



**The National Career
Development Strategy
Research Project**

Element 1

Final Report

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**Sections of this report were deleted prior to publication as they contain
personal information, business information and/or information
currently under consideration by the Australian Government**

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1 Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of research, consultation and literature review designed to underpin the development of Australia's first national career development strategy, which will seek to address and cater for the career development and transition management needs of all young Australians (aged 5-24).

This research forms one part of a four-element process to develop a national career development strategy: the other three elements being:

- Identification and analysis of the career development needs and wants of young people from the ages of 5-24, their parents, teachers and communities
- Development of options for a national approach/strategy for career development support for young people from the ages of 5-24, and
- A cost-benefit analysis of these options.

This report will therefore, where pertinent, provide part of the evidence base for the other strands of the strategy's development.

The findings here are based on three avenues of research activity:

- a) Literature review of national and international career development research
- b) Consultation with a panel of nominated experts to guide the focus of the literature review, and
- c) Consultation with key career development representatives in each state and territory and with representatives of the institutions and agencies that provide career development services to young people.

The focus of the literature review in Element 1 was to identify:

- Best-practice career development models
- Any impacts, benefits or effectiveness of career development practices on youth transitions
- The skills young people need to develop to enable them to manage their careers into the future, and
- Ways to address the needs of specific target groups.

Based upon the existing literature on "best" or "effective" practice, the researchers were required to devise a set of proposed criteria for effective practice to inform options for a national career development strategy and system.

Element 1 also required:

- An assessment of State/Territory government career development initiatives, and
- The provision of advice on a number of specified Australian Government career resources, services and initiatives.

1.1 What is Career Development?

Career development is the lifelong process of managing progression in learning and work. The quality of this process significantly determines the nature and quality of individuals' lives: the kind of people they become, the sense of purpose they have, the income at their disposal. It also determines the social and economic contribution they make to the communities and societies of which they are part (Watts, undated publication).

The development of a career is a unique process for every individual and is affected by a wide range of influences such as the attributes, aptitudes and values of the individual, and the social and economic circumstances of their family and the wider community in which they live.

Our careers develop naturally and unintentionally, as we grow. In childhood, ideas about life, learning and work roles are expressed in play and are based on the views and experiences of adults with whom children identify. In adolescence, career exploration is based on identifying interests, abilities, capacities and values; learning about further education and the world of work through observing adults engage in work and study; and through taking a part-time job.

Providing people with accurate and current career information and advice and learning experiences that help them to develop career management skills, will foster the development of their careers in more intentional ways.

Nine years ago, Patton and McMahon stated that, “It is no longer startling to refer to the dramatic changes in the world of work” (2001, 3). At that time the changes referred to by many authors included the:

- Globalisation of the workforce
- A growing global labour surplus
- Organisational transformations in the workforce, including a move towards more project base, part-time and temporary work and changes to the psychological contract between employers and employees
- The rising importance of the knowledge worker
- A growing awareness of linkages between world of work experiences and physical and mental health, family responsibilities and life options
- Relevant changes to government policy and legislation related to child-care provision for women in the workforce and school-to-work transition, and
- Demographic trends related to new entrants to the market, including women and migrants (adapted from Patton and McMahon, 2001).

The nature of these changes has shifted over the intervening years, and others have emerged:

- Access Economics highlight the ageing of the Australian workforce with “Population growth ... slowing and, in particular, working-age population growth ... slowing as the number of new retirees a year is growing while the number of new entrants” is in decline (2006, 10)
- The continuing ramifications of the global financial crisis are impacting on international labour markets in a variety of ways
- Climate change has seen the adaptation and creation of occupations needed to address commitments to reduced emissions, and
- Technological change, including Web 2.0 and the development of new infrastructure such as the National Broadband Network has ramifications for service delivery.

All point to the need for individuals, more than ever, to be prepared for a career management process that will need to be maintained throughout their lives. Effective career services therefore seek to “help young people to make career decisions not just now, but also in the future, and thereby to construct their careers. Moreover, (young people) need to be helped to understand that they will continue to develop their career management skills throughout their lives” (Watts 2010, 3).

As Gillie and Gillie-Isenhour (2003) argue:

Career self-management is the internalisation of career development processes that enable an individual to navigate and prosper in a world of work in which one’s relationship to employment is in a state of flux, in which changing jobs and employers is the norm (3).

1.2 The Evidence Base

Career development service providers know that learning and work decisions powerfully influence people's individual social and economic well being. Key decision making bodies, such as the OECD, Ministers of the European Union and their equivalents world-wide know that staying engaged in learning and making successful transitions to further education or work is of critical importance to the social and economic wellbeing of communities, regions, and nations.

The evidence that does exist points strongly towards the critical importance of career development services in supporting young people's successful transition into an increasingly complex labour market. Effects include:

- Increased educational engagement and attainment: career development services are shown by the literature review to demonstrate higher levels of engagement and attainment in learning
- Increased self-awareness and self- confidence
- Increased goal/future awareness and orientation: recipients of career development services, that contribute to the development of career management skills, demonstrate an enhanced orientation towards the future, and a disposition to more proactively manage their future
- Strengthened pathways for those young people at risk of disengaging from education, training or work: career development services have a critical capacity to support and enhance the learning and transitions of those at risk of disengaging from education, training or work, and
- Enhanced employment outcomes, such as higher wages and job satisfaction.

The focus of current career development thinking emphasises the developmental nature of careers, and cultivating the career efficacy and resilience of young people to manage a dynamic and elongated career and transition process.

In Australia, this body of research and thought has been the driving force behind the development of the *Australian Blueprint for Career Development (The Blueprint)*, which clearly stipulates the skills young people need to be competent career managers in the 21st century, as a culmination of almost a decade of research, design, testing and refinement.

These skills and aptitudes that all young people (and others) need to manage their careers are well established in the literature and include:

- Self development or personal management skills
- Skills associated with learning and work exploration, and the
- Career building skills required to make career-enhancing decisions, and to secure, create and maintain work.

It has long been recognised by researchers and professional career development practitioners that career development services have a key role to play in advancing the access and equity agenda, and facilitating access to learning, work and self-development opportunities for a range of groups traditionally marginalised within education and training and labour market systems. These groups include:

- Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse groups
- Low socio-economic status and low-level educated groups
- People with disability
- Learners in rural/regional/remote areas, and
- Women.

However, the literature suggests that meeting the needs of a range of diverse groups hinges upon the capacity of practitioners to diversify service provision based upon the recognition and understanding of different levels of life complexity. This highlights the importance of practitioners being adequately qualified professionals, and adhering to the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners, which stipulate the competencies and ethical practices needed to be responsive to the needs of diverse clients.

It is also necessary that services themselves be able to be accessed in such a way that they recognise the diversity and complexity of client needs. A client-segmentation model, which channels users into an appropriate service level at point of entry —such as that in operation in Scotland—provides a useful model here.

Also key to successful expansion of access to career development services for a range of groups is expanding their availability and reach: by beginning in primary school; extending into tertiary and post-compulsory institutions, and involving a broad range of stakeholders, including, most critically, parents and carers who are shown throughout the available research to have a critical influence upon the career development of young people in their care.

1.3 Criteria for Effective Practice

The following criteria for effective practice have been distilled and synthesised from the above literature review and discussion of the existing literature and research evidence base. They identify the characteristics of:

- Effective career development systems
- Effective delivery mechanisms, and
- Effective career development content.

The Characteristics of Effective Career Development Systems

1. Career development systems are characterised by strong and accountable leadership.
2. Promotional activity is sufficient to raise awareness and the profile of services.
3. Clients of all ages, regardless of their background or location, are able to easily access career development services.
4. Clients of all ages have access to service delivery that is independent of the interests of particular institutions or enterprises.
5. Career development practitioners are provided with sufficient professional support and resources to perform their work to defined quality standards.
6. Data is gathered on the financial and human resources devoted to career development services, on client need and demand, on the characteristics of clients, on client satisfaction, and on the outcomes and cost-effectiveness of career development services.

The Characteristics of Effective Delivery Mechanisms

7. Career development services are delivered via a recognisable entry point and use multiple delivery channel arrangements, including walk-in centres, face-to-face delivery, telephone services, online services, and learning experiences.
8. In schools, developmentally appropriate career education is a compulsory curriculum subject and/or a set of integrated activities that form part of the routine life of the school.

9. Children in primary schools have the opportunity to engage in intentional and developmentally appropriate career-related learning activities.
10. Delivery frameworks, quality standards and quality assurance mechanisms guide all service provision.
11. Service providers show the capacity to adapt service provision in light of differences in socio-cultural understandings and/or practices.
12. Programs in primary and secondary schools recognise the role of parents/carers and employers and engage them fully in young people's career development.

The Characteristics of Effective Content

13. Exemplary career development programs are outcomes-focussed and foster the development of individuals' own career management competence and resilience.
14. Career development programs in educational settings offer experiential learning linked to the labour market, so that young people are given opportunities to investigate and experience a range of learning and work options before making career decisions.
15. Services are underpinned by comprehensive educational, occupational and other relevant labour market information.

The following matrix provides illustrative international, national and state/territory examples aligned to the effective practice criteria, where appropriate. In most cases, such generalisations are difficult given the broad nature of this research project and the devolved nature of service provision in most states and territories.

It is also widely accepted that it is unwise to generalise or attempt to transpose examples of effective practice across an entire system. Career development systems need to be tailored to the context in which they are intended to operate, after careful consideration of a range of local variables.

As the OECD concludes, there is no one common design for career guidance systems, as "these will vary according to national traditions and administrative arrangements, and according the stage of development of career guidance services" (2004a, 137).

This equally applies in a federated system such as Australia, where state and territory career programs have evolved in different ways in response to shared national directions and goals, as well as state/territory priorities.

Effective Practice Criterion	Examples of effective practice	Comment	Responsibility
<p>1. Career development systems are characterised by strong and accountable leadership</p>	<p>International examples</p> <p>Careers Services New Zealand (Watts 2007).</p> <p>The European Lifelong Learning Network (ELGN)</p>	<p>Funded by the Education Department, yet operates with status and authority alongside a range of other Departmental heads that have responsibility for other workforce development activities. Attributes success to striving for excellence and developing effective professional relationships.</p> <p>Provides a powerful example of a well resourced, leadership forum that encompasses career industry representatives as well as policy makers from 22 European countries.</p>	<p>Leadership is a shared responsibility and needs to be evidenced at all levels of government and at all service delivery outlets. However, the Australian government has a significant role to play in establishing – in partnership with the States and Territories, and the career information industry of practitioners, researchers, and theorists - national directions and strategies, producing or maintaining agreed national frameworks, and career information resources that underpin the work of career practitioners throughout Australia.</p> <p>The Australian government is the appropriate body to convene a leadership forum, such as the European Lifelong Learning Network, that comprises key stakeholders such as States and Territory Education and Training Authorities, CICA, and user representatives.</p>

Effective Practice Criterion	Examples of effective practice	Comment	Responsibility
	<p>Australian examples</p>	<p>National leadership for career development within government has had a strong focus in recent years on career development activities covered under the National Partnership for Youth Attainment and Transitions, and for clients aged 45 years plus.</p> <p>The Career Industry Council of Australia has provided strong leadership in the area of quality improvement.</p>	
	<p>State/territory examples</p> <p>South Australia</p> <p>Western Australia</p> <p>NSW</p> <p>Victoria</p>	<p>In SA and WA state training authorities are exercising the leadership needed to establish coherent, state-wide all-age career development systems.</p> <p>In NSW, central agency leadership of the School to Work Program has contributed to the growth and sustainability of the program.</p> <p>In Victoria central agency leadership has resulted in the development of a new career development curriculum for high school, ACE and TAFE students.</p> <p>There are also numerous examples of local level leadership at the service delivery level, for example in schools and other places of learning.</p>	

Effective Practice Criterion	Examples of effective practice	Comment	Responsibility
2. Promotional activity is sufficient to raise awareness and the profile of services	<p>International examples</p> <p>LearnDirect, UK (Watts and Dent, 2008 for a broader discussion of marketing career development activities)</p>	<p>LearnDirect Advice is a distance guidance service that has a marketing budget set at 1/3 of the total advice turnover, resulting in brand recognition amongst the general public of around 80%.</p>	<p>Marketing is a shared, yet differentiated responsibility. Public funders of career development initiatives need to ensure sufficient resources are allocated to the promotion of activities and/or services to ensure that clients are aware of their entitlement to publicly funded services. Systems that record these inputs in systematic ways are also needed.</p>
	<p>State/territory examples</p> <p>States and Territories use the resources and support provided through the Australian Government funded National Career Development Week to promote local level activities.</p>	<p>In many cases, large-scale marketing of career services and resources tends to be neglected or capped to ensure that demand does not outstrip supply. In NSW, however, a simple pamphlet makes young people aware of their entitlement to career services in schools. Another exception is the Australian government funded, National Career Development Week that raises awareness of the value of career development services. However, this poses risks in an environment where access to services is largely restricted to those enrolled in an education or training institution.</p>	

Effective Practice Criterion	Examples of effective practice	Comment	Responsibility
<p>3. Clients of all ages, regardless of their background or location, are able to easily access career development services.</p>	<p>International examples</p> <p>Careers Services New Zealand (Watts 2007)</p> <p>Careers Wales Edwards et al 2010; Watts 2009)</p> <p>Careers Scotland (Careers Scotland undated publication)</p>	<p>Clients of all ages can access differentiated services through these organisations, depending on their needs. Young people can access information via SMS, group sessions, face-to-face guidance, and the provision of a variety of on-line tools and activities designed for a range of age groups. All three organisations also offer support services to schools and other learning institutions. For adults, group sessions, face-to-face and tailored website information is available.</p>	<p>National governments in each of the international best practice examples are responsible for the funding and delivery of the service. In the case of <i>Career Services NZ</i> a treasury appropriation is delivered through the Ministry of Education, <i>Careers Scotland</i> is funded through the new agency <i>Skills Development Scotland</i>, while the Welsh Assembly Government funds the six <i>Careers Wales</i> companies.</p> <p>To create an accessible, nationally available network in Australia, bi-lateral negotiations with the States and Territories (that take into account existing services) would be needed to create a network of service delivery outlets that provide access to a range of face-to-face services for clients of all ages. Such a network could be spearheaded by an enhanced myfuture providing the virtual entry point for a range of other services, including telephone and email counselling as well as other online services that could be accessed by individuals in a range of settings.</p>

Effective Practice Criterion	Examples of effective practice	Comment	Responsibility
	<p>State/Territory examples</p> <p>Career Centre and Workforce Development Centres (Metro, rural and regional WA)</p> <p>Career Development Centres (SA)</p> <p>Skilling Solutions agencies (Qld)</p>	<p>Three state/territory governments provide varying levels of service provision to clients other than enrolled students. The WA Career Centre and regionally located Workforce Development Centres provide clients of all ages with access to online career exploration tools and information and face-to-face assistance where needed. Targeted services also exist for Indigenous people, via five Aboriginal Workforce Development Centres located throughout the State. Specialist services for ex-offenders and migrants are also available.</p> <p>The Careers SA Career Development Centres are located throughout the State, and provide services to unemployed and underemployed people. Services include face-to-face individual and group activities.</p> <p>Skilling Solutions agencies in QLD provide face-to-face and some online services to all ages but focus primarily on skills recognition and development. Skilling Solutions also partner with industry and provide overseas skills recognition, career pathway planning and client access to e-portfolio software (VUMI).</p>	

Effective Practice Criterion	Examples of effective practice	Comment	Responsibility
4. Clients of all ages have access to service delivery that is independent of the interests of particular institutions or enterprises.	<p>International examples</p> <p>Careers Services New Zealand (Watts 2007)</p> <p>Careers Wales (Edwards et al 2010; Watts 2009)</p> <p>Careers Scotland (Careers Scotland undated publication)</p> <p>Australian examples</p> <p><i>myfuture</i></p>	<p><i>Careers Services</i> NZ is funded by the Ministry of Education; however the service has been mandated to assist in the achievement of government education, training and employment goals through the provision of high quality information, advice and guidance services.</p> <p>Similarly, <i>Careers Wales</i> and <i>Careers Scotland</i> are expected to provide high quality services that are independent of the interests of institutions and enterprises.</p> <p>Although limited to online tools and services, <i>myfuture</i> also offers professional development support to teachers and other career development practitioners. It also provides career information and online tools to users of all ages that are independent of the interests of institutions and enterprises.</p>	Elements of a national network that is independent of the interests of education and training providers exist in Australia and could be built upon to create an independent, easily accessible national network in Australia (see above). This would be a shared responsibility of the Australian and State and Territory Governments.
	<p>State/Territory examples</p> <p>Career Centre and Workforce Development Centres (Metro, rural and regional WA)</p> <p>Career Development Centres (SA)</p> <p>Skilling Solutions agencies (Qld)</p>	Again, all three services are delivered with a mandate to ensure the interests of the client are best served through independent information, advice and guidance.	

