

Boosting Business with Career Services

Career Services Policy Paper





Acknowledgement of Country

The Victorian Chamber acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation, of the lands on which the Victorian Chamber head office is located and where we conduct our business and extend this respect to all lands across the state.

We pay our respects to ancestors and elders past and present, and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We endeavour to develop stronger and enduring partnerships with First Peoples and work together to achieve economic, social and cultural equity and prosperity across Victoria.

We are committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.



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Executive Summary

Through consultation with members and stakeholders, research and roundtables, the Victorian Chamber has developed 29 recommendations that would improve the future of career services, both in Victoria, and Australia-wide.

Career services and business might seem to be odd bedfellows on the surface, but the level at which they are intertwined is underestimated. The need for turbocharged career services is an issue that comes up time and time again in the Victorian Chamber's policy roundtables, surveys, and discussions with our members. For example, a July 2023 Victorian Chamber survey found that 94 per cent of members think career services are important.

A lack of adequate career services for students, graduates, and workers has significant impacts on the labour market and decreases productivity, leading to an ineffective allocation of labour. The simple fact is that most Victorians do not have sufficient information to make the right choices at the right time in their careers. Industry wants to ensure workers and future businesspeople are prepared with the information and skills they need.

The modern Australian rarely sticks to one career across their working life. Despite this shift, the appropriate support and services have not evolved to ensure that students, graduates and workers are well placed to make career decisions.

Recommendations in this paper centre on increasing exposure to the workplace, making it easier for employers to provide employment and workplace experiences, streamlining communication and administration in a place-based manner and building capability of schools, employers, and employees.

The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry prepared this paper with input from the Australian Centre for Career Education (ACCE). The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) is the leading voice of business in Victoria. We represent 65,000 members and clients, businesses of all sizes, in all sectors and right across the State.



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The appropriate support and services have not evolved to ensure that students, graduates and workers are well placed to make career decisions.





Recommendations Snapshot

Top 10 priority recommendations:

Recommendation 01

Establish a Local Careers Development Fund to enable a place-based approach to careers development activities and current, successful place-based careers development activities to be scaled up and replicated. Ensure employers and business groups can access this Fund.

Recommendation 04

Establish subsidies or tax incentives to employers who provide work experience and internships.

Recommendation 17

Establish Careers Victoria within Jobs Victoria and re-establish careers counselling.

Recommendation 28

Ensure the Victorian Department of Education keeps Career Education Funding separate from schools' global budgets and that the funding is utilised solely on career development services.² (V)

Recommendation 06

Include careers development in school curriculums from Year 7 by inserting one career education subject in the curriculum as a compulsory unit of work.

Recommendation 15

Ensure every student leaves school with a career action plan. (V)

Recommendation 29

Create an economy-wide dashboard to show the ROI on career services, based for instance at the Productivity Commission or the Victorian Economic Growth Commission, drawing from factors such as career benchmarking measures and evidence-based vocational tools that measure service effectiveness.

Recommendation 03

Reduce and remove the regulatory burden around providing access to workplace experiences. (V)

Recommendation 26

Establish a local industry satisfaction rating scale for Local Learning and Employment Networks about their engagement with employers.¹

Recommendation 24

Ensure the Department of Education supports secondary schools to employ a ratio of minimum one career professional for every 450 enrolled students. (V)

KEY: (F = Federal) (V = Victorian)

Summary of all recommendations

Recommendations:

KEY: (F = Federal) (V = Victorian)

01	Establish a Local Careers Development Fund to enable a place-based approach to careers development activities and current successful place-based careers development activities to be scaled up and replicated. Ensure employers and business groups can access this Fund.
02	Establish a central database and coordinating function for employers to access careers development activities.
03	Reduce and remove the regulatory burden around providing access to workplace experiences. (V)
04	Establish subsidies or tax incentives to employers who provide work experience and internships.
05	Develop a workforce strategy for career professionals to ensure sufficient experts are available to deliver wide-ranging career education and guidance to all Australian students.
06	Include careers in school curriculums from Year 7 by inserting one career education subject in the curriculum as a compulsory unit of work.
07	Ensure tertiary education providers offer career development activities in courses.
08	Ensure industry groups can access an established Local Careers Development Fund for their career development and industry information activities.
09	Establish easy-to-access information for employers about microcredentials – what they are, their role, how they are developed, and how they are funded.
10	Subsidise training and upskilling for line managers, particularly for training involving how to develop career navigation skills in employees.
11	Offer subsidies or tax incentives to employers who provide professional career services to their employees.
12	Establish federal leadership about career education and career services in schools. (F)
13	Enable place-based coordination, with Skills and Jobs Australia playing a key role, to increase efficiencies, reduce competition and duplication. (F)
14	Create a clear and coordinated Commonwealth-led strategy to lift the status and prestige of VET pathways and occupations in schools to provide clear messages and guidance on the qualities of VET. (F)
15	Ensure every student leaves school with a career action plan. (V)
16	Ensure a whole-of-school approach for careers education by instilling career service benchmarking in school principals' key responsibilities.



