

# *Career and Skills Pathways*

Research into a whole-of-system approach to enhancing lifelong career support mechanisms for all Australians

*Final Report*

Commonwealth  
Department of  
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Career and skills  
pathways

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# *Executive summary*

Australia needs to transition to a career support model that works for all people, no matter what their life stage and circumstance. Given the accelerating pace of change, the longer we take to act, the more Australians will fall behind.

## **The future of work is complex and changing...**

Today, a career is more than a job. It is a combination of work, education and training, volunteering, community participation, and other societal roles and activities, underpinned by several transitions, lifelong learning, and balance between many facets of life. For some, work is purely a source of income, while for others, their work gives them a greater sense of purpose, personal satisfaction, and fulfilment. Regardless of what a career means to the individual, there is one universal truth – careers are changing, and fast. The concept of ‘a job for life’ is no longer a reality, and few careers follow the expected pattern of prepare-work-retire.

While changes in work patterns and occupations have always occurred, the pace of change is accelerating, with career shifts now occurring in an average of ten years or less. A variety of factors are disrupting the career landscape, changing not only what Australians do, but how they work, learn and manage their many life roles.

## **... creating a need for a better model of career support...**

Disruption will drive exciting opportunities for economic and personal growth, but only for those individuals who can navigate the new unpredictable, ambiguous career landscape.

In this new and complex environment, people will need support to adapt to change and make transitions throughout their career, whether the support is advice from a friend or formal guidance from a professional. There is a long standing recognition of the need to support people transitioning from school to work, but there are many other transition points, from tertiary education to work between jobs, between industries, between various paid and unpaid roles, or after a prolonged absence from the workforce.

Career support is necessary to help Australians navigate this complex work and education environment when they need to. However in Australia, career support is currently poorly positioned to meet this need. It tends to be fragmented, delivered at discrete junctures rather than consistently across a person’s life phases, and of variable quality across jurisdictions, industries, and types of education and training.

Government investments are being made to create an education and training system that better meets these changing skills needs, with a number of significant investments recently announced that will put vocational pathways at the centre of skills and jobs. These include: the Skilling Australians Fund, designed to support states and territories to invest in reskilling Australians using apprenticeships and traineeships; the Transition to Work program, designed to improve the work-readiness of young people; the Industry Specialist Mentoring Scheme, aimed at improving apprenticeship retention rates; and other initiatives targeted at improving the profile of vocational education and training. Career support policy must keep pace with the rest of Australia’s education, training and employment system ensuring Australians are part of a productive workforce.

**Our project:** We in PwC have been engaged by the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training to research and investigate a whole-of-system, lifelong career support model for all Australians throughout their post-schooling life. This report provides a summary of the current career support system, an understanding of the high level users and their requirements, and an informed set of recommendations for how to enhance careers support in Australia. This work aligns with vocational education reform initiatives, including the recently announced Skilling Australians Fund and Industry Specialist Mentoring program, as well as the National Career Development Strategy.

**Key message:** Career support needs to be delivered through a model that offers lifelong, connected and accessible support – to any and all Australians, including their network of key influencers, providers, employers and educational institutions.

### **Career support in Australia exists, but is inadequate...**

Our research highlights key areas where the current career support model fails:

- **Information about career and pathways options exists and is widely available, but it is ‘patchy’, ‘overwhelming’ or difficult to understand.** Information is not always readily accessible to all Australians, or representative of all possible careers and pathways.
- **Career guidance and advice is of variable quality.** Most Australians use informal support mechanisms, and those who seek professional support find it is heavily reliant on the provider’s own knowledge, competence and skill.
- **Career development skills are critical to employability and future career management,** but users tend to have little to no awareness of career development until they are exposed to it through a career practitioner.
- **Alternative pathways and work experience options are not always considered,** or individuals lack the know-how, skills, or resources to investigate these options.

### **... and people experience multiple roadblocks and hurdles...**

We heard from people across Australia about what it is like to access career support today. For many, career support is sought in response to a crisis and based on a referral by a concerned parent or friend. When support is accessed the experience is highly variable.

While some reported a good experience, or elements of their experience that were positive, there are considerable difficulties experienced by the majority of users: information and support is fragmented; of unreliable quality; often lacks whole-of-person appreciation; sometimes fails to connect the individual to further support when this is required; or sometimes fails to help the individual develop their employability and career management skills. In particular, this is a system that requires people transitioning careers to reach ‘crisis point’ before connected, holistic support is available. This is a problem for all, but in particular the 1.1 million people that are underemployed and cannot access this support. Alarming, the issues with the current system disadvantage the cohorts that need it the most, including (but not limited to) mature age workers, youth not in education, employment or training (NEETs), persons with disability or disadvantage, skilled migrants and refugees, and culturally and linguistically diverse persons.

### **...but we can learn from the success and challenges of other countries...**

Our research has revealed that lifelong support is best achieved through the development of an ‘all-ages’, nationally consistent, multi-channel career support system. Examples of this model exist in New Zealand, Wales and Scotland. We reviewed what works well in these countries to develop our recommendations, conducting gap analysis to understand their applicability to the Australian context, and highlighting domestic examples to demonstrate the extent to which many best practice elements of these models are already being delivered in parts of Australia. To deepen our analysis, we also explored best practice examples from countries with similar governance structures to Australia, with a particular focus on Canada, to gain insights into how Australia might implement a career support system in our federalised, geographically dispersed country.

The benefits of an all-ages models include improved accessibility, multiple channels for the individual to reach out for support, and connectedness, usually by providing a forum for individuals to engage with employers, education and training, and career practitioners. This approach also provides a ‘single point of truth’ that is consistent across jurisdictions, different forms of education and training, and different industries. This ensures that, at any stage of a person’s career journey, no matter their location or intended career outcome, they have access to consistent, high quality career support. This continuity is pivotal to the success of a lifelong support model. Career development in these best practice countries also starts early; there is strong evidence to suggest that career skills development should start as early as primary school. A lifelong career support model should support early development, growing with the person to incorporate new learnings, so that when the person transitions between roles later in life they have tailored, accessible support.

## How might we enhance careers and pathways support for all Australians?

We have identified seven core elements that are key to a future whole-of-system career support model:



**Lifelong**, that takes into consideration the whole of the person, and grows with them to accommodate new learnings and experiences



**Connected** to government, industry, local communities, and educational institutions; and is connecting – to the right people and networks as needed



**Accessible** to all people, relevant and understandable, available via multiple support channels.



Of **high quality**, reliable and delivered by qualified and trained professionals



**Tailored** to the individual and their niche needs



About **enabling** people to be work ready and supporting people to acquire work-related experience



About **empowering** the person to manage their career and navigate the uncertain and complex future of work

Our research and consultation has led us to the conclusion that a Career Pathways model, based on these core elements, is needed to provide:

- A **single support system for all people** in Australia.
- **Multiple channels** for users, including an online portal, telephone, online chat and text messaging service.
- A **one-stop-shop for people** navigating their careers, helping others, or looking to hire people, that brings together information and services that already exist in the market and creates incentives to improve the quality of career support.
- A **strong connection** between employers, practitioners and individuals to facilitate greater involvement in vocational pathways.

To be successful, the Career Pathways model would need to be underpinned by two supporting considerations:

### 1 The role of government

- a Development and introduction of a new model and shape, and develop the market.
- b Monitoring and regulatory role.
- c Considering career practitioner certification.

### 2 Commercial architecture

- a A new financial model based on a ‘user pays’ assumption unless specific circumstances prevail.
- b Commercial finance, to be secured through secondary uses of the model, to reduce the need for public funding of the operation of the model.

### How might we move toward this future Career Pathways model?

We understand that moving towards a future Career Pathways model requires careful planning and targeted activity to close the gap between the current state and desired future state. As part of this planning, it is also important to consider an approach that brings in key stakeholders, leverages existing investments, and builds on current best practice.

Our research included a gap analysis to determine the gap between the current state of career support in Australia and the desired future state, across all seven core elements. Pursuant to our goal of taking a considered, well planned approach to transition to the future model, a number of areas requiring further investigation were identified and subsequently prioritised in consultation with the Department. Based on this prioritisation of areas, two broad categories of activities emerged:

Next step activities	Expected outcomes of addressing next step activity
Further exploration of the benefits, optimal role of government, and funding mechanisms relating to a Career Pathways model ('case for change')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear articulation of current costs and outcomes versus ideal benefits and outcomes, to help build the case for progressing the Career Pathways model</li> <li>• Options for optimal governance framework, to assist Government with deciding its desired role in the system</li> <li>• Options for funding structures with major stakeholders, to help Government decide an ideal funding structure and identify key stakeholders</li> </ul>
Detailed investigation(s) to better understand what is currently delivered and if existing arrangements could be augmented to deliver on the seven core user-defined elements focused in three priority areas	<p><b>Option 1. Apprenticeship focus:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed investigation of current career support arrangements for an apprenticeship cohort (or a subset of this), including initiatives such as the Industry Specialist Mentoring program, to evaluate current support against the seven core elements</li> <li>• Options to determine the best path to the future state, to help inform if/how current support could be augmented to deliver the Career Pathways model</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Option 2. Forced career transitioner focus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed investigation of current career support arrangements for forced career transitioners, or those impacted by structural adjustments in industry, to evaluate current support for this cohort against the seven core elements</li> <li>• Options to determine the best path to the future state, to help inform if/how current support could be augmented to deliver the Career Pathways model</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Option 3. Connect and leverage current data and information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed investigation of all data sources (including ownership, funding arrangements, current links), to help inform how existing data sets could be better connected</li> <li>• High level prototype design of a cost-effective model that would connect all data sources and possible next steps if Government were to proceed with roll-out and implementation</li> </ul>

Following discussions with the Department, we suggest that developing the case for change is a priority activity to be undertaken. Detailed investigations will also be important to test applicability of the Career Pathways model to different contexts, if we are to move toward a lifelong, connected and accessible Career Pathways model in the future.

In addition to these areas, a number of longer term issues have been identified that, in time, will need to be considered. These include consideration of:

1. how to align provision and support across States and Territories, recognising the differences in local needs and policy imperatives;
2. the implications of a lifelong career support service on the design and delivery of other public services, such as employment support, healthcare, welfare and immigration; and
3. how to develop and implement a benefits realisation model for enhanced career support.

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For the Glossary, please refer to Section 9.

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# 1 Background

## 1.1 About the project

We, PwC Consulting (Australia) Pty Ltd ('PwC'), were engaged by the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training ('the Department') to research and investigate a whole-of-system, career support model for all Australians, that prepares people for work and supports them throughout their post-schooling life.

This report presents a summary of current career support arrangements, domestic and international best practice, and wider market factors influencing future career support needs in Australia. Drawing on stakeholder consultations, it identifies high level requirements of different user groups, options for a future whole-of-system career support model for all Australians, and implications for adoption or areas that require further investigation. This work aligns with vocational education reform initiatives, including the recently announced Skilling Australians Fund and the National Career Development Strategy.

## 1.2 Objectives

This research project marks a first important step towards the creation of a whole-of-system, lifelong career support model. Such a model could bring value to both the individual – by supporting a fulfilling career – and society – by aligning to a range of government initiatives centred on creating and maintaining a productive Australian workforce, especially the use of vocational learning and apprenticeship pathways.

## 1.3 Methodology

We have used a mixed-method approach, combining an extensive desktop review with stakeholder consultations. For the desktop component, we conducted an extensive scan of existing research and academic literature, exploring best practice both domestically and internationally, and building on existing work already done by the Australian Government and other groups in order to better understand the impacts of past policies on the career landscape.

To complement this desktop research, we applied Design Thinking methodology to our stakeholder consultations, starting with an open-minded discovery process to understand the current careers and skills pathways needs and current experiences of people around Australia. We conducted in-depth interviews with approximately 68 key stakeholders; six focus group discussions in Sydney and Melbourne central business districts; nine discussion groups with niche cohorts in regional Victoria and regional Queensland; and also distributed a national online survey. Through these stakeholder consultations, we collected over 720 user experiences, and these formed the basis of our findings in Section 5.

## 1.4 Structure of the report

The remainder of this report is set out in the following sections:

- **Overview of current support arrangements (Section 2):** Given the siloed, fragmented nature of career support in Australia, an important first step in developing a future career support model is to better understand the current career landscape, including current career support systems and issues faced by individuals in Australia trying to make informed career choices. In Section 2 we provide a snapshot of what career support is available in Australia.
- **Summary of domestic and international best practice (Section 3) and wider market and environmental factors influencing career support needs (Section 4):** It is also important to understand the broader context, including lessons to be learned from best practice within Australia and internationally, and the wider market and environmental factors influencing career support needs. These sections set out to build on existing research, international examples and case studies. For ease of readability, international and domestic best practice examples are set out in alignment with the seven core elements of the future career support model identified in Section 5.
- **High level requirements by user group (Section 5):** Understanding the current user needs and current user experience is critical to identifying what the core elements of a future, whole-of-system career support model should be. We have developed a high level understanding of the requirements of different

user groups, what is working well and where there are difficulties, from which we distil the seven core elements that a future career support model must have.

- **Main options through which career support could be provided (Section 6):** This section brings together the seven core elements into one possible future model: a Career Pathways model with a number of options, innovation ideas, and supporting considerations.
- **Implications of the adoption of each main option and gap analysis (Section 7):** This section builds on the previous one to explore the implications of the adoption of each of the seven core elements, and present a high level gap analysis along with possible areas for further investigation.
- **Proposed areas for further investigation (Section 8):** Drawing on learnings from this research and stakeholder consultations, the final section of the report synthesises the proposed areas for further investigation and sets out next steps for any subsequent work.



## 2 *Overview of current career support arrangements*

### *Key Points:*

- **Career support is delivered in many forms.** Our report defines career support as falling into one of four categories: career information; career guidance and advice; career skills development; and career pathways and experience.
- **Career information is largely available online, and focuses on youth and select high needs groups.** As people transition through their careers, much information becomes either unavailable or irrelevant.
- **Career guidance and advice is mostly delivered informally.** Formal career guidance and advice is available to some of those who are in education and training (usually on an opt-in basis) or unemployed at no cost to the individual. Otherwise, people can access career guidance and advice on a fee-for-service basis, though anecdotal evidence suggests that few Australians choose this option.
- **Career skills development is available on an ad hoc basis.** Several government programs, including those targeted at niche groups, offer career skills development support as a ‘first step’ for people struggling to find employment. For those in education and training, resources to improve career management skills are available to those who ‘opt-in’, rather than through the curriculum. For others there is some self-guided online material.
- **Work related learning is widely regarded as important.** Pathways that encourage on-the-job learning in addition to study, such as apprenticeships, need to be encouraged and available to a wider range of occupations. These pathways are of growing importance in reskilling individuals.

### *2.1 What career support is available in Australia?*

Career support in Australia is delivered by government, not-for-profit and private bodies through many different modes, to many different groups of Australians. This report considers four broad categories of career support: career information; career guidance and advice; career skills development; and career pathways and experience. For more information about these terms, please refer to the Glossary in Section 9.

This chapter focuses on the positives and gaps of the current system. A summary of our findings by category is provided in Table 1.

**Table 1: Summary of career support in Australia**

Type	Providers	Funding	Key points
<b>Career information</b>	Government provided or funded. Some provision, mostly targeted at youth.	Private service providers are often commissioned or partially funded by government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Largely delivered online. Government websites are most commonly used to deliver information to all ages, while private providers tend to deliver targeted information.</li> <li>• Younger Australians have access to the most career information, through government and private websites, as well as applications and a variety of innovative platforms.</li> <li>• Information needed at various parts of the career journey is disjointed, requiring individuals to navigate a variety of websites and other sources, then ‘join the dots’.</li> <li>• Information is sometimes outdated, and rarely provided in a targeted manner.</li> </ul>
<b>Career guidance and advice</b>	Education and training institutions, government organisations and some private provision	Largely supported by government directly, through education or on a fee-for-service basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practitioners generally deliver career support through educational institutions, government programs or private practice. Given the high cost of fee-for-service advice, most people only access face-to-face support if it is provided through a government program or by an education and training body.</li> <li>• Formal services are often described as being of mixed quality, perpetuating poor industry perceptions.</li> <li>• Many Australians instead seek career guidance and advice through informal channels, such as a parent or partner. Post-school, there is limited information and guidance for those providing informal support to help them provide the most accurate and useful advice possible.</li> </ul>
<b>Career skills development</b>	Largely within schools. Some offered as part of formal tertiary training or specific government programs.	Mostly supported by government or education institution based funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of employability skills during tertiary course delivery is ad hoc, with few institutions prescribing standards or integration into the curricula.</li> <li>• Several government programs offer career skills development support as a ‘first step’ for people struggling to find employment.</li> <li>• There is some availability of online, self-guided courses, focused more on employability skills (such as communication, organisation) rather than career management skills (such as support to interview, write a résumé, understand the career landscape).</li> </ul>
<b>Career pathways and experience</b>	Various.	Mostly government funded.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apprenticeships offer the best employment outcomes, and are being increasingly used by people over 25.</li> <li>• Other work placements are largely limited to early career explorers.</li> <li>• Government funded programs assist people to build employment skills and find a job, but these are only provided where a person has already reached ‘crisis point’.</li> </ul>

### 2.1.1 Career information

Career information is a critical component of a functioning career support model.

*'It is difficult to see how [career support] can operate in the absence of highly developed systems of information and advice, any more than it is possible to see how financial markets could operate in the absence of appropriate information and sources of advice to guide financial investment decisions.'*

*Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 'Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap', 2004*

Career information in Australia is:

- **Largely delivered online.** Government websites are most commonly used to deliver information to all ages, especially on vocational pathways. Younger Australians have access to the most career information, through government and private websites, as well as applications and a variety of innovative platforms.
- **Targeted at young people or people that are unemployed.** For all others, career information provided is generic, making it difficult for people to know what options are available to them given their particular characteristics or circumstance.
- **Often fragmented.** Information needed at various parts of the career journey is disjointed, requiring individuals to navigate a variety of websites and other sources, then 'join the dots' to understand what it means for their careers.
- **Largely outdated and irrelevant.** Information is often dense, comprised of outdated occupational descriptions and labour market conditions, and rarely provides the level of detail relevant to the person's circumstance.