Effective Practice Criterion	Examples of effective practice	Comment	Responsibility
<p>5. Career development practitioners are provided with sufficient professional support and resources to perform their work to defined quality standards.</p>	<p>International examples</p> <p>This characteristic of effective practice in any human services environment was evident in the literature, but examples of best practice were not provided (See Bezanson and Plant, 2010 for further information).</p>		<p>Professional Associations have certain obligations to provide support to their members. However, the primary responsibility resides with the employers of career development practitioners, which in most cases are governments.</p> <p>The contractual arrangements between funders of services and initiatives and service providers could strengthen this requirement by including reference to the Guiding Principles for Career Services, in particular Principle 7: <i>Provide staff with sufficient support to deliver a quality service.</i></p>

Effective Practice Criterion	Examples of effective practice	Comment	Responsibility
	<p>Australian examples</p> <p>The Australian Government provides:</p> <p>Scholarships for Career Advisers</p> <p>A range of career information resources, such as Job Guide, ReCap, etc.</p> <p>CDAA's annual conference and ongoing professional development activities.</p> <p>Myfuture's product champion network</p>	<p>The Australian Government Scholarships for Career Advisers provides much needed professional support for practitioners. The Australian Government funded career information products also underpin practitioners' capacity to deliver services.</p> <p><i>Myfuture's</i> product champion network and professional development workshops have ensured that practitioners are aware of the national online career information system and know how to use it effectively.</p>	

Effective Practice Criterion	Examples of effective practice	Comment	Responsibility
	<p>State/Territory examples</p> <p>Independent Schools Associations, Catholic Education Offices, and government agencies combine resources to offer professional development and support to practitioners in many states and territories. Many agencies are also providing financial support for teachers and others to upgrade their qualifications.</p> <p>National and state/territory career development associations provide ongoing professional development and other supports to their members.</p> <p>There are also are also numerous examples of local level professional development and support at the service delivery level, for example in schools and other places of learning.</p>		

Effective Practice Criterion	Examples of effective practice	Comment	Responsibility
6. Data is gathered on the financial and human resources devoted to career development services, on client need and demand, on the characteristics of clients, on client satisfaction, and on the outcomes and cost-effectiveness of career development services.	International examples Examples not found – identified as a large gap internationally.		Systematic data collection should be a requirement built in to contractual arrangements or agreements between the funders and providers of career services at all levels of the system.
	Australian examples N/A – except through the NPYAT.		
	State/Territory examples School to Work reports (NSW)	Publicly available data is available on the number of students participating in School to Work activities, and undertaking career education in NSW high schools.	

Effective Practice Criterion	Examples of effective practice	Comment	Responsibility
7. Career development services are delivered via a recognisable entry point and use multiple delivery channel arrangements, including walk-in centres, face-to-face delivery, telephone services, online services, and learning experiences.	International examples Careers Services New Zealand (Watts 2007) Careers Wales (Edwards et al 2010; Watts 2009) Careers Scotland (Careers Scotland undated publication)	See above comments	Joint responsibility between the Australian and State and Territory Governments, See comments regarding criterion 3.
	State/Territory examples The WA Career Centre and Workforce Development Centres (the online component is currently under development)	See above comments	

Effective Practice Criterion	Examples of effective practice	Comment	Responsibility
8. In schools, developmentally appropriate career education is a compulsory curriculum subject and/or a set of integrated activities that form part of the routine life of the school.	<p>International examples</p> <p>Examples of the diverse ways of making career education a compulsory curriculum subject can be found in Sultana, 2004.</p> <p>The ways in which career learning is made compulsory reflect the unique characteristics of education systems, making identification of best practice inappropriate.</p>		National leadership, with strong support from the States and Territories is needed, if career learning is to be incorporated into the new national curriculum.
	<p>State/Territory examples</p> <p>Different examples of compulsory curriculum for particular year levels can be found in different states and territories – however there is no compulsion for career development learning at all levels of schooling, or in TAFE or universities.</p>		

Effective Practice Criterion	Examples of effective practice	Comment	Responsibility
<p>9. Children in primary schools have the opportunity to engage in intentional and developmentally appropriate career-related learning activities.</p>	<p>International examples</p> <p>Examples of the diverse ways that career related learning occurs in primary schools can be found in Sultana, 2004.</p> <p>The ways in which career learning is delivered at the school level reflects the unique characteristics of local school communities, making identification of best practice difficult.</p>		<p>Schools Education Authorities - public and private.</p>
	<p>Australian examples</p> <p>The Blueprint outlines competencies for all Australians from kindergarten through to adulthood to guide career-related learning in early childhood settings.</p>	<p>The inclusion of career related content into the National Curriculum would ensure all young people, from kindergarten to Year 12 had access to developmentally appropriate career-related learning.</p>	

Effective Practice Criterion	Examples of effective practice	Comment	Responsibility
	<p>State/Territory examples</p> <p>Education Queensland's Career Education policy statement encompasses students from K-12.</p> <p>Kurri Kurri Learning Community (NSW)</p>	<p>Education Queensland's policy is underpinned by the Blueprint reflecting a 'whole-of-life' approach to career development.</p> <p>The schools participating in the Kurri Kurri Learning Community have developed a career development curriculum, based on the Blueprint that is developmentally appropriate and addresses career development needs of young people from K-12.</p>	
10. Delivery frameworks, quality standards and quality assurance mechanisms guide all service provision.	<p>International examples</p> <p>Most countries have QA systems that are sector-based rather than comprehensive systems. (See Bezanson and Plant 2010 for more information).</p>		The requirement to implement nationally agreed delivery frameworks, quality standards and quality assurance mechanisms could be built in to contractual arrangements or agreements between funders (primarily governments) and service providers.

Effective Practice Criterion	Examples of effective practice	Comment	Responsibility
	<p>Australian examples</p> <p>The <i>Blueprint</i></p> <p>Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners</p> <p>Guiding Principles for Career Development Services and Career Information Products</p>	<p>Australian quality frameworks and standards are considered to be international best practice. However there are few requirements or incentives to apply these frameworks.</p> <p>CICA and its member associations require all practitioners to meet the Professional Standards by 2012.</p>	
	<p>State/Territory examples</p> <p>ACT Teachers are required to meet minimum qualification levels.</p> <p>In WA, MEAST funding is available to schools that make a commitment to use the WA Career and Transitions Framework, and the <i>Blueprint</i>.</p> <p>Many community-based services, for example in WA and SA, require minimum level qualifications based on CICA standards for associate level professionals.</p>	<p>Elements of these standards have been implemented in government funded services in various, limited ways throughout Australia.</p>	

Effective Practice Criterion	Examples of effective practice	Comment	Responsibility
11. Service providers show the capacity to adapt service provision in light of differences in socio-cultural understandings and/or practices.	<p>International examples</p> <p>All international competency frameworks for career development practitioners include this capacity as a core competency.</p>		It is the responsibility of funders of career services to ensure that career development services are provided by qualified practitioners. This could be achieved through the establishment of minimum qualification requirements that align with the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners.
	<p>Australian examples</p> <p>The Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners Code of Ethics</p>		
	<p>State/Territory examples</p> <p>All states and territories cite examples of utilising the expertise of specialist workers to adapt service provision appropriately. Not all, however, require career staff to be qualified.</p>		

Effective Practice Criterion	Examples of effective practice	Comment	Responsibility
12. Programs in primary and secondary schools recognise the role of parents/carers and employers and engage them fully in young people's career development.	<p>International examples</p> <p>Examples of the diverse ways parents/carers and employers are engaged in young people's career development in schools can be found in Sultana 2004, 50.</p> <p>The ways in which parents/carers and employers are engaged in young people's career development in schools reflects the unique characteristics of education systems, making identification of best practice difficult.</p>		State and Territory Governments do and should continue to take responsibility for ensuring that schools incorporate strategies to engage parents/carers and employers in young people's career development.
	<p>Australian examples</p> <p>School Business Community Partnership Brokers</p>	<p>Partnership Brokers create new partnerships and enhance existing partnerships between and among four key stakeholder groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Education and training providers - Business and industry - Parents and families - Community group 	

Effective Practice Criterion	Examples of effective practice	Comment	Responsibility
	<p>State/Territory examples</p> <p>All jurisdictions recognise the value of such engagement and apply different engagement strategies.</p>		
<p>13. Exemplary career development programs are outcomes-focussed and foster the development of individuals' own career management competence and resilience.</p>	<p>International examples</p> <p>National Career Development Guidelines (NCDG; US)</p> <p>The Canadian Blueprint for Life/Work Design</p> <p>European framework currently under development (EU)</p> <p>Australian examples</p> <p>The Australian Blueprint for Career Development</p>	<p>While these career management frameworks are not programs in themselves, they specify the learning outcomes that are appropriate at different stages of an individual's career development journey.</p> <p>The Blueprint has been based on the NCDG and the Blueprint for Life/Work Design and also forms the underpinning framework for the design of outcomes-focussed programs.</p>	<p>Should remain a shared strategy of all levels of government, until service providers routinely design career development programs that are outcomes-focused and foster the development of career management competencies.</p>

Effective Practice Criterion	Examples of effective practice	Comment	Responsibility
	<p>State/Territory examples</p> <p>Education Queensland Career Education policy</p> <p>Victorian Curriculum framework, which has been based on the Blueprint</p> <p>Career and Transition Guidelines for all school sectors (WA)</p>	<p>Each of the State/Territory examples provided are underpinned by the Blueprint career management competencies and outline developmentally appropriate career learning from Kindergarten to Year 12.</p>	
<p>14. Career development programs in educational settings offer experiential learning linked to the labour market, so that young people are given opportunities to investigate and experience a range of learning and work options before making career decisions.</p>	<p>International examples</p> <p>Careers Wales (Edwards et al 2010; Watts 2009)</p> <p>Examples of the diverse ways experiential learning is delivered in educational settings can be found in Sultana 2004, 48.</p> <p>The ways in which experiential learning is delivered in educational settings reflects the distinctive characteristics of education systems and schools, and the age of the students, making identification of generic best practice difficult.</p>	<p>Careers Wales broker work experience on behalf of schools, though in the absence of a career service, external to schools and other education and training providers, this model is not considered to be transferable.</p>	<p>This responsibility is currently shared by the Australian Government, and State and Territory Education Authorities – public and private.</p>

Effective Practice Criterion	Examples of effective practice	Comment	Responsibility
	<p>Australian examples</p> <p>School Business Community Partnership Brokers</p>	<p>Although not directly involved in the provision of experiential learning linked to the labour market, Partnership Brokers facilitate the development of learning opportunities, through building relationships between businesses and education and training providers.</p>	
	<p>State/Territory examples</p> <p>SWL opportunities abound – but less formal, engaging exploratory work experience opportunities are reported to be declining in the wake of the growth in VET in Schools.</p> <p>In the ACT, there is a strong tradition of work experience in schools</p>		
<p>15. Services are underpinned by comprehensive educational, occupational and other relevant labour market information.</p>	<p>International examples</p> <p>USA, Canada, UK.</p>	<p>Governments assume responsibility for the provision of comprehensive educational, occupational and other labour market information in most developed countries.</p>	<p>The Australian Government should retain responsibility for the provision of nationally relevant career information, with States and Territories responsible for the provision of locally relevant career information.</p>
<p>Australian examples</p> <p>Myfuture Job Guide</p>	<p>Provide easily accessible, current and bias-free career information.</p>		

<i>Effective Practice Criterion</i>	Examples of effective practice	Comment	Responsibility
	<p>State/Territory examples</p> <p>Career Choices (SA)</p> <p>Career Centre Online (WA, currently under development)</p>	<p>Career Choices, found within the Workforce Information Service website, provides workforce and training information for 32 South Australian industries.</p> <p>Career Centre Online provides a range of career information, and assists users to navigate through career decision-making processes.</p>	

1.4 State and Territory Career Development Services

Consultations with key stakeholders revealed the following broad features of career development service provision throughout Australia:

- There is evidence of a growing ‘school to work’ orientation that is inclusive of various forms of career and transition activities in all three schooling sectors.
- State and territory-wide initiatives have been introduced to support young people’s career development and transitions, such as the School to Work Program in NSW, the introduction of a career development curriculum in Victoria, and Pathways Planning activities in most other States and Territories, alongside a range of typical information-based career activities that are predominantly determined at the local level.
- Community-based career development service networks have been established in WA, SA and QLD to cater for different client groups. They are funded through Training and Workforce Development budget allocations as state training authorities pay increasing attention to the importance of equipping individuals to make wise learning and work choices.
- There is growing awareness from community-based educators in the ACE Sector of the importance of career development activities being made available to an increasingly youthful cohort of ACE users.
- There is awareness of the importance of providing accessible and culturally appropriate services, particularly for disadvantaged learners, young Indigenous learners, people with disability, and young people with caring responsibilities. More intensive case-managed approaches are being adopted in some schools and workers with specialist expertise in working with these client groups are being engaged to support their career development.
- Higher education services in the tertiary sector continue to operate opt-in, multi-channel delivery service models for groups and individuals, and are increasingly working with teaching and learning staff to embed career management development into higher education courses in a variety of ways. There is widespread variety in career development service delivery models in TAFE Colleges throughout Australia, and ongoing reliance on one-on-one counselling.
- Publicly funded efforts are being made in all sectors to upgrade the qualifications held by teaching staff and career practitioners prior to the introduction of the *Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners*.
- There is some recognition that career-related learning in primary schools provides a strong foundation for later career education and development activities, but only isolated instances of giving this effect.
- Shared responsibility for career development is being encouraged through the formation of functional relationships with parents, industry groups, and employers in all sectors and in all states and territories.

1.5 Australian Government Initiatives

Consultation with stakeholders on the current suite of Australian Government initiatives disclosed the following broad themes:

- There is a strong Australia-wide dependence on and support for nationally funded career information products, such as *myfuture*, the *Job Guide*, and others.

- There is growing recognition of the importance of equipping people with career management competences— and uneven efforts to utilise the *Blueprint* - in most sectors. A desire was also evidenced in the schools sector to see the competencies of the *Blueprint* incorporated as a cross-curricula strand of the national curriculum.
- There is widespread support for the efforts to professionalise the career development workforce through the introduction of quality standards and the introduction of the scholarship program.
- There is widespread recognition of the important collaboration between CICA and the Government and support for its continuation.

Summary

In a broad sense, the three research strands affirmed the existence of a number of aspects of the Australian career development landscape which are consistent with current international practice concerning the characteristics of effective delivery mechanisms, and the delivered content of services. One notable exception is the existence of an easily accessible, multi-channel service delivery arm that is available to all citizens regardless of their age or their attachment to an educational or training establishment.

This is unsurprising given that the features found to be most lacking were those related to the characteristics of effective career development systems. Much of the infrastructure required at all levels of government, and within local level learning establishments, for an effective national career development system is still lacking. Most often, the leadership, direction and strategy, cross-portfolio protocols and accountability mechanisms that guarantee the level and quality of service provision are lacking or in their infancy.

In order to meet the proposed criteria for effective practice outlined in this report—as based on the international research—it will be necessary to put in place and/or strengthen national infrastructure so that career development services are delivered throughout the nation in a consistent way, and at a benchmarked level of quality and responsiveness to diversity.

Our vision for a national career development system in Australia, borrowed from Wales, is:

To create fully integrated online, telephone and face-to-face services designed to ensure that every individual, regardless of their circumstances, can develop and apply career management and employability skills that will sustain them throughout life (Edwards et al 2010).

On the basis of the findings detailed in this report, the following broad goals should be areas of priority for the national career development strategy:

1. Strengthening the capacity of governments and the career industry to provide strategic and inclusive leadership of a national career development system
2. Strengthening national policy/or introducing statutory requirements that create an appropriate entitlement to career development services
3. Strengthening accountability mechanisms [through National Partnership negotiations or through the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)] that require learning institutions to facilitate the career management skills of all learners
4. Establishing mechanisms to ensure compliance with agreed quality assurance frameworks
5. Investigating fully the feasibility of establishing a national mechanism for providing a career services network that provides a recognisable entry point, such as *myfuture*, and uses multiple delivery channel arrangements, including walk-in centres, face-to-face delivery, telephone services, online services, and learning experiences, and

6. Establishing data systems that improve the information base for public policy making, including gathering improved data on the financial and human resources devoted to career guidance, on client need and demand, on the characteristics of clients, on client satisfaction, and on the outcomes and cost-effectiveness of career guidance.

The report outlines relevant literature, maps the career development landscape and the views of stakeholders, which may assist in the achievement of these goals, as specific and practical options for a national career development strategy are formed in Element 3 of this project.

The Structure of the Report

Chapter 1 of this report provides the context for the research, the methodology, and definitions of career development terms used in the report.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the literature related to what's known about the positive effects of services that foster individual's career development; best practice career development models; the skills young people need to develop to enable them to manage their careers; meeting the needs of diverse client groups; and involving parents and others in the career development in young people. It also derives a set of effective practice criteria from the literature.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the key features of career development services in government, Catholic and independent schools as derived from the consultation. It also reviews the literature on career development services in tertiary education and provides an overview of services in Australian universities and TAFE colleges.

Chapter 4 provides advice on each of the Australian government funded initiatives that were specified in the requirements for this project. These include:

- The Australian Blueprint for Career Development
- The Careers and Transitions Services (CTS) Framework
- myfuture
- Job Guide
- Bullseye Posters and Books
- Yr 12 - What's next
- Career Information Flyers
- Resource for Career Practitioners
- Centrelink's Career Information Centres
- Parents Talking Career Choices
- Scholarships for Career Advisers
- Australian Career Services Judith Leeson Award
- National Career Development Week
- myfuture video competition
- The Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners, and
- CICA.

Chapter 5 considers the findings of each of these separate strands of activity against the effective practice criteria derived from the literature and discusses the implications of these findings for the creation of a national career development system.

Chapter 6 contains a reference list; and chapters 7 and 8 contain appendices that provide more detailed information on service provision throughout Australia, derived from the consultation.

2 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of Element 1 of the National Career Development Strategy research project. The project is a staged research project, which will provide the Australian Government with an evidence base and options for developing a national Strategy for career development for all young Australian people.

Element 1 of the NCDS Research Project comprises:

- A review of international and national career development literature
- An assessment of existing Australian Government and State/Territory government career development initiatives
- Advice on a number of specified Australian Government career resources, services and initiatives, and
- A set of generic criteria for effective practice in the provision of career development.

The combined elements of the NCDS research project are as follows:

Element 1: A literature review of national and international research in career development including information on best-practice career development and an analysis and evaluation of existing Australian Government and state and territory government career development initiatives

Element 2: Identification and analysis of the career development needs and wants of young people from the ages of 5-24, their parents, teachers and communities

Element 3: Options for a national approach/strategy for career development support for young people from the ages of 5-24, and

Element 4: A cost-benefit analysis of these options.