Recommendations:

KEY: (F = Federal) (V = Victorian)

17	Establish Careers Victoria within Jobs Victoria and reestablish careers counselling.
18	Increase the availability of information for parents on the My Future platform.
19	Australia has several programmes that target mid-career adults who face disruption or job transition, and these should be evaluated, and scaled up if evaluation results suggest they are successful. (F)
20	Ensure schools are equipped with a careers engagement strategy for parents.
21	Streamline employer access to government employment services and the pool of unemployed Australians through a more centralised contact point to increase employment opportunities and reduce confusion for employers. (F)
22	Ensure supports for unemployed Australians include career advice and guidance from qualified career counsellors with CICA endorsed professional standing, as well as working closer to provide work experience and knowledge about the workplace to increase successful employment placements. (F)
23	Cease job cycling of jobseeker placement in any job by underpinning the employment ecosystem with career development principles and interventions.
24	Ensure the Department of Education supports secondary schools to employ a ratio of minimum one career professional for every 450 enrolled students. (V)
25	Ensure the Department of Education provides school career practitioners additional support and resourcing, by funding a secondary school career development coordinator at each Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) throughout the state.
26	Establish a local industry satisfaction rating scale for Local Learning and Employment Networks about their engagement with employers. ¹
27	Ensure the Department of Education publishes longitudinal data (on Track) that tracks school leavers' satisfaction with career development services at their school and their perceived career management skills to provide a more meaningful measure of effectiveness.
28	Ensure that the Victorian Department of Education keeps Career Education Funding separate from schools' global budgets and that the funding is utilised solely on career development services. ² (V)
29	Create an economy-wide dashboard to show the ROI on career services, based for instance at the Productivity Commission or the Victorian Economic Growth Commission, drawing from factors such as career benchmarking measures and evidence-based vocational tools that measure service effectiveness.

KEY: (F = Federal) (V = Victorian)

¹ Victorian Inquiry, 2018.

² *ibid.*

Introduction: Paving the Way to a Stronger Workforce

The Victorian Chamber receives considerable feedback from members and the business community that finding and retaining staff is a significant handbrake on growth and productivity.

Members continue to highlight the role of career services – including careers information, development, and guidance/ advice – as well as access to potential workers, as mechanisms to develop and improve their pipeline of staff. When surveyed, 94 per cent of employers think career services are important for building pipelines of staff.³

Further compounding this, the nature of the modern labour market means people require stronger career navigation and employability skills to minimise skills mismatches and non-completion of tertiary education, while improving opportunities to transition to rapidly changing jobs, and increased mobility between jobs.

Skills mismatching can mean that people can be overqualified and under skilled, misusing time and resources on activities that may not relate to a job or be needed in the labour market. This alongside persistent labour and skills shortages, and persistent low unemployment rates highlights a gap between what education and employment services do to prepare people and the realities of the labour market or the business world.

Australia has significant non-completion rates in tertiary study, in both vocational education and training (VET) and university study. This is a wasteful cost to both students and taxpayers. For example, nationally, one in three university students do not complete their qualification within six years of enrolling.⁴ In the vocational system, just under one in two students complete within four years of enrolling.⁵ There will always be people who start a type of study and realise it is not for them, but the high numbers of non-completion for both university and VET study indicate a need for increased information and consideration in the decision-making process, prior to enrolment.

The Australian economy is also rapidly changing, with new industries emerging, and new technologies, processes, skills and roles creating the conditions for significant movement of people in the labour market. The skills people need to navigate this environment are significantly different from when it was the norm to stay in one career, function type, industry, or company for an entire working life.

Continued on page 10.



³ Victorian Chamber survey, June 2023.

⁴ Career Industry Council of Australia, 2017.

⁵ NCVER, 2021.



There will always be people who start a type of study and realise it is not for them, but the high numbers of non-completion indicate a need for increased information & consideration.

International and local research has identified career services as a principal driver in developing the skills people need, enhancing employability and job matching, reducing unemployment and increasing skills utilisation and career progression.

While career services aren't a promotional tool for any particular industry, they serve to increase the ability of people to navigate their careers, access to career information about a broad range of industries and jobs will help build pipelines for industries that otherwise struggle to access the workforce.

Narratives about certain industries can be created by friends and family, but in the absence of proactive careers information, people may be prohibited in pursuing a vocation they are suited to. The perception that a university pathway is superior to a VET pathway is one example. This issue was repeatedly ventilated throughout the Australian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Perceptions and Status of Vocational Education and Training.⁶

In Victoria, the importance of career services has been recognised through the investment in the Career Counselling Service previously offered through Jobs Victoria, as well as the 2018 Victorian *Parliamentary Inquiry into career advice activities in Victorian schools* (Victorian Inquiry). This Inquiry's final report captured many of the challenges and opportunities for careers education, and offered many reasonable recommendations, some of which are supported in this Paper.