*'Often I have to cross-reference because the search functions are untrustworthy and don't produce the range of course options I know are out there.'*

*Provider (tertiary setting)  
Survey respondent from Queensland*

#### Career information is largely delivered online

Career information is delivered by government and private bodies, often through websites and information packs, by education and training bodies through information forums and expos, and by other influencers such as peers, through blogs and social media platforms. When all this is considered, it is clear that for people outside of the school system, the **majority of career information is online**. This largely reflects cost considerations and feedback. Anecdotally we have heard from the Commonwealth Department of Education and Training that people do not want paper based feedback, especially younger people. However, the lack of offline information (including in-person information sessions, not just paper based information) present equity and access issues, especially for people with poor digital literacy, those living in regional or remote areas, or for those with a disability. While this does not necessitate a change in the current mix of delivery modes, it does indicate that more needs to be done to consider what additional support is needed to help these niche needs groups find information.

#### Career information is often targeted at a particular audience

Resources are generally targeted at youth, those in education, or people seeking employment and already on government welfare support. Information differs significantly depending on the target age group:

- The majority of **all ages websites offer general information**, not targeted at a particular cohort, such as labour market information (e.g. jobs available in a particular industry, likely labour market conditions), or education and training pathways (e.g. information on VET courses). Many of these websites lack

information tailored to the person, and tools specific to career support information, such as tools to build an understanding of the individual's preferences and competencies (e.g. support to help with résumé writing).

- Information for **youth tends to be 'holistic'**. For example, Youth Central and Year 13 provide support regarding finance and moving out. It also tends to provide more tailored information to cater for the various circumstances of the individual (e.g. Job Jumpstart, which allows youth to search information based on their circumstance).
- **Gaps in information** exist for people transitioning later in their careers, particularly mature age workers, or those exploring non-traditional forms of work such as portfolio careers, entrepreneurships or retirement.

### Career information is often fragmented

Career information needs vary depending on a person's circumstances, characteristics and the stage of their career transition. For example, a person going through a forced transition may initially need information on the labour market in their region, but as they progress through this journey, their information needs will shift to advice on job applications, and connections to local networks.

There is currently a **disconnect between information needed at various parts of the career journey**, with the majority of government and private websites offering information for a particular stage of the transition. Several government websites attempt to summarise much of the information required at various stages of a career journey.<sup>1</sup> However, these portals simply collate information and provide links to other websites rather than offering a meaningful pathway through the information. This means that individuals are required to navigate a variety of websites and other sources, then 'join the dots' to understand what it means for their career. Only Western Australia and South Australia have made significant progress in developing a 'one-stop-shop' for career support through their websites, hotlines and face-to-face services. However, these services are only available to people in their respective states, and some services are limited to unemployed people. Therefore, for the majority of Australians, career information is fragmented.

### Career information is largely outdated and not relative to the person's circumstances

There is no shortage of career information available. For the average person navigating their career, issues instead relate to difficulties in navigating the sheer volume of career information, reliability of the content and **misalignment between the way the information is delivered and the personal preference of the individual**.

Labour market information in particular was often characterised by people we consulted as being couched in **inaccessible and outdated terms**. Inaccessibility issues that were raised largely stemmed from the dense, text heavy nature of the information. A number of new and interesting approaches are being offered, targeted at improving accessibility of information for apprenticeships and traineeships:

- **Skills One TV** – Educational videos on trades and emerging skill areas to encourage engagement from a wider number of potential apprentices and trainees.<sup>2</sup>
- **AusAppPathways** – A free mobile app to explore apprenticeship and traineeship options in a tactile and engaging way.<sup>3</sup>

## 2.1.2 Career guidance and advice

Career guidance and advice ranges from formal support such as that provided by a practitioner, to informal support such as that provided by a parent. From our desktop research and consultations, career guidance and advice in Australia is:

<sup>1</sup> For more information, 'Australian Government, [website], <http://www.australia.gov.au/information-and-services/jobs-and-workplace/career-information>, (accessed May 2017); Department of Employment, [website] <https://www.education.gov.au/skills-support-individuals>, (accessed May 2017); Department of Employment (Youth specific), [website] <https://www.education.gov.au/youth>, (accessed May 2017).

<sup>2</sup> For sample videos visit, skills1netv, [website] <http://www.skillsone.com.au/>, (accessed May 2017).

<sup>3</sup> For more information visit, Australian Apprenticeship Pathways, [website] <http://www.aapathways.com.au/Career-Resources/Career-Services/National>, (accessed May 2017).

- **Largely provided through informal channels.** For younger people, parents are by far the most influential person on career plans. There is currently a lack of available support and information for parents and other key influencers, especially to help people outside of the school system.
- **Offered by practitioners to people in educational institutions or government employment programs,** creating a gap in low cost support for those not in training and/or those not in a government program.
- **Of inconsistent quality.** More research is needed to understand the use of current services, and what controls are needed to improve quality.

### **Career guidance and advice is largely provided through informal channels**

Informal advice includes advice from parents and other family members, friends, educators, employers, mentors, peers and colleagues. A Mission Australia Survey of 15 to 19 year olds found parents (83 per cent), other family members (72 per cent) and the internet (69 per cent), had the largest influence on post-school career plans. Just 42 per cent of respondents identified career advisers as influential.<sup>4</sup> Anecdotal evidence suggests that these preferences continue into adulthood, but with more emphasis on advice from friends, partners and colleagues, instead of parents.

*'I was thinking about changing my career path and I spoke to my friends, colleagues and mentors. They weren't able to guide me nor give me advice on which career path I can look into...'*

*Career Transitioner  
Survey respondent from New South Wales*

While **informal career advice is important, it is often based on the own person's values and assumptions,** which might lead it to be misguided.<sup>5</sup> For example, recent research by the Skilling Australia Foundation found that:

*'Four in five parents [surveyed] would prefer their children to go to university after leaving school, rather than undertake a vocational training pathway.'*

*N. Wyman et. al., 'Perceptions are not reality: myths, realities & the critical role of vocational education & training in Australia', Skilling Australia Foundation, 2017.*

Influencers need help to better understand and communicate opportunities and challenges related to work and study. While some support exists for parents and other influencers in schools, outside of the school environment, there is limited formal support for influencers looking to help people to navigate the complex career landscape. One example of a support initiative is:

**Parents As Career Transition Support** program, which is designed to provide parents, carers, education providers and support workers with up-to-date information about education and training pathways, including advice on communicating about careers, using job guides, and preparing young people for interviews.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Mission Australia, 'Mission Australia Youth Survey Report 2016', 2016. NB: Survey had nearly 22,000 respondents.

<sup>5</sup> M. Miles, 'The national Career Development Research Strategy Project', 2013.

<sup>6</sup> For more information, see Youth Connect, [website] <https://youthconnect.com.au/career-transition-programs/pacts/>. (accessed 14 June 2017). Note: It is unclear which states and territories currently offer this support. Our desktop research suggests that the program is currently delivered in Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia.

### Formal guidance and advice is generally offered by practitioners in educational institutions or government programs

The importance of face-to-face advice in improving career outcomes has been reiterated through our research and consultations, especially for high needs groups.<sup>7</sup>

*'Older people, people with disabilities, migrants and parents who have been out of the workforce... These groups really seem to benefit from coming in and speaking to us in person.'*

Provider  
Survey respondent from Victoria

Formal career guidance and advice outside of schools is generally either offered by tertiary education institutions to students, or by the government and not-for-profit sector to unemployed people and select high needs groups. Our research and consultations suggest few people engage career practitioners privately on a fee-for-service basis, but further research would be needed to better understand usage trends.

The **quality and scope of the guidance and advice offered differs significantly between education and training institutions.** Services offered in education and training institutions tend to be 'opt-in', meaning that it is possible for people to complete their learning without any engagement with career guidance and advice. Research suggests that career support is particularly underdeveloped in the VET sector,<sup>8</sup> either often not available at all to learners or compounded with generalist counselling services.<sup>9</sup> Most universities have established career support services.<sup>10</sup>

**Outside of educational institutions, the government is the largest provider of career guidance and advice.**<sup>11</sup> Face-to-face support is provided in Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria through centres. For those without access to support at these centres, support may be available through specific government programs, such as ParentsNext or the NSW Refugee Employment Support Program. Unfortunately, as services are generally only available to people who are unemployed, this creates a gap in support for the 1.1 million Australians who are underemployed, and need support to work more hours or move into more fulfilling roles.<sup>12</sup> Overall, **there is insufficient provision of career guidance and advice for those outside of educational institutions and unemployment programs,** as confirmed by a number of papers.<sup>13</sup>

### Formal career guidance and advice is of inconsistent quality

There is limited research available as to how often people engage fee-for-service professional advice. In our consultations, we heard from a number of high quality career practitioners looking to make a difference through targeted support and well considered initiatives. While there are good experiences, we also heard from practitioners and other stakeholders that there are quality concerns in relation to the delivery of formal career advice, such as lack of consistency, and no requirement for continuing professional development.

<sup>7</sup> R Sweet et al, 'Making Career Development Core Business', Centre for Post-compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning, the University of Melbourne, for the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Victorian Department of Business and Innovation, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> L. Rainey et al, 'What Choice? An Evaluation of Career Development Services for Young People', National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Adelaide, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> S. Halliday Wynes and J. Misko, 'VET career development services: the way forward', National Centre for Vocational Education and Training, 2012.

<sup>10</sup> The Good Universities Guide, 'Getting the most out of your university's student services' <<https://www.gooduniversitiesguide.com.au/education-blogs/student-life/getting-the-most-out-of-student-services>> (accessed June 2016).

<sup>11</sup> R. Polvere, and P. Lim, 'Career Development supporting young Australians', National Centre for Vocational Education and Research, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Labour Force, Australia', Catalogue 6202.0, November 2016 'Spotlight on Underemployment'.

<sup>13</sup> R Sweet et al, 'Making Career Development Core Business', Centre for Post-compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning, the University of Melbourne, for the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Victorian Department of Business and Innovation, 2010; R. Polvere, and P. Lim, 'Career Development supporting young Australians', National Centre for Vocational Education and Research, 2015.

*'It's very hit and miss in terms of quality ... [some] are providing fluffy, inconsistent, largely unhelpful and unpractical advice.'*

*Provider  
Survey respondent from Victoria*

### 2.1.3 Career skills development

In the changing world of work, effective career support needs to equip the person to independently navigate their own career. Career management skills and employability skills empower people to navigate their career autonomously, relying less on support from external providers.<sup>14</sup>

Our research indicates that career skill development in Australia is:

- **Becoming more integrated with tertiary education** though overall development of employability skills during tertiary course delivery is ad hoc, with few institutions prescribing standards or integration into the curricula, making delivery highly dependent on the preferences of the trainer or lecturer.
- **Offered through government programs.** Many government programs include the development of employability and self-management skills as a precursor to work experience and employment. Provision of this skills development tends to focus on lower levels of competency.
- **Available online through self-guided training.** These tend to be focused more on employability than career management skills.

#### **Career skill development is becoming more integrated with tertiary education**

Vocational training organisations offer several employability skill specific courses, however these are generally targeted at low competency levels as opposed to ingrained in the general curriculum (e.g. Western Australia's Course in Applied Vocational Study Skills). We have heard that progress is being made to embed the development of employability skills into university course curricula, but this is hindered by the large time cost associated with translating the framework into the many curricula existent in universities. Overall, career skill development integration is highly dependent on the lecturer or trainer and organisation, meaning that there is a lack of consistency in the access to, and quality of, career skill development.

#### **Career skill development is now a part of many government programs**

Several government programs offer career skills development support as a 'first step' for people struggling to find employment, such as the 'prepare' component of the Youth Jobs PaTH program (detailed in Section 2.1.3 below). However, these programs tend to only be offered to high needs groups such as NEETs and long term unemployed people. In addition to holistic support programs, there are a number of programs targeted at skill development, such as:

- **Transition to Work** (Commonwealth Government) which provides intensive, pre-employment support to improve the work-readiness of young people and help them into work (including apprenticeships and traineeships) or education.<sup>15</sup>
- **Ready for Work** (Queensland Government) which allows community organisations to run courses of up to 6-8 weeks to assist young people to transition into the workforce and provide them with the practical skills they need to successfully find work.<sup>16</sup>

There is also likely to be a number of new initiatives following the implementation of the Try Test and Learn Fund, which is designed to trial new and innovative policies to support people moving from welfare to the workforce.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> S. Neary, V. Dodd, T. Hooley, 'Understanding career management skills: findings from the first phase of the CMS leader project', 2016.

<sup>15</sup> For more information, see Transition to Work [website] < <https://www.employment.gov.au/transition-work> > (accessed June 2017).

<sup>16</sup> For more information, Queensland Government, [website] <https://training.qld.gov.au/community-orgs/funded/sqw/get-set-for-work>, (accessed May 2017).

### Career skill development outside of the above is limited to online, self-guided learning

Career skills development can occur through self-guided learning utilising Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) and similar platforms, through on-the-job through work experience and work related learning and development programs, and through gamification. These tend to be focused more on employability than career management skills. At the moment there is a gap in the provision of this training outside of online courses, which is a problem for people with low digital literacy, or those living in areas with patchy internet access.

#### 2.1.4 Career pathways and experience

Career pathways and experience has been used to characterise a broad range of initiatives, activities and support offered to link those in education and training, or those seeking employment, to the workplace. This section discusses apprenticeships and traineeships, work related learning, and government employment programs and services.

#### Apprenticeships and traineeships

Apprenticeships and traineeships ('apprenticeships') offer on and off the job training, paid employment, and an accredited qualification.<sup>18</sup> Apprenticeships are pivotal to the success of career support, providing a strong connection between education and training, and are the most successful education and training pathway:

*In 2015, 84 per cent of apprentices were employed within six months of completing their qualification, higher than other VET and bachelor degree graduates.*

*Commonwealth Department of Employment, 'Australian Jobs 2016', 2017.*

In Australia, apprenticeships are:

- **Supported by government funding and initiatives.** This is available through subsidies and support programs to improve the integration of apprentices into the organisation, such as:

**Australian Apprenticeship Support Network** which aims to make it easier for employers to recruit, train and retain apprentices. This Network includes pre-commencement services such as screening, testing and job-matching to help 'the right apprentice get the right apprenticeship with the right employer'.<sup>19</sup>

- **Experiencing a decline in commencements, especially in non-trades**, with employers struggling to find suitable job ready candidates. New initiatives, such as Higher Apprenticeships, may help to increase participation for younger cohorts. Of even more importance will be the positive promotion of apprenticeships through strong branding and ambassadors. There are many initiatives targeted at this, for example:

**Today's Skills, Tomorrow's Leaders** brings together the top apprentices and trainees from all over Australia to intensive career and leadership program to help equip them as future leaders. This encourages leadership in their respective fields and helps to raise the profile of apprenticeships.<sup>20</sup>

- **Being used as a pathway for career transitioners.** In 2016, adult apprentices represented 28 per cent of workers in trades and 45 per cent in non-trades, compared to 8 per cent and 22 per cent 20 years ago.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> For more information and submission of ideas, see Australian Government Department of Social Services, [website] <https://www.dss.gov.au/review-of-australias-welfare-system/australian-priority-investment-approach-to-welfare/try-test-and-learn-fund>, (accessed May 2017).

<sup>18</sup> Discussion relates to apprenticeships and traineeships delivered through accredited qualifications under the Australian Apprenticeship program.

<sup>19</sup> For more information, see <<https://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/australian-apprenticeship-support-network>> (accessed June 2017).

<sup>20</sup> For more information, see <<http://www.grouptraining.com.au/announcements/todays-skills-tomorrows-leaders?A=SearchResult&SearchID=10393186&ObjectID=103497&ObjectType=7>>.

<sup>21</sup> J. Hargreaves, J. Stanwick & P. Skujins, 'The changing nature of apprenticeships 1996-2016', National Centre for Vocational Education and Research, 2017.



The Commonwealth Government has committed new funding to the skilling and reskilling of all Australians, placing particular emphasis on the importance of Apprenticeships:

**Skilling Australians Fund** commits \$1.5 billion from 2017–18 to 2020–21 to co-fund state and territory governments to implement projects focused on improving apprenticeships and traineeships, and areas of future growth in Australia.<sup>22</sup>

### Work related learning

Work related learning is available through a number of avenues, such as formal paid internships, volunteer roles, as well as facilitated through controlled experiences, such as case study competitions and ‘a day in the life’ programs. In Australia, work related learning is:

- **Limited to early career explorers.** This is especially true of paid internships with employers.
- **Of growing importance in tertiary institutions.** Work related learning has long been of high importance in the VET sector, and is growing in importance in universities.<sup>23</sup>
- **Confusing and costly for small to medium size businesses.** It is more common for employers with 15 or more staff who have been operating for 20 or more years to engage work experience placements.<sup>24</sup> Barriers for smaller businesses include lack of time and resources, and a confusing and difficult to navigate landscape with multiple stakeholders and poorly defined roles.<sup>25</sup> Stakeholders have noted a lack of central coordination and consistency as a major barrier for employers.

### Employment programs and job related services

A number of government programs offer work experience placements and job placements for unemployed people, with variations targeted at high needs groups such as NEETs, Indigenous Australians and people with a disability. Employment programs and job related services in Australia are:

- **Offering holistic support.** Government employment support programs are generally offered to high needs groups and characterised by case management, employability skills training, work experience placements, employer incentives for hiring and other tailored support. Examples include Community Work Skills (Queensland Government), Partnering for Work (New South Wales Government), Reconnect (Victorian Government) and Youth Jobs PaTH (see below).
- **Industry specific, where there is a large forced transition.** Recent programs include support for workers leaving the automotive manufacturing industry.<sup>26</sup>
- **Only available to certain high needs groups.** Programs are largely targeted at those who are unemployed. These services include jobactive, Disability Employment Services, and the Community Development Programme.

