

National Career Development Strategy (NCDS) Research Project

Element 2: Synthesis Report

April 2011



URBIS STAFF RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS REPORT WERE:

Director	Alison Wallace, Roberta Ryan
Associate Director	Lee Holloway
Senior Consultant	Sam Ryan Watkins, Benita Power
Consultant	Susan Hatherly
Group Support	Lynda Jones, Jillian Rose
Job Code	SSP32710



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1 Executive Summary

Urbis was commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to identify and analyse the career development needs and wants of young people (5-24 years), their parents, teachers and communities. This research is one of four major elements commissioned to inform the creation of a National Career Development Strategy (NCDS).

This document is the Synthesis Report.

1.1 AIMS OF THIS RESEARCH

The stated aims of this research are to provide analysis on:

- the career development needs, wants and issues of both 'mainstream' young people and harder to reach or potentially disadvantaged young people (including young people at risk, Indigenous young people, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) young people, young people with a disability, young refugees, young people with caring responsibilities and young people in regional, rural and remote locations) as well as parents and carers, career practitioners, teachers and employers
- the career development needs and wants of young people at different schooling levels, including children in primary school, young people in secondary school and young people in higher education and VET
- the career development needs and wants of young people currently not engaged in education
- the career development needs at the primary school level to ensure that practices are in place that support the growth of career development skills from a very early age
- the knowledge and skills of the individual where effective career development has occurred
- what is needed by young people to assist them with making better choices in relation to their learning, education and employment
- the role of online information, web-based and interactive technologies in meeting the career development needs of young people and their parents
- awareness and perception of career development services, information and guidance by young people, their parents, teachers, communities and employers.

1.2 RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

The methodology for this research project involved a mixed method qualitative and quantitative approach. The research included focus group discussions, one on one in-depth interviews, online surveys and Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) with young people, parents, teachers, employers, career practitioners and other stakeholders. In total, over 5,500 people were consulted and/or surveyed as part of the project. The research was conducted over a five month period from November 2010 to March 2011.

This Synthesis Report draws together the results from the qualitative and quantitative research to present the key findings.

1.3 DEFINITIONS

In this report, 'career development' is defined as the complex process of managing life, learning and work over the lifespan (Miles Morgan 2003)¹. In some instances, we make a distinction between 'career education' and 'career guidance', which both contribute to a young person's career development. 'Career education' is the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes through a planned program of learning experiences that will assist young people with making informed career decisions (MCEETYA Career

¹ Miles Morgan Australia, *Australian Blueprint for Career Development*, Draft Prototype, July 2003

Education Taskforce 1998)². 'Career guidance' is counselling and advice provided to young people to assist them with developing a specific understanding of the realistic learning and work opportunities available to them (Miles Morgan 2003).

Career development services can be defined as a wide range of programs and services provided in many different jurisdictions and delivery settings. Their object is to assist individuals to gain the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours to manage their life, learning and work in self-directed ways³.

1.4 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Young people's career development needs and wants

This research suggests young people have personalised and unique career development needs and wants. The ways in which young people approach and respond to career development varies from individual to individual. Young people have unique career aspirations, which are influenced by different sources and experiences. They begin thinking about their career options at various ages and have different preferences on when and how they want career information and advice communicated to them.

Broadly speaking, young people appear to approach career development in one of the following ways:

Some young people form a specific career idea at an early age. This is often derived from a strong family influence, an early detection of a particular aptitude or interest, or a unique experience they have as a child which gives them exposure to specific career options (eg an illness as a child which exposes them to doctors and nurses). These young people want career guidance about their chosen vocation and opportunities to test out these ideas at an early age. Such opportunities are not always available under the current service delivery system which generally seems to confine the provision of career guidance to the later years of secondary school. Notwithstanding this, there is a general view that these young people still need career education to broaden their horizons and develop their general skills and competencies as they may not remain attached to this specific vocation throughout the rest of their lives.

Other young people form general ideas about future work or study options based on their values, interests and their understanding of their own skills and aptitudes. These ideas will often change with gained experiences, exposure, knowledge and self-awareness. This group of young people may find experiential learning and opportunities to refine and test out these ideas particularly useful. It was commonly suggested by research participants that these young people also need relevant and current labour market and study related information to ensure they are able to make informed career decisions.

Yet other young people have no idea what they want to do or are disinterested in engaging with the career development process. Career development services may face greater challenges in meeting the needs and wants of these young people. Strategies for engaging these young people and more effective communication of the importance and relevance of career development may be useful. These young people need help to figure out what their interests, values, strengths and weaknesses are. They also need someone to help them link their personal interests and abilities to particular career paths, and opportunities to test them out.

The provision of career development

The provision of career development should involve a client-centred approach. It should be delivered in a flexible, personalised manner that responds to the individual needs, wants and preferences of young people. Career development should take into account the individual interests, values, capabilities and circumstances of young people and be delivered in a way that reflects the young person's age, how they as an individual approach career development, and how they prefer to be communicated with.

Provision currently is focused in secondary schools, which is generally deemed to be appropriate as young people need to make important work and study decisions during this time. Awareness, access and quality of career development in secondary schools are currently variable.

² Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), *National Principles for Career Education*, MCEETYA, Canberra, 1998

³ Career Industry Council of Australia, *Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners*, Revised 2007

There are varying levels of satisfaction with career development in secondary school among young people, parents, teachers and career practitioners. While the majority of people surveyed express overall satisfaction with the quality, access and timing of career development in secondary schools, this satisfaction is qualified with the majority of people saying they are *fairly satisfied* rather than *very satisfied*, and also by the fact that around one in four respondents identify unmet career development needs in secondary schools. Of all the cohorts, young people who have left school are the least satisfied with career development in school.

Schools could improve career development by ensuring the career development activities they provide align with the career development activities young people find most useful. At present, the evidence suggests young people are getting less of the career development they find most useful, including *'hands on'* activities such as work experience/work placement and visits to or by universities and TAFEs, and more of the career development they currently find least useful such as discussions with a school career practitioner.

This research indicates there is scope to improve career development in all schools, and particularly in Government schools, small schools, and schools in regional, rural, remote and low socio-economic status (SES) areas.

In relation to the timing of provision, young people need more flexible options. The timing of career development should recognise that young people start thinking seriously about their career options at different ages (eg some at an early age and some much later in life). Career development should be available to be accessed when young people want to receive it and when they are likely to be most receptive to it.

There appears to be gaps for young people who want to access career development services earlier, particularly career guidance and experiential learning opportunities. It is commonly agreed by career practitioners, parents and teachers that career development services should be available at an earlier stage in young people's schooling years than what is currently common practice.

The biggest gap in the provision of career development is for young people who are no longer in education. Most young people not in education do not know where to go for career information and guidance, and those that do know where to go report that the support they receive is not satisfactory. Young people not in education need a clear, central point at which to enter the service delivery system, where they can access a range of career development services that will respond to their individual needs, wants and preferences.

Young people, parents, teachers, educational institutions, and employers need to have a better understanding of what career development is, its relevance, value, and the benefits that it can offer. Limited understanding of what career services have to offer can act as a barrier for accessing services or engagement with career development activities. Some young people reflecting back on their schooling years said at the time they did not understand the relevance of career development but now regret not engaging with it and fear they may have made some wrong career related decisions. Improvements to the way career development services are branded, marketed and positioned could enhance awareness of career development and understandings of its importance.

While career practitioners are generally seen by educational institutions as being best placed to provide career information and advice, young people often prefer to receive this advice from people working in the industry in which they have an interest, family and peers. This may partly be due to the fact that many young people report negative experiences with specialist career practitioners or a limited understanding of their relevance and usefulness. There is a view that to provide quality career development, specialist career practitioners need to be adequately qualified and properly resourced. They also need to have sufficient time allocated for one-on-one consultations, and the support of higher level staff (eg the school principal).

There is a distinction between *responsibility* for career development of young people, and *influences* in the career development of young people. Parents appear to have the most significant *influence* in the career development of young people, while educational institutions are viewed by parents, career practitioners and teachers as having the primary *responsibility* for the career development of young people. Employment services (eg Centrelink and the Job Network) and employers have a role to play in the career development of young people not in education. Young people generally see *themselves* as

primarily responsible for their own career development and others as responsible for supporting their career development.

There is scope for career development to be delivered in a more coordinated, joined-up, holistic way. While career practitioners are one source of career development, they are not the only source, and are often not the most significant or influential. Although parents appear to be the most significant influence in young people's career aspirations and decisions, they have varying capacities to cater to their children's career development needs and wants. Other influences in young people's career decisions include other family members, school teachers, friends and classmates, employers and broader community groups. The provision of career development should recognise this by involving parents, teachers, employers, and other community groups to a greater extent, to ensure their influence is valuable. Specialist career services should facilitate the development of networks and relationships with these groups to support them to participate in the career development of young people.

Young people need options in how to access career information and advice. Preferences for how they want to be communicated with vary according to their age, and the type of career development they are seeking (eg career guidance versus career information). Young people need a combination of methods including: personalised one-on-one discussions with people who have industry experience, university and TAFE representatives, family members, career practitioners, and classroom teachers; experiential learning opportunities; printed materials and online resources. As previously stated, this research suggests young people in schools are currently receiving less of the information and activities they find most useful (eg work experiences and visits to workplaces) and more of the activities they find less useful (eg interviews with a career practitioner).

While some young people prefer to access career information online this is generally not seen to be the most useful source of career development, with young people favouring personalised one on one discussions and opportunities for experiential learning. With the exception of young people not in education, the internet is generally seen as complementing these other, more useful, forms of career development. Young people not in education appear to be more likely to use online resources to obtain career information than young people engaged with educational institutions, partly because there is a lack of viable alternatives.

There is evidence that some teachers and parents, particularly those in rural, regional and remote locations, rely on the internet to obtain career information and advice to help their children. They say a website which provides a *one stop shop* for information on local labour market demand, skills shortages, awards and pay rates, the top universities and university courses in the country, and the cost of tertiary programs of study, would be beneficial. There is a view that the information currently available online is fragmented and difficult to access. Career practitioners also rely on the internet for career information and advice and say better internet resources would enhance the provision of effective career development.

Career development for potentially disadvantaged groups

Potentially disadvantaged young people share many of the same views as mainstream young people on the adequacy of career development inside and outside the education system. However, they also report specific challenges in accessing career development and barriers to achieving their career aspirations. These barriers, for example, may relate to language and cultural barriers, lack of family support or role models, financial disadvantage (eg inability to afford post-school study), access barriers (eg due to caring or family commitments), and disengagement from learning and educational institutions.

Potentially disadvantaged young people may have unique career development need and wants that require tailored, individualised responses. Career development for these young people may need to be thought of differently, because underlying issues affecting access to career development often need to be considered before the career development needs and wants of these young people can be addressed.

A key message from all potentially disadvantaged young people is that they do not want any assumptions made about what they can and cannot do in relation to their future career.

The provision of career development at different stages of education

The diagram below outlines the career development needs and wants and the related service delivery response at the different stages of education. This presents the career development needs and wants of young people in a temporal, linear fashion to highlight the overall key themes and issues for each stage. While recognising and addressing the unique needs of young people at these different stages is important, the system needs to be flexible and client-centred to respond to the different ways in which young people approach career development.

	NEEDS AND WANTS	SERVICE DELIVERY	RESPONSIBILITY AND INFLUENCES
Primary School	<p>Young people in primary school need to be introduced to the world of work, have their horizons broadened. This is important for combating any negative influences of family, SES or culture and overcoming gender stereotyping.</p> <p>Young people in primary school also need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to develop general skills and competencies • to have an understanding of their skills and aptitudes • to begin to make links between classroom learning and the world of work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career education (the development of general skills, knowledge and attitudes to assist with managing future careers) is appropriate in primary school but there is not a great need for career guidance. • Currently there is room for improvement in the consistent delivery of career education. • Some primary teachers say support from professional development and external specialist services would assist them to deliver career education more effectively. • There is relatively little support to formally incorporate career education into the primary school curriculum. Instead, it should be linked more consistently with existing actions, programs and teachings. 	<p>Parents/family members and schools are mainly responsible.</p> <p>Influences include parents/family members, schools, exposure, personal interests and the media.</p>
Secondary School	<p>Young people in secondary school need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to have their horizons broadened • an understanding of skills, values, interests and how they link to career options • opportunities to test out their career ideas through experiential learning • to be focused on forward thinking and planning • an understanding of the pathways to achieving their career goals • work and study specific information (labour market, salaries, courses available etc) to ensure they are making informed decisions • to develop general life skills and competencies and pre-work skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current access to and quality of career development in secondary schools is variable. • Effective career development is individualised and personalised, independent and offers experiential learning opportunities. • There is overall room for improvement and particularly for Government schools, small schools, and schools in regional, rural, remote and low SES areas. • Career development could be improved by ensuring the activities provided align with the activities that young people find most useful. • There is potential for secondary school students to have increased access to people with industry experience, employers and TAFE/ University representatives • Career services could be professionalised to a greater extent • Career services should be made available earlier for those who want to access them. • Career practitioners should facilitate networks and relationships with parents, subject teachers and employers to a greater extent. 	<p>Schools, young people, and parents/family members are mainly responsible.</p> <p>Influences include parents/family members, personal interests, exposure, career practitioners and classroom teachers, work placement/work experience, talking to someone with industry experience, labour market demands, and the media.</p>

	NEEDS AND WANTS	SERVICE DELIVERY	RESPONSIBILITY AND INFLUENCES
Tertiary education	<p>Young people in tertiary education need and want:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contact with industry and employers • opportunity for experiential and integrated learning (eg work placements and internships) • an understanding of how their course of study translates into practical work options and relates to labour market demands • assistance with making this transition from university/TAFE to the workforce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of career development services in university is generally thought to be satisfactory but there is room for improved promotion and marketing of services to increase levels of awareness. • Quality of career development services in VET is less satisfactory. • The credibility of career development services in VET is undermined because it is seen as lacking links with industry. • Career development services in tertiary institutions could better facilitate access to industry and employers. • Tertiary institutions could provide better provision of information and guidance on courses <i>before</i> young people start studying. • TAFEs could brand and market their career development services more effectively. • Universities and TAFEs can do more to ensure all students, including those studying by correspondence, have access to career development services. 	<p>TAFE/universities, young people, schools, and parents/family members are mainly responsible.</p> <p>Influences include personal interests, parents/family members, teachers and career practitioners, peers, government agencies, labour market demands, and financial considerations.</p>
Not in education	<p>Young people not in education are a diverse group who have diverse career development needs and wants and who need to access information in a variety of ways.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a major gap in the provision of career development for young people not in education. • Some young people simply don't know where to go. • Those that do know where to go have mixed views on the quality of advice provided by employment service providers. The internet is also seen as having limitations because it only allows young people to source information, not ask questions and obtain advice. • Centrelink, employment service providers and employers could better be engaged and supported to provide career development to young people not in education. • A service with a clear, central point at which to enter the system, that provides a range of career development services, may be beneficial to young people not in education. 	<p>Young people, parents/family members, employment service providers, and employers are mainly responsible.</p> <p>Influences include personal interests, parents/family members, peers, youth service workers, financial considerations, transport, and labour market demands.</p>

2 Introduction

In November 2010, Urbis was commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to undertake Element 2 of the National Career Development Strategy Research Project. This is the Synthesis Report which draws together the key findings from the various streams of research conducted for this project.

2.1 THE POLICY CONTEXT

In support of the Australian Government's agenda on productivity and workforce participation, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) has set targets to drive reforms in the areas of schooling, skills and workforce development. These include:

- achieving a national Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate of 90% by 2015
- halving the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates by 2020.

To support the delivery of these reforms, the Australian Government is working together with the State and Territory Governments to implement a National Partnership (NP) Agreement on Youth Attainment and Transitions. Under the NP, the Australian Government is committed to the implementation and administration of national career development initiatives. This will be facilitated through the creation and implementation of a National Career Development Strategy.

In line with the NP Agreement, the desired outcome of the NCDS is to maximise the educational engagement and attainment of young people and to improve their transition to post school education, training and employment. More specifically, the NCDS aims to:

- ensure equity of access to appropriate and quality career education and guidance at key transition points
- support all young people to gain the skills to manage their own career development over their lifespan
- support individuals to take responsibility for and manage their own learning and career directions across their lifespan
- ensure that practices are in place that support the growth of career development skills from a very early age.

2.2 THE NATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

The purpose of the NCDS Research Project is to assist the Australian Government to provide policy leadership in the career development agenda by building an evidence base and presenting options to inform future directions. The Australian Government is currently responsible for a range of national career development initiatives and resources. National Career Development Strategy funding under the NP Agreement may continue to provide support for these existing projects and/or may result in the implementation of new initiatives. The outcomes of the NCDS Research Project will influence the future direction to be taken in this regard.

Urbis was commissioned by DEEWR to undertake Element 2 of the NCDS Research Project. This represents one of the total four elements, as outlined below.

- *Element 1* – a literature review of national and international research in career development
- *Element 2* – identification and analysis of the career development needs and wants of young people (5-24 years), their parents, teachers and communities
- *Element 3* – options for a national strategy for career development support for young people (5-24 years)

- *Element 4* –a cost-benefit analysis of these options.

The objectives of the research project as a whole are to:

- provide government with a lifelong learning strategy for supporting young peoples' career development
- ensure a strategic approach to the development of an NCDS
- eliminate confusion and duplication of career development services in Australia
- identify what career development activities the Australian Government and State and Territory governments are undertaking, what is working well and where there are gaps or opportunities for improvement
- identify the most appropriate approach and intervention point in career development support for key cohort groups
- ensure equity of access for all young people to high quality national career information services, guidance, resources and standards
- ensure that key influencers, such as parents, career practitioners and teachers have access to appropriate career resources and information that they need to support young people
- improve the quality of career advice and guidance in schools, Vocational Education and Training (VET), higher education and outside of the school system
- identify what role State and Territory governments and the Australian Government could have in the career development agenda
- ensure that Australian Government funding is directed towards the most cost-effective option/s for supporting the career development of young people.

2.3 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR ELEMENT 2

Element 2 of the NCDS Research Project involves an identification and analysis of the career development needs and wants of young people, their parents, teachers and communities. The terms of reference for this project stipulate that Element 2 will provide analysis on:

- the career development needs, wants and issues of both 'mainstream' young people and harder to reach or potentially disadvantaged young people (including young people at risk, Indigenous young people, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) young people, young people with a disability, young refugees, young people with caring responsibilities and young people in regional, rural and remote locations) parents and carers, career practitioners, teachers and employers
- the career development needs and wants of young people at different schooling levels, including children in primary school, young people in secondary school and young people in higher education and VET
- the career development needs and wants of young people currently not engaged in education
- the career development needs at the primary school level to ensure that practices are in place that support the growth of career development skills from a very early age
- the knowledge and skills of the individual where effective career development has occurred
- what is needed by young people to assist them with making better choices in relation to their learning, education and employment
- the role of online information, web based and interactive technologies in meeting the career development needs of young people and their parents
- awareness and perception of career development services, information and guidance by young people, their parents, teachers, communities and employers.

2.4 ELEMENT 2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Element 2 of the NCDS Research Project consisted of three key stages of research and reporting.

Stage 1 – Qualitative research

The purpose of Stage 1 was to undertake an in-depth qualitative exploration, in the form of focus group discussions and one on one interviews, of the career development needs and wants of young people, their parents, teachers and communities. A Qualitative Report detailing the findings from Stage 1 was submitted to DEEWR on 8 April 2011.

Stage 2 – Quantitative research

The purpose of Stage 2 was to undertake quantitative research to supplement the qualitative research. Stage 2 involved national online surveys and Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) administered to over 5,000 respondents. A Quantitative Report detailing the findings from Stage 2 was submitted on 8 April 2011.

Stage 3 – Synthesis Report (**this report**)

The Synthesis Report draws together the results from the qualitative and quantitative research to present the key findings from Element 2.

2.5 THIS REPORT

This document is the Synthesis Report for Element 2 of the NCDS Research Project.

The structure of the Report is as follows:

- Chapter 1:Executive Summary
- Chapter 2: Introduction
- Chapter 3:Methodology
- Chapter 4:Notions of ‘career’, ‘work’ and ‘career development’
- Chapter 5: Career development: responsibility and influences
- Chapter 6:Young people in primary school
- Chapter 7:Young people in secondary school
- Chapter 8:Young people in higher education and VET
- Chapter 9:Young people not in education
- Chapter 10:Potentially disadvantaged groups of young people
- Chapter 11:Parents and carers
- Chapter 12:Teachers
- Chapter 13:Employers
- Chapter 14:Career practitioners
- Chapter 15:Key findings.

2.6 TERMINOLOGY USED IN THIS REPORT

In providing an analysis of the career development needs and wants of young people (5-24 years), their parents, teachers and communities, a number of different terms are relevant to the understanding of ‘career’ as a concept.

In this report, 'career development' is defined as the complex process of managing life, learning and work over the lifespan (Miles Morgan 2003)⁴. In some instances, we make a distinction between 'career education' and 'career guidance', which both contribute to a young person's career development. 'Career education' is the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes through a planned program of learning experiences that will assist young people with making informed career decisions (MCEETYA Career Education Taskforce 1998)⁵. 'Career guidance' is counselling and advice provided to young people to assist them with developing a specific understanding of the realistic learning and work opportunities available to them (Miles Morgan 2003).

Career development services can be defined as a wide range of programs and services provided in many different jurisdictions and delivery settings. Their object is to assist individuals to gain the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours to manage their life, learning and work in self-directed ways⁶.

