Managing Life, Learning and Work in the 21st Century

Issues Informing the Design

of an Australian Blueprint

for Career Development

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The Transition from School Taskforce of the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) is currently investigating the development of a national framework that specifies the competencies that Australians of all ages need in order to build and manage their lives and careers.

Based on the Canadian *Blueprint for Life/Work Designs*, an Australian version is being developed by Miles Morgan Australia Pty Ltd, under the guidance of the national Career and Transition Services Working Group.

This paper, written by Mary McMahon, Wendy Patton and Peter Tatham, has been commissioned by Miles Morgan Australia to raise awareness of the important issues that an Australian Blueprint seeks to address. It synthesises the theoretical, policy and practice perspectives that will help to inform the development of the Blueprint within the Australian context. It also provides a useful, concise and informative resource for those with an interest in assisting people to effectively manage their lives, learning and work in the 21st century.

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Changes in the nature and availability of work and the corresponding demands on workers to engage in repeated occupational and learning transitions throughout life have heralded a rise in the importance of and necessity for the provision of career services across the lifespan. This is evidenced at an international level by the involvement of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in international research into the topic conducted across 14 countries including Australia. At a national level, it is evidenced by reports such as "Stepping forward: Improving pathways for all young people" (Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), 2002b), "Employability skills for the future" (Department of Education, Science, and Training (DEST), 2002), "Report on the MCEETYA taskforce on transition from school" (MCEETYA, 2002a), and the "Shaping our Future" project currently being conducted by the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA).

Such intense interest in preparing workers for the future has brought sharply into focus the differences between the skills and competencies needed by the workers of the industrial era and the workers of the future. While technical and job-specific skills have sufficed in the past, it is increasingly being accepted that the worker of the future will need a more comprehensive set of competencies, "meta-competencies" such as learning skills, life management skills, and communication skills that are not occupation specific and are transferable across all facets of life and work. The economic value, to individuals and the nation as a whole, of a workforce equipped with these "meta-competencies" cannot be underestimated and their development cannot be left to chance.

The concept of "meta-competencies" is not new to Australia as the recent "Employability skills for the future" (DEST, 2002) report evidences a change in focus away from job-specific skills. Indeed it recommends the development of these "meta-competencies" in individuals and suggests that the report be used to inform curriculum development. There are two main differences between the competencies presented in this document and the "meta-competencies"

presented in the career development frameworks produced in Canada (Hache, Redekopp, & Jarvis, 2000) and the United States of America (National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC)(US), 1996). First, the competencies of the "employability skills framework" have been conceptualised with an employment focus. Specifically they represent the skills needed to maximise employees' progression within and contribution to the strategic direction of an enterprise (DEST, 2002). However, employment contracts represent only one facet of career development and it is becoming increasingly evident that individuals need to be equipped with the competencies that will enable them to transition repeatedly between learning, work and other life roles in order to create a life balance for themselves that is both satisfying and productive. The second difference between the competencies identified in "Employability Skills for the future" (DEST, 2002) and competencies identified in the United States and Canada is that these other countries have recognised the notion of lifespan career development and refined and expanded their competencies to reflect age/stage appropriateness across the lifespan and presented them in the form of a framework or blueprint. Significantly, when presented in the context of lifespan career development, these competencies can be used to inform the coherent development of practice and policy.

Australia too has recognised the importance of the development of a framework or blueprint. For example, in 2001 the National Careers Task force drafted several terms of reference for the Quality Working Group. Essentially the terms of reference were to develop a quality assurance framework and standards in career education, facilitate professional associations to develop nationally agreed standards for career professionals in all sectors, and investigate ways to improve the quality standards for career information. More recently the MCEETYA Transition from School Taskforce has commissioned the writing of a career development blueprint for Australia based on the Canadian model.

The purpose of this paper is to:
- establish the context in which the Australian blueprint is being written;
- provide a rationale for using a lifespan career development framework to guide career policy and practice; and
- raise awareness about the need for and usefulness of a career development blueprint for Australia.