This Paper however covers not only school-based career services, but also focuses on the importance of lifelong learning and ongoing career development to grow the skills Australia needs.

This Paper has been informed by this feedback, interviews, roundtables, and research to present the business perspective about how career services should be utilised to better prepare our people for succeeding in the workforce, in turn creating a stronger labour market for employers to access.

We acknowledge that these recommendations cannot realistically be acted upon immediately.

We have provided a suite of recommendations to inform the long-term focus on careers development from an industry perspective. The scope of this Paper is Australia-wide, with a focus on Victoria, and has been prepared in collaboration with the Australian Centre for Career Education (ACCE).



Career services play a vital role in empowering individuals to make informed & well considered career decisions.

⁶ Australian Parliamentary Inquiry, 2023



An Introduction to Career Services: Empowering Career Choices

Career services play a vital role in empowering individuals to make informed and well-considered career decisions. Through professional career counselling, assessment tools, and workshops, these services provide individuals with the knowledge and resources necessary to understand their skills, interests, and values in relation to the labour market. By offering guidance on suitable career paths, industries, and training opportunities, career services help individuals align their aspirations with available opportunities, increasing the likelihood of career satisfaction and success.

Decoding Careers Terminology: Understanding the Language of Careers

Career education is learning about careers through a planned program of learning experience in education or training i.e., learning about the world of work, different roles and the pathways to reach those roles. It includes learning about your own values, interests and skills to make an informed career choice. It highlights the development of employability skills (those essential skills for employment: Communication, teamwork problem solving, organisation initiative, digital competence, decision making, self-management).

Career information is factual. It may be data (for example, labour market information) or it may be other factual information, but generally, it is largely uncontentious (if soundly derived) and lacks context.

Career advice puts information into context, making it potentially useful to any person who receives it. To use the same analogy, it would be advice to say that “the average price of coffee is \$5.50, so this cafe is relatively cheap”. Good advice is true in a general sense, even though it is insensitive to any individual’s perspective.

Career guidance, however, is personalised and starts with the individual and their hopes, opportunities, and needs.⁷



Industry-led: Aligning Careers and Education with the Real World

Career services, schools, work transition services, unemployment services and the jobs and skills system must be equipped to provide up-to-date information about the labour market. In doing so, they can then highlight how best to bridge the gap to the world of work, whether as an entrepreneur or as a worker.

“There is a disconnect between the academic skills learned in tertiary education vs the practical skills required to do the job.”

Employer feedback from Victorian Chamber survey, 2023

A critical purpose of these organisations is to prepare people for the working world. Aligning the work done by these organisations more closely with industry is required to achieve this purpose. The jobs and skills needed by employers and the labour market, now and into the future, should be central to the conversations and information provided to people making career plans and decisions. To make this happen, it is crucial that engaging with employment and education services and providers is stream-lined for employers.

Making Industry Engagement Accessible: The Key to Success

The most successful careers and employment programs are ones where employers are involved. The Victorian Inquiry identified that employers are critical of how current school career development services are not preparing students for the workplace and is directing some students to unsuitable pathways.⁸

Many employers, particularly those driven by a desire to engage with the community and those who need to fill roles locally, work to grow awareness about their industry. More than a third (37 per cent) of employers report working closely with schools, education providers and other community groups to increase awareness about working in their industry.⁹

However, the organisations involved in increasing awareness are fragmented, creating barriers to even the most enthusiastic of businesses. Many employers say they want to engage more, but do not know how or who to approach.

For example, an employer in a community might have contacts for three different employment service providers, be searching for the contacts for careers people at local schools in the area but cannot find them, be chasing a Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN), be engaged with a Jobs and Skills Centre, be trying to work with two councils with initiatives, and other organisations such as charities and not for profits.

These are many points of contact, all with separate processes, engagement styles, and priorities. Additionally, in many areas different schools may be calling the same large business to place their students in an uncoordinated way – overwhelming the business. This is daunting, complicated, and time consuming – which makes it difficult to prioritise, particularly for small businesses. Small businesses are defined as having fewer than 20 employees, and represent 97.5 per cent of all Australian businesses¹⁰ and 41 per cent of the business workforce – Australia’s largest employer category.¹¹

8 Victorian Inquiry, 2018.

9 Victorian Chamber survey, June 2023.

10 Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman, 2023.

11 *ibid.*



Ideally, there would be a lead contact at a place-based, local level who can help manage these contacts on behalf of the business. It should be easy for business leaders to be linked to their local schools to provide industry guidance forums that teachers/principals/parents to tap into, and showcase businesses close to schools for work experience opportunities.