⁴ Miles Morgan Australia, *Australian Blueprint for Career Development*, Draft Prototype, July 2003

⁵ Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA), *National Principles for Career Education*, MCEETYA, Canberra, 1998

⁶ Career Industry Council of Australia, *Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners*, Revised 2007

3 Methodology

The methodology for Element 2 of the NCDS Research Project involved a mixed method qualitative and quantitative approach. Table 1 sets out the research key activities. In all, over 5,500 people were consulted and/or surveyed as part of the project.

TABLE 1 – METHODOLOGY TABLE

KEY ACTIVITIES	DESCRIPTION
Qualitative research	
Stakeholder interviews (n=23)	<p>Interviews were conducted with a range of national and state/territory based government and non-government organisations. The interviews were deliberately targeted to ensure representation of a broad range of stakeholder views, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ organisations that represent and support young people ▪ organisations that represent and support parents ▪ career practitioner industry associations ▪ school associations ▪ higher education and VET sector organisations ▪ organisations that represent and support teachers and principals ▪ State and Territory education and training departments.
Focus groups (n=48 groups with 358 participants)	<p>48 focus groups were conducted, with a total of 358 focus group participants. Groups were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 34 groups with children and young people aged 11-24 years in primary school, secondary school, higher education, VET and not in education. This included mainstream young people, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) young people, Indigenous young people, young people at risk, young people with a disability, young people with caring responsibilities and young refugees. ▪ 6 groups with parents (two with parents of young people in secondary school, one with parents of young people in VET, one with parents of young people in higher education, and two with parents of young people not in education). ▪ 7 groups with teachers (four with primary school teachers, two with secondary school teachers and one with VET teachers). ▪ 1 group with small-medium employers. <p>Groups were held across seven States and Territories and in metropolitan, regional and remote locations. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New South Wales (Sydney) ▪ Queensland (Brisbane and Cairns) ▪ Victoria (Melbourne) ▪ South Australia (Adelaide and Ceduna) ▪ Western Australia (Broome) ▪ Tasmania (Hobart and Launceston) ▪ Northern Territory (Darwin).

KEY ACTIVITIES	DESCRIPTION
Career practitioner interviews (n=15)	One on one in-depth telephone interviews were conducted with career practitioners in every state and territory, and also with those working in schools (Independent, Government and Catholic), Technical and Further Education (TAFE), universities, and the private sector.
Interviews with large size employers (n=8)	One on one in-depth telephone interviews were conducted with large employers. Interviews were conducted with employers across a range of industries, including some of Australia's biggest companies and biggest employers of young people (eg Woolworths and McDonalds).
Quantitative research	
Survey of young people (n=1,801)	<p>1,801 young people aged between 14 and 24 years completed the online survey. Most respondents were the children of parents who were members of an existing online survey panel. A low socio-economic status sub-sample involving 200 young people were interviewed by telephone, randomly selected from the Electronic White Pages.</p> <p>Of the 1,801 respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 69% were female and 31% male ▪ 33% were at school or doing year 11 or 12 at TAFE; 35% were doing some form of further study; 32% were not in education ▪ half were aged between 20 and 23 years; the female respondents had a somewhat older age profile than the males ▪ 63% lived in a capital city, 28% in a regional city or large town, and 9% in a small town or rural area ▪ 2% were of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, and 22% spoke a language other than English at home ▪ 7% reported having carer responsibilities ▪ 5% reported having a disability ▪ 56% were receiving (or had received) their secondary education at Government schools, 25% at Catholic schools, 16% at Independent schools, and 4% at some other type of school.
Survey of Indigenous young people (n=40)	<p>40 Indigenous young people aged between 14 and 24 years completed the survey. The short survey was administered at the end of the focus group discussions with young people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Of the 40 respondents, 17 participants were at school and 23 had left school.
Survey of parents (n=1,809)	<p>1,809 parents completed the survey. Most respondents completed a short survey online. A low socio-economic status sub-sample of parents were interviewed by telephone, randomly selected from the Electronic White Pages.</p> <p>Of the 1,809 respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 74% were female and 26% were male ▪ 76% had one or more children aged 14 years or over attending secondary school, 54% had one or more children attending TAFE or university, and 35% had one or more children who have left school and are not in education ▪ those parents with children at secondary school were broadly representative in terms of the proportion attending Government, Catholic and Independent schools.

KEY ACTIVITIES	DESCRIPTION
Survey of career practitioners (n=304)	<p>304 career practitioners completed the survey online. The online survey was promoted to respondents through major industry associations including the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) and the Career Development Association of Australia (CDAA).</p> <p>Respondents included career practitioners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ with and without formal career qualifications ▪ working in schools, VET institutions, universities, private practice, government organisations and businesses ▪ working in different States and Territories around Australia ▪ working in metropolitan, regional and rural areas.
Survey of teachers (n=399)	<p>399 teachers completed the online survey. Of the respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 56% were secondary school teachers, 28% were primary school teachers, 17% taught at both a primary and secondary level ▪ Just over 70% were female ▪ 67% were teaching in a Government school, 14% in a Catholic school, 17% in an Independent school, and 3% in some other type of school ▪ Among those teaching at secondary level, 20% were in schools with fewer than 500 students, 43% in schools with 500-1,000 students, and 37% in schools with over 1,000 students ▪ 64% were teaching in a capital city, 25% in a regional city or large town, and 12% in a smaller town or rural area ▪ Almost 50% of these teachers had started teaching 20 or more years ago, and almost 70% had started teaching 10 or more years ago ▪ 20% spent some of their time working as a career teacher but, for most of these, careers work occupied less than 20% of their time. Only 2% of respondents spent all or most of their time working as career teachers. Among those who did some work as career advisors, just over one-third reported having formal qualifications for this work.
Survey of employers (n=800)	<p>The survey was completed by 800 employers comprising a nationally representative sample of small to medium sized business decision makers across 14 core industries. The 11 survey questions were administered via an omnibus Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI), which included a range of other questions including basic screening and demographics to profile the businesses and respondents.</p>

4 Notions of 'career', 'work' and 'career development'

KEY FINDINGS:

- Young people generally have fairly optimistic attitudes towards work and career. Overall, young people express the desire to have a career and most are of the view there are lots of interesting work and career opportunities ahead of them.
- Young people say it is important for work to be personally satisfying and fulfilling. They see work as an important way of using their skills and talents. Many, including some in primary school, have made a link between their career aspirations and their interests, skills and aptitudes.
- While some young people say there are no barriers to having a career, others are less confident. Some potentially disadvantaged cohorts, including young refugees, young carers and young people with a disability, face greater barriers to having a career than other young people.
- There is general agreement amongst respondents that the world of work has changed and that nowadays a career does not necessarily involve one job or even one line of work.
- Career practitioners say that the term 'career development' is not always understood and the importance of the work that career practitioners do is not always valued.
- Young people typically speak about 'career development' in relation to career guidance or the skills, knowledge, experience and qualifications they will need to secure the occupation they want. In defining career development, young people rarely speak about being empowered to make decisions and identify opportunities; developing self-awareness or exploring skills, values, interests and experiences; or developing general competencies.
- The development of life skills and competencies is seen to be important for managing careers in the ever evolving and complex world of work. Both young people and parents consider family to make the most significant contribution to the development of these skills in young people. While schools are seen by both young people and parents as having an influence, they are identified as only one of a number of influences, and not the most significant.
- While there is general agreement that it is important to encourage young people to have confidence and a positive self concept, teachers and employers say this needs to be balanced with reinforcing realistic expectations.

4.1 WHAT ARE YOUNG PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS WORK AND CAREER?

Young people generally have positive attitudes towards work and career. Overall, young people want to have a career and most agree there are lots of interesting work and career opportunities ahead of them. Only a minority say they will have to take more or less whatever work they can get. Indigenous young people, CALD young people, young people with a disability and, in particular, young people with caring responsibilities are more likely than other young people to say they will have to take more or less whatever work they can get. TAFE students are also more likely than university students to say this. Generally, males are less positive or optimistic than females in the career choices and opportunities available to them.

Young people identify a range of benefits to having a career. As demonstrated in Figure 1 below, benefits include: money and a stable income to support their chosen lifestyle, success, security, skills and capacity building, increased self-esteem and confidence, opportunities to grow and develop, personal satisfaction and fulfilment, making a contribution to the community, gaining respect and a reputation, and opportunities to try new things.

FIGURE 1 – BENEFITS OF A CAREER AS IDENTIFIED BY YOUNG PEOPLE



Young people describe a career as encompassing more than just the work someone does, rather it is 'a job that connects you with the life you want to lead'. One of the key benefits to having a career is that it creates opportunities and provides an income to enrich other aspects of an individual's life. Most young people say they expect to spend some time working and some time doing other things such as raising a family or travelling. Only a small proportion of young people think that 'work pretty much determines who you are in life'. Agreement with this statement tends to be higher among young people who attended schools in lower socio-economic status (SES) areas and CALD young people.

Although young people generally say they want to have a career, not all have a clear idea of what this might look like or what it might involve. Forty percent of young people surveyed say they do not have a clear idea about the kind of work they would like to do over the next five to ten years. The majority of young people say they expect to do further training at various stages of their working life, and many say it is quite likely they will do different kinds of work over their lifespan.

The majority of young people say it is important for work or a career to be personally satisfying and fulfilling. Young people often describe a career as work that an individual is passionate about and that links to their interests and values. There is a high level of agreement that *satisfaction with your work is one of the most important things in life*, and that *work is the source of a great deal of people's interest and satisfaction in life*. Of young people across the three school sectors, those from Independent schools are more likely to express these views, while those from Government schools are less likely. CALD young people are less likely to agree that work is the source of a great deal of people's interest and satisfaction in life, and Indigenous young people are less likely to agree that satisfaction with your work is one of the most important things in life. Only a small minority of young people say *they do not care much about the sort of work they will end up doing*. Males, Indigenous young people, those with a disability and those with caring responsibilities are more likely to have this view.

The majority of young people say work is an important way of using their skills and talents. Of young people across the three school sectors, those from Independent schools are more likely to express this view, while those from Government schools are less likely to do so. Qualitative discussions with young people indicate that many, including young people in primary school, have made a link between their career aspirations and their interests, skills and aptitudes. Some examples are provided in the Snapshot below.

SNAPSHOT: LINKING INTERESTS AND APTITUDES TO CAREER ASPIRATIONS

- A primary school student from Sydney said he is not well suited for a career in marine biology because he does not like diving or putting his head under water.
- A 17-18 year old from Broome said she wants to pursue a career in events management and advertising because she likes being creative and because she enjoyed and did well at media studies at school.
- A 12-13 year old Indigenous student from Sydney said he wants to be a mechanic '*because I know a lot about cars*'.
- A young person with a disability from Sydney said she likes cooking and is currently doing a hospitality course at TAFE, with a view to getting a job in a café.
- Another young person with a disability in Sydney said '*I will probably be packing shelves at Franklins because that is what I am good at*'. This young man also said he is good at computers - '*everyday when I come home from school mum and dad have a question about the computer, it is hard for them but easy for me*', and might also get a job working with computers.

Although young people generally have positive attitudes towards work and career, one third of young people say *work is a necessary evil*. Agreement with this statement is highest amongst young people from Government schools.

Some young people say the prospect of having a career is unattractive as it involves having to work for someone else and sticking to one job for life. Some say they do not want to '*serve someone else*' but want a job that they do for their own personal satisfaction. For these young people, a career signifies being '*stuck*', '*tied down*', or being '*locked into something*'. They say a career limits an individual's options and people who have careers can become '*closed-minded*'. Having a career can restrict the time available to spend with family and friends. A career can result in '*no social life*' and '*no weekends*'.

Some young people say there are no barriers to having a career, while others are less confident. There is a common perception that a career requires tertiary studies, which some young people have little interest in or are not confident about their ability to do. Some say that even a tertiary qualification does not guarantee a job in your chosen field. A few young people say a career infers aspirations and that you cannot have a career until you have an ambition or chosen vocation.

Some of the potentially disadvantaged cohorts appear to face greater barriers or challenges in having a career than mainstream young people. For example, young refugees say they often arrive in Australia with big gaps in their education and limited work experience, which can limit their career prospects. Young carers, particularly those with a primary caring role, say a career is only possible if they are able to access flexible learning and work options and low cost respite care for family members. Young people with a disability and Indigenous young people do not want employers, career development services, school teachers or employment agencies to make assumptions about what they can and cannot achieve.

4.2 HOW AND WHY HAVE THESE NOTIONS AND THE WORLD OF WORK CHANGED OVER TIME?

There is agreement across different cohorts that the world of work has changed over time. Although a career is generally viewed as long-term or a lifelong commitment, it does not necessarily involve one job or even one line of work. Instead a career involves change and comprises various stages and transition periods. Nowadays there are more study and work options available, and young people can '*chop and change*' between different types of work. Nowadays there is also a trend away from permanent employment to more casual work arrangements (eg contract work).

In support of this view, the majority of young people surveyed say they expect to do further training at various stages of their working life (81%), and it is quite likely they will do different kinds of work during their life (63%). These sentiments are echoed by other cohorts. Eighty nine percent (89%) of parents say

their children will probably need to do further training at various stages of their working life. Parents with a household income of over \$100,000 per annum are more likely to agree with this statement. Ninety percent (90%) of teachers say it is quite likely that their students will do several different sorts of work over the course of their lives, and 91% of career practitioners agree that it is natural that some young people will ‘*chop and change*’ jobs or courses of study before finding something that suits them. These views reflect the emphasis of change and flexibility and the importance of life long learning that are central elements in contemporary thinking of the term career.

Rapid advancements in technology are seen as contributing to the changing nature of the working world as is the advent of a global economy with global workers. Some, particularly parents, commented that there is no longer a clear distinction between a job and a career.

While the increase in options and opportunities is acknowledged, many say the labour market has become more competitive and that employers now have higher expectations of their young employees.

Qualitative discussions with different cohorts suggest the changing nature of the working world is most strongly felt by parents who reflected on their own work experiences and spoke of growing up in a social environment where committing to one job for life was the norm. This is supported by the quantitative research whereby 75% of parents surveyed say their children have much more complicated decisions about future work and career than they did at their age. Teachers agree with this statement, but to a lesser extent. Sixty seven percent (67%) of teachers surveyed say young people face much more difficult choices about work or career than their parents did at their age.

4.3 UNDERSTANDINGS OF ‘CAREER DEVELOPMENT’

Career practitioners surveyed use a variety of terms to describe the work they do. Most commonly they use the term career counselling (66%), followed by career education (56%), career information (54%) and career development (52%). Some career practitioners consider ‘career development’ to be a fairly new term, which may partly account for nearly half of all those surveyed not using it to describe the work they do. Fewer practitioners use career guidance (45%) or career planning (42%) to describe what they do. Some career practitioners say the term ‘career guidance’ has negative connotations because it implies giving advice in a paternalistic manner and lacks the whole-of-person, action-based approach that is thought to characterise career development.

Despite this variation in the terminology used to describe their work, there is a very high level of agreement among career practitioners regarding their approach to their work and what the focus of their work should be. Regardless of the sector they work in, the length of time they have been working as a career professional, and the level of formal career qualifications they hold, the great majority of career practitioners assign greatest importance to assisting young people to make decisions and take action for themselves. Those elements of their work that they rate as *very important* are empowering young people to make their own decisions (91%), helping young people to identify what their strengths and talents are (86%), and encouraging young people to do their own investigations or research (84%).

In considering their work with young people, career practitioners rate *broadening the range of possibilities that individuals may consider* (60%), *focusing on the individuals’ personality, interest or passions* (60%), and *recognising the wide diversity of young people’s career development* (56%) as particularly important. Improving access to work and study opportunities for disadvantaged young people and understanding the current and likely future labour market conditions are also ranked as important.

Career practitioners interviewed in the qualitative research say that the term ‘career development’ is not always understood by students/young people, educational institutions, industry and society more generally, and the importance of the work that career practitioners do is not always valued. This view is reflected somewhat in discussions with different cohorts who understand the term career development to varying degrees.

Many young people appear to have a limited or incomplete understanding of career development. The term is generally spoken about in relation to career guidance or what skills, knowledge, experience and qualifications young people will need to secure the occupation they want. Career development is also seen, particularly by school leavers, as advancing in your chosen field (eg promotions, increases in salary and leadership roles). In defining career development, young people rarely speak about being empowered to make decisions and identify opportunities; developing self-awareness or exploring skills,

values, interests and experiences; and developing general competencies. This has implications for how they perceive the usefulness and relevance of career development services. For example, some young people say there is little point accessing career development services until they have a clear career aspiration or goal. In this sense, career development is viewed entirely as career guidance and not career education.

Employers largely view career development as specifically work-related. Small-medium employers, in particular, understand career development as training and developing skills to do the particular job young people are employed to do.

4.4 NATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Stakeholders say the lack of a national career development strategy is the biggest gap in career development in Australia. While states and territories have access to the same reference materials, including for example the Australian Blueprint for Career Development (the Blueprint)⁷, delivery of career development in Australia varies widely across and within states and territories, within education sectors (Government, Independent, Catholic), and across education levels (primary, secondary, tertiary).

4.5 SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

Across all cohorts, the development of life skills and competencies is seen to be important for managing careers in the ever evolving and complex world of work where the notion of a 'job for life' no longer exists.

Young people, parents and teachers surveyed were asked their views on the importance of seven life skills or capabilities that can be considered relevant to success in study and the workplace (eg good communication skills, co-operating with others, learning from your mistakes, keeping your commitments, understanding your own strengths and limitations, coping with setbacks or disappointments, willingness to try something new). Large majorities across all groups say that each of the listed capabilities is important. Of young people and parents surveyed, more females than males regard the capabilities as important; however there is little variation by type of school attended.

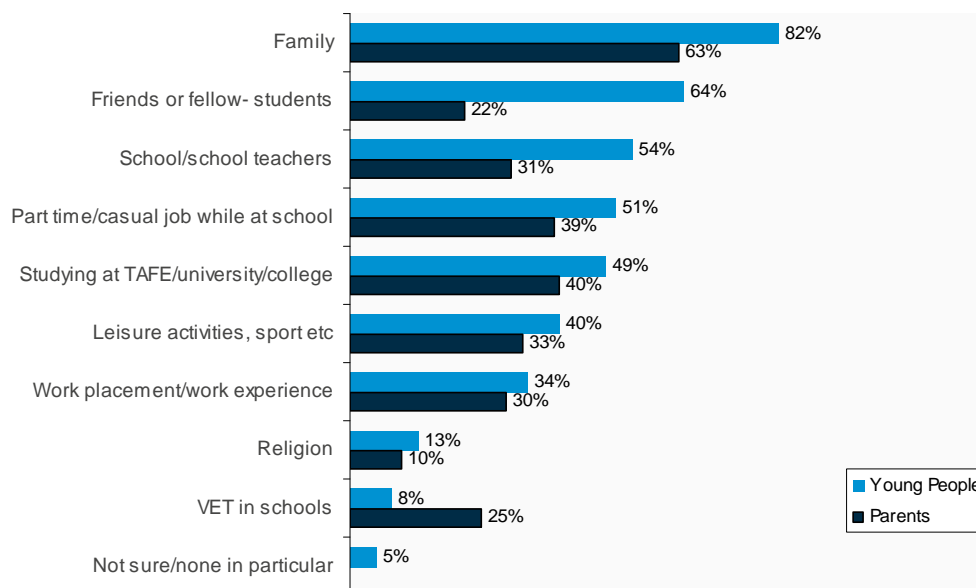
Young people were asked if they had learned much about these life skills from various sources. Parents were also asked what sources they thought make the biggest contribution to the development of these capabilities in young people. Young people consider family the most significant source of learning, followed by friends or fellow students, school or school teachers, part time jobs done while at school, and studying at TAFE/university/college. Young people who attended schools in areas of relatively low SES attribute somewhat less influence than others to family, and to part-time jobs at school. On the other hand, these young people tend to attribute more influence than others to work experience (see Figure 2).

Parents also consider family to be the most significant source of learning, followed by studying at TAFE/university/college, part-time or casual jobs done while at school, and leisure activities. Parents of young people from Government schools attribute more influence to part-time or casual jobs, work placement/work experience and VET in schools/school based apprenticeships compared with parents from Catholic and Independent schools. Compared to parents from other sectors, parents from Independent schools attribute more influence to the school and school teachers, family, and studying at TAFE/university/college.

Overall, young people are more likely to emphasise the contribution made by friends and fellow students to the development of life skills than parents are.

⁷ MCEECDYA, 2010 *The Australian Blueprint for Career Development*, prepared by Miles Morgan Australia, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra. Available at: <http://www.blueprint.edu.au/>

FIGURE 2 – SOURCES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIFE SKILLS IN YOUNG PEOPLE



While schools are seen by both young people and parents as having an influence in the development of these life skills, they are identified as only one of a number of influences, and *not* the most significant. To some degree this is supported by the view of teachers, who were asked whether their school makes a significant contribution to developing any of these capabilities in their students. Teachers say their schools make a greater contribution to some skills than others. Most teachers (76%) say their school makes a significant contribution to communication skills, followed by co-operating with others (75%), and keeping one’s commitments (53%). Half of teachers surveyed say their school makes a significant contribution to student’s willingness to try something new, and less than half say their school makes a significant contribution to student’s understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses (48%), learning from mistakes (48%) and coping with setbacks or disappointments (38%). Overall, Independent schools tend to assess their school’s contributions quite highly.