The world of work is marked by an accelerating complexity and non-linearity – these features have been well documented (Hall, 1996; Herr, 1997; Patton & McMahon, 1999). Work is no longer characterised by a set of tasks which are mastered once, and a career is no longer characterised by a vertical process of advancement within the one organisation. Increasingly work can be characterised as a series of periods within and outside paid employment, linked by experiences of learning and retraining. In addition these periods of paid employment may include casual work, short-term contracts and job sharing.

Definitions of career and career development have changed over time to accommodate both the changed understanding of these related concepts and the changing nature of the world of work. For example, early definitions of career were synonymous with the terms vocation or occupation (Patton & McMahon, 1999), that is, paid employment. Correspondingly, early definitions of career development focused on occupational choice (Patton & McMahon). More recently career development has been proffered as a description of both the influences and processes relevant in understanding career behaviour, and is closely related to career intervention. Patton (2001) described career development as "the process of managing learning and work over the lifespan" (p. 14). Increasingly there has been acknowledgement that career development is a lifespan process where paid employment is embedded in the complex systems that represent the lives of people (Patton & McMahon). For example, paid employment influences and is influenced by education, family

considerations and needs, personal values, organisational change and government policy. Definitions of career development have evolved over time to reflect these changes as evidenced by Wolfe and Kolb (1980) who claim "Career development involves one's whole life, not just occupation … it concerns him or her in the ever-changing contexts of his or her life …self and circumstances – evolving, changing, unfolding in mutual interaction" (p. 9).

Indeed, the term "life/career" has become widely used and what clearly needs to be acknowledged is the active role the individual needs to take in his or her own ongoing career development. As the world of work has changed and continues to change, there is widespread agreement in the literature that individuals need to be much more than passive recipients of a life/career process.

Rather they will necessarily need to be proactive life/career managers in order to be responsive to their own changing needs and changes in the nature and structure of paid employment including the proliferation of short-term contract work, casual work, contingent work and a decrease in full-time permanent work, the irrefutable influence of globalisation and lifelong learning requirements. Thus emerging definitions of career and career development are reflective of a proactive, individual centred, lifespan, life/career management process where individuals are active in responding and adapting to change and in creating, constructing, designing, and identifying paid employment opportunities, life and learning experiences that will enable them to create satisfying lives.

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In summary the concepts of career and career development have changed over time to reflect:
- holistic views of paid employment as one facet of an individual's life;
- dynamic interaction between individuals, paid employment and life;
- a constantly changing world of work; and
- the necessity for individuals to be proactive life/career managers.

Clearly the challenge for individuals is to play a greater role in constructing their own career development, in both their access of ongoing learning opportunities, and in their representation in the world of work. Individuals need to prepare for the likelihood of a number of occupationally related working experiences during a lifetime – indeed these working experiences may not be related to a particular occupation but may be organised around particular sets of skills required by particular projects. Savickas (1999) suggests that in preparing for such a dynamic working life, individuals need to constantly "look ahead" and "look around". Amundson, Parker, and Arthur (2002) further this notion in discussing "a continuing tension between leveraging past experience and positioning for future opportunity" (p. 27). In line with other writers, they emphasise the imperative that individuals need to learn to actively act on environments of change, citing the notion of an individual as a self-organising, active system – "The common thread is that people make sense of the world of work through subjective interpretation of their own career experience. In living through the complexity of economic life, they draw new insights and formulate new strategies that make sense of this complexity" (Amundson, Parker, & Arthur, p. 27). Individuals increasingly need to focus on learning the skills which will assist them in taking responsibility for the direction and evolution of their own careers. Developing skills that enhance current performance and equip for the next employment experience is an important underpinning of this focus.

In a world where "new labour market entrants are likely to experience a succession of work roles, with 12 – 25 jobs in up to five industry sectors in their working lives" (Jarvis, 2002, p. 3), narrowly defined job-specific or technical skills represent only one facet of what industry and individuals require to survive and thrive in the 21st century. Much effort has been dedicated to the identification of the skills or competencies needed by an appropriately skilled community. For example, the "meta-competencies" presented in the career development frameworks produced in Canada (Hache, Redekopp, & Jarvis, 2000) and the United States of America (NOICC, 1996) clearly identify the life/career management skills required by individuals to successfully negotiate life and work roles. In Australia, as early as 1992 the Mayer committee identified seven Key Competencies, followed later by an eighth competency required by workers (AEC, 1992). More recently, the Employability Skills for the Future report has identified 13 personal attributes and eight key skills that contribute to overall employability (DEST, 2002). However, there is a significant difference between employability skills and the life/career management skills identified in Canada and the United States of America. Specifically, the Employability Skills Framework has been developed with a paid employment focus and the needs of employers and business enterprises in mind. In contrast, life/career management skills serve the needs of individuals in preparing them to transition repeatedly between work, learning and other life roles in order to create a life/career that is both satisfying and productive. Clearly, a focus on employability skills alone only partially prepares individuals for living and working in the 21st century.

