved in, thanks to a federal government grant, allowed every year 11 student at a rural school to undertake one week of work experience at Monash University, regardless of whether they aspired to university. This certainly impacted upon their level of awareness and self-confidence.⁵⁷⁰

Mr Healy, who went to school in Ouyen, had high praise for his experiences in Melbourne as a secondary student:

Some of the most powerful influences on what I want to do for my career have not come from a careers adviser or a careers class. They have just come from living life and programs like the Rural Youth Ambassadors or Kwong Lee Dow Young Scholars. I think that sort of thing really needs robust support from the government, especially for rural kids, who do not have access to the museums and galleries and everything else that happens in Melbourne. I think the government needs to give robust support to exposing our rural peers to different experiences that can then colour their life trajectory and their career options. It might not be explicit, but I think those things are really powerful in career advising.⁵⁷¹

Mr Healy is a former Rural Youth Ambassador. The Rural Youth Ambassadors program supports young people in rural and remote Victoria to develop leadership skills while also providing a voice for rural young people on education issues. Each year, schools in rural Victoria nominate Year 11 students for the

⁵⁶⁸ Ms Nicole Clisby-Weir, Sunraysia Careers Network, *Transcript of evidence*, 6.

⁵⁶⁹ Mr Lionel Parrott, *Submission 19*, 11.

⁵⁷⁰ *ibid.*

⁵⁷¹ Mr Xavier Healy, *Transcript of evidence*, 41.

program, which takes up to 20 students across the state. The Country Education Partnership, a not-for-profit organisation that supports the provision of education within rural and remote communities, established the program in 2011.

Rural Youth Ambassador alumni support young people in rural and remote Victoria who want to relocate to a metropolitan or regional centre for further study or employment by hosting a visit to the university they are studying at, organising accommodation and providing a mentoring role.⁵⁷² The alumni have also set up the Rural Inspire program, which links students from small Victorian towns to rural young people studying at university or working in inspiring jobs.⁵⁷³

The Department of Education and Training allocated \$50 000 to the Rural Inspire program through the Common Funding Agreement with Country Education Partnership. This funding supported the Rural Inspire program during the 2017–18 financial year but the funding finished in July 2018.⁵⁷⁴ The Rural Youth Ambassador alumni want to expand the program to broaden their online and social media footprint, facilitate more workshops with upper primary and junior secondary schools and establish more links between young people who have relocated and students in their hometown.⁵⁷⁵

Youth Action, the peak organisation representing young people and youth services in New South Wales, found that young people from rural and remote communities want local mentors and role models who understand their background and can support them in their career aspirations.⁵⁷⁶ The Committee believes that mentoring programs provide regional students a range of benefits and can help them develop higher career aspirations. Therefore, it recommends that relevant Victorian Government departments support current and future mentoring programs that aim to improve the post-school outcomes for regional students. It also recommends the continued funding of the Rural Inspire program.

FINDING 34: Mentoring programs that provide regional students with experiences in larger urban centres can inspire young people to develop higher career aspirations.

RECOMMENDATION 40: That the Victorian Government support current and future mentoring programs for regional students to assist their transition from school to higher education or employment.

RECOMMENDATION 41: That the Department of Education and Training continue funding for the Rural Inspire program through the Common Funding Agreement with the Country Education Partnership.

⁵⁷² Rural Youth Ambassadors, *Rural Inspire: enhancing rural young people's aspirations*, 8.

⁵⁷³ Ms Rose Vallance, *Transcript of evidence*, 44.

⁵⁷⁴ Rural Youth Ambassadors, *Rural Inspire: enhancing rural young people's aspirations*, 3.

⁵⁷⁵ *ibid*, 6–7.

⁵⁷⁶ Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, 36.

5 Tailoring career development for young people facing disadvantage

Throughout the Inquiry, stakeholders informed the Committee of how school career development services are not meeting the needs of a range of vulnerable student groups such as culturally and linguistically diverse students, young people with disability, young carers and students in out-of-home care, among others. This chapter considers the challenges faced by these student groups and their unique career development needs, and then discusses how school career development can better assist these students as they transition from school to work or further study.

5.1 Young people facing disadvantage are at risk of poor post-school outcomes

Young people from vulnerable groups are at a greater risk of having a poor transition from school to employment due to barriers such as low aspirations, lower participation in education, smaller social networks and connections and less access to career development services. This section presents the challenges and barriers faced by young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and low socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as young people with disability, young people in out-of-home care, young carers and students at risk of disengaging from school.

5.1.1 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

While the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Victorian population is small (0.8%), Victoria has the greatest geographical dispersion of Aboriginal families of all states according to the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated (VAEAI), the peak Koorie community organisation for education and training in Victoria.⁵⁷⁷ It noted that four out of five Victorian schools (80%) have one or two Koorie students.⁵⁷⁸

In general, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population face higher levels of disadvantage than the non-Indigenous population in relation to education, employment, income and housing. Poorer socioeconomic outcomes may be

⁵⁷⁷ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Census of population and housing: counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, 2016*, cat. no. 2075.0 (2017), <<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/2075.0Main%20Features52016?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=2075.0&issue=2016&num=&view=>> viewed 10 July 2018; Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, *Submission 38*, 3.

⁵⁷⁸ Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, *Submission 38*, 3.

attributed to health inequality and social issues that are a result of cultural dislocation, racism, discrimination, removal from family and trauma.⁵⁷⁹ These outcomes can also influence the education and employment aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, which can have an impact on their schooling and transition to work.⁵⁸⁰

The gap in Year 12 attainment between Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people is closing; however, VAEAI notes that some schools have low expectations for Koorie students and direct Koorie students towards vocational education and training (VET) rather than university. It stated:

VAEAI still receives regular anecdotal stories from community members across Victoria of Koorie students in secondary schools receiving advice from school staff, whether from VCE Coordinators, careers teachers or other teachers involved with the Koorie student that points the Koorie student towards accepting a low aspirational pathway as being all to aspire to, rather than a high aspirational pathway and potential career. It happens too often, with observably thinly disguised judgement made about the student based on their status as a Koorie student.⁵⁸¹

Feedback from VAEAI forums held in 2017 relating to school career development for Koorie students raised the following issues:

- schools provide inadequate advice to students about career pathways, course options and subject selection
- navigating post-school education and training systems is difficult
- the quality of career development services in schools depends on the importance placed on it by the school leadership team
- students are unaware of course costs, available scholarships and relevant financial support schemes
- schools push students towards the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) and TAFE pathways rather than the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and university
- students are unfamiliar with university if their parents and grandparents did not finish high school.⁵⁸²

Geelong Grammar School, whose Indigenous Programme has 27 Indigenous Scholars, agreed that Indigenous young people need to have greater exposure to universities and career options while at school to overcome intergenerational disadvantage and low expectations.⁵⁸³ In addition to overcoming these barriers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people also face cultural barriers, such as family and community responsibilities.⁵⁸⁴ Not all school

⁵⁷⁹ Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, report prepared by Gabrielle Brown and Eliza Kidd (2017), 32.

⁵⁸⁰ *ibid.*

⁵⁸¹ Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, *Submission 38*, 1.

⁵⁸² *ibid.*, 4–6.

⁵⁸³ Geelong Grammar School, *Submission 56*, 4.

⁵⁸⁴ Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australia, *Rationale and options for National Career Development Strategy*, report prepared by Nous Group (2011), 12.

career development programs take into account cultural differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, and studies show that Indigenous students prefer school career practitioners to use a student-centred rather than an information-centred approach to career development.⁵⁸⁵

VAEAI noted that currently there is no way to measure the quality and appropriateness of career development services that Koorie students receive at school. It added:

schools must be accountable to their communities for the careers advice provided to all students and their parents/carers, and specifically accountable for advice given to Koorie students whose communities are unfortunately still bearing the effects of racist assumptions about Koorie peoples' capacities, interests and potential in education and employment.⁵⁸⁶

5.1.2 Culturally and linguistically diverse young people

In addition to cultural and language barriers to post-school education and employment, young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds face challenges such as their and their family's unfamiliarity with the Victorian education system and a lack of social connections outside their community. Schools also need to recognise that young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds may have experienced trauma, separation and loss as well as disruptions to their education that make it difficult to settle in Australia and develop career goals for the future.⁵⁸⁷ Some of them may also need to develop their English language proficiency.⁵⁸⁸

Students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and their families may have a poor understanding of the Victorian school system and the possible education, training and employment pathways available after school. For example, newly arrived students who are unfamiliar with VCE or VCAL may be unaware that certain subject selections could lock them into a particular career path that could be difficult to change later.⁵⁸⁹ A regional advisory council member of the Victorian Multicultural Commission (VMC), an independent statutory authority that represents Victoria's culturally and linguistically diverse communities, added:

Sometimes the system of applying to study can be confusing and a huge barrier, even for students who are very smart. Australians take it for granted that this stuff is common sense.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁵ Sheldon Rothman and Kylie Hillman, *Career advice in Australian secondary schools: use and usefulness* (2008), 3.

⁵⁸⁶ Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, *Submission 38*, 2.

⁵⁸⁷ Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, 31; Victorian Multicultural Commission, *Submission 87*, 3.

⁵⁸⁸ Urbis, *National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) research project element 2: synthesis report*, report for Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australia (2011), 48; Victorian Multicultural Commission, *Submission 87*, 4.

⁵⁸⁹ Victorian Multicultural Commission, *Engaging our youth: our future* (2015), 71.

⁵⁹⁰ Victorian Multicultural Commission, *Submission 87*, 17.