The skills and competencies needed by young people vary according to their age and life stage. Young people, parents and teachers make a distinction between the skills needed by young people in primary school and the early years of high school (eg communication skills, confidence, resilience, self awareness) and the skills needed by young people who are in the later years of high school or who have left school (eg time and financial management skills, organisation, leadership, initiative, good work ethic, punctuality, reliability, business management skills, computer literacy and research skills).

Potentially disadvantaged young people identify the need to develop basic skills to manage their careers. For example, some Indigenous young people from regional areas speak of needing numeracy and literacy skills, young people with a disability speak of needing practical skills such as knowing how to catch a bus, be on time and buy your own lunch, and young refugees and newly arrived migrants speak of needing to be proficient in the English language.

While it is generally agreed that it is important to encourage confidence and a positive self-concept (particularly for young people from low SES or disadvantaged backgrounds), teachers and employers say this needs to be balanced with reinforcing realistic expectations about post school work and study.

Employers consulted with in the qualitative research and in response to the open-ended survey question say young people need to have more realistic expectations about work. They say one of their biggest challenges is managing young people’s expectations about what sort of work they will do, how quickly they will be promoted, and their remuneration. Some employers say society has created a generation of young people that have high levels of confidence, which in a workplace are not always commensurate with their ability and experience. Many employers say young people need to develop better ‘soft skills’, such as initiative, flexibility and communication skills. They also need greater self-awareness and an ability to understand their strengths and weaknesses.

5 Career development: responsibility and influences

KEY FINDINGS:

- There is a distinction between 'responsibility' for career development of young people, and 'influences' in the career development of young people.
- Parents have the most significant *influence* in the career development decisions of young people.
- If a young person is in school, parents, career practitioners and teachers see the school as *mainly responsible* for their career development. Likewise, if a young person is in higher education or TAFE, the same cohorts see these institutions as mainly responsible for the career development of their students.
- Young people in school and higher education or VET, however, see themselves as *primarily* responsible for their own career development and others as responsible for *supporting* their career development.
- Young people themselves and employment service providers are seen as mainly *responsible* for the career development of young people not in education.
- Employers see themselves as having a limited role in the career development of young people regardless of whether they are in education or not.
- The significant majority of teachers and career practitioners agree that primary schools should be responsible for career education, which includes teaching young people general competencies and life skills, and introducing them to the various careers available to them.
- Despite parents being the key *influence* and different educational institutions being mainly *responsible* for the career development of different groups of young people, all young people consider a range of other factors when making career development decisions. These include: the things they like or are good at; labour market conditions; cost of study and transport; and the need to relocate for post school work or study.

5.1 RESPONSIBILITY FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Schools, universities and VET institutions, young people themselves, parents, Federal and State/Territory governments, employers and Job Services Australia, all have a responsibility for the career development of young people. However, there are a range of views on the degree to which each of the above is responsible. Degree of responsibility for career development also varies depending upon the young person's age and level of schooling.

5.1.1 *Young people in primary school*

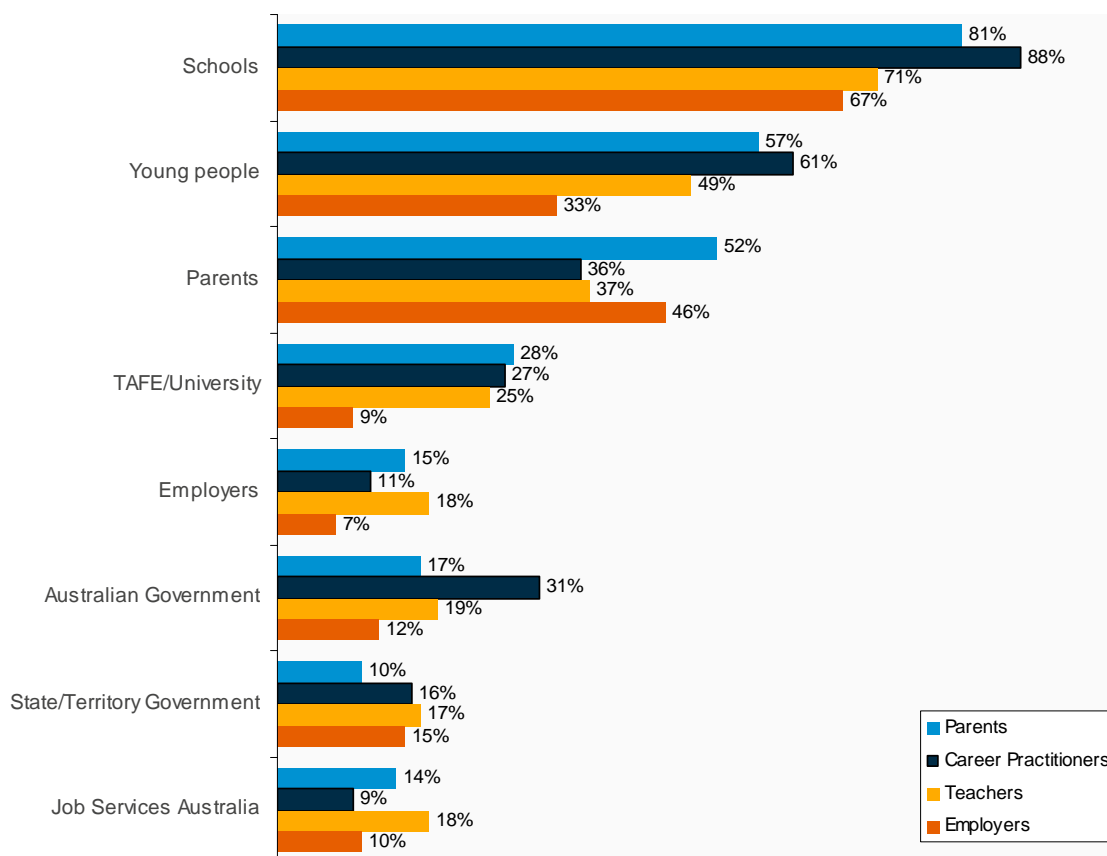
The significant majority of teachers and career practitioners agree that primary schools should be responsible for career education. This includes teaching young people general competencies and life skills such as good communication skills, flexibility and resilience. It also includes broadening young people's horizons, and introducing them to the world of work and the various careers available to them.

5.1.2 *Young people in secondary school*

Parents, teachers and career practitioners say schools are mainly responsible for the career development of young people in secondary school, followed by young people themselves and parents. Employers also say schools are mainly responsible, followed by parents and then young people (see Figure 3).

Parents, career practitioners and teachers are more likely than employers to see employers as mainly responsible. Only 7% of employers see themselves as mainly responsible.

FIGURE 3 – MAIN RESPONSIBILITY FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT – AT SECONDARY SCHOOL



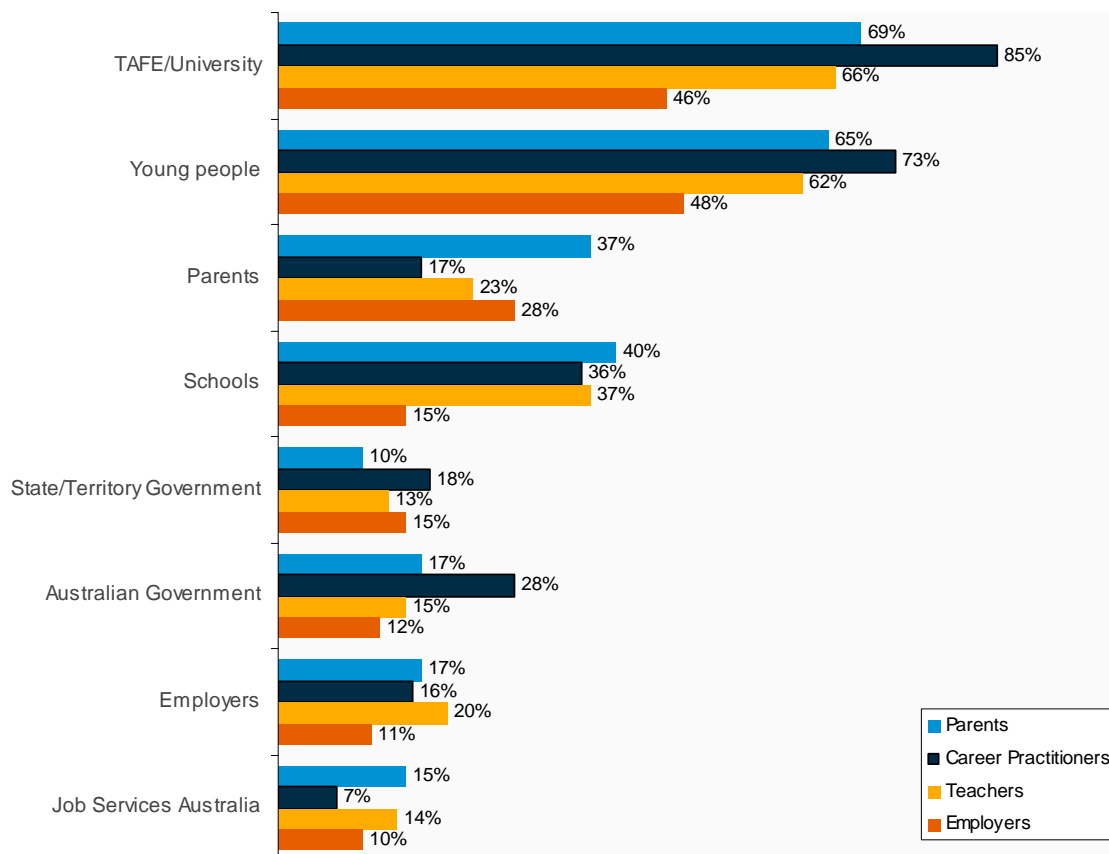
Parents have variable resources and capabilities to cater to their children’s career development needs. Therefore, schools can *‘fill the gap’*, and work in partnership with parents to ensure the career development needs and wants of their children are adequately met.

Many young people in secondary school see themselves as primarily responsible for their own career development. However, they do say parents and families, teachers, school based career practitioners and employers are responsible for *contributing* to their career development. Some Indigenous secondary students see their parents and families as *primarily* responsible for their career development. This view is complemented by some Indigenous parents who also see themselves as being *primarily* responsible.

5.1.3 Young people in higher education or VET

Parents, teachers and career practitioners see universities and TAFEs as mainly responsible for the career development of young people in higher education or VET, followed by young people themselves and then schools (see Figure 4). Employers see young people themselves as mainly responsible, followed by universities and VET institutions, and then parents. The responsibility of parents is perceived to decrease as children move from secondary school to higher education or VET.

FIGURE 4 – MAIN RESPONSIBILITY FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT – AT TAFE/UNIVERSITY



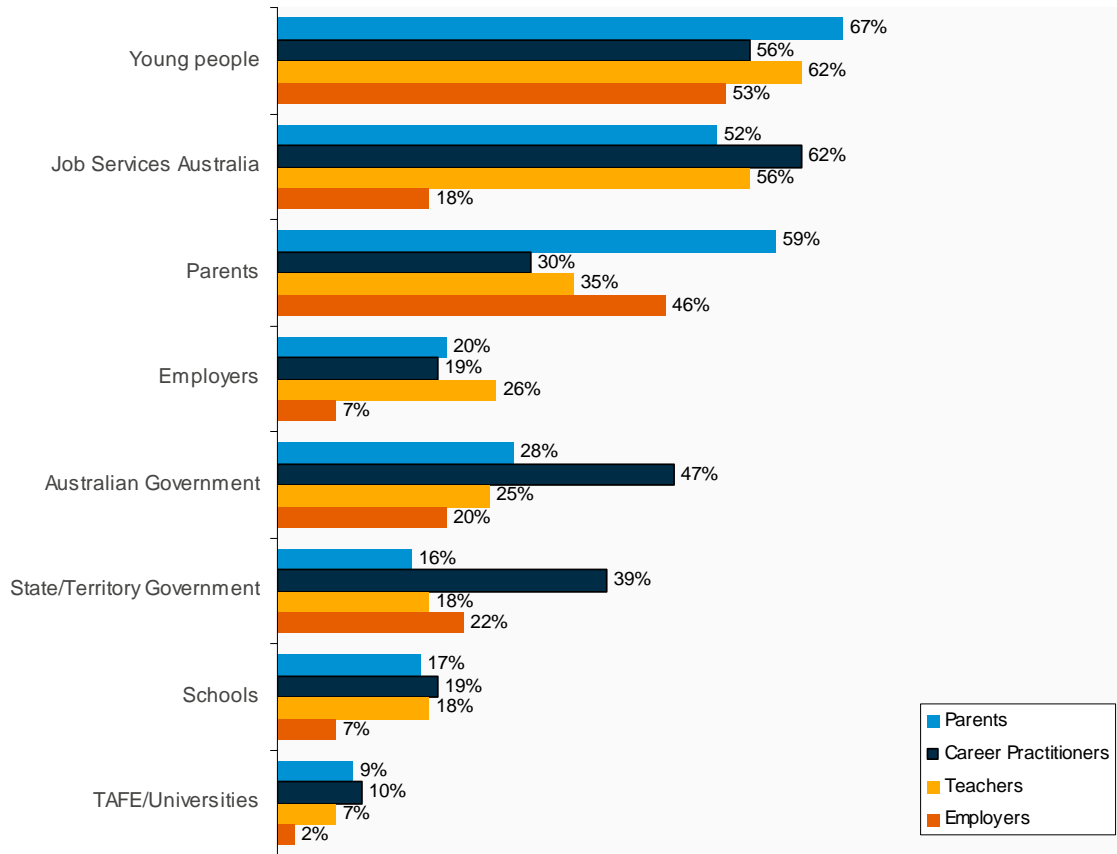
There is a view that schools are responsible for giving higher education and VET students accurate and comprehensive information and advice on university and VET courses *before they* start those courses, so they do not make poor course choices. The fact that respondents refer to schools when discussing the career development needs of young people in higher education or VET suggests that career development is seen as something that should be done in and by schools.

Young people in higher education or VET generally say a mix of young people, parents, universities and TAFEs, schools, employers and the government, are responsible for their career development. Young carers, culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) young people and some mainstream young people in higher education or VET see themselves as *primarily* responsible for their career development, but see others as responsible for *contributing to* their career development. At risk young people, Indigenous young people and some mainstream young people are less likely to see themselves as *primarily* responsible for their own career development. As with Indigenous young people in secondary school, Indigenous young people in higher education or VET generally say their families, teachers, elders and community are responsible, as well as Aboriginal mentors working in educational institutions. At risk young people say schools, TAFEs, government agencies and community organisations are responsible, notably fewer see parents as having a role. Some mainstream young people say parents, teachers, universities and employers are jointly responsible.

5.1.4 Young people not in education

Parents, teachers and career practitioners say young people, employment service providers and parents are mainly responsible for the career development of young people not in education (see Figure 5). Employers see young people as mainly responsible followed by their parents and state/territory governments. Parents say they are more responsible for the career development of young people not in education than the career development of young people in higher education or VET, possibly because young people not in education do not have an educational institution they can turn to for support. Parents, career practitioners and teachers are more likely than employers to see employers as mainly responsible. Only 7% of employers see themselves as mainly responsible for the career development of young people not in education.

FIGURE 5 – MAIN RESPONSIBILITY FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT – NOT IN EDUCATION



Young people not in education generally say young people themselves are responsible for their own career development, or a combination of young people, parents/families, schools and employers are responsible. Although some refugee and at risk young people attribute responsibility to employment service providers, on the whole young people not in education are much less likely to attribute responsibility to employment service providers. When compared to other young people, young people not in education are more likely to see employers as responsible for their career development. The majority of employers, however, do not see this as their responsibility.

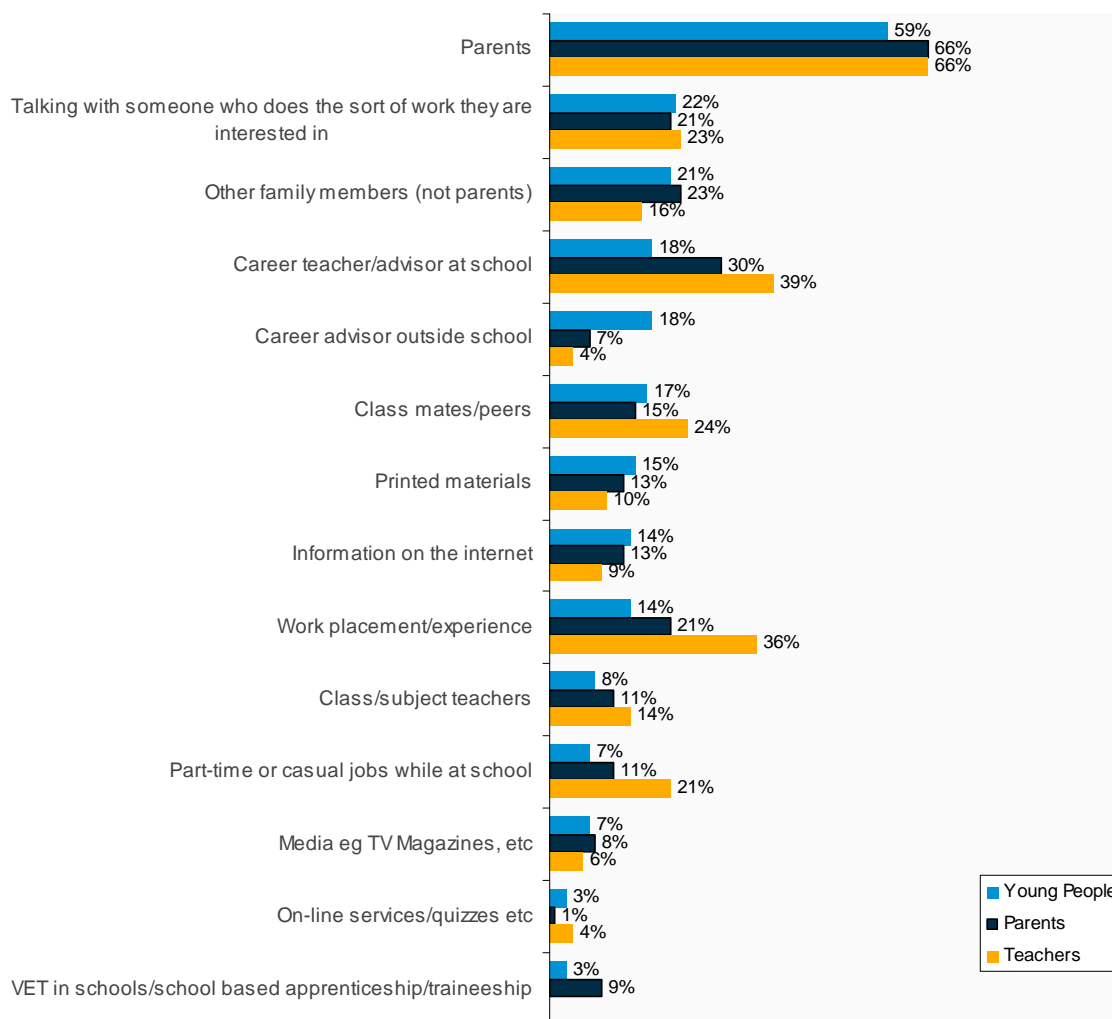
5.2 INFLUENCES IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Parents have the greatest influence over young people’s subject choices, followed by peers, subject or class teachers, and school career practitioners (see Table 2). Parents also have the greatest influence in young people’s thinking about post school work or study. There is broad agreement that the following are also important influences in the career development decisions of young people: school career practitioners, work placements/work experience, peers, other family members and people that are working in the industry in which they have an interest.

TABLE 2 – FACTORS MOST INFLUENTIAL ON SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' CHOICES OF SCHOOL SUBJECTS (UP TO THE THREE RESPONSES ALLOWED PER RESPONDENT)

	YOUNG PEOPLE	TEACHERS
Parents	55	74
Class mates/friends	39	52
Subject or class teachers	37	50
Career teacher/advisor	34	49
Information from the Internet	5	6

FIGURE 6 – INFLUENTIAL FACTORS – SECONDARY STUDENTS THINKING ABOUT CAREER OR FUTURE STUDY



As demonstrated in Figure 6, parents and teachers are more likely than young people to see career practitioners and work experience/work placements as influential in young people's choices about post school work and study.

Young people are more likely than parents and teachers to see career practitioners outside school as influential in their career development. The qualitative research suggests young people are using this term to refer to employment service providers, youth services workers and other mentors, rather than private career practitioners. The qualitative research generally supports the quantitative findings; however young people in focus groups were more likely to nominate classroom and subject teachers as more influential than school career practitioners in their thinking about subjects and post school work and study.

While the influence of parents is significant, the degree and type of influence varies depending on the individual young person. Parents influence children from an early age by determining family norms and values. These norms and values are pervasive and can lower the career aspirations of young people or foster unrealistic expectations of young people. The cultural background and the socio-economic status of families are strongly influential in shaping young people's aspirations. At risk young people often have fewer familial ties and therefore they report that parental influence is not as strong for them.

SNAPSHOT: PARENTS LOWERING EXPECTATIONS

Teachers report that if parents do not value work or education, then their children may have limited career aspirations. If parents are 'job hoppers', young people may not think of a career and may look for 'surviving jobs' with an attitude of 'I'll be ok because mum and dad survived'. Some young people say their parents discouraged them from further work or study because they could not see the longer-term benefit and preferred their children to earn money.