In summary, individuals will be required to:
- repeatedly change work roles;
- actively engage in learning throughout life;
- develop the employability and life/career management skills necessary to thrive in the 21st century; and
- proactively design and manage their life/career progression.

These changes in thinking around career and the role of the individual in constructing his/her own career invites a new focus on the place of learning in life. The industrial view of the three ages of life of an individual included the ages of schooling and formal education, the working life, and retirement (see Table 2). Traditionally, learning in the second and third ages has been viewed as not nearly as significant or as important as the learning one obtains in the first age. More recently the notion of continuous or lifelong learning has become widely accepted. Defined by the Commission of the European Communities (2000) as "all purposeful learning activity, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge skills and competence", the concept of lifelong learning is seen as pivotal to successful life/career management in the 21st century.

As the traditional career pattern increasingly resembles a patchwork curriculum vitae characterised by continuous learning processes, new types of competence are needed. Of key importance is "meta-competence" which cuts across occupational skills and can be universally applied, and the most important type of "meta-competence" is the ability and the will to keep learning. Mirvis and Hall (1996) assert that workers need to *learn a living* rather than *earn a living*. Krumboltz and Worthington (1999, p. 314) similarly emphasise that "learning how to adapt to changing conditions in the workplace will be one of the essential skills for success" (p. 313).

Government policies around the globe are focusing on systemic approaches to lifelong learning. Norway is viewed as one country which has broad support from institutions across the country for integration of lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is more a kind of embracing perspective than a new educational system. Understandings as defined

in Norway (OECD, 2002) include the following:

Lifelong learning is system wide – it embraces education and training at all levels in the formal school system and in non-formal and informal arenas. It comprises concepts such as adult education, continuing education, and distance education.

The objectives of lifelong learning are to ensure that initial education and training provides a sound foundation for further learning … and that opportunities for learning in adulthood are available to everyone.

Since preparation for work cannot be regarded as a once and for all process, lifelong learning takes account of the multiple transitions between learning, working, and living throughout life.

Within this focus on lifelong learning, Law, Meijers, and Wijers (2002) remind us that our focus of learning in a changing world needs to be related to skills and competencies, and a focus on how people learn (process), not on what people learn (content).

As evidenced in Table 1, career development learning in its broadest form relates to learning about the content and process of career development or life/career management. The content of career development learning in essence represents learning about self and learning about the world of work. Process learning represents the development of the skills necessary to navigate a successful and satisfying life/career. Table 2 illustrates the career development competencies identified in the United States of America (NOICC, 1996) and Canada (Hache, Redekopp, & Jarvis, 2000) and the career development outcomes identified by the Australian Education Council that can underpin career development learning.

Table 1: Career development learning

	Content learning		Process learning
	Self-learning	World of work learning	Learning to negotiate life and the world of work
USA NOICC – Career development competencies across the lifespan	Self-knowledge	Educational and occupational	Career planning
Canada Canadian Blueprint – Career development competencies across the lifespan	Personal Management	Learning and work exploration	Life/work building
Australia AEC – Career development outcomes during K-12 schooling	Learning about self in relation to work	Learning about the world of work	Learning to make career plans and decisions Implementing career decisions and managing work transitions
Vocational education and training		Job specific and technical skills and knowledge	

As can be seen in Table 1, vocational education and training has traditionally provided more narrowly defined learning than career development learning. More recently, the "Employability Skills for the Future" document (DEST, 2002) recognises in the breadth of its competencies that the traditional role of vocational education and training is not in itself adequate to prepare the productive workforce desired by industry and the nation.