Programs that currently work well should be easily replicated and implemented across Victoria, as well as across Australia. While there are good examples in some schools, including those in rural or remote locations, where groups of school career professionals or particular school career services have engaged with employers to offer work experience, more can be done.

Optimising the Potential of Work Experience: Simplifying the Process for Employers

Ninety-eight per cent of employers agree that work experience is important, however only 19 per cent host work experience themselves.¹²

"If our business were to host a student who may be interested in [our industry], we would like guidance on how this would work. Given our time commitments in this post-covid competitive market, we may not be able to commit to too much time unless we had a larger support system in place."
Employer feedback from Victorian Chamber survey, 2023

Employers are unsure how to start, design, and provide work experience or source people to participate in work experience.

The Need for a Qualified Careers Workforce: Beyond the Classroom

Businesses value qualified people in the roles that deliver careers guidance and advice, and craft the delivery of careers events, engagements, and information. The people engaged in these activities should be supported into formal qualifications.

"I think that career development in schools needs to be done by professionals other [than] teachers. With all due respect, in most instances their careers have been with the public sector (education department) and is fairly limited in exposure to the wider private sector, how it works and the way that it works." Employer feedback from Victorian Chamber survey, 2023



Employers are unsure how to start, design and provide work experience.



Why employers think the public don't understand their industry

When employers were asked why they think people don't know about or understand their industry, they responded:

"Can't be what you can't see"

"The industry is site related and therefore the public does not have access to the relevant work areas."

"The public have preconceived ideas of the industry."

"It is a unique industry that individuals personally come into contact with only once or twice in their lifetime."

"STEM needs more focus in secondary, primary and even pre-school"

"It is not a well profiled industry from a career perspective at educational levels nor professional career pathways"

"Lack of education"

"Government and schools push students to university degrees"

"It is a relatively small industry. People often think that it is an unskilled occupation"¹³

Education institutions

Seventy-six per cent of employers think substantive careers education and services should be in school curriculums from year seven.¹⁴

Many employers value employability skills over hard knowledge particularly for entry level or graduate roles. These employability skills are not what is assessed in schools for the most part. Students are also unequipped with the language to talk about these kinds of skills they do have.

Similarly, tertiary education providers need to build career information, career development, and employability into learning and assessments in core courses. Employers ranked employability skills as the most important thing they look for in recruitment for entry level roles.¹⁵

Overall, it is clear that education institutions at all levels need to:

- ✓ Prepare core skills – reading, writing, up to date technical knowledge (e.g., correct accounting standards) as well as provide career information
- ✓ Develop and assess employability skills
- ✓ Provide career information, education and development alongside workplace exposure within courses, aligned with assessment.

¹³ ibid.

¹⁴ Victorian Chamber survey, June 2023.

¹⁵ ibid.



Industry groups as Catalysts

The Government should fund industry associations to encourage and coordinate their members to engage with schools and stakeholders. Industry associations can also play an important role to provide resources and information on how to provide work experience. For example, the Boating Industry Association works with the Australian Industry Trade College (ATIC) in Queensland on a program between students undertaking VET qualifications and employers. This partnership is focused at year 10-12 students who complete a trade qualification while completing their Higher School Certificate. This program enables students to try different work experience and industry immersion experiences.

Mid-career workers

Industry is aware that workers come from mid-career changes as well as from school and educational pathways – particularly as automation and shifting skills demands in Australia drive labour market changes (for instance, due to the green energy transition).

Mid-career workers and the skills they have to navigate changes are important – highlighting the need for flexible training for people in fulltime employment and ways to upskill and reskill workers. Microcredentials and the process of accessing easy, flexible training should be demystified for employers.

Toyota is a good example of the successful development of careers advice for mid-career workers with the company taking a career development approach to the planned closure of its manufacturing plants. It engaged ACCE to help develop their Dedicated, Ready, Individual, Vocational, Energised (DRIVE team) to support the transition of workers which commenced in 2015 through to six months post plant closures.

Toyota team members completed the Certificate IV Career Development delivered by ACCE in conjunction with the co-design of the Toyota DRIVE Careers Service. Twelve staff including four managers made up the team and the service delivered programs include targets established by ACCE for career readiness and career transition planning.

This provided support for retrenched workers through a re-evaluation process that reflected their working life. In mid-2015 the trained DRIVE team began working with employees to develop additional skills/training, preparing individual career plans, and providing access to company-sponsored training and further study.

Two and a half thousand workers were to be retrenched and all those supported by the trained DRIVE team and program were able to transition successfully to either work, starting a business, volunteering, reskilling/training, or successful retirement planning.

Careers development in workplaces

The inclusion of careers development within the workplace has been constantly raised during consultation with members and stakeholders. Learning and development of staff typically sits with line managers, who may not be skilled or prepared for learning and development discussions, even in instances where it is built into formal performance management processes.