The objectives of the research project as a whole (Elements 1 – 4) are:

- To provide government with a lifelong learning strategy for supporting young people's career development
- To ensure a strategic approach to the development of a National Career Development Strategy (NCDS)
- To eliminate confusion and duplication of career development services in Australia
- To identify what career development activities the Australian Government and state and territory governments undertake, what works well and where there are opportunities for improvement or gaps
- To identify the most appropriate approach and intervention point in career development support for key cohort groups (identified in Element 2)
- To ensure equity of access for all young people to high quality national career information services, education, guidance, resources and standards
- To ensure that key influencers, such as parents, career advisers, teachers etc. have access to appropriate career resources and information that they need to support young people
- To improve the quality of career advice and guidance in schools, Vocational Education and Training, Higher Education sectors and outside of the school system
- To identify what role State and Territory Governments and the Australian Government could have in the career development agenda, and

- To ensure that Australian Government funding is directed towards the most cost-effective option/s for supporting the career development of young people.

2.1 Context

In support of the Australian Government's agenda on productivity and workforce participation, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has endorsed significant, long-term reforms across the areas of early childhood, schooling and skills and workforce development. COAG has set targets to drive reforms in these areas including:

- Achievement of a national Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate of 90% by 2015, and
- Halving the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 attainment or equivalent attainment rates by 2020.

To support the delivery of these reforms, the Australian Government is working with State and Territory Governments to implement a National Partnership (NP) Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions. The agreement aims to increase the educational engagement and attainment of young people and to improve their transition to post school education, training and employment.

The National Partnership Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions provides funding under the *Maximising Engagement, Attainment and Successful Transitions* (MEAST) project payments to States and Territories to assist with the implementation of strategies to address reforms in multiple learning pathways, mentoring, and importantly for this project, *career development*.

Under the agreement, the Australian Government will provide \$47 million from 2009-2014 for national career development initiatives administered by the Australian Government that require a national approach to implementation. The Australian Government will take into account the evidence gathered through this research project in determining its future funding priorities within a national career development strategy.

2.2 Methodology

Element 1 comprised 3 avenues of research activity:

- Consultation with a panel of nominated international experts to guide the focus of the literature review
- Literature review of national and international career development research, and
- Consultation with key national and state and territory career development representatives, which formed the basis of developing a national picture of career services in Australia.

An iterative methodology was used to combine these activity strands. For example, the literature review informed the development of the effective practice criteria, which were subsequently refined through the mapping of career development activities across States and Territories. In turn, consultation with the key career development representatives resulted in refinement of the effective practice criteria and the identification of examples of good practice. Further detail on each of the research strands is outlined below.

2.2.1 Stage 1: Project planning

An initial meeting with the project management team at DEEWR, and other consultants appointed to undertake Elements 2, 3, and 4 of the project clarified the scope and objectives of this project. Following the development of a detailed project management plan, the research activities commenced.

2.2.2 Stage 2: Consultation with the expert panel

The input of four leading academic and public policy experts also informed our work during this stage of the project:

Professor Tony Watts

Professor Watts is a self-employed international policy consultant on career guidance and career development, based in Cambridge, England. He is a Founding Fellow and Life President of the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling (NICEC; sponsored by the Careers Research and Advisory Centre in Cambridge); Visiting Professor of Career Development at the University of Derby; and Visiting Professor at Canterbury Christ Church University.

Dr. Mary McMahon

Dr. McMahon teaches career development theory, guidance and counselling, and supervision at the University of Queensland. She is particularly interested in the career development of children and adolescents and how career programs may support young people.

Professor Jenny Brimrose

Professor Brimrose is a Professorial Fellow at the Institute for Employment Research, at the University of Warwick in the UK. She is a Fellow of the Institute for Career Guidance, with a continuing research interest in supporting the use of ICT in practice.

Lynne Bezanson

Lynne is the Executive Director of the Canadian Career Development Foundation, an acknowledged global leader in the Career Development field. With over 30 years of experience, she is a dynamic counsellor educator, author, researcher, and adult trainer.

The expert panellists were engaged to work with us in the following ways:

- A teleconference of up to two hours was conducted, seeking each expert's perspective on a number of key areas and on specific research questions as per the brief, and of relevance to that person's particular individual expertise, and
- Following the teleconference, each expert panellist prepared a "reference" document that outlined key papers, resources, and sources of information referred to during the interview, and which were then included, where appropriate, in the literature review.

Interviews with the expert panel members were held in mid-late December 2010 and all members of the panel provided us with substantial reference lists to guide our research. This process provided additional certainty that no key evidence would be missed.

Additionally, the diversity of opinion offered by the panellists, in terms of their unique research areas and the spread of countries represented (UK, Canada and Australia) ensured a range of views were represented.

The findings of each interview were summarised, the references obtained and reviewed, and integrated into the literature review. Please note that the contents of the expert interviews themselves were not intended for inclusion in the final report, although where panellists made a comment that related to the literature under review, we have included these as personal communications.

2.2.3 Stage 3: Literature review

Working closely with the project manager at DEEWR, with our nominated expert team, and drawing on our own knowledge of the research base, we identified and reviewed both national and international literature to:

- a) Identify the known evidence base for the effectiveness of career development initiatives known to be in use in Australia and internationally
- b) Identify the evidence base for the impacts, benefits or effectiveness of career development practices on youth transitions, especially within the context of motivating young people to maintain their engagement with learning
- c) Identify the skills, information and experience that young people need to manage their careers and transitions, and
- d) Identify the needs of specified target cohort groups, including: Indigenous young people; culturally and linguistically diverse young people; students in their primary years; young people in regional or remote areas; young people who are not attached to schools; and parents and carers.

The review also encompassed the ‘grey literature’—government documents, briefings, scoping and discussion papers and the NPYAT implementation plans—that contributed to:

- a) the map of career development policy and service provision across all State/Territory jurisdictions in Australia;
- b) identification of earlier reviews or evaluations of currently funded national career information resources and activities.

2.2.4 Consultation with key stakeholders

Members of the National Career Development Working Group were invited to nominate representatives from their State/Territory or jurisdiction who would be able to provide information on the key features of career development services within their area of responsibility. Nominees were contacted, telephone interviews scheduled, and a semi-structured interview schedule developed to guide a 1 – 1.5 hour long discussion with each nominated representative.

The semi-structured interview schedule was developed to use with stakeholders to focus on the three key tasks of Element 1 of the overall project:

- a) Identification of best practice principles
- b) Description of the key features of each jurisdiction’s career systems and programs, and
- c) Assessment of the utility of the nominated national career resources, services and initiatives.

A similar instrument was developed for DEEWR staff with responsibility for the nominated national career resources, services and initiatives.

In total 63 telephone interviews were conducted with stakeholders and policy makers in order to gain their insight and input in relation to the requirements of Element 1. Several also responded in writing (3) using a brief written questionnaire, aligned to the telephone interview questions, while a further three responded in writing only. In total we spoke with or received information from 65 stakeholders.

Table 1 shows the spread of stakeholders contacted during the consultation phase of the project. Given that young people, parents and career development practitioners were targeted for extensive consultation in Element 2 of this project, they were not included in this consultation.

Table 1 Key Stakeholders Contact During Stage 3

Jurisdiction/Sector	Public Schools	Catholic Education	Independent Schools	TAFE/VET	ACE
WA	1 (1)*	2	1	1	1
NT	1	1	(1)	1	1 (1)*

<i>Jurisdiction/Sector</i>	Public Schools	Catholic Education	Independent Schools	TAFE/VET	ACE
SA	2	1	2	1	2 (1)*
NSW	2	4	(1)	13**	1
VIC	1	1	1	3	1
QLD	1	1	1	1(1)	1
TAS	1	1	(1)	(1)	1
ACT	2	(1)	(1)	(1)	1
TOTAL (School representatives Interviewed)	11	11	5	20	9

Note: *numbers in parentheses are number contacted where we were unable to secure an interview;
 **several TAFE institute representatives participated in a teleconference.

In addition to the above education sectors, representatives from peak career industry bodies were interviewed along with representatives from universities and DEEWR contract managers of the national career development initiatives included in our brief.

Table 2 Key Representatives from DEEWR and Peak Career Industry Bodies

Sector	Number interviewed
<i>Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA)</i>	2
<i>Career Development Association of Australia (CDAA)</i>	1
<i>National Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (NAGCAS)</i>	1
<i>DEEWR representatives with responsibility for government-funded initiatives</i>	5
<i>Universities</i>	2
Total	9

2.2.5 Synthesis, analysis and reporting

Following the compilation, review and assessment of all material gathered through these interviews, we then:

- Described the pertinent features of career development service provision in all jurisdictions
- Provided illustrative examples of good practice nominated by stakeholders and identified in the literature. Early in the project the notion of 'best practice' was abandoned for language that more closely reflected that used in the career development literature, and so the criteria were renamed as representing *effective* rather than 'best' practice. Where possible case studies/illustrations of good practice have been included, and

- Finalised our assessment of the utility of current Australian-Government funded career resources, services and initiatives.

2.3 Definitions

Career development: as defined in the brief, is the development by an individual of the skills that will support the lifelong process of managing learning and work activities in order to live a productive and fulfilling life. Career education programs and career guidance services both contribute to a person's career development.

Career education: the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes through a planned program of learning experiences that will assist students to make informed decisions about their study and/or work options and enable effective participation in working life (MCEETYA 1998).

Career guidance: is an inclusive term that has been used to describe a range of interventions—including career education and counselling—that help people to move from a general understanding of life and work to a specific understanding of the realistic learning and work options that are open to them. Career guidance is often thought to incorporate career information, career education and career counselling (Miles Morgan 2003¹).

Where appropriate, we have distinguished between career education programs and career guidance services. Career education activities are typically facilitated by teachers, trainers and transition officers and are offered to large learning groups. Career guidance services are personalised services, provided by qualified career development practitioners to individuals and/or small groups needing the support, confidence and tools to make decisions about their particular career circumstances.

Career management competencies: The eleven career management competencies identified in the *Australian Blueprint for Career Development* represent the broad learning goals of career development that have been identified and endorsed by career practitioners and their professional associations in the USA and modified for use in Canada and Australia. They denote the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are required to successfully manage life, learning and work from cradle to grave.

Although the career management competencies are listed sequentially in the *Blueprint*, learning and experience do not proceed in such a linear manner. Career development is an ongoing lifetime process of interaction between the individual and the environment that surrounds them. These interactions will shape people's learning requirements and their levels of mastery of the career competencies in different ways and at different times in their lives (MCEECDYA 2010, 79).

Employability: Employability skills are those "skills required not only to gain employment, but also to progress within an enterprise so as to achieve one's potential and contribute successfully to enterprise strategic directions" (ACCI and BCA 2002). Employability skills are generic skills and attributes that can be transferred from one situation to another (MCEECDYA 2010, 79).

Human capital: Human capital is productive wealth embodied in labour, skills and knowledge (OECD Glossary of Statistical Terms, online <http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=1264> accessed 17th January 2010).

Labour market information: Labour market information is information related to conditions in, or the operation of, the labour market, including wages, job openings, working conditions, and current and future skill, occupation and industry requirements. It is an increasingly important element of career information (MCEECDYA 2010, 80).

¹Blueprint draft prototype

Social Capital: Social capital is defined as the norms and social relations embedded in the social structures of societies that enable people to co-ordinate action to achieve desired goals (Grootaert, Working Paper No. 3, World Bank, 1998).

3 THE LITERATURE REVIEW

This section details the findings of the literature review of the Australian and international evidence base on the impacts and benefits of career development on youth attainment and transitions and the skills young people aged 5 – 24 years need to successfully manage their careers. In addition, it provides examples of career development service delivery models highlighted in the literature as representing effective practice. We have developed criteria for effective career development service delivery based on this information.

We have also explored research that considers the issue of the responsiveness of services to a diverse range of user groups, for instance, Indigenous young people, young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, primary school aged students, young people living in regional or remote areas, disengaged young people and parents and carers. The purpose of this research is to underpin the development of a national career development strategy that can effectively meet the career development and transition needs of all young Australians.

This section brings together what is known about the efficacy of career development interventions and the benefits/outcomes that accrue to individuals and the broader community.

3.1 The Challenge to Provide Evidence

In international symposia on career development and public policy held in 1999, 2001, and 2003, a common theme expressed by policy makers was that “they were amenable to consider providing funds for career development services, but, in the absence of evidence attesting to the efficacy of such services, it was difficult for them to justify spending the money” (Baudouin et al 2007).

This is a legitimate concern for the career industry. However, the substantial funding required for the longitudinal research that will create such an evidence base remains difficult to secure (Bezanson 2010)². In particular, there is little longitudinal research that enables researchers or policy makers to understand the causal relationships that exist between particular inputs, processes, and outcomes.

This lack of a quality evidence base on the longer-term outcomes of career development interventions has left policy makers in the rather tenuous position of making decisions about the delivery models and funding of career development services and career information products, without unequivocal evidence of the real benefits to individuals and the broader community.

After the 2005 international symposium on career development and public policy, a group of researchers decided to explore the ways in which the challenge of an inadequate evidence base could be addressed. As a consequence, the international evidence base on the impacts and benefits of career development is currently in the process of being consolidated, with the development of web-based research clearing houses in:

- Canada (see the Canadian Research Working Group on Evidence-Based Practice in Career Development web site <http://ccdf.ca/crwg/>)
- The UK (see the growing body of evidence of the impact of career development in educational outcomes at the CfBT Education Trust *educational evidence portal* at <http://www.eep.ac.uk/dnn2/ResourceArea/Careersworkexperienceemployment/tabid/170/Default.aspx>)
- Europe, with the formation of the European Lifelong Guidance and Policy Network (see <http://ktl.jyu.fi/ktl/elgpn>), and

²Information provided during expert consultation process.

- The International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (<http://www.iccdpp.org/>).

At the 2009 International Symposium held in New Zealand, an agreement was made between all participating countries to strengthen the evidence base for career development services and practices, with Canada agreeing to lead this work (Fifth International Symposium for Career Development and Public Policy, Communiqué, 2009, available at:

<http://www.iccdpp.org/Portals/1/IS%202009%20Communique.pdf>)

Australia's country paper also acknowledged that "further research (would) be needed to inform the development of government policy that is evidence based and outcomes focused" (Australia's Country Report prepared for the *Fifth International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy* held in Wellington, New Zealand, from November 14 to 17, 2009 15, available online:

<http://www.iccdpp.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=QBJLJR10%2fQU%3d&tabid=249&mid=816> accessed December 2010).

In Australia, the Career Industry of Council of Australia (CICA) was, at the time of writing, in the process of establishing Career Development Research Australia (CDRA) –a virtual research centre that will facilitate several streams of research and the dissemination of findings. In 2007, CICA also commissioned a report (*The Public Benefits of Australian Career Development Services: Towards a National Research Strategy*, by Dr Richard Sweet, Feb 2007,

http://www.cica.org.au/uploads/Downloadable%20Resources/Research/PublicBenefitsofCareerDevelopmentServices_ResearchStrategy_Feb2007.pdf) which considered options for establishing a research centre.

In 2010, CICA assembled Australia's leading researchers on career development theory and practice and a decision was made to establish a centre. Funding has been allocated by CICA to provide research support and researchers have agreed to consider themes and topics. Researchers also agreed to provide existing research to CICA for housing on a research portal within the CICA website. This first collection of papers will be completed early in 2011.

3.2 Measuring Effectiveness

The issue of whose perspective has most weight when assessing the effectiveness of career development interventions and their outcomes has long been a matter of concern for career development practitioners, as it is for many providers of human services funded by governments. As Hughes and Gratton (2009) argue, paraphrasing Savickas:

Policy makers look at what workers contribute to the economy, whereas practitioners look at what workers receive from employment (6).

The issue for research and data collection is that the kinds of measurable indicators often given most weight by policy makers and funders are difficult to connect directly with a particular career intervention, given the considerable lag time between the intervention and the longer term outcome to which it contributes. This difficulty is compounded by the fact that career development learning occurs within the context of an individual's ongoing human development and growth, and within the context of changing economies and labour markets. None of these variables is static. Additionally:

- Each individual brings with them a unique set of experiences and understandings, personal characteristics and a domestic situation that impacts their career development, and
- The nature of services received varies from one-off, short-term interventions to longer-term learning programs. Some career education programs may be designed to develop career management skills, while others may focus on the provision of advice or guidance at particular decision-making points.

Immediate outcomes of career development interventions, therefore, depend on the focus of the program and the needs of the individual, which in turn will dictate the types of intermediate and longer-term outcomes that can reasonably be expected.

As a result of this complexity, several researchers argue there is considerably more evidence for the shorter-term benefits and impacts of career interventions, rather than the longer-term outcomes that are further removed from the point of intervention. These are, of course, less amenable to systematic data collection, both for reasons of access to information and establishment of causality (Access Economics, 2006; CICA, 2007a; Hughes, et al, 2002; Killeen, Sammons and Watts, 1999; OECD, 2004a).

These researchers also argue that these short-term effects are “important ‘pre-cursors’” to the economic benefits of career development programs and services (Hughes et al, 2002). These include, for example:

- *Positive motivational and attitudinal changes*, including motivation to engage in learning, which contributes to increased educational attainment and attainment of desired work roles, and
- *Learning outcomes* such as acquiring the skills, knowledge and attitudes to make informed and rational decisions, and the confidence and skills required to implement those decisions.

Such “precursors” can be powerful determinants of positive career behaviours such as taking up education and training opportunities and completing courses successfully, which in turn can lead to:

- Increased educational attainment levels
- Re-entering the labour market, and
- Increased wages (See Sikora and Saha 2011 for Australian evidence and the work of the Canadian Social Research and Demonstration Corporation 2009).