Building on the work of the Mayer committee it has identified competencies that are not industry or trade related and are similar to the "meta-competencies" traditionally located in career development learning and transferable across a range or work and life settings.

Indeed, career development learning has long provided the mechanism for developing such competencies whereas vocational education and training has not.

Identification of these competencies is significant in that it is recognition of the complementarity of career development learning and vocational education and training.

In summary:
- lifelong learning and career development are closely interrelated;
- career development learning encompasses content and process;
- career development learning may be expressed in terms of competencies;
- career development learning encompasses and extends traditional vocational education and training learning;
- the need to learn, develop and continue to revisit the "meta-competencies" across the lifespan is critical; and
- lifelong learning can be supported and encouraged through the provision of intentional mechanisms such as career programs and services.

Skills development through curriculum initiatives necessarily implies intentional intervention in the career development of individuals. Intentional intervention in career development is best reflected in Australia through career education and vocational education and training programs. Regardless of intentional intervention, career development learning occurs unintentionally through interaction between individuals and their environments. Evidence of the unintentional nature of career development learning is provided by career theorists such as Gottfredson (1996) who describes young children ruling out occupations by age 10 on the basis of values and gender and by Mitchell and Krumboltz (1996) who describe career development learning about occupations through children's association with significant others such as their parents. While also acknowledging unintentional career development through play, observation and interaction with the environment, Super (1980, 1990) extended previous thinking by presenting a theoretical lifespan model of career development (see Table 2). Super's model as it was originally presented in the industrial era described linear career progression through life (Super, 1980), now a largely outdated concept. However his more recent life-span life-space conceptualisation of career development (Super, 1990) where individuals may cycle and recycle through tasks and stages is much more accommodating of the world of work and variable career patterns with which we are becoming increasingly familiar.

As evidenced in theory (Super, 1990) and in practice (NOICC, 1996; Hache, Redekopp, & Jarvis, 2000), there is increased recognition of lifespan career development and recognition that learning of career/life management skills occurs across the lifespan. Increasingly the importance of influencing the career development learning of individuals through intentional programs of career development and appropriate service provision has been recognised. For example, the OECD has acknowledged the importance of career services across the lifespan and has been actively engaged in research and promotion of career services. Australia also has acknowledged the importance of intervention in career development. For example, in 1989 the Hobart Declaration (AEC, 1989) and more recently in 1999 the Adelaide Declaration (MCEETYA, 1999) on the agreed goals for schooling included career development learning as a goal for all Australian young people. Further in 1992, the Australian Education Council produced the document "Career education in Australian Schools: National goals, student, school and system outcomes and evaluative arrangements" to guide curriculum development.

More recently, in Australia, much attention has been focused on the development of the vocational education and training (VET) sector. With its primary emphasis on "building Australia's work skills for the future" (ANTA, 2003, p. 2), the VET sector has been guided primarily by business and industry and has successfully developed a "national vocational education and training system that is recognised as among the most sophisticated in the world" (ANTA, 2003, p. 2).

In summary, career development learning:
- occurs with or without intervention;
- has been acknowledged as an important schooling goal; and
- may be assisted and fostered through appropriate and intentional career services and programs.

It is no longer the case that individuals engage in one experience of career decision-making, usually at the transition point between education and work. Rather, they will engage in repeated career decision-making and transition processes across the lifespan. In addition, they can no longer depend on educational and work organisations to direct their career planning. As individuals are being challenged to accept greater responsibility for constructing their own careers across the lifespan, a greater imperative exists for career development services to assist them to navigate the complexity of the world of work. There are both social and economic benefits to be gained from the provision of such services, as individuals are assisted to derive maximum benefit from their education, training and employment choices, and economic competitiveness is improved through a better placed, more motivated and more productive workforce (Watts, 1999). Centred on career development learning and life/career management, career services may be viewed as an educative process and as a process of learning that facilitates "the learning of skills, interests, beliefs, values, work habits, and personal qualities that enable each client to create a satisfying life within a constantly changing work environment" (Krumboltz & Worthington, 1999, p. 313). Thus career practitioners are more likely to view their clients as lifelong learners, themselves as facilitators of learning, and their interaction as a learning system.