A lack of connections, networks and mentors to assist these young people to consider and find employment opportunities can limit their career choices.⁵⁹¹ A 2016 survey by the Centre for Multicultural Youth, a Victorian not-for-profit organisation supporting young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, found that many young people feel isolated when entering the workforce because they have few professional role models and they and their parents do not have the knowledge or connections to help them gain employment.⁵⁹² In these instances, survey respondents noted that youth workers, community workers and teachers were vital to helping them find work because for some of them, these were the only adults who they had contact with outside their community.⁵⁹³

The parents of culturally and linguistically diverse young people can also pose difficulties if the career expectations they have for their children are too low, too high or unrealistic.⁵⁹⁴ Some parents may also not engage with their child's career development because of language barriers, financial and time pressures and their unfamiliarity with the education system.⁵⁹⁵ In addition, school career practitioners may have limited understanding of students' cultural backgrounds and may not engage with parents about their child's career development.⁵⁹⁶

Culturally diverse young people also feel that school career practitioners do not understand the cultural barriers that exist between the practitioner and the student. Young people have told the members of VMC's regional advisory councils that this lack of understanding makes them feel isolated, ashamed of their background and like 'outsiders'.⁵⁹⁷

Another concern culturally diverse students have is that school career practitioners direct them to career pathways based on stereotyping. Based on its consultations, VMC stated:

Some culturally diverse school leavers felt they were advised to follow pathways that took them into manual labour, sports or entertainment careers. Such stereotypical career advice is unhelpful if it ignores the academic potential and achievements of culturally diverse young people.⁵⁹⁸

Members of VMC's regional advisory councils suggested:

there should be a greater focus on students' capability and potential to achieve, including practical examples of what they need to do and advice about how competitive their chosen career field is. This advice should be conveyed taking into account the young's person's cultural background.⁵⁹⁹

591 Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, *Submission 38*, 5.

592 Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Submission 29*, 13.

593 *ibid.*

594 Urbis, *National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) research project element 2: synthesis report*, 48.

595 Victorian Multicultural Commission, *Submission 87*, 3-4.

596 *ibid.*, 5.

597 *ibid.*, 6.

598 *ibid.*, 8.

599 *ibid.*, 6.

Parents of culturally diverse students should also be educated about career options (especially non-traditional roles for females), course prerequisites and limits on the numbers of places higher education providers can offer.⁶⁰⁰ Understanding this information will help parents to better guide their children.

5.1.3 Young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds

Several stakeholders noted that students from low-income families can struggle to access career development opportunities and overcome generational unemployment. Young people and their families may also have low career aspirations. As explained by Mr Graeme Cupper, Principal of Merbein P-10 College:

there are often family dynamics based around poverty and disadvantage. Having a good start to school, having the right attitudes and support from family for aspirations and encouraging students, or young people, to understand the power of education, and ultimately that is a challenge for us ...⁶⁰¹

Even when young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds have high career aspirations, they and their families may not have the experience or connections to help them realise their goals.⁶⁰² Mr Tony Sheahan, a school career practitioner for over 40 years, stated:

assisting young people who have parents who are long-term unemployed ... to find work experience, a part time job, or work placement is often difficult. Their parents have few contacts, little work ethic and limited knowledge of opportunities available.⁶⁰³

Families who have limited experience or understanding of university can be another barrier for young people.⁶⁰⁴ A 2016 La Trobe University study found students from low socioeconomic backgrounds were less aware of university courses and providers, university admission processes and educational access schemes.⁶⁰⁵ In addition to needing more assistance to access university, Melbourne City Mission commented that these students may lack confidence to engage with tertiary education:

educators noted that some young people have had limited exposure to universities in their lives and feel a sense of inferiority when compared against other young people who go to university.⁶⁰⁶

Low career aspirations and expectations are not only common among students and their families but also schools and the wider community. Ms Emma King, Chief Executive Officer of the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS), the peak body of the social and community sector in Victoria, stated:

⁶⁰⁰ Victorian Multicultural Commission, *Engaging our youth: our future*, 72-73.

⁶⁰¹ Mr Graeme Cupper, Principal, Merbein P-10 College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 27.

⁶⁰² Mitchell Institute, *Submission 67*, 6.

⁶⁰³ Mr Tony Sheahan, *Submission 73*, 2.

⁶⁰⁴ Australian Education Union, Victorian Branch, *Submission 79*, 7.

⁶⁰⁵ La Trobe University, *Submission 85*, 1.

⁶⁰⁶ Melbourne City Mission, *Submission 81*, 5.

I think one of the challenges that we often have is the so-called ‘soft bigotry’ of low expectations, which we see particularly for people from disadvantaged backgrounds. There is an assumption that simply because students may live in, for example, housing commission areas or be from low-income backgrounds or particular nationalities et cetera therefore there is less expected of them in terms of their schooling and other areas when in fact that is simply not reflective of what their capability and their capacity is overall.⁶⁰⁷

Parents and students from low-income families also told the Committee that the cost of some VET courses can be prohibitive, limiting students’ choices and career pathways. For example, Ms Siaan Brookes, a Year 10 student at Irymple Secondary College, stated:

I just want to touch base on the cost of things, because personally I am the youngest of four coming from a single parent income and it is harder to pay for the camps and courses and all that. My beauty course cost over \$900, so it has been hard to get the money without funding.⁶⁰⁸

Ms Gail McHardy, Executive Officer of Parents Victoria, which represents parents of students in Victorian government schools, also noted that some parents can struggle to pay up-front fees for their students to undertake VET courses as part of their schooling.⁶⁰⁹

5.1.4 Young people with disability

Research shows that young people with disability are less likely to complete Year 12 and participate in the labour force, which has an impact on their future health, financial security, personal wellbeing and social inclusion.⁶¹⁰ Out of 29 countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Australia ranked 21st for employment participation rates among people with disability in 2009.⁶¹¹ In Victoria, the labour force participation rate for people with disability in 2009 was 54% compared with 83% for people without disability.⁶¹²

There is also evidence that the gap in social inclusion measures between young people with and without disability is growing. Between 2001 and 2012, the gap widened significantly in relation to unemployment, education participation and financial stress.⁶¹³ National Disability Services (NDS), Australia’s peak body for non-government disability service organisations, noted the importance of reversing these trends stating, ‘if young people with significant disability do not engage in mainstream employment by age 21, it is unlikely that they ever will.’⁶¹⁴

⁶⁰⁷ Ms Emma King, Chief Executive Officer, Victorian Council of Social Service, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 43.

⁶⁰⁸ Ms Siaan Brookes, Year 10 student, Irymple Secondary College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 37.

⁶⁰⁹ Ms Gail McHardy, Executive Officer, Parents Victoria, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 5.

⁶¹⁰ Victorian National Disability Coordination Officer State Network, *Submission 48*, 2; National Disability Services, *Submission 69*, 1; Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, 37–38.

⁶¹¹ Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, 36.

⁶¹² National Disability Services, *Submission 69*, 2.

⁶¹³ Centre for Disability Research and Policy, *Left behind: 2014: monitoring the social inclusion of young Australians with disabilities 2001–2012*, report prepared by Eric Emerson and Gwynnyth Llewellyn (2014), ii.

⁶¹⁴ National Disability Services, *Submission 69*, 1.

A significant proportion of Victorian students have a disability. NDS provided statistics indicating that 17% of Victorian students received education adjustments due to disability and the most common type of disability among Victorian students is cognitive disability (8.8%).⁶¹⁵ Mr Braedan Hogan, Manager of Public Affairs and NDIS Transition at Amaze, the Victorian peak body for people on the autism spectrum, stated that while the exact number of autistic Australians is unknown, more than 1% of children under 14 are autistic. He added that 29% of current participants in the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) are autistic and this increases to one in two among NDIS participants aged 0–7.⁶¹⁶

Several stakeholders noted that students with disability struggle with the transition from school to further education and employment, and this is compounded by low expectations and poor quality or non-existent career development at school.⁶¹⁷ In Victoria, young people with disability often transition from school to day programs rather than employment. Data from the Department of Education and Training's (DET) On Track survey show that only 6% of young people in special schools transitioned into open employment compared with 58% who transition into day services and 9% into supported employment settings.

Ms Leah van Poppel, Manager of the Youth Disability Advocacy Service (YDAS), which provides policy and individual advocacy to young Victorians aged 12–25 with disability, noted that transition into day programs or supported employment can place students in a closed environment:

Young people can go from special schools into day centres or into sheltered workshops, where they are paid much less than they would be in the mainstream market, without anyone checking in as to whether that is what they would like to do and putting them in positions. In closed environments you are much more likely to be open to abuse and neglect of all different types.⁶¹⁸

The On Track survey also showed that 73% of students in special schools reported not receiving assistance with job seeking or job placement.⁶¹⁹ Young people with disability and their parents feel that school career development is inadequate and some 'have described feeling like they "have been dropped off a cliff" once the young person leaves school and reaches adulthood.'⁶²⁰ NDS noted that the provision of career development services for young people with disability is fragmented and inconsistent. It added that sometimes schools do not offer them

⁶¹⁵ *ibid.*, 2.

⁶¹⁶ Mr Braedan Hogan, Manager, Public Affairs and NDIS Transition, Amaze, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 33.

⁶¹⁷ Victorian National Disability Coordination Officer State Network, *Submission 48*, 3; Amaze, *Submission 59*, 3; National Disability Services, *Submission 69*, 3; Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Submission 29*, 21.

⁶¹⁸ Ms Leah van Poppel, Manager, Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 9.

⁶¹⁹ National Disability Services, *Submission 69*, 2.

⁶²⁰ *ibid.*, 3.

career development citing statistics showing 72% of students with intellectual disability report not participating in work experience compared with 14% of students without disability.⁶²¹

Stakeholders also noted that career development services for students with disability are often the responsibility of a ‘transition coordinator’ in special schools and teachers aides or integration aides in mainstream schools rather than career practitioners.⁶²² According to the NDS, the title ‘transition coordinator’ implies that the student will transition from school to a disability service rather than embark on further education or employment.⁶²³ It added that young people with disability are often not given a choice in their future because of a prevailing notion that school staff ‘know best’.⁶²⁴

YDAS surveyed young people with disability about education and employment and found that the young people described the transition from education to employment as uncertain and difficult. Their comments included:

“I’m worried that they aren’t preparing us for after school. I want to know how to pay bills and how to act in the workplace.”