SNAPSHOT: PARENTS RAISING EXPECTATIONS

Teachers and some young people report that parents who have very high expectations of their children push them into courses and career paths that their children are either not interested in or ill-suited to. They do this for different reasons. Some university educated parents want their children to follow in their footsteps. Other parents who are not university educated want their children to 'do better' than them, and see university as a vehicle for this.

Peers are also influential in young people's subject and post school work and study choices. Young people say sometimes this influence is positive. Many say they find out about part-time jobs and longer term career options through their friends. Others say they obtain useful career information and advice from friends in their late 20s and early 30s because these friends have had some experience in the workforce. However, some young people say peer influence can be negative and can encourage them to make poor decisions such as drop out of university courses.

Class and subject teachers are seen as influential by some young people. The influence is generally seen as positive but can sometimes be negative. Young people say that good subject teachers inspire them to be enthusiastic about the subject, but bad subject teachers can make them dislike the subject and associated careers. Some young people say subject teachers can be biased, and can try and push young people into their own professional field.

Many Indigenous young people say their career decisions are positively influenced by Aboriginal Education Workers and other Indigenous mentors. Likewise, at risk young people say their career decisions are influenced by government agencies, employment service providers and youth workers.

Young people consider a range of other factors when making career development decisions, such as their personal interests and the things they are good at. Most young people judge what they are good at by their school marks and by feedback they receive from those around them. Many young people from regional, rural and remote locations consider labour market conditions and the jobs in demand in the areas they live when making career decisions. These young people also consider cost and transport as key barriers to them pursuing particular courses of study or work, and therefore key influences in their career decisions. Some Indigenous young people say their career decisions are influenced by a desire to contribute and remain connected to their communities. Some young carers say their decisions are influenced by what careers will fit with their often heavy carer responsibilities. There is general view, particularly among parents, that young people are also influenced by the things they are exposed to. For example, if a young person has been involved in trauma and spent a lot of time in hospitals, they may consider a career in health.

6 Young people in primary school

KEY FINDINGS:

- There is broad support for career development to commence in primary schools. Primary school students need to be introduced to the world of work, have their horizons broadened, and begin developing general skills and competencies.
- Broadening primary students' horizons of work and career opportunities is important for countering the influences of some parents, cultural backgrounds and SES status, which can lower young people's career aspirations or foster unrealistic expectations.
- Exposure to a range of occupations is also important for combating young people's gender stereotypes of work.
- Primary teachers have an important role to play in providing career education but, at this age, career guidance is not necessary.
- There are varying views on how well career education is currently delivered in primary schools. Some say the current provision is satisfactory and not in need of significant changes. Others describe the current provision as patchy, informal and inconsistent.
- Opinion is divided amongst teachers as to whether there should be a formalised career curriculum in primary school.
- Opinion is also divided as to whether primary school teachers should have professional development to assist them in working with students on issues relating to future work or study.

6.1 CAREER DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

School teachers and career practitioners say young people in primary school need to be introduced to the world of work and have their horizons broadened. Primary schools need to raise children's awareness of jobs beyond the conventional (eg fireman, policeman, doctor, teacher) and combat young people's gender stereotypes about what work 'boys' do (eg builder, architect, mechanic) and what work 'girls' do (eg beautician, hairdresser, assistant). This is particularly important for primary students from low socio-economic backgrounds and from regional, rural and remote locations who may have limited exposure to different careers.

Teachers said that the influence of parents, cultural background and SES status of families can influence the career aspirations of young people either by lowering their career aspirations or by fostering unrealistic expectations. Broadening primary schools students' horizons of work and career opportunities is important for countering these influences.

Teachers, career practitioners and parents generally agree that primary students need to begin developing the general skills and competencies (eg resilience, self-esteem, flexibility, reliability, and communication and interpersonal skills) they will need to manage their lifelong learning and work.

6.2 WHAT IS APPROPRIATE CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOL?

There is broad support for career development to commence in primary school, although views differ to some extent on what form this should take. Only a minority of teachers (24%) see no place at primary school for information or discussion relating to future work or career.

Support for career development commencing in primary schools is strongest among career practitioners with 95% agreeing that primary schools should be developing their students' capabilities such as good communication skills, flexibility and resilience that may be relevant to lifelong learning. A total of 91% of

teachers also share this view. Career practitioners interviewed in depth agree that career development should be introduced in primary school, although they say at this early age, career development activities need only be basic. Teachers linking classroom learnings to the world of work, workplace visits and presentations by people working in different careers are seen by career practitioners as valuable activities.

The majority of teachers surveyed say primary schools have a responsibility to encourage children to identify and begin to make the most of their strengths, and that primary teachers should make it clear to students how their studies are relevant to the work they may do later in life.

In the qualitative research, primary school teachers made a distinction between career education (introducing children to work, developing skills, encouraging strengths, linking learnings etc) and career guidance. They say primary teachers have an important role to play in providing career education but, at this age, career guidance is not necessary. They say primary school should be about broadening children's ideas and keeping doors open, not narrowing their ideas or steering them in a particular direction. Supporting this view, only 49% of teachers surveyed say primary students respond well to information or discussion that relates to possible work or study options after they leave school.

6.3 ADEQUACY OF THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED TO YOUNG PEOPLE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Primary teachers say primary schools already have career education programs and activities designed to introduce their students to the world of work. These include: excursions to local workplaces, classroom talks, curriculum topics, role play activities and dress ups, and practical demonstrations. Teachers generally agree that such activities are useful.

The majority of primary school teachers (83%) surveyed report that their school specifically aims to develop students' capabilities in a way that will help them with lifelong learning. Primary school teachers working in Catholic and Government schools are more likely to say this is the case than their counterparts in Independent schools.

All primary school teachers in the qualitative research spoke of developing general competencies in their students, with some referring to it as '*the hidden curriculum of being a teacher*'. The development of general competencies is not explicitly linked to career development as teachers feel these skills are important for young people to manage their lives more broadly. They teach these skills '*naturally as part of their day to day work*'. Some teachers from all locations say their schools have formal programs for teaching general competencies (ie the You Can Do it Program, Leadership Programs, Student Representative Councils). In some Catholic schools, these programs are tied in with religious education (ie the Virtues Program).

Sixty percent of teachers surveyed also say that teachers should make it clear to their students how their studies are relevant to the work they may do later in life. Numerous examples of this were provided by primary teachers in the qualitative research. One teacher from Sydney, for example, said that when she teaches a unit of work, she tries to make it relevant to everyday life. If, for example, she is teaching students about money she will set up a shop scenario and ask questions like '*how do you get this money?*' so that students understand they have to work to earn money. Another teacher from Sydney said if she is teaching maths she will link it to different jobs ie. '*if you are a carpenter you need to be good at measurements*'.

Primary teachers and career practitioners have varying views on how well career education is currently delivered in primary schools. Some say the current provision is satisfactory and not in need of significant changes. Others describe the current provision as patchy, informal and inconsistent. The qualitative research found that key barriers to the provision of career education in primary school are a crowded curriculum, large student to teacher ratio in classes, lack of time and resources such as computers, and lack of support from principals. Having said this, the majority of primary teachers surveyed quantitatively say there is likely to be support from school principals for some more emphasis on issues relating to future work and career.

Opinion is divided amongst teachers as to whether there should be a formalised career curriculum in primary school. Forty four percent of teachers say there should be no careers curriculum at primary school. Some primary teachers say that formalising the teaching of career education would potentially

limit flexibility and make it overly prescriptive. Others, however, say further structure and support for teachers would assist with ensuring consistency and the dedication of appropriate resources. Some career practitioners in the qualitative research said career education should be made a part of the national curriculum for primary schools, and that the Australian Blueprint for Career Development could contribute to this.

Opinion is also divided among teachers as to whether primary school teachers should have professional development to assist them in working with students on issues relating to future work or study. Almost half of the teachers surveyed (46%) say they should have professional development, with more female than male teachers expressing this view. There is stronger support for this among career practitioners, with 65% agreeing that such professional development would be beneficial.

7 Young people in secondary school

KEY FINDINGS:

- The provision and quality of career development in secondary schools is patchy and inconsistent, both across and within States/Territories and education sectors.
- The most common reported forms of career development available in secondary school are: an interview with a school career practitioner; printed material; a visit to or by a university or TAFE representative; a careers day or expo; and work experience/work placement.
- Young people, career practitioners and teachers have different views on the usefulness of different career development activities. However, all agree that work experience/work placement is either the most useful or the second most useful form of career development for young people.
- Young people are receiving less of the career development they find most useful (eg 'hands on' activities such as work experience/work placement and visits to workplaces) and more of the career development they find less useful (eg interview with a career practitioner).
- There are varying levels of satisfaction with career development in secondary school. Young people who have left school are the least satisfied with career development in secondary school. Teachers are the most satisfied, and young people still at school, parents and career practitioners fall in the middle.
- Satisfaction with career development in secondary school is generally lowest in Government schools, smaller schools (ie less than 500 students), schools in regional or remote areas and schools in low SES areas.
- The significant majority of parents, teachers and career practitioners think career development should be introduced early in secondary school.
- There is broad agreement that young people want secondary schools to provide personalised one-on-one career information and advice that takes their interests, values, strengths and weaknesses into account. They also want schools to provide: more practical hands-on work experience; more direct contact with universities, TAFEs and employers; and more detailed and specific information on the range of jobs and pathways available to them.
- The vast majority of career practitioners (93%) and parents (89%) surveyed say *schools should involve parents or other community members in providing career information and guidance*. There is broad agreement that schools can do this better than they are currently.

7.1 AVAILABILITY OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

There is a general view that the provision and quality of career development in secondary schools is patchy and inconsistent, both across and within States/Territories and education sectors.

Young people say the most common forms of career development available in secondary school are: an interview with a school career practitioner; printed material; a visit to or by a university or TAFE representative; a careers day or expo; and work experience/work placement. This is broadly consistent with what teachers say is available to young people in secondary school (see Table 3).

TABLE 3 – AVAILABILITY OF VARIOUS FORMS OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN SCHOOLS

	WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE RECALL RECEIVING	WHAT TEACHERS SAY IS AVAILABLE
Interview with careers teacher/advisor	65	82
Printed materials	62	72
Visit to/by TAFE or Uni	54	73
Careers day/Expo	52	62
Work experience/placement	46	72
Talk/presentation by someone outside school	38	63
Group discussion	38	58
Time at school to access the Internet	31	55
Time at school to access on-line careers surveys/quizzes/test	30	41
Careers information included in regular class	22	42
School based apprenticeships/VET in schools	21	61
Visits to workplaces	13	48

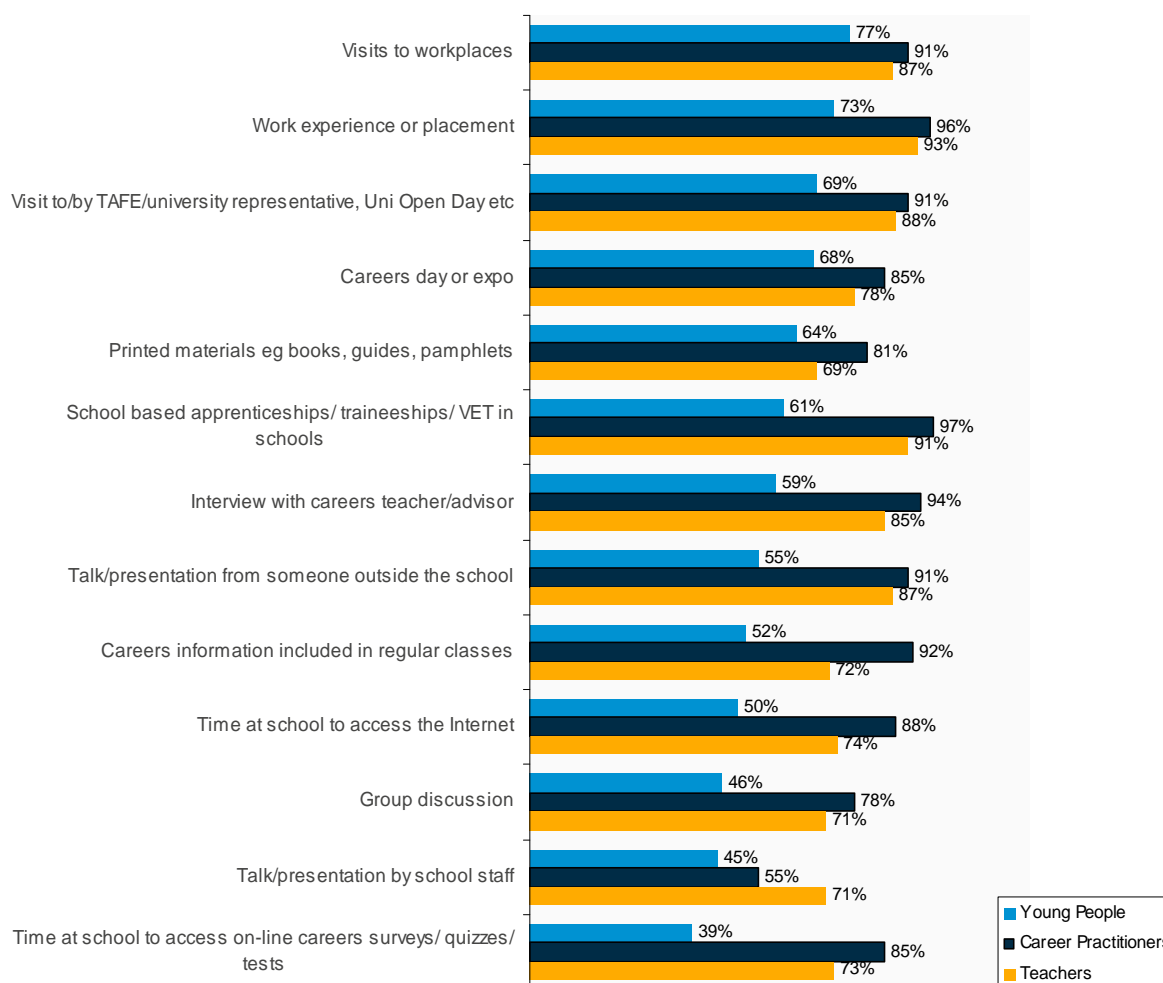
(Percentage of respondents)

Many young people interviewed in the focus groups recall receiving some form of career development in the later years of secondary school, although the quality of what they received were said to vary considerably.

While teachers are aware of what career development is available in secondary school, they are not as aware of who career development is provided to. Of the 288 secondary school teachers surveyed, more than one in ten (11%) say they do not know what proportion of young people in their school receives career information, education or guidance. Forty seven percent of teachers say *all* of their students receive career information, education or guidance, and 42% say *most* students receive this. A particular gap was indentified among teachers in small towns or rural areas, and teachers working in smaller schools. Approximately 26% of teachers working in small schools (ie schools with under 500 students) say less than half (or none) of their students receive career information, education or guidance at school.

7.2 USEFULNESS OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

FIGURE 7 – USEFULNESS OF VARIOUS FORMS OF CAREER INFORMATION OR GUIDANCE – AT SECONDARY SCHOOL



Young people, career practitioners and teachers have different views on the usefulness of different career development activities. However, all agree that work experience/work placement is either the most useful or the second most useful form of career development for young people. Young people appear to find 'hands on' activities such as visits to workplaces, visits to or by TAFE/universities, and careers expos most useful (see Figure 7).

Career practitioners and teachers surveyed agree that the VET in Schools program is among the top two useful career development activities, a view that is not shared by young people surveyed who rank the VET in Schools Program as the sixth most useful form of career development. Career practitioners are more likely than teachers and young people to see an interview with a career practitioner as a useful form of career development.

In focus groups, young people, parents, teachers and career practitioners all say the VET in Schools Program is a valuable program for young people who know what they want to do, because it allows them to get hands-on industry experience and potentially complete part of their post school study before they finish school. Young people were more positive about the VET in Schools Program in the qualitative research than the quantitative research. Young people in focus groups were also less likely to see careers expos as a useful form of career development. While some young people say career expos are informative and give them new ideas, many others say the events are crowded and that the information provided is 'biased', 'spin' and not detailed enough in terms of the actual jobs.

Work experience and work placements are highly regarded because they give young people exposure to the world of work and let them test out the different career ideas they have. Many young people that have done work experience say the experience is useful even if they do not like the work they do because it helps them decide what they like and do not like. It also helps them identify their strengths and

weaknesses. There is a view, however, that schools and employers should ensure work experience and work placements are valuable to young employees by enabling them to do more than menial tasks such as photocopying and filing.

Some young people and their parents in focus groups were highly critical of school career practitioners. This view is perhaps supported by the quantitative finding that young people identify an interview with a career practitioner as the seventh most useful form of career development. Many young people and parents criticise school career practitioners for failing to provide personalised advice that takes into account the young person's values, interests, strengths and weaknesses. Some feel career practitioners try to push young people into careers that they are either not interested in or ill-suited to, have biases towards either university or TAFE, and fail to provide young people with advice on different pathways available to take them where they want to go.

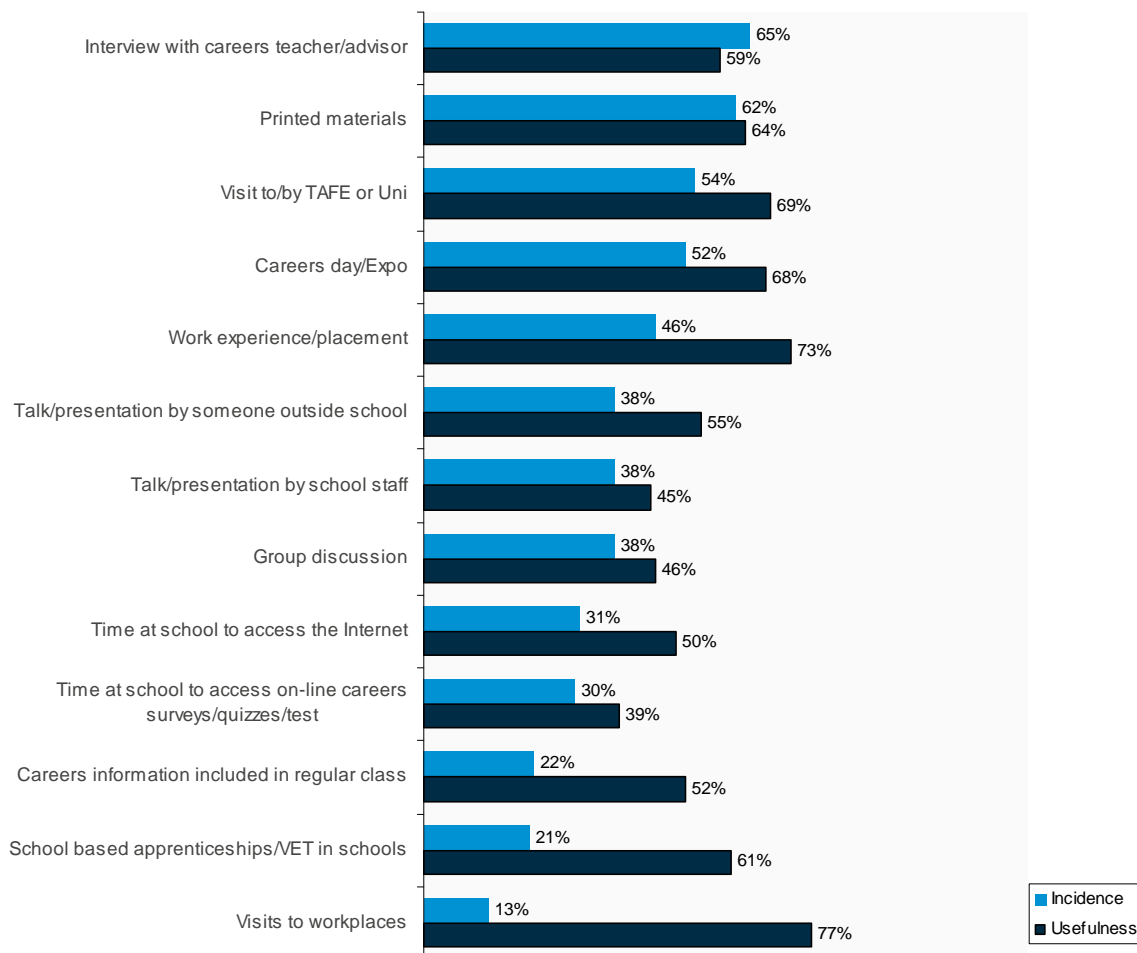
The printed materials young people and their parents say they use include university/tertiary admissions centre guides, the UniGrad Guide and other pamphlets and leaflets about specific careers. While some young people find university/tertiary admission centre guides helpful for identifying suitable tertiary courses, others say that are not particularly user-friendly because they are too bulky and contain too much information.

Using the internet, including online career quizzes and tests, is not seen by young people, teachers and career practitioners as one of the more useful forms of career development. Qualitatively, young people say they do use the internet to learn more about courses and careers. However, it is clear that the internet complements other forms of career development that are perceived as more useful, such as work experience and one-on-one discussions. A small number of students say they have used the myfuture website. Some of these students found the website helpful while others say it '*boxes you in to certain careers*'. Career practitioners agree that while online services can be helpful for young people, these services need to be accompanied by someone who can help young people interpret the information and find some direction.

Other commonly used websites include university and TAFE websites, Job Guide, and job websites such as Seek. There is a general view among young people that online career quizzes have limited value. Young people say while the quizzes can expose them to a range of different career options, they often recommend career paths that are completely unrelated to the young person's interests and abilities. This raises a question about the quality and validity of some of these instruments.