Australia's career development learning initiatives to date have been heavily focused in the school, VET and university sector (see Table 2). The recent OECD mapping study of career services across Australia (Miles Morgan

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Australia, 2002) and the Footprints to the Future report (Prime Minister's Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce, 2001) indicate significant discrepancies and inconsistencies in the quality of career development activities and the level of access across the country. Little attention has been paid to early intervention in career development prior to high school age and there is evidence that service provision for adults is not easily accessible by them and of variable standards (Miles Morgan Australia, 2002).

In addition, as evidenced by the OECD mapping study career development learning is not experienced equally by all high school age students and provision is variable. Currently, there is little to guide career development policy or practice in this country. Where guidelines have been provided (e.g., AEC, 1992) there is evidence that they have been useful in practice (McMahon & Carroll, 1999a, b).

As illustrated in Table 2 some key differences are identifiable between what guides career development policy and practice in Australia and overseas. Unlike Australia which has focused on the school sector and more recently primarily around the issue of transition from school (ANTA, 2003; MCEETYA, 2002a, b), Canada and the United States of America have acknowledged the lifelong nature of career and the notion of career as a developmental process. In so doing, they have identified career development competencies which can be learned and refined across the lifespan and in turn can guide policy development and career development service provision. While the AEC (1992) outcomes of career education could be used in a similar way, they are insufficient to guide policy and service provision related to lifespan career development.

Table 2: Comparison of intentional and unintentional career development learning and intervention across the lifespan

Super's career development lifestages (1980)	Growth (childhood)	Exploration (adolescence)	Establishment (adulthood)	Maintenance (middle adulthood)	Disengagement (late adulthood – old age)
Features of Super's (1980) industrial era conceptualisation of career development	Recognition of lifespan career development Focus on career in relation to paid employment Emphasis on job for life employment Reflects linear progression through career across the lifespan where individuals achieve tasks at particular stages, e.g., 1) Children observe the world around them and through play and tasks in the home develop work habits, interests, and gender stereotypes; 2) Young people form clearer ideas about themselves and their abilities and begin to make occupational decisions; 3) Young adults obtain paid employment ; 4) Adults seek promotion through the organisation; 5) Older adults plan for retirement, may reduce workload, and retire				
Features of Super's (1990) Life-span life-space conceptualisation of career development	Recognition of lifespan career development Inclusive of life-roles other than paid employment roles Accommodates repeated transition between work and other life-roles across the lifespan Individuals recycle through tasks and stages several times in a lifetime (minicycles) as a result of planned and unplanned changes				
USA NOICC – Career development competencies	Elementary	Middle/Junior High School/High School	Adult		
	Competencies at each level in self-knowledge, educational and occupational exploration, and career planning				
Canada Canadian Blueprint – Career development competencies	Level 1	Level 2/Level 3	Level 4		
	Competencies at each level in personal management, learning and work exploration, and life/work building				
Australia Australian Education Council career development outcomes (1992)	Years K - 4	Years 4 – 7 Years 7 – 10 Years 10 - 12			
	Outcomes at each year level in terms of learning about self in relation to work, learning about the world of work, learning to make career plans and decisions, and implementing career decisions and managing work transitions				
Australia Employability Skills for the Future (DEST, 2002)		Expectation that schools, VET and universities will contribute to the development of employability skills in graduates			

The US and Canadian initiatives have recognised the need to identify "age and stage" related competencies that are responsive to:

- the notion of lifespan career development;
- the inseparability of work and life;
- the maturational process of individuals at many levels such as self-knowledge, work knowledge;
- individuals' roles as lifelong learners;
- continual change in the world of work; and
- the many changes that confront individuals throughout their careers.

In summary, intentional career development interventions can be facilitated through lifespan career development competencies which acknowledge that:
- lifelong learning occurs intentionally or unintentionally;
- the world of work is undergoing constant and rapid change;
- individuals change and develop throughout life;
- transition from school is but one of several transitions individuals will make in a lifetime;
- skills and knowledge learned at school will need repeated updating;
- the work goals of individuals change with increased self-awareness and skill development, awareness of new and emerging work opportunities, and lifestyle accommodations;
- individuals need to be responsive to their own needs as well as the needs of others and availability of work opportunities; and
- individuals may seek the services of career professionals several times in a lifetime for assistance with career development issues.