The longer-term, flow-on effects for the economy of these individual actions, therefore, would include increased productivity, reduction of skills gaps and shortages, lower unemployment rates, and reduced welfare payments.

In an attempt to deal with some of the complexities involved in measuring outcomes, the *Prove it Works* Working Group, formed at the 2009 International Symposium, is currently working with the Canadian research team to identify a number of key measures that will provide the evidence that policy makers and funders need to make well considered and accountable decisions.

In its earliest stages, there is agreement to date that it would be useful to assess several possible measures pertaining to:

- personal attributes (e.g., self-efficacy, optimism, self-sufficiency);
- progress milestones (e.g., job readiness, educational attainment, credential acquisition); and
- impacts (e.g., employment status, employment equivalence) (Canada Update 2011-02-04, Prove It Works Working Group, available online: <http://www.iccdpp.org/Symposia/IS2009NewZealand/tabid/249/forumid/71/threadid/85/scope/posts/Default.aspx>).

While the report on these proposed measures has not yet been finalised, they could potentially be useful in the Australian context. In particular, a measure of impact that is relevant to both funders/policy makers and to practitioners is the relatively new concept of *employment equivalence*. This concept can be applied to cases where clients of career development services decide to undergo further education or training, and can therefore be deemed as undertaking a task with an *employment equivalency* measure.

Since ABS data clearly indicates that people of working age are more likely to be participating in the labour force, if they have attained Year 12 or an equivalent qualification and above (ABS Australian

Social Trends, Data Cube - Education and Training, 30th June 2010 cat. No. 4102.0), the decision to participate in education and training—as an outcome of a career development intervention—constitutes a positive anticipatory indicator for employment outcomes. By incorporating this measure into the measurement of service outcomes, it would be possible to calculate the statistical probability of a financial return on the investment in career development services.

3.3 The Existing Evidence Base

Hughes et al (2002) and Hughes and Gration (2009) describe the expected outcomes from career development interventions, including:

- Immediate outcomes for clients, including learning, motivation and attitude changes
- Intermediate outcomes for individuals, that is behavioural changes such as enhanced decision-making skills and job search skills
- Longer term outcomes for the individual include accessing further education and training and employment, and
- Longer term outcomes for the economy, including increased productivity, increased GDP growth, reduced skills gaps and shortages and lower unemployment.

Hughes, Bosley, Bowes and Bysshe (2002) outlined three types of evidence for the judging the extent to which these outcomes have been achieved:

Level 1 Studies	Studies based on client feedback which Hughes et al describe as being comprised of usefulness ratings, attributed effects or general satisfaction with the service provided, gathered from clients and/or employers or other beneficiaries of the service. Evidence can be gathered through qualitative in-depth interviews or focus groups or it can be quantitative evidence from large sample follow-up surveys.
Level 2 Studies	Outcome measurement studies with no or weak counterfactuals and/or control groups. Methodologies lack a comparison to a situation where no intervention has occurred, whether statistically, or through control group designs. Studies tend to be quantitative and tend to measure learning outcomes such as attitudes, knowledge and skills, often through self-report but also using objective tests with known reliability and validity. A broad range of outcome measures might be used in such studies—including job search behaviour, securing employment, job satisfaction, entry to continuing education and training and course completion. This makes it difficult to compare these studies on a like-for-like basis.
Level 3 Studies	Controlled studies where evidence is derived from more complex experimental designs that can include control groups (ideally randomly assigned to a group that does not have access to the same level of services or no services at all). Meta-analyses can also be carried out that compare several of these types of studies.

According to Hughes et al (2002) there are many Level 1 studies that provide evidence (based on client feedback) of the immediate impacts of career development experienced by individual clients. These impacts include learning new skills, including career management skills, becoming motivated to learn and positive changes in attitude towards learning and working.

Similarly, in relation to intermediate and longer-term outcomes for individuals and the longer-term outcomes of career development services for the economy, there are many Level 1 studies that

provide evidence of these less directly attributable outcomes that are based on the feedback of clients, and/or other service users.

However, there is little research evidence in the form of more rigorous studies, particularly controlled studies (Level 3 studies), regarding the longer-term outcomes of career development interventions for individuals or the economy, as few controlled studies have been carried out that have focused on these areas of investigation.

The evidence base has not changed extensively over the last ten years, as Hughes and Gration recently (2009) argued:

In general, the evidence on the benefits of career guidance is limited but positive. It indicates that evidence for its positive impact upon short-term learning, motivational and attitudinal outcomes can be treated with a high degree of confidence, and in the case of its impact upon actual behaviour with moderate confidence. However evidence of its impact upon long-term individual outcomes, and hence upon economic outcomes, is very limited. If more definitive long-term evidence is required by policy makers, the studies to establish such evidence need to be mounted. In particular, if longitudinal studies could explore the relationship between immediate learning outcomes and longer-term outcomes, and if positive connections between them were to be established, the learning outcomes could thereafter be regarded not only as being of value in their own right but also as proxies for longer-term outcome (36).

Nevertheless, there are some key facts about the role of career development in people's lives that have been established in the existing literature as Hughes and Gration (2009), with the assistance of Savickas, point out and link with existing research evidence.³

In terms of short to medium term outcomes, for individuals at least, career development services are credited throughout the literature with assisting in the achievement of the following key outcomes:

- Increased educational attainment/engagement
- Increased self-awareness and self-confidence
- Increased goal/future orientation
- Increased awareness of the labour market
- Strengthened pathways for those at risk of disengagement, and
- Improved employment outcomes/job fit/employability.

The following section elaborates on these key outcomes in relation to the experiences of young people.

³See Hughes and Gration (2009b) for more information and the body of evidence.

Summary

- Concrete and empirical research into knowledge of outcomes of career development services is still very much in its infancy.
- Much of the research evidence is based on studies that rely on feedback from clients/employers or other beneficiaries of services, while there is a dearth of evidence based on controlled, longitudinal studies.
- There is still little evidence of the longer-term impacts of career development services for individuals or the economy, particularly in the Australian context.
- There is a considerable body of evidence concerning the capacity of career development services to provide immediate and intermediate learning outcomes for young people that serve as precursors or indicators of longer term benefits for individuals and the economy.

3.4 The Positive Effects of Career Development Interventions

A considerable body of research evidence exists for the positive impacts that good quality career development services can have upon the learning and work outcomes of young people. The following section provides a review of the positive impacts career development services can have on young people, which include:

- Increased educational engagement and attainment
- Increased self-awareness and self-confidence
- Increased goal/future awareness and orientation
- Increased awareness of the labour market
- Strengthened pathways for those young people at risk of disengaging from education, training or work, and
- Enhanced employment outcomes.

3.4.1 Increased educational attainment and engagement

The research literature mounts a case for the beneficial impact of career development services upon engagement in learning, and on levels of educational attainment. For instance, the interim findings of a current (ongoing) Canadian evaluation of two career education interventions suggest that the interventions have so far had success in:

- Increasing the proportion of participants who aspire to pursue a post-secondary credential
- Influencing participants' post-secondary choices, and
- Improving participants' knowledge of post-secondary education costs and sources of financing (Social Research and Demonstration Corporation 2009, 2).

A 1999 study by Killeen, Sammons and Watts on the relationship between careers work and school effectiveness argues strongly that career development learning supplies a sense of purpose and goal-directedness in learning which in turn leads to higher levels of engagement, achievement and attainment. The researchers conclude that those “with clear goals outperform those without clear goals in terms of educational attainment” (37-38).

Similarly, the 2002 study by Hughes, Bosley, Bowes and Bysshe cites at length evidence for guidance increasing learning participation and engagement: “research suggested that careers education and guidance had a positive impact on student motivation that in turn, leads to academic performance. Guidance is reported to be associated with, or perceived to be associated with, positive change in individuals set within a range of contexts” (10).

For instance, Bowlby and McMullen found—using Canadian longitudinal data—that “those who took part in career planning courses at school were less likely to drop out of high school. It can be shown to have a small but positive effect upon academic achievement and to increase the probability of successful transitions between key points in the education system” (cited in Sweet et al 2009, 14).

In addition, Bimrose, Barnes and Hughes' (2008) longitudinal study over the period 2003 to 2008 in the UK used a qualitative, longitudinal case study approach to investigate the nature of effective guidance for adults. As over 59% of the participants in the final sample were aged between 15 – 29 years, the findings have some relevance for this report.

In evaluating the efficacy of guidance, ‘effectiveness’ was defined primarily as what was found ‘useful’ to recipients of services. The ‘usefulness’ of guidance was consistently described as: providing access to specialist information; providing insights, focus, and clarification; motivating; increasing self-confidence and self-awareness; and/or structuring opportunities for reflection and discussion.

At the end of the study period the following shifts were reported:

- An increase in qualification levels of clients over the period of the study, irrespective of the organisational contexts in which the initial case study interview took place, and
- The number of clients participating in training and/or education while in full-time employment had increased over the five-year period.

Moreover, in a recent U.S. survey:

...researchers found that high schools and middle schools with more fully implemented comprehensive developmental guidance (CDG) programs (that is, more closely aligned to the [American School Counselor Association] ASCA National Model⁴) had students who reported earning higher grades, maintaining better relationships with teachers, feeling safer and more satisfied in school, and having more positive outlooks regarding future and career opportunities (Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski 2001; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun 1997, cited in Martin, Carey, and DeCoster 2009).

This confirms the findings of an earlier (Sink and Stroh 2003) study of 150 diverse US elementary schools, which found that students performed better academically in schools with comprehensive developmental guidance (CDG) programs. This study also found that “over a 3-year period, students showed better academic performance in schools with CDG programs, even if the programs were not fully implemented” (cited in Martin, Carey, and DeCoster 2009).

A UK Review of Research (1988-2004) into the impact of career development services during key transitions into post-16 opportunities also found that “positive pupil outcomes were most evident in schools where career education was effectively integrated with guidance and into the wider curriculum, and where CEG (career education and guidance) tended to have a higher profile” (Smith, Lilley, Marris, and Krechowicka 2005, 9).

Indeed, this meta-analysis implied a positive association between the time dedicated to career activities and positive learning achievement and transition outcomes for students: “Overall, the studies imply that more time allowed for career education and guidance would have a more positive impact for young people.” Smith et al (2005) identified best practice as being in schools which had a timetabled allocation of at least 50 minutes a week for the career education and guidance program for each of years 9, 10 and 11 (5-6).

The current Canadian research also indicates that specific career development interventions (enhanced and specific career planning and information in particular) can change the beliefs and perceptions young people hold about learning. The *Futures to Discover* pilot project, a 7-year longitudinal study currently in its final year in Canada, was designed to measure the effectiveness of two programs aimed at assisting young people to overcome perceived and real barriers to post-secondary education (Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 2009). The project involved 51 high schools and 5, 429 students, and included control and experimental groups. It found that the main barriers to educational attainment these young people faced were lack of career clarity and lack of accurate information about post compulsory education options, and lack of financial resources.

One of the interventions was designed to assist young people to develop enhanced career plans based on accurate information about their options and their associated costs, while the second

⁴ The ASCA National Standards for Students specify the academic, career and personal/social development competencies required to experience successful transitions into further education, training and/or work (ASCA, 2004). These standards were adapted for schools from the US National Career Development Guidelines, the framework on which the *Australian Blueprint for Career Development* is based.

established a learning account which provided funding to young people who lacked the financial means to enter post-secondary education. The preliminary findings of this project were that:

- For some student groups perceptions of financial barriers were reduced, indicating a shift in their understanding of what was possible through their own efforts and through researching available financial supports
- Student aspirations changed in positive ways after participating in the career development program, and
- Students who were the first generation to enter post-secondary education in their families also increased the amount of homework they performed, suggesting the career development intervention had increased students' disposition towards effort, performance and personally valued educational outcomes (Social Research and Demonstration Corporation 2009).

Moreover, other UK research has identified a number of significant benefits from offering *integrated packages* of career development support (which includes advice, training, and job search support) to school students. These benefits include “higher levels of participant satisfaction; lower incidence of early leaving; and greater success in terms of both labour market outcomes and qualifications” (Allen, Hansbro, and Mooney 1999, cited in Hughes et al 2002, 4.2).

That there exists a positive association between access to effective career development services and enhanced educational engagement and attainment is a strong recurring finding across the research literature, and clearly points to the important role that career development services can play in keeping young people engaged in learning.

3.4.2 Increased self-awareness and confidence

Another consistently reported positive association is the capacity of effective and integrated career services to increase the self-awareness and confidence of young people to manage their transitions into the future in a positive and proactive manner.

In a survey of 151 participants in career services in two provinces in Canada, an assessment of the impacts of educating people in how to understand and use labour market information found strong reported evidence of increased self-confidence in managing their career process. This included:

- Greater confidence in their ability to manage career transitions, and
- Greater confidence to research career, employment and training options that are available (Bezanson et al 2010, 26).

The developmental approach to the provision of career development services is also positively associated with increases in student confidence and effective decision-making, whereas the absence of such an approach is associated with reduced confidence and effectiveness in decision-making, as a 2004 study found in Australia:

The approach to career advising in schools was identified as being a significant factor in the effectiveness of career planning with students. Two approaches to career advising were identifiable: a student-centred and an information-centred approach. Students and parents acknowledged the student-centred approach as being formative, empowering and highly valued. Students from schools that had adopted an information-centred approach to career advising often expressed confusion and uncertainty about their career planning and decision-making (Alloway et al 2004, 108).

Career advisers that took a student-centred approach worked proactively with students, while the information-centred approach taken by others focused on information dissemination, without any mediation (Alloway, 2004). Given the confusing array of information and options available in ever changing education and training institutions and the labour market, it is hardly surprising that some

explicit instruction in how to navigate the information maze—and how to connect one’s abilities and aptitudes to available pathways—results in increased confidence, self-esteem and effectiveness in making career decisions.

Similarly, Hughes and Gratton observe in their review of UK evidence relating to the impact of career-related interventions: “in-depth support is positively associated with [. . .] confidence in gaining a desired job; and increases in confidence over time” (2009b, 38). There is an extensive body of knowledge and research demonstrating a clear associative relationship between the delivery of quality careers guidance and information and reported increases in self-awareness, self-esteem, motivation and confidence on the part of users (Barham, Hughes and Morgan 2000; Bimrose, Barnes and Brown 2005; CICA 2007a; Hasluck 2000; Herr 2003; James 2001; Maguire and Killeen 2003; McMahon 2004; Morris et al 1999; Winterbotham et al 2001).

3.4.3 Increased goal/future orientation

As implied in earlier sections of this chapter, the literature demonstrates a positive connection between the provision of comprehensive career development services and an increased or enhanced future orientation of users, in the sense of being an active architect in the building of one’s future.

Reinforcing the importance of a holistic, integrated and developmental approach to career development, a report into career education in New Zealand schools argues:

career education is not just about providing information about options and encouraging participation in tertiary learning or the workforce; it is about fostering individual progression and development, and crucially encouraging participation as learner-worker and engaging students with the “production” of their careers (Vaughan and Gardiner 2007, xi).

Moreover, the interim findings of a Canadian pilot project testing the effectiveness of two career interventions involving over 5,000 students at 51 high schools demonstrate the intervention has been successful in increasing participants’ orientation toward the future, in particular for students from low income backgrounds whose parents possessed low levels of educational attainment, and those students who were the first generation in their immediate family to enter post-secondary education (Social Research and Demonstration Corporation 2009).

This demonstrated capacity for career development services to redress the developmental perspective of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds is significant, as confirmed by Mary McMahon (personal communication, December 2010) who also suggests future time perspective is a key concept to consider when delivering career development services to disadvantaged young people, as their perception of time tends to be relatively short term.

Phan (2009) supports this argument with research that links future time perspective with particular markers of social and cultural identity, including class, ethnicity and family background. Phan argues that future orientation—or a lack of it—is embedded in the values of one’s cultural context, and provides the “strong motivational force” for people to engage in activities that are perceived to provide positive outcomes in the future.

The available evidence that indicates effective career development services can supply or enhance young people’s future orientation further underscores its capacity to build the learning engagement and capacity of young people. For instance, Phan notes orientation toward the future as a key factor underpinning students’ motivation to work at achieving academic success (Phan 2009). Moreover, Horstmanshof and Zimitat (2006) found that for the first year university students in their study, a future orientation was a significant predictor of student engagement in both traditional and mature-age groups of participants.

A review of career guidance services in Wales also found that after receiving guidance services, 82% of service users were confident about their future plans, compared to 38% before the guidance intervention (Reed, Mahony and Gratton 2005).

That career learning interventions have the capacity to increase and enhance the goals and future orientation of young people is without doubt one of its key aims and demonstrable benefits. Given that the task of managing one's career requires both careful forward planning as well as flexibility and adaptability, a sophisticated awareness of time and a capacity to work productively with change would appear to be a key disposition in effectively managing the contemporary career process.

The dynamic nature of contemporary careers means that individuals need to be prepared effectively for a career management process that will need to be maintained throughout their lives. Effective career services therefore need to "help young people to make career decisions not just now, but also in the future, and thereby to construct their careers. Moreover, they need to be helped to understand that they will continue to develop their career management skills throughout their lives" (Watts 2010, 3).

3.4.3.1 Increased awareness of the labour market

Another key outcome cited at length throughout the literature is the capacity for quality career learning programs to raise the labour market awareness of young people, linking current educational experiences with possible futures in the labour market for young people. There is broad consensus throughout the literature that exposure to experientially-based career learning activities with direct application to the labour market is an essential feature of effective career programs for young people. The OECD (2004a) key principles - "(g) opportunities to investigate and experience learning and work options before choosing them" (26), and the recent review of international evidence by Sweet and others that advocates that effective programs should "offer experiential learning linked to the labour market" (Sweet et al 2009, 15) supports this view. As the OECD review argues, career guidance services:

...help them [people] to understand the labour market and education systems, and to relate this to what they know about themselves. Comprehensive career guidance tries to teach people to plan and make decisions about work and learning. Career guidance makes information about the labour market and about educational opportunities more accessible by organising it, systematising it, and making it available when and where people need it (OECD 2004a, 19).