Figure 8 illustrates young people's responses to the online survey on the availability or incidence and usefulness of career development in secondary school. This demonstrates that young people in secondary school are receiving less of the career development they find most useful (eg work experience/work placements, and visits to workplaces) and more of the career development they find less useful (eg interview with a career practitioner).

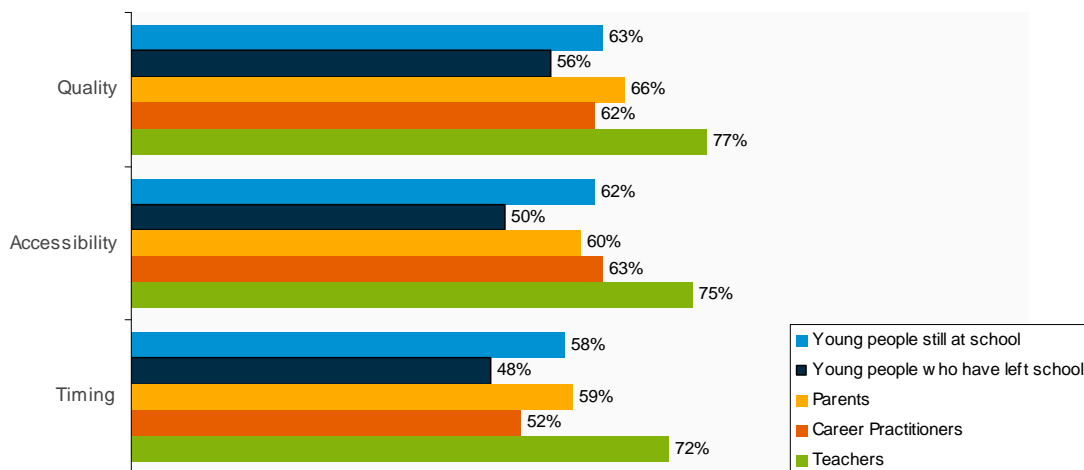
FIGURE 8 – INCIDENCE AND PERCEIVED USEFULNESS OF VARIOUS FORMS OF CAREER INFORMATION OR GUIDANCE – YOUNG PEOPLE AT SECONDARY SCHOOL



7.3 OVERALL SATISFACTION OF WITH THE QUALITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND TIMING OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

There are varying levels of overall satisfaction with the accessibility, quality and timing of career development in secondary schools among young people, parents, career practitioners and teachers (see Figure 9). Generally speaking, teachers express the most satisfaction. Parents, career practitioners and young people at school express similar levels of satisfaction, while young people who have left school express least satisfaction. The drop in satisfaction levels of young people who have left school is quite marked and may suggest that, for some, post school experience has demonstrated limitations or shortcomings in the career development they received at school. Alternatively, it may suggest that career development in schools has substantially improved since they left. Satisfaction is generally lowest in Government schools, smaller schools (ie less than 500 students), schools in regional or remote areas and schools in low socio-economic status areas.

FIGURE 9 – SATISFACTION WITH CAREER DEVELOPMENT – AT SECONDARY SCHOOL



Although the majority of people surveyed express satisfaction, in most cases they say they are *fairly satisfied* rather than *very satisfied*. Generally, somewhat higher levels of satisfaction are evident in relation to the *accessibility* and *quality* of career development. Lower levels of satisfaction are evident in relation to the *timing* of career development in secondary schools.

Satisfaction also varies based on education sector. Students from Government schools consistently express less satisfaction with access, quality and timing of career development, when compared to students from Independent schools. Students in Catholic schools typically rated somewhere in the middle, but their experiences are often more closely related to those in Government schools. This variation based on education sector is reflected in the response of parents and to some extent the response of teachers. These quantitative findings are supported by the qualitative research, with focus group participants generally agreeing that Independent schools are more committed to career development than Government and, to a lesser extent, Catholic schools. Some young people are, however, critical of career development in Independent schools, saying it focuses too much on marks and is biased towards the university pathway.

Satisfaction with access, quality and timing of career development in secondary school is lower for small (ie less than 500 students) schools. For example, on the issue of access, teachers from schools with less than 500 students are less satisfied than teachers from schools with more than 1,000 students. Young people from small schools also have below average levels of satisfaction with access and quality of career development in secondary school.

Likewise, satisfaction with career development in secondary school is lower for parents and teachers in regional and particularly rural areas than capital cities. Less than half of parents in rural areas surveyed express satisfaction with the timing of career advice and support available in secondary schools. Qualitatively, students say schools in regional, remote and rural areas are limited in the career development they can provide. There are few workplaces or tertiary institutions in these locations that schools can expose young people to. Schools in these locations are often smaller and provide limited subject choices. As an example, some students in Broome who wanted to participate in the VET in Schools Program said they could not do the VET course they wanted because the courses were at capacity. Consequently, one of the students who wanted to study automotives was enrolled in a VET community service course because there was a vacancy in this course. Parents and young people say such situations are unsatisfactory, and have the potential to impact negatively on their post school work and study options.

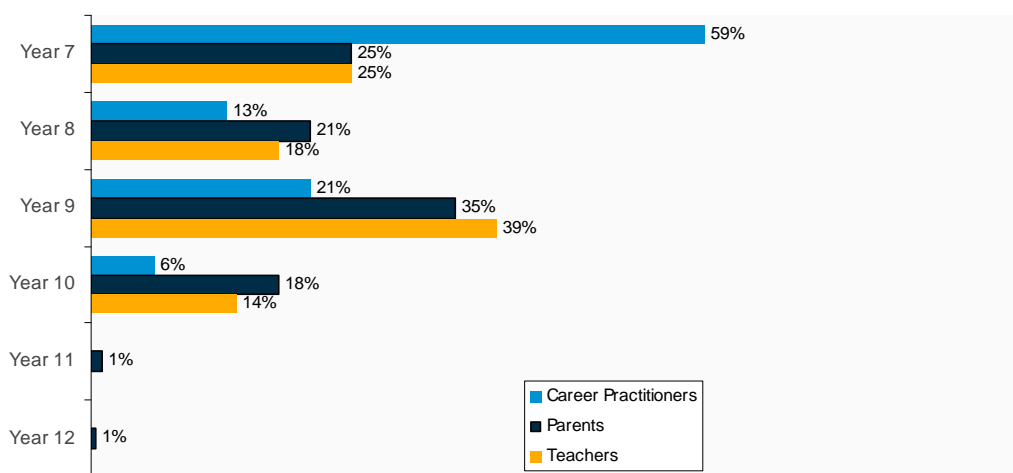
Satisfaction with career development in schools does vary on the basis of SES. Students whose schools are in the lowest Socio Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA categories) are consistently less satisfied than students in higher SEIFA categories. Qualitatively, at risk young people who are often from low socio-economic backgrounds report that career development in schools is either non-existent or poor in quality.

On the issue of timing, qualitatively most students say they receive some form of career development in Years 10, 11 and 12, and indeed most young people identify later secondary school as a critical time for career development because this is when young people generally start thinking about post school work

and study. There are varying views on whether career development should start earlier in secondary school. Some students say it should, and work experience should be an option from as early as year 8 so that secondary students have more opportunities to test out their career ideas. Other young people, however, say there is no point starting career development earlier because the issue of careers is generally not on their radar or of significant interest to them before Year 10.

The significant majority of parents, teachers and career practitioners, however, think career development should be introduced early in secondary school. Most career practitioners say career development should be introduced in Year 7 (see Figure 10). Most parents and teachers say it should be introduced in Year 9, although a significant minority of parents say it should begin in years 7 and 8. Career practitioners say career development needs to start earlier in secondary school because young people need to have exposure to the range of careers and a clear understanding of their skills and aptitudes before selecting their subjects. Some teachers say if career development is left until the later years of secondary school, students who leave school in Year 10 will potentially miss out.

FIGURE 10 – TIME TO INTRODUCE CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS



7.4 ADEQUACY OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED TO POTENTIALLY DISADVANTAGED YOUNG PEOPLE

The majority of teachers surveyed say the provision of career education in school for at risk young people, Indigenous students, students who speak a language other than English at home and students with a disability is *adequate*. Slightly fewer teachers believe the system is *adequate* for other young people, with only 55% of teachers saying this is the case for humanitarian refugees and 60% for young carers.

Career practitioners are more likely to identify at risk young people, students without good family support and young people with a disability to be less well served by school career development programs. Career practitioners working in Government schools are generally more likely to consider the provision of career development to these groups and Indigenous young people to be inadequate compared to those working in other education sectors.

Career practitioners working in Independent and Catholic schools are more likely than those in Government schools to identify students with poor results as receiving *inadequate* career development.

Qualitatively, young carers and young people with a disability are very critical of career development in schools. Young carers say schools do not take into account their challenging personal circumstances when providing career information and advice, and often see young carers as *'hard work'*. There is a view among some young carers that Government schools provide young carers with more empathetic career development than Independent and Catholic schools. As an example, one young carer said she was unhappy with the career development her Catholic school provided so she moved to a Government school which she found far more accommodating. The Government school was sympathetic to her personal circumstances and gave her a personalised learning plan which allowed her to complete year 10 over three years. Had the school not done this, she may not have finished Year 10 and this would have negatively impacted on her career options.

Young people with a physical disability criticise schools for making negative assumptions about them, and for pressuring their parents to put them into Day Services, a service provided to young people with a disability by government. Young people with a disability say Day Services staff '*think we can't achieve*' and try and push them into voluntary work, as opposed to paid work in an area they are interested in. Humanitarian refugees say schools also make unfair and unfounded assumptions about what they can and cannot achieve.

Indigenous young people are not a homogenous group and the adequacy of career development provided to them in schools varies. Many Indigenous young people go to school in regional, rural and remote areas and, these schools by virtue of their location can sometimes provide only limited career development. Some schools, however, have Aboriginal Education Workers and other Indigenous mentors that Indigenous students say provide high quality career development services that cater to their individual needs and aspirations.

There is a general view that highly mobile young people (for example, young people in Defence families) and young people that are disengaged from the school system, such as at risk young people, do not receive adequate career development. Many report that it can be difficult to get these young people to think about their future, let alone engage in career development activities.

7.5 IMPROVING CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED TO SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Young people, parents, teachers and career practitioners are of the view that there are gaps in the current provision of career development in secondary schools. Almost half (48%) of career practitioners, 22% of students, 18% of parents and 10% of teachers say they are aware of instances where young people wanted or needed some form of career development but were unable to get it.

Young people, parents, teachers and career practitioners say that young people generally want secondary schools to provide personalised one-on-one career information and advice that takes their interests, values, strengths and weaknesses into account. They also want schools to provide: more practical hands-on work experience; more direct contact with universities, TAFEs and employers; and more detailed and specific information on the range of jobs and pathways available to them. Career practitioners, parents and teachers all specifically identify the need for schools to have better and dedicated career-advisors.

The perceived poor quality of school career practitioners is perhaps the reason why many young people say they want personalised one-on-one career information, but would prefer to receive it from people working in the industry in which they have an interest, family, peers and classroom teachers, rather than career practitioners. Many young people spoke about negative experiences with unapproachable or unhelpful school career practitioners. It appears that if school career practitioners focus more on *relationship-building* with students and providing them with tailored, personalised advice, students may be more inclined to actively engage in career development.

Parents, teachers and young people want schools to ensure that the career information and advice provided to young people is *impartial* and not biased towards a particular pathway. As noted above, some Independent schools are seen as more likely to push students down the university pathway even though students may not be interested in or well-suited to university. Similarly, other young people say some schools, often Government schools, have a preference for the VET pathway and try to push young people down this pathway.

Some parents say schools should arrange for one-on-one interviews with qualified and personable career practitioners to be backed up by user-friendly written materials. However, not all parents agree with this. Some Indigenous parents, for example, say written materials are '*useless*' and often '*get thrown in the bin*'.

Others say one-on-one interviews should be backed by online resources. Some parents say a government online *one-stop shop* for information on local labour market demand, awards and pay rates, the top universities and university courses in the country, and the cost of tertiary programs of study, would be helpful. There is, however, a general view that online information has limits. Not all young people and their parents have access to the internet or know how to navigate it. In addition, the internet only allows

parents and young people to obtain information, it does not allow them to ask questions and explore different options in the same way as a one-on-one interview does.

Parents, teachers and career practitioners say schools can better engage parents in the career development of their children. Quantitatively, the vast majority of career practitioners (93%) and parents (89%) surveyed say *schools should involve parents or other community members in providing career information and guidance*. However, less than half the parents surveyed say *parents were involved with schools in the process of providing careers information or advice*, and close to one in six parents say they *didn't know much about what was provided at school by way of careers information and advice*.

There is a general view that schools should better prepare young people for the transition from school to study or work. Young people and parents say young people struggle at this transition point, and are at high risk of making poor career development decisions. Career practitioners and teachers surveyed say the following types of assistance (out of a list of 13 options provided) contribute the most to a successful transition:

- interviews with careers teachers or advisors (63% of career practitioners; 48% of teachers)
- work placements/ work experience (49% of career practitioners; 51% of teachers)
- visit to and /or by TAFE or university representative (41% of career practitioners; 42% of teachers).

Young people in schools say they want schools to help them understand their strengths and aptitudes, and suggest career options that take into account these strengths and aptitudes. Having said this, where participants did have the opportunity to undertake career development activities on identifying strengths, skills and weaknesses (ie Set Plan or Personal Learning Plan) they were generally not well received. It is unclear from discussions with young people if this is due to the design of these programs, their implementation or both.

Career practitioners say providing career development to potentially disadvantaged young people can be challenging, and agree they need additional resources and support to effectively provide this career development. The type of resources or support they identify includes: greater contact with employers and industry, additional time to spend with potentially disadvantaged young people, internet-based resources, help in networking with other career practitioners, professional training/development, and greater support from the organisations they work for.

8 Young people in higher education or VET

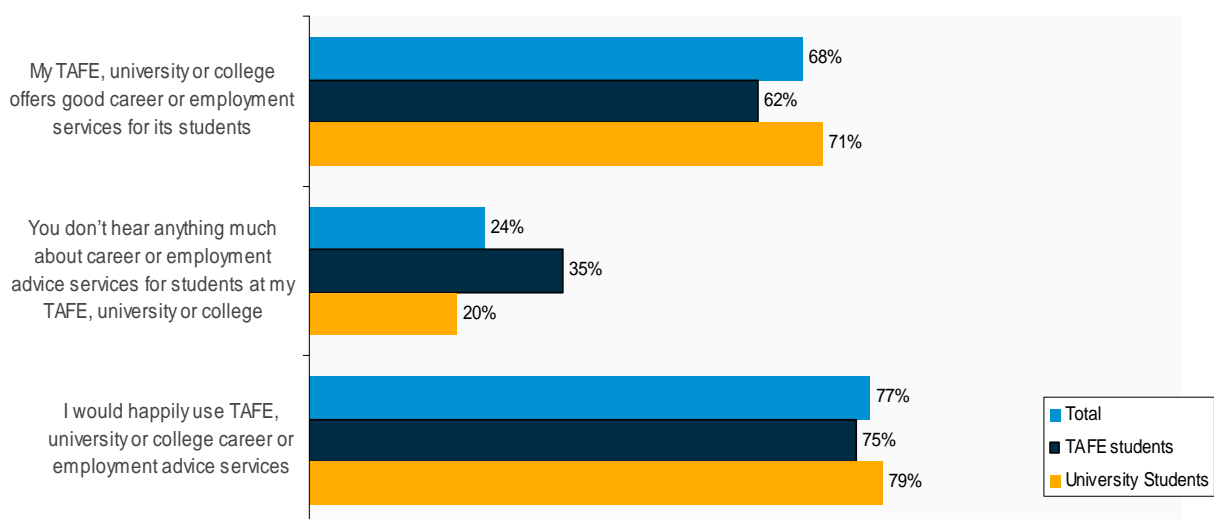
KEY FINDINGS:

- The quantitative research found that young people in higher education and VET are fairly positive about the career development offered by their educational institutions. The qualitative research on this issue is less positive, however, with many young people interviewed having 'no idea' what career development services their tertiary institutions offer.
- The majority of career practitioners are reasonably satisfied with the quality of and access to career development in universities. However, less than half of career practitioners are satisfied with the quality and accessibility of career development in the TAFE system.
- There is a general view that universities and TAFEs can market their career development services better. The branding of career development in TAFEs may be a barrier for some young people, particularly young males.
- Young people in higher education and VET want access to personalised one-on-one career advice and information from someone with industry experience that takes into account their interests, values, strengths and weaknesses. They want this one-on-one advice to be complemented by online resources.
- There is broad agreement that young people need extra support at the transition between school and university, and university and the workforce. Universities can contribute to this latter transition by facilitating contact with industry through integrated learning such as work placements and internships. The transition from school to TAFE, and TAFE to the workforce is seen as less difficult for young people.

8.1 AVAILABILITY AND QUALITY OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION OR VET

The quantitative research found that young people in higher education and VET are fairly positive about the career development offered by their educational institutions, with both groups of students agreeing that their university or VET institution provides good career or employment services (see Figure 11). Only a minority of higher education and VET students (25%) say 'you don't hear much about these services at my uni or college'. However, TAFE students are more likely to say this than university students: more than a third are of this view.

FIGURE 11 – SATISFACTION WITH CAREER DEVELOPMENT – AT TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

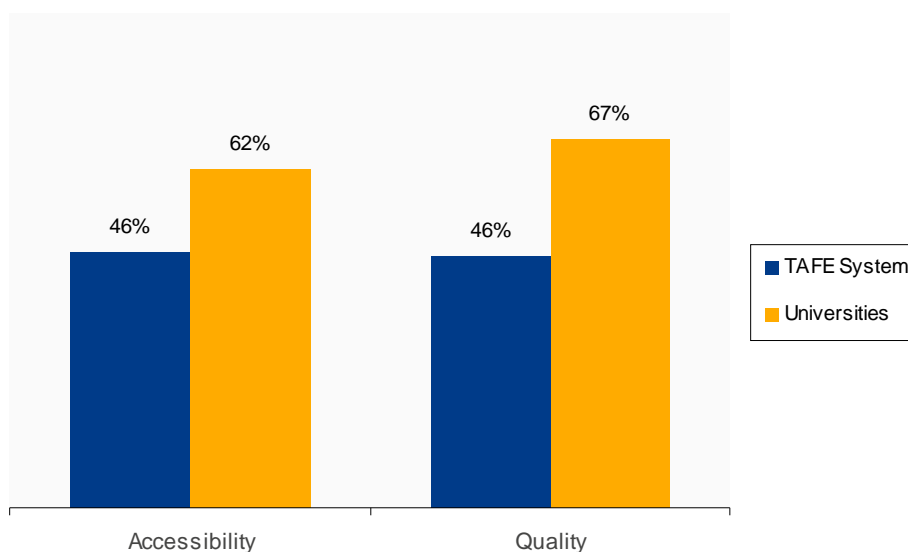


Qualitatively, young people in higher education or VET were less positive about career development in their institutions. Many young people said they have *'no idea'* what services their educational institutions offer. Some others say they know *something* exists but do not know how to access it and have not tried to find out. Some of these young people say they do not necessarily see this as a gap or an unmet need, because they receive the career development support they need from other sources, such as lecturers or course teachers, family members, and online and printed materials.

Of the small number of young people in focus groups that said they have pro-actively sought out career development in higher education or VET, some reported positive experiences such as filling out a questionnaire to identify strengths and weaknesses and then working with a career practitioner to develop a pathway plan and organise work experience. Others, however, said career practitioners had not been helpful in addressing their individual needs, and had instead referred them to generic websites and other written material. Some Indigenous students spoke positively about Indigenous staff in universities employed to assist young Indigenous people with the transition to university and career development more generally. A young person with a physical disability also spoke positively of a Centre for Adult Education, which had one staff member dedicated to providing young people with a disability with career advice and support.

The majority of career practitioners surveyed say they are satisfied with the quality (67%) and access of (62%) career development in universities (see Figure 12). However, this is not the case with the respect to TAFE. Less than half of career practitioners say they are satisfied with the quality (46%) and accessibility (46%) of career development in the TAFE system. Qualitatively, career practitioners say career development in universities and TAFEs is under-resourced, and that access is an issue because not many young people know what services are available. Some career practitioners say that 'career development' is better understood by universities, and that TAFEs have a tendency to define the term narrowly and relate it solely to finding employment.

FIGURE 12 – CAREER PRACTITIONERS: SATISFACTION WITH CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS



Percentage of respondents who are very or fairly satisfied

Career practitioners working in TAFE/university commonly identify challenges in working with a number of potentially disadvantaged groups. As many as 71% identify challenges in working with young people who speak a language other than English at home. A further two thirds (65%) say they face challenges working with young people with a disability and 55% with young people at risk. Some 40% also identify young humanitarian refugees and Indigenous students as posing challenges for them.

The quantitative research shows that just over a third of parents (36%) who have children attending university or TAFE say they have tried to get information and advice to help their children make decisions about work or study. Most parents say this was *easy* (60%) but 18% say they found it *fairly difficult* or *very difficult*. In focus groups, the majority of parents had very little awareness of career development services offered by their children's university or TAFE. The small number of parents that were aware of

such services tended to know more about TAFE than university. Some parents were pleased with the services TAFE offered but others found the TAFE system 'very hard' to navigate.