**Youth Jobs PaTH (Commonwealth Government)** provides participants with holistic support through three components: prepare (career skill development); trial (work experience); and hire (career pathway).<sup>27</sup> This program takes important steps to improve employment outcomes for a select group of Australians, and

<sup>22</sup> For more information, see [https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/skilling\\_australians\\_fund\\_fact\\_sheet.pdf](https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/skilling_australians_fund_fact_sheet.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> D. Edwards, K. Perkins, J. Pearce, J. Hong, ‘Work Integrated Learning in STEM in Australian Universities’, 2015.

<sup>24</sup> Universities Australia, ‘National Strategy on Work Integrated Learning in University Education’, in partnership with ACCI, AI Group, BCA and ACEN, 2015, <http://cdn1.acen.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/National-WIL-Strategy-in-university-education-032015.pdf>, (accessed May 2017).

<sup>25</sup> Commonwealth Department of Education and Training, ‘Engaging Employers in Skills Development for the 21st Century: Joint Australian Government and OECD Workshop’, Adelaide, South Australia, 2016.

<sup>26</sup> For more information, see Hon Arthur Sinodinos, ‘Australian Government support to Australian automotive industry’ (8 February 2017) <<http://minister.industry.gov.au/ministers/sinodinos/media-releases/australian-government-support-australian-automotive-industry>> (accessed June 2017); see also Victorian State Government, ‘Programs and Initiatives’, [website] <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/pathways/Pages/auto.aspx>, (accessed May 2017).

<sup>27</sup> For more information, see Department of Employment, [website] <https://www.employment.gov.au/youth-jobs-path>, (accessed May 2017).

following initial roll out, it is our view that further consideration needs to be given to the applicability of the model to underemployed people, career transitioners and other high needs groups.

## ***2.2 Implications for a future career support model***

Current career support arrangements can be characterised overall as fragmented and inconsistent, offering great support for some, but failing to adequately meet the career support needs of all Australians. How this compares to our future state is considered in Section 7.

## 3 Summary of domestic and international best practice

### Key Points:

- **Understanding best practice, both international and domestic, is an important step in the development of any policy.** This research deepens our understanding of what could constitute a viable solution, and maximises efficiency by highlighting what future state career models should be explored or left unexplored based on other countries' experiences.
- **Our user-designed career support model elements are best achieved through the development of an 'all ages' career support system.** Examples of this model exist in New Zealand, Wales and Scotland, though examples of best practice in this section have also been drawn from a variety of countries, including countries with similar federal systems and geographical dispersion, such as Canada.
- **Benefits of 'all ages' models** include the delivery of lifelong support to all citizens, multiple support channels to improve accessibility, and provide a forum for individuals to connect to employers, education and training, and career practitioners. These systems are underpinned by strong governance and quality assurance at the government and service delivery levels. Lastly, best practice research suggests that tailored support that empowers the individual to manage their own career and offers enabling pathways into the workforce, is best facilitated as part of a whole-of-system, all ages, model.
- **Career skill development, work integrated learning, and apprenticeships, will be central to the success of the system.** These elements empower the individual to manage their own careers, and provide a clear pathway into the workforce.

### 3.1 Adapting best practice research to the Australian context

Just as every person's career experience is unique, every country's career landscape is different. We have been cognisant of this when drawing lessons for the development of our own model. Where possible, we have looked to countries with similar education and training and employment systems, and federal structures. We recognise that our three 'gold standard' career support model countries – New Zealand, Wales and Scotland – are different to Australia in terms of their population, geography and governance. However, they are also facing many challenges similar to Australia, including how to support people in declining industries that were previously pivotal to economic growth; and how to tailor support to remote geographies and high needs groups. As such, we have included examples of successful domestic career support to demonstrate their partial alignment to the current state, and have carefully considered what areas of our best practice model, such as governance and co-design between all levels of government, need further investigation in the next stage of our work, such that we could successfully transition to a similar model in spite of differences between countries. These are discussed in more detail in Sections 7 and 8 of this report.

To deepen our analysis, we also explored best practice examples from countries with similar governance structures to Australia, such as Canada, to gain insights into how Australia might implement a career support system in our federalised, geographically dispersed country. Other countries with federal structures and geographic dispersion drawn on in this section include the United States of America and Germany.

### 3.2 What lessons can be learnt from best practice career support?

International best practice has been assessed as those career support models and initiatives that **meet our seven core user-designed career support elements** (see Section 5 for more detail). We have drawn on literature by academics and core policy bodies, and country based reviews of these models and initiatives, to assist in our evaluation against these elements. These elements are not unique, with a variety of international and country papers echoing similar sentiments, but have been adapted slightly for the Australian context.

### 3.2.1 Lifelong

Ultimately, the objective of a lifelong career support model is to ensure that people have access to career support, whether they choose to use it or not, at each transition point in their career.

*‘Improved access to lifelong guidance services, activities, tools and resources supports equality of citizen opportunity, social equity, social mobility, and social cohesion.’*

*European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, ‘Guidelines for Policies and Systems Development for Lifelong Guidance’, 2015.*

The best examples of lifelong support are in New Zealand, Wales and Scotland’s single system, all ages career support models. Drawing on the models in these countries, we have identified three features important to a lifelong career support model:

- 1 Single system that is for all ages.** Continuity and consistency across different jurisdictions, education and training levels, and life stages are important aspects of lifelong career support. The more familiar a person is with the support system, the more likely they are to re-engage with it at the various career transition points throughout their lifetime.<sup>28</sup> A single, all ages model has been successful in providing career support to people across all stages of life in Wales. Engagement with the system starts early, with final year high school students reporting 95 per cent awareness and 75 per cent usage of the system, getting them on track for lifelong support. Through the system, people can create a résumé and apply for jobs, creating an incentive to reconnect post-school whenever they are going through a transition. In addition to this, face-to-face support is offered to those who need it, regardless of age, with 170 of approximately 350 daily sessions delivered to people over the age of 18.<sup>29</sup>
- 2 Multiple access channels to cater for a diverse user group.** All three countries’ support models have a common touch point (usually an online portal), supported by chat forums, hotlines and face-to-face support avenues that can be accessed depending on the person’s need. Availability of multiple access points caters to the needs of the diverse user base in an all ages model, and provides a mechanism to triage resource intensive (face-to-face) support to those who need it most. In New Zealand, 75 per cent of users report that they get the information and advice they need through non-face-to-face channels.<sup>30</sup>
- 3 Career development starts early.** While it is outside the scope of this paper to discuss how career support should be delivered within schools, it is important to note that lifelong requires engagement with the system from an early age, even as young as primary school.<sup>31</sup> For example, in Scotland, My World of Work familiarises students with different job opportunities and pathways given their interests, starting in school.<sup>32</sup> Further investigation into an Australian career support model should consider alignment to the number of valuable career support systems for people of school age in Australia; from MyFuture at a national level to those at state and territory level such as the Australian Capital Territory’s Education Directorate’s school-age careers portal.

Australia will face a challenge in replicating these models given our geographically dispersed and highly populated country. Fortunately, significant investment has been made to the most resource intensive part of career support (face-to-face) in three states. Western Australia has made the most progress towards the development of an all ages support model, though South Australia has also made significant investments into a multi-channel approach to support.<sup>33</sup> These are outlined below.

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<sup>28</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, ‘Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap’, 2004; European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, ‘Strengthening the Quality Assurance and Evidence-Base for Lifelong Guidance’, 2015.

<sup>29</sup> Career Wales, Career Wales Annual Report 2015-16, 2016; A. G. Watts, ‘Career Wales’, 2016.

<sup>30</sup> New Zealand Ministry of Education, ‘Overview of the performance of the New Zealand Careers System’, 2015; Career New Zealand, ‘2016 Statement of Performance Expectations’, 2016.

<sup>31</sup> M. Watson, M. McMahon, ‘Children’s Career Development: A research review from a learning perspective’, *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, pg. 67, 119–132, 2005.

<sup>32</sup> C. Howieson, S. Semple, ‘What’s the evidence? Comparing the impact of career websites and other career support’, 2013.

<sup>33</sup> For more information, see < <http://www.skills.sa.gov.au/>> and < <http://www.careercentre.dtwd.wa.gov.au/Pages/CareerCentre.aspx>> (accessed June 2017).

**Western Australia** offers career guidance and information about training options to people of all ages, using a multi-channel approach including access to ‘in person’ support at 11 Career Centres. Features of the online portal include tools to help them understand their interests, skills and competencies, and links to other online resources, so that people can take the next step in their journey (e.g. job boards, agencies etc.).

**South Australia** also has a multi-channel system, but face-to-face services are offered on a more limited basis.

**Victoria** also has in person career support services which are attached to TAFEs, but these are not supported through other channels.

### 3.2.2 *Connected*

Connection between the many different activities, stakeholders, and opportunities that comprise the career landscape is crucial to ensuring that no matter what kind of transition a person is making, they have access to consistent, accessible, high quality career support. Fragmentation is highlighted in many international reports as being a problem both in Australia and abroad.<sup>34</sup> Drawing on examples from a variety of countries, being cognisant of the Australian context, we have identified four features important to a connected career support model:

- 1 **Clear governance** is important to set the strategic direction and facilitate stakeholder cooperation. Wales, Scotland and New Zealand’s career support systems are managed by a wholly owned government subsidiary.<sup>35</sup> This is already the case for part of the career landscape in Australia, with Education Services Australia, a Commonwealth, State and Territory corporation managing the MyFuture platform and a number of other initiatives. Other countries have strategic forums, such as the Croatian Forum for Lifelong Career Guidance,<sup>36</sup> that bring together all relevant government, non-for profit and private stakeholders to make key decisions. In Australia, the establishment of such a body was recommended by Nous Group as part of the National Career Development Strategy (NCDS).<sup>37</sup> Our recommendation to explore governance arrangements best suited to our federal system are discussed in more detail in Sections 7 and 8.
- 2 **‘One-stop-shop’** such that all information and support in relation to career guidance, education and training, employment and other roles is either in the same space, or connected through clear pathways and support channels. For example, in Finland, their One-Stop Guidance Centres and an e-Guidance service connect educational institutions, social and health services, voluntary organisations and other bodies that work with young people in the one location. This program was successfully piloted in 2010, and there are now 30 centres nationally.<sup>38</sup>
- 3 **Use of conduits and partnership brokers.** These bodies play an important role in connecting education and training with industry, and job seekers with jobs. Industry and education partnership brokers have been successful in England, Wales and Austria.<sup>39</sup> Progress has been made in this space in Australia:

**National Work Integrated Learning Portal by the Australian Collaborative Education Network** provides a central hub connecting stakeholders to develop and provide work integrated learning opportunities. It guides participants with the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of getting involved, including the benefits of work integrated learning to potential stakeholders to get them involved, and promotes good practice and innovation through case studies.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>34</sup> C Brown et al, ‘Report on the 6th International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy’, Budapest, Hungary, 5-7 December 2011, prepared for the Department of Employment Education and Workplace Relations, March 2012.

<sup>35</sup> See Career NZ, [website] <https://www.careers.govt.nz/about-careers-nz/about-us/>; Skills Development Scotland, [website] <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/about/our-leadership-team/>; Career Wales, [website] <http://www.careerswales.com/en/contact-us/about-us/>, (accessed 28 May 2017).

<sup>36</sup> European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, ‘European Lifelong Guidance Policies: Summative Report 2007-15’, 2015.

<sup>37</sup> Nous Group, ‘Rationale and options for a National Career Development Strategy’, Prepared for The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2011.

<sup>38</sup> International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy, ‘Finland: One-Stop Guidance Centers and e-Guidance services’, [website] <http://iccdpp.org/portfolio/finland-one-stop-guidance-centres/>, (accessed May 2017).

<sup>39</sup> For more information, see Careers and Enterprise Company, [website] <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/research>, (accessed May 2017); P Forbes, P Norris, ‘Understanding student expectations and national and international best practice’, AGCAS Conference, 2011; Career Wales, ‘Annual Report 2015-16’, 2017.

<sup>40</sup> For more information, see < <http://acen.edu.au/>> (accessed June 2017).

- 4 **Localised support.** Localised information and support was consistently raised as critical to positive domestic career outcomes throughout our consultations. This is reflected internationally. Scotland has been successful in this space, creating local networks and producing half yearly labour market reports to guide policy making at the localised level.<sup>41</sup> Switzerland also offers marketing, facilitation of industry connections and mentoring at a highly localised level for apprenticeships, improving the success of apprenticeships.<sup>42</sup>

### 3.2.3 Accessible

Career information is widely recognised as a public good which should be freely available to all, for reasons of both efficiency and equity.<sup>43</sup> Government therefore has an important role to play in the provision of unbiased, accurate information that is available to all.

*‘Providing careers information on its own, as an ‘information dump’, without appropriate accompanying career guidance support, does not recognise the differential capacity of individuals and groups to source and use information.’*

*European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, ‘Guidelines for Policies and Systems Development for Lifelong Guidance’, 2015.*

The following two features are important to an accessible career support model:

- 1 **Simple, easy to understand process for seeking support.** Information overload has been shown to undermine career decision making abilities.<sup>44</sup> Careers New Zealand has made significant progress in developing a career support system that is accessible and easy to understand. Using the online portal, individuals seeking career support can ‘start planning’ by taking one of three steps, which may lead to face-to-face support. This has been assessed as easy to follow for the majority of users.<sup>45</sup> The website also includes a number of tools to help produce customised information for the individual.<sup>46</sup> Several international papers also highlight the importance of one-on-one support to help interpret information, especially for high needs groups, such as people likely to drop out of the school system.<sup>47</sup>
- 2 **High quality information.** Career information, especially information on labour market conditions and job or business opportunities, will only be useful to the individual if it is up to date, and presented in easily accessible terms. The National Career Development Association guidelines for the publication of career and occupational information are a good example of best practice in this space.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, Canada, Korea and the Netherlands have labour market information portals that are widely regarded as producing current, accessible labour market information.<sup>49</sup> Career information portals in Australia should look to the above best practice examples to improve the quality, in particular currency and relevance, of labour market information.

<sup>41</sup> Skills Development Scotland, ‘Submission from Skills Development Scotland (SDS) – Education & Skills Committee’, [website] [http://www.parliament.scot/S5\\_Education/Inquiries/20160902SDS.pdf](http://www.parliament.scot/S5_Education/Inquiries/20160902SDS.pdf), (accessed May 2017).

<sup>42</sup> P Forbes and P Norris, ‘Understanding student expectations and national and international best practice’, AGCAS Conference, 2011.

<sup>43</sup> Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, ‘Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap’, 2004.

<sup>44</sup> European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, ‘Guidelines for Policies and Systems Development for Lifelong Guidance’, 2015.

<sup>45</sup> State Services Commission, the Treasury and the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, ‘Review of the Careers New Zealand’, 2013.

<sup>46</sup> Careers New Zealand, [website] <https://www.careers.govt.nz/>, (accessed 31 May 2017).

<sup>47</sup> See, e.g., European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, ‘Guidelines for Policies and Systems Development for Lifelong Guidance’, 2015.

<sup>48</sup> National Career Development Association, ‘Guidelines for the Preparation and Evaluation of Career and Occupational Information Literature’, 2007.

<sup>49</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, ‘Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap’, 2004.

### 3.2.4 Quality

Career support must be underpinned by the provision of high quality information and services. This requires robust standards, accountability and the consistent monitoring and evaluation of performance.

*'The provision of high quality, independent and impartial career guidance for young people (and adults) is key to supporting transitions into education, training and employment.'*

*D. Hughes et al., 'Careers education: International literature review', July 2016.*

We have identified four features as important to a high quality career support model:

- 1 **Strong accountability frameworks.** Accountability must be present at the governance and delivery levels, supported by the structures discussed in Section 3.2.2. For example, at the service delivery level, England developed a set of eight benchmarks and a self-evaluation tool to improve accountability and thereby promote the high quality delivery of career support in schools.<sup>50</sup>
- 2 **Quality control measures.** Practitioner competence is well established as being important to a quality career support model. Common policy levers to ensure that practitioners maintain a certain level of competence include legislation (e.g. Finland, Iceland, Poland and Slovakia have legislated minimum qualifications for their career practitioner workforce)<sup>51</sup> and a register of practitioners (e.g. UK has a national register of Career Development Professionals who are subject to a minimum qualification level, a code of ethics, and annual professional development).<sup>52</sup>
- 3 **Efficient use of public funding.** Economic evaluations are important to justify expenditure on career support programs, especially in tight fiscal environments. In England, cost benefit modelling found that for every pupil that goes into tertiary education (who would not have otherwise achieved this outcome in the absence of career support), there is an economic benefit equivalent to the cost of providing career support to 985 pupils.<sup>53</sup> Outside of this, few countries have attempted to model the relationship between career support and outcomes, or the economic impact of such interventions.<sup>54</sup> There is also a lack of empirical evidence in Australia.<sup>55</sup>
- 4 **High quality brand.** Improving public awareness of the availability and benefit of career support is important to all ages models. For example, high levels of participation in Flanders' (Denmark) career counselling scheme was attributed, in part, to a high-profile advertising campaign.<sup>56</sup>

### 3.2.5 Tailored

Each person's careers experience is unique. Career support services need to adapt to this dynamic environment, and be able to synthesise preferences, characteristics and life circumstances of the individual, as well as the many macro factors that influence jobs availability and skills needs, to provide tailored and effective support. The following two features are important to a tailored career support model:

- 1 **Targeted programs.** Career support must be tailored to individuals' needs to be successful. Tailoring can occur at the program level with specialist services, such as proactive outreach programs for high risk groups.

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<sup>50</sup> For more information, see UK Education, <http://www.gatsby.org.uk/education/programmes/good-career-guidance>, (accessed May 2017).

<sup>51</sup> European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, 'Strengthening the Quality Assurance and Evidence-Base for Lifelong Guidance', 2015.

<sup>52</sup> For more information see < <http://www.theecd.net/Professional-Register->> (accessed June 2017).