“I was immediately told that certain careers were off limits because of my disability.”

“There was very little focus on my future and the idea that I would have ambitions; I was told to ‘just have fun’.” ...

“Attending a mainstream school ... my career advisor had very little knowledge on the challenges I would face trying to get work as a person with a disability ... They did not know how accessible my university would be or what supports would be available ... I was left asking people like my physiotherapist for answers.”

“Careers advisors only had basic information about supports, I was left to contact TAFEs and Universities myself.”⁶²⁵

The Victorian National Disability Coordination Officer State Network, which assists people with disability to access and participate in tertiary education and employment, also noted that students feel ‘stranded’, ‘left out’ of school career development and that career expectations for them are ‘very low’.⁶²⁶

Ms Marlee van Mourik, who is 16 and has autism spectrum disorder, told the Committee of her frustration with the career development offered to her by her school:

I was not included in any careers expos or open days. I did not receive any careers course counselling. The staff were unwilling and unreasonable and did not help me. I exited the school with low numeracy and literacy skills. They were more concerned

⁶²¹ *ibid.*, 4.

⁶²² Mr David Moody, State Manager, National Disability Services, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 37; Ms Leah van Poppel, *Transcript of evidence*, 9; Ms Andrea Evans-McCall, National Disability Coordination Officer, Victorian National Disability Coordination Officer State Network, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 37; National Disability Services, *Submission 69*, 6.

⁶²³ National Disability Services, *Submission 69*, 5.

⁶²⁴ *ibid.*

⁶²⁵ Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Submission 29*, 15.

⁶²⁶ Victorian National Disability Coordination Officer State Network, *Submission 48*, 3.

with getting rid of me than trying to develop my career. As I already mentioned, I am going to study visual arts Cert III in design. I was told that it was not suited to me, and the teachers went out of their way to undermine me and my efforts, and every day was a daily fight.⁶²⁷

Stakeholders acknowledged that school career practitioners face a number of challenges to support students with disability. For example, physical access to events such as career expos can be a barrier, finding suitable work experience placements can be difficult and navigating post-school options for young people with disability can be challenging.⁶²⁸ Due to lower Year 12 completion rates, young people with disability may miss out on career development if their school only provides services in senior years.⁶²⁹ In mainstream schools, the responsibility of finding work experience placements often falls on parents and their networks. Sometimes the placements found are not suitable to the student or do not match their interests.⁶³⁰

Amaze also highlighted issues with work experience for autistic young people, such as difficulty finding a placement or having little choice where they were placed. Often work experience placements were with family or with family connections.⁶³¹ In a survey of young people with disability and their carers, Amaze found that the career development received at school by autistic young people was not meeting their needs. Most carers responded that the services provided had not helped with career planning or boosting the young person's confidence to look for work, nor were they focused on a career in the industry the young person most wanted to work in.⁶³²

A culture of low expectations for students with disability in Australian schools was highlighted as a major impediment for these students to aspire to and gain employment.⁶³³ NDS also added that school career practitioners discourage many parents from having high employment expectations for their children. For example, Ms Michelle Wakeford, National Ticket to Work Manager at NDS, stated:

what families are telling us is that they are constantly told by the school system not to have high expectations—that you will just be disappointed, so lower your expectations—even though that is the key thing that we know makes a difference in the post-school world. Parents are exhausted. They have been through a lot of advocacy for their child to have an education. We think that, yes, parents should be encouraged and supported, but schools should take a partnership approach with those parents and to build those expectations within the school sector but also with parents.⁶³⁴

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- 627** Ms Marlee van Mourik, TAFE student, Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 19.
- 628** Victorian National Disability Coordination Officer State Network, *Submission 48*, 8; Amaze, *Submission 59*, 4; Ms Leah van Poppel, *Transcript of evidence*, 17.
- 629** Amaze, *Submission 59*, 3–4.
- 630** Victorian National Disability Coordination Officer State Network, *Submission 48*, 8.
- 631** Amaze, *Submission 59*, 5.
- 632** *ibid.*, 5–6.
- 633** National Disability Services, *Submission 69*, 3, 5; Victorian National Disability Coordination Officer State Network, *Submission 48*, 5.
- 634** Ms Michelle Wakeford, National Ticket to Work Manager, National Disability Services, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 37.

School career practitioners need more support and education to provide better services to students with disability.⁶³⁵ As Ms van Poppel explained:

Young people tell us that the attitude of the careers advisers that they speak to and their teachers in general are often to have really low expectations of their abilities. They do not always know how a disability might impact a young person. Sometimes they think that their disability has been under-represented or is perceived as less serious than it is. Sometimes they think that a young person might be exaggerating. When it comes to careers advisers specifically, young people say that they do not have a lot of practical information and skills to give. If you are a young person with a disability, that might mean that your careers adviser does not tell you about Ticket to Work or disability employment services, and they do not assist you with finding suitable workplaces for work experience—for example, where the facilities are wheelchair accessible. So young people are sometimes left doing that work themselves. Clearly there is a need for careers advisers to have some training and some support, and some good networks with expertise in disability.⁶³⁶

The Victorian National Disability Coordination Officer State Network noted that gaps in school career practitioners' knowledge about how to assist students with disability plays a critical role in students' engagement with education and employment and that career practitioners need more support in this respect.⁶³⁷

5.1.5 Young people in out-of-home care

Students in foster, residential, kinship and permanent care arrangements may also face disadvantage when making the transition from school to education, training or employment. Several stakeholders noted that there are low career aspirations and expectations surrounding these students and few of them enter university.⁶³⁸ There were over 9700 young people in care arrangements in Australia in 2017 in addition to children and young people without a statutory care order, who are often in the care of their grandparents.⁶³⁹

Anglicare Victoria, which is the largest provider of out-of-home care in Victoria, noted that compared with their peers, young people in out-of-home care will have lower secondary school attainment rates and will be more likely throughout their life to experience poor health and be unemployed, homeless and involved with the justice system.⁶⁴⁰ Studies have also shown that young people in out-of-home care have lower educational and career aspirations and are less likely to participate in career planning and exploration than their peers.⁶⁴¹ Many young people in care arrangements have experienced trauma and disruption in their lives, which are known to affect academic achievement, self-confidence and educational aspirations and outcomes.⁶⁴²

⁶³⁵ Victorian National Disability Coordination Officer State Network, *Submission 48*, 5.

⁶³⁶ Ms Leah van Poppel, *Transcript of evidence*, 9.

⁶³⁷ Victorian National Disability Coordination Officer State Network, *Submission 48*, 8–9.

⁶³⁸ For example, Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, *Submission 61*, 2; Associate Professor Andrew Harvey, Director, Centre for Higher Education, Equity and Diversity Research, La Trobe University, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 62.

⁶³⁹ Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, *Submission 61*, 1.

⁶⁴⁰ Anglicare Victoria, *Submission 27*, 1–2.

⁶⁴¹ Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, *Submission 61*, 2–3.

⁶⁴² Anglicare Victoria, *Submission 27*, 2; Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, *Submission 61*, 3.

A significant challenge for students in out-of-home care is that formal state care ends when they turn 18, regardless of whether they have accommodation or means to support themselves financially.⁶⁴³ The uncertainty around housing and finances can have a significant impact on these young people's ability to continue their education. As explained by Ms Joanna Humphries, a Project Manager at the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, the peak body for child and family services in Victoria:

young people in care are required to leave formal care literally on their 18th birthday or before, and quite frankly the stress and anxiety associated with finding somewhere to live and with how they can financially support themselves means that any thoughts around education are likely to go on hold for a while ... I am not sure the extent to which careers advisers within schools would know the young people that this affects or indeed the impact it has on them. It is not unusual for young people to disengage way before they get to Year 12 because of that level of stress and anxiety.⁶⁴⁴

School career development for young people in out-of-home care needs to take into account that some of these students do not live in stable environments and may have little encouragement to aspire to higher education.⁶⁴⁵ Career planning should also be more flexible for students in out-of-home care as they may not be able to take a linear career pathway. For example, some might not be ready to engage in higher education for a few years until their housing and financial arrangements are more secure.⁶⁴⁶

At the same time, schools should not direct students in out-of-home care to VCAL due to the perception that they have lower numeracy and literacy skills due to disruptions in their education.⁶⁴⁷ Research has found that these students wanted more assistance with career planning but they also wanted teachers and career practitioners to allow them to make their own study and career decisions.⁶⁴⁸

5.1.6 Young carers

Young people who have caring responsibilities may become disengaged from education and struggle with their post-school transition due to the time and energy demands of their caring role.⁶⁴⁹ Data from the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) show that 39% of young people in Year 9 reported providing some type of care to family or friends, and 22% of them were providing assistance with activities of daily living, such as personal care, mobility and communication.⁶⁵⁰

⁶⁴³ Anglicare Victoria, *Submission 27*, 2; Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, *Submission 61*, 3.

⁶⁴⁴ Ms Joanna Humphries, Project Manager, *Raising Expectations: Improving Educational Outcomes for Young People Leaving Care*, Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 53.

⁶⁴⁵ Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, *Submission 61*, 3.

⁶⁴⁶ Victorian Council of Social Service, *Submission 54*, 16.

⁶⁴⁷ Ms Aileen Lacey, Area Manager, Victoria, Mission Australia, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 51–52.

⁶⁴⁸ Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, *Submission 61*, 2.

⁶⁴⁹ Carers Victoria, *Submission 83*, 4.

⁶⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 3.