Teachers and young people say TAFE course teachers are often a better source of career information and advice for TAFE students than TAFE career practitioners. This is because TAFE course teachers generally have better links with industry and are able to provide students with practical advice. For example, several TAFE students say their course teachers provided them with valuable advice on which employers to contact for an apprenticeship. Having said this, some TAFE students in regional, rural and remote locations studying by correspondence say they do not find course teachers helpful. These students say they find it difficult to contact course teachers to discuss coursework, let alone career development.

There is a view among some young people that TAFE career practitioners lack credibility because, unlike TAFE course teachers, they generally do not have links with industry. Some TAFE teachers say the credibility issue could also be associated with the branding of career development services in TAFE. TAFE career practitioners are referred to as 'counsellors' and are responsible for providing career counselling and also personal counselling. TAFE teachers, and some TAFE students, say TAFE students are reluctant to go and see a career counsellor in case their peers think they are receiving counselling for a personal problem. The branding issue appears to be a particular barrier to young male trade students using TAFE career development services.

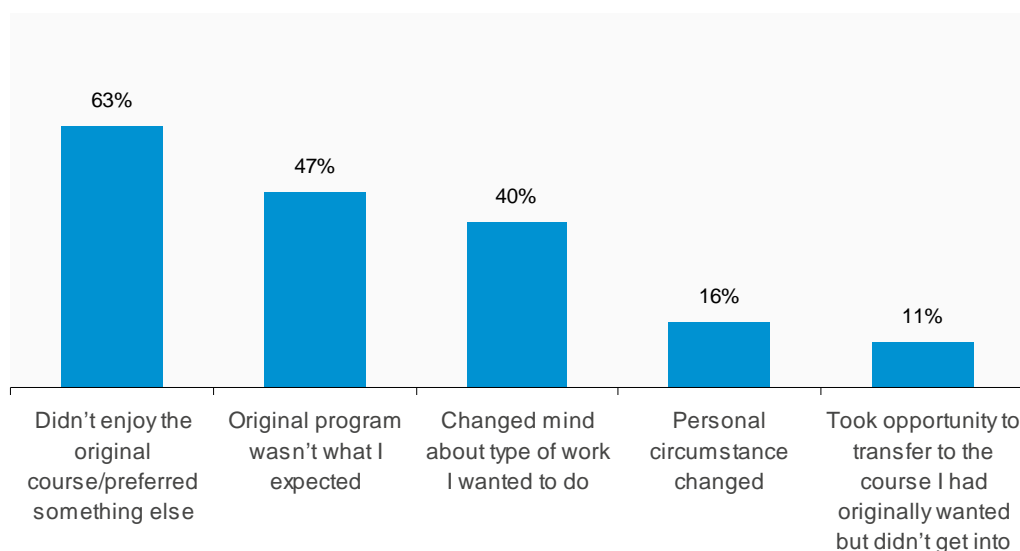
8.2 SATISFACTION WITH HIGHER EDUCATION OR VET COURSES

Of the 593 young people in higher education or VET surveyed, the majority (80%) said they are *happy* or *very happy* with their choice of program. Only 5% said they are *unhappy* or *very unhappy*.

A total of 7% (76) of young people surveyed have changed a tertiary program since leaving school, and a total of 5% (55) of young people have started a tertiary program but discontinued it. Of the 55 students who have discontinued a course, only 10 reported receiving any advice from their higher education or VET institution before deciding to leave.

The main reasons why the 7% of young people have changed their course of study since leaving school are outlined in Figure 13.

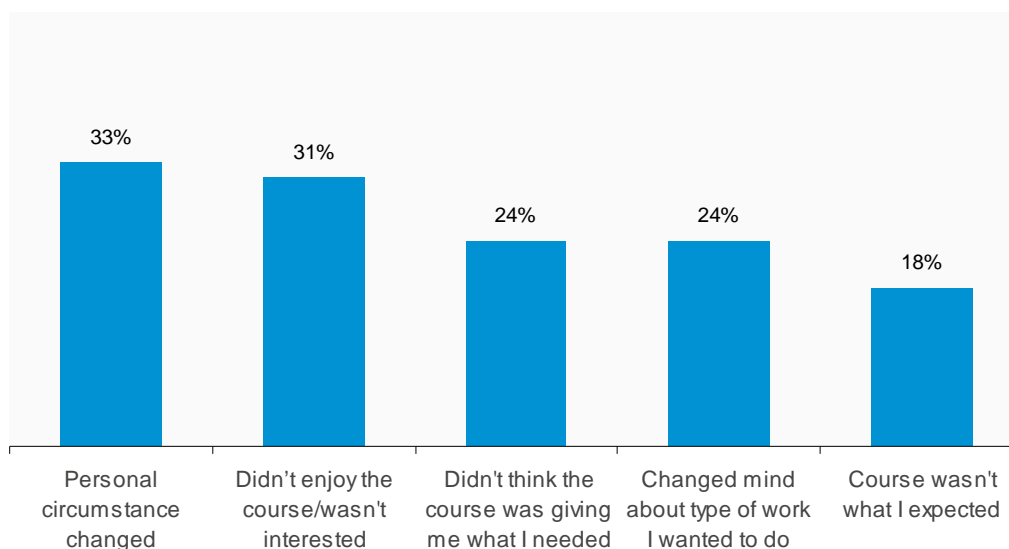
FIGURE 13 – REASONS FOR CHANGING COURSE OF STUDY



Multiple responses allowed

The main reasons why the 5% of young people discontinued a course of study are outlined in Figure 14.

FIGURE 14 – REASONS FOR DISCONTINUING COURSE OF STUDY



Multiple responses allowed

Although most higher education and VET students indicate they are happy with their courses of study, common reasons for changing or discontinuing courses include: they did not enjoy the course, it was not what they expected; or they changed their minds. It is unclear what career development, if any, these respondents received before or after starting university. In any case, career development that focuses on identifying young people's values and interests, and providing young people with detailed information on what tertiary courses are like *before* they start those courses, may help reduce the number of student's changing or discontinuing courses.

8.3 IMPROVING CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED TO HIGHER EDUCATION OR VET STUDENTS

Most young people in higher education and VET, much like young people in secondary school, say they want access to personalised one-on-one career advice that takes into account their interests, values, strengths and weaknesses. They would prefer to receive this advice from someone with experience in the industry in which they are interested. Several say they do not want to receive advice from 'baby boomers', because in their view baby boomers have outdated ideas about careers and a 'job for life' mentality.

Young people also want this one-on-one advice to be complemented by online resources. An Indigenous young person, for example, said students should be able to go to a website and type 'I live in Melbourne and I want to do nursing, what TAFEs can I go to' and find out all the information they need. Several young people say they currently have to collect career information from a range of different websites, which is time-consuming and inconvenient. A small number of young people in higher education or VET reported using interactive technologies, but there is definitely not a strong preference for such technologies.

Parents and young people both agree that more support should be provided to higher education and VET students at the transition point between school and university because this is when young people are most at risk of dropping out and making poor career decisions. Many young people say they were not prepared for the demands of university or the lack of structure and found the experience isolating and overwhelming. The transition appears to be particularly difficult for humanitarian refugees and young people from regional, rural and remote locations. This latter group of young people often have to leave home for tertiary study which can be difficult and expensive.

Some young people at university say they are also anxious about the transition from university to the workforce because they have often had little experience in the industry their study relates to. Young people and employers say universities could provide better career development by facilitating contact with industry through integrated learning such as work placements and internships. Employers also say

universities can assist with the transition to the workforce and young people's career development more generally by giving them a more realistic idea of the type of work they will do when they leave university. Employers say one of the biggest challenges they face is managing young people's expectations about the work they will do, how quickly they will be promoted and the remuneration they will receive. Some employers say it is often the highly educated young people that have the most unrealistic expectations.

The transition from school to VET and from VET to the workforce generally appears to be easier for young people. Many TAFE students say they prefer TAFE to school because it is a *'more relaxed'* environment. TAFE students also appear to have greater exposure to industry which is seen as making the transition to the workforce easier. However, there is a view that TAFEs need to do more to better inform young people about the transferability of TAFE courses across States/Territories. Given young people are highly mobile now, some young people say TAFE should better explain to students how TAFE course requirements differ across States/Territories.

Several young people, including young carers and Indigenous young people, say that finances are a huge barrier to them pursuing post school study options. They say that financial assistance would enable them to broaden their career options. Other mainstream young people suggest that flexible work and study options such as evening and online classes would enable them to work during the day to earn money and study at night.

Young people at university and VET say they expect to have many different careers over the course of their working lives. They generally recognise that in order to manage their careers they will need general competencies and life skills such as communication and interpersonal skills, flexibility, resilience, self-confidence and time management. They say they will also need to understand their values, interests, strengths and weaknesses, and know where to go to get career information and support. There is a view among young people that universities and TAFEs should be providing opportunities for young people to develop and refine these life skills.

Some parents say universities could improve the career development provided to students by linking courses to labour market demands and providing young people with up-front information about the employment prospects for particular courses of study. As an example, one parent in Launceston said her daughter undertook three years of a teaching degree before learning that there would be 300 graduates but only 17 teaching places available locally. Had her daughter known this information earlier, it would have enabled her to make more informed career decisions.

9 Young people not in education

KEY FINDINGS:

- There is broad agreement that there is a major gap in career development for young people not in education. Many young people not in education say they do not know where to go to get comprehensive career information and advice.
- Once young people leave educational structures, there is no 'natural, go to place' for career development support.
- Young people not in education tend to rely on employment service providers and the internet for career information and advice. They have mixed views on the quality of advice provided by employment service providers. The internet is also seen as having limitations because it only allows young people to source information, not ask questions and obtain advice.
- Young people not in education are a diverse group with very diverse needs. They generally want access to personalised one on one career information and advice, but they want this advice at different times. Career practitioners say young people not in education need 'drop in centres' where they can obtain career information and advice from a qualified career practitioner. Any such centre, however, needs to be free and easy to access.
- Young people not in education from potentially disadvantaged groups sometimes have their own sources of career development support, but the quality of this support is variable.
- Parents and young people say employers can do more to support the career development needs of young people by investing time and money into training them, and having realistic expectations about what young people can or should be able to do.

9.1 AVAILABILITY AND QUALITY OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE NOT IN EDUCATION

A total of 88% of career practitioners surveyed agree that *there is a major gap in career development to young people who are not in education*. Many young people not in education say they do not know where to go to get comprehensive career information and advice, and many of those who do know where to go say the career advice and information they receive is inadequate. Parents are slightly more positive. A quarter of parents with children not in education say they have tried to get career information or advice - 55% of parents say it was *easy* but 24% say it was *fairly difficult* or *very difficult*. There is a view across the different cohorts that once young people leave educational structures, there is no '*natural, go to place*' for career development support.

Career practitioners say sources of career information and support for young people not in education include: private career practitioners; family and friends; the internet; universities and TAFEs (for those interested in enrolling in tertiary courses); and some school career practitioners. Young people not in education generally agree with these sources of career development, although are more likely to see employment service providers and less likely to see private career practitioners as sources of career development support. Career practitioners say young people not in education tend to access sources of career development in a '*haphazard*' way, and that these young people tend to receive career information and advice informally.

Many young people not in education say they receive career information and advice from employment service providers. Some say they are happy with the support they receive from these providers, adding that the providers have found them jobs or training/study linked to their interests or skills. Some Indigenous young people say employment services assisted them with exploring their interests and options, finding them work, enrolling them in TAFE courses, financing the costs of their courses and preparing them for jobs (eg writing résumés). However, despite their enthusiasm for employment service

providers, it appears that several of these young people have three or four certificates in different fields (ie horticulture, hospitality, tourism, construction), and that there has been no follow through to link these courses with employment.

Other young people are not satisfied with the career development provided by employment service providers. These participants say employment agencies do not explore with them their aspirations, needs and interests, and put them in menial jobs that they have no interest in. Some young people also say employment agencies give them wrong information, do not communicate effectively and say they will do things but do not follow through.

Young people not in education tend to rely more heavily than other cohorts on the internet for career information and advice because they do not see themselves as having many other options. Young people not in education spoke about using TAFE and university websites, MyCareer, myfuture and Seek to obtain career information. While some young people find the internet very helpful, others say the internet is *'too difficult'* to navigate, and others say they cannot use the internet because they do not have access to it at home. As with young people in higher education or VET, some young people not in education say the internet is good for information and fact finding, but poses limitations because it cannot answer questions or give opinions, advice and guidance.

Young people not in education are more likely than other cohorts of young people to see employers as responsible for their career development. Where employers are committed to career development, they can be an excellent source of career development for young people not in education. The young people that are most positive about career development provided by employers are generally those that work for large business that have greater resources for training and skill development. The reality, however, is that most employers are not committed to providing quality career development to young employees.

Career practitioners and young people say a small number of school career practitioners continue to provide career advice and information to students after they have left school. They generally see this as a valuable source of career development for young people not in education because it enables them to obtain one on one advice personalised advice from someone they trust and feel comfortable speaking with.

Although career practitioners see private career practitioners as a source of career development for young people, they acknowledge that this service is expensive and generally only available to young people that have been to schools with good career development programs. Young people do not generally see private career practitioners as an accessible form of career development.

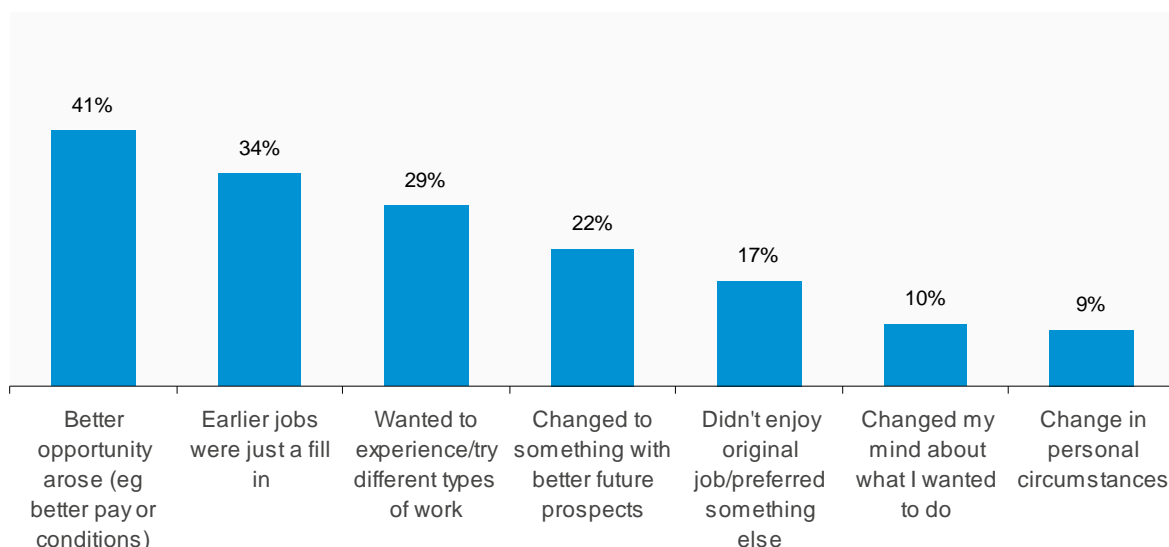
Young people not in education that are potentially disadvantaged often have their own sources of career development support but the quality of this support is variable. Some Indigenous young people, for example, say there are career mentoring programs for young Indigenous people, but they question how many young Indigenous people actually know about them. This view is supported by some Indigenous parents who say that although a range of services exist for Indigenous young people, many do not know about them. Young people with a physical disability say Day Services staff should provide them with career advice and information, but instead make unfair assumptions about them and try to push them into voluntary work that they are not interested in. Some refugees said a 'pathways counsellor' at a specialist refugee service provided them with useful advice on the best pathway for them to take to TAFE or university.

9.2 SATISFACTION WITH WORK POST SCHOOL, HIGHER EDUCATION OR VET

Of the 1,801 young people quantitatively surveyed, a total of 460 people have left school and are not in education. Most of these young people (83%) are working full or part time. A total of 73% say they are *happy* or *fairly happy* with their current type of work, and only 9% say they are *unhappy* or *very unhappy*.

A total of 44% of young people not in education and currently working say that since leaving school they have changed the type of work they do. The most common reasons for this change are outlined in Figure 15 below.

FIGURE 15 – REASONS FOR CHANGING TYPE OF WORK



Multiple responses allowed

The notion of *'chopping and changing'* jobs repeatedly emerged in focus groups with young people. Some young people do not necessarily see *'chopping and changing'* jobs as a bad thing, suggesting it is perfectly normal for young people to want to try different things. Young people say they do not have the *'job for life'* mentality that many of their parents have, and expect to have a number of different careers over the course of their lifetime. Some young people who do not know what they want to do deliberately *'chop and change'* jobs in the hope they will *'fall into something'* they enjoy. However, it is clear that *'chopping and*

changing' jobs can be destabilising for some young people. Some young people say they *'wandered aimlessly'* between jobs, and others say despite various jobs in various fields, they still have not managed to *'fall into something'* they enjoy.

9.3 IMPROVING CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROVIDED TO YOUNG PEOPLE NOT IN EDUCATION

Improving the career development provided to young people not in education requires recognition of the fact that these young people are different and have different needs. Some are working in jobs they are satisfied with and need little career development at this stage in their lives. Some have clear career aspirations and need information and advice on what to do to realise these aspirations. Some know their interests and want a better understanding of the career options available to them. Some do not have clear or specific career aspirations and need opportunities to further explore their interests and aptitudes. Some need practical assistance with finding and securing jobs.

Young people not in education generally want access to personalised one on one career information and advice, but they want this advice at different times. Career practitioners say young people not in education need *'drop in centres'* where they can obtain career information and advice that addresses their individual needs from a qualified career practitioner. Some career practitioners and parents say this service would be particularly useful for young people already working and considering a change of career. These young people cannot access Centrelink employment service providers and generally cannot afford to see a private career practitioner. There is a view that young people develop firm ideas about what they want to do at different times, including after they have left educational institutions, and structures need to be in place to enable young people not in education to get the information and advice they need. Any such structure, however, needs to be free and easy to access as transport and finances are key barriers for many young people not in education.

Other suggestions by career practitioners working outside the school sector for improving career development to young people not in education include:

- advertising campaigns, provided in locations where young people will see them
- specialised services such as hotlines and outreach programs
- internet-based resources such as blogs and tweets about careers, and more user friendly websites
- more and better careers expos
- educating and involving parents
- services through Job Services Australia.

Several stakeholders say at risk young people not in education are a *'hard core challenge'*. They say these young people need to be engaged one-on-one and given information and advice on opportunities and pathways available to them. They also need practical advice on how to behave in a workplace. Some stakeholders identify government employment agencies and non-government organisations (NGOs) as best placed to provide this advice but say, to be effective, these organisations need to work with at risk young people to identify their values and interests, and set short and long term goals. These organisations also need to work effectively with each other and coordinate their activities. There is a general view that coordination between these organisations can be significantly improved.

Trust appears to be a key issue in the provision of career development to at risk young people. These young people want career information and advice from someone whom they trust and can have an established, long-term relationship with. Some at risk young people, for example, say they do not like it when Centrelink staff assigned to their case change, because it means they have to deal with someone they do not know and start to build a relationship all over again.

Parents and young people say employers could do more to improve the career development provided to young people not in education. They both say that employers have unrealistic expectations of young employees and are not prepared to invest time and money into training them to do certain jobs. Many parents commented that it was different when they were younger because they were able to start at the bottom with no qualifications and work their way up. They say they received workplace training and mentoring which occurs far less frequently now. Some Indigenous parents say employers should network and coordinate with schools, youth organisations and Indigenous organisations to promote appropriate entry-level jobs to young people. Many at risk young people say employers need to learn to *'give us a go'*.

Some potentially disadvantaged young people say that in order for them to access career development, certain barriers not necessarily related to career development *per se* need to be removed. For young people with a disability, a key barrier is the assumptions people make about what they can and cannot achieve. For young people in regional, rural and remote areas, the barriers are money, transport and limited job opportunities in their hometowns. For Indigenous young people, prejudices and the desire to remain connected to their communities can be barriers. For young refugees, the main barrier is their command of the English language.

10 Potentially disadvantaged groups of young people

KEY FINDINGS:

- Potentially disadvantaged young people often have unique career development need and wants that require tailored, individualised responses.
- Young people in regional, rural and remote areas need to have their horizons broadened and greater exposure to different careers and the day-to-day existence of universities and VET institutions.
- Any approach to improving the career development provided to Indigenous young people should actively engage families, communities and existing sources of career development support for Indigenous young people. Career development should meet the needs of Indigenous young people and parents at the local level and take into account the varying capacities of Indigenous families to support the career development needs of their children.
- Indigenous students and parents do not necessarily want advice from an Indigenous career practitioner, but they do want advice from someone who has had Indigenous cultural awareness training
- Parents of CALD young people may have either too low or too high career expectations for their children. They also may have a limited knowledge of the education system in Australia and the career opportunities available. Teachers and career practitioners say schools can better engage with CALD parents to help them have realistic and informed expectations of their children.
- Many young refugees want to develop proficiency in the English language because they recognise that without adequate English, their career options will be severely limited. There is also a need for young refugees to better understand notions of 'career' and 'career pathways', and the various careers available to them.
- Effective career development for young carers involves the facilitation of flexible work and study options that take their personal circumstances into account.
- Effective career development for people with a disability involves specialised advice that takes into account their individual circumstances, recognises and supports their abilities and provides opportunities to try different types of work.

