

Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment  
Education and Employment Legislation Committee  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
AUSTRALIA

## **JOBS AND SKILLS AUSTRALIA BILL**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) is the peak industry body in Australia for career development. Our eleven member associations represent over 6,000 career development practitioners in schools, vocational education and training, higher education, rehabilitation, elite athletes, and private practice.

CICA plays a national role in representing our member associations, providing professional endorsement of training courses across higher education and VET and serves as a focal point for government and other stakeholders in Australia who are concerned about and interested in promoting high-quality career development services.

Effective career guidance is recognised as supporting social mobility as it enables individuals to realise their full potential. Supporting the development of career management competency at all ages and stages helps economies become more productive, and society become more equitable. Career development empowers individuals to make decisions that are significant for their life by providing them with information and support that is individualised, objective, and delivered in a timely manner.

### **SUMMARY**

This comment relates to Section 9: Jobs and Skills Australia Functions of the Jobs and Skills Australia Bill 2022. A Bill to establish Jobs and Skills Australia and for other purposes related thereto.

The CICA commends the formation of Jobs and Skills Australia. As part of its function in providing independent advice to the Minister/s around workforce planning, including skills and training issues to improve employment opportunities for individuals and help drive economic growth.

We believe that it is vital that, as part of its functions, Jobs and Skills Australia work closely with the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and the National Careers Institute (NCI) to ensure that the provision of career development support services is central in policy planning and decision making. To this end, we believe this needs to be explicitly included in the Bill as a function of Jobs and Skills Australia.

## **CAREER DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT**

Career development support comprises activities such as career guidance, career education, provision of career information and staff development for workers. Helping people advance in their lifelong and lifewide careers is essential to the achievement of social and economic goals, as well as to the successful implementation of policies promoting active labour markets and lifelong learning.

Developing one's skills and abilities in one's chosen field should be a lifelong endeavour. It is essential for the smooth transitions of young people as they are provided with choices about continuing education and training in ever greater numbers, as well as for adults who need to upskill, reskill, or transfer within the labour market.

Not only unemployed individuals require career guidance. As the demand for labour changes rapidly, it is more important than ever for employed individuals who are looking to switch jobs.

Providing career guidance according to individuals' diverse needs is key to ensuring informed learning choices and the efficacy of learning incentives. Providing career education promotes successful contact of youth with the world of work and reduces the likelihood of skills mismatches.

## **YOUNG AUSTRALIANS**

Young people in today's society are making concerted efforts to improve their employment prospects by obtaining the education, credentials, and skills necessary to do so. However, the rapid changes in demand for labour (caused by automation, digitalisation, globalisation, population ageing, the green transition, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic) make it considerably more difficult to make decisions regarding education and training options.

Young people require more help as they prepare themselves for working life because there are many new occupations emerging and many established occupations changing or decreasing in number.

## **SUPPORTING THE MOST VULNERABLE**

Frequently, the most vulnerable adults receive the least amount of career guidance and have the most restricted access to career education and information. As demonstrated by the pandemic, low-income and low-skilled workers typically have less access to social protection despite greater exposure to lower job security.

Access to the information and assistance that can facilitate progression into decent work is typically more difficult for adults in informal employment, including those responsible for domestic work.

There has been growth in the provision of digital career guidance services. On the other hand, our past experiences have shown that the most disadvantaged populations have, on the whole,

not only had trouble gaining access to digital equipment and the internet but also frequently lacked the skills necessary to use digital services.

While the availability of multiple delivery channels, digital equipment, and the development of digital skills are essential for engagement, well-developed outreach initiatives are also required to ensure access equity.

## **ACCESS TO CAREER GUIDANCE AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES FOR ALL**

Widespread access to career development support means that people of all ages, regardless of their gender, culture, socioeconomic status, or where they live, can get the services and measures they need.

This means that career guidance services and provision of information do not discriminate against anyone and that anyone can get help from one or more of the services. Accessible services take into account each person's needs, preferences, and situation. They also offer a service that can be tailored to each person and uses the right methods, tools, and language to meet those needs and preferences.

Good access also means that services and activities are offered in the best setting for them and that people can get extra help when they need it. Access can be improved by giving people more rights to career development, making digital and distance services easy to use, reaching out to the most vulnerable people, and building career guidance into other activities and services.

## **CICA MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS**

Australian Capital Territory Careers Association (ACTCA)  
Australian Centre for Career Education (ACCE)  
AIS Athlete Wellbeing and Engagement Network (AIS)  
Career Development Association of Australia (CDAA)  
Career Advisers Association of New South Wales & ACT (CAANSW/ACT)  
Career Education Association of Western Australia (CEAWA)  
Career Educators Association of the Northern Territory (CEANT)  
National Association of Graduate Career Advisory Services (Aust) Inc (NAGCAS)  
Queensland Association of Student Advisors (QASA)  
Queensland Guidance and Counselling Association (QGCA)  
Rehabilitation Counselling Association of Australasia Inc (RCAA)

## **CONTACT INFORMATION FOR THIS SUBMISSION**

David Carney  
CICA Executive Director  
info@cica.org.au