LSAC results suggest that Year 9 students who spend two or more hours per day caring for others are more likely to have lower reading and numeracy skills than their peers.⁶⁵¹ Young carers are also unlikely to self-identify due to the stigma surrounding disability, chronic illness or mental health issues. This means that schools may not know of a young carer's circumstances and therefore do not offer or provide them with support.⁶⁵²

Carers Victoria, the peak body for carers of all ages in Victoria, noted that many young carers do not receive a carer payment and they may need to leave school to work part-time or work night and weekend shifts to support the family.⁶⁵³ As Mr Gabriel Aleksandrs, Policy Adviser at Carers Victoria, stated:

A lot of the young people that we support at Carers Victoria might be one of two main carers in the household, and that other carer may be getting a carer payment, so the young carer would see it as their responsibility to just leave school and start work. Now, that would lead them quite likely into a casualised job or a part-time job, and not all of those jobs have promotional opportunities down the track.⁶⁵⁴

School career practitioners need to be aware of the responsibilities of young carers and adapt their guidance accordingly, such as developing plans that allow them to work and study on a part-time basis.⁶⁵⁵

5.1.7 Students at risk of disengaging from school

Early school leavers are another group that can struggle with the transition from school to employment. As the Career Education Association of Victoria, a not-for-profit association that supports and trains career practitioners, explained:

Early school leavers often leave school not because they have a job or training course to go to but it is their negative academic experiences and view of school as irrelevant to their future employment that “encourages” them to exit. As a result, they face many problems in finding work or accessing training. It is also important to note that in longitudinal studies early school leavers often state that they regret leaving and that if they had better career advice they may have stayed.⁶⁵⁶

The long-term effects of disengaging from school include greater reliance on income support, lower earnings and poorer health outcomes in the future.⁶⁵⁷

Since school career practitioners in Victoria report that they spend 80% of their time with students in senior years, most students who have disengaged from school by Year 10 receive little career development.⁶⁵⁸ A 2017 review of career

⁶⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁶⁵² *ibid.*, 4.

⁶⁵³ Carers Victoria, *Submission 83A*, 1.

⁶⁵⁴ Mr Gabriel Aleksandrs, Policy Adviser, Carers Victoria, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 44.

⁶⁵⁵ Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Australia, *Rationale and options for National Career Development Strategy*, 12; Carers Victoria, *Submission 83A*, 1.

⁶⁵⁶ Career Education Association of Victoria, *Submission 26*, 5.

⁶⁵⁷ Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Submission 29*, 8.

⁶⁵⁸ Dandolo Partners, *Review of career education in Victorian government schools*, report for Department of Education and Training, Victoria (2017), 5.

education in Victorian government schools for DET found that when school career practitioners attempt to support these students, they often direct students to stereotypical pathways.⁶⁵⁹ On Track survey responses indicate that early school leavers are less likely to participate in career development activities and find school career development less useful than Year 12 graduates.⁶⁶⁰

Several stakeholders raised the need to start career development services earlier in secondary schools because students at risk of disengaging from school are likely to miss out otherwise.⁶⁶¹ While most schools offer career development, students at risk of disengaging do not receive the benefits of it despite needing it the most.⁶⁶² Ms Kerry Moloney, who has worked as a teacher in government schools for 34 years and as the career practitioner at her current school for the past four years, added:

I have no doubt that there is a group of students that currently ‘fly under the radar’ as they are not in a serious crisis situation, and so they are not brought to the attention of school administration for support. If there was more time allocated in the careers area then it would be possible to seek out this group of students that need more individual support. This support would assist students with their well being, engagement with school and their aspirations for the future.⁶⁶³

Starting career development services earlier at school would have an additional benefit of helping students at risk of disengaging find meaning in staying at school, which might prevent them from leaving school early.⁶⁶⁴

FINDING 35: Students facing disadvantage may have poor access to career development services due to language and cultural barriers, smaller social networks, low expectations, financial pressures, family responsibilities and disengagement from school.

5.2 The Government and schools can adopt a number of strategies to assist young people facing disadvantage

The recommendations made in Chapter 3 to improve resourcing for school career development will help school career practitioners spend more time with students facing disadvantage and provide these students with better services from the start of secondary school. In addition, the recommendations in Chapter 4 will also help to address the needs of these student groups in regional areas, which often have higher proportions of vulnerable students than Melbourne. This section presents

⁶⁵⁹ *ibid*, 6.

⁶⁶⁰ Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Submission 29*, 7–8.

⁶⁶¹ For example, Northern Melbourne VET Cluster and South East VET Cluster, *Submission 55*, 3; Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Submission 29*, 4; Victorian National Disability Coordination Officer State Network, *Submission 48*, 9; Amaze, *Submission 59*, 8; Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, *Submission 61*, 4.

⁶⁶² Baw Baw Latrobe Local Learning and Employment Network, *Submission 75*, 1.

⁶⁶³ Ms Kerry Moloney, *Submission 32*, 2.

⁶⁶⁴ Career Education Association of Victoria, *Submission 26*, 6; Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Submission 29*, 4.

some more specific ways of assisting students facing disadvantage with their post-school transition including better identifying these students, improving their access to career development services and lifting their aspirations.

5.2.1 Identifying young people facing disadvantage earlier will help direct appropriate services to them

Several stakeholders noted that schools need to have robust processes to identify young people facing disadvantage in order to provide them with additional support including career development services.⁶⁶⁵ For example, Mission Australia stated:

A considerable proportion of young people that access various Mission Australia services in Victoria have had no or significantly limited exposure to career advisers due to disengagement from school, health or drug and alcohol related issues or other similar barriers. These young people need to be identified by the school system and referred to other early intervention support services to address the challenges they are dealing with prior to addressing training or employment related issues.⁶⁶⁶

Identifying vulnerable students can also help school career practitioners to tailor their services to better meet the needs of these students. Ms King from VCOSS explained:

we need to actually make sure that we are able to pick that up really quickly and invest quickly in students, because we know also at the same time that if we have high expectations, generally students are able to live up to those as long as we are able to put other supports around them as well.⁶⁶⁷

VMC suggested that:

schools should collect culturally-specific data as part of their admission processes, such as information about students' country of birth and their cultural backgrounds. This information could then be used by career advisers to offer holistic and culturally appropriate career programs which take into account the students' cultural background and addresses their personal, family and social needs. The VMC is willing to provide guidance regarding the collection of data.⁶⁶⁸

A study into defining and measuring the quality of career development by the Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy at The University of Melbourne found there was general consensus on the benefit of targeting support to students facing disadvantage from the start of secondary schooling and that schools should have systems in place to identify these students.⁶⁶⁹ VMC noted that the province of Ontario, Canada, implemented an Education Equity Action Plan and one of its key components includes schools collecting voluntarily-provided

⁶⁶⁵ For example, Victorian Multicultural Commission, *Submission 87*, 6; The Gordon, *Submission 30*, 3; Ms Emma King, *Transcript of evidence*, 43; Mr Lionel Bamblett, General Manager, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 46.

⁶⁶⁶ Mission Australia, *Submission 68*, 7.

⁶⁶⁷ Ms Emma King, *Transcript of evidence*, 43.

⁶⁶⁸ Victorian Multicultural Commission, *Submission 87*, 6.

⁶⁶⁹ Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy, University of Melbourne, *Career development: defining and measuring quality*, report prepared by Suzanne Rice, et al. (2015), 21.

student data related to race, ethnicity, religion and indicators of parental socioeconomic status. This information is then applied to the provision of school services.⁶⁷⁰

Carers Victoria also agreed that schools should identify young carers to respond to them appropriately and provide or refer them to services. However, it noted that the reluctance of young carers to self-identify could prevent schools from recognising their status. It suggested that school staff undertake training to recognise caring responsibilities early, make students more comfortable with disclosing and understand how young carers' responsibilities affect their education and career development.⁶⁷¹

Stakeholders also noted that the lack of demographic data to identify students facing disadvantage is a barrier to monitoring the quality of career development services schools provide.⁶⁷² The collection of this data would help to determine these students' access to career development services, the relevance and usefulness of services provided, and students' post-school pathways.⁶⁷³

Schools should have a system in place to identify students facing disadvantage and school career practitioners should be able to access relevant information that will help them provide these students with better services early in their secondary schooling. However, schools and career practitioners should treat this information sensitively as students facing disadvantage may not wish to be identified as such in front of other students.

DET should ensure that schools have processes identifying students facing disadvantage to provide these students with tailored support. The Department should also collect this information in the On Track survey to be able to track the quality of career development services delivered to these students and their post-school pathways. Students facing disadvantage should include but not be limited to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, culturally and linguistically diverse young people, young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds, young people with disability, young people in out-of-home care, young carers and students at risk of disengaging from school.

Indicators to identify young carers and students at risk of disengaging are not as obvious as for the other groups, but DET should develop processes in conjunction with the relevant peak bodies to help recognise these students in order to provide them with better career development services early in their schooling.

FINDING 36: Schools need to be able to identify students facing disadvantage to provide them with tailored support and career development services.

⁶⁷⁰ Victorian Multicultural Commission, *Submission 87*, 15.

⁶⁷¹ Carers Victoria, *Submission 83*, 4.

⁶⁷² For example, Victorian Multicultural Commission, *Submission 87*, 6; Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Submission 29*, 9; Mr Lionel Bamblett, *Transcript of evidence*, 46.

⁶⁷³ Victorian Multicultural Commission, *Submission 87*, 6.

RECOMMENDATION 42: That the Department of Education and Training require schools to have a system in place to identify students facing disadvantage and provide them with tailored support and career development services.

RECOMMENDATION 43: That the Department of Education and Training collect demographic data in the On Track survey to enable the disaggregation of results by indicators of disadvantage and better monitor the quality of services delivered to young people facing disadvantage and their post-school outcomes.

5.2.2 Access to career development services for students facing disadvantage must be improved

Students facing disadvantage have additional career development needs and school career practitioners should tailor their support to the individual beginning in Year 7 and continuing throughout secondary schooling. The type of guidance and support career practitioners provide may vary from the services they provide to other students, which may be perceived as threatening or uninviting to students facing disadvantage. School career practitioners may need to provide guidance and information more informally and in ways that are more familiar and more easily understood by these student groups.⁶⁷⁴ This section outlines approaches to improve access to school career development services for students facing disadvantage.