Exposure to labour market experiences and information, when delivered in an accessible and relevant way, has the capacity to powerfully "affect the socialisation and development of adolescents" (Hughes and Gratton 2009, 18). Information about the labour market and workplaces delivered in schools is shown throughout the literature to have the function of being able "to connect work to school in meaningful ways, thereby helping students to view work as a complement to school, not a separate domain" (Hughes and Gratton 2009, 36).

It is important, however, to emphasise the pedagogical and developmental value of participating in such activities, which are not just about identifying a particular career path, but are also centrally concerned with "enabling students to experience the realities and complexities of the workplace, thus building employability skills" (Beddie et al 2008, 3).

The capacity of schools to create links to the labour market and provide young people with experientially based activities within real workplaces - as part of a broader career development program - has a clear and obvious impact on raising young people's labour market awareness, and increasing their familiarity with the nature of the workplace.

A 2005 UK systematic review of career-related interventions for higher education concluded: "the experience of work in some form strongly influences early career learning/development, progress

towards entry into the labour market and acquisition and development of a vocational identity” (Bimrose, Barnes and Brown 2005, 55).

The five-year longitudinal study conducted by Bimrose, Barnes and Hughes (2008) indicates increased understanding of the labour market as a key benefit of participation in career development services:

The development of career management competencies has been an integral part of clients’ learning and development over the last five years....Examples given by clients include how they had developed their career competencies linked to: researching training and employment opportunities (38%, n=11); understanding of the labour market and how it operates (66%, n=19); and knowledge of employer requirements (41%, n=12) (Bimrose, Barnes and Hughes 2008, 76).

On the whole, the literature strongly argues the case that career education and guidance has a positive effect upon raising the labour market awareness of young people and this is critical to ensuring their ability to make informed decisions about education and training pathways as well as keeping them engaged in purposeful learning.

3.4.4 Strengthening pathways for those at risk of disengaging from learning

Career services are often credited with a capacity to reduce levels of disengagement and dissociation from learning and productive activity. These services can raise the capacity of young people at risk of disengaging to envision possible futures for themselves by raising awareness of options, and providing strategies for overcoming the barriers of disadvantage. As Sweet and Watts argue: “Well organised career services can be a significant way to overcome the lack of social capital among disadvantaged groups: for example by incorporating mentoring, work experience and role models and information and personal guidance” (Sweet et al 2009, 4).

When delivered in a way that is relevant to the social context and career values of disadvantaged groups, and which recognises and incorporates the positive value of cultural differences and value systems, career development services are able to address barriers to engagement by disentangling the “values clutter” that compromises motivation and decision-making for many disengaged and disadvantaged young people (Poehnell, 2007).

The OECD review of career guidance and public policy (2004a) also suggests that career development services can assist members of disadvantaged groups to access education and labour market information, and provide support in navigating increasingly complex learning systems.

Sikora and Saha’s (2010) recent work with high achieving young people (that is students in the top 50% of academic achievement) provides evidence that good career planning, and high expectations for future work roles, can improve the social mobility of young people from low socioeconomic backgrounds by assisting them to achieve their occupational aspirations. Thomson and Hillman (2010) also found that students considered low-achievers at school (i.e. students that did not achieve at least proficiency level 3 on maths in the 2003 PISA assessment) that had expressly planned to enter vocational pathways, following a career development intervention, were much more likely to experience successful post school outcomes, which included engagement in education/employment and happiness with their lives (Thomson and Hillman 2010, 27).

In line with Sweet and Watts’ (in Sweet et al 2009) assertion that career development services can assist in the development of social capital for members of disadvantaged groups, McIlveen et al (2005) developed an initiative designed to assist the study to work transitions of university students with a disability. The key to the approach was the formation of a *Career Enhancement* forum that effectively linked students with one another, with employers, with employment agencies, State and Commonwealth agencies, and key staff at the university’s careers service. The forum was conducted using a group career counselling framework and McIlveen et al (2005) argued that students with

disabilities participating in the forum, were undertaking the deliberate formation of a network of social capital facilitated by the initiative, that was able to correct the lack of access to such networks usually experienced by students with disability: “Feedback from students indicated the value of the event in terms of outcome and process” (McIlveen et al 2005, Abstract).

In relation to such group approaches, Sampson (2009) discusses the importance of incorporating a range of innovative group activities as sometimes “individual career counselling is incongruent with social justice concerns for equality of access to services” (9). In particular, “practitioners need to be proactive in institutions that have practices that may not meet the needs of diverse groups” including challenging the dominance of more costly individual counselling methods where large numbers require access to services (9).

A range of initiatives can be referenced which clearly demonstrate the capacity of career development services to address barriers to engagement in education and training and the labour market for disadvantaged learners (Curtis and McMillan 2008; Gallegos and Tilbury 2006; Helme 2009; McMahan 2004). And while it might be difficult to quantify, this reduction in levels of disengagement translates directly into significant cost savings in the sphere of social and welfare services tasked with “managing” the consequences of disengagement. Cost-saving implications are discussed in section 3.4.6.

3.4.5 Enhanced employment outcomes

Policy-makers worldwide want publicly funded career development interventions for young people to be clearly linked to enhanced participation and productivity outcomes. As has been argued earlier, due to the long-term and developmental nature of career interventions for young people, it is often very difficult to establish any sort of direct association between a particular initiative and a particular career “outcome” (i.e. obtaining a job or finding a career path) that may occur years after the intervention.

Longitudinal studies that track clients of services over a long-term period are, not surprisingly, rare in a field where the funding and resources available for services themselves are already stretched and often inadequate.

However, due to increasing pressure and advocacy from the career development community, some studies have been undertaken which provide some evidence for making the link between enhanced employment outcomes and career guidance. As a 2002 UK review of evidence for the economic benefits of career guidance activities found:

The evidence to date is that quite intensive, multi-method guidance intended to support the job search of non-or unemployed people does reduce mean job search time/enhance re-employment rate over the short-to-medium term. In short, the general case for intensive methods applied to welfare claimants seems reasonably secure (Hughes, Bosley, Bowes and Byshe 2002, 14).

In a more recent review of the evidence base for career development services, Hughes and Gratton observe, “in-depth support is positively associated with three attitudinal work-related outcomes”:

- satisfaction with a current job;
- confidence in gaining a desired job; and,
- increases in confidence over time (2009b, 38).

Such attitudinal work-related outcomes could be causally related to increased productivity and thereby overall financial benefits for individuals, employers and governments.

In an earlier study, MORI (2001) found that most users of guidance (86%) reported a positive outcome resulting from comprehensive career development services. Specifically, 30% found a job or entered the labour market (cited in Hughes, Bosley, Bowes and Byshe 2002, 14). A 2005 Welsh

study into the employment outcomes of guidance activities also found 60% of users reporting “career-related changes including: progression to employment, education/training, voluntary work” (Reed, Mahony and Gratton 2005, 80).

A five-year longitudinal study undertaken in the UK by Bimrose, Barnes and Hughes (2008) found at the end of the study period:

- The number of clients registered as unemployed decreased from 34% to 3%, and
- The proportion of clients who have entered full-time employment since the beginning of the study increased from 31% (n=9) to 45% (n=13).

In Australia, a recent report based on data drawn from Longitudinal Surveys of Australian Youth (LSAY98), also highlights the important role career planning can have on the educational and occupational plans and expectations for students in the top 50% of academic achievement (Sikora and Saha 2011). The most significant finding of this research was that those students with a specific career plan were more likely to enter a high-status occupation, regardless of their backgrounds and gender (Sikora and Saha 2011), vindicating “all policy measures which strive to provide informed and individually tailored vocational counselling to students in various high school programs” (37).

In spite of the scarcity of solid research findings in the area, the research that does exist all points strongly toward a positive connection between the delivery of career development services and enhanced employment outcomes for individuals, as well as enhanced overall economic productivity and labour market functioning.

3.4.6 The economic and community benefits of career development services

In March 2003 Phil Jarvis, the Vice President of Partnership Development at the National Life/Work Centre, released a paper called “Career Management Paradigm Shift: Prosperity for Citizens, Windfall for Government”.

This work provides a macro analysis on the potential benefits of implementing comprehensive and coherent career development service provision in Canada on the basis of an assumed causal relationship between the benefits of career development service provision for individuals and the resultant gains for communities and governments. Jarvis’s analysis included the following key points:

- **Health Care Savings** - Individuals who lack career development skills and hence are unemployed or work in settings they dislike, are more likely to be stressed, and are more likely to engage in alcohol and drug use to alleviate this stress. A recent poll found that 17% of people surveyed had contemplated suicide at some point in their lives, with the major causes cited as job stress (43%) and financial stress (39%). If 1% of people now utilising health care services in Canada are doing so as a result of this kind of stress, and this could be ameliorated, it would represent a saving to the health care system of approximately \$800 million Canadian dollars annually.
- **Improved Productivity** - In Canada, a 1% increase in productivity by improving the match of individual skills to workforce requirements would result in an approximate increase to gross domestic production of \$10 billion Canadian dollars. The loss of productivity is also high whether measured by training costs or unrealised potential.
- **Education** - It is imperative that students gain career management competencies so that they can better identify the appropriate courses and training they require for their preferred futures. Improving the efficiency of the education system by 1% (by reducing the number of students who change courses or drop out of school, or who do not undertake further education because they do not fully understand its benefits) would translate to approximately \$600 million Canadian dollars being better invested annually in education.
- **Social Services** - Full participation or ‘social inclusion’ is vital for social and economic prosperity. The location and maintenance of fulfilling learning and work opportunities is a

mechanism for increasing social inclusion. If the amount of money currently invested in social welfare and assistance programs in Canada could be reduced by 1%, this would represent annual savings of approximately \$1 billion Canadian dollars.

- The Justice System - If 1% of young people and adults in Canada could be diverted from the justice system, via early intervention and reconnection to appropriate life and work roles, it would represent a potential saving of \$150 million Canadian dollars annually.
- Increased Tax Revenues - A 1% increase in connecting individuals with steady work that they find fulfilling would result in a potential increase of \$4 billion Canadian dollars per year in increased revenues (via individual and corporate income taxes, property taxes, consumption taxes, health premiums and the like).

To summarise, the potential economic benefits (across the six domains above) of implementing a more comprehensive career development system in Canada was estimated to be in the vicinity of \$16.55 billion Canadian dollars each year.

More recently, as part of their recent report on measures to support social mobility through education, the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) undertook a cost-benefit analysis for the establishment of an “independent careers and education advice service” that would:

Provide both group and one-to-one sessions, could draw on national support and specialist advice as required. The service would organise speakers to talk to primary and secondary age pupils about their jobs, as well as providing more specific advice on careers, college and university options from the age of 14. Pupils would be advised of the financial value of different degrees and the benefits of taking certain subjects which are more highly-valued by universities and employers (The Sutton Trust 2010, 19).

BCG estimated a positive return on investment of 7 to 1; that is, for every pound spent, the return would equate to 7 in terms of increased lifetime earnings (The Sutton Trust 2010, 6).

Moreover, they claimed, like Jarvis, that by creating a more informed labour market participants, effective career development services can contribute centrally to the efficiency of the market, thereby reducing the costs involved in managing labour market failure (for instance welfare costs, the costs involved in excessive churn through both the employment and education and training services) (The Sutton Trust 2010, 17).

The capacity of career services to prevent people from disengaging from learning can also be used as a mechanism by which the cost benefits of providing effective career services could potentially be calculated:

Godfrey et al focus upon calculating the costs to the public purse of those not in education, employment or training in terms of educational underachievement, unemployment, inactivity, crime and health, and the cost saving that would accrue from each percentage point reduction in their numbers. Although this work does not address the separate and specific cost-saving potential of careers guidance, there is an implication that if careers guidance could be proven to result in a quantifiable reduction in NEET [not in employment, education or training], then the calculations [...] could be used as a means of calculating the cost saving attributable to careers guidance (Hughes and Gratton, 2009, 38).

Enhancing an individual’s capacity to better manage their own future, within the existing constraints and realities of the current national and global environment, has benefits beyond the obvious outcomes of improved and more personally meaningful and relevant experiences in further education and/or work.

Summary

The evidence base highlighted in the literature review demonstrates positive outcomes for young people in the following areas:

1. Increased educational engagement and attainment: career development services are shown by the literature review to demonstrate higher levels of engagement and attainment in learning;
2. Increased self-awareness and self- confidence;
3. Increased goal/future awareness and orientation: recipients of career development services, that contribute to the development of career management skills, demonstrate an enhanced orientation towards the future, and a disposition to more proactively manage their future; and in particular, an increased awareness of the labour market and its links to education and training;
4. Strengthened pathways for those young people at risk of disengaging from education, training or work: career development services have a critical capacity to support and enhance the learning and transitions of those at risk of disengaging from education, training or work; and
5. Enhanced employment outcomes, such as higher wages and job satisfaction.

Although the evidence base in many areas remains slight, the evidence that does exist points strongly towards the critical importance of career development services in supporting young people's successful transitions into an increasingly complex labour market.

These positive outcomes for young people have positive implications for local communities and local labour markets, which in turn flow on to regional, state/territory and national economies.

3.5 Best Practice Career Development Service Delivery Models

According to the findings of our review of the international literature on best practice career development models, the current benchmarks for best practice are still largely those established by the OECD review of career guidance policies in 14 OECD countries undertaken in the early 2000s, culminating in the 2004 report *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap* (the OECD review).

While recognising the need to tailor any career development systems to the context in which they are intended to operate, the OECD (2004a) report identifies ten general features of effective lifelong guidance systems, which according to Ronald Sultana “can be framed as criteria which policy-makers can use to examine the adequacy of their current guidance systems in lifelong terms, and to determine priorities for action” (Sultana 2004, 129):

- Transparency and ease of access over the lifespan, including a capacity to meet the needs of a diverse range of clients
- Attention to key transition points over the lifespan
- Flexibility and innovation in service delivery to reflect the differing needs and circumstances of diverse client groups
- Processes to stimulate individuals to engage in regular review and planning;
- Access to individual guidance by appropriately qualified practitioners for those who need such help, at times when they need it
- Programmes for all young people to develop their career-management skills
- Opportunities to investigate and experience learning and work options before choosing them
- Access to service delivery that is independent of the interests of particular institutions or enterprises
- Access to comprehensive and integrated educational, occupational and labour market information, and
- Active involvement of relevant stakeholders.

However, the OECD (2004a) report’s conclusions regarding building policy frameworks for career development cautioned with regard to defining models of “best practice”:

There is no one common design for lifelong guidance systems. These will vary according to national traditions and administrative arrangements, and according to the stage of development of career guidance services. However in all countries policy-makers face common choices in designing lifelong guidance systems (OECD, 2004a, 137).

The report elaborates the nature of these choices as follows:

Policy makers need to decide: when the career guidance process should start; how long it should continue throughout life; how responsibility for young people should be shared at key decision points such as the transition from school to work or to tertiary education; whether to deliver services through specialised occupational and organisational structures that provide only career guidance, or to attempt to combine career guidance with other forms of personal services; whether services should be all-age or age-specific; and what mix of present models and more innovative approaches, of the sort outlined in this report, to use to deliver career guidance for adults (ibid, 137).

The OECD report also outlines seven key challenges to the establishment of effective career development systems:

- Ensuring that resource allocation decisions give the first priority to systems that develop career self-management skills and career information, and that delivery systems match

levels of personal help, from brief to extensive, to personal needs and circumstances, rather than assuming that everybody needs intensive personal career guidance

- Ensuring greater diversity in the types of services that are available and in the ways that they are delivered, including greater diversity in staffing structures, wider use of self-help techniques, and a more integrated approach to the use of ICT (including helplines as well as the Internet)
- Exploring the scope for facilitating measures, including appropriate incentives, designed to encourage the development of career guidance services within the private and voluntary sectors
- Working more closely with professional associations and training bodies to improve education and training for career guidance practitioners, preferably on a cross-sectoral basis, producing professionals who can manage guidance resources as well as be engaged in direct service delivery
- Improving the information base for public policy making, including gathering improved data on the financial and human resources devoted to career guidance, on client need and demand, on the characteristics of clients, on client satisfaction, and on the outcomes and cost-effectiveness of career guidance
- Developing better quality assurance mechanisms and linking these to the funding of services, and
- Developing stronger structures for strategic leadership (2004a, 129-130).

These criteria and challenges continue to remain pertinent for many OECD countries, including Australia and are discussed in greater detail throughout this report.

3.6 Providing Lifelong Access to Career Development Services

As the focus of this literature review is upon approaches to career development for young people aged 5-24 years, considerations of an all-age lifelong career development system would seem to be precluded. But it is important to note, at the outset, that current expert opinion—from the findings of the OECD review through to the most current academic literature and our consultation with our expert panel—strongly emphasises the need to conceptualise career development policy within the framework of a lifelong learning system, which necessarily means being accessible to people from *all age groups, at any stage in their lives* (Hughes et al 2002; OECD 2004a).

This is in line with the now widely accepted recognition that career development—by its very definition—is not restricted to a particular discrete point in the individual’s development—i.e. adolescence or young adulthood—but is rather a lifelong process.

As Watts suggested when launching the Victorian Careers Curriculum Framework: “careers are no long chosen: they are constructed through the series of choices we make throughout our lives”. As a consequence, career service models no long constitute a single event that focuses on choosing a career, but a continuous career learning process designed to help individuals to construct their careers (Watts, 2010).

It is also because career development is seen as a lifelong process that current thinking—spearheaded by the OECD Review (2004a)—emphasises the need for career development services to develop for their users *their own capacity for career management skills and career self-efficacy*. That is, increasing the capacity of individuals to manage their own career process and transitions across the lifespan. As Gillie and Gillie-Isenhour (2003) argue:

Career self-management is the internalisation of career development processes that enable an individual to navigate and prosper in a world of work in which one’s relationship to employment is in a state of flux, in which changing jobs and employers is the norm (3).