THE CASE FOR A LIFESPAN CAREER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK OR BLUEPRINT FOR AUSTRALIA

While the development of lifespan career development competencies is important, their translation into a format that can inform the development of policy and career services is critical. Representing the competencies as a developmental matrix across the lifespan has to date been the most useful and successful format as it provides a mechanism for forging links between career development theory, practice and policy. Examples include the NOICC (1996) guidelines from the United States of America and the Canadian Blueprint (Hache, Redekopp, & Jarvis, 2000). Indeed it was the success of the NOICC guidelines that informed the development of the Canadian Blueprint. Australia too has an example of where such a framework has been useful in its 1992 Australian Education Council document "Career education in Australian Schools: National goals, student, school and system outcomes and evaluative arrangements". Unlike the US and Canadian competencies, the Australian outcomes were not documented developmentally across the lifespan and to date the employability skills (DEST, 2002) have not been. A lifespan career development framework or blueprint is designed to help individuals make career development intentional and therefore, better manage their lives and work (Hache, Redekopp, & Jarvis, 2000)

The Transition from School Taskforce has currently commissioned the development of an Australian Blueprint based on the successful Canadian Blueprint. This represents a clear link to the unfinished work of the National Careers Task Force and is the next step after the implementation of the national career information system, myfuture.edu.au. myfuture is a successful national approach to career information coordinating disparate career information into a single portal and illustrates the quality that can be achieved with a national coordinated approach to career development.

As a result, for the first time, there is now the potential for equality of access to career information for all Australians. However, although accurate career information is fundamental to informing career development learning, career development services are also needed to enable individuals to personalise information. The establishment of a national career development learning framework or blueprint provides a mechanism for guiding career information and career development services and fostering a common language around career development.

In summary, the importance of representing career development competencies within a lifespan career development framework or blueprint cannot be underestimated as it presents a mechanism for:

- integration between career development theory, practice and policy;
- enabling individuals to understand the lifespan career development process;
- mapping the life/work competencies individuals need to proactively manage their broadly conceptualised career;
- enabling educational and employing organisations to understand the nature of career development support and service that is necessary for individuals across the lifespan;
- providing a common language around career development content and process for individuals, career development practitioners, and national and state policy makers;
- facilitating greater understanding in partnerships between theorists, researchers, practitioners, policy makers, business and industry through the provision of a common language;
- providing policy makers/practitioners with a systematic framework to develop, implement, and evaluate career development programs;
- enabling program developers to target programs around specific competencies/groups of competencies to facilitate targeting and marketing purposes;
- enabling policy makers to co-ordinate and integrate career development services and policies;
- guiding the development of career development learning in a variety of forums including career education, career programs, and career counselling;
- informing the development of training programs for career development professionals;
- synchronising individual career development, career development practice, and career development policy; and
- locating Australian career development initiatives within a framework of internationally accepted best practice.

THE AUSTRALIAN BLUEPRINT FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT – COMPLEMENTING AND EXTENDING EXISTING INITIATIVES

While there is evidence that a national system for career development is underway, it is not nearly as robust or equitable as policy makers might assume as evidenced by the OECD mapping study (Miles Morgan Australia, 2002).The development of a blueprint is not meant to compete with or devalue existing career development initiatives. Rather career development can be viewed as a concept within which existing initiatives can be better understood and enacted. For example, with its emphasis on learning and lifespan career development competencies, a blueprint provides a useful tool for facilitating greater understanding of MCEETYA initiatives such as "Stepping forward: Improving pathways for all young people" (MCEETYA, 2002b) and the "The Ministerial declaration on Adult Community Education" (MCEETYA, 2002c) and the relationships between them. In essence, the blueprint will complement and add value to existing initiatives. Further, a blueprint of career development competencies could enable career development learning programs to be devised to foster competencies in young people that could maximise their involvement in career and transition activities and initiatives, and to identify career development services needed beyond the completion of apprenticeships and traineeships to enable individuals to continue to manage their career development learning and pathway.