A dedicated coordinator for students facing disadvantage could improve access

Some stakeholders suggested that schools have a dedicated officer or coordinator to support students facing disadvantage with their post-school transitions.⁶⁷⁵ For example, Mildura Senior College:

supports the employment of a school to transition coordinator to support students who do not have the family resources to transition from school. We use some of our equity funding which would be beneficial elsewhere in the school.⁶⁷⁶

Other stakeholders proposed that young people facing disadvantage should have access to independent, expert advice from an external coordinator or be directed to community service organisations who can provide this support.⁶⁷⁷ For example, Mr Dave Wells, Principal of Hester Hornbrook Academy and General Manager of Early Years, Education and Employment at Melbourne City Mission, suggested that schools:

⁶⁷⁴ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Career guidance: a handbook for policy makers* (2004), 37.

⁶⁷⁵ For example, Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, *Submission 38*, 5; Ms Tracy Marr, Assistant Principal, Mildura Secondary College, supplementary evidence, response to questions on notice received 20 April 2018, 1.

⁶⁷⁶ Ms Tracy Marr, Assistant Principal, Mildura Secondary College, supplementary evidence, response to questions on notice received 20 April 2018, 2.

⁶⁷⁷ Victorian Council of Social Service, *Submission 54*, 25; Mr Dave Wells, Principal, Hester Hornbrook Academy, and General Manager, Early Years, Education and Employment, Melbourne City Mission, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 54.

have a contract with the local community services agency to provide that additional support for your people who are disengaged. What you get then is youth workers or social workers or counsellors who are engaged in that wider sector. They are getting the professional development, the conversation, the mentoring, the supervision and the practice specialists.⁶⁷⁸

The Committee's recommendation in Chapter 3 to employ a secondary school career development coordinator at each of Victoria's Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) will provide young people facing disadvantage with independent, expert advice as well as have the capacity to link young people with community service organisations for additional support. The coordinators' links with industry will also help connect these young people with work experience placements.

Family involvement can open up opportunities for students facing disadvantage

Parents and families play a crucial role in students' career aspirations and decision making and stakeholders strongly supported the involvement of families in the career development of young people facing disadvantage.⁶⁷⁹ For example, family and community networks are highly significant for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and young people rely heavily on their family network to find out and make decisions about their options after school.⁶⁸⁰ Community and family supports are also important for young people with disability and culturally and linguistically diverse young people.⁶⁸¹ Research shows career planning that involves family lifts the aspirations of students facing disadvantage, increases their participation in career development services and improves their post-school outcomes.⁶⁸²

Involving parents in school career development also improves their awareness of the opportunities, challenges and support available for their children. This is especially the case for migrant and refugee parents, as described by VMC:

Given the challenges around family and parental expectations in this space, young people advised the VMC that it is critical their parents and carers are involved and informed about the process. This will make them aware of the challenges that students may encounter in pursuing some careers ... Schools should be conscious of how best this can be achieved, possibly through one-on-one meetings and the provision of translated materials. This will assist parents to have realistic and informed education and career expectations for their children, and to ensure they understand the education system and career options in Australia.⁶⁸³

⁶⁷⁸ Mr Dave Wells, *Transcript of evidence*, 54.

⁶⁷⁹ Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, 31; Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, *Submission 38*, 6; Victorian National Disability Coordination Officer State Network, *Submission 48*, 9; Amaze, *Submission 59*, 7; Victorian Multicultural Commission, *Submission 87*, 8–9.

⁶⁸⁰ Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, 33–34.

⁶⁸¹ *ibid*, 37; Ms Gail McHardy, *Transcript of evidence*, 5.

⁶⁸² Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, 34; Amaze, *Submission 59*, 7; Victorian Multicultural Commission, *Submission 87*, 9.

⁶⁸³ Victorian Multicultural Commission, *Submission 87*, 9.

DET has developed the Engaging Parents in Career Conversations (EPiCC) program, which provides resources for career practitioners to engage parents and encourage them to have meaningful career conversations with their children. EPiCC has been tailored for use with parents of Koorie students, culturally and linguistically diverse students, young people with disability and young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds.⁶⁸⁴ As recommended in Chapter 3, DET should evaluate the use and effectiveness of the EPiCC program.

School career practitioners need professional development to better support students facing disadvantage

To provide the best services to students facing disadvantage, school career practitioners need to be aware of these students' needs, circumstances and challenges as well as keep up to date with the supports and alternate pathways available for these students.⁶⁸⁵ Career practitioners also need to have an understanding of how students' aspirations and decisions are influenced by the type of disadvantage they face.⁶⁸⁶ For these reasons, several stakeholders recommended that school career practitioners be required to undertake professional development relating to student groups facing disadvantage.⁶⁸⁷

In addition, school career practitioners should be aware of available support networks and community service organisations they can direct young people to. As Ms van Poppel from YDAS explained, there is a need for:

making sure that careers advisers have good skills and good networks, and that is particularly important when you talk about minority groups like young people with disabilities. So a careers adviser may not know everything about the National Disability Insurance Scheme themselves because that is quite an intricate area or know about the way you might develop skills differently for young people with disabilities, but having access to supports that give them those skills is really, really critical.⁶⁸⁸

Professional development for school career practitioners should also include cultural awareness training so they have a greater understanding of the cultural backgrounds of students and their parents.⁶⁸⁹ This is not only important for students with migrant or refugee backgrounds, but also for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. School career practitioners should be aware of the diversity of Indigenous culture and the role family and community plays in students' career development.⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸⁴ Department of Education and Training, Victoria, supplementary evidence, response to questions on notice received 4 May 2018, 3.

⁶⁸⁵ Anglicare Victoria, *Submission 27*, 2; Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, *Submission 61*, 3; Ms Andrea Evans-McCall, *Transcript of evidence*, 35; Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, 32.

⁶⁸⁶ Centre for Vocational and Educational Policy, University of Melbourne, *Career development: defining and measuring quality*, 23.

⁶⁸⁷ For example, Anglicare Victoria, *Submission 27*, 2; Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Submission 29*, 28; Victorian National Disability Coordination Officer State Network, *Submission 48*, 10; Dr Jessie Mitchell, Policy Manager, Youth Affairs Council Victoria, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 26 March 2018, 10–11.

⁶⁸⁸ Ms Leah van Poppel, *Transcript of evidence*, 14.

⁶⁸⁹ Victorian Multicultural Commission, *Submission 87*, 9.

⁶⁹⁰ Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, 33; Urbis, *National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) research project element 2: synthesis report*, 48.

In Chapter 3, the Committee recommended that school career practitioners be registered with the Career Industry Council of Australia, which would require them to undertake 25 hours of professional development each year. DET should support the Career Education Association of Victoria, a not-for-profit association that assists and trains career practitioners, to provide professional development relating to students facing disadvantage. This professional development should cover the characteristics, circumstances and challenges these students face and ways to support them in their post-school transitions.

RECOMMENDATION 44: That the Department of Education and Training support the Career Education Association of Victoria to develop and run professional development activities that focus on the needs of student groups facing disadvantage.

Support must be tailored to the individual's needs and challenges

There was consensus among organisations working with groups facing disadvantage that schools must tailor career development support to the individual.⁶⁹¹ This would involve addressing specific barriers the student faces, providing extra services such as literacy and numeracy support, considering alternate pathways and developing career plans that complement the student's abilities and interests.

Young people also asked for career development that is tailored to each individual's circumstances. For example, Ms Tnaysha Halemba, a graduate of Hester Hornbrook Academy, an independent school run by Melbourne City Mission, said:

I think schools need to be—I know it is a big leap, but they definitely need to be more individualised. Amongst the students attending school you have a lot of intersectionality that goes on, and the current school system does not really focus on that. Each student is obviously going through different things and they all do not want to be lumped into one category.⁶⁹²

Ms van Poppel added that school career practitioners should ensure that young people facing disadvantage have input into their career planning:

I think it is critical when we think about developing transferable skills among young people, but particularly for young people with disabilities, that, firstly, they are given a say. So for the young person, careers advisers and schools should be able to put the young person at the centre of planning in how you do this and create some flexibility in how you do this.⁶⁹³

When preparing its submission, Melbourne City Mission, a charity that works with vulnerable individuals, families and communities, asked young people what 'great career development' would look like for them. It found:

⁶⁹¹ Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Submission 29*, 28; Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, *Submission 38*, 4; Victorian National Disability Coordination Officer State Network, *Submission 48*, 9.

⁶⁹² Ms Tnaysha Halemba, Former student, Hester Hornbrook Academy, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 7 May 2018, 57.

⁶⁹³ Ms Leah van Poppel, *Transcript of evidence*, 14.

Many of the young people spoke about “personalised and situational advice” that treated them like individuals rather than a generic cohort. Other young people explained:

“It should be helping the students to understand all possible options and various pathways and understanding what classes they need now to benefit them in the future.” [Young person]

“Teaching me what I am interested in, building on that. Then teaching me how I can apply it in the real world.” [Young person]

“It should be realistic, yet inspiring. Shouldn’t crush dreams, but perhaps reshape them.” [Young person].⁶⁹⁴

Mr Wells from Hester Hornbrook Academy agreed that school career development should focus on the individual rather than directing students to industries with strong jobs growth. He argued:

I think all teachers, all people who are approaching young people have to start to approach them from an option of possibility. This flies in the face of much of what we talk about: ‘Let’s identify the jobs that are available for young people and teach them for that’. That is not opening up possibilities; that is narrowing down opportunities and shutting down opportunities ... Education has to be about the young person standing in front of you, not the job that might be available in five years’ time. Our young people are complex, they are diverse, they all come with their own narratives and stories and very complex situations going on. If you are talking about the genuinely disadvantaged young person, you cannot approach them saying, ‘In four years’ time there are going to be a lot of jobs in early years, so you should start training there’ or ‘In three years’ time, there are going to be a lot of jobs in the NDIS—you should start training there’. That is not the start of a conversation with a disadvantaged young person. The start of a conversation with our young people is, ‘Who are you? What do you want to do? Where do you want to go? What do you want to be? Because there are no limits ...’⁶⁹⁵

A 2011 study on career development for the Australian Government, found that young people facing disadvantage made it clear they do not want schools and career practitioners to make assumptions about what they can and cannot do in terms of their career.⁶⁹⁶

Providing school career practitioners with more resources and ensuring they undertake professional development on better supporting students facing disadvantage will enable career practitioners to provide more tailored guidance to these students.