These two aspects: 1) having lifelong access to career development support services, and 2) building the internal career resilience of individuals, are two essential ingredients of an effective lifelong guidance system, as recommended by the OECD review, through to all current research and literature reviews in the career development space.

3.6.1 Effective practice for young people in schools

The OECD review does provide some recommendations relating to best practice career development delivery for young people, which involves embedding career learning in the curriculum and supplementing this with explicit and specific units of career-related learning. The OECD report argues strongly for separating out careers guidance from general and personal guidance, and champions the establishment of independent agencies with a mandated responsibility for coordinating and/or supplementing the delivery of career services across a range of settings: schools, post-compulsory education, workplaces (2004a, 39-55).

The OECD findings are still congruent with the most current thinking in the career development field, as confirmed by the recent Victorian report *Making Career Development Core Business* (Sweet et al 2009), which contains a review of international evidence for effective career development models by Tony Watts and Richard Sweet. These researchers identified the following features of best practice career development delivery for young people in transition:

- Career development is a compulsory subject or set of activities as part of the regular school curriculum
- Career development programs incorporate a coherent range of activities that are both student-centred and information-centred
- Programs offer experiential learning linked to the labour market
- Programs instil lifelong learning and career self-management skills such as planning and decision making
- Programs are delivered by specifically qualified and experienced people with links to the labour market and with manageable staff-student ratios, and
- Programs commence early in school (Sweet et al 2009, 15).

The Australian review of the Career Education Lighthouse Schools project (Castine 2007) also suggested that the following features define good practice in schools:

- Effective school leadership
- Planning, monitoring and evaluation
- Embedding career education within the curriculum
- The inclusion of experiential learning, either within or outside of the school
- Use of a range of curriculum resources
- Use of qualified staff and ongoing professional development
- Involvement of parents and families
- Student involvement in planning, implementing and evaluating programmes, and
- Use of a wide range of community resources, external to the school.

A major point to consider in relation to career development models for young people is the role of schools, and the mode of integrating career development activities within the schools framework. As Sweet et al argue:

The most common pattern internationally is for services within educational institutions to be provided by counsellors or guidance officers who also have responsibility for personal, social and educational guidance. This way of providing career development generally results in its importance, compared to other forms of personal counselling, being down-graded, and to course and subject choice decisions taking priority over help with occupational choice and

longer term career planning. This has been used as an argument by countries such as Norway and Luxembourg for separating career development assistance from personal counseling, and for creating specialist career guidance staff within schools (2009, 4).

Creating a separate careers department within schools is therefore one option for improving the profile and effectiveness of career learning in schools.

As noted by Sweet et al (2009), the literature identifies three main patterns by which career education can be delivered within schools. Career learning within school activities can be delivered as either a standalone program (i.e. a separate course); can be subsumed within other subjects (i.e. social studies or health education); or can be infused across a range (or all) subjects across the curriculum. All of these models can be observed in different forms throughout Australia, due to the autonomy granted to states and territories for distribution of education funding, and the freedom given to schools in how to utilise that funding.

Research in schools has found the attitudes toward and belief in the effectiveness of career development held by the school leadership impact the ways career development is incorporated into the functioning of the school (Andrews et al., 1998, cited in Killeen, Sammons and Watts, 1999). Killeen et al (1999) describe the ‘spectrum of opinions’ on career development in schools, researchers have defined, as ranging from:

- Those that believe career development work enhances academic achievement, in this case career development is seen as a whole of school responsibility, to
- Those that feel career development is a specialised activity, ‘unrelated to academic aims’ (Killeen et al., 1999, p.10), and so is allocated specific staff and classroom time, but remains separate from other school activities, to
- Those who feel career development activities reduce attention and time on academic activities and so can only have a negative impact on attainment; these activities remain, at best, a marginal activity within the school.

This ‘spectrum of opinions’ can have ramifications for the differing modes of delivery, that relate to the advantages and disadvantages to the different modes of delivering career education in schools. In the stand-alone model delivered outside the curriculum in the form of distinct modules or workshops, delivery can escape the “confines and constraints of the curriculum, and enables a fresh set of ‘recognition rules’ about what teachers and pupils regard as legitimate discourse within particular lessons...to be established” (Sweet et al 2009, 61). The potential disadvantage is that career education is divorced from the general curriculum and hence can be easily marginalised and sidelined in the case of constricted schedules, resources or budgeting.

There is a similar danger with the subsumed form—whereby career education is dovetailed with a related subject such as social studies or society and environment—of career education being assigned a peripheral, non-core importance within the curriculum. Although the subsumed model has the advantage of linking career learning—at least in part—with the curriculum, and therefore embedding it within the regular teaching schedule, being siloed within a non-specialist subject like society and environment or personal and health education, means that there may be a tendency to view career learning as a less than “core” academic area.

The model of infusing career learning across the curriculum has the advantage of being able to explicitly link career-related learning to a range of core academic content. Yet, at the same time, within this model career learning can easily get submerged within the general content of the curriculum, or “provision can be patchy, disconnected and often invisible to the student” (Sweet et al 2009, 61). As Sweet et al note: “At times it [the infused model] can be adopted for reasons that have little to do with the needs of students. In Austria, for example, it was adopted only because of resistance by teachers to time being taken away from the teaching of their subjects” (2009, 61). They go on to argue, “the infusion model requires a high level of coordination and support to be

effective” and require the complement of “some separate provision where the student is helped to make sense of the bits and to pull them together” (Sweet et al 2009).

Best practice career development principles—from the OECD report through to the recent international review of evidence in “Making Career Development Core Business”—argue that careers need to be embedded in the curriculum both as an explicit subject of instruction, and also infused across the curriculum as an underpinning principle.⁵ 61

This does not mean, however, a complete overhaul of the curriculum or a radical disruption of current teaching practices. As Watts argues: “Building career-related learning into the curriculum [. . .] is not about doing a great many new and different things that require additional resources and a lot more time. Career-related learning is the curriculum looked at from another point of view” (2001, 7). Infusing career learning across the curriculum means delivering academic content in such a way as to articulate its relevance to the development of career competency and pathways to the world of work.

The nature of the content of career programs currently delivered in Australian schools can also vary widely, with some focusing mainly on the “world of work and its demands”, whereas others include a focus upon building self-awareness and the “development of skills for making decisions and managing transitions.” As the OECD review of career guidance and policy notes: “In a lifelong context, this broader approach is highly desirable” (2004a, 44).

Career self-efficacy, rather than just advice on subject and course decisions, should be the designated outcome of any effective career development system. Sweet et al argue career programs in schools should incorporate “a coherent range of activities that are both student-centred (that is proactively engage individual students in their own career issues and develop their skills) and information-centred (resource dissemination)”, and they should also instil lifelong learning and career self-management skills such as planning and decision-making (2009, 15). As quoted earlier, a recent (2004) report into the impacts of different guidance models upon student decision-making found:

The approach to career advising in schools was identified as being a significant factor in the effectiveness of career planning with students. Two approaches to career advising were identifiable: a student-centred and an information-centred approach. Students and parents acknowledged the student-centred approach as being formative, empowering and highly valued. Students from schools that had adopted an information-centred approach to career advising often expressed confusion and uncertainty about their career planning and decision-making (Alloway et al 2004, 108).

There is clearly a need to distinguish between the mere provision of career information, and the provision of a comprehensive program that provides young people with the skills to effectively utilise and act upon available career information.

As the OECD assert, career development programs within schools should consist of a “developmental approach, embedded in the curriculum and with a strong experiential component....Such programmes need to involve community members as well as school staff. They have significant implications for the organisation of the whole school: the curriculum; resource allocation, and teachers’ skills” (2004a, 39). It goes on to argue:

⁵“Recent developments have provided clear frameworks for the development of effective careers education and guidance programs. These promote an approach to careers that is fully integrated across the curriculum” (Bimrose, Barnes and Marris 2007, v).

Alongside teachers, there is a strong case for more active involvement of parents, employers, former students and other community representatives in school career guidance programmes. Employers can be involved through the work experience and other experience-based schemes discussed above. Parents and former students can also be used in this way. A further reason for involving parents is to ensure that their influence on their children's career choices is well-informed, and supportive... (OECD 2004a, 47).

Adhering to internationally recognised principles of best practice, therefore, will involve significant reform of current educational arrangements and systems, in order to achieve the necessary “paradigm shift” in career education that is needed to match the reality of the complex transition pathways to the 21st century Australian labour market.⁶

Moreover, a comprehensive national strategy needs also to recognise the reality—despite compulsory schooling regulations—that many young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are not in contact with, or are at risk of disengaging from, mainstream educational institutions. Given that the national strategy is also currently focussed on service provision for young people aged 5-24 years, there needs to be provision for services to be provided to out-of-school youth and young adults in community settings. These must be “highly individualised in their approach, and involve mutual obligations and individual action-planning” (OECD 2004a, 39).

Having an external career service provider who is able to link in with both schools and community organisations will provide an essential mechanism for ensuring that the national career development strategy caters to the needs of all Australian young people and not just those within the education system.

3.6.1.1 External or internal service provision

Others have also argued that if career development services are delivered solely within schools they are often delivered in isolation from the labour market. As Sweet and Watts argue, “international reviews indicate that where career services for school students are exclusively provided within schools, they tend to be characterised by: lack of strong specialised services; weak links with the labour market; and lack of impartiality” (Sweet et al 2009, 61).

The argument in favour of external provision of career development support for school aged young people is underpinned by the point that an external, independent agency is not tied to the institutional barriers or curriculum restraints that apply to schools, and is therefore able to pursue more active and effective links and networks with the local labour market. This is essential to pursuing another of the key features frequently identified as characterising best practice in the career development field: the provision of experientially-based career learning opportunities, which

⁶ Watts even recently (2010) argued for the need for a whole team structure to deliver effective career services to schools, including:

- A Careers Governor with specific responsibility for career education and guidance.
- A Careers Leader: a member of the senior leadership team who is responsible for providing vision and strategic leadership for the careers provision.
- A Careers Co-ordinator: a middle manager responsible for day-to-day leading and managing of the careers provision.
- Careers Administrator: to administer the careers resource centre and work-experience programs.
- Teachers, in three roles: as subject teachers, teaching about careers related to their subject and about how the skills and attributes developed through the subject prepared them for adult life; as tutors, supporting the students in their tutor-group; and possibly also as teachers of career education lessons, within the program co-ordinated by the Careers Co-ordinator.

In some schools, some of these roles might be combined with each other, or with wider roles. If career development programs are viewed as whole-school programs, then all of these roles need to be given attention and support” (Watts, 2010).

necessitates some degree of access to the labour market. There is a considerable body of consensus in the literature that indicates schools are not well placed to provide this access (Beddie et al 2008, 4; Bimrose, Barnes and Marris 2007, 46; Careers Wales 2009, 21; Hughes and Gration, 2009b, 19; Smith et al 2005, 9; Sweet et al, 2009). As Beddie et al point out; “This poses a specific challenge for teachers from whom career advice is expected. Many teachers are called upon to perform this dual role, but the complexity of the labour market and knowledge required to navigate the education, training and job market demands a dedicated service” (2008, 4).

In addition to being able to get closer to the labour market, an external career service provider is able to avoid the trap—noted in the OECD review (2004a), Sweet et al (2009), and elsewhere—of placing the “institutional needs of their school before the needs of students”. The OECD review goes on to note:

These pressures often operate in subtle, subconscious ways. They are particularly evident in systems where funding is linked to the recruitment and retention of students. In such cases, guidance services may tend to promote the interests of their institution, even in cases where it is not in the interests of a student to remain there (2004a, 42).

A recent (2009) UK report also asserted “there is some evidence to suggest that the IAG (information, advice and guidance) offered by some schools is not impartial, or is simply dull and ineffective. Transferring responsibility to schools does not therefore offer a straightforward guarantee of improved quality” (DCSF 2009, 48). As Hughes and Gration argue in relation to the UK context:

...there is strong evidence that many schools provide slanted and partial evidence on post-16 options; for example, although many teachers were well informed about academic routes, far fewer knew about vocational routes and work-based training (2009a, 46).

Within the Australian context, currently, the new draft national curriculum lacks any specified careers focus and there is no compulsion for schools to utilise the broader *Blueprint* framework—despite its inclusion in the implementation plan for the National Goals of Schools—and so service provision tends to be open to variation between different jurisdictions, different schools, different classes, and depends crucially on the individual philosophies of jurisdiction leaders, principals and teachers involved.

Formal guidance agencies external to schools, the OECD has suggested, will need to be set up for early school leavers and at-risk youth and to provide support to schools, involving “career guidance staff working with youth workers, using outreach approaches” (OECD 2004a, 50). Hughes and Gration identify ten critical success factors to providing services for disengaged youth, in particular (2009b, 49):

- Outreach and engagement
- Diagnosis of need
- Relevant offerings
- Engaging partners to provide a comprehensive service
- Advocacy and brokerage
- Pre-transition and post-transition support
- Incentives and rewards
- Involvement of young people
- Effective staffing, and
- Evaluation and review.

Examples of externally-based career services exist in Austria, France, Germany, the UK and Wales, the Czech Republic, and New Zealand. Watts and Sweet outline services in Austria, Germany and France “which either visit schools, have young people visit them, or both” and the partnership

model in operation in Denmark and Wales “with schools and external agencies working together” (Watts 2005, 5). Similar external specialist career guidance agencies exist in New Zealand and Scotland, which Watts regards as exemplary models: “Scotland, Wales and New Zealand could be regarded as the prime examples of the ‘separate organisational structures’ commended to policy-makers by the OECD review” (Watts 2005, 9).

According to the international literature, therefore, the use of an external service provider that works with schools to provide professional, career-specific learning activities is essential to increasing the impartiality of services delivered. This is a point that was made strongly in the 2004 OECD report, which states: “the priority for policy makers in most OECD countries should be to create separate, and appropriate, occupational and organisational structures to deliver career guidance” (2004a, 102). As a recent Welsh report noted in relation to Careers Wales:

...the all-age stand-alone structure of Careers Wales assures that all inhabitants of Wales in principle have access to independent and impartial career guidance services. This is one of the distinctive strengths of such a structure, in contrast to many other countries where most career guidance provision is embedded within educational and other organisations, and subject to pressures from the institutional interests of those organisations (Watts 2009, 21).

One of the potential disadvantages of setting up career services external to schools is that it can result in career services becoming isolated from the curriculum and marginalised within the overall learning program of the school. This tendency has been noted in relation to France and Germany in particular (Sweet et al 2009, 61). A review of the literature and existing international models, therefore, suggest that the partnership model—such as that in existence in New Zealand, Wales and Scotland—that involves close coordination between schools and an external, specialist career agency may prevent this potential dissociation of external services from curriculum-based activities. It is therefore recommended by current research in the field that external services should be established to complement, but not replace, career learning embedded within the curriculum that is delivered within the school.⁷

In the case of Wales, a recent review has found that where schools have not successfully implemented an effective career education program Careers Wales providers have been required to provide additional career education to young people prior to conducting their career interview (Edwards et al 2009). This issue highlights the importance of a clear delineation of the roles of schools and external career service providers in the delivery of career development programs to young people. Careers Wales services support career education by providing training and information for teachers and lecturers, and through encouraging learning institutions to quality assure their programs using their quality award. These service providers also recruit employers willing to provide work experience placements and provider partnership brokerage services (Edwards et al 2009). On the other hand schools in Wales are to provide career education programs for 16-19 year olds as stipulated by regulations, and the Welsh Government has mandated statutory guidance for young people aged 11-19 years. As stated previously, though, learning institutions, particularly schools, apply these regulations in various ways.

The “customer segmentation model” employed at Careers Scotland is frequently identified in the literature as providing a model for best practice for targeting and providing for at-risk groups with specific or greater need “to ensure we provide a value for money service and a rationale to

⁷And this presents a further problem within the Australian context for a national career development strategy based upon best practice since, as it stands, the draft national curriculum does not really allow any space for career learning to be adequately embedded within the curriculum, apart from within the area of “generic” skills. This would seem to bury career learning within the curriculum, rather than embed it.

determine the scale of service provision for our diverse client groups within the funding available” (Careers Scotland undated publication). The model is outlined as follows:

The segmentation of the market provides us with relative priority groups and a rationale for these individuals, supported by extensive staff training to empower staff to be efficient and effective in their work [. . .] The Customer Segmentation work provides us with relative priorities for service provision, in order that we do not duplicate effort of other providers, for example the HE careers services for undergraduates and graduates means we see this group as low priority, for up to one year beyond graduation. This is agreed with AGCAS through the Partnership Agreement (Careers Scotland undated, 13-14).

In relation to catering for disadvantaged and at-risk groups, such a detailed model of customer service delivery would need to be considered as part of a comprehensive, best practice career development strategy that could meet the needs of all young Australians. This is particularly important when considering the need to balance the costs with the effectiveness of these services. Sampson argues that the career theories underpinning particular interventions influence both the cost and the effectiveness of those interventions, with many (Western) career theories focused on more expensive individualised counselling methods (2009). As has already been illustrated in previous sections, individualised approaches are not always sustainable, nor necessary, particularly where there are large numbers of clients that require assistance, and where these approaches may not be culturally appropriate.

Service differentiation is the provision of services that can range from:

- Face-to-face interviews
- Group discussions
- School lessons
- Structured experiences
- Assistance via telephone or the Internet/email, and
- Self-help resources used in schools, offices or online.

And according to Sampson, cost effectiveness of service provision can be improved when appropriate interventions are applied according to the identified needs of each client. Crucial to taking this approach are service providers successfully recognising, “which clients would not be able to make an informed and careful career choice without individualised assistance from a counsellor?” (Sampson 2009, 11).

