



Australian Government

# National Career Development Strategy



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**The National Career Development Strategy was developed under the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions**

# A NATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR AUSTRALIA

## MINISTER'S FOREWORD



The Australian Government wants to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential, and to live a life that is personally rewarding and productive. Not only does this benefit each individual, it also supports improved social and economic conditions for everyone.

Careers are no longer, and perhaps never really were, about making ‘the right choice’ when we are teenagers and then following the dotted line from school to retirement. Most of us now face many career decisions throughout our lives. We no longer expect to stay in the same occupation for all of our working life, and nor do we want to. As our lives evolve we expect that what we are doing to earn an income will change in response to changes in our circumstances, the economic environment and our own interests and desires. We are not single-mindedly pursuing one ‘career goal’ which will deliver ultimate happiness, but navigating a ‘career journey’ and trying to ensure that our needs for income, skills development, work/life balance and personal fulfilment are met throughout.

To do this, we need the skills to understand ourselves, investigate options, and make decisions. Whether we are still in school and dreaming about our future, returning to the workforce after a break, contemplating a mid-life career change, forced to change by job loss or the need to move, or planning our transition into retirement, we need to make decisions about education, training and work, and then act on them. There are times when some of us need professional assistance to help work through the decision process and it is important that quality career guidance is available. For most of us, if we have good career management skills, and access to good information and tools, we are able, and prefer, to manage our careers independently.

The Government has already made an unprecedented investment in education and training reform, and is continuing to do so, with reforms to make the systems even more flexible, responsive to change and driven by the needs of individuals. We have also directly supported Australians to make informed choices about education, training and work through flagship career information resources such as *myfuture*. This highly regarded online career exploration service is a joint initiative of the Australian, state and territory governments and a fantastic example of collaboration and national leadership creating a resource of great value to individuals.

This National Career Development Strategy aims to build on the history of collaboration across governments in this area to bring an even more coherent approach to career development, and inform services that help Australians build more productive and rewarding careers. It has been developed collaboratively as one of the elements of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions.

To inform the Strategy, we first developed a strong evidence base. This included extensive market research in which we spoke to parents, young people, employers, career advisers, unemployed people, teachers and industry and asked their views about career development resources and activities. This informed the development of a Green Paper on the National Career Development Strategy, which I released in June 2012.

Almost eighty organisations and individuals took the time to provide feedback on the directions we proposed in the Green Paper. The submissions showed strong support for the actions discussed in the Green Paper, especially for clarification of the roles of governments and other players, for a multi-sectoral approach, and for the redevelopment of significant national resources such as *myfuture*.

The thoughtful submissions we received have greatly informed this final National Career Development Strategy, and I would like to express my appreciation to the organisations and individuals who responded.

The National Career Development Strategy is deliberately a high-level document which provides an overarching vision for career development in Australia. In the same way that a career adviser does not tell a client what decisions to make, the Strategy does not seek to define what individual governments, sectors or stakeholders should do. Rather, it sets out key priorities and guiding principles which will help to align and focus effort. The Strategy also encourages stakeholders to collaborate across sectors whenever possible. New and improved technologies will provide comprehensive career information designed for different age groups, and allow for completely new approaches to evolve. For example, with the connectivity provided by the National Broadband Network, a social networking approach to exploring career options becomes feasible, allowing people to communicate directly with someone in an industry they are interested in exploring.

A key message of the Strategy is that career development is important to the Government's agendas in workforce participation, productivity, social inclusion, equity and closing the gap between Indigenous and non-indigenous education and employment. Responsibility for career development goes well beyond the education and youth agendas, and the Australian Government is committed to a whole-of-life approach which sees career development recognised as a priority by all relevant portfolios.

I am pleased to release this National Career Development Strategy and look forward to ongoing collaboration with all stakeholders as we work together to ensure that all Australians are able to manage and build their careers effectively.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Garrett".

**The Hon Peter Garrett AM MP  
Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth**

# INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND

Welcome to Australia's first National Career Development Strategy. Historically, career development in Australia has tended to be located as an adjunct to education, with a strong focus on students in high schools and universities. While there are many examples of good practice in career information, career education and career advice services, their provision has tended to be fragmented. Governments have seen the benefits of collaborating on national initiatives, particularly in relation to career information, and the career development profession has worked to address quality concerns through the development of national standards and promotion of good practice. However, consultations and research continue to show a need for a more coordinated, efficient and strategic approach that recognises the value of career development as a lifelong process with benefits to many policy areas, and aims to ensure that career development support is accessible to those who need it. The elements contained in this Strategy respond to this need.