Students facing disadvantage need better access to work experience

A common concern among stakeholders was the lack of work experience opportunities for students facing disadvantage. For example, feedback to VAEAI noted that only 40% of Year 10 Koorie students participate in work experience, and Section 5.1.4 outlined the difficulties students with disability have finding

⁶⁹⁴ Melbourne City Mission, *Submission 81*, 4.

⁶⁹⁵ Mr Dave Wells, *Transcript of evidence*, 52.

⁶⁹⁶ Urbis, *National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) research project element 2: synthesis report*, 4.

work experience placements.⁶⁹⁷ Work experience is crucial for students facing disadvantage to expose them to work environments, occupations and industries that are unfamiliar to them.⁶⁹⁸ Research also shows that exposure to work environments during secondary school improves employment outcomes for students facing disadvantage.⁶⁹⁹

The NDS has developed the Ticket to Work program, which has been successful at improving post-school employment rates among young people with disability through work experience. The program works with young people with disability and their families and schools to tailor a combination of curriculum, work experience and School-based Apprenticeships and Traineeships (SbATs).⁷⁰⁰

Ticket to Work has created over 1000 jobs for students with significant disability, with most of these being SbATs.⁷⁰¹ An independent pilot study of Ticket to Work found:

- participants were almost twice as likely to have completed Year 12 as non-participants
- 86% of participants were in open employment one to three years after finishing school
- participants were four times more likely to be working than other young people with disability.⁷⁰²

NDS supports an ‘employment first’ approach to school career development for young people with disability. This approach considers employment as the first and preferred outcome of career development services for students with disability regardless of their impairment. NDS highlighted that the Western Australian Department of Education is using this approach and that legislation in the United States of America requires schools to work with Disability Vocational and Employment Services to deliver the same approach when providing career and transition support to students with disability.⁷⁰³

Finding employers who are willing to take on work experience students facing disadvantage can be difficult. Mr Hogan from Amaze noted that employers may have preconceptions about these students:

I think the first person [student] is always the hardest, to create that attitudinal change with an employer. You get the first one in, and then it is easier after that, and all those kinds of attitudinal barriers come down, preconceptions, about what an autistic person might be like in the workplace. They actually find out that they have greater outputs, less sick leave—all this is very evidence based—but I think it is about how we support workplaces in doing that.⁷⁰⁴

⁶⁹⁷ Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, *Submission 38*, 4.

⁶⁹⁸ Mr Keith Brownbill, *Submission 86*, 1.

⁶⁹⁹ National Disability Services, *Submission 69*, 4; Victorian Multicultural Commission, *Submission 87*, 5.

⁷⁰⁰ National Disability Services, *Submission 69*, 10.

⁷⁰¹ *ibid.*

⁷⁰² *ibid.*, 10–11.

⁷⁰³ *ibid.*, 6, 9, 11.

⁷⁰⁴ Mr Braedan Hogan, *Transcript of evidence*, 38–39.

Mr Wells reiterated that schools need to take into account individuals' circumstances when organising work experience:

A lot our kids simply are not ready to go into some of the employment contexts, and we have to wait until the senior years more, which is not ideal from a careers development perspective ... It is quite difficult for us, because reputation-wise students just not turning up to a work placement when you have done all of the work with the placement to organise it and that kind of thing is very difficult. We still do it, but we manage it very closely.⁷⁰⁵

Other stakeholders agreed that the success of work experience for students facing disadvantage depends on an individual student's circumstances, skills, level of confidence and aspirations.⁷⁰⁶ Aligning an individual student's skills with a gap in the job market has been successful in jurisdictions such as Western Australia and New South Wales.⁷⁰⁷

Dedicated funding will help students facing disadvantage access career development opportunities

The cost of accessing career development activities and vocational education and training can be prohibitive for low-income families. For example, Mrs Jackie Horkings, Careers and Pathways Adviser at Irymple Secondary College, stated:

A lot of the VET options that students have, have a cost that goes with them. Some families struggle to pay any sort of school fees, and with some of the VET options there is \$500 for beauty services or \$200 for automotive, which is also a restriction. A lot of kids drop out early on because they cannot pay the materials cost. Perhaps some sort of funding arrangement like you do with camps and that sort of thing might be a way of students from low-income families accessing some of those VET subjects. Some are very expensive, but they may like to do them.⁷⁰⁸

A number of stakeholders suggested that a subsidy similar to the current Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) could help students undertake vocational education and training while at school and access career development activities.⁷⁰⁹ The CSEF is a Victorian Government fund that provides students from low socioeconomic backgrounds payments to attend camps, excursions and swimming, sports and outdoor education programs. DET allocates money to eligible students but pays it to the school, which subsidises the activities.

As with regional students in Chapter 4, the Committee recommends that DET create a career development fund for students from low-income families to have the opportunity to undertake Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS) programs or participate in career development activities. DET should pay

⁷⁰⁵ Mr Dave Wells, *Transcript of evidence*, 54.

⁷⁰⁶ Ms Michelle Wakeford, *Transcript of evidence*, 39; Ms Joanna Humphries, *Transcript of evidence*, 54.

⁷⁰⁷ Ms Michelle Wakeford, *Transcript of evidence*, 39; Mr Braedan Hogan, *Transcript of evidence*, 39; Ms Andrea Evans-McCall, *Transcript of evidence*, 39.

⁷⁰⁸ Mrs Jackie Horkings, Career and Pathways Adviser, Irymple Secondary College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 30.

⁷⁰⁹ For example, Mr Graeme Forrester, Executive Principal, Chaffey Secondary College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 30; Ms Amanda Boulton, Pathways Coordinator, Red Cliffs Secondary College, *Transcript of evidence*, Mildura, 22 March 2018, 30; Ms Gail McHardy, *Transcript of evidence*, 6.

the money allocated to eligible students to their school, which then subsidises course costs and costs associated with attending career development activities and events.

RECOMMENDATION 45: That the Department of Education and Training establish a career development fund for students from low-income families to cover tuition and materials costs of Vocational Education and Training in Schools programs and participation in career development activities.

Students facing disadvantage need more information on available supports

As mentioned throughout this chapter, students facing disadvantage as well as their families and school career practitioners are often not aware of the scholarships, programs, services and supports that these students are eligible for. Stakeholders recommended the promotion of this information, such as through an online portal accessible to young people, parents and schools.⁷¹⁰ An online portal, which is regularly updated, would ensure that school career practitioners have access to current information to best guide their students.⁷¹¹

The Committee's recommendation in Chapter 3 to create an online portal advertising relevant scholarships, support programs and employment, education and training opportunities for secondary students will provide this information to young people facing disadvantage and their families and school career practitioners. The portal should allow users to refine information on scholarship, support and financial assistance opportunities by the type of disadvantage experienced.

5.2.3 Mentoring programs can lift the aspirations of students facing disadvantage

Stakeholders who work with young people facing disadvantage regularly raised low expectations and aspirations as barriers to these young people exploring and embarking on post-school pathways.⁷¹² Low expectations of students can come from families, teachers and school career practitioners, and they can discourage students from having high career aspirations and lead them to choose low skilled and poorly paid jobs.⁷¹³

Mission Australia stated, 'It can be arduous for the career advisers to influence and change these attitudes and perceptions' and suggested that parents and family members be included in career development services to support students to aspire to more meaningful careers.⁷¹⁴

710 Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, *Submission 38*, 4; Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, *Submission 61*, 2.

711 Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, *Submission 61*, 2.

712 For example, Victorian Local Learning and Employment Networks, *Submission 21*, 10; Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, *Submission 38*, 6; Victorian Council of Social Service, *Submission 54*, 8; Mission Australia, *Submission 68*, 6; Victorian Multicultural Commission, *Submission 87A*, 1; Ms Andrea Evans-McCall, *Transcript of evidence*, 36.