Careers Wales, for example, currently delivers at least one face-to-face interview with each student before the age of 16, constituting 220 000 interviews in 2008-09 alone, a resource intensive exercise that a recent review has argued needs “to be balanced against (students) specific needs and emerging priorities for adults” (Edwards et al 2009, 22). Within the Australian context, although the current national career development strategy is focussing on 5-24 year olds, if a future iteration of the strategy were to extend to the provision of lifelong guidance, careful consideration needs to be given to the development of models of service provision that incorporate differentiated and targeted services.

Another important factor to consider in establishing services that are external to schools is the nature of its interface with government and policy formation. As a recent Careers Wales report argued:

Despite being a brand rather than an organisation, Careers Wales plays a key role in relation to a number of important Assembly policies. [. . .] However, there is a need for a stronger interface from the assembly Government than the current Careers Policy Branch is able to provide. Conversely, the diffuse structure of seven independent companies inhibits both the influence of Careers Wales within the Assembly, and its capacity to achieve effective change in response to the challenges it faces. A number of alternative structures can be conceived,

some of which can be illustrated by exemplars from other countries. In particular, the example of New Zealand demonstrates the benefits of strong leadership and a single interface with government (Watts 2009, 20).

The nature of the interface with government and policy formation of any system of external agencies would need to be carefully considered as part of the establishment of any such system. New Zealand's Career Services, for example, is one of six government agencies that are intended to work closely together. It is funded through an annual purchase agreement with the Ministry of Education (Watts, 2007), yet its aim is defined as "assisting in the achievement of government education, training and employment goals through the provision of high quality career information, advice and guidance services". While there is a risk in this model that services could be skewed towards the schooling sector, in practice the strong relationships that have been established with senior level managers of other agencies have minimised this.

As Wales revitalises its career services, concerns have been expressed that the Careers Policy Branch sits uneasily in a Division concerned with post-16 learning delivery; has no focus on career education in schools or for higher education career services, and is often overlooked by other sections of government, when decisions about career services are made (Edwards et al 2010, 73).

Summary

The current definition of effective practice in the career development field as identified by the literature points to a number of clear principles, chief of these include:

- Conceptualising career development as a lifelong process
- Developing users' capacity for career self-management skills and self-efficacy
- Having in place clear delivery frameworks that specify learning outcomes to guide career development activities
- Starting the career awareness-raising process as early in school as possible
- Embedding career-related learning within the school curriculum as well as teaching it as a subject in its own right
- Establishing a specialised agency with responsibility for coordinating career development activities across a range of sectors
- Building strong links to the labour market to facilitate experientially based career learning activities
- Building in capacity of services to respond flexibly to the needs of a diverse range of disadvantaged groups, and
- Establishing effective mechanisms for leadership within the field and effective representation to government and to the community.

Many of these recommended principles may well pose significant challenges in the Australian context, for a range of reasons, but they constitute the international ideal against which all national career development systems will be measured and judged.

3.6.2 The skills all young people need to manage their careers

Nine years ago Patton and McMahon stated that “It is no longer startling to refer to the dramatic changes in the world of work” (2001, 3). At that time the changes referred to by many authors included the:

- Globalisation of the workforce
- A growing global labour surplus
- Organisational transformations in the workforce, including a move towards more project base, part-time and temporary work and changes to the psychological contract between employers and employees
- The rising importance of the knowledge worker
- A growing awareness of linkages between world of work experiences and physical and mental health, family responsibilities and life options
- Relevant changes to government policy and legislation related to child-care provision for women in the workforce and school-to-work transition, and
- Demographic trends related to new entrants to the market, including women and migrants (adapted from Patton and McMahon, 2001).

The nature of these changes has shifted over the intervening years, and others have emerged:

- Access Economics highlight the ageing of the Australian workforce with “Population growth ... slowing and, in particular, working-age population growth ... slowing as the number of new retirees a year is growing while the number of new entrants” is in decline (2006, 10)
- The continuing ramifications of the global financial crisis are impacting on international labour markets in a variety of ways
- Climate change has seen the adaptation and creation of occupations needed to address commitments to reduced emissions, and
- Technological change, including Web 2.0 and the development of new infrastructure such as the National Broadband Network has ramifications for service delivery.

All point to the need for individuals, more than ever, to be prepared for a career management process that will need to be maintained throughout their lives. Effective career services therefore need to “help young people to make career decisions not just now, but also in the future, and thereby to construct their careers. Moreover, they need to be helped to understand that they will continue to develop their career management skills throughout their lives” (Watts 2010, 3).

This approach is reflected in Wyn’s (2009) argument that young people need to become “proactive, well-informed decision-makers” (50), that is:

...effective self-navigators... (who) understand the nature of the social, economic and political world in which they are living and their relationships with others, locally and globally. Being good navigators requires a more conscious approach to personal development so that all young people have the capacity to view the development of their personal biography and how it may be constructed as critical to their options for the future (Wyn 2009, 50).

To assist young people to develop the knowledge and skills they need to become ‘self-navigators’ Wyn suggests:

...social and communication skills, identity construction work, and a capacity to understand the organisation of workplaces and their relationship to wider social and economic issues, are all important. Students preparing for life and work could do no better than to have the opportunity of working, within the structure of school, as a precursor to other work-based structures, such as they will later experience (2009, 52).

She also suggests that young people will gain these types of skills most effectively as active learners, rather than as passive recipients of information. As highlighted earlier in this report, student and

client centred approaches that focus on skills development rather than simply information provision were reported to have better outcomes for participants.

In the past, making career decisions was considered by many—whether rightly or wrongly—to be a relatively straightforward event. As Jarvis (2007) points out, career development meant one would:

- Explore one’s interests, aptitudes, and values
- Determine a “best fit” occupation by matching personal traits to occupational factors
- Develop a plan to attain the prerequisite education and training
- Graduate, choose a secure job, climb the ladder, and
- Retire as young as possible on pension as a reward for decades of service (2007, 4).

These traditional ‘matching’ approaches to career guidance, which were largely based on personality theories, have started to transform over the last ten years to address more adequately the socio-economic and political issues that have impacted upon people’s working lives in the new economy. The skills, attitudes and knowledge required to make sound choices and to determine what constitutes success in such an environment have changed. In the new climate, individuals need to exhibit characteristics such as adaptability, flexibility, self-initiative and collaboration to accommodate and thrive in workplaces, or to create work for themselves (Hughes and Gratton 2009b, 40).

There is fairly clear consensus across the literature on the skills young people need to be effective career self-managers. Watts identifies the broad areas of knowledge and understanding that young people need to manage their careers as:

- Self development
- Career exploration, and
- Career management (Watts 2001, 2).

These areas mirror the three broad domains of the *Australian Blueprint for Career Development*, which are:

- Personal management
- Learning and work exploration, and
- Career building.

The OECD (2004a) also emphasises the need for the development of broad career management skills:

...policies for career guidance in schools need to shift away from an approach that focuses only upon immediate educational and occupational choices, and towards a broader approach that also tries to develop career self-management skills: for example the ability to make effective career decisions, and to implement them (2004a, 8).

In the 2009 Victorian report, *Making Career Development Core Business*, Sweet and Watts elaborate further on the nature of career management skills, which they unpack as consisting of:

- A clear understanding of the future work and study options that are available to them and the extent to which these options meet career preferences and aspirations
- An advanced capacity for self assessment of skills, attributes and preferences and capacity to evaluate these attributes and make decisions against planned study and employment options
- A strong capacity for information research and analysis relevant to career development and pathways exploration and evaluation
- Detailed understandings of planned study and work pathways, and
- Knowledge and experience of the work environment in relation to the routines and expectations of work and employers (2009, 11).

Hughes, Bosley, Bowes and Bysshe (2002) refer to “career learning outcomes” which are defined in Killeen and Kidd (1991) as “the skills, knowledge and attitudes, which facilitate informed and rational occupational and educational decision-making and the implementation of occupational and educational decisions.” Killeen and Kid classified these outcomes as:

- attitudes;
- decision-making skills;
- self-awareness;
- opportunity awareness;
- certainty of preference; and
- transition skills (1991, 11).

Knowledge about the world of work and education and training programs and the relationships between them; information research skills; self assessment, planning and decision making skills; and confidence in one’s capacity to utilise these skills in navigating and building career pathways are all identified in the most recent literature reviews as core career management skills (Sweet and Watts 2009, 13).

Focusing more specifically on the Australian context, a prototype career management framework was developed in September 2003, tested during 2006-07, refined and redesigned in 2008, and made publicly available via the web in 2009. Policy and program staff from education, employment and training agencies, schools, universities and TAFE, career development associations, as well as peak employer and employee associations, career development teachers and guidance officers, academics and many others collaborated to design and validate the competencies of the *Australian Blueprint for Career Development*.

Yet, despite this MCEECDYA-endorsed specification of the skills that young people need to manage their careers, old notions about the nature of ‘careers’ and what constitutes ‘career education’ persist. Career education and guidance, for many, continues to be based in strategies of information provision, rather than in integrated experiential activity, personal planning and skills development. In short:

Careers Education is a lifelong journey. It is not a MIPs Plan. It is not a Career Development Portfolio. These things are tools, which assist students to navigate their own pathways. It is not the tools alone. In developing your Careers Education process, ensure you are focusing on learning outcomes and personal development of students not the completion of a plan (Cool Jobs, Hot Careers, Castlemaine Secondary College, viewed 29 July 2007 <http://www.careerlighthouse.dest.gov.au/articles/castlemaine.htm>).

Renewed international interest in the specification of career management skills has been triggered by the work of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN), a European-Commission funded Network made up of policy-maker representatives from the 27 European Union (EU) member states and 2 European Economic Area (EEA) countries (Iceland and Norway), charged with helping to realise the EU Council Resolution to better integrate lifelong career guidance into lifelong learning strategies. In its most recent Resolution, EU member states were invited to give special attention to four key areas, one of which was the lifelong acquisition of career management skills (Sultana 2009, 3)

Despite the difficulties (related to issues of language and culture) that some countries have with the terminology, Sultana suggests that there seems to be a high degree of shared understanding across Europe about what constitutes career management skills content or curriculum and their capacity to assist young people to become more adept at planning, and managing their transitions. He also points out that in some countries, and we would suggest that this is the case in Australia, the acquisition of career management skills should be an outcome of the regular curriculum (Sultana 2009, 7 – 8, 11).

Summary

1. The skills and aptitudes young people need to manage their careers are well-established in the literature and include:
 - Self development or personal management skills
 - Skills associated with career exploration, and
 - Career building skills.
2. Current career development thinking emphasises the developmental nature of careers, and is focused on cultivating the career efficacy and resilience of young people to manage a dynamic and elongated career and transition process.
3. This body of research and thought has been the driving force behind the development of the *Blueprint*, which clearly stipulates the skills young people need to be competent career managers in the 21st century, as a culmination of almost a decade of research, design, testing and refinement.

3.6.3 Meeting the needs of diverse client groups

The ability to tailor career development services to the specific needs of a diverse range of clients should be an integral part of any practitioner’s professional repertoire, and is a core competency for qualified Australian career development practitioners, as outlined in the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners (CICA, 2007b).

It is difficult to specify in advance what are the specific career development needs of “various target cohort groups”, as it is dangerous to generalise about experience, needs or capability from cultural, linguistic, age-based or geographically defined attributes.

The complexity of any individual’s life journey and their broader cultural context and background clearly needs to be factored into the delivery of any program of career learning, if it is to be effective. As Hughes and Gratton note “Individuals who have a high level of decision-making capability and a low level of life complexity generally experience less difficulty in making choices” (2009a, 18). It stands to reason that individuals with a higher level of life complexity will need more assistance to make their own effective career decisions.

The capacity of career services to effectively address the needs of a diverse range of clients will depend upon the extent to which the practitioner is able to question assumptions, and modify their practice for a client who has a low level of literacy and numeracy (perhaps due to long periods out of schooling), does not see paid work as a particularly achievable option, lacks family support and access to resources such as ICT, and perhaps has a more collective or group-oriented identity—as with some CaLD and Indigenous identities—than is implied by most career development activities and resources.

Such a high level of life complexity clearly creates challenges for service provision, but in order to make services accessible to and effective for a broad range of groups, practitioners need to be able to recognise and understand such levels of life complexity and provide appropriate support so that the client is able to reframe this complexity in a way that is consistent with a career mindset of engaging with the labour market in a manner that is meaningful to them.

Lichtenberg and Smith (2009) point out that in Australia “career support addressing the needs of cultural and minority groups has had limited systematic attention”, with the focus instead being on

the needs of “mainstream secondary students and, to a lesser extent, on the long-term unemployed” (45). Helme (2009) has identified recent research that found that only 18% of a sample of Victorian careers counsellors (144) were equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding to effectively work with Indigenous students, and only 19% knew of the existence of Indigenous Support units in universities.

As Gray Poehnell, author of *Guiding Circles*, a resource for working with indigenous populations, suggests in his definition of career integrity: “Career integrity involves a life/work balance in which people can live and work with integrity, in a manner consistent with who they are, with what is most important to them and their sense of hope” (Poehnell, Career Integrity PPT, http://www.aboriginalhr.ca/HRconference/presentations/Gray_Poehnell.pdf).

In addressing the needs of a diverse range of target cohort groups, practitioners or deliverers of services need to be able to deliver services in a manner that is consistent with this definition of career integrity, sensitive to the particular identities of clients, and not in accordance with assumed or abstract principles of what the “typical” client needs.

Lehman et al also suggest that one of the keys to “planning and implementing individualised transition support is to empower youth to determine their futures by providing the types of information and support that match the strengths, needs, and life circumstances of each youth” (135).

Cobb and Alwel also support student-focused planning, as it appears to hold the promise of delivering “important outcomes for students (or their parents) who are shaping their skills to participate in their own planning for their future after school” (2009, 77). Woolsey and Katz-Leavy take this a step further, by recommending the incorporation of “youth voices into the development and implementation of program services and policies” (2008, 17).

A recent review of the Careers Wales service defined 6 features that ensure services can be accessed and utilised by all citizens:

- **Coherence:** this includes the setting of delivery frameworks, quality standards, quality assurance mechanisms (in Wales this includes the Estyn inspection framework)
- **Channelling:** this concerns modes and channels of delivery: walk-in centres, face-to-face delivery, telephone services, online services, integrated customer management systems⁸
- **Differentiation:** this involves a “triage”-like system whereby customers are assigned to different services based upon assessment of their presenting needs⁹
- **Penetration:** this involves the level of market “penetration” of services (i.e. proportion of eligible citizens actually using services)
- **Targeting:** that is, programmes that have an outreach function in relation to identified priority groups, and
- **Marketing:** promotional activity designed to raise awareness and the profile of services (Welsh Assembly Government 2009, 22).

Australia has, since the OECD review of services in the country, made some progress against some of these features, but others still remain substantively unaddressed. In relation to coherence, it has developed the *Australian Blueprint for Career Development*, *Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners* and has developed entry-level qualifications for associate level practitioners, and *Guiding Principles for Career Development Services and Career Information*

⁸Careers NZ is noted as being more advanced in this regard.

⁹Career Scotland is noted as being more advanced in this regard.

Products. The extent to which these measures have impacted on consistency of services is largely unknown, as their uptake has been largely voluntary, highly dependent on the enthusiasm and commitment of individual practitioners, and with limited resource available to support their implementation.

In relation to channelling, service provision has remained fairly static, without an integrated or multi-faceted approach to service delivery. There is a national telephone-based career service; however it is targeted at unemployed persons 45 years and over. There is no national online career guidance *service*. Many services continue to be delivered in the traditional face-to-face format with little integration with other forms of delivery, and limited integration between different areas of career development delivery (between schools, universities and VET institutions, for instance).

Differentiation of particular groups does occur to a certain extent with different levels of services being made available to young people depending on their level of engagement with education, training and/or employment. DEEWR funded Youth Connections services, for example, provide services for young people at risk and/or disengaged from education, training and/or employment.

Career development services also lack a strong brand and identity in Australia and bodies such as Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) and the Career Development Association of Australia (CDAA) are recognised primarily by those within the industry, rather than the general public.

The role of marketing in ensuring the most broad uptake of services is confirmed by a comparative survey of the national career services in the UK and New Zealand, where a review of the New Zealand Career Services indicated the level of take-up of the Careers Services helpline as under a quarter of that for Learndirect in the UK:

This seems clearly to be related to the level of brand recognition among the general public, which has been around 30% for the ‘relatively unpublicised’ Career Services in NZ, in contrast to figures of over 80% for Learndirect Advice a UK distance guidance service. Such differences in turn seem likely to be linked to the size of marketing budgets: the Learndirect marketing budget as a percentage of total turnover (its budget has been consistently set at one-third of total advice turnover) is nearly five times larger than that for Career Services (Watts and Dent 2008).

According to these access criteria, therefore, Australia has some way to travel before it can claim to be approaching such principles of best practice in relation to the provision of universal access.

A model of differentiated service provision that sits within a model of universal access, that is often identified in the literature as an instance of world’s best practice is the model of “customer segmentation” employed by Careers Scotland, which takes into account the different potentials that clients bring to the service. As Watts notes, the Careers Scotland customer segmentation model is based upon a model of differentiated service delivery developed at Florida State University (FSU). This model distinguishes three levels of service, related to individuals’ readiness for career decision-making:

- Those who are initially judged to have a high level of readiness can be referred to self-help services: career resource rooms and web sites designed to help them to select, find, sequence and use resources with little or no help.
- Those judged to have a moderate level of readiness can be referred to brief staff-assisted services: some help with the use of resources, supplemented by group sessions.
- Those with a low level of readiness can be referred to intensive (individual case-managed) services: individual counseling and longer-term group counseling (Watts 2005, 11).