## A GUIDING FRAMEWORK

The Strategy provides a guiding framework for those involved in career development across a broad range of settings, and articulates guiding principles for future approaches that will benefit both individuals and the productivity of Australia. It communicates a vision to 2020 for career development in Australia, with some priority areas for action.

The Strategy will bring a more coherent approach to the design and development of programs and resources that support career development. It will inform government policy and programs in the areas of education, training, employment, workforce development and employment services, as well as local partnership planning.

# WHAT IS 'CAREER DEVELOPMENT'?

## THE INDIVIDUAL IS AT THE HEART OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

*Career development* describes 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.

*Career development services* include career education, career exploration, career information, career advice and career guidance. While these can be provided in different ways and by different providers, at their heart is the individual, with particular capacities and requirements at particular points in life. An individual's need for specific forms of career development services will vary according to their life-stage, skills and circumstances. Ultimately, however, the common aim is to enable individuals to manage their careers by knowing how to access and use relevant career information independently, and how to access services when they need them.

# THE VISION FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN AUSTRALIA

## AN ALL-AGES PERSPECTIVE

Career development must go beyond the education and youth arenas. Increasingly, people are likely to hold many different jobs throughout their lives, in different industries. The nature of the global economy also requires a labour force that is agile and highly flexible. It is therefore important that people are equipped with the skills and knowledge needed to respond to and take advantage of the opportunities that arise from ongoing changes in the economy, emerging industries and occupations, education and skill requirements and their own personal circumstances.

All Australians need the knowledge and skills to manage their own futures and access information to decide how best to achieve this. While responsibility for exploring personal career interests and opportunities and making decisions ultimately lies with each individual, access to high quality career development services will assist individuals to do this efficiently and effectively.

At the broader level, better decisions by individuals mean less wasted investment in unused skills, less 'churn' through education and employment pathways and higher productivity.

For the individual, career development needs to start at school and continue throughout life, including: transitioning from school to further education, training or work; entering, re-entering or changing employment; and transitioning to retirement. Career development services need to recognise and respond to this lifelong nature of career development. They also need to recognise that some individuals, such as those facing entrenched or multiple disadvantages, are more likely to need and benefit from targeted career development services.



The long-term vision of the National Career Development Strategy incorporates this lifelong approach:

***All Australians have the skills, knowledge and capabilities to manage their careers throughout life to support their individual wellbeing and participation in the workforce and contribute to Australia's productivity.***

A lifelong approach to career development means that responsibility for equipping people to manage their careers must extend beyond the education and youth agendas. Career development is important to workforce participation, productivity, social inclusion and equity, including the Closing the Gap agenda. Strong links will need to be made between the National Career Development Strategy and strategic frameworks in the youth, skills, higher education, employment and workforce development areas. Those involved in implementing broader learning and workforce development reforms such as the *National Workforce Development Strategy*, the *Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework* and the *National Foundation Skills Strategy for Adults* will be key partners in achieving the vision articulated in this strategy by ensuring that career development is integrated into their reforms.

Everyone with an interest in supporting career development, whether in the public or private sectors, should be working towards this vision. Policy and planning activities, service initiatives, benchmarks and standards, advocacy, research and evaluation activities - all are important elements that should be able to demonstrate how they will contribute to achieving the long-term vision.

## OUR GOALS

### CLEAR SIGNPOSTS TO KEEP US ON THE RIGHT PATH

There is no single or simple path to achieving this vision. A diversity of approaches is essential to ensure that career development services are available at the times and in the ways that best meet the needs of each individual. In order that this diversity acts as a strength in achieving our vision, rather than as a confusion of alternative approaches, we will need clear signposts to make sure our various efforts are all working towards the same 'destination'.

We will know if we are on the right path if, as a nation, we are making tangible progress against the following goals.

- Every individual has the opportunity to build the skills required to manage their career throughout their lives.
- There is equitable access to high quality career information and services when people need it most.
- People understand where to access career development services and the value of these services.
- Career development services are of a high quality and delivered by appropriately skilled practitioners.
- Career development support is integrated into government programs that assist people at education and employment transition points.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## DIFFERENT APPROACHES CAN ACHIEVE COMMON GOALS

Career development support and services can be provided in different ways, by a variety of groups, to people at different points in their lives, and still achieve the common goals and vision for career development in Australia. In acknowledging the appropriateness of this flexibility, the Strategy sets out the following guiding principles to inform design and delivery of career development services.