713 Mission Australia, *Submission 68*, 6.

714 *ibid.*

Ms Andrea Evans-McCall, a National Disability Coordination Officer, added that school career practitioners should undertake professional development so as not to make assumptions about the abilities of students facing disadvantage, such as young people with disability. She stated professional development for career practitioners:

needs to be around the culture of low expectations. I guess it is that if you do not know what a young person can do, if you do not know that young person, you are making these huge assumptions about what you think they can do, and quite often we are seeing that. So I think it needs to be more case studies, so that they can start to see what a young person with a disability can do, like what their strengths are and what they can do. Because I have seen a real culture of low expectations from careers advisers.⁷¹⁵

Mr Wells from Hester Hornbrook Academy noted the importance that school career practitioners have in lifting student aspirations:

We certainly believe that young people do not have low aspirations for themselves, and that bears out as soon as you get into a decent long-term conversation with young people. Start to identify opportunities, options, give them positive experiences, and very quickly their aspirations for themselves escalate. Young people are, I think, the victims, if you like, of the low aspirations of others for them, and they can very quickly turn that around with a bit of support. It is not actually that hard. It can take some time, but it has got to be an ongoing relational conversation.⁷¹⁶

The purpose of school career development should be to build confidence among students facing disadvantage that they can go on to higher education or employment. As explained by Professor James Bright, a Professorial Fellow in Career Education and Development at the Australian Catholic University:

it is about that notion that they can be further exposed and have contact, whether it is familiarisation with going into a college of further education or into a university or meeting employers and actually knowing, 'Yes, I can do this. I can have a conversation with an employer. I can find my way around a university campus, and I can begin to feel at home'. Those very basic kinds of things are career education, and it is about building up that confidence and that mastery, and I think that is a very important aspect of this.⁷¹⁷

Associate Professor Andrew Harvey, Director of the Centre for Higher Education, Equity and Diversity Research at La Trobe University, agreed that school career development for young people facing disadvantage should not focus on occupations or tertiary admission processes but on building students' confidence. He stated:

There is a lot of work that has to happen particularly with low SES [socioeconomic status] around expectations and plasticity of intelligence—the fact that people can learn, people can get smarter. A lot of people do not actually believe that. A lot of

715 Ms Andrea Evans-McCall, *Transcript of evidence*, 40.

716 Mr Dave Wells, *Transcript of evidence*, 52.

717 Professor James Bright, Professorial Fellow, Career Education & Development, Faculty of Education and Arts, Australian Catholic University, *Transcript of evidence*, Melbourne, 19 February 2018, 66.

low-SES students and regional students think the main reason they do not go to university, whoever they are, is that university is not for people like them. That is the same for Indigenous students, regional boys, it does not matter. So we need to normalise not only university but careers for all of those diverse students and to keep promulgating the idea that intelligence is not fixed and that everyone is capable of a range of careers ...⁷¹⁸

Several programs exist to lift students' aspirations such as the Raising Expectations project run by the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare. The aim of the project is to lift the educational aspirations of young people in, or who have left, out-of-home care so they pursue and undertake study at university or TAFE.⁷¹⁹ Another example is the Links to Learning: LOTE program, which works with Year 9 students from culturally diverse backgrounds that are at risk of disengaging from school and helps them to develop confidence, skills and education pathways towards their career goals.⁷²⁰

Another strategy recommended by several stakeholders was running mentoring programs for young people facing disadvantage.⁷²¹ Mentors can help these young people with their transition from school to further study or employment by encouraging, advising and providing an example of what people in similar circumstances to them can achieve.⁷²²

The Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) is one example presented to the Committee that showed how mentors can build young people's aspirations and help them transition to further education, training or employment.⁷²³ AIME works with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in Years 9–12 to raise aspirations and improve students' skills, opportunities and confidence. Each student is matched with a university student mentor. In each of the past six years, at least 75% of AIME students have transitioned into employment or university compared with the national Indigenous rate of 42%.⁷²⁴

In the northern suburbs of Melbourne, the Koorie Academy of Excellence run by VAEAI and DET aims to lift Koorie students' aspirations through a program of social, cultural and leadership activities. As explained by Mr Lionel Bamblett, General Manager of VAEAI, the Academy:

is built around the notion of leadership, academic development and cultural maintenance. There is a very heavy mentoring component right throughout the program and that is rolling out successfully at present.⁷²⁵

718 Associate Professor Andrew Harvey, *Transcript of evidence*, 65–66.

719 Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare, *Submission 61*, 1.

720 Victorian Multicultural Commission, *Submission 87*, 14.

721 For example, Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service, *Submission 29*, 27; Victorian Council of Social Service, *Submission 54*, 9; Australian Education Union, Victorian Branch, *Submission 79*, 14; Victorian Multicultural Commission, *Submission 87*, 10; Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated, *Submission 38*, 4.

722 Victorian Multicultural Commission, *Submission 87*, 19; Youth Action, *Career guidance: the missing link in school to work transitions*, 33.

723 Victorian Council of Social Service, *Submission 54*, 9.

724 Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience, *What is AIME* (2018), <<https://aimementoring.com/about>> viewed 13 July 2018.

725 Mr Lionel Bamblett, *Transcript of evidence*, 46.

Mentoring programs run by The Smith Family were also noted for their effectiveness at lifting students' aspirations.⁷²⁶ For example, the Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals (VASSP), the professional association for principals, assistant principals and leading teachers in government secondary schools, stated:

Principals report that, particularly in contexts where there are high levels of socio-economic disadvantage, working with agencies such as the Smith Family is important. Through a range of programs and supports, including mentoring and work experience, the Smith Family provides valuable work with schools to assist students in their pathways planning to continue with education and increase the likelihood of successful educational and employment outcomes. One of the key outcomes reported by Principals who work with the Smith Family is the impact this work has on raising the aspirations of young people in socio-economically disadvantaged areas.⁷²⁷

Mr Wells also praised mentoring programs but noted that they need funding:

We also used to run a program which was started by the Maribyrnong and Moonee Valley LLEN out in the west. It was a program called YMAP, Youth Mentoring Assisted Pathway. We worked with schools to identify young people who were at risk of dropping out of school, and we worked to identify long-term pathways for those young people ... The program was defunded. We are playing around with trying to figure out what sort of mentoring programs work, but we know what works and they simply will not work unless they have funding to back them up.⁷²⁸

He added that mentoring programs have been proven to work and that schools need to identify students who are at risk and link them with a mentoring program to improve their post-school outcomes.⁷²⁹

FINDING 37: Mentoring programs that connect students facing disadvantage with mentors from similar backgrounds can inspire young people to develop higher career aspirations and help them to successfully transition into education, training or employment.

RECOMMENDATION 46: That the Victorian Government support current and future mentoring programs for students facing disadvantage to transition from school to higher education or employment.

⁷²⁶ Department of Education and Training, Australia, *Career and skills pathways: research into a whole-of-system approach to enhancing lifelong career support mechanisms for all Australians: final report*, report prepared by PriceWaterhouseCoopers (2017), 18.

⁷²⁷ Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals, *Submission 22*, 3.

⁷²⁸ Mr Dave Wells, *Transcript of evidence*, 51.

⁷²⁹ *ibid.*

6

Concluding remarks

Career development in Victorian schools is not meeting the needs of students. Some students told the Committee they do not feel their school career practitioners are providing them with adequate guidance and others said that career development services at schools are too generic and not offered early enough. Employers were also concerned with the quality of career development provided to students, stating that the advice given often does not reflect the nature of their industries or the reality of the labour market.

There is a large degree of inconsistency in how Victorian schools deliver career development to students, which is up to each school's leadership team. The evidence presented to the Committee suggested that many schools do not allocate enough time and resources to career development and that school career practitioners struggle to spend enough time with students, keep their knowledge current and make connections with local employers and higher education providers.

The Committee believes that career development should be a core component of secondary school education. Each school should have a career development strategy, adopt a whole-of-school approach to career development and elevate the role of the school career practitioner by hiring qualified, professionally registered staff who are remunerated accordingly.

Schools need more resources for career development and the Department of Education and Training (DET) should support schools to implement a ratio of one school career practitioner for every 450 students enrolled. DET should also fund external add-on support through a coordinator at each Local Learning and Employment Network. The coordinator can facilitate links between schools, industry and higher education providers, provide independent advice to students and parents, and be available via telephone, email and online chat to provide guidance to young people in their region, including recent school leavers.

To provide better guidance to students, school career development services should be tailored to the individual and include regular one-to-one meetings between students and career practitioners from Year 7. Exposure to workplaces, vocational education and training and tertiary education should also begin early and continue throughout students' schooling. To keep schools accountable, DET should monitor the provision of services and track how schools spend career development funding.

Some students have greater career development needs than others. Regional students and students facing disadvantage often miss out on career development opportunities due to factors such as location, cultural barriers, smaller social networks, low expectations, financial pressures, family responsibilities and

disengagement from school. Providing these students with individualised guidance, extra support to participate in career development opportunities and access to mentors will help to reduce the inequity they experience.

Implementing the recommendations in this report will provide schools with more resources for career development and improve the quality and frequency of service delivery, which will ultimately help build students' skills and confidence to navigate their transition from school and their future professional life.

**Adopted by the Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee
55 St Andrews Place, East Melbourne
6 August 2018**

Appendix 1

List of submissions

Submission no.	Individual or organisation	Date received
1	Year13	13 October 2017
2	Mr Mithat Demir	2 November 2017
3	Notre Dame College	8 November 2017
4	The Knox School	9 November 2017
5	Name withheld	10 November 2017
6	Rosehill Secondary College	16 November 2017
7	Balwyn High School	17 November 2017
8	Australian International Academy of Education	17 November 2017
9	Ms Caroline O'Donnell	17 November 2017
10	Academy of Mary Immaculate	23 November 2017
11	Brauer College	23 November 2017
12	Hallam Senior College	29 November 2017
13	Ms Sally Gilder	29 November 2017
14	Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce	30 November 2017
15	Victorian Parents Council	10 December 2017
16	Wallan Secondary College	11 December 2017
17	Dr Mark Glazebrook	11 December 2017
18	Hair and Beauty Australia	11 December 2017
19	Mr Lionel Parrott	11 December 2017
20	Box Hill Institute Group	12 December 2017
21	Victorian Local Learning and Employment Networks	12 December 2017
22	Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals	13 December 2017
23	Ms Judy O'Donohue, Director/Career Practitioner/Consultant, Career Me Now	13 December 2017
24	Goulburn Ovens TAFE	13 December 2017
25	Ms Catherine Armstrong	13 December 2017
26	Career Education Association of Victoria	14 December 2017
27	Anglicare Victoria	14 December 2017
28	TAFE Directors Australia	14 December 2017
29	Youth Affairs Council Victoria, Victorian Student Representative Council and Youth Disability Advocacy Service	14 December 2017
30	The Gordon	14 December 2017
31	Doncaster Secondary College	14 December 2017
32	Ms Kerry Moloney	14 December 2017
33	Mr Scott Westray	14 December 2017
34	G21-Geelong Region Alliance	14 December 2017
35	North-West Careers Group	14 December 2017
36	National Centre for Vocational Education Research	14 December 2017