It needs to be easier for line managers to access training to build these skills and assist workers so that they are better able to develop career navigation skills of their staff.

Mid-career workers and the skills they have to navigate changes are important – highlighting the need for flexible training and ways to upskill and reskill workers.

Recommendations:

01	Establish a Local Careers Development Fund to enable a place-based approach to careers development activities and current successful place-based careers development activities to be scaled up and replicated. Ensure employers and business groups can access this Fund.
02	Establish a central database and coordinating function for employers to access careers development activities.
03	Reduce and remove the regulatory burden around providing access to workplace experiences. (V)
04	Establish subsidies or tax incentives to employers who provide work experience and internships.
05	Develop a workforce strategy for career professionals to ensure sufficient experts are available to deliver wide-ranging career education and guidance to all Australian students.
06	Include careers in school curriculums from Year 7 by inserting one career education subject in the curriculum as a compulsory unit of work.
07	Ensure tertiary education providers offer career development activities in courses.
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10	Subsidise training and upskilling for line managers, particularly for training involving how to develop career navigation skills in employees.
11	Offer subsidies or tax incentives to employers who provide professional career services to their employees.

Definitions

Employability Skills: are the non-technical skills needed to get a job. Often referred to as 'soft skills', they include skills such as:

- ✓ communication
- ✓ teamwork
- ✓ problem solving
- ✓ initiative
- ✓ planning and organising
- ✓ decision making
- ✓ self-management¹⁶

Labour productivity: output per hour worked.¹⁷

Actions employers can take now

- ✓ Promote careers development into line manager's jobs.
- ✓ Invest in people management training for your managers.
- ✓ Reach out to your industry association about how to get involved with activities that lift the profile of the industry.
- ✓ Plan or fine tune your approach to work experience.

¹⁶ My Future, 2021.

¹⁷ Productivity Commission, 2023.



Victorian Chamber Training options for people leaders:

Day to Day Management and Supervision of Staff | 1 day



The Effective New Manager | 2 days



From Manager to Leader | 2 days



Evidence suggests young people are getting less of the career development they find most useful, including 'hands on' activities such as work experience.