10.1 YOUNG PEOPLE IN REGIONAL, RURAL AND REMOTE AREAS

There is a general view that young people in regional, rural and remote areas need greater exposure to different careers and the day-to-day existence of universities and VET institutions. Many of these young people have limited horizons because they cannot get this exposure in their home town.

Universities and VET institutions are less likely to visit regional, rural and remote areas so young people, parents and teachers in these locations say they have to rely more heavily on online services. Many say the quality of online services (both for career development and for accessing higher education) can improve. Parents, in particular, are looking for detailed advice on university courses across the country so they can match courses to local labour market conditions.

Parents and young people say young people from regional, rural and remote areas also need support at key transition points, particularly the transition from school to higher education or VET, and from education to the workforce. These young people often have to leave family and friends, and move away from home for post school work or study. The move can be daunting and destabilising, particularly for young people who have never left their hometown or seen a university campus. The move can also complicate an already difficult transition, and increase the risk of these young people making poor career decisions. Young people in regional, rural and remote locations that have had opportunities to visit

university campuses and workplaces outside their hometowns as part of school career development programs generally say they find these opportunities useful.

It is suggested that finance and transport are key barriers for these young people accessing career development, and that more can be done to promote government assistance and scholarships for people from regional, rural and remote areas. It appears that more can also be done to provide quality career development services to young people in these locations who choose to study by correspondence.

Schools, teachers, parents and young people say that schools in regional, rural and remote locations have more limited opportunities to match young people's interests with subjects, VET courses and work experience placements. For example, schools in regional locations may only offer students VET courses through the VET in Schools Program if there are places available. Parents and young people say this has the potential to impact negatively on their post school work and study options.

10.2 INDIGENOUS YOUNG PEOPLE

Our discussions highlight that Indigenous young people are not a homogenous group. They have very different career development needs and wants. Indigenous young people in regional, rural and remote areas, for example, have many of the same needs and wants as those identified under in section 9.1.

However, similar to all young people, Indigenous young people want high quality career development that takes into account their values, interests and aptitudes, and options regarding how to access career information and advice.

There is a general view among Indigenous students and parents that Indigenous young people do not necessarily want advice from an Indigenous career practitioner, but they do want advice from someone who has had Indigenous cultural awareness training. Some Indigenous parents, however, say that Indigenous career practitioners could work in places where there are large populations of indigenous young people.

Indigenous organisations and Indigenous staff in and outside educational institutions are available to provide career development to young Indigenous people, and this career development can be extremely valuable. It appears that Indigenous young people do obtain career advice and information from a range of sources, and that any approach to improving the career development provided to Indigenous young people needs to actively engage these various sources to ensure a coordinated approach. There is a view that although a range of services exist for Indigenous young people, these services could be better promoted because not all Indigenous young people know they exist.

Family and communities also play a pivotal role in the career development of Indigenous young people, and should be actively engaged in any efforts to improve the provision of career development to these young people. Career development should meet the needs of Indigenous young people and parents at the local level and take into account the varying capacities of Indigenous families to support the career development needs of their children. It is important to note that many Indigenous young people have limited support at home but others have an excellent network of family and friends that they can tap into.

Some young Indigenous people say maintaining a connection with their community is important, and leaving their community for post school work or study can make the post school transition very challenging. Conversely, some Indigenous young people are highly mobile and this makes the provision of career development both within and outside educational institutions difficult.

As noted in section 8, it is reported that young Indigenous people often complete several Certificate IIIs at TAFE in a range of different fields. This VET study is often facilitated by employment service providers. However, there appears to be a lack of opportunity to link this study with employment opportunities.

10.3 CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE (CALD) YOUNG PEOPLE

There is a view among teachers and career practitioners that many CALD parents have either too low or too high career expectations for their children. Teachers and career practitioners say schools can better engage with CALD parents to help them have realistic and informed expectations of their children, and to ensure they understand the education system in Australia and the opportunities provided by career

development. Parents who grew up in foreign countries often have a limited understanding of these issues which limits the career development they can provide their children. There is a view that it is up to schools to *fill the gap*.

10.4 HUMANITARIAN REFUGEES

Many young refugees say they want to develop proficiency in the English language because they recognise that without adequate English, their career options will be severely limited. There is a view that young refugees can better understand notions of 'career' and 'career pathways', and the various careers available to them in Australia. They often have a poor understanding of the labour market in Australia and cultural norms in Australian workplaces (eg shaking the interviewer's hand when attending an interview). Young refugees say the transition from school to higher education or VET, and from education to employment, is a considerable challenge for them.

10.5 AT RISK YOUNG PEOPLE

At risk young people often have poor connections with schools, universities and VET institutions, and families, which is partly why they may be at risk. Many of these young people may have disengaged from school from an early age or been highly mobile and missed out on adequate career development at school. It appears that schools alone cannot be relied upon to meet the career development needs and wants of this group. Rather, there needs to be a coordinated approach among key organisations providing them with support such as government employment agencies and non-government organisations.

Trust is strongly reported as an issue for this group, so career information and guidance from someone with whom they can have a long-term trusting relationship is beneficial. At risk young people say employment service providers should take a holistic approach to their career development, and consider their interests, values and abilities, rather than just finding them short-term and casual work. They also say the key barriers to them pursuing their career aspirations are finances, transport and childcare.

10.6 YOUNG CARERS

Young carers say they need flexible work and study options that take their personal circumstances into account (eg pathway plans which allow young carers to complete secondary school certificates over a longer period of time and provide flexible deadlines). These arrangements should be facilitated by a career practitioner who can provide practical support in an empathetic and understanding way. Counsellors that have a dual role of personal counsellor and career counsellor have been seen as suitable for this cohort. Young carers say finances are a key barrier to them pursuing their career aspirations, particularly given they cannot get a full-time carer pension if they are full-time students.

10.7 YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

Young people with a disability, career practitioners, teachers and parents say young people with a disability need specialised advice that takes into account their individual circumstances, and opportunities to try different types of work. Young people with a physical disability say it is important their abilities are recognised, and report that schools and Day Services make unfair and unfounded assumptions about what they can and cannot achieve.

The quantitative survey showed that students with a disability are less satisfied than other young people with the career development they are receiving or had received at school. Note, however that the quantitative sample size of young people with a disability was small (45 people).

11 Parents and carers

KEY FINDINGS:

- There is broad agreement that parents are the most significant influence in young people's career decisions, and that they play a key role in supporting and assisting young people in their career development.
- Many parents say they feel confident about their capacity to help their children at school to make decisions about study, work or career. However, parents' levels of confidence diminish after their children leave school.
- Despite most parents saying they feel confident, a substantial minority of parents believe things have changed so much it is difficult these days for parents to advise their children about work or study.
- The great majority of parents express a strong desire for schools to involve them in the career development of their children. However, less than half say this is happening at present.
- Parents say schools need to better communicate and share information with them.
- Parents say a range of resources and tools would help them support their children with decisions about study, work or career. These include: help in contacting people doing the kind of work their children may be interested in; material on the internet or printed material designed for parents on work, study and careers; career expos; personal meetings with school career advisors and teachers; and a careers hotline for parents.

There is broad agreement that parents are the most significant influence in young people's career decisions, and play a key role in supporting and assisting young people in their career development. This is particularly the case when young people are at school, but is also the case when young people are in higher education or VET, and are not in education.

Parents generally see their role as supporting and encouraging the career aspirations of their children. Notwithstanding this, career practitioners say parents can be both a positive and a negative influence on their children's career development. The majority of career practitioners (67%) say that firm parental expectations, whether too high or too low, are a major barrier to effective career education and guidance. This view is supported by findings from the qualitative discussions with young people, teachers and career practitioners.

Most parents surveyed (82%) say they feel confident about their capacity to help their children at school to make decisions about study, work or career, and 83% say they feel able to advise or help their children with school subject choices. Slightly fewer parents with children in Government schools express such confidence in comparison to those parents with children attending Catholic or Independent schools. Also, slightly fewer Indigenous parents surveyed express this confidence.

Parents' levels of confidence appear to diminish after their children leave school. Only 67% of parents surveyed whose children have left school say that feel able to advise or help their children with decisions about work or study. Women are less confident than men in this regard.

Qualitative discussions with parents of children at school, in higher education or VET, however, suggest parents have much lower levels of confidence to assist their children with decisions about study, work or career. Some parents find supporting and encouraging the career aspirations of their children difficult to do. They do not know the extent to which they should push their children, engage their children, or leave them alone. They say it is difficult to get the balance right and they struggle to know what is the right or best thing to do. Parents say even their own children are like *chalk and cheese* and therefore different strategies are required for each. For parents who cannot adequately meet the career development needs of their children, schools are seen as having a responsibility to *fill the gap*.

Despite most parents saying they feel confident to help their children make decisions about study, work or career, a substantial minority of parents (around 40%) believe things have changed so much it is difficult nowadays for parents to advise their children about work or study. This is particularly the view of parents with an annual household income of less than \$60,000, with half of these parents expressing this view.

Career practitioners also share this view, with over two thirds (67%) of those surveyed saying parents face some difficulties in this regard.

Parents express a strong desire for schools to involve them in the career development of their children. The vast majority of career practitioners (93%) and parents surveyed (89%) believe that schools should involve parents or other community members in providing career information or guidance. This finding was evident for males and females and across school education sectors and regional locations. However, less than half the parents surveyed (46%) were of the view that parents were involved with schools in the process of providing career information or advice.

Close to one in six parents reported they did not know much about what was provided at school by way of careers information and advice. This was particularly the case for parents whose children attended a Government school. Only 40% of these parents said parents were involved in this process compared with 48% in Catholic schools and 55% in Independent schools. Indigenous parents report an even lower level of involvement (31%).

In qualitative discussions, parents said schools need to better communicate and share information with them. They want more and regular information so they can more effectively support the career development needs of their children. One-off parent/teacher nights and careers nights do not always give parents the information they need. Some parents say schools could more effectively use email as a channel of communication. Parents want greater access to school career practitioners and their children's teachers, and they want these people to *listen* to what they and their children want.

Parents surveyed were asked to rate the usefulness of a range of identified resources and tools that would potentially assist them support their children with decisions about study, work or career. The majority of parents rate the following as useful:

- help in contacting people doing the kind of work my children may be interested in (84%)
- material on the internet designed for parents on work, study and careers (82%)
- career expos (81%)
- printed materials designed for parents on work, study and careers (77%)
- personal meetings with school career advisors, teachers or advisors (75%)
- a careers hotline for parents (60%).

In focus group discussions, parents spoke of a desire for improved access to information on: *local* labour market demand, awards and pay rates, the top universities and university courses in the country, and the cost of tertiary programs of study. They expressed a desire for information to be in a centralised place (ie a '*one stop shop*'). Some say this information is currently not easily accessible and involves considerable time and effort to source. Some parents express a preference for this information to be provided by the government, saying they do not trust information from private employers.

12 Teachers

KEY FINDINGS:

- Almost half of the primary teachers surveyed say professional development could assist them in providing career development to students. Some primary teachers also say an external, specialist service that visits primary schools could be an effective way of providing career development to students.
- Primary teachers are not supportive of initiatives that would add extra pressures to the limited time they have available and the already-crowded curriculum.
- Secondary teachers say that both school-based career practitioners and subject teachers play an important role in providing career development to students.
- Secondary teachers want career practitioners to share information and communicate more effectively with them.
- Some secondary teachers also express a desire for centralised online information about careers. A particular gap identified is information relating to labour market demands and skills shortages.
- High quality teachers are seen by both young people and teachers themselves as imperative to quality career development in secondary schools.
- TAFE teachers say they often spend a large percentage of their time providing students with careers information and advice as TAFE career practitioners are seen as lacking links with industry, which undermines their credibility. They say TAFE should consider introducing 'ambassadors' - a head teacher in each course with good links to industry that students can go to for career advice.

12.1 PRIMARY TEACHERS

As previously discussed in Section 5 opinion is divided among teachers as to whether primary school teachers should have professional development to assist them in working with students on issues relating to future work or study. Almost half (46%) of teachers surveyed are of the view they should, with more female than male teachers expressing this view. Qualitatively, some primary school teachers say professional development could help teachers better provide career development to their students by raising their awareness of the different career options available and assisting teachers to overcome their own personal biases. Having said this, primary teachers are not supportive of initiatives that would add extra pressures to the limited time they have available and the already crowded curriculum. Teachers are *'sceptical about whacking more things in for us teachers to do'*. Primary teachers are generally also not supportive of kits and programs that they would be required to implement. *'Don't make a program and box it up beautifully and send it to schools. No-one wants it'*.

Some primary school teachers suggest an external, specialist service that visits primary schools could be an effective way of providing career development to primary students. The provision of information by someone other than the teacher can be exciting for young children, who *'get sick of listening to the teacher all the time'*. The visit could then be followed up by classroom based discussion. Several teachers said the Healthy Harold Life Education program is a good example of how this is done.

12.2 SECONDARY TEACHERS

Secondary teachers say that *both* school-based career practitioners and subject teachers play an important role in providing career development to students by linking teaching to careers, broadening horizons, developing general competencies and providing information and advice on subject selection and post school options. Teachers spoke of doing these things in varying degrees (eg some teachers specifically focus on these career development activities and others only give them prominence if it

comes up in the context of other things). Secondary teachers also spoke of using various resources in providing career development to students including the Bullseye Posters, Job Guide and myfuture.

Secondary teachers say students often have expectations of subject teachers regarding the provision of career information and advice that can be challenging for them to meet. For example, students will expect to be able to ask a science teacher about science-related career options but the reality is the science teacher may have never worked in the science industry. Secondary teachers say teachers can give students the wrong advice (eg you need x maths to study x course) because they are not experts on post school options.

There is a view amongst secondary teachers that, even if they are not qualified in the area of career development, they need to know how to point young people in the right direction and to facilitate their access to relevant information. To support them to do this, secondary teachers want career practitioners to share information and communicate more effectively with them. Improvements in this regard would enable teachers to be better informed and would assist them when speaking with students and their parents about subject choice and future career options.

Some secondary teachers also express a desire for *centralised* online information about career pathways and options, what courses universities and TAFE's offer, entry scores, local labour market demands, skills shortages and subject requirements. A particular gap that was identified is information relating to labour market demands, where the skills shortages will be over the next ten years, and how young people can link their skills and career aspirations with these shortages. Many teachers have used the internet to access this information in the past, identifying sites such as Careerjet, OneSchool, MyCareer and Job Guide, but say the provision of career information online is currently fragmented.

High quality teachers are seen by both young people and teachers themselves as imperative to quality career development. Teachers who are appropriately qualified and passionate about what they teach can be instrumental in inspiring young people, sparking their interests, and shaping their future aspirations. Secondary teachers say teachers need higher salaries and continuing training to ensure high quality people, that will *'give kids every opportunity'* to succeed in life, to enter the profession.

12.3 TAFE TEACHERS

TAFE teachers say they often spend a large percentage of their time providing students with career information and advice as TAFE career practitioners are seen as lacking links with industry, which undermines their credibility. While this can be beneficial to students, there are some limitations. For example, it can lead to biased advice as course teachers can only give advice on their particular area of expertise, not on the complete range of options available to students. Further, while most agree that TAFE teachers generally have good links with industry, some TAFE teachers have not been directly involved in the workforce for many years, so any advice they give on the labour market may be outdated. TAFE teachers say it would be helpful if TAFE introduced 'ambassadors' - a head teacher in each course with good links to industry that students could go to for career advice.

13 Employers

KEY FINDINGS:

- Employers generally do not see themselves as responsible for the career development of young people, but do see themselves as having a role to play in supporting the career development of young people.
- Larger businesses are more likely to contribute to career development, whereas small businesses are less likely to do this.
- Career development provided by employers generally tends to focus on training to do a particular job, rather than developing general life skills and competencies.
- Most employers say young people have a poor attitude and work ethic, as well as unrealistic expectations. However, young people say it is employers that have unrealistic expectations about what young people can or should be able to do.
- Many employers say they need government assistance to provide better career development to young people. Others say other forms of assistance such as career development toolkits would be helpful.

Young people, parents, teachers and career practitioners are more likely than employers to see employers to some extent as responsible for the career development of young people. While there is some variation among employers, employers generally do not see themselves as *responsible* for career development but do see themselves as having a role to play in *supporting* the career development of young people. Employers' commitment to career development appears to be commensurate with the size of the business – larger businesses are more likely to contribute to career development, whereas small businesses are less likely to do this.

The majority of employers recognise the need for businesses to dedicate some resources to training young employees (94%), and understand the critical role of *'on the job'* training (85%). The majority of employers (77%) say they have incorporated these concepts into a process or scheme to manage the career development of young employees. The quality of these programs, however, is very variable. Some employers, particularly large employers, report having comprehensive performance management programs which require a periodic review of staff performance and the identification of training and development needs. They also provide external and in-house training as well as formal and informal mentoring programs. Other employers, generally small-medium employers, have a very limited understanding of career development and their career development programs reflect this. As an example, one small-medium employer said his career development consists of giving new employees an induction manual to read.

Career development provided by employers generally tends to focus on training to do a particular job, rather than developing general life skills and competencies. Only a small number of medium to large employers see developing general competencies and life skills in young people as part of their role.

Approximately 57% of employers surveyed say young people are prepared to function effectively in the workplace. However, most of these responses are qualified as *prepared to some extent* (41%), compared to *fairly well prepared* (15%) or *very well prepared* (1%). There is a view among employers that young people generally have a poor attitude and work ethic, unrealistic pay expectations, and poorly developed 'soft skills' such as communication and interpersonal skills.

Many employers say one of their biggest challenges is to manage the unrealistic expectations of young people, adding that young people's high levels of confidence are not always commensurate with their ability and experience. On the other hand, young people say that *employers* have unrealistic expectations about what young people can or should be able to do. Some young people, particularly at risk young people, say employers will not give young people 'a go'.

Some young people, teachers, parents and career practitioners say employers can help make young people prepared for the workforce by offering work experience and work placements. Most large and medium sized employers are prepared to offer young people hands-on work experience/placements, but small-medium employers are generally less inclined to do so.

Employers say to be able to provide better career development, they need government assistance to reduce the financial and administrative burden of employing and training young people either through tax rebates, direct funding or other concessions. Several employers identify preferences in Government tendering of contracts towards those companies with considerable numbers of apprentices or trainees as a strong incentive to employing and providing career development to young people. Other employers say unclear or "*unfair*" industrial relations legislation is a barrier to employing young people.

There is a general view that small to medium employers often do not have the human and financial resources to provide quality career development. In recognition of this, some small to medium employers say career development of young people should be dealt with at an industry level. Other employers say providing *tool kits* with basic career development frameworks to small to medium employers would be helpful.

14 Career practitioners

KEY FINDINGS:

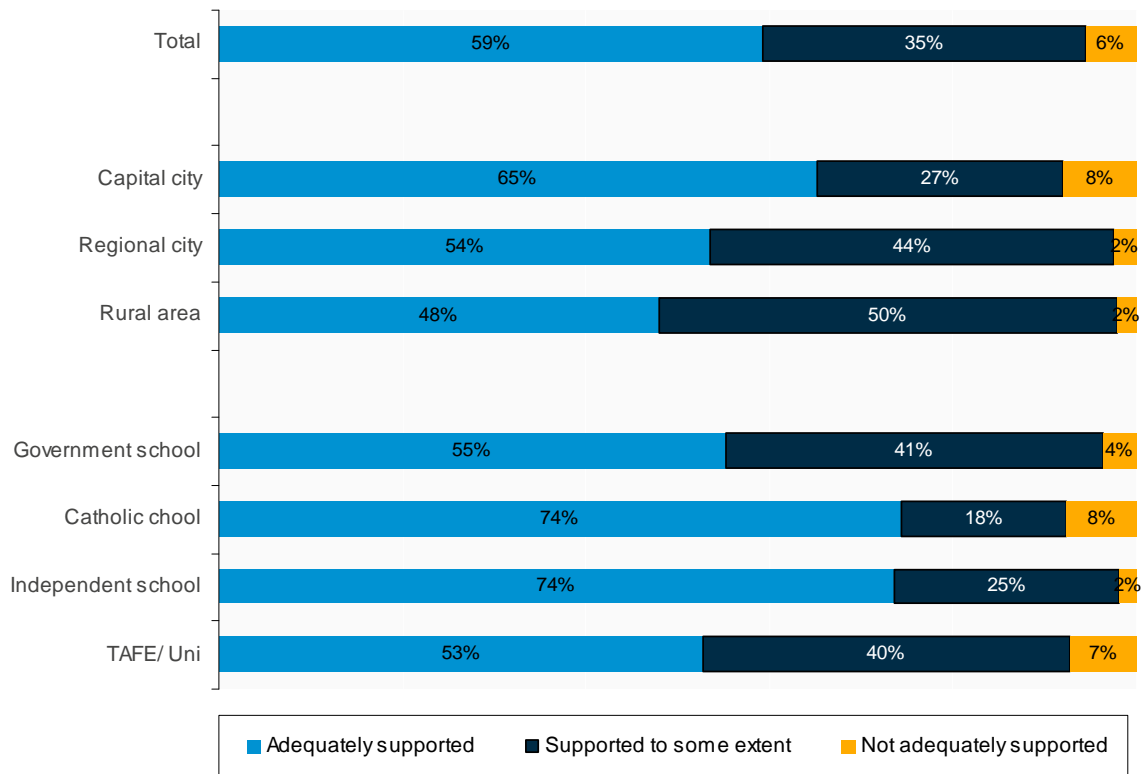
- Career practitioners have the key role to play in facilitating the career development of young people in primary school, secondary school, higher education or VET, and also young people not in education.
- While the majority of career practitioners feel they are adequately supported in their work by the organisation in which they work, there is room for further supporting career practitioners in general, and particularly those working in Government schools, in TAFE or university, and in regional and rural locations.
- Career practitioners say the quality and accessibility of career development varies widely in all sectors, and is often provided in an 'ad hoc' manner. Over half of career practitioners surveyed say career development for school students needs to be provided in a more professional manner.
- Career practitioners identify a range of services and resources that they use in their day to day work. By far the most frequently used resources are the Job Guide, followed by Myfuture.
- Career practitioners identify a number of additional resources or support that they think will enhance the effective provision of career development. These include: additional time to spend with students/young people; greater contact with employers and industry; professional development and training; internet-based resources; help in networking with other career practitioners; and greater support from the organisations they work for.