- The individual is at the centre of career development services.
- Career development services will be provided in many different ways and recognise that many people influence an individual's career decisions throughout their life, including parents, teachers, peers, mentors, partners and other family members, employers and colleagues.
- While career development will have a strong focus on preparing young people for the transition to work, individuals across all ages may benefit from career development services at any time when they need it most.
- Education and training organisations, workplaces, employment services, governments and private enterprises will incorporate career development skills within their overall approach to learning, skills development and personal development.
- Standards and quality assurance processes—for both services and practitioners—support effective career development services and enhance career development outcomes.
- Career development information including labour market information is managed efficiently so that it continues to be relevant and reliable.
- Communication, collaboration and co-ordination across sectors enhance career development policy, service delivery and outcomes.

# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT

The Australian Government recognises the value of a broader, lifelong focus for career development, and the role that career development can play in achieving public policy goals across the education, workforce participation, productivity and social inclusion agendas. Strong links will be established between the Australian Government portfolios of education, employment participation and workforce development to ensure a whole of government, whole-of-life approach to career development at a national level.

The Australian Government's role will be to:

- adopt a cross-sectoral and lifelong approach to career development at the national level
- facilitate links between career development and broader government policies of participation, productivity and social inclusion
- provide accessible, relevant and high quality national career information
- provide services for those receiving assistance through Australian Government programs which support people to enter or re-enter the workforce
- seek to engage with other stakeholders to develop collaborative or complementary initiatives in priority areas of action under the Strategy.

## THE STATE AND TERRITORY GOVERNMENTS

State and territory governments have responsibility for providing quality career development services in the areas of school education, vocational education and training and in other state and territory portfolios in which career development is relevant, such as juvenile justice, community welfare or employment-related programs.

Within these settings, state and territory governments will work to continuously improve the quality and qualifications of career advisers. They will also continue to undertake service provision, priority setting and co-ordination of services within tertiary education, non-government schooling and the broader community, where these fall within current state and territory responsibilities.

State and territory governments will work to promote the vision, goals and principles of this strategy, and the inclusion of career development in the wider approach to learning, skills development and personal development in education and training organisations, workplaces and private enterprises in their jurisdictions.

## SCHOOLS

The schooling sector is key to young people developing effective career development skills.

The role of schools includes:

- fostering the development of career skills through the school curriculum, from the early years through to the post-compulsory years
- facilitating young people's access and exposure to the world of work, as well as to the education and training pathways available to them
- ensuring teachers and career advisers provide high quality, relevant career development assistance and supporting their staff to gain relevant professional training and qualifications.



## BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

Business and industry have important roles both at the broader policy level and at the enterprise and local levels. Industry participation in policy development and in the provision of career (and especially labour market) information, for example, will help to ensure that this information is coordinated and aligned with industry needs, and that individuals will be able to base their career decisions on up-to-date information about the labour market, skills shortages and regional/national employment opportunities.

At the local level, business and industry will value career development as an important part of their workforce development strategies and contribute to career information for those wishing to join their industries. They will also contribute through strong partnerships with schools, communities, and training and higher education providers, to increase knowledge and understanding of employment opportunities in local areas and to provide opportunities for young people to gain exposure to the world of work.



## THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT SECTOR

The career development sector comprises career development services and practitioners in a diversity of organisations in the public and private sectors. In all these settings, service delivery should be guided by professional standards and quality assurance processes. The sector will continue to provide high quality career development services to meet a range of client needs.

Career industry bodies have an important role to play in fostering partnerships between key stakeholders to promote the Strategy's vision and the uptake of professional qualifications, as well as ensuring their members continue to meet national quality standards. They will provide expertise in the development of professional materials, courses and services and provide representation on behalf of the career industry. They also have a role to play in contributing to policy development, research and evaluation.

# CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

It is the responsibility of all the partners in career development in Australia to continue to examine their systems, practices, standards and partner relationships to ensure they are using collective resources in the most effective way. Consolidation and sharing of good practice, and the adoption of joined-up, efficient and sustainable delivery models, will ensure that career development services support individuals to make effective career decisions and contribute to Australia's future workforce development and economic growth.

## SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS TO GAIN CAREER DEVELOPMENT SKILLS

### SUPPORT AT KEY TRANSITION POINTS

A key element of the Strategy is the commitment to an all-age career development perspective. Access to effective career advice, support and information at key transition points in the lives of individuals, ensures that all Australians have opportunities to develop the skills, knowledge and competencies necessary to successfully manage their careers.

Key transition points include: from school or tertiary education and training to work; from unemployment to employment; from significant absence from work, such as parenting or work injury, to work; as a result of structural adjustment of industry; and for mature age workers wishing to stay in the workforce.