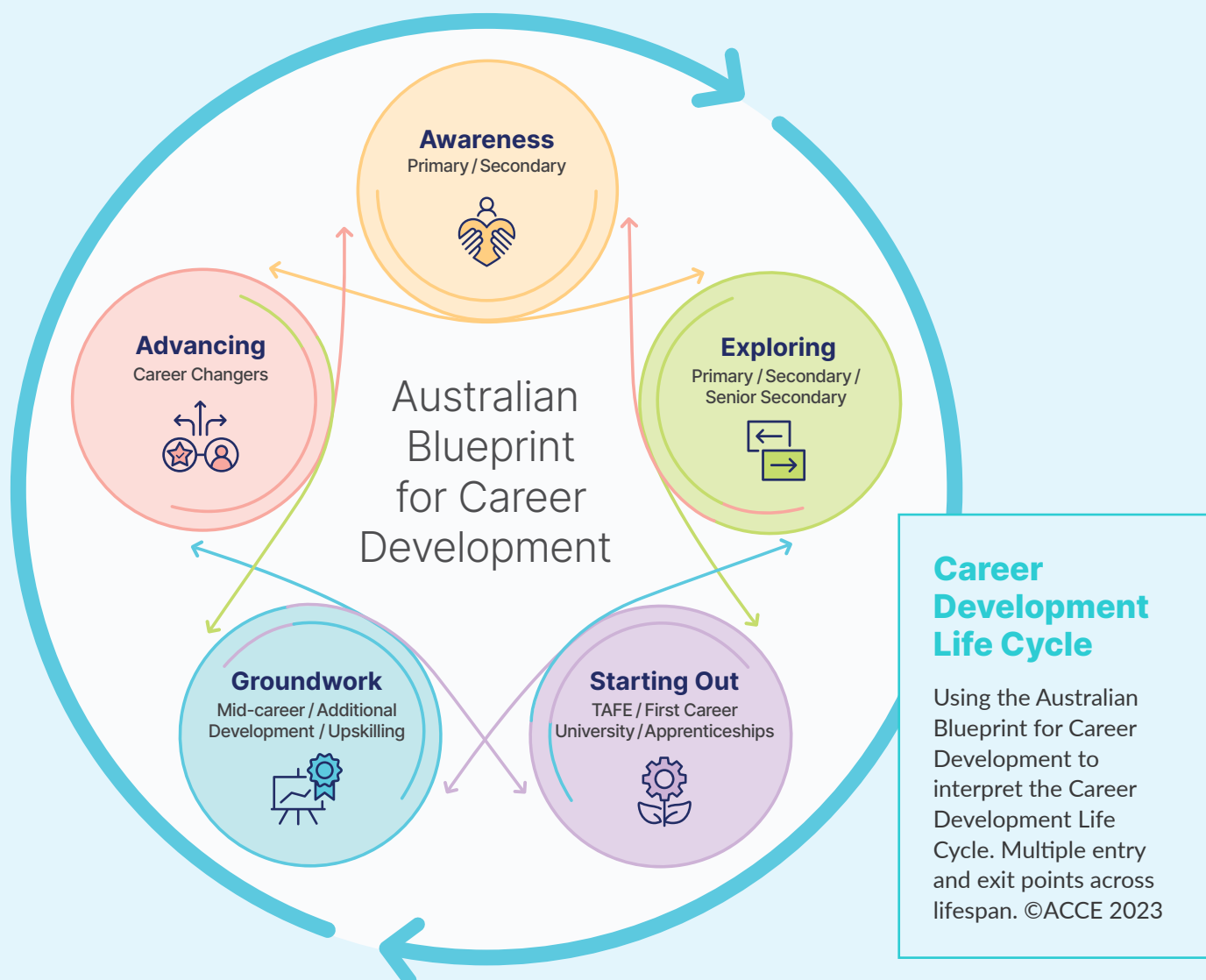


Utilising what we know: Insights into Career Services

Research tells us

International research has concluded that young people who receive school career guidance are “more likely to achieve better outcomes in the labour market”.¹⁸

In the UK, career education and guidance has been proven to reduce the number of students that end up not enrolling education or employment.¹⁹ Evidence also suggests sound career planning at multiple transition points is vital for successful future workforce development.²⁰



¹⁸ European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, 2014.

¹⁹ The Gatsby Foundation, 2014.

²⁰ European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, 2014.

Evidence suggests young people are getting less of the career development they find most useful, including 'hands on' activities such as work experience, work placement and visits to or by universities, VET providers and industry, and more of the career development they currently find least useful, such as discussions with a school career practitioner.²¹

For unemployed mid-career adults, access to federally-funded career guidance programs is limited. Some of these individuals require more comprehensive career support than simply job matching. Within these services, there is limited use of professional career development practitioners.²²

Schools

In schools, teachers do not feel equipped to provide information relating to careers in their field, labour market trends and course admission requirements.²³ Teachers and other school staff suffer from a crowded curriculum, with careers activities not included as a key learning activity or subject. A lot of formal careers advice doesn't start until later in high school by which time students already have strong preconceptions.

Teachers are not careers professionals, with expertise lying in teaching and assessing particular subject matter. Increasing real world application and employability within this context is important, however this should not be conflated with thinking teachers should be providing the role of careers professionals. Many schools suffer from resourcing constraints, especially in the careers space.

Those with career professionals often have a small team, of perhaps one person, to deliver information, guidance, and activities to an entire school.

Employment support services

Employment services play a key role in the careers lifecycle. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) identified that COVID-19 and the changing world of work has implications for publicly funded employment services, presenting an opportunity to consider how the future of Workforce Australia's employment services can:

- Use technology to expand provision and boost overall performance.
- Improve speed and quality of job matching.
- Keep people with different needs and backgrounds employable in the future.
- Work with enterprises to upskill and reskill in sectors driving job creation.
- Invest in labour market intelligence and evidence-based decision-making.
- Partner to scale up capacities and deliver support to groups most at risk of unemployment and discouragement.
- Foster innovation and resilience to manage change.²⁴

Influencers

When it comes to navigating the labyrinth of career choices, influencers play a pivotal role, with parents, peers, and mentors serving critical roles, alongside the formal influencers teachers and career advisors.

Parents are the most influential factor in a student's career decisions, meaning programs that support parents alongside their children are needed.²⁵ Parents and other social factors influence what training and employment people consider. Research shows that four out of five parents prefer university, which impacts the pipelines into both universities, VET and entry level employment.

How to increase an individual's exposure to the workplace

- ✓ Workplace tours (in person, or virtual)
- ✓ Mock interviews
- ✓ Mock work environments
- ✓ Informational interviews
- ✓ Shadowing
- ✓ Case competitions working on real problems or 'mock' work in the workplace with feedback provided
- ✓ Internships
- ✓ School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships

21 OECD, 2011.
 22 OECD, 2022.
 23 CICA, 2011.
 24 ILO, 2021.
 25 Study, Work, Grow, 2021.



What's happening at the federal level

Careers-related services across the nation and within states and territories vary and face challenges of co-ordination, awareness and scale.

Despite substantial evidence, research, and reviews, including ongoing research and OECD recommendations, highlighting the advantages of integrating career education into schools, it's crucial to note that there is currently no national career education subject within the Australian curriculum. This disparity means that while some students may receive a measure of career education, others may receive none. Australia does not have a national careers agreement. Australia-wide, services and information include:

- The national careers website: My Careers online – federal pay half and the states pay the rest.
- Careers Benchmarks.
- Future Ready Strategy.
- Careers Benchmark.
- Ontrack destinations survey.