The research suggests that career practitioners have the key role to play in facilitating the career development of young people in primary school, secondary school, higher education or VET and also young people not in education.

There is a role for career practitioners to work with primary teachers to ensure they have adequate professional development to provide career education to primary students. In secondary school, they have a key role to play in working with young people, teachers and parents to ensure young people receive personalised career information and advice, and labour market information; and opportunities to test out their ideas through 'hands on' practical experience. In higher education or VET, career practitioners can play an important role in supporting and facilitating links to industry through various forms of integrated learning. For young people not in education, a key challenge for career practitioners is making young people aware of the services they provide and making these services available.

As demonstrated in Figure 16, the majority of career practitioners surveyed feel they are adequately supported in their work by the organisation in which they work. However a substantial minority (35%) feel supported *to some extent* only. This is particularly the case for practitioners working in Government schools (41%), in TAFE or university (40%), and in regional (44%) or rural Australia (50%). This clearly suggests that there is room for improvement in further supporting career practitioners in general, and those working in these contexts in particular.

FIGURE 16 – EXTENT TO WHICH CAREER PRACTITIONERS FEEL SUPPORTED BY THE ORGANISATION IN WHICH THEY WORK



While many practitioners feel adequately supported by the organisation in which they work, career practitioners say the quality and accessibility of career development varies widely in all sectors, and is often provided in an *ad hoc* manner. A range of barriers and challenges were identified in discussions with career practitioners. Inadequate resourcing in terms of limited funding and too few staff are said to present challenges for career practitioners, particularly those working in Government schools, regional locations and tertiary institutions. Independent and Catholic schools are seen as being able to provide better career development due to smaller student numbers and better funding. There is a view that career practitioners working in universities are often too busy to deal with the volume of students and their diverse needs.

Poor commitment to career development by principals and competing priorities in the school curriculum are also cited as barriers. Securing time within an already crowded curriculum to ensure career development is extended to all students is a challenge faced by schools. Some career practitioners say career development should be incorporated into the curriculum and the school timetable.

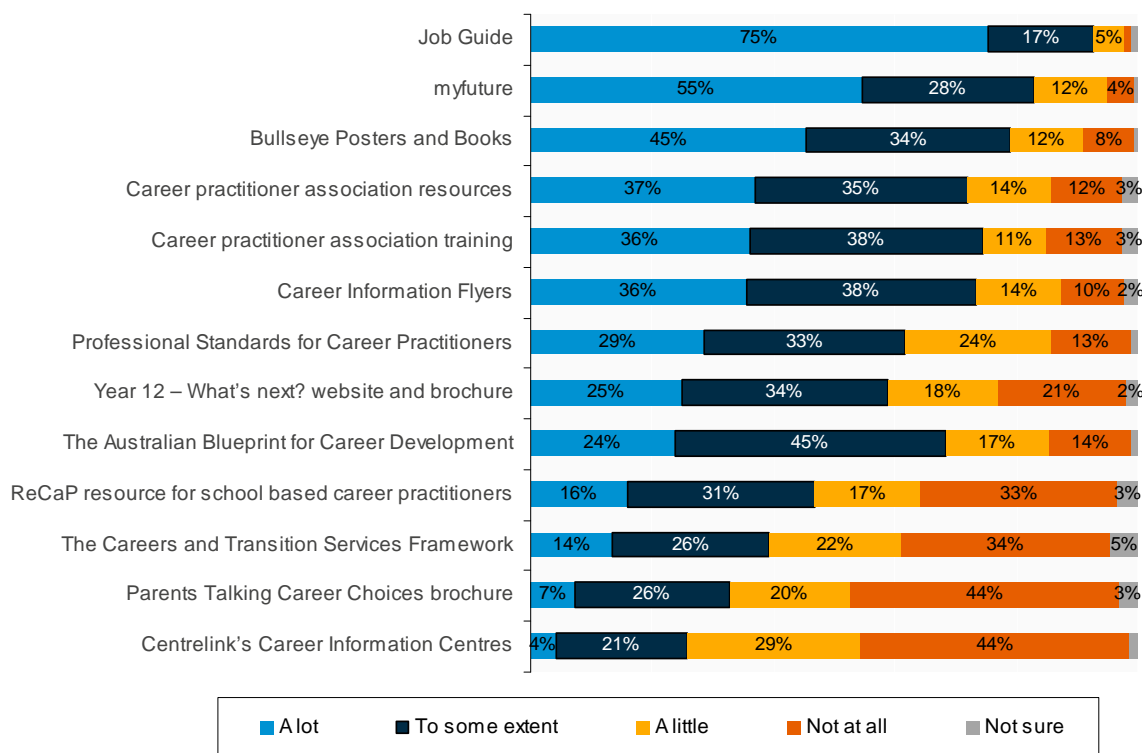
Over half of the career practitioners surveyed say career development for school students needs to be provided in a more professional manner than it is at present. Furthermore, two in five career practitioners are of the view that people providing career development in schools are often poorly equipped for the task. Around one in four parents surveyed also express this view.

Several career practitioners say the school career practitioner role is sometimes wrongly assigned to a teacher with free time, regardless of the teacher's interest in, or knowledge of, career development. Career practitioners say schools need a *'centralised'* dedicated career practitioner who is passionate, qualified and committed to their work. There is a view that the dual role of some school-based career practitioners of career counsellor and personal counsellor can undermine the quality and accessibility of career development. Career practitioners say career development would be improved if formal qualifications and ongoing professional development are made compulsory.

Career practitioners say that the term career development is not always understood by students/young people, educational institutions, industry and society more generally. The value of career development and the work of career practitioners are not always recognised. Improvements to the way career development services are branded, marketed and positioned could enhance awareness of career development and understandings of its importance.

Career practitioners identify a range of resources and supports that they use in their day to day work. As demonstrated in Figure 17 below, by far the most frequently used resources are Job Guide reported to be used *a lot* by 75% of practitioners followed by myfuture, reported to be used *a lot* by 55% of practitioners. Also used *a lot* are the Bullseye Posters and Books, career practitioner association resources and training, and careers information flyers. The least used resources are the Careers Transition Services Framework, the Parents Talking Career Choices brochure, the ReCaP resource for school-based practitioners and Centrelink's Career Information Centres. Just under a third of practitioners report using the Australian Blueprint for Career Development *a little* or *not at all*. This is an important finding given the importance that the Australian Government and others attach to this resource.

FIGURE 17 – RESOURCES USED BY CAREER PRACTITIONERS



Notwithstanding this, the Australian Blueprint for Career Development (the Blueprint) was mentioned by several career practitioners in the qualitative research. Generally, those career practitioners that have used the Blueprint in their work with young people say it is a valuable resource. The Blueprint is said to be a good framework that can be adapted to implement career development into classroom learning. However it was suggested by a career practitioner working in a university that the Blueprint has limitations as a framework for the provision of career development at the tertiary level, as it provides minimal guidance on how to provide career development specific to young people at this stage in their lives. This practitioner said that further research and guidelines for practitioners working in tertiary institutions would be useful.

Another practitioner said the Blueprint, as well as the establishment of national bodies such as the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA), CDAA and CEAV, have been instrumental in improving understanding of career development in recent years (eg greater focus being placed on career education and personal development, rather than simply guidance in relation to employment outcomes).

Career practitioners and others identify a number of additional resources or support that they think will enhance the effective provision of career development. The top six resources or forms of support identified by career practitioners include:

- additional time to spend with students/young people
- greater contact with employers and industry
- professional development and training

- internet-based resources
- help in networking with other career practitioners
- greater support from the organisations they work for.

These resources and forms of support to some extent reflect the priorities of parents who identified shortfalls and gaps in their children's career development at school. These parents also identify the need for young people to have more personalised one on one input with and access to individual career practitioners, and more talks/presentations by employers, TAFEs and universities.

15 Key findings

This chapter outlines the key findings from the qualitative and quantitative research into the career needs and wants of young people, their parents, teachers and communities. There is a general view that the biggest gap in career development is the lack of a national strategy to guide development and implementation of consistent career development across Australia.

It is clear that young people have very diverse career development needs and wants, depending on their age, level of schooling and whether they come from a potentially disadvantaged group. After researching career aspirations with young people, parents, teachers, career practitioners and employers, we deduce that young people fall into one of three broad groups:

- Those that know what they want to do from an early age: these young people generally need information about their chosen career path.
- Those that have general ideas about what they might like to do: These young people need to be given opportunities to refine these ideas and test them out.
- Those that have no idea what they want to do or are fairly disinterested. these young people need help to work out their interests, values, strengths and weaknesses. They also need someone to help them link their personal interests and abilities to particular career paths.

15.1 CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOL

There is broad agreement that there is a place for career education in primary school. However, there is little support for career guidance at this stage. Primary schools have a role to play in introducing young people to the world of work and broadening their horizons. They can help raise children's awareness of jobs beyond the conventional (eg fireman, policeman, doctor, teacher) and combat gender stereotypes about what work 'boys' do and what work 'girls' do. This is particularly important for young people from low SES backgrounds and those who live in regional, rural or remote locations who may have limited exposure to different careers options.

The research suggests primary schools also have a role to play in starting to develop in young people the general life skills and key competencies they will need to manage their lifelong learning, such as resilience, self-esteem, flexibility, reliability, communication and interpersonal skills.

Opinions differ on how well primary schools currently provide career education to young people. Some say the current provision is satisfactory and not in need of significant change. Others say it is informal and inconsistent. Opinion is divided on whether career education should be formally included in the primary school curriculum and on whether primary teachers should have professional development to assist with delivering career education to primary school students.

15.2 CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The provision and quality of career development in secondary schools in Australia is patchy and inconsistent, both across and within States and Territories and education sectors (Independent, Catholic and Government). Some young people receive high quality career development which: takes their values, interests and aptitudes into account; gives them an opportunity to test out their career ideas and obtain practical 'hands on' work experience; provides detailed information on labour market trends and pathways to get where they want to go; and empowers them to develop general life skills and competencies. However, other young people receive poor quality career development, if any at all. They are therefore not being equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to manage their careers and realise their career aspirations.

There are varying levels of satisfaction with career development in secondary school among young people, parents, teachers and career practitioners. While the majority of people surveyed express overall satisfaction with the quality, access and timing of career development in secondary school, this

satisfaction is qualified with the majority of people saying they are *fairly satisfied* rather than *very satisfied* and also by the fact that around one in four respondents identify unmet career development needs in secondary schools. Young people who have left school are the least satisfied with career development in secondary school. Teachers are the most satisfied, and young people still at school, parents and career practitioners fall in the middle.

Importantly, there is much less satisfaction with *timing* of career development than with access or quality reflected in the fact that there is considerable support for introducing career development early in secondary schools.

Satisfaction with career development in schools varies considerably according to education sector. Young people from Government schools express less satisfaction with access, quality and timing of career development, when compared with young people from Independent schools. Catholic schools are typically rated somewhere in the middle. Satisfaction with career development is also considerably lower for small schools (ie less than 500 students), schools in regional, rural and remote areas, and schools in the lowest Socio Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) areas.

While it appears that there is scope to improve career development in all schools, there is significant scope to improve services in Government schools, smaller schools, and schools located in regional, rural, remote and low SES areas. This is particularly the case given that these schools face the greatest challenges due to the fact they work with a high proportion of potentially disadvantaged young people.

Young people in secondary school want access to one-on-one career information and advice that takes into account their interests, values and aptitudes. They also want schools to provide more: practical hands on work experience, more direct contact with universities, TAFE and employers; and more detailed and specific information about the range of jobs and pathways available to them.

While career practitioners are generally seen by schools as being best placed to provide such one-on-one career information and advice, young people often prefer to receive this advice from people working in the industry in which they have an interest, family, peers and classroom teachers. This may partly be due to the fact that many young people report negative experiences with school career practitioners. There is a view that to provide quality career development, school career practitioners need to be adequately qualified and properly resourced. They also need to have sufficient time allocated for one-on-one consultations, and the support of the school principal.

Schools could improve career development by ensuring the career development activities they provide align with the career development activities young people find most useful. At present, the evidence suggests young people are getting less of the career development they find most useful, including *'hands on'* activities such as work experience/work placement and visits to or by universities and TAFEs, and more of the career development they currently find least useful such as discussions with a school career practitioner.

Schools could also adopt a more *holistic* approach to career development and better inform and engage parents in the career development of their children. The research suggests parents are the most significant influence in young people's career decisions, but that they have varying capacities to cater to their children's career development needs and wants. There is a view that career practitioners should work more in partnership with teachers and parents to *'fill the gaps'* and ensure the career development needs and wants of young people are adequately met.

15.3 CAREER DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION OR VET

The research suggests the provision and quality of career development in higher education or VET is variable. Some young people are positive about the career development their institutions offer. Others, however, say they have *'no idea'* what career development their institutions offer, or they say they know *'something'* exists but do not know how to access it and have not tried to find out.

Although the majority of career practitioners are generally satisfied with the quality of and access to career development in universities, less than half are satisfied with career development services in the TAFE system. There is a view that TAFE course teachers are often a better source of career development for young people than TAFE career practitioners because they have better links to specific industries and can provide more practical advice.

Career practitioners are generally of the view that career development in higher education and TAFE is under-resourced, and that few young people know what services are available. The research suggests that higher education and VET institutions need to market their career development services better so that young people are more aware of the services available to them, and to ensure that there is a clear separation of these services from general (personal) counselling services.

Young people in higher education or VET, much like young people in secondary school, want access to personalised one-on-one career information and advice, preferably from someone with industry experience. Young people at university also want their institutions to facilitate greater contact with industry through forms of integrated learning such as work placements and internships.

Some parents say universities could improve career development by linking courses to labour market demands and providing young people with up-front information about the employment prospects for particular courses of study. This would help young people, particularly those from regional, rural and remote locations where job opportunities are more limited, to make more informed career decisions.

15.4 CAREER DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The research identified a major gap in the provision of career development to young people not in education. Once young people leave educational structures, there is no *natural go to place* for them to obtain career information and advice. Most young people not in education do not know where to go to get career information and advice, and those that do know where to go report that the advice they receive is not satisfactory.

Young people not in education and *not working* tend to seek career information and advice from employment services providers. These young people have mixed views on the quality of such services. Some young people find them valuable, but others say employment service providers do not take their values, interests and aptitudes into account, and focus on placing them in jobs. Young people not in education *and working*, however, are not able to use employment services providers and so their sources of career information and advice are even more limited. Private career practitioners are available, but the cost of engaging them means this is not a viable source of career development for most of these young people.

Career practitioners say young people not in education need *drop-in centres* or a central place where they can go to receive one-on-one personalised career information and advice. Any such centre, however, should be free and easy to access given their lack of finances and transport can be key barriers for this cohort of young people. There is a view that employers can also better contribute to the career development of young people who are working, but the reality is few employers see this as their role.

There is a general view that there is a need to significantly improve career development services provided to at risk young people not in education. Many say these young people need to be engaged one-on-one and provided with career information and advice, as well as practical advice on things like how to behave in a workplace. Some identify government employment agencies and non-government organisations as best placed to provide this advice but say, to be effective, these organisations need to better understand and engage these young people, and better coordinate with each other. There is a view that there is significant scope to improve inter-organisational coordination.

15.5 WHAT CAREER DEVELOPMENT DO YOUNG PEOPLE WANT? WHEN DO THEY WANT IT AND HOW DO THEY WANT IT?

Table 4 provides an analysis of various components of a young person's career development needs and the stages at which these occur.

TABLE 4 – CAREER DEVELOPMENT NEEDS AND WANTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

WHAT	HOW	WHEN
Develop general competencies and life skills (eg resilience, flexibility)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ influence of parents, family and friends ▪ personal development activities at school ▪ trying different things (eg sport) ▪ part-time and casual work ▪ travel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ commence in the home ▪ continue in school and higher education or VET ▪ development of these skills is a life-long evolving process
An understanding of interests, aptitudes and values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ trying different things ▪ feedback from parents and family, teachers, peers and the wider community ▪ school achievement ▪ stated preferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ commence in the home and to a greater extent in primary school.
An understanding of, and exposure to, different career options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ linking classroom learning to careers ▪ workplace visits/ work experience ▪ presentations in schools ▪ research projects into different jobs and careers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ commence in primary school
Link abilities with different career options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ one-on-one interviews with people with industry experience or career practitioners ▪ discussions with teachers, parents, other family members and friends ▪ interactive technologies and use of the internet ▪ labour market information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ commence in secondary school.
Opportunity to test out career ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ part-time or casual work ▪ work experience/work placement ▪ other forms of integrated learning (eg VET in Schools Program) ▪ visits to universities, VET institutions and workplaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ commence in secondary school ▪ continue in higher education and VET ▪ continue after young people have left educational institutions
Advice and information about careers options, and pathways to get there	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ one-on-one interviews with a person with industry experience or a career practitioner (for subject advice and advice on post-school options) ▪ discussions with people with industry experience ▪ discussions with parents and other family members, teachers and peers ▪ use of online materials ▪ use of written materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ commence in secondary school ▪ continue in higher education and VET ▪ continue after young people have left educational institutions

15.6 INFLUENCES AND RESPONSIBILITY

There is a distinction between *responsibility* for career development of young people, and *influences* in the career development of young people. Parents have the most significant *influence* in the career development of young people. Parents, career practitioners and teachers see the school as mainly responsible for the career development of young people at school. Likewise, if a young person is in higher education or TAFE, the same cohorts see these institutions as mainly responsible for the career development of their students. However, young people in school and higher education or VET see *themselves* as primarily responsible for their own career development and others as responsible for supporting their career development.

Young people and employment service providers are seen as mainly responsible for the career development of young people not in education. Employers see themselves as having a limited role in the career development of young people, regardless of whether or not they are in education.

Despite parents being the key influence and different educational institutions being mainly responsible for the career development of different groups of young people, all young people consider a range of other factors when making career development decisions. These include: the things they like or are good at; labour market conditions; cost and transport; and the need to relocate for post-school work or study.

15.7 POTENTIALLY DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

Potentially disadvantaged groups of young people share many of the same views as mainstream young people on the adequacy of career development inside and outside the education system. However, they also report specific challenges relating to a range of factors including English language proficiency, the cost of post-school study, lack of family support or role models, caring or family commitments, and the cost of childcare. Career development for these young people needs to be thought of differently, because underlying issues affecting access to career development often need to be considered before the career development needs and wants of these young people can be addressed.

The research suggests that any career development program for Indigenous young people needs to engage their broader family and community and Indigenous organisations, some of which are already working in the area of career development. Career practitioners dealing with Indigenous young people also need to have cultural awareness, but do not necessarily need to be Indigenous.

Career development for young people from regional, rural and remote areas needs to focus on exposing these young people to a range of different careers, as it is often difficult for them to get this exposure in their home town. These young people also need extra support at transition points, particularly the transition from school to work or tertiary education. They often have to move away from home for post-school work or study which complicates the transition, and increases the risk of them making poor career development decisions.

The research suggests that a key issue for at risk young people is trust. They often have poor connections with schools, universities and VET institutions, and families, and are looking to receive career information and advice from someone they trust and with whom they can have a long-term relationship. The research also suggests that young people with a disability are the least well-served of all young people in terms of career development.

A key message from all potentially disadvantaged young people is that they do not want any assumptions made about what they can and cannot do in relation to their future career.

15.8 USING THE INTERNET FOR CAREER INFORMATION AND ADVICE

It is clear from this research that although many young people use the internet to obtain career information and advice, for many, it is not seen as the most useful form of career development. With the exception of young people not in education, the internet is seen as complementing other more useful forms of career development, such as work experience/work placements and one-on-one interviews.

Young people not in education are more likely than other young people to use the internet to obtain career information and advice, mainly because they do not have an obvious place they can go to for advice.

There is a general view among young people that the internet is good for sourcing information and for fact-finding, but it has limitations because it does not enable young people to ask questions and obtain advice or guidance. An additional limitation is that not all young people have access to the internet at home or are comfortable using computers. Some young people have used interactive technologies, but they have varying views on their value, largely reflecting the variable quality of the tools they have used.

There is evidence that some teachers and parents, particularly those in rural, regional and remote locations, rely on the internet to obtain career information and advice to help their children. They say a website which provides a *one stop shop* for information on local labour market demand, skills shortages, awards and pay rates, the top universities and university courses in the country, and the cost of tertiary programs of study, would be beneficial. There is a view that the information currently available online is fragmented and difficult to access. Career practitioners also rely on the internet for career information and advice and say better internet resources would enhance the provision of effective career development.