Such a model of service differentiation is clearly essential to ensuring services are well-matched to individual needs—as recommended by the OECD (2004b)—and that intensive services are not delivered to everyone irrespective of need—thus resulting in the over-allocation of resources—or

that self-help services or “passive” methods such as information provision are inappropriately directed to individuals in need of far greater assistance.

The level of flexibility and recognition of differential customer need accommodated by this model has been identified as having considerable advantages in terms of resource allocation and cost efficiency, not to mention effectively matching the right level of support and service provision to meet the needs of the most disengaged and disadvantaged clients.

Customer segmentation and service differentiation models are clearly important to ensuring that the needs of target groups are met. But as argued earlier, it is difficult, and indeed dangerous, to generalise a priori what those needs might be according to some presumed characteristics of gender, ethnicity or other culturally differentiating factor.

The fundamental principle in relation to access and equity for target group members is that universally accessible services need to have the flexibility *built-in* to enable them to adapt in response to the needs of diverse groups. Much of this has to do with the cultural competency of practitioners themselves, and their ability to be truly flexible and adapt services in light of different levels and types of “life complexity.”

Again, this then highlights the importance of the role of the *Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners*, and other initiatives currently underway to increase the professionalism of the career development workforce.

3.6.3.1 Career services for groups traditionally disadvantaged in the labour market

Career services are often credited with a capacity to reduce levels of disengagement and dissociation from learning and productive activity. They are often assigned by the research a particular capacity to raise the aspirations and attainment of disadvantaged groups, by raising awareness of options, and providing strategies for overcoming barriers of disadvantage. Some evidence of this has been described earlier in this report (see Social Research and Demonstration Corporation 2009 longitudinal study in Canada, and the recent LSAY reports by Sikora and Saha 2011, and Thomson and Hillman 2010, for example). As Sweet and Watts argue: “Well organised career services can be a significant way to overcome the lack of social capital among disadvantaged groups: for example by incorporating mentoring, work experience and role models and information and personal guidance” (4).

When delivered in a way that is relevant to the social context and career values of disadvantaged groups, and recognises and incorporates the positive value of cultural differences and value systems, career learning and guidance services are able to address barriers to engagement with education and training and the labour market, by disentangling the conflicting values of their culture and community and that of the workplace/labour market that compromises motivation and decision-making for many disengaged and disadvantaged young people (Poehnell 2007).

As Woolsey & Katz-Leavy (2008) argue for provision of student-centred career services to young people with disabilities, and for the development of a “process that identifies individual strengths or ‘gifts’ as the stepping stone to the development of education, career, and life goals, and the gateway to discovery and hope”, as well as recommending programs that “individualise exposure to the world of work and to incorporate activities that meet youth and young adults ‘where they’re at’” (17).

Career services can also provide the link into the necessary networks of support—peers, employers, employment agencies, education and training providers, etc.—that constitute the “social capital” that all young people need to be able to make successful transitions. For young people who become disengaged from education, employment or training, it is usually due to some deficiency or incoherence in this network of social capital, not a deficiency of the young person themselves.

McIlveen, Ford and Everton (2005), examining the post-school transitions of rural students, found that in addition to information provision, considerable awareness-raising was required to convince many students of the feasibility of available post-school education and training pathways, because they were perceived as too distant and remote from their immediate context (2005, 2-3). “In order to raise rural students’ awareness of university life and the potential educational and career options available, the program addressed issues surrounding rurality and students’ mindset in relation to university” (McIlveen, Ford and Everton 2005, 3).

McIlveen et al (2005) identified an initiative designed to assist the study to work transitions of students with a disability, and key to the approach was the formation of a forum that effectively linked students with one another, with employers, with employment agencies, State and Commonwealth agencies, and key staff at the university’s careers service. Here we can see the deliberate formation of a network of social capital by means of the program, that is able to correct the lack of access to such networks of capital for students with disability: “Feedback from students indicated the value of the event in terms of outcome and process” (McIlveen, Ford and Everton 2005, Abstract).

3.6.3.2 Effective career development for Indigenous young people

While the general approaches to professional career development practice described above can move some way to ensuring the needs of specific target groups are met, the specific needs of Indigenous young people require a particular focus (Helme, 2009; Lichtenberg and Smith, 2009; Sarra, 2008).

As Lichtenberg and Smith point out, some Indigenous young people face several barriers and challenges to successful completion of education and training and transitions into work including lower literacy and numeracy levels, lower socioeconomic status, low levels of proficiency in English (12.1% of Indigenous people speak an Indigenous language at home), and that 64% of the Indigenous population live in remote/very remote, and/or disadvantaged communities (2009). Young Indigenous people can also find school environments uncomfortable, and can also have low academic expectations, which can be shared by their teachers, peer, employers and families (Helme, 2009; Lichtenberg and Smith, 2009; Sarra, 2008).

Given the socio-political disadvantage Indigenous young people face, Sarra argues that effective career counselling “that accommodates the broader context of Aboriginal career decision making does more than assist the individual to make sound career decisions. It plays a part in the empowerment of all Aboriginal people” (cited in Helme 2009, 75). As Sarra points out this work also “often requires considerable personal and peer-based reflection and strategising to challenge the superficial and often manipulative patterns of communication that many Indigenous people regularly have to confront” (8).

An important aspect of career development approaches tailored to the needs of Indigenous young people is the need to overcome socio-political inequality, such as structural racism and asymmetrical distribution of resources, to create links between their own self-concept and the world of work: a difficult task in the face of intergenerational unemployment and poverty. As Sarra and others (Diemer et al 2010; Irving, 2009) point out, an important step for young people in minority groups is to identify the historical, social and cultural context of their career decision making.

Sarra also emphasises that career practitioners should:

- Acknowledge and value Aboriginal identity
- Challenge the client to examine a broad range of options to break new ground and create role models for others
- Encourage clients to consider careers away from home and family while including assistance in identifying alternative social support structures, and

- Encourage clients to use Indigenous specific programs and support mechanisms without guilt or embarrassment (cited in Helme 2009, 75).

An important feature of any program designed to meet the needs of Indigenous young people will be the connections that are made with employers, and the broader community and in particular with mentors and Indigenous role models that can assist young people to make “positive career decisions so they can in turn establish themselves as positive role models for other young Aboriginal young people to follow” (Sarra cited in Helme 76).

3.6.3.3 The career development needs of young children

Another key decision for career development policy is considering the appropriate age brackets and timing of career development interventions and delivery. The OECD (2004a) report notes the most typical approach internationally is to concentrate career education in lower and middle secondary education, with the exceptions of some countries (Canada, the Czech Republic, Finland and Spain) where it extends into upper secondary education. Career related learning in some contexts (Canada, the Czech Republic and Denmark) also begins as early as primary school.

The dominant pattern of age-based delivery reflects the assumption that “the key career-related decisions are made at the end of compulsory schooling” (OECD 2004a, 44). It is now generally recognised that this assumption is out of date, and the end of compulsory education in many cases no longer represents “the main point of transition from school to the labour market, or from school to very specific occupational preparation” (ibid, 45). This point, made in the 2004 OECD Bridging the Gap report, was valid at the time and is perhaps even more so today.

The importance of starting career related learning early in childhood has been long established within careers research literature (Auger, Blackhurst and Wahl 2005; Hodder 2005; McMahon and Rixon 2007; Watson and McMahon 2004), and most reports relating to best practice—such as the 2004 OECD report and Sweet et al (2009)—all insist that ideally career development services should begin in schooling as early as possible.

Furthermore, as Watts argues: “Most of the factors unconsciously affecting young people’s career choices are in place by the time they are 13 years old” (2001, 6), while Auger, Blackhurst and Wahl (2005) found evidence in the research literature that career development is a lifelong process that begins in childhood (Magnuson and Starr 2000; Trice 1991; Trice and McClellan 1993, 1994). Another investigation found that half of a group of children aged 9 and 10 believed they had already made decisions that would impact their future careers (Seligman, Weinstock and Heflin 1991), while another found that 23% of adults aged 40-55 had made decisions about their current professions in childhood (Trice and McClellan 1994). Mitchell and Krumboltz (1996) describe how children learn about occupations and career through imaginative association with significant others such as their parents, and perceptions of their parents’ relation to their own occupation/career trajectories.

The family context has huge unconscious influence in the decision-making of 14-18 year olds. For most people the choices made are “a synthesis of inherited values and emerging individual values” (Centre for Studies in Enterprise 2004, 10). Whether we make efforts to engage parents or not, they are in fact active and significant participants in the career development of their children. Parents influence their children’s learning and growth through their love, encouragement and discipline; their assumptions and values; through raising aspirations; and through their own experiences of learning and work. Parents are an important part of the system of complex interrelationships that Patton and McMahon (1999) describe as influencing the career development of all individuals.

As the Centre for Studies in Enterprise (2004) suggests, young people are not blank sheets on which to write the hoped-for learning outcomes of career education. They bring the accumulated life and work experiences of their parents, families and communities to their future career choices.

In her masters thesis, Monica Hodder (2005) argues:

Primary school aged children, according to Gottfredson, are classifying occupations, and the world of work generally, according to occupational sex-types and, to a lesser degree, by social status. Children are making decisions about what occupations are deemed unacceptable; it is true that at this early stage children are eliminating career options without conscious recognition that they are doing so. [. . .] it appears beneficial for children to be aware of what happens in the jobs they are rejecting. It is also considered important to children that the influencing factors upon which they are basing their decisions are identified (42).

Hodder also argues that because children have been found to be excluding career options early in school, it would be advantageous for children to have access to greater information about occupations and work roles to make this process more explicit:

The implications of this investigative study are that children will benefit from greater access to career education, commencing as early as primary school. In order to make realistic future occupational selections children will benefit from having more specific information regarding occupational tasks. It therefore follows that teachers need to be made aware of these implications and plan relevant curricula to address the specific needs of students (vii).

Many teachers in primary schools, although they may not be familiar with career development frameworks, are aware of the importance of expanding children's awareness of the work that adults do and of challenging their attitudes about gendered work roles. As a consequence, many primary teachers engage their students in learning which could be described as career-related learning.

NICEC (1998) suggests that:

Career-related learning is not about bringing a traditional careers education into the primary classroom on a formal basis but rather about building on children's natural curiosity and their existing perceptions of work roles on an informal basis. It is complementary to the curriculum in that children learn about the working world through subjects such as history, geography and science (NICEC, 1988).

Similarly, Watts argues that "career-related learning is not about asking eight-year olds what they want to do in the future! – children must be allowed their childhood. It is work that builds on children's growing awareness of themselves and the world of work, and weaves what they know into useful learning for now and later" (2001, 2).

He goes on to suggest that whether we consciously do anything about it or not, children are constantly assembling impressions of the world of work, and where they fit in it, through:

- What they see in the media
- What they hear people at home and around them say, and
- Some of the games they play and the roles they act out.

"In these ways children develop ideas about the world outside and beyond school" (Watts 2001, 2).

As a recent UK report (2009) makes clear, the early intervention approach is key to a holistic approach to career development:

Three years after leaving primary school, students are required to make decisions that will influence their subsequent life chances. Their decisions will be influenced by what they think they already know about themselves, about work and the job roles available to them. Leaving this to secondary schools relies on too little, too late (Department of Children Schools and Families 22).

There is an opportunity, in primary school, to introduce career related learning that more intentionally fosters young people's career development in developmentally appropriate ways.

3.6.4 Involving parents and carers

Research over the past twenty years emphasises the overwhelmingly positive benefits of families, schools and communities working together with a shared understanding and focus on the needs of young people (McGregor 2006). Mapp claims a “positive and convincing relationship between family involvement and better physical as well as improved academic achievement. This relationship rolls across families of all economic levels, racial, ethnic and educational backgrounds, and for students of all ages” (cited in McGregor 2006).

In response to such findings, educators are experimenting with ways to actively engage parents in their children’s learning. Given that career development is now recognised as a developmental learning process, the need to engage parents in career development learning programs is becoming increasingly apparent, since parents/families are at the centre of most young people’s identities and experiences, and are therefore key players in the overall process of career development.

The involvement of parents in their children’s transition through education is universally encouraged in all academic and governmental literature reviewed. According to Grigal and Neubert, parental involvement in the transition process “is perhaps the most significant factor in the transition outcomes for students from youth into adulthood” (2004). Family involvement has been recognised as essential in ensuring desired transition outcomes for students (Landmark, Zhang and Montoya 2007, p. 68).

The increasing awareness of the importance of career development has seen the incorporation of a focus upon career development into parent engagement strategies. Although at this stage this focus has been largely concentrated at the latter end of the schooling cycle, most clearly in the workshops delivered in New Zealand, Canada and Australia, which seek to enlist parents as career transition “partners” or “allies.”

A report by Saulwick Muller Social Research (2006) on the broader Family-Schools partnerships project examines a range of programs and initiatives designed to engage parents, which include such delivery mechanisms as workshops, parent/community learning centres, parent excursions, information sessions, meetings and conferences. These initiatives have been employed in a variety of contexts with students and parents from a range of social and cultural backgrounds.

Recent initiatives—such as Parents as Career Educators in New Zealand, the Lasting Gifts program from Canada, the Parents as Career Transitions Supports (PACT) program piloted by the Brotherhood of St Laurence, and the Parents as Career Partners (PACP) programs implemented in Western Australia and South Australia—are significant in their attempt to more specifically engage parents in their children’s career development.

These programs represent perhaps the current “best practice” in identified parental engagement strategies, incorporating as they do two elements of parental engagement in student learning that have been shown by research to be effective in positively influencing student outcomes, that is:

- exploring parental aspirations/expectations as a crucial influence on a young person’s development including their career development; and
- encouraging direct engagement with children in learning/developmental activity.

These workshop initiatives add to these strategies a third co-efficient of cultivating parents as de-facto career practitioners (or “career partners”), a strategy which is yet to be formally evaluated in terms of its influence on student development.

Since it is widely acknowledged that the influence of parents is great, efforts need to be made to harness positive parental influences where they exist and to compensate where possible for any unintended influences that restrict young people’s choices and transitions to further education or work.

Summary

It has long been recognised by researchers and through professional experience that career development services have a key role to play in advancing the access and equity agenda, and facilitating access to learning, work and self-development opportunities for a range of groups traditionally marginalised within education and training and labour market systems. These groups include:

- Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse groups;
- Low socioeconomic status and low-level educated groups
- People with disability
- Learners in rural/regional/remote areas, and
- Women.

However, the effectiveness of these services to meet the needs of a range of diverse groups hinges upon the capacity of practitioners to diversify service provision based upon the recognition and understanding of different levels of life complexity. This highlights the importance of practitioners being adequately qualified professionals, and adhering to the *Professional Standards for Career Development Practitioners*, which stipulates the need for services to be responsive to the needs of diverse clients. Raising awareness of the *Guiding Principles for Career Development Services and Career Information Products*—which also contains provisions relating to diversity of access—will also foster enhanced incorporation of diversity issues into the delivery of services.

It is also necessary that services themselves be able to be accessed in such a way that they recognise the diversity and complexity of client needs. A client-segmentation model, which channels users into an appropriate service level at point of entry —such as that in operation in Scotland—provides a useful model here.

Also key to successful expansion of access to career development services for a range of groups is expanding their availability and reach: by beginning in primary school; extending into tertiary and post-compulsory institutions, and involving a broad range of stakeholders, including, most critically, parents and carers who are shown throughout the available research to have a critical influence upon the career development of young people in their care.

3.7 Suggested Criteria for Effective Practice

The following criteria for effective practice have been distilled and synthesised from the above literature review and discussion of the existing literature and research evidence base. They draw upon the OECD (2004a and 2004b) recommendations on the essential features of effective lifelong guidance systems, as well as the more recent (2009) Victorian report “Making Career Development Core Business,” which outlines a series of best practice criteria based on a current international literature review.

We have also drawn upon a number of features of instances of identified international best practice where it seemed pertinent to do so. Most of these features have been drawn from career and guidance systems in New Zealand, the UK (including Wales and Scotland) and Canada, as being instances of more developed career and guidance systems based in cultural contexts broadly comparable to Australia.

The effective practice criteria identify the characteristics of:

- Effective career development systems
- Effective delivery mechanisms, and
- Effective career development content.

The Characteristics of Effective Career Development Systems

1. Career development systems are characterised by strong and accountable leadership.
2. Promotional activity is sufficient to raise awareness and the profile of services.
3. Clients of all ages, regardless of their background or location, are able to easily access career development services
4. Clients of all ages have access to service delivery that is independent of the interests of particular institutions or enterprises.
5. Career development practitioners are provided with sufficient professional support and resources to perform their work to defined quality standards.
6. Data is gathered on the financial and human resources devoted to career development services, on client need and demand, on the characteristics of clients, on client satisfaction, and on the outcomes and cost-effectiveness of career development services.

The Characteristics of Effective Delivery Mechanisms

7. Career development services are delivered via a recognisable entry point and use multiple delivery channel arrangements, including walk-in centres, face-to-face delivery, telephone services, online services, and learning experiences.
8. In schools, developmentally appropriate career education is a compulsory curriculum subject and/or a set of integrated activities that form part of the routine life of the school.
9. Children in primary schools have the opportunity to engage in intentional and developmentally appropriate career-related learning activities.
10. Delivery frameworks, quality standards and quality assurance mechanisms guide all service provision.
11. Service providers show the capacity to adapt service provision in light of differences in socio-cultural understandings and/or practices.

12. Programs in primary and secondary schools recognise the role of parents/carers and employers and engage them fully in young people's career development.

The Characteristics of Effective Content

13. Exemplary career development programs are outcomes-focussed and foster the development of individuals' own career management competence and resilience.
14. Career development programs in educational settings offer experiential learning linked to the labour market, so that young people are given opportunities to investigate and experience a range of learning and work options before making career decisions.
15. Services are underpinned by comprehensive educational, occupational and other relevant labour market information.

The remaining sections of this report were deleted prior to publication as they contain personal information, business information and/or information under consideration by the Australian Government