<sup>53</sup> PwC, 'Assessing benchmarks of good practice in school career guidance', Cost Benefit Analysis for the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, 2014.

<sup>54</sup> D. Hughes et al, 'Careers education: International literature review', 2016.

<sup>55</sup> R Sweet et al, 'Making Career Development Core Business', Centre for Post-compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning, the University of Melbourne, for the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Victorian Department of Business and Innovation, 2010.

<sup>56</sup> Euro found, 'Changing places: Mid-career review and internal mobility', Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2016.

For example, Denmark municipalities are legally obliged to make contact with, and offer guidance to, young people who have dropped out of formal education on at least two occasions a year up to the age of 19, to great success.<sup>57</sup> Similar support exists in Germany and Norway.<sup>58</sup> Importantly, **targeted support is best provided as part of an all ages model** to ensure scalability and cost efficiency. Denmark also offers face-to-face career guidance to all citizens, but uses pricing mechanisms to entice engagement with the support service by target groups.<sup>59</sup> A great example of targeted support for students of low socioeconomic background is already present in Australia:

**Cadetship to Career program** is being run by the Business Council of Australia and The Smith Family to enable young, disadvantaged Australians to kickstart their career. It involves an eight week, full time, paid cadetship with a Business Council Member company. This helps to overcome barriers for students due to a lack of social capital and connections. Support is provided to employers and interns before, during and after.<sup>60</sup>

- 2 **Use of self-assessment tools.** Tailoring should also occur at the individual level through the personalisation of one-on-one guidance, and tailoring of online information. Career New Zealand has a number of tools to tailor information: ‘Subject Matcher’ for job ideas based on school subjects; ‘Skills Builder’ to figure out how to build on current skills; ‘CareerQuest’ for job ideas based on interests.<sup>61</sup>

### 3.2.6 Enabling

Work related learning is pivotal to career success, providing a pathway into the workforce.

*‘There is strong evidence that work-based learning helps to equip young people with the skills that can improve their employability and ease the transition from school to work.’*

*European Commission 2020 Working Group on Vocational Education and Training, ‘High-performance apprenticeships and work-based learning: 20 guiding principles’, December 2015.*

The following three features are important to an enabling career support model:

- 1 **Strong link between education and training, and employment.** Apprenticeships are pivotal to this strong relationship. Several countries have made work experience a compulsory part of education and training, including Poland, Austria, Finland and the Netherlands.<sup>62</sup> Education and training bodies around the world have taken significant steps to improve their work related learning programs, such as Drexel University in the United States, where undergraduate students have up to 18 months of professional experience before graduation.<sup>63</sup> In Australia, several universities have progressed their industry based learning programs, including:

**Work integrated learning for engineering students** whereby Engineers Australia requires that students have ‘exposure to industry practice’ to be accredited. As a result, the majority of engineering students undertake work integrated learning, usually through a 12 week placement. Research has found that there are considerable benefits to the student, industry, and the universities ‘because industry has a direct role in graduate preparation, and universities benefit from industry feedback about how well their academic programs are

<sup>57</sup> Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, ‘Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap’, 2004.

<sup>58</sup> European Commission, Learning Exchange on ‘Integration of NEETs’, 26-27 September, Brussels, [website] <http://iccdpp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/ICCDPP-MLP-LE-NEETS-MEETING-SEPT-2016-Executive-Summary.pdf>, (accessed May 2017).

<sup>59</sup> Scotland Skills Development, My World of Work, [website] <https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/getting-job/additional-support-needs-work>, (accessed May 2017).

<sup>60</sup> For more information, see <<https://www.thesmithfamily.com.au/programs/work-experience/cadetship-to-career>> (accessed June 2017).

<sup>61</sup> Careers New Zealand, <https://www.careers.govt.nz/>, (accessed 31 May 2017).

<sup>62</sup> European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, ‘Work-based learning and lifelong guidance policies’, 2015.

<sup>63</sup> The International Graduate Insight Group Ltd (i-graduate), ‘Supporting Graduate Employability: HEI Practice in Other Countries, Prepared for the UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, 2011.



oriented to work.<sup>64</sup>

Employer engagement is critical to the success of these programs. It can be bolstered by involving them in the design and implementation of programs,<sup>65</sup> and promotion of the benefits of participation. On the design of programs, one avenue used to co-design such programs is the use of employer feedback to better align training and employer skills needs.<sup>66</sup> Australia already encourages this alignment through the vocational education training package development system.<sup>67</sup>

- 2 Support for employers and individuals.** For example, France has a strong support system for both apprentices and employers, with a particular focus on small to medium sized enterprises. Features include regular check-ins at the workplace, online information portal and pre-training skills development for the apprentice.<sup>68</sup> In Australia:

**Industry Specialist Mentoring program** aims to increase Australian Apprenticeship retention rates by offering intensive and specialist assistance from a highly skilled industry mentor to apprentices and trainees facing barriers.<sup>69</sup>

- 3 Encourage innovation, not just ‘traditional’ experience.** Anecdotally, we heard that any experience is good experience. This may include volunteering, and gamified experiences, such as University of Turkey’s ‘Virtual Enterprise Programme’ which uses virtual reality technology to allow students to have a hands on application of their learnings.<sup>70</sup> One Australian company is pioneering in this space:

**Career Blueprint’s Real Day Out** allows passionate students join forces with businesses to work on 21st century challenges. Students gain insights into the businesses, and an opportunity to contemplate practical, technology driven solutions, utilising digital technologies, like virtual reality as part of the experience.<sup>71</sup>

Preparation to be a ‘job maker’, not just a ‘job taker’ is also critical. For example, the University of Aalto in Finland runs Aalto Venture Garage which is an on-campus space for entrepreneurs to grow their business, as well as a bootcamp for students to help pre-seed start-ups build up their products.<sup>72</sup> In Australia:

**The \$20 Boss Program** run by the Foundation for Young Australians and National Australia Bank allows students to develop and run their own business. Students are provided with \$20 capital to fund the start-up of their business. At the end of the program they are encouraged to return the start-up capital plus a \$1 legacy payment.<sup>73</sup>

### 3.2.7 Empowering

Development of the skills to autonomously manage one’s own career is critical. More and more countries are placing the development of career management skills at the centre of their career support system.

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<sup>64</sup> Edwards et al, ‘Work Integrated Learning in STEM in Australian Universities’, Submitted to the Office of the Chief Scientist, July 2015.

<sup>65</sup> Commonwealth Department of Education and Training, ‘Engaging Employers in Skills Development for the 21st Century: Joint Australian Government and OECD Workshop’, Adelaide, South Australia, 2016.

<sup>66</sup> European Commission 2020 Working Group on Vocational Education and Training, ‘High-performance apprenticeships and work-based learning: 20 guiding principles’, 2015.

<sup>67</sup> For more information, see < <https://www.education.gov.au/training-packages> > (accessed June 2017).

<sup>68</sup> P Forbes, P Norris, ‘Understanding student expectations and national and international best practice’, AGCAS Conference, 2011.

<sup>69</sup> For more information, see < <https://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/programs/industry-specialist-mentoring> > (accessed June 2017).

<sup>70</sup> P Forbes, P Norris, ‘Understanding student expectations and national and international best practice’, AGCAS Conference, 2011.

<sup>71</sup> Provided on request following an interview with Career Blueprint.

<sup>72</sup> For more information, see <http://aaltovg.com/>, (accessed June 2017).

<sup>73</sup> For more information, see <http://www.fya.org.au/our-programs/2oboss/> (accessed June 2017).

*‘Meaningful, fulfilling careers don’t happen by accident – it’s a process of careful decision-making. But where can people find the information and develop the skills to make those decisions? That’s where Career Management Skills come in.’*

*Skills Development Scotland*

The following features are important to a career support model that empowers users:

- 1 **Skills people to manage their own careers.** A career support model must skill people to develop their own career (e.g. understand the job market, brand themselves), and to transition well between environments (e.g. agility, employability skills, resilience). Careers Scotland has embedded the development of career management skills through their services, not only delivering development through their World of Work website and 650 coaches and advisers, but through trained third parties in schools and colleges. Initiatives to develop these skills include one-to-one coaching, group sessions, meaningful work experience, industry contact, and My World of Work.<sup>74</sup>
- 2 **Integrates with education.** A career support model should ‘train the trainers’ to ensure they are equipped to teach career management and employability skills. There should also be an evaluation of the competence of learners post-training. Blueprint frameworks, which have been utilised in Australia as well as Canada and the United States, are broadly evaluated as effective.<sup>75</sup> However, in Australia, we have heard that there is low uptake of career skill development into the curricula in universities and VET at the institutional level, and that a blueprint better adapted to adult education, or the development of ready to use tools as opposed to conceptual frameworks that have to be translated into the curriculum, may go some way to improving integration.
- 3 **Emphasises self-reflection.** Reflection on the person’s own aptitudes, motivations, self-determination and levels of resilience has been shown to promote positive career outcomes.<sup>76</sup> For example, Germany’s ProfilPASS is a portfolio instrument to help a person systematically review their own life, including volunteer experience and skills from life roles. Further, a prototype tool called the Twenty-Twenty Mid-Career Review encourages self-reflection on self-image, nature of work, self-management and wider life context through a questionnaire, with low scores in each of these areas suggesting further development may be necessary.<sup>77</sup>

### **3.3 Implications for a future career support model**

Building on the information above, we have developed a set of recommendations for the development of an all ages, multi-channel career support model. Overall, our assessment has identified some key features that best practice, lifelong career support models have:

- Single support system across jurisdictions that is for all ages.
- Multiple access channels, including localised services and tailored programs guided by the core system.
- A ‘one-stop-shop’ online platform or other mechanism that brings together innovative tools and work experience options, and is supported by strong governance and quality assurance frameworks.
- Strong connection with employers and an emphasis on apprenticeships, career skill development and self-reflection.

<sup>74</sup> Skills Development Scotland, ‘Career Management Skills’, [website] <https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/what-we-do/our-products/career-management-skills/>, (accessed May 2017).

<sup>75</sup> T. Hooley et al, ‘The ‘Blueprint’ framework for career management skills: a critical exploration’, *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, Vol. 41, No. 2, 2013.

<sup>76</sup> R. Helyer, ‘Learning through reflection: the critical role of reflection in work-based learning’, *Journal of Work-applied Management*, Vol 7 (1), 2015, p.15.

<sup>77</sup> Eurofound, ‘Changing places: Mid-career review and internal mobility’, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2016.

## 4 *Wider market and environmental factors influencing career support needs*

### *Key Points:*

- **Regardless of what a career means to the individual, there is one universal truth – careers are changing, and fast.** The concept of ‘a job for life’ is no longer a reality, and few careers follow the expected pattern of prepare-work-retire.
- **The future of work is changing at an ever accelerating pace.** This is challenging conventional views of careers and disrupting industries. Disruption will drive exciting opportunities for economic and personal growth, but only for those individuals that can navigate the new unpredictable, ambiguous career landscape, which will likely require more transitions between jobs and life roles than ever before.
- **Career support is more important than ever.** In this new and complex landscape, people will need support to adapt to change and to make transitions throughout their career, whether the support is advice from a friend or parent or formal guidance from a professional. There is long standing recognition of the need to support people transitioning from schooling to work or further education, but there are many other transition points, from tertiary education to work, between industries, between various paid and unpaid roles, and after a prolonged absence from the workforce.
- **Australia needs to transition to a career support model that is for all Australians.** A model that delivers career support no matter what their life stage and circumstance, and one that is more focused on the individual's needs, that lives with the individual over time, accommodates modern working practices, and supports learning that is strongly integrated with work experience, such as apprenticeships. Given the accelerating pace of change, the longer we take to act, the more Australians will fall behind.

This section provides a summary of the wider market and environmental factors impacting the career landscape. Clearly, these add further complexity to how we might enhance career support for all people in Australia.

### **4.1 *Technological changes***

Technological change is occurring at an exponential pace, driven by better utilisation of information, improvements in artificial intelligence, blockchain, automation, and other efficiency driving technologies, and investment in technological infrastructure, such as the National Broadband Network. Underpinning many of these trends is a general movement towards an increasingly digitised economy, one that is more connected, informed and efficient than ever before, and characterised by end-to-end digitisation and disruption of traditional industries.<sup>78</sup>

#### **What does this mean for career support needs?**

Career support will be more important than ever, and must be available to all people, regardless of age, characteristics and circumstance. As a result of technological change, people will be experiencing more transitions, requiring them to regularly engage with formal, informal and on-the-job training to gain new specialist, digital and generic skills. Many people will need support to optimise their education and training and

<sup>78</sup> Department of industry, ‘German-Australian Cooperation on Industrie 4.0’, [website] <https://industry.gov.au/industry/Industry-4-0/Documents/Australia%20Industry%204.0%20cooperation%20agreement.pdf>, (accessed May 2017).

work experience options as new roles emerge and new skills are demanded in the workplace. The decline in entry level jobs will make it difficult for early career explorers, or those moving into a new role or industry after retraining, to transition. This is a problem now, with over a third of Mission Australia 2016 Youth Survey respondents having reported that they were looking for paid work yet unable to find employment.<sup>79</sup>

Career support can leverage new technologies, including options to use new digital delivery platforms and exploit almost universal access to personal devices. Data analytics and machine learning can improve the connectivity and customisation of career support, and the accuracy of career information. For example, the Foundation for Young Australians used data analytics, drawing from 4.2 million unique job advertisements online, and found evidence to show that employer demand for 'digital literacy' and 'critical thinking' was booming, up 212 and 158 per cent respectively over the past three years.<sup>80</sup>

## 4.2 Global influences

Global forces are changing the world of work both in Australia and abroad. Developing countries are still struggling to reach long term average rates of economic growth and employment following the global financial crisis, limiting export opportunities for Australia in these regions. Asian economic powerhouses such as India and China are continuing to grow strongly, creating new export markets, trade relations, business models and cultural ties for Australia.<sup>81</sup>

People in these rapidly growing Asian economies are getting wealthier and are looking to Australia and other international markets to make use of education, healthcare, entertainment, tourism and financial services.<sup>82</sup> Australian businesses are well placed to capitalise on these opportunities and could realise huge economic growth given our geography and developed services market.

### What does this mean for career support needs?

Career support will need to adapt to a more competitive labour market environment, and to the opportunities that arise from changing global activity. Career support could improve the connection between international opportunities and training by communicating the potential opportunities from economic growth in Asian countries, and supporting people to acquire the skills to succeed in what might be an unfamiliar market.

Career support will be necessary to aid global mobility. For those looking to come to Australia, the career landscape can be difficult to navigate, especially for those facing a forced dislocation. If poorly managed, there is a risk that displaced workers will take a longer time to re-engage with the labour market, which is where skills in cultural awareness, language, international business, and professional networking may assist. Similar challenges are faced by those looking for job opportunities overseas. Support for these people is also important to global economic integration and economic growth, as those who leave and come back do so with a deeper understanding of international markets and new opportunities for growth.

## 4.3 Economic transitions

Australia has enjoyed 24 years of solid economic growth,<sup>83</sup> coupled by increases in our wages and standards of living. However, Australia is in a period of transition with China's demand for our resources continuing to slow, and the real estate market beginning to cool. Continued growth is contingent on the development of a flexible, productive workforce, capable of embracing new economic opportunities brought by high demand for health care from the ageing population, new industries driven by technological change, and increased service demand from Asia.

These economic transitions are shaping the career landscape: disrupting traditional sectors and creating new opportunities in the services industry; shaping an older workforce that will be working longer and juggling non-work roles and responsibilities (including their own personal health); and increasing demand for greater

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<sup>79</sup> Mission Australia, 'Youth Survey 2016', 2017.

<sup>80</sup> Foundation for Young Australians, 'The New Basics: Big data reveals the skills young people need for the New Work Order', 2016.

<sup>81</sup> CSIRO, 'Australia 2030 – Navigating our uncertain future', May 2016.

<sup>82</sup> CSIRO, 'Australia 2030 – Navigating our uncertain future', May 2016.

<sup>83</sup> 'Australian National Accounts: National Income, Expenditure and Product', Catalogue 5206.0., December 2016, Available from ABS, (accessed on April 2017).

flexibility in education and training as people ‘dip in and out’ of skills development. Australia must embrace these opportunities or else face a decline in living standards.<sup>84</sup>

#### **What does this mean for career support needs?**

Career support must be responsive to individual needs, and flexible to accommodate changes in the economy. As well, career support must empower individuals to drive their own career, be resilient to change, and teach individuals the career management skills to manage in a constantly shifting environment. Demand for tailored, personalised and immediate experience will also drive how individuals interact with the career support sector itself.

Career information must be up to date. Support must be able to communicate changing labour market opportunities. People will need information and potentially coaching to ‘cut through’ and capitalise on opportunities in new or flooded markets. In particular, it will be important to communicate the value of vocational learning.

### **4.4 Regulations and new policies**

Government regulations and policies are highly important to the career landscape, having the ability to drive economic growth and alter accessibility to education and training opportunities. Key changes in the regulatory and policy space include more emphasis on innovation in industry, tightening of funding and quality controls in education and training, and support for more green industries. Additionally, there have been changes to labour market regulation at the point of entry through tightening of visa restrictions, and in the domestic market through, for example, changes to weekend penalty rates.<sup>85</sup>

#### **What does this mean for career support needs?**

Career support must connect people to external support. Job opportunities and challenges are closely linked to the political and regulatory environment. Career support must connect people looking to understand regulatory changes and the implications of these regulatory changes to the appropriate resources, such as support from Fair Work Australia regarding labour market changes, or assistance from the Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman to understand how changes to regulations impact their business.

### **4.5 Shifting societal norms**

Individuals, community and broader society also have a profound influence over the career landscape. Emphasis on equality, autonomy and community values are some of the shifting societal norms leading to later transitions into or out of the workforce, changing career values and creating more workplace opportunities for minority groups. Other shifts in societal norms include a growing awareness of the linkages between work and mental and physical health and general wellbeing, and a greater recognition and push towards diversity in all roles (diversity of thought, not just cultural diversity).

