

8

Career education

There is no consistent or comprehensive system of ensuring the delivery of career advice to secondary school students. Further, there is no systematic integration of career advice into the school to work programs.¹

- 8.1 MCEETYA's New Framework for Vocational Education in Schools locates career education within vocational education as part of student support services (see Figure 2.2 in Chapter 2). This chapter examines the place of career education in schools and how it relates to general vocational education and also VET in Schools.

The need for career education

- 8.2 Career education is one element of the complex issue of young people's transition from school to employment, training or further education. In recent years there has been significant activity in addressing the range of issues associated with effective management of transitions between school and post-school destinations. The Committee notes that school-based career education must take place in the context of a wider framework of support and information services, not all of which can be adequately explored in this report. Some reference will be made to various programs but the focus of the chapter is on career education delivered within schools, particularly as it relates to and impacts on vocational education.

1 ACCI, *Submission No. 95*, p. 14.

- 8.3 The Committee notes the importance of career advice and career planning beyond the immediate post-school transition or the needs of the unemployed. In recent years there has been a growing recognition of the need for life-long learning and career development to meet the constantly changing needs of the labour market.
- 8.4 There are certainly shortcomings in the career services offered to school leavers. More broadly in Australia there is a general 'lack of strategic attention to encouraging and supporting individuals in planning their upskilling and in making career moves that not only respond to but take advantage of economic and technological change'.²
- 8.5 In 1998 the then MCEETYA National Careers Taskforce endorsed a set of Principles for Career Education and Advisory Services, which noted the key role of career education in helping people to become lifelong learners, to move between work and learning and to adapt to changing situations.³
- 8.6 In 1999 the Adelaide Declaration on National Goals for Schooling in the Twenty-First Century acknowledged the importance for students of career advice, Goal 1.5 stating that when students leave school they should:
- have employment related skills and an understanding of the work environment, career options and pathways as a foundation for, and positive attitudes towards, vocational education and training, further education, employment and life-long learning.⁴
- 8.7 The 2001 report of the Prime Minister's Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce, *footprints to the future*, stated that:
- For career education services to be of high quality, they need to be offered by people with appropriate skills/qualifications and be an integral part of the curriculum.⁵
- 8.8 In 2002, as part of a major international review of career information, guidance and counselling policies, an OECD review team visited Australia. To complement the OECD review the Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) funded a mapping exercise of career services throughout Australia to assist in identifying gaps, opportunities and good practice models in the provision of career services. The OECD report and

2 OECD *Review of Career Guidance Policies*, Australia Country Note, 2002, p. 19, <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/47/1948341.pdf>>.

3 OECD *Review of Career Guidance Policies*, Australia's response to questionnaire, p. 19, <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/27/40/2494499.pdf>>.

4 MCEETYA, <<http://www.mceetya.edu.au/nationalgoals/natgoals.htm>>.

5 *footprints to the future*, Report from the Prime Minister's Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce 2001, p. 34, <<http://www.ecef.com.au/principals/ASTF3/docs/footprints.pdf>>.

the mapping exercise will inform the work of the MCEETYA Taskforce on Transition from School.⁶

- 8.9 At the July 2003 meeting of MCEETYA, Ministers agreed to promote the Career and Transition Services Framework developed by the MCEETYA Taskforce on Transition from School, as a guide for all public jurisdictions and the non-government sector. The Framework comprises ten elements, including Career Education and Career Information, Guidance and Counselling. While it acknowledges the wide range of informal and non-professional sources from which students will draw information, it states that:

Career and transition services ... should be delivered by professionally trained and committed staff able to access an extensive school-community network.⁷

- 8.10 The Framework argues that career education has an important role to play both within compulsory education, in relation to knowledge of the world of work, decision-making and transitions, and also within post-compulsory education. Significantly, in the context of this report's emphasis on the crucial importance of effective links between industry, the community and schools, the Framework notes that career information services should include the use of current industry based information and that transition strategies generally should involve a community partnerships approach.⁸
- 8.11 There are two distinct but closely related aspects to career education. The first is the broader teaching about careers and various career pathways, either as a stand-alone subject or embedded in other courses. The second is the one-to-one student-specific careers advice or counselling. Both are of vital importance.
- 8.12 The Committee believes that with both there are two issues to be addressed: the organisation of career education within the curriculum and the allocation of staff to manage and teach that program. In relation to the first of these issues, career education has to be seen as a legitimate and significant part of the school curriculum. In relation to the second it has to

6 DEST, *Submission No 75*, pp. 37, 74-75; *OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies*, Australia Country Note, 2002, <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/47/1948341.pdf>>; DEST mapping exercise, <<http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/careers/CareerservicesAustraliareport.pdf>>.

7 MCEETYA, *Career and Transitions Services Framework*, p. 2, <http://www.mceetya.edu.au/pdf/c_t_services.pdf>.

8 MCEETYA, *Career and Transitions Services Framework*, p. 4, <http://www.mceetya.edu.au/pdf/c_t_services.pdf>.

be taught by experienced and appropriately qualified teachers. Until both of these requirements are met there will continue to be a danger of career education being seen as something marginal to the curriculum, which can be taught by anyone with a gap in their timetable, usually resulting in inadequate assistance to the students.

8.13 One witness told the Committee that:

I cannot emphasise strongly enough that I think the key to improvement in all areas – not only for students studying VET but also for academic students who go straight on to tertiary education – is career education and guidance.⁹

8.14 Some witnesses argued that:

The time spent on career education should be at least the same as the time spent on any other curriculum area ... it will have ongoing benefits for the rest of their lives.¹⁰

8.15 In recent years a range of reports, frameworks and sets of principles have all implied a more deliberate school to career orientation for schools. It is clear that there is a broad general consensus that effective career education is a centrally important element of a successful transition to post-school pathways. What then is the state of career education in schools in 2003-2004?

The state of career education in schools

8.16 The main coordinating mechanism for career information and guidance services in Australia is MCEETYA. State and territory education departments play a significant role in funding, developing and managing career services in schools, with the Commonwealth largely funding career information resources.¹¹

8.17 In the context of a range of approaches in different jurisdictions the consistent message that the Committee received about career education in schools was that it was very much a poor cousin to the major curriculum areas. A witness in South Australia told the Committee that 'schools

9 Ms Gabrielle Power-West, Executive Officer – Post-Compulsory/Curriculum, Queensland Catholic Education Commission, *Transcript of Evidence*, 9 April 2003, Brisbane, p. 321.

10 Ms Cathy Moore, Careers Counsellor, Mater Dei College, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 August 2003, Perth, p. 982.

11 DEST, *Career Services in Australia*, February 2002, p. 5, <<http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/careers/CareerservicesAustraliareport.pdf>>.

generally need to get a lot better at it'.¹² The following comment, from a witness in Western Australia, was typical:

They do not have a subject called 'career education'. The children have to fit in their career development and their attempts at educating themselves about a career and how to develop it. They have to fit that in on the fringes, around the side. It has a lower priority than beliefs and values and phys ed and anything else. It is just an ad hoc thing that happens to happen.¹³

8.18 State and territory policies vary considerably. According to the OECD review of career guidance policies they are generally weak:

the provision of career education programmes is still patchy and diffuse, in some schools is for some students rather than for all, and seems likely to be of more variable quality than most other areas of the curriculum.¹⁴

8.19 In practice, decisions about the provision of careers advice tend to be taken at the individual school level, where there is considerable flexibility in the resourcing and delivery of careers activity. The range of approaches in the different jurisdictions¹⁵ is evident in the following comparison:

- New South Wales has a strongly professionalised structure, with formal provision of a full-time equivalent careers adviser in each secondary school. These advisers are required to have a teaching qualification and some form of careers-related training. They are distinct from the school counsellors who focus on learning problems and personal welfare issues. Career education elements are also included in all subjects.
- In Queensland these two roles are effectively combined. Guidance officers cover careers advice and personal counselling. They are qualified in educational psychology, not career guidance. The ratio of guidance officers to students is approximately 1:1200 and they spend about one third of their time on careers advice.

12 Mr Paul Billows, Principal, Willunga High School, *Transcript of Evidence*, 6 August 2003, Willunga, SA, p. 1014.

13 Ms Cathy Moore, Careers Counsellor, Mater Dei College, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 August 2003, Perth, p. 982.

14 *OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies*, Australia Country Note, 2002, p. 16, <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/47/1948341.pdf>>.

15 Information on career education in the jurisdictions is drawn from state and territory government submissions, the websites of the various education departments, the Australia Country Note of the *OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies* and Australia's response to the OECD questionnaire. A more comprehensive overview of activity in each jurisdiction can be found in Chapter 4 of the 2002 DEST publication, *Career Services in Australia*, <<http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/careers/CareerservicesAustraliaireport.pdf>>.

- Victoria has a system of part-time careers advisers, on a flexible staffing ratio of between 0.2 and 0.8. Individual schools determine the staffing and resources allocated to career education.
 - Western Australia has no state policy in relation to the provision of career guidance; schools make their own decisions.
 - South Australian schools do not have careers advisers. They have student counsellors, some of whom may give careers advice.
 - In Tasmania schools must include a focus on career and work education in Studies of Society Environment (SOSE) units, and teachers are required to integrate the personal futures dimension of the Essential Learnings Framework across the curriculum.
 - In the Northern Territory career education programs are usually delivered by classroom teachers in SOSE. The recommended course of study is 40 hours in either Year 9 or 10. Each high school has a career counsellor position to be used for career counselling at least 50 per cent of the time.
- 8.20 In addition to these differences, the location of career education within the curriculum varies widely. It may be located within personal development courses, in SOSE programs or it could be integrated into a number of subjects across the curriculum.
- 8.21 In the absence of structured careers programs within state curricula, and given the flexibility available to individual schools, successful programs appear to require active support from the school principal and an appropriately trained specialist on the staff. Without these key elements it is difficult to provide an adequate program.
- 8.22 It should be noted that witnesses pointed to the range of terms used to describe staff delivering career education in schools, including careers teacher, careers adviser and careers counsellor. In the context of the delivery of information and advice on an individual basis 'careers adviser' is common. In the context of the delivery of career courses as part of the curriculum, and also in the context of giving individual advice, 'careers teacher' is also common.
- 8.23 A range of witnesses from different jurisdictions presented to the Committee a picture of careers teachers, often without any training, carrying that responsibility in addition to a substantial teaching load, sometimes being chosen for reasons quite unrelated to expertise or enthusiasm and in some cases accepting the role reluctantly. Many have great commitment and considerable expertise acquired on the job, but

confront difficulties of a kind not faced by their colleagues teaching mainstream subjects.¹⁶

- 8.24 The Department of Education Science and Training's 2002 report, *Career Services in Australia*, stated that:

While examples of creative practice and promising new initiatives are becoming far more widespread, there are still few assurances for students that they will have access to a reasonably consistent level or quality of career guidance. Students' access to services is dependent upon the State or Territory in which they live, or the particular school in which they are enrolled.¹⁷

- 8.25 The Australian Education Union (AEU) offered a similar perspective, telling the Committee that:

there is an enormous variation in terms of the quality that students are getting in different schools because people are not trained. Many people have come into these jobs out of interest and have developed enormous amounts of expertise over many years but do not necessarily have any training. I think training would help. Giving people adequate time to actually do the job would also help. Careers educators are quite right when they say careers teachers are often loaded up with a whole lot of other jobs and consequently do not have the necessary time to deliver the sorts of careers advice services that they would like to particular students.¹⁸

- 8.26 The Department of Education, Science and Training told the Committee that a key finding of the evaluation of the Career and Transitions pilot projects was that:

access to a dedicated career and transition adviser is really important to young people and their parents and teachers. It is quite clear.¹⁹

16 See for example, Mr Michael Harrison, Group Training NT, *Transcript of Evidence*, 29 April 2003, Darwin, p. 538; Ms Meredith Peace, AEU, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 September 2003, Melbourne, p. 1216. Similar views were expressed to the recent Senate inquiry into skills needs. See *Bridging the skills divide*, report of the Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education References Committee, November 2003, pp. 149-152.

17 DEST, *Career Services in Australia*, February 2002, p. 6, <<http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/careers/CareerservicesAustraliareport.pdf>>.

18 Ms Meredith Peace, Deputy Vice-President, Secondary Sector – Victorian Branch, AEU, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 September 2003, Melbourne, p. 1216.

19 Ms Shelagh Whittleston, Branch Manager, Transitions Branch, DEST, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 November 2003, Canberra, p. 1428.

8.27 The need for students to have face to face experience with a trained careers adviser, whatever the information packs and online resources available, was emphasised in evidence to the Committee. Generally the preference was for that person to be a member of the school staff. In Queensland a school principal told the Committee that:

a key part in individualising pathways [is] having really good guidance support. Unfortunately, we do not have enough guidance resources in schools. At our school, for example, we have a four-day-a-week guidance service and most of that service is taken up with crisis counselling ... A small portion of it is taken up by career counselling ... I would estimate that at our school we would need three full-time guidance officers to really do the job of individual goal setting and career path planning with kids properly.

It really is a big issue. Yes, there are wonderful web sites such as mycareer.com and so on that have been developed—they are great—but career guidance still needs that human interaction. Human interaction is expensive but it is crucial. Some of these students may not have started this pathway except for that crucial interview with the guidance officer.²⁰

8.28 The report of the Prime Minister's Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce, *footprints to the future*, noted that career information and guidance in schools came in for considerable criticism in community consultations.²¹ While the Committee can understand these criticisms, members were impressed by the level of commitment to achieving positive outcomes for students shown by teachers in the face of a variety of obstacles.

8.29 The extent of that criticism reflects the pressing need to address the structural and resourcing issues which are preventing teachers from meeting students' needs more effectively. While the Committee acknowledges the advantages of individual schools having flexibility in resourcing and programming, it also notes the need for a minimum level of career education in all schools, mandated by the relevant curriculum authorities.

8.30 The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) told the Committee that:

20 Mr Raymond Johnston, Principal, Tannum Sands State High School, *Transcript of Evidence*, 10 April 2003, Gladstone, Qld, p. 399.

21 *footprints to the future*, Report from the Prime Minister's Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce 2001, p. 32, <<http://www.ecef.com.au/principals/ASTF3/docs/footprints.pdf>>.

ACCI and member organisations consider that Australia should develop a consistent and comprehensive system of ensuring the delivery of quality careers information and advice to secondary school students across all school sectors (i.e. government, catholic and independent). Whilst it is acknowledged that this responsibility primarily rests with State/Territory governments, there is a role that the Commonwealth should play in facilitating the development of such a system through provision of products, development of quality standards and provision of resources for best practice and employer engagement.²²

- 8.31 In Victoria, individual schools determine the staffing and resources allocated to career education. The submission from the Victorian Government noted the curriculum framework within which career education might be placed and referred to a range of possible resources available to support careers teachers.²³ However, in response to a question from the Committee as to whether careers guidance in Victoria was adequate, the Committee was told:

No – that is the simple answer. In Victoria it is not mandated that there be careers positions in schools. Schools make that decision from their global budget. Most schools ... will have someone who is not full time. So it was not adequate before and once the VET coordination was thrown into the mix it became less adequate.²⁴

- 8.32 Careers teachers in Victoria spoke positively about the context in which their New South Wales colleagues operate, where not only is there one designated, full-time careers adviser in every school but there is also a mandated and well defined framework for careers education, to which every student has access ‘at the crucial levels of Year 9 and Year 10, rather than at the post-compulsory level’.²⁵

- 8.33 The Committee was told that in Western Australia, where there is no state policy:

The level of career education in schools has been predominantly left up to the principal of the school, as to what sort of emphasis ... to place on the benefit of a program such as career education in schools. Some government schools do it very well, some

22 ACCI, *Submission No. 95*, p. 14.

23 Victorian Government, *Submission No. 86*, pp. 18-19, 24.

24 Ms Julie Ryan, President, Career Education Association of Victoria, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 September 2003, Melbourne, p. 1152.

25 Ms Bernadette Gigliotti, Career Education Association of Victoria, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 September 2003, Melbourne, p. 1154.

government schools do not do it terribly well, and the same in the non-government system as well.²⁶

- 8.34 A member of CareerLink in Perth told the Committee that: 'As far as support and backup from the school are concerned, it is very ad hoc. It is potluck as to what happens.'²⁷
- 8.35 The Committee believes that career education should be a mandatory part of the core curriculum, taught by qualified careers teachers. Otherwise, as noted above, career education becomes too dependent on individuals such as the principal and the careers teacher at a particular time. Whether it is taught as a separate subject or embedded, for example in SOSE units, there should be a clearly defined part of the curriculum in Years 9-10, possibly with some introductory work in Year 8, which is devoted to career education.
- 8.36 This view is supported by the Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce and the MCEETYA Taskforce on Transition from School.²⁸
- 8.37 The relationship between VET in Schools, vocational education and careers is discussed below but it seems clear to the Committee that the growth in VET has been a two-edged sword for career education. On the one hand it has given new emphasis to the importance of effectively managing transitions from school, and often given career advice greater profile within schools, but on the other hand, in many cases, it has added a significant burden to already stretched careers advisers and changed the focus of their work away from careers guidance to the management of VET programs and associated work placements.
- 8.38 The Australian Education Union commented in its submission that:
- career, vocational and educational guidance services in schools have been strained severely in recent years as resources for these services have not kept pace with the expansion of vocational education.²⁹
- 8.39 The Committee is concerned, not only that the provision of career education is so inadequate and so inconsistent, both between jurisdictions and within jurisdictions, but that this situation has been recognised and allowed to continue for so long. In 1997 the Committee's predecessor

26 Mr David Carney, President, Career Education Association of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 August 2003, Perth, p. 937.

27 Ms Cathy Moore, Careers Counsellor, Mater Dei College, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 August 2003, Perth, p. 969.

28 See paragraphs 8.7 and 8.9.

29 AEU, *Submission No. 72*, p. 30.

reported on youth employment and made a number of observations on careers guidance. The following comment from that report is just as valid today:

many teachers are ill equipped for the careers guidance role ... It is a systemic problem and not the fault of individual teachers who may, without any specific training, find themselves the careers teacher simply because their teaching load allows time for it ... Typically there will be one careers teacher, who may or may not be full-time, for as many as 1,000 to 1,200 students.³⁰

8.40 In 1998 the Committee reported on the role of TAFE and again had a section on careers guidance in schools, stating that:

careers guidance in schools should be better resourced to enable properly qualified and equipped counsellors to provide comprehensive advice to students. Careers guidance must be regarded as a legitimate need and right for all secondary students.³¹

8.41 It should be noted that some of the issues identified in these earlier reports have been the subject of significant and very positive developments. As noted elsewhere in this report, the scope of vocational education, particularly VET, a subject of some concern to previous committees, has expanded very significantly in recent years. This has brought new pressures and hence the current inquiry. There also appears to be a more balanced approach to the advice being given about post-school opportunities other than university. However, the fundamental problems and needs of career education identified several years ago generally remain.

Career education within the curriculum

8.42 The Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce found that every young person should receive 'professional and on-going career and transition support beginning at Year 8'.³² This view was reflected in evidence received by the Committee, some of which has been referred to above. A key question that arises is the form that support should take.

30 House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, *Youth Employment: A working solution*, 1997, p. 49.

31 House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, *Today's training. Tomorrow's skills*, 1998, p. 59.

32 *footprints to the future*, report from the Prime Minister's Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce, 2001, p. 32, <<http://www.ecef.com.au/principals/ASTF3/docs/footprints.pdf>>.

- 8.43 Reference was made in Chapter 2 to confusion over terms and their meanings in relation to vocational education, vocational learning and vocational education and training (VET). This report adopts the MCEETYA 2002 usage for vocational learning, which includes elements such as general employment skills, career education and community and work based learning.
- 8.44 The impact of VET programs on career education is discussed below, but one impediment to the development of effective vocational learning programs, including career education, has been the growth of VET. The Career Education Association of Victoria noted in its submission:
- the distinct lack of understanding in schools about the difference between vocational learning and VET, often confusing the two and using VET provision to satisfy the needs of vocational learning for all students.
 - the inability of schools to offer vocational learning programs in the crucial Years 7 to 9, as all resources have been tagged for the post compulsory years. Little to no funding by the education systems for formal vocational learning programs in Year 9 and 10.³³
- 8.45 The first of these is a perception issue and the second is a resourcing issue, both of which must be addressed before significant progress can be made in giving career education its legitimate place in the general curriculum.
- 8.46 The perception that VET programs alone can deal with the career education needs of students does a disservice both to VET students and to those aiming at university study. VET students still need the broad vocational learning program, including career education, which goes beyond the specifics of a VET program and associated work placement, and so do other students, including those planning tertiary education.
- 8.47 All students need to be introduced to general concepts associated with employment, the world of work and career planning and to be encouraged to begin considering their post-school pathway earlier than the post-compulsory years. In evidence to the Committee the Career Education Association of Victoria stated that:
- We need to start much lower down in our school system. We are concentrating all our efforts at the post-secondary level, and very little is happening at that Year 7 to Year 10 level.³⁴

33 Career Education Association of Victoria, *Submission No. 50*, p. 3.

34 Ms Bernadette Gigliotti, Career Education Association of Victoria, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 September 2003, Melbourne, p. 1150.

- 8.48 It is not the intention of the Committee to canvass in detail possible curriculum structures, but to make some general observations on career education within the curriculum and indicate some of the approaches being adopted.
- 8.49 A Queensland witness gave the example of a Career and Transition pilot at Shailer Park State High School, which has introduced a careers program in Years 8-12:

The school operates seven lines, and the seventh line, for every student from Years 8 to 12, is career guidance and education ... I cannot emphasise strongly enough that I think the key to improvement in all areas—not only for students studying VET but also for academic students who go straight on to tertiary education—is career education and guidance, because ... the drop-out rate at university is quite significant ... If we had better career guidance and education, we would not be wasting nearly as many resources in that area at tertiary level.³⁵

- 8.50 In South Australia the Futures Connect strategy, launched in April 2003, aims to bring together enterprise and vocational learning, vocational education and training in schools and career and transition services, to develop a Learning Plan, a Transition Portfolio and an Exit Map. A school principal told the Committee that:

as of next year, every single student from Years 8 to 12 ... will have individual career plans and transition portfolios that they will develop in consultation with both school staff and out-of-school personnel that really explores one to one the career directions of students and informs them and their family in terms of the range of options available to them.³⁶

- 8.51 In Tasmania the Committee was told of significant curriculum reform in recent years, which includes careers education integrated into the curriculum:

The essential learnings curriculum, which is now in place in every K to 10 school in Tasmania, has as part of it a personal futures dimension which all teachers in all schools are required to integrate into their curriculum in every subject they teach. The whole point of that is to get students and staff thinking in a

35 Ms Gabrielle Power-West, Executive Officer – Post-Compulsory/Curriculum, Queensland Catholic Education Commission, *Transcript of Evidence*, 9 April 2003, Brisbane, p. 321.

36 Mr Paul Billows, Principal, Willunga High School, *Transcript of Evidence*, 6 August 2003, Willunga, SA, p. 1014.

coherent way, across all subject areas in high schools, about the career and pathway approach that needs to be taken.³⁷

- 8.52 New South Wales also has an integrated approach, with career education content included in all syllabuses under 'A statement of Career Education Outcomes Years 7-12' and 'Career Education Modules Years 7-10'. All NSW secondary schools also have careers advisers who provide career guidance and coordinate career related activities.