An ethos that promotes effective decision-making about education, training and work choices as a key to individuals' success and a key element in the growth of the national economy needs to apply across the lifespan.

### LAYING DOWN EARLY FOUNDATIONS

Achieving the vision wherein all Australians are equipped with the skills, knowledge and capabilities to enable successful lifelong career transitions that support their happiness, wellbeing and participation in Australian society will be an iterative process.

A focus on developing these skills in young people from as early as primary school will lay down the foundations for a future when all Australians are equipped throughout their lives to make confident and successful decisions about their careers.

Integral to building this foundation is a focus on supporting parents, and others who provide young people with informal career advice and support, with the appropriate tools to undertake this role.

## **LINKS TO SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

Career development skills can readily be fostered within the existing Australian school curriculum, based on the eleven competencies identified in the Australian Blueprint for Career Development. The Australian Government will work with Education Services Australia, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority and career development stakeholders to develop teaching and learning resources for schools to deliver career development in ways that incorporate the Australian Blueprint for Career Development, the Australian Curriculum General Capabilities and the National Trade Cadetship Curriculum.



## **CAREER DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE IN THE LABOUR MARKET**

### **CAREER DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE WILL BE STRENGTHENED**

Labour force participation challenges exist for many people and groups, particularly those who experience multiple forms of disadvantage. The Australian Government provides additional assistance for those who need it most through a variety of labour market support initiatives, including mainstream employment services and specialised labour market programs. While their primary role is to help individuals move from unemployment to employment, career development information and advice can be strengthened in some services.

There is an existing commitment to career development in specialised labour market programs such as: Experience+ for older workers; Career Advice for Parents to help parents explore career options and develop a plan of action to achieve their employment goals; and Indigenous Youth Careers Pathways to help Indigenous students to transition from school to work or further education. Mainstream employment services such as Job Services Australia and Disability Employment Service also offer some levels of career development support to jobseekers.

The Australian Government will examine opportunities to strengthen career development features in the current suite of labour market support initiatives. This may take the form of increasing access to external career development services or providing specialised assistance to jobseekers to access myfuture and other career development information and resources.

In future service redevelopment or design, and in any newly established programs, the Australian Government will consider ways to bolster the uptake of professional training and qualifications in career development for relevant service staff.

## NATIONAL CAREER INFORMATION

### STRENGTHENING MYFUTURE WITH AN ‘ALL AGES’ APPROACH

Australia’s comprehensive national career information service—myfuture.edu.au—provides access to support for career development in a consistent way across the country, for individuals and for those who support or influence career choices.

The Australian Government is currently updating aspects of myfuture and implementing a number of enhancements to ensure it provides an all ages approach to career development. These changes will improve ease of use and reflect the diversity of life stages and skills of people seeking career information.

Key enhancements include:

- a Parents’ Portal with tailored information to assist parents to support and encourage their children when making career decisions
- stronger connections with industry to enhance information on occupations and education and skills requirements
- presentation of labour market information to assist people to make informed choices
- enhanced social networking technology, which will include enabling users to talk to someone working in the industry they are interested in
- improved access to comprehensive information about VET courses and training options.

Further enhancements to the myfuture website will be guided by the outcomes of the projects and research conducted in the first 12 months of this strategy.

The Australian Government will also continue to produce occupational information in ways that help young people explore career options and access information about a wide range of occupations, along with the education and training pathways that lead to them.

# NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

## FOSTERING A CROSS-SECTORAL APPROACH

At the national level, the Australian Government will adopt a whole of government approach to ensure that career development initiatives are part of and align with the participation and productivity agendas. Australian Government action will focus on the following priority areas which received strong support through the development of this strategy by:

- involving industry more actively in career development
- building career development skills in individuals
- improving young people's exposure to the world of work
- improving the quality and professionalism of the career development industry.

To coincide with the release of the Strategy, the Australian Government will implement a series of measures under these key priority areas that support young people to gain the skills they need to make effective career decisions throughout their lives.

The Australian Government will establish a leadership group to identify collaborative and complementary measures for the priority area *improving the quality and professionalism of the career development industry*. The leadership group will initially be established for a period of 6 months and will be reviewed at the conclusion of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions. The Government will also work with other stakeholders to promote the vision, goals and principles of the Strategy, and to monitor progress against it. Monitoring will also take into consideration whether the roles, responsibilities and expectations of stakeholders continue to reflect the best arrangements for future delivery of career development.



See the **DEEWR website** for copies of this Strategy and more information about career development:  
[www.deewr.gov.au](http://www.deewr.gov.au)



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