#### **What does this mean for career support needs?**

Career support must be holistic and lifelong. Holistic career support that recognises the interconnectedness between career and other aspects of a person’s life and the existence of multiple career and life goals will be in high demand. There will also be a greater need for support later in life, as societal norms, as well as a number of other factors, drive later transitions. Additionally, with reskilling there is a need for greater support for people even after they are in employment (ie not just extending career support to 5 years post school, but truly all ages).

*The average young person will have 17 jobs across 5 different industries in their lifetime.*

*McCrindle, ‘Job Mobility in Australia’, June 2014*

<sup>84</sup> PwC, ‘A smart move’, July 2015.

<sup>85</sup> Fair Work Commission, Summary of decision: ‘4 yearly review of modern awards — Penalty Rates AM2014/305 [2017] FWCFB 1001’, 2017.

Career practitioners must provide ongoing tailored support to help individuals articulate their skills, develop their career narrative and plan their career in an ever-changing environment. Parents and others who provide much of the informal career guidance and advice will also need support and resources so that they can effectively assist individuals or otherwise refer them to the 'right' help.

#### ***4.6 Implications for a future career support model***

It is clear that the future of work will continue to change exponentially, challenging conventional views of careers and disrupting industries, moving faster than we can keep up with. Career support is necessary to help Australians navigate this complex work and education environment, and needs to be delivered through a model that can keep up with the accelerating pace of change yet still offer its users lifelong, connected and accessible support. Ultimately, an effective model would need to ensure that all people in Australia have access to career support, whether they choose to use it or not, at any point in their life and career.

## 5 High level requirements by user group

### Key Points:

- **Careers are deeply personal and individual experiences.** Since each person is unique, so too are their career support needs. Our user-led research indicates that an individual's circumstances are the primary driver for them to seek out career information or support; and individual characteristics drive their need for more tailored support.
- **Two broad user groups emerged from our research:** Early career explorers are relatively new to the world of work and transitioning from schooling to work for the first time. These users want free, on-demand access to career support; information that is up-to-date; greater personal insight; and help to acquire work-related experiences. Career transitioners have more work and life experience, and are initiating a career change or have been impacted by one. Similarly, these users want flexibility in how and when they access career support; help with where to find reliable and relevant information; a meaningful connection; greater personal insight; and help to draw learnings from work-related experiences.
- **Common patterns were evident in the current experience of users.** Good quality career support happens inconsistently. Post-school, many individuals seek out career support in response to a crisis, based on a referral by a parent, friend or other key agent; they enter into career support seeking a specific outcome (help with a résumé, support in writing a job application, finding a career direction); and do not enter into career support either wanting or expecting to build their career development skills. The user experience is highly variable, fraught with roadblocks and hurdles, and individuals can easily disengage from the system at any point in the journey.
- **Our research gives clear signals to what a future whole-of-system career support model might look like.** We identified seven core elements of a future whole-of-system career support model that is for all Australians: Lifelong; Accessible; Connected; Tailored; Quality; Enabling; Empowering. These provide a set of criteria that should be present to ensure that any future career model caters to the needs of individual users (including those cohorts who might have more niche needs) and connects individuals to the right information, support and pathways options.

To design a lifelong, whole-of-system career support model that meets the needs of people now, yet is flexible enough to meet the future needs of people in Australia, it is important to understand who the users are, their high level requirements, current user experience, and implications for a future career support model. This section draws heavily on our primary research data, collected from approximately 720 people through interviews, focus groups and our nationwide survey.

### 5.1 Who are the users and what are their high level requirements?

Lifelong career support should be available to all Australians, no matter their life circumstance or individual characteristics. However, we recognise that each person is unique, and so too is their career experience. This means that each person's engagement with a whole-of-system career support model will be unique too.

*'All this stuff is developed for young people. As a mature aged worker, I don't want to sit in front of a computer screen to look through something with pictures or activities designed for young people. I need someone to look at my experience and advise where the possible realistic avenues for future employment are for me.'*

*Career Transitioner (and mature aged worker)  
Survey respondent from Tasmania*

Our research suggests that a combination of an individual's life circumstances and characteristics drive them to seek out career information or support, as highlighted below. Furthermore, the primary driver appears to be their life circumstances. That is, a person seeks out career support because of where they are at with their life stage or stage of career; the fact that they might also be a mature age worker provides additional context and their career support must also be tailored to these niche needs.

- **Life circumstances:** These include factors that reflect where the individual is at with their life stage or career. For example, some people may be new to the world of work, transitioning from education and training for the first time; other, more experienced workers, may be employed in a declining industry and looking for reskilling opportunities in a different field of work.
- **Individual characteristics:** These include any combination of demographic and individual factors that drive a person to seek out more tailored career information or support. In broad terms these include age and geography, financial or mental health, educational attainment, employment status, disadvantage, cultural and linguistic diversity, or disability. Specifically, we mean 'niche need' cohorts to describe mature age workers, youth not currently in education, employment or training (youth NEETs), skilled migrants or refugees, Indigenous Australians, persons living with a disability, or people living in regional, rural and more remote areas in Australia, etc.

### 5.1.1 *User groups and their high level requirements*

Two broad user groups emerged from our research: early career explorers and career transitioners.

#### **Early career explorers**

Early career explorers are transitioning into the world of work from education and training for the first time or are relatively new to their career. They have minimal work-related experiences to draw upon and so are still exploring what career means for them, discovering what they like and dislike, developing their skills and understanding the work and team environments they enjoy. Early career explorers may have transitioned straight from secondary school to employment; they may have gone on to complete further (post-secondary) education through a vocational or university pathway. As a user group, they tend to be younger adults, although age and other demographics do not distinguish them. They may be looking for support to articulate or refine their career direction, access career advice, or develop their career management skills. Niche need cohorts may seek more tailored support, for example (but not limited to) youth NEETs, those located in regional/remote areas; or skilled migrants.

From our research, we developed two personas that illustrate how life circumstances interact with individual characteristics to shape career behaviours and career support needs for this user group.

*'I'm stuck... You're supposed to tell me what to do!'*

*Early career explorer  
Focus group respondent from Queensland*

*'I searched online ... I wasn't aware of many search methods to find employment ... Being new to the Australian careers market, I was unaware of how to search for a job ... Recruitment agencies weren't useful ... in an unfamiliar industry, it's hard to know what is and isn't relevant information.'*

*Early career explorer and skilled migrant  
Survey respondent from New South Wales*

Table 2 summarises what we heard and observed from early career explorers in our research about their career support needs and high level requirements. These provide a starting point to understanding early career explorers, their high level requirements and the implications for a possible career support model that caters to this cohort.



**Table 2: Summary of early career explorers' high level requirements**

**As an early career explorer, I need...**



**'On demand' access to free career support that helps me achieve a specific and desired outcome.** Cost of services can be a key barrier to some early career explorers seeking career advice, particularly where parents or others do not provide financial support with this.



**To connect with someone – but only if and when I choose to.** Early career explorers may prefer to conduct their own self-directed search rather than reach out to someone else for help.



**Information about careers, education and training options or labour market data – and for this to be accurate, reliable and up-to-date.** Many early career explorers are typically quite adept at using technology and the internet to search for information.



**To better understand myself, including my interests, motivations, strengths, likes and dislikes – and how these relate to different options for a fulfilling career.** Due to their limited work-related experience, early career explorers may not have strong self-awareness or have been challenged to think about 'why' they like or dislike particular things.



**To understand what career skills development is and why it is important – and help to develop these skills.** Some might be exposed to this (e.g. through post-secondary schooling – Deakin University has begun to embed career development classes into some of the curriculum) or have to proactively seek this out.



**Support to grow and reach out to my personal and professional networks and second-degree contacts.** Help to plan who, when and how to reach out to their network, including what questions to ask.



**Work-related experience – and help to acquire and reframe these experiences.** Early career explorers can sometimes struggle to identify and communicate the knowledge, skills or attributes they have acquired.

**Career transitioners**

In contrast, career transitioners already have significant career or work experience and may be initiating a career change themselves or may have been impacted by a change outside of their control. For example, they may be wanting to try a completely new career or type of employment (portfolio, entrepreneurships) or they may be looking to upskill or reskill because of a redundancy or a forced return-to-work. Career transitioners, because of their significant career or work experience, tend to be older adults, although age and other demographics are not the key distinguishing factors of this cohort. They may be looking for support to articulate their transferrable skills, identify reskilling opportunities or pathways support. Niche need cohorts may seek more tailored career support, for example (but not limited to), mature aged workers; persons with a disability; or individuals returning to work.








From our research, we developed two personas that illustrate how life circumstances interact with individual characteristics to shape career behaviours and career support needs for this user group.

*'At age 45 with 3 kids, you can't afford to re-invent yourself as a Vet ...'*

*Provider to career transitioners  
Survey respondent from New South Wales*

Table 3 summarises the career support needs and high level requirements of career transitioners that emerged through our research. Again, these findings provide a starting point to understanding career transitioners, their high level requirements and the implications for a possible career support model that caters to this user group.

**Table 3: Summary of career transitioners' high level requirements**

As a Career Transitioner, I need...	
	<b>Flexibility and assistance to access career support – if, when and however I want to.</b> Cost of services can be a barrier, but so too can time, and the balance of other life role responsibilities and commitments.
	<b>To connect with someone if I want to and, if I do connect, to know that I can have a meaningful conversation about my career, education and training options, or alternative pathways.</b> Career transitioners want to know that quality, tailored and meaningful support is there if/when they need access to it.
	<b>Support to draw from work-related experiences – and help to identify and communicate these.</b> Career transitioners have varied life and work-related experience and often need support to weave a coherent career narrative.
	<b>Help with where to look for information – and I need this information to be accurate, reliable and up-to-date.</b> Career transitioners may have been out of the job market for some time and therefore may be less unfamiliar with new sources of information about careers, education and training options, job opportunities or labour market information.
	<b>To better understand my individual strengths, likes and dislikes and how these can help me find fulfilling work.</b> Career transitioners may have worked several years down a particular career pathway without consciously challenging why.
	<b>An understanding of what career skills development is and how it is still relevant to my career at this stage of my life.</b> Employability and career management skills may be new concepts for some Career transitioners, and the idea of reskilling or upskilling can be daunting.
	<b>Support to reach out to my personal and professional networks, including second-degree contacts.</b> Help to plan who, when and how to reach out to their network, including what questions to ask.

## 5.2 What is the current user experience?

Before we can design what a whole-of-system, lifelong career support model in Australia might look like, it is important to first understand the current experience of users through the existing career support system. Despite the very individual and personal nature of careers, our research identified common themes in users' experiences from hundreds of individual user stories from people around Australia. These are summarised below.

### What is working for all users?

There are many positives in the current experience of all users; the challenge is that these positives are not consistently experienced in every career support engagement. Key aspects of the experience that are working well (when they occur):

- **Timely:** Career support is often sought in response to a specific crisis.
- **Quick access to (some) information:** Some information is quick to find.
- **Connected (sometimes):** Information or support sometimes connects the individual to local job opportunities, employers, educational institutions, or others.
- **Of high quality (sometimes) and tailored (sometimes):** Career guidance and advice is sometimes of high quality and tailored to the individual's needs, which provides a basis for empathy and trust. Sometimes it empowers the individual and helps them develop new skills. Sometimes it recognises the whole of the person and opens up options to the individual.

### Where are the difficulties for all users?

Despite the positives outlined above, at each stage of the user journey, there are multiple pain points that are being experienced by users when accessing career support in Australia. Even more alarming, and as mentioned below, these pain points can be experienced in the extreme by some cohorts.

- **Fragmented:** This creates multiple possible barriers that can prevent an individual from engaging with career support in the first instance, or can prompt someone to disengage and prematurely exit from the career support system.
- **Unreliable quality:** There is variability in quality of information and support, and this may not always be obvious to the individual. Individuals with niche needs may be disadvantaged here, particularly if those providing career guidance or advice lack the knowledge, skills or experience to tailor career support for niche need cohorts.
- **Information or career support is not easily accessible:** Non-youth audiences or those considering non-traditional employment or education paths can encounter difficulties accessing or understanding information. For example, information for mature age workers looking for information about apprenticeships specific to their unique needs can be difficult to find; online information can be difficult to access for those living in regional or remote areas without a stable internet connection.
- **Lacks whole-of-person appreciation:** Career information and support does not always take into account the person's life stage or circumstances. The current system of support relies on the individual to proactively disclose relevant information, which can be a challenge for some cohorts, especially those for whom communication is an issue.
- **Fails to identify or connect an individual to further support as required:** Career support can create new crises for the individual – whether a direct or indirect result of receiving career support itself – and does not always connect individuals to additional support (such as welfare support, mental health support) as and when this is required. This can be particularly challenging for individuals who are already working with other professionals, for example skilled migrants, those with language barriers, and those with existing mental health conditions.
- **Lacks emphasis on lifelong learning, or sometimes fails to empower the individual to engage in lifelong learning:** Here we distinguish career information (poor emphasis on lifelong learning) from career guidance and advice (variable emphasis on lifelong learning, dependent on the practitioner).
- **Fails to help the individual see options:** Some individuals do not know what they do not know and exploration of options is highly dependent on the skills, knowledge and experience of the career practitioner.

### Justin's user experience

To bring the user experience to life, we have included the current user journey for Justin, a Career Transitioner impacted by a redundancy, over the page. It is important to note that Justin's journey describes the experience of a persona (not an individual) and is a characterisation of the key themes that emerged through our research rather than a description of an individual research participant's experience.

**About Justin:** Justin feels mounting pressure from home to find a job, has not had a response back from recent job applications, and has financial responsibilities to meet. Justin receives career support through his ex-employer. His engagement is an emotionally erratic one. Although he is able to identify a next career step (career change to a different industry), he is unable to pursue this opportunity further because of a lack of flexible pathway options and the financial ramifications for him to start at an entry-level salary. See

High level requirements by user group

Figure 1 for more detail.

**Figure 1: Justin – Forced Career Transitioner**

## FORCED CAREER TRANSITIONER



**“**  
I desperately need to find work. I can't afford to be out of a job!  
**”**

**“**  
I'm just barely keeping it all together.  
**”**

**A BIT ABOUT ME ...**

I was let go. After so many years of service, this is how they repay me. I've done the maths and I can't afford to be out of work for more than 4 months. I did up my resume and sent it out to a few friends and even spoke to a few trusted people in my network – to see if they had any work. People keep asking how I'm going. I just need to find work.

### Know me and recognise me

#### What you'll see me doing:

- Sending my resume out to any job I see, even if I don't meet all of the 'essential criteria'. It's all that's available for the salary I need to earn.
- Keeping a brave face for friends and family even though I'm not, because I don't want them to worry them.
- Wondering if this is a sign – an opportunity to do something completely different. But I can't afford a university degree at this stage in my life.
- Catching up with people I know and asking them if they have a job, or know of anyone who's hiring.

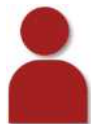
#### What I need from a careers support system:

- To realise how the job market has changed, how and where the jobs are, and what the new education and training options are. But I don't know what I don't know, and so I don't know to even ask for this information.
- Simple, easy steps to follow, and check-ins along the way for when life interrupts me.
- Support – emotionally. I'm not in the right headspace and it's impacting every aspect of my life.
- Flexibility – so that I can fit my career (or study) around my lifestyle and responsibilities.

**Justin's career journey is set out on the next page.** Please also refer to Section 6.1 to see how this journey might change for Justin under the new career support model.

User experience in 2017 for Justin, a Career Transitioner who has been impacted by a redundancy and is considering reskilling in a different industry.

Entice & Enter	Engage	Exit & Extend
<p><i>What instigates your thinking about career support? What is the point you choose an avenue of career support?</i></p>	<p><i>What is your experience during the engagement?</i></p>	<p><i>How and when do you exit from the engagement? How (if at all) do you reconnect after the engagement?</i></p>
<p><i>The experience before</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An <b>immediate trigger or crisis</b>: redundancy due to company downsizing; opportunity to work in a different industry but unsure how to make myself attractive to employers in the market.</li> <li>• An <b>emerging crisis</b>: lack of response from job applications I have recently submitted; have exhausted who and where I know of to find a job; mounting pressure from family and friends; I have commitments, responsibilities and bills and no income flowing in; I'm getting older and the longer I stay out of the market, the harder it will be to re-enter.</li> </ul>	<p><i>The experience during</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Emotional, distracted and time pressured</b> – I'm stressed, overwhelmed, anxious, depressed. There is a lot to take in. I urgently need to resolve this crisis.</li> <li>• <b>Fraught with roadblocks and hurdles</b> – I have to do what? I have to go where? I have to speak to whom?</li> <li>• <b>Existential rollercoaster</b> – who am I? What do I want? What's more important to me?</li> <li>• <b>A steep learning curve with unexpected delights</b> – I uncover things about myself that I didn't know, I learn skills to help me develop my career, I learn new things about the world of work and job search.</li> <li>• <b>Uplifting</b> – I discover my passion and identify an industry and career opportunity. I have renewed hope at the possibility of work fulfilment.</li> <li>• <b>Disheartening</b> – education and training options are limited; alternative pathways are lacking. There is no pathway that will suit me and my situation.</li> </ul>	<p><i>The experience after</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I exit the system because there are <b>no alternative pathways</b> for me; so I go back to working in the industry I was in before.</li> <li>• <b>Follow up (if done), is not always effective</b>: I am contacted by my career practitioner 3 months into my new role, but I missed the call and all I got was a voice message.</li> </ul>
<p><i>What is working well?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm offered outplacement support by my employer. They contact me to set up an appointment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (If quality careers advice) I feel listened to and heard. Conversations are tailored to me. I have support outside of family and friends.</li> <li>• I learn something new – about myself, about career opportunities, about education and training options.</li> <li>• There are real high points and unexpected delights.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is easy to exit the system.</li> <li>• I am empowered with new information and a new mindset about my abilities and future career prospects. I am confident. I know what steps I need to take to manage my career.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Where are the pain points?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The crisis brings stress and anxiety – and this clouds my thinking and decision-making.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (If poor quality careers advice) I'm frustrated – this help is not helpful! But I have no other choice – because of time, money, effort involved to switch.</li> <li>• It is hard to stay motivated and persist. It is taking a lot of effort for me to change. Other things get in the way.</li> <li>• It is exhausting to encounter so many roadblocks and hurdles. In my emotional state, it is tempting and easy to disengage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is difficult to initiate re-entry into the system or I am reluctant to do this because it was a very personally challenging process.</li> <li>• (If I do reconnect) I have to start from scratch and tell my story all over again.</li> </ul>



**Persona: Justin in 2017  
Journey: Career Transitioner**








## 5.3 Implications for a future career support model

### 5.3.1 What must a future career support model include?

Clearly, much is already being done to support Australians with their career and pathway options. However, as this and earlier sections have described, current career information and support happens in a way that is disconnected, patchy and of highly variable quality. As well, it does not provide adequate support to individuals when they need it the most. In order to improve on existing career support arrangements, a future whole-of-system career support model must – in simplest terms – create more of the positive experiences and less of the negative experiences for all potential users; and must do so more consistently.