School Leavers Information Service

The National Career Institute runs the School Leavers Information Service for young people aged between 15-24 years of age. It provides career guidance to help participants navigate their [School Leavers Information Kit \(SLIK\)](#), access and use the Your Career website and tools; and find relevant support services.

Participants can also be referred to a qualified career practitioner for a 45-minute career guidance session for information, advice and assistance relating to career planning and management, training and studying, or job searching.

Mid-Career Checkpoint

Closed in 2022, the federally funded Mid-Career Checkpoint Program was trialled in Victoria through the Victorian Chamber of Commerce to provide support for working-age people who had taken time out of the workforce to care for their families and were looking to return to employment. Piloted in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, it was expanded to include workers in female-dominated, COVID-19 impacted industries.

Services included a free skills and employment assessment, tailored career advice and coaching sessions. It matched participants' employment goals with their skills and qualifications and could deliver psychometric, skills and employment testing. Participants were provided with an individualised Skills, Training and Employment Plan that identified their attributes, skills and qualifications, and any skills gaps while identifying their employment goals.

VCCI assisted 1,342 eligible Victorians with personalised career coaching, psychometric testing, job-ready training, and development of career plans. Approximately 70 per cent of participants accessed the funding

incentive and enrolled in nationally accredited vocational training that will help to further enhance their career opportunities and employability. 94.6 per cent of participants said the program helped their employability.

Skills Checkpoint for Older Workers

The recently ended Skills Checkpoint operated across Australia administered by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment for Australians aged 40 plus who were recently unemployed or at risk of becoming unemployed.

Services include a free, tailored advice on transitioning into new roles within their current industry or pathways to a new career. Skills and employment assessment services, career advice and coaching sessions, including a tailored Career Plan. Foundational skills and gaps were assessed, and eligible participants could access up to 75 per cent of the training costs for occupations in the national skills shortage.



What's happening in Victoria

Victorian Government schools used to be required to report on postschool transitions in their annual implementations. These plans specified annual targets and actions to track progress towards goals for improved student outcomes identified in a government school's strategic plan. As noted in the inquiry, current data collection and publication through the On Track survey in Victoria provides limited information on how well school career development improves students' capacity to manage their study and career choices.²⁶

There are many organisations active in careers in Victoria, including:

- The Australian Centre for Career Education (ACCE).
ACCE has professional career practitioner members working in education and community. ACCE develops career resources, undertakes career consulting projects, runs industry to school career programs and the My Career Insights Program and host the Learning to work resources for the DE.
- Schools and careers practitioners.
- 36 Regional Career Networks across the state of Victoria.

- Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) – there are 31 LLENs across Victoria funded through the DET.

They provide free advice on training and employment opportunities, training, and referrals to welfare support and financial advice.

They engage with a broad range of industries in their local area and some employ career professionals. Services include free career advice and information, workshops to support people into education, training or employment, help job searching and with job applications, referrals and job matching to local opportunities, information on employment trends and with training and support plans and career transitioning.

76 per cent of employers do not know what a LLEN is.²⁷

- Skills and jobs centres located in every TAFE in Victoria.
- Nationally, Education Services Australia (funded by the Government) provides My Future, an unbiased career information website to assist students with career development and planning, pathway options and work transitions.

In addition, there are many independent providers of career information services and programs that may or may not be developed and delivered by qualified career professionals.

Victoria's Career Counsellor Service through Jobs Victoria was Victoria's first state-wide all adult community career service and delivered services to 33,250 jobseekers. The service was rolled-out during lockdown in June 2021 and only employed career professionals with a Career Industry Council Australia (CICA) endorsed Graduate Certificate (level 8) or equivalent qualification in career development and concluded due to lack of funding in June 2023.

Employer feedback on LLENs:

"They should take more of an industry approach."

"[They need] a dedicated group that develops strong industry links and understands what industries are out there and be able to match students with things that would suit."

"The current model doesn't work in our region. Too many layers and confusion."

"All work so differently, [need to be] more consistent and maybe school based."

²⁶ Victorian Inquiry, 2018.

²⁷ Victorian Chamber survey, June 2023.



There are 31 Local and Learning Development Centres (LLENs) in Victoria and they provide free advice on training and employment opportunities. These centres also provide referrals to welfare support and financial advice.