A strength of such a blueprint is its ability to help infuse and enhance career development learning in existing initiatives (Hache, Redekopp, & Jarvis, 2000). For example, it provides a mechanism for operationalising the employability skills framework and setting it into the broader context of lifespan career development.

In addition, it could inform thinking related to the development of the ANTA (2003) national strategy for vocational educational and training 2004-2010 which promotes a whole of life approach and recognises that such an approach "goes beyond vocational education and training" (ANTA, 2003, p. 15). Clearly, career development learning can complement and extend what is already being provided by the VET sector.

At a state level, the changing approaches to education require a national set of guidelines to ensure a minimum standard in relation to career development learning. For example, the Blueprint could guide the Essential Learnings Framework recently introduced by the Tasmanian Education Department. New activities are being produced and reproduced by teachers who need clearer national guidelines for career development activities. The potential benefit is national rather than regional replication of the best ideas of the best teachers.

In terms of equity, a lifespan career development framework or blueprint can guide the provision of career development learning services for all people at all ages and stages of their lives. Significantly, the Canadian Blueprint with its emphasis on levels of development rather than stages of schooling accommodates people of all abilities and disabilities by regarding them as an individual, rather than as someone who is ahead of or behind their current level of schooling. Further it facilitates assessment of an individual's career development needs at any point in his/her lifespan. Recognition of individual responsibility for life/career management necessitates intentionally equipping Australians with the competencies to do so effectively and equitably. Currently, one in six children live in households without an employed person in the household (Dawkins & Kelly, 2003). Access to successful role models is limited in

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many Australian households whereas advantaged families often have contact with a range of successful role models. Introducing a set of competencies to enhance an individual's capacity to manage his/her employability is crucial if we are to benefit from the potential of all Australians and reduce reliance on welfare support. In a sense a framework is no more than what comes naturally to the best of our teachers

or of individuals who manage their life/work successfully. It recognises the active nature of the process. Thus, an outcome of the Blueprint is its potential is to improve the resilience of Australians to manage employability more

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effectively in a labour market where workers move up, down and out of organisations, into self employment, through periods of unemployment, and into and out of formal learning experiences.

Implementation of a national blueprint clearly necessitates access to career development learning services at multiple points across the lifespan, across a range of sectors and at a range of sites (Patton, 2002). Corresponding with this, is the need for appropriately trained career personnel to staff these services. A problem with the existing provision of career services is that providers tend to come from a diverse range of professions with a variety of qualifications, backgrounds and perspectives (Patton, 2002). In fact, relatively few have specific qualifications in career development. A framework or blueprint provides a mechanism for identifying the professional skills needed by career development service providers. While previous guidelines for the training of career personnel have been developed in Australia (National Board of Employment, Education and Training, 1992), they have not been implemented. Thus the implementation of a blueprint would provide an impetus for re-examining the existing training guidelines and identifying the qualifications and standards required by career development service providers. Clearly, appropriately trained and qualified career personnel can only complement and strengthen the provision of career development services and ensure the minimum level of consistency required to meet industry, government, economic and individual expectations in a globalised economy.

In summary the development of the Australian Blueprint for Career Development:

- does not compete with or devalue existing initiatives;
- supports the diversity of a range of existing initiatives and strategies by making explicit the learning that such strategies are designed to achieve;
- provides a framework within which existing initiatives can be mapped and future initiatives coordinated;
- guides policy and practice at national and state levels across all sectors of education and employment;
- enables the identification of skills and qualifications needed by career professionals; and
- promotes equity for all Australians.

CONCLUSION

As is evidenced throughout this paper, interest in career development and lifelong learning is global. What is also evident is that career development learning in Australia has to date occurred in an ad hoc and uncoordinated manner (Miles Morgan Australia, 2002). Lifelong career development learning is a key global strategy for economic success this century. The development of a national career development learning blueprint provides a means of mapping, unifying and coordinating service provision. A national blueprint does not resolve all of the problems in the system but goes a long way to establishing a common ground of understanding and a firmer footing on which to base intentional career development learning programs and policy. Investment in the development of the Australian Blueprint for Career Development will reap the rewards of economic growth as a result of a population well-equipped with appropriate skills and competencies to be successful life/career managers.

" The development of a national career development learning blueprint provides a means of mapping, unifying and coordinating service provision. "

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