Our research gives a strong signal to what these ‘givens’ could be, that is, the core elements that must be present if it is to truly enhance lifelong career and pathways support for all Australians. The seven core elements are summarised in Table 4.

**Table 4: The seven core elements of a future career support model in Australia**

Elements	Features of the Career Pathway Model
<b>Lifelong</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access for all people in Australia.</li> <li>• Information to cater for all ages, circumstances and characteristics.</li> <li>• Consistent touch point, so that people can come back as needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Connected</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connects individuals with practitioners.</li> <li>• Connects employers with job and work experience candidates, including through targeted advertisements and communications (opt-in). These relationships can be supported through practitioners, as well as a wealth of online materials.</li> <li>• Strong connection with education and training organisations.</li> </ul>
<b>Accessible</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple channels to account for a diverse range of needs.</li> <li>• Local provision of face-to-face support through the practitioner network.</li> <li>• Branding and communications to improve recognition and access.</li> </ul>
<b>Tailored</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of data analytics and artificial intelligence to provide a user friendly, customised experience.</li> <li>• Customisation of content and pathways for high needs groups, including quicker access to face-to-face support.</li> <li>• Prompts to ‘check in’ based on individual preferences, as well as the labour market conditions in the individual’s industry.</li> </ul>
<b>Quality</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum standards to be a career practitioner.</li> <li>• Incentives to produce high quality information and job advertisements, such as analytics that filters information based on certain criteria.</li> <li>• Strong evidence base and benefits realisation framework.</li> </ul>
<b>Enabling</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incentives to take on work experience candidates, such as discounted access to resources.</li> <li>• Support for apprenticeship pathways.</li> </ul>
<b>Empowering</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individuals can learn about themselves, with access to tools to engage in self-reflection, assess skills and competencies, and understand next steps.</li> <li>• Development opportunities, with access to career management and employability skill develop tools, and courses.</li> <li>• Easier for individuals to manage their own career, as connected information means they can understand what their options are and what their next steps need to be quicker.</li> </ul>

### **5.3.2 Who must it cater to?**

A future career support model must cater to the individual user – including niche need cohorts – and must recognise and support key influencers.

#### **Catering to the individual user: A note about niche need cohorts**

In respect of catering to the individual, we recognise that there are a number of cohorts in Australia that require more targeted career information or support. The main groups are outlined below. Any future career support model must take into account these individuals, their needs, and any special arrangements to support them, to ensure equity of provision and to maximise their opportunities and potential.

#### *Youth not in education, employment or training (often referred to as NEETs)*

These individuals are at risk of disengaging with support systems and networks. Any career support arrangements need to include features that identify individuals in danger of becoming NEETs (those with low academic attainment, those presenting behaviours that indicate concern) and provide them with encouragement and incentives to engage in career pathways. For those who are in this situation, specific initiatives may be needed to target engagement and transition to career pathways, as outlined in Section 3.2.5.

#### *People with a disability*

Disabilities can impact both on the career options available to Australians and on how these individuals engage with any career support arrangements. The emergence of new technologies and workplace adaptations are opening up options for people with a disability and any career support arrangements need to recognise and promote these opportunities. A multi-channel solution must cater for those unable to access some of the channel routes by including adapted channels or providing additional support with access.

#### *People from a range of culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds (including Indigenous Australians, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers)*

Indigenous Australians often have specific needs that could impact upon the points of access to career support (especially for those in more remote areas) and the style of support provided (potentially engaging more with the community).

Many skilled migrants move by choice to Australia and have a significant potential to contribute to the economic prosperity and social infrastructure in Australia. These migrants need support in understanding the differences between their original host countries and the working environment in Australia. While often being skilled and ready for work, some migrants may need extra help in settling into Australian career pathways, additional support with language skills, formal recognition of prior learning, or understanding the work environment and workplace standards in Australia. As well, these individuals may have partners, children or other family members who need career support.

Refugees, asylum seekers, and other migrants who have been forced to move from their home country in pursuit of safety and stability, have many additional niche requirements on top of cultural and language training, including support to establish themselves in Australia, recover from trauma, and perhaps develop skills in an industry for the first time.

Any career support solution will need to consider the needs of these cohorts, to help them deal with barriers to employment and deal with the consequences of any relocation trauma and distress alongside careers and job search activities.

#### *Mature age workers*

The career options and lifestyle choices available to mature age workers are one of the fastest changing areas of society. As working ages extend, career support needs to address this and be sensitive to the challenges facing mature age workers, such as mobility, health issues and carer duties. In addition, careers in later years of life can include roles of a voluntary and/or part time nature and career support systems need to explore the extent to which this can be enabled.

#### *Those in more remote communities*

Issues for those in more remote communities relate both to a general restriction in career options and the means by which they access career support. The delivery model and content of career support solutions must



consider this given the immense geographic challenge in Australia and the immaturity of networks and support facilities in more remote areas.

*Those with other responsibilities that limit their capacity for work or their ability to access career support*

There will be a number of users who may have other responsibilities, such as childcare, care for the elderly or infirm, or community roles that limit their capacity for work or their ability to access career support. Career pathways need to be flexible and recognise the implication of these roles and be adapted such that work, and access to support, can be configured to ensure that these individuals are not excluded from consideration.

**Catering to the individual user: The important role of influencers**

Effective career support in Australia must start with the individual in mind and put their needs front and centre of the experience. It is also important that we recognise that individuals are connected to their own social support network; key influencers play an important role in providing informal career support. As mentioned in Section 2.2.2, these influencers can be parents, guardians or other caregivers, mentors and well-meaning supports (friends, peers, colleagues, educators and instructors) who themselves often need resources and support before they can effectively help others to navigate their careers.

*‘There is a challenge with aspirational parents who want their children to achieve a certain level, either because they didn’t themselves or because they see tertiary training as a guarantee of future success.’*

*Provider to early career explorers  
Interviewee from Victoria*

Providing these people with information and support is particularly important in removing the misconception that VET has poorer income and employment outcomes than universities when in fact:<sup>86</sup>

- VET graduates earn a median income of \$56,000 within six months of graduation, compared to \$54,000 for a Bachelor’s degree.<sup>87</sup>
- VET graduates have a higher employment rate than bachelor’s degree graduates, with 84 per cent of apprentices employed within six months of completing their apprenticeship (as noted in Section 2.1.4).<sup>88</sup>
- VET provides training for 9 of the 10 occupations projected to grow the fastest over the next five years.<sup>89</sup>

Although further research would be required to understand the dynamics between parent and child on career decision-making, which is outside of the scope of this project, it is clear that parents can influence their child’s views about what career and employment options are possible; and this influence can stay with the child into their adulthood.

For the purposes of our research, we recognise that parents, mentors, friends and other agents in the individual’s circle of influence play an important role in supporting that individual’s career development, influencing their mindset about possible careers and pathways, and therefore must be included – and equipped with resources and skill development – in any future model of career and pathways support.

<sup>86</sup> Wyman, N., McCrindle, M., Whatmore, S., Gedge, J. & Edwards, T., ‘Perceptions are not reality: myths, realities & the critical role of vocational education & training in Australia’, Skilling Australia Foundation, 2017.

<sup>87</sup> National Centre for Vocational Education and Training, ‘Total VET graduate outcomes 2016’, 2016; Graduate Careers Australia, ‘GradStats Employment and Salary Outcomes of Recent Higher Education Graduates’, 2015.

<sup>88</sup> Commonwealth Department of Employment, Australian Jobs 2016, 2017; National Centre for Vocational Education and Training, ‘Total VET graduate outcomes 2015’, 2015.

<sup>89</sup> Commonwealth Department of Employment, Australian Jobs 2016, 2017.

# 6 Main options through which a Career Pathways model could be provided

## Key Points:

- **Our research and consultation has led us to the conclusion that the development of an all ages, multi-channel career support network** (the ‘Career Pathways’ model), including the investigation of supporting commercial models, should be explored. This could centre on a career platform that brings together individuals, career practitioners, employers, educational institutions and influencers.
- **Our initial assessment demonstrates that these options are likely to satisfy our seven core user-designed elements**, as well as be delivered in a manner that is cost-effective, impactful and meets other government policy objectives.
- **Further investigation is recommended in a number of areas.** The development of the options for the Career Pathways model, and supporting principles, have led to the discovery of a number of gaps in current provision which should be further investigated as a next stage.

## 6.1 The Career Pathways model

To ensure that the model will deliver a solution that benefits the individual, and adhere to the high standards required for government to institute change, we have developed a number of core **features and supporting considerations**, as summarised in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: The Career Pathways model – features and supporting considerations**

### Career Pathways model for all people in Australia

#### Features

- Single support system for all people in Australia.
- Multiple channels for users, including an online portal, telephone, online chat and text messaging service.
- Online portal that provides a one-stop-shop and brings together information and services that already exist in the market, creating incentives to improve the quality of support – does not exist to duplicate information and advice.
- Creates a strong connection between employers, practitioners and individuals to facilitate greater involvement in vocational pathways.

#### Supporting considerations

##### 1 Role of Government

- Development and introduction of a new model and shape and develop the market.
- Monitoring and regulatory role.
- Consider career practitioner certification.
- Adopt a co-design approach.

##### 2 Commercial architecture

- New financial model based on a ‘user pays’ assumption unless specific circumstances prevail.
- Commercial finance to be secured through secondary uses of the model to reduce the need for public funding of the operation of the model.

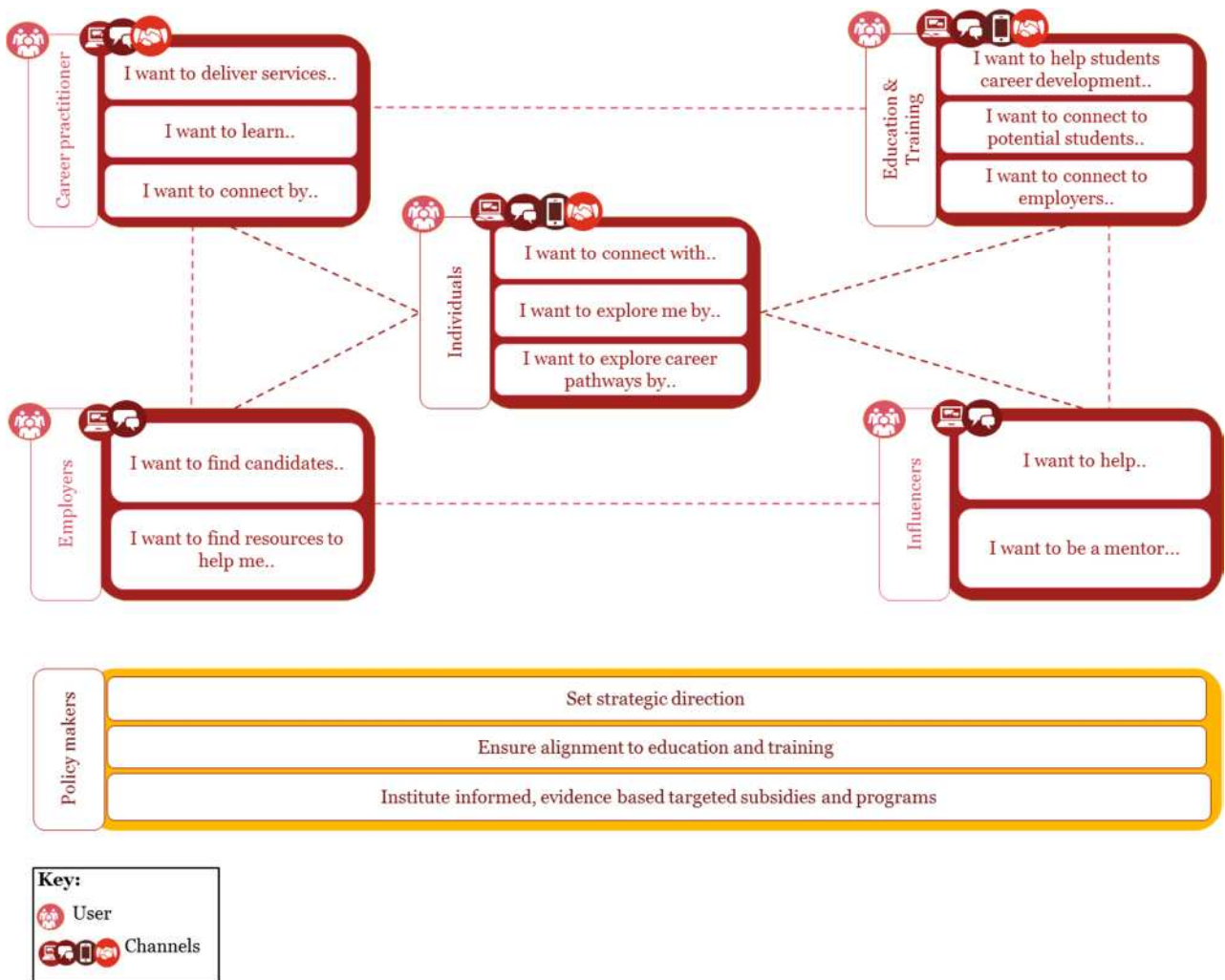
Additionally, Australia's future career support model will not be able to keep up with the changing world of work unless it is innovative, drawing on data analytics and artificial intelligence to produce a formative model that meets user needs. Our recommended **innovation options** include portal customisation, proactive engagement with users, and use of data analytics.

The Career Pathways model will **improve the experience of others**, including:

- **Individuals** – *people trying to navigate their career* – will have access to multiple channels of support to help connect with professionals, employers and peers, understand their own skills needs, and explore options for their next steps.
- **Employers** – *people looking for employees, or looking to offer work related learning opportunities to others* – will have access to candidates through direct advertisements and connections, and resources to support them hire new people or take on people for work experience.
- **Career practitioners** – *people looking to provide professional support* – will have access to a portal, channels to network with peers, client information based on their e-profiles (opt-in), professional development materials, resources needed to assist clients and an easy to use administration portal.
- **Influencers** – *people looking to help (e.g. parents)* – will have access to information on how they can help their child, friend, colleague or another person trying to navigate their career. The portal will also facilitate mentor networks.
- **Education and training bodies** – *people looking to develop the skills of others* – will have access to resources to help develop the career management skills of students, connections to work placements for students, and an avenue to connect with potential future students.

The various features and pathways for each of the users are shown in Figure below.

**Figure 2: High level Career Pathways map**



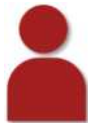
**A Career Pathways model that delivers an enhanced user experience**

To demonstrate how the new Career Pathways model might improve the experience of individuals, we have depicted the new experience journey for Justin over the page. Justin is our Forced Career Transitioner from Section 5.2 whose position had been made redundant. In the old model of career support, Justin’s was a very emotional and erratic journey. Justin in the year 2025, using the new Career Pathways model, has access to more targeted information through one lifelong, connected, easily accessible interface.

Main options through which a Career Pathways model could be provided

User experience in 2025 for Justin, now eight years after his redundancy, Justin is able to seek the support he needs to manage his portfolio career.

Entice & Enter	Engage	Exit & Extend
<p><i>What instigates your thinking about career support? What is the point you choose an avenue of career support?</i></p>	<p><i>What is your experience during the engagement?</i></p>	<p><i>How and when do you exit from the engagement? How (if at all) do you reconnect after the engagement?</i></p>
<p><i>The experience before</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lifelong</b> – The system prompts me to interact with it. Because I have ‘opted in’ to get this, I am notified that an employer looking for someone with my skills has viewed my career profile; I am prompted to complete a Career Health Check.</li> <li>• I might still seek out career support in response to a trigger, but <b>that trigger is not always a crisis</b> (I may be prompted to seek out career information or support as my circumstances change or as new opportunities emerge).</li> <li>• <b>Accessible</b> – I have the option to engage via chat, telephone, internet, or in person.</li> </ul>	<p><i>The experience during</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tailored to my needs and preferences</b> – information and support is tailored to me; it’s easy to find the right information and engage with support in a way that suits me.</li> <li>• <b>Connected</b> – I am linked to job opportunities which are connected to employers and education and training bodies, which help me navigate different pathways and show me different options to close any skill gaps.</li> <li>• <b>Of high quality</b> – The career practitioners who deliver career guidance and advice are equipped to work with people like me; the experience is seamless and pain free.</li> <li>• <b>Enabling and empowering</b> – I am linked to job opportunities (and non-paid roles) that stretch and challenge me; I am continuously learning new things about myself; and I am supported to develop the skills I need to manage my own career.</li> </ul>	<p><i>The experience after</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can close my session any time and the system will remember where I got up to when I am ready to come back to it.</li> <li>• I am prompted to re-engage with the system after a period of absence.</li> </ul>
<p><i>What is working well?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can access the system when I want to, and am prompted to interact with the system, at any stage of my life.</li> <li>• There are multiple channels through which I can engage, which gives me the freedom to choose how and when I interact with the system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I feel listened to and heard. The conversations are tailored to me. I am connected to an ecosystem of support from friends and family, employers, educators and career practitioners.</li> <li>• The experience is consistently positive and seamless.</li> <li>• I learn something new – about myself, about career opportunities, about education and training options.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is easy to exit the system, and it is also easy to re-engage with the system and pick up where I left off. The system remembers where I got up to.</li> <li>• I am prompted to re-engage after an extended period of absence, at any stage of my life or career.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Where are the pain points?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>



**Persona: Justin in 2025  
Journey: Career Transitioner**

## 6.2 Supporting considerations

### 6.2.1 Role of Government

Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments currently have a role in setting strategy, policy direction, funding and some service delivery. It is clear from our research and consultations that there are opportunities for the role of government to change, and potentially reduce, in the future. Moving to a more commercial model for career support will enable the Government to lead the **development and introduction of a new model and shape and develop the market** of commercial providers. Once this core model is established, Government could move to a **monitoring and regulatory role** with the option to intervene to address areas of specific need or policy imperatives.

In addition, our research has led to the following suggestions for developing a model that is high quality and has the buy-in of important stakeholders in the career landscape:

- **Consider career practitioner certification.** Certified practitioners should have a relevant qualification, experience and complete a compulsory number of professional development hours each year. We recommend that the Commonwealth Government commission a Regulatory Impact Assessment to determine the best approach.
- **Adopt a co-design approach.** Rather than prescribing the establishment of a core body or working group, it is our recommendation that there is close consultation with all relevant stakeholders during potential prototyping, encouraging co-design of the final solution. Key stakeholders include other levels of government, education and training institutions, and professional associations. This will lead to an understanding of the role each party will play in successful delivery, and therefore, what the best governance solution will be. Prescribing a governance structure at this early stage is likely to be limiting.

### 6.2.2 Commercial Architecture

Intervention should not be the default position of policy makers. Instead, government should only intervene where there is a net benefit to society. Development of a well-researched, evidence based policy impact assessment is recommended as part of the case for intervention. However at this stage of development, it is still important to communicate, at a high level, how a fiscally sustainable commercial architecture could be constructed.

#### Elements of the commercial architecture to be explored

The potential benefits include:

- 1 The direct results of enhanced career support (the outputs: skills, better managed shifts to more productive/valuable roles, wealth creation, fiscal dividends etc).
- 2 The direct consequences of enhanced career support (the economic outcomes: productivity, better support for disadvantaged groups, attraction of new talent etc).
- 3 The indirect consequences of enhanced career support (the societal outcomes: wellbeing and health improvements, improved living standards etc).

The options for delivery include:

- 1 Exploitation of modern digital solutions.
- 2 Better focussed support for those needing extra help.
- 3 Alternative funding models, including secondary income sources (see below).

The case for change:

- 1 Assessing the value of outcomes against the net costs of delivery of the future model.
- 2 The costs of change and the level of change funding required from public funds.

In addition, it would appear that some support for employers, looking to determine the right level of career support for their employees, alongside publicly funded support, could be of use. **Further consideration of**

**the business case is recommended as a next step in the development of a Careers Pathways model.**

**Potential future commercial architecture**

Alongside considerations for how the provision of career support could be enhanced operationally, there are opportunities to consider innovative commercial models that might maximise the value for money from this funding or even go part way to recovering, or completely recover this funding. From a strategic perspective, such considerations need to be based on a number of assumptions. These are proposed as follows:

- 1 Unless there are other reasons, the beneficiaries of career support (the individual or the organisation for which they create value) should pay for career support.
- 2 The areas where public money should therefore be used are where individuals are unable to pay due to their personal circumstances; it is not practical to create a payment regime (e.g. career support in schools or the maintenance of a generic careers hub); government wishes to 'invest ahead of the curve' in the development of future skills anticipating future employer demand; and where population or technological shifts disrupt industries (e.g. automotive sector in South Australia).

While an element of career support can be embedded into other service provision (education, training, employment support, support for disadvantaged groups), the balance of career support needs to be accessible when needed to support citizens as they navigate a number of transitions, often outside of these institutions and support programs. As per our research, it is anticipated that, in future, given likely shifts in career and employment models, the number of transition points will increase and these will often create a greater need for career support.

**Potential funding models**

The future model of career support is likely to differ significantly from historic models due to changes in the employment and career landscape, and the potential to exploit technological solutions not previously available. This provides an opportunity to reconsider both how career support is provided and the related commercial architecture.

*Future commercial architecture options*

Core service funding from government budget appropriations is an option and an element of this may always form a part of the funding arrangements for career support. This funding should focus on those areas where there is greatest need for such support. There are a number of options that can be explored to either direct this funding to areas of greatest need or create income or service streams to minimise the public burden as follows:

- 1 **Means testing** – where a public service is available, a generic base service could be provided with more advanced or detailed options introduced on a user pays basis, subject to need and the individual's finances.
- 2 **Vouchers or credits** – in addition to a base support level, a citizen may be granted a level of public funded support that they can use, when needed, to gain access to career support and guidance.
- 3 **Deferred funding** – where a citizen uses a chargeable service, there could be a loan which will be paid down based upon the success of the individual's career and future capacity to pay (similar to the Student Loans arrangements).
- 4 **Employer obligations** – employers (or a subset of employers based on size or employee profile) could be obliged to fund or make employees available for career support and guidance, pay a levy, or alternatively, tax concessions could be made available for employers who take more responsibility for career support.

While it is not a funding option in itself, one means of increasing reach could be to make greater use of the voluntary sector. Although not traditionally government's role to direct such activities outside of publicly funded programs, government could create a closer partnership where the voluntary sector is able to make a greater contribution.

In addition, where public provision is required, traditionally this has been organised either as a public service (delivered by public servants) or through outsourcing. Advances in contestability and commissioning arrangements, the exploitation of new public service engagement models such as joint ventures, or the introduction of outcome based reward structures, including social impact financing, should be considered as an integral element of the model.

### Secondary income streams

Accepting that a level of public funding is probably inevitable, there are a number of aspects of a publicly funded career support service that create opportunities for the generation of secondary income streams that could be used to offset core funding. These opportunities fall into two main areas:

- 1 Providing an opportunity for employers, service providers and other commercial organisations to promote their organisations through advertising on a publicly funded career support platform.
- 2 Providing commercial organisations with access to the data generated through a career support platform.

#### *Advertising on a publicly funded career support platform*

At the current time, the generation of advertising or sponsorship revenue aligned with publicly funded websites is in its infancy. In respect of direct revenue generation, the only real example in Australia is with the Bureau of Meteorology who offer commercial advertising space on their web site, including behavioural advertising techniques (using browsing history to direct advertising content to specific web users).<sup>90</sup> Internationally, such activities are gaining momentum with the British Columbia Parks agency in Canada offering advertising space to corporates (at approximately \$1,100 per month per organisation)<sup>91</sup> and many Local Government bodies in the UK now exploring this option.<sup>92</sup>

Given that a significant element of career support is seeking to gain sustainable and suitably skilled employment for Australians from Australian businesses, then this is an area that could be worthy of further investigation and provide an opportunity to explore some of the issues involved.

#### *Access to data generated through a career support platform*

Data access could be at an individual level (e.g. allowing, subject to consent, the export of data to social media platforms such as LinkedIn) or at an aggregate level (providing access for commercial purposes to data for analytic and data mining purposes). There are a number of matters to be considered in generating secondary income streams from data access (privacy, fairness etc) but further consideration of these options could provide a revenue stream that could defray an element of public spend.

### Next steps on commercial options

In practice, it is likely that a combination of public and private funding will be needed to provide an effective career support environment and that opportunities for the consideration of innovative commercial models will arise. Most modern national career support systems rely upon a baseline of universal provision (funded centrally), with options for more intensive support for those in greatest need, and commercial options on a paid basis. There are very few examples where innovations in funding models have been targeted at career support. **Further work is needed to consider the potential advantages and disadvantages of these recent developments and innovations.**

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<sup>90</sup> The Workforce Skills Development and Recognition Act was put into place in 1998 across Quebec. This Law requires organizations (payroll > \$1M) to invest at least 1per cent of their payroll into training initiatives.

<sup>91</sup> In accordance with the Meteorology Act 1955 the Bureau of Meteorology may include advertising on, in or in connection with any of its services. Since April 2013, the Bureau has included commercial advertising on its website.

<sup>92</sup> N. Stewart, 'Corporate ads on BC Parks website under question', 17 September 2016, [website] [http://globalnews.ca/news/2946202/coporate-ads-on-bc-parks-website-under-question/?iframe=true&theme\\_preview=true](http://globalnews.ca/news/2946202/coporate-ads-on-bc-parks-website-under-question/?iframe=true&theme_preview=true), (accessed June 2017).



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## 7 *Implications of the adoption of each main option and gap analysis*

This section compares each feature of the future Career Pathways model to the current state to identify areas for further investigation going forward. These are divided into four categories:

- **Deep dives.** These are targeted detailed investigations of specific issues to inform the debate on career support, such as the interrelationship between wider life events and career support needs, linkages between formal and informal career support, approaches to ensure that data is kept up to date and a review of the causes and solutions to underemployment.
- **Investigations.** These are reviews of areas warranting further analysis at a general level, such as the requirements of users with special needs, the potential to exploit greater data analytics, options on market regulation, techniques to build greater career development skills, and more detailed assessment of current service costs and issues that may need to be addressed in exploring secondary income streams.
- **Explorations.** This involves the consideration of broader matters impacting upon the system wide solution such as commercial opportunities from wider data aggregation, incentive regimes that could address both employment and underemployment, determining the optimal role for government in the system and exploring how to assess the level of public funding that should be made available.
- **Development.** This will use simulations and collaborative methods to consider the optimal role of the system and level of support for each career need and the minimum standards that should be set for those supporting the system.

More detail as to each of these areas of further investigation is set out in Table 6.

**Table 6: Implications of the adoption of each feature of the Career Pathways model**

Features of the future Career Pathway Model	Implications of adoption of the feature	
	Gap analysis when compared to the current position	Areas for further investigation
<p><b>Lifelong:</b>                      Access for all people in Australia.                      Information to cater for all ages, circumstances and characteristics.                      Consistent touch point, so that people can come back as needed.</p>	<p><b>Current position:</b>                      Access is provided through a mix of standard online and face to face solutions, provided by, or sponsored by, government and through commercial market options focused on specific groups.                      Public services vary across Australia due to varying policy decisions of States and Territories.                      Current solutions are configured around specific life events and offer little joined up support across career stages or lifetime needs.                      Most solutions are focused on mainstream needs with separate initiatives to address those with special needs.                      There are gaps in support for mature age workers and those facing employment barriers.</p> <p><b>Gap analysis:</b>                      Gap in a lifelong solution that ‘lives’ with the individual.                      Gap in providing a consistent and full scope service to all Australians.</p>	<p><b>Potential investigation areas:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Deep dive into the full range of all potential major life events and transitions and the inter-relationship between these and the need for career support.</li> <li>2 Further investigation of options to engage users over time and specifically retain connection between transition points.</li> <li>3 Further analysis of the requirements of those with niche or special needs to inform system design including requirements for local support.</li> </ol> <p><b>Longer term considerations</b>                      Consider how to align provision and support across States and Territories, recognising the differences in local needs and policy imperatives.                      Consider the implications of a lifelong career support service on the design and delivery of other public services, such as employment support, healthcare, welfare and immigration.</p>

Features of the future Career Pathway Model	Implications of adoption of the feature	
	Gap analysis when compared to the current position	Areas for further investigation
<p><b>Connected:</b>                      Connect individuals with practitioners and influencers.                      Connect employers with job and work experience candidates, including through targeted advertisements and communications (opt-in). These relationships can be supported through practitioners, as well as a wealth of online materials.                      Strong connection with education and training organisations.</p>	<p><b>Current position:</b>                      Inconsistent and often narrow guidance and advice is typically provided by a range of formal and informal stakeholders due to the absence of an authoritative single reference point.                      Formal systems tend to ignore and not enable the many sources of ‘informal advice’ that a user is subject to. Much of that informal advice is based upon historic perceptions and prejudices.                      There is a separation between central public (Commonwealth), local public (State, Territory, Public Education sector) and commercial (Private Education sector and commercial business) provision of career support with little interaction in delivery. The responsibility for joining up information sources and supporting informed decision making sits with the user.  <b>Gap analysis:</b>                      Users groups ‘don’t know what they don’t know’ due to a lack of broad, up to date information and related signposting to other support options.                      Lack of consideration of the links between formal and informal advice.</p>	<p><b>Potential investigation areas:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 Deep dive into the most appropriate connection mechanisms and pathways including the relationship between formal and informal support arrangements.</li> <li>5 Exploration of commercial opportunities arising from these connections and the aggregated data that they could generate.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Accessible:</b>                      Multiple channels to account for a diverse range of needs.                      Local provision of face-to-face support through the practitioner network.                      Branding and communications to improve recognition and access.</p>	<p><b>Current position:</b>                      There are variable levels of career support across vocational and higher education establishments often due to pressure on resources.                      Commercial solutions are often seen as expensive and only available at the upper end of the market.                      Users are reluctant to use services that charge access fees or full exploit ‘free trial’ style models due to their limited scope.                      Most information sources are online, making it difficult for those unable to access online resources or unable to work with online solutions.  <b>Gap analysis:</b>                      Gap in availability of appropriate and user friendly channels to provide optimal support and advice to users.                      Gap in availability of standards to guide solution and service providers.                      Gap in support for those with special needs and those who wish to access local services.</p>	<p><b>Potential investigation areas:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6 Develop a model to categorise and determine the optimal route and level of support for each career support need.</li> <li>7 Develop minimum standards to guide those developing and delivering career support.                      See 3) above concerning support for those with niche needs.</li> </ol>

Features of the future Career Pathway Model	Implications of adoption of the feature	
	Gap analysis when compared to the current position	Areas for further investigation
<p><b>Tailored:</b> Use of data analytics and artificial intelligence to provide a user friendly, customised experience with a self-learning loop. Customisation of content and pathways for high needs groups, including quicker access to face-to-face support. Prompts to ‘check in’ based on individual preferences, as well as the labour market conditions in the individual’s industry.</p>	<p><b>Current position:</b> Information tends to be generic, making it difficult for users to tailor provision and develop personal insight. There appears to be little holistic data analysis, looking at trends and emerging insight and what there is primarily supports policy development rather than individuals. Support is essentially ‘on-demand’ with little proactive engagement or ‘careers health check’ style interactions away from a small number of informed employers who address elements of this through staff development programs. Support for those with specific needs tends to be through separate initiatives and programs seldom aligned with mainstream solutions.</p> <p><b>Gap analysis:</b> Gap in use of data analysis to inform enhanced and customised support to users throughout their life. Gap in proactive career support engagement outside transition phases.</p>	<p><b>Potential investigation areas:</b> 8 Investigate the potential to use data analysis and artificial intelligence to create greater insight on how to give the user support they need in the best way for them, learns with them and proactively helps them to manage their career. See 3) above concerning support for those with special needs.</p> <p><b>Longer term considerations:</b> Consideration of the implications of a lifelong career support service on the design and delivery of other public services, such as employment support, healthcare, welfare and immigration.</p>
<p><b>Quality:</b> Minimum standards to be a career practitioner. Incentives to produce high quality information and job advertisements, such as analytics that filter information based on certain criteria. Strong evidence base and benefits realisation framework.</p>	<p><b>Current position:</b> Some concerns have been identified in the quality of provision in some areas (especially in the supervision of unqualified practitioners). There appears to be little incentive for industry or employers to engage in the careers system unless there is a direct and immediate benefit. Generally only anecdotal evidence base to support career decision making, and the budget allocation at various levels of government is not supported by detailed data analysis. Some information sources are outdated and not in line with current or future skills needs, but users are often unaware of this.</p> <p><b>Gap analysis:</b> Gap in the consistency and quality of the service provided by those that a user would consider to be a ‘careers practitioner’. Gap in the availability of consistently up to date, user friendly, high quality information on current and future skills needs. Gap in measurement and quantification of benefits from career support.</p>	<p><b>Potential investigation areas:</b> 9 Investigate options to introduce greater regulation of the provider market. 10 Deep dive on how to ensure that information is maintained and up to date, by industry, theme and geography.</p> <p><b>Longer term considerations:</b> Consideration of how to develop and implement a benefits realisation model for enhanced career support.</p>

Features of the future Career Pathway Model	Implications of adoption of the feature	
	Gap analysis when compared to the current position	Areas for further investigation
<p><b>Enabling:</b> Support for apprenticeship pathways. Incentives to take on work experience candidates, such as discounted access to resources.</p>	<p><b>Current position:</b> Some targeted support exists to encourage and incentivise innovative career options, such as apprenticeships, but incentives are primarily focused on inputs and outputs, rather than outcomes. There is an encouraging level of work experience type activity but this tends to be limited to early career stages and focused on engagement rather than seen as an opportunity to develop potential employment relationships and support those in transition. The structure of some programs (e.g. jobactive) can lead to a disincentive for providers to focus on career support to maximise an individual’s potential rather than simply securing short term employment.</p> <p><b>Gap analysis:</b> Gap through the absence of an effective mechanism to matches employers with candidates for work experience, apprenticeships, work trials or other routes to sustainable and skilled employment.</p>	<p><b>Potential investigation areas:</b></p> <p>11 Deep dive to explore how work experience episodes could be better enabled and supported.</p> <p>12 Consider how to expand incentive regimes to address both employment and underemployment.</p>
<p><b>Empowering:</b> Individuals can learn about themselves, with access to tools to engage in self-reflection, assess skills and competencies, and understand next steps. Development opportunities, with access to tools and courses in career management and employability skills. Easier for individuals to manage their own career, as connected information means they can understand what their options are and what their next steps need to be quicker.</p>	<p><b>Current position:</b> Little support is provided on employability skills and career management alongside academic or vocational education. Career support tends to focus on those at risk of being without work rather than those at risk of underemployment. Careers advice tends to be delivered on an ‘opt-in’ model often with little understanding of the benefit of engagement or incentive for participation. Provision tends to focus on information rather than decision support facilities.</p> <p><b>Gap analysis:</b> Gap in the availability of employability and career management skills. Gap in the understanding of the interventions available to address underemployment.</p>	<p><b>Potential investigation areas:</b></p> <p>13 Deep dive in to the causes and potential solutions to underemployment (recognising area 12 above) including both in terms of part time work and those not maximising their potential.</p> <p>14 Investigation of a suite of tools and solutions that support skills in career development and employability.</p>