What's happening in other states and territories

New South Wales (NSW)

Careers NSW was initially trialled in 2021 through an open tender and was designed for 10,000 jobseekers. It launched in November 2021 offering three key services to adult residents of NSW:

- A self-service website providing immediate access to a wide range of career guidance information, resources and support.
- Individual appointments with [Industry Experts](#) from a variety of industries for insider insights into careers in their industry.
- Access to professional [Careers Practitioners](#) for tailored career guidance and support in targeted regions of NSW.
- Adults services:
 - Started with six career pilot regions and then went state-wide
 - 186,000 adults in year and a half
- 20 per cent of customers are First Nations People
 - Engage with third party careers advisors out in community to help service them
- NSW DET has mandatory trainings for staff – including for careers advisers
- Regional Industry engagement program (NSW) aligns with DET schools

South Australia

In South Australia students in Year 10 can gain up to 10 credits towards their ATAR based on their Personal Learning Plan. The Personal Learning Plan (PLP) identifies the plans and goals of the young person for their future. It is designed to explore further education and career options. The students are introduced to seven capabilities such as literacy, numeracy, ethical understanding and critical and creative thinking. The students are assessed on their ability to identify strengths, focus on areas for development, investigate potential pathways and figure out how they are going to achieve their goals.

Recommendations

12	Establish federal leadership about career education and career services in schools. (F)
13	Enable place-based coordination, with Skills and Jobs Australia playing a key role, to increase efficiencies, reduce competition and duplication. (F)
14	Create a clear and coordinated Commonwealth-led strategy to lift the status and prestige of VET pathways and occupations in schools to provide clear messages and guidance on the qualities of VET. (F)
15	Ensure every student leaves school with a career action plan. (V)
16	Ensure a whole-of-school approach for careers education by instilling career service benchmarking in school principals' key responsibilities.

KEY: (F = Federal) (V = Victorian)




Recommendations (continued)

17	Establish Careers Victoria within Jobs Victoria and reestablish careers counselling.
18	Increase the availability of information for parents on the My Future platform.
19	Australia has several programmes that target mid-career adults who face disruption or job transition, and these should be evaluated, and scaled up if evaluation results suggest they are successful. (F)
20	Ensure schools are equipped with a careers engagement strategy for parents.
21	Streamline employer access to government employment services and the pool of unemployed Australians through a more centralised contact point to increase employment opportunities and reduce confusion for employers. (F)
22	Ensure supports for unemployed Australians include career advice and guidance from qualified career counsellors with CICA endorsed professional standing, as well as working closer to provide work experience and knowledge about the workplace to increase successful employment placements. (F)
23	Cease job cycling of jobseeker placement in any job by underpinning the employment ecosystem with career development principles and interventions.
24	Ensure the Department of Education supports secondary schools to employ a ratio of minimum one career professional for every 450 enrolled students. (V)
25	Ensure the Department of Education provides school career practitioners additional support and resourcing, by funding a secondary school career development coordinator at each Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) throughout the state.
26	Establish a local industry satisfaction rating scale for Local Learning and Employment Networks about their engagement with employers. ²⁸
27	Ensure the Department of Education publishes longitudinal data (on Track) that tracks school leavers' satisfaction with career development services at their school and their perceived career management skills to provide a more meaningful measure of effectiveness.
28	Ensure that the Victorian Department of Education keeps Career Education Funding separate from schools' global budgets and that the funding is utilised solely on career development services. ²⁹ (V)
29	Create an economy-wide dashboard to show the ROI on career services, based for instance at the Productivity Commission or the Victorian Economic Growth Commission, drawing from factors such as career benchmarking measures and evidence-based vocational tools that measure service effectiveness.

KEY: (F = Federal) (V = Victorian)

²⁸ Victorian Inquiry, 2018.

²⁹ *ibid.*



Robust career services are paramount for Australia to maintain and foster a skilled workforce and navigate the ever-changing dynamics of the global economy.



Conclusion: Employers Emphasise the Importance of Career Services



To conclude, employers value the role of career services and recognise them as a vital component of Australia's labour market.

By focusing on enhancing employability, reducing unemployment and underemployment, promoting lifelong learning, and contributing to economic growth, career services provide invaluable support to individuals and employers alike.

Through empowering individuals to make informed career decisions, bridging the gap between education and employment, supporting businesses, and boosting economic growth and productivity, these services play a critical role. Robust career services are paramount for Australia to maintain a foster a skilled workforce, and navigate the ever-changing dynamics of the global economy industry requires.

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About

Australian Centre for Career Education

The Australian Centre for Career Education (ACCE), formerly the Career Education Association of Victoria, is a national career association, not-for-profit charity, and thought leader in career education and development. ACCE is an endorsed provider of career practitioner training by the peak industry body, The Career Industry Council of Australia.

ACCE was established by the Victorian Government in 1975 to support the work experience legislation to assist students into industry and to train secondary school teachers to support student subject choices and transitioning. ACCE designs and delivers career projects and resources to the education, government, and community sectors. It is Australia's largest demonstration career association and the largest provider of career services to the Victorian community.

Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

The Victorian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) is the largest and most influential not-for-profit business organisation in Victoria, informing and servicing more than 65,000 members and clients across the State.

Through our policy and advocacy work, professional development courses, workplace relations and consulting services, we help thousands of businesses every year to improve workplace performance and achieve business growth and success.

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