Submission no.	Individual or organisation	Date received
37	Mr Bruce Connor	14 December 2017
38	Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated	14 December 2017
39	Eltham College	14 December 2017
40	South Gippsland Bass Coast Local Learning and Employment Network	14 December 2017
41	Australian Catholic University	14 December 2017
42	TwoPointZero	14 December 2017
43	Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre	14 December 2017
44	Moreland Darebin Careers Network	14 December 2017
45	Ms Amanda Ellwood	15 December 2017
46	River City Christian College	15 December 2017
47	Tertiary Information Service	15 December 2017
48	Victorian National Disability Coordination Officer State Network	15 December 2017
49	Catholic Regional College, Sydenham	15 December 2017
50	Ai Group	15 December 2017
51	Victorian TAFE Association	15 December 2017
52	Mr Karl Mahr	15 December 2017
53	Young Workers Centre	15 December 2017
54	Victorian Council of Social Service	15 December 2017
55	Northern Melbourne VET Cluster and South East VET Cluster	15 December 2017
56	Geelong Grammar School	15 December 2017
57	Holmesglen Institute	15 December 2017
58	Ms Melyssa Fuqua	15 December 2017
59	Amaze	15 December 2017
60	Ms Felicity Wilmot	15 December 2017
61	Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare	15 December 2017
62	Independent Schools Victoria	15 December 2017
63	Kaniva College	15 December 2017
64	Ms Anne Trickey, Executive Officer, Campaspe Cohuna Local Learning and Employment Network	15 December 2017
65	Good Education Group	15 December 2017
66	Victorian Farmers Federation	15 December 2017
67	Mitchell Institute	15 December 2017
68	Mission Australia	15 December 2017
69	National Disability Services	15 December 2017
70	Aitken College	15 December 2017
71	Dandenong High School	15 December 2017
72	Foundation for Young Australians	15 December 2017
73	Mr Tony Sheahan	16 December 2017
74	Haileybury College and Haileybury Girls College	16 December 2017
75	Baw Baw Latrobe Local Learning and Employment Network	18 December 2017
76	St Francis Xavier College	19 December 2017
77	Business Council of Australia	19 December 2017
78	Catholic Education Commission of Victoria	19 December 2017

Submission no.	Individual or organisation	Date received
79	Australian Education Union, Victorian Branch	22 December 2017
80	Restaurant & Catering Australia	22 December 2017
81	Melbourne City Mission	22 December 2017
82	Parents Victoria	29 December 2017
83	Carers Victoria	5 January 2018
83A	Supplementary submission	17 May 2018
84	Career Development Association of Australia	8 January 2018
85	La Trobe University	11 January 2018
86	Mr Keith Brownbill	15 January 2018
87	Victorian Multicultural Commission	16 January 2018
87A	Supplementary submission	17 May 2018
88	Department of Education and Training	19 January 2018
89	Futures Foundation	13 March 2018
90	Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project	24 April 2018
91	Mr Kenneth McLeod	2 May 2018

Appendix 2

List of witnesses

Melbourne, 19 February 2018

Name	Position	Organisation
Ms Judy O'Donohue	Director/Career Practitioner/Consultant	Career Me Now
Mr Steve Shepherd	Chief Executive Officer	TwoPointZero
Ms Melyssa Fuqua		
Ms Bernadette Gigliotti	Chief Executive Officer	
Mr Frank Thompson	President	Career Education Association of Victoria
Mr Phil Newnham	Treasurer	
Mr Allan Moyle	National Vice President	
Ms Louise Walsh	Member, National Learning and Development Committee	Career Development Association of Australia
Ms Megan O'Connell	Institute Director	
Ms Kate Torii	Policy Analyst	Mitchell Institute
Mr Peter Roberts	Director, School Services	
Ms Aine Maher	Director, Education Services	Independent Schools Victoria
Ms Sue Bell	President	
Mr Colin Axup	Principal, Suzanne Cory High School and Committee Member	Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals
Ms Jerri Nelson	Executive Officer, North Central LLEN	
Mr Trent McCarthy	Executive Officer, Central Ranges LLEN	Victorian Local Learning and Employment Networks
Mr Justin Mallaly	Deputy President	
Ms Erin Aulich	Vice President, Secondary	Australian Education Union
Mr John Graham	Research Officer	
Professor James Bright	Professorial Fellow, Career Education and Development, Faculty of Education and Arts	Australian Catholic University
Associate Professor Andrew Harvey	Director, Centre for Higher Education, Equity and Diversity Research	La Trobe University

Mildura, 22 March 2018

Name	Position	Organisation
Ms Sara Wrate	President	Sunraysia Careers Network
Ms Nicole Clisby-Weir	Vice President	
Mr Ron Broadhead	Executive Officer	Northern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network
Mr Peter Devilee	Managing Director	Devilee's Air Conditioning & Refrigeration
Mr Peter Ebner	Manager, Business Development	Lower Murray Water
Mr Robert Wheatley	General Manager, Almond Operations Australia	Olam
Mr Graeme Forrester	Executive Principal	Chaffey Secondary College
Ms Sara Wrate	Transition and Pathways Leading Teacher	
Mr Campbell Griffiths	Year 10 student	
Ms Jade Aitken	Year 10 student	
Mr David Browne	Principal	Red Cliffs Secondary College
Mrs Amanda Boulton	Pathways Coordinator	
Mr Sebastian McNabb	Year 11 student	
Ms Dallas Gange	Year 11 student	
Mr Graeme Cupper	Principal	Merbein P-10 College
Mr Andrew Willison	Careers Coordinator	
Ms McKenzie Dunne	Year 10 student	
Ms Kaycee Fleming	Year 10 student	
Mrs Jackie Horkings	Career and Pathways Adviser	Irymple Secondary College
Ms Tamsin McLean	Year 10 student	
Ms Siaan Brookes	Year 10 student	
Mrs Tracy Marr	Assistant Principal, Transition and Pathways	Mildura Senior College
Ms Linda Snoxall	VET Coordinator	
Ms Bethany Simpson	2017 graduate	
Mr Izaak Luitjes	Year 12 student and Vice Captain	
Ms Debbie Bell	Careers Counsellor	St Joseph's College Mildura
Mrs Julia Lewis	College VET Coordinator	
Ms Tayla Pahl	Year 12 student	
Mr Nicholas Opie	Year 12 student	
Ms Nicole Clisby-Weir	Pathways Coordinator	Trinity Lutheran College Mildura
Ms Simone Palamara	Year 10 student	
Mr Robin Kuhne	General Manager, Education	Sunraysia Institute of TAFE

Melbourne, 26 March 2018

Name	Position	Organisation
Ms Gail McHardy	Executive Officer	Parents Victoria
Ms Leanne McCurdy	Administration and Executive Support	
Mr William Stublely	Chief Executive Officer	Year13
Ms Jan Owen	Chief Executive Officer	Foundation for Young Australians
Ms Sherry-Rose Bih Watts	Associate, YLab	
Dr Jessie Mitchell	Policy Manager	Youth Affairs Council Victoria
Ms Leah van Poppel	Manager	Youth Disability Advocacy Service
Ms Marlee van Mourik	TAFE student	
Ms Shannon Bone	Year 12 student	Victorian Student Representative Council
Mr Tom Saxton	Year 11 student	
Ms Wren Gillett	Year 11 student	
Ms Clare Joseph	Year 12 student	
Ms Katy Haire	Deputy Secretary, Early Childhood and School Education	Department of Education and Training
Mr Nick Beckingsale	Executive Director, Secondary Reform, Transitions and Priority Cohorts Division, Early Childhood and School Education Group	
Ms Rose Vallance	University student	Country Education Partnership
Mr Joe Collins	University student	
Ms Alice Whitford	Year 12 student	
Mr Nathan Grigg	University student	
Mr Sam Rice	Year 12 student	
Ms Emily Turnbull	University graduate	
Mr Xavier Healy	University student	

Melbourne, 7 May 2018

Name	Position	Organisation
Mr Nigel Muller	Executive Manager, Training, Auto Apprenticeships and Skills	Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce
Ms Meg Parkinson	President, Victorian Farmers Federation Industrial Association and Chair, Workplace Relations Committee	Victorian Farmers Federation
Ms Jonty Low	Project Manager, Tourism and Hospitality Careers Council	Restaurant & Catering Australia
Ms Tracey Jeffery	Skills and Jobs Centre Adviser	The Gordon
Ms Keelie Hamilton	Director, Student and Industry Engagement	
Dr Arnaldo Barone	Director, Policy and Advocacy	Victorian TAFE Association
Ms Jodee Price	Manager, Skills and Employment	Goulburn Ovens TAFE
Ms Fleur Goulding	Executive Officer, Office of the Chief Executive and Board Secretary	Holmesglen Institute
Ms Jane Young	Manager, Employment Initiatives	Box Hill Institute Group
Ms Vicki Bawden	Cluster Coordinator	North Melbourne VET Cluster and South East VET Cluster
Mr Phil Loveder	Manager, Stakeholder Engagement	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
Mr Braedan Hogan	Manager, Public Affairs and NDIS Transition	Amaze
Mr David Moody	State Manager	National Disability Services
Ms Michelle Wakeford	National Ticket to Work Manager	
Ms Andrea Evans-McCall	National Disability Coordination Officer	Victorian National Disability Coordination Officer State Network
Mr Lionel Bamblett	General Manager	Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Incorporated
Ms Emma King	Chief Executive Officer	Victorian Council of Social Service
Mr Gabriel Aleksandrs	Policy Advisor	Carers Victoria
Ms Joanna Humphries	Project Manager, Raising Expectations: Improving Educational Outcomes for Young People Leaving Care	Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare
Ms Aileen Lacey	Area Manager, Victoria	Mission Australia
Mr Dave Wells	Principal, Hester Hornbrook Academy and General Manager, Early Years, Education and Employment	Melbourne City Mission
Ms Sinead McKenna-Reid	VCAL student	Hester Hornbrook Academy
Ms Thaysha Halemba	Graduate	

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