Supporting considerations	Implications of adoption of the feature	
	Gap analysis when compared to the current position	Areas for further investigation
<p><b>Role Government:</b> Government to lead the development and introduction of a new model, and shape and develop the market of commercial providers. Government to move to a monitoring and regulatory role once the core model is established with the option to intervene to address areas of specific need or policy imperatives.</p>	<p><b>Current position:</b> Many parties are involved in the design and delivery of career support including a number of government bodies, peak bodies and members from practitioner teams, commercial service providers and organisations looking at specific topics or at risk groups. Roles overlap and, in some cases, provide conflicting advice or alternative options for users. Also, some areas are not operating ‘at scale’ increasing delivery costs and preventing universal access. There are numerous touch points for government covering policy setting, system design, service delivery and governance. Concerns exist in the quality of provision in some areas (especially the supervision of unqualified practitioners) which may put elements of the population at risk of exploitation or disadvantage.</p> <p><b>Gap analysis:</b> Gap in understanding the optimal role of government in the establishment, delivery and management of career support. Gap in the means by which the appropriate level of public funding and the optimal funding routes are determined.</p>	<p><b>Potential investigation areas:</b> 15 Analysis to identify the optimal role of government in the establishment, operation and management of a new service. 16 Analysis of the mechanisms available to determine the appropriate level of public funding of a careers service.</p>
<p><b>Commercial architecture:</b> New financial model based on a ‘user pays’ assumption with the ability of government and other stakeholders to support users in specific circumstances. Commercial finance to be secured through secondary uses of the model to reduce or eliminate the need for public funding of the operation of the model.</p>	<p><b>Current position:</b> A wide range of financial models are currently engaged including free services, subsidised services, fully commercial services and provision by the voluntary sector. This has led to variations in support for some groups and a ‘postcode lottery’ across Australia. Major employers tend to rely on internal or commercial support, seeing public provision as mainly focused on the vulnerable or unemployed. While difficult to quantify, the funding for career support appears to be behind that allocated in other jurisdictions. There is little consideration of how secondary income sources could be used to offset public funding.</p> <p><b>Gap analysis:</b> Gap in having a consistent and evidence based commercial architecture to support the delivery of the careers service. Gap in understanding of the current cost of career support provision, the optimal level of funding and options to offset costs to the taxpayer.</p>	<p><b>Potential investigation areas:</b> 17 Investigation of the current costs of delivery of career support (in support of investigation area 16 above). 18 Analysis of the potential source of secondary use funding to consider legal, commercial and moral issues.</p> <p><b>Longer term considerations:</b> Consideration of the level of public funding, the business case to support the request for funding and the commercial options available in supporting the development of the case for change.</p>

# 8 Proposed areas for further investigation

## Introduction

Our research identified significant gaps between the current state of career support in Australia and the desired future state, across all seven core elements. To move toward a lifelong, connected and accessible Career Pathways model in the future, a number of areas require further investigation before any changes to the current state are made. Based on Departmental prioritisation, these have been categorised into areas of high, medium and low priority as indicated in Table 7 below.

**Table 7. Prioritised areas for further investigation**

Priority Level	Areas for further investigation*
<b>High</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The <b>optimal role of government</b> in the establishment, operation and management of a new service.</li> <li>2. The mechanisms available to determine the appropriate level of public funding of a careers service.</li> <li>3. The current costs of delivery of career support (in support of investigation area 2 above).</li> <li>4. Opportunity to exploit data connectivity and aggregation and any related commercial opportunities this could generate.</li> <li>5. Options to introduce <b>greater regulation of the provider</b> market.</li> <li>6. The <b>suite of tools and solutions</b> that support skills in career development and employability.</li> <li>7. The potential source of secondary use funding to consider legal, commercial and moral issues.</li> </ol>
<b>Medium</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. The full range of all potential major life events and transitions and the inter-relationship between these and the need for career support.</li> <li>9. Options to engage users over time and specifically retain connection between transition points.</li> <li>10. The most appropriate connection mechanisms and pathways including the relationship between formal and informal support arrangements.</li> <li>11. A model to categorise and determine the optimal route and level of support for each career support need.</li> <li>12. The potential to use <b>data analysis and artificial intelligence</b> to create greater insight on how to give the user support they need in the best way for them, learns with them and proactively helps them to manage their career.</li> </ol>
<b>Low (for later consideration)</b>	<p>The requirements of those with niche or special needs to inform system design including requirements for local support.</p> <p>Minimum standards to guide those developing and delivering career support.</p> <p>How to ensure that information is maintained and up to date, by industry, theme and geography.</p> <p>How work experience episodes could be better enabled and supported.</p> <p>** How to expand incentive regimes to address both employment and underemployment.</p> <p>** The causes and potential solutions to underemployment (recognising area above regarding how to expand incentive regimes) including both in terms of part time work and those not maximising their potential.</p>

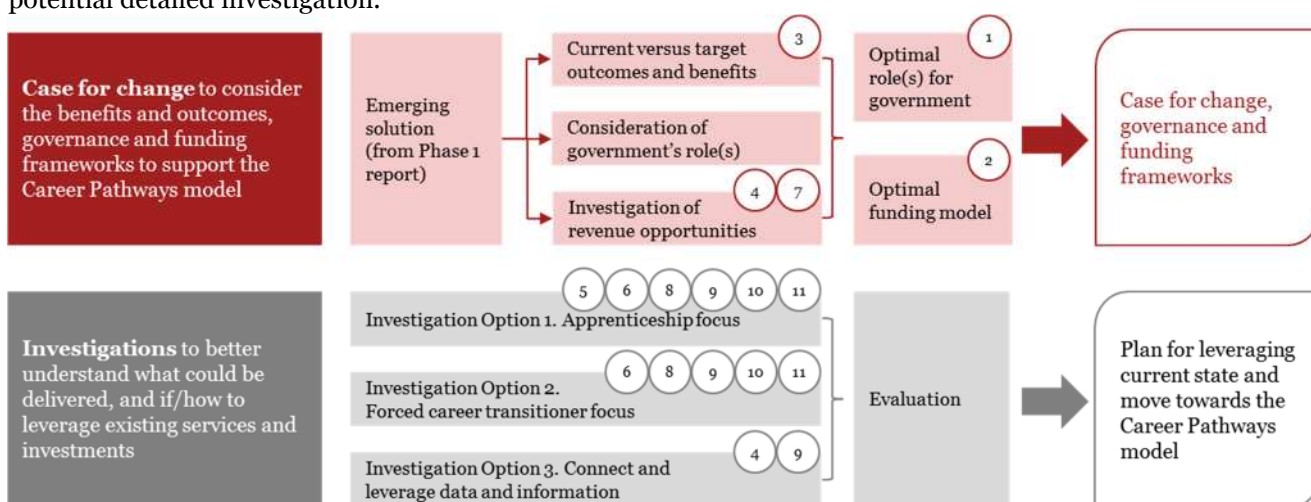
\* Note: Items have been truncated and renumbered to reflect Departmental priorities. \*\* Note: Items have been flagged by the Department as potentially too wide a scope.

## 8.1 How might these areas be tested?

Based on the Department's prioritisation, we grouped together related high to medium priority areas. Two broad categories of activities emerged that give signals as to possible next steps to carry forward development of the proposed Career Pathways model:

- Further exploration of the benefits, optimal role of government and funding mechanisms ('case for change'); and
- Detailed investigations to better understand what could be delivered (specifically, the suite of tools and solutions; data assets and opportunities; and provider regulation) and how to leverage existing services and investments to enhance the user experience in alignment with the seven core elements ('investigations').

Following discussions with the Department, we believe that developing the case for change is a priority next step activity to be undertaken; a clearer articulation of the benefits, outcomes and optimal governance and funding frameworks is required to determine what benefits and outcomes are expected from the Career Pathways model and how such a solution might be best implemented in Australia. Detailed investigations will also be important to test the applicability of the proposed Career Pathways model to different contexts. We have outlined a possible approach to the case for change and investigations, which includes three options for potential detailed investigation.



We suggest that developing the case for change is an essential activity to be undertaken. Detailed investigations will also be important to test applicability of the Career Pathways model to different contexts, if we are to move toward a lifelong, connected and accessible Career Pathways model for all Australians in the future. Although still preliminary at this stage, possible next step activities to support the case for change and each of the three options for investigation are detailed below.

### Case for change

The current career support governance and funding landscape in Australia is both underdeveloped and under-researched. A future Career Pathways model needs to be underpinned by a strong governance and funding framework if it is to deliver on the seven core elements and enhance the career experience of all Australians. This will be the focus of developing the case for change.

Questions that the case for change would answer:

- What is the current state of career support governance, service delivery and funding?
- How much do we currently spend on career support?
- What are the desired outcomes and benefits of a future model?
- What is the optimal role for government to play in the future state?
- What is the optimal funding model in the future state?
- How much funding should the government provide?
- What opportunities are there for investigating secondary income and other non-government revenue opportunities?
- How could this governance and funding framework be implemented?



Possible next step activities:

- Create a detailed landscape map of current governance, service delivery and funding arrangements
- Conduct consultations and research to co-design a set of options for optimal governance and funding structures with major stakeholders
- Evaluate these options against ideal outcomes (include cost-effectiveness and likelihood of implementation)
- Articulate next steps in a report

### **Investigation Option 1: Apprenticeship focus**

The profile of those commencing an apprenticeship is changing. Although the Australian Apprenticeship Support Network and the Australian Apprenticeship and Traineeship Information Service support several aspects of Apprenticeship advice and guidance, we have heard through consultations that these services differ according to location are mainly accessed by those going into apprenticeships from school and into trades. In addition, some of the information can be out of date, although the apprentices and their influencers may not realise this.

As the Skilling Australians Fund is implemented, the number, type and level of apprenticeships could further increase and diversify, leading to a much greater need for career support on a lifelong basis.

Questions this investigation could answer:

- What is the specific nature of support requested and accessed by Apprentices, including tools and services?
- To what extent do the existing mechanisms meet the seven core elements identified?
- How could existing systems, if at all, meet the future model of a lifelong, accessible and connected Career Pathways model?
- What level and style of regulation is required to uphold service quality?

Possible next step activities:

- Identify an apprenticeship cohort for further consultation
- Create a landscape map of current support
- Conduct in depth consultations and research to evaluate current support against the seven core future elements and determine the best path to the future state
- Present findings to inform future development of the Career Pathways model

### **Investigation Option 2: Forced career transitioner focus**

The Australian economy will continually undergo structural change. Given the rapidly accelerating pace of change that is shaping industry and the future of work, workers in Australia will be making more forced transitions than ever. Yet, our work has shown that the current career support model is not effective in providing consistent, lifelong connected support to individuals impacted by forced transitions, including those resulting from structural adjustments in industry.

New initiatives, such as the Industry Specialist Mentoring for Australian Apprentices program, have promise in providing support for adult apprentices looking to reskill and upskill, and could be a possible model for a much broader cohort (beyond apprentices and trainees).

Questions this investigation could answer:

- What is the specific nature of support provided and accessed by forced transitioners, including tools and services?
- What are the life, career and skills events surrounding forced transitions for impacted individuals?
- What career and skilling options are being considered and taken up by forced transitioners, and what opportunities are being missed out on?
- What tools and support mechanisms exist for forced transitioners, are being used, their relative effectiveness and what opportunities there are for greater use of these?
- How could individuals impacted by structural adjustments be better supported through a Career Pathways model that incorporates the seven core elements?

Possible next step activities:

- Work with the Department to identify a forced transitioner cohort for further consultation. Factors to consider in identifying this cohort include scale of the transition, likely cooperation from businesses transitioning workers, and opportunities to leverage existing models (e.g. apprenticeships)
- Create a landscape map of current support
- Conduct in depth consultations and research to evaluate current support against the seven core future elements and determine the best path to the future state
- Present findings to inform future development of the Career Pathways model

### **Investigation Option 3: Connect and leverage data and information**

There are many information and data sources that exist in the current careers landscape (including Job Outlook, MyFuture, MySkills, the Australian Apprenticeships website, the Australian Apprenticeship and Traineeship Information Service, and many non-government resources and datasets). Issues with the current information and datasets are two-fold:

1. For users, there is no meaningful pathway connecting these sources, requiring them to navigate several websites and manually 'connect the dots', interpret information that is not customised, and start from the beginning whenever they go back online.
2. For policy makers and website creators, there is a wealth of data and information that is underutilised and lacks central coordination, creating inefficiencies and limiting data analytics to generate improvements in support, as well as commercialisation opportunities.

The development of a lifelong, connected, accessible Career Pathways model could allow information and data structures to be reinvented and embedded into a core model. This will enable data to be collected, analysed and used to improve individual experiences for all stakeholders in the careers landscape.

Questions that this investigation could answer:

- What current and future data sources could be collected?
- How might existing government resources be more effectively used, promoted and joined up, to provide greater synergies and more seamless support to individuals?
- How might data, opportunities for data mining and core service delivery components be linked?
- What data analytic techniques support customised career pathways and support?
- What opportunities exist to use Artificial Intelligence to develop a system that learns with use?
- How might employment, work experiences and other work readiness activities be linked?
- What are the secondary uses of data?

Possible next step activities:

- Create a landscape map with all data sources (including ownership, funding arrangements, current links)
- Co-design a cost-effective model that would connect all websites
- Present a high level prototype design
- Articulate the next steps for a roll-out in a report and/or presentation

### **Longer term considerations**

In addition to these areas, a number of longer term issues have been identified that, in time, will need to be considered. These are set out in Section 7 and include consideration of:

1. how to align provision and support across States and Territories, recognising the differences in local needs and policy imperatives;
2. the implications of a lifelong careers support service on the design and delivery of other public services, such as employment support, healthcare, welfare and immigration; and
3. how to develop and implement a benefits realisation model for enhanced careers support.

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# 9 Glossary

## 1 Terminology

**Career** is defined as more than a job. It is a combination of work, education and training, volunteering, community participation and other societal roles and activities, underpinned by several transitions, lifelong learning and balance between many facets of life. Careers are also personal. For some, work is purely a source of income, while for others, their work gives them a great sense of purpose, personal satisfaction and fulfilment.

**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 their education and training resources'. This is identified as the most encompassing term in the Australian context.

**Career support** or career development services are defined by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development as information and services 'intended to assist people, of any age and at any point throughout their lives to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers'.<sup>93</sup> This paper extends this definition further, to encompass support to manage transitions between many roles, such as volunteer, community and family roles, recognising that paid employment is just one dimension of a person's career.<sup>94</sup>

**Career support materials and services** include:

- **Career information** includes any print and electronic services that help someone understand employment, education and training opportunities. It includes occupational and industry information, education and training information and other general information related to the world of work. Examples include 'a day in the life' descriptions of roles for those exploring career options, 'how to guides' for those making a transition, and specific information on programs for those finding it difficult to make their next career step.
- **Career guidance and advice** includes services to help someone access and interpret career information, understand individual career development needs, conduct career pathways planning, and liaise with educators, trainers and employers. Career guidance makes use of theories of career development, occupational choice, psychological and economic analyses, and puts into practice a variety of frameworks for effective guidance delivery. This includes the use of techniques and tools which focus on personal challenge and growth.
- **Career skill development** includes development of knowledge, skills and attitudes related to career management (e.g. how to search for jobs, write a CV, network) and employability (e.g. how to communicate, work in a team).
- **Career pathways and experience** includes apprenticeships and traineeships, vocational learning, work experience and job placement services.

**Career management skills** are the skills an individual needs to autonomously navigate their career, and the include ability to job-seek, use career services and information, engage in lifelong learning, self-awareness and decision making

**Characteristics** include any combination of demographic and individual factors that drive a person to seek out career support. In broad terms these include age and geography, financial or mental health, educational attainment, employment status, disadvantage, cultural and linguistic diversity, or disability.

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<sup>93</sup> Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 'Career guidance and public policy: bridging the gap', 2004.

<sup>94</sup> M. McMahon, P. Tatham, 'Career More than just a job', 2008.

**Circumstances** include factors that reflect where the individual is at with their life stage or career.

**Employability skills** are often referred to as 'soft skills', 'core skills' or '21st century skills', these are the generic skills that are transferable across jobs, such as confidence and agency, creativity and innovation, enthusiasm for ongoing learning, ability to critically assess information, working with others, communication, project management, financial literacy, digital literacy, global enthusiasm/citizenship.

**Providers** or career practitioners are those who deliver careers-related information, resources or support or help with skills pathways.

**Users** who access careers information, resources or support to manage their career and re/skilling. User groups identified in our research include:

- **Early career explorers** who are transitioning into the world of work from education and training for the first time or are relatively new to their career and so have limited work-related experiences to draw upon. These early career explorers may be looking for support to articulate or refine their career direction, access careers advice, or develop their career management skills.
- **Career transitioners** who are looking to change careers, whether it is because they are initiating this change themselves or are reacting to a change outside of their control, such as a redundancy or restructure. These 'career transitioners' may be looking for support to articulate their transferrable skills, identify skilling or reskilling opportunities or pathways support.

## 2 Acronyms

Acronym	Definition
ATSI	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CDAA	Career Development Association of Australia
FYA	Foundation for Young Australians
GTO	Group Training Organisation
NCDS	National Career Development Strategy
NCVER	National Centre for Vocational Education Research
NEET	Not in education, employment, or training
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
STEM	Science, technology, engineering and mathematics
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
VET	Vocational education and training

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