

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

**3 June 2025**

### **New National Report Calls for Strategic Investment in Career Development to Deliver Workforce and Education Reform**

**Melbourne, Australia** – A highly experienced and committed career development workforce stands ready to support Australia’s workforce and education reform if empowered with the right policy settings. That is the message from the 2024 National Survey of Career Development Practitioners, released today by the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA).

The report provides a comprehensive overview of a profession at the intersection of education, skills, and employment policy. With responses from 734 practitioners working in schools, TAFEs, universities, employment services, government agencies, community organisations, athlete wellbeing, and private practice, the findings confirm that career development is a vital yet underutilised policy tool.

#### **A skilled workforce with untapped potential.**

Career development practitioners bring deep expertise and lived experience to their work. Nearly half of all respondents have more than ten years of dedicated practice, and three in four entered the profession mid-career from other sectors, contributing valuable cross-sector insight. Yet, with almost three-quarters of the workforce aged over 45 and fewer than 7% under 35, succession planning is urgent.

*“This is a mature, capable workforce that delivers frontline outcomes aligned with national goals,” said David Carney, Executive Director of CICA. “But without strategic investment, we risk missing a major opportunity to scale what works and meet rising demand.”*

#### **Scalable, client-centred career services ready to grow.**

The report highlights the growing scalability of career development service models. While 40% of practitioners still deliver primarily in-person support, nearly one-third have shifted to virtual or hybrid models. These delivery modes offer flexibility and broader reach, particularly for regional, rural, remote or time-poor individuals.

Blended delivery, now used by 19% of practitioners, combines personalisation with accessibility, making it a highly scalable option for national expansion. However, to fully realise this potential, investment in digital infrastructure, practitioner training and equitable access is essential.

#### **Supporting transitions across the lifespan**

The report affirms that professional career practitioners are ready and equipped to support citizens at all stages of their working lives. Whether guiding young people entering the workforce, helping adults re-skill or upskill mid-career, or supporting older Australians planning later-life transitions, career practitioners provide tailored advice and practical support that aligns with individual goals and national workforce needs.

#### **Digital transformation and AI readiness require support.**

Despite the government's emphasis on digital innovation, career services lag in integrating AI and digital tools. Over 70% of practitioners identified AI training as their most urgent development need, yet more than half have never utilised AI for client support.

Training needs include AI-enabled job search, resume screening, labour market analysis and ethical use.

### **Workforce ready, but systems must evolve.**

Practitioners are highly qualified, with 66% holding a Graduate Certificate in Career Development or higher, the recognised professional qualification in career development. More than half express interest in pursuing a Master's qualification. However, one in four have no professional development budget, and 27% report a lack of leadership and mentorship structures.

Performance evaluation remains informal. Around half rely on self-assessment or client feedback, and few institutions systematically use the nationally endorsed Professional Standards to support quality improvement and accountability.

### **A profession aligned with national goals and prepared for reform.**

Despite the challenges, practitioners remain optimistic and future focused. Job engagement scored an average of 8.1 out of 10, and 53% of respondents believe the sector will improve in the next five years.

This presents a timely opportunity for policy reform. CICA encourages government decision-makers to:

- Integrate the Professional Standards for Career Development Practitioners into education, training and employment systems
- Expand access to endorsed qualifications and postgraduate study opportunities
- Invest in digital infrastructure, AI capability and practitioner upskilling for scalable service delivery
- Support structured supervision, performance review and leadership development
- Recognise career development as a core component of National Skills Agreement implementation, employment services reform and women's workforce participation strategies.
- Embed career education into the Australian Curriculum from the early years through to post-school transitions.

*"This profession is a force multiplier," Mr Carney said. "With the right system supports, career practitioners can expand access, reduce fragmentation and help more Australians make confident decisions in a rapidly changing world of work."*

### **About the survey**

The 2024 National Survey of Career Development Practitioners was conducted between 28 October and 28 November 2024. It provides a robust evidence base to guide workforce planning, service reform and strategic investment across Australia's education and employment systems.

**Download the full report at:** <https://cica.org.au/category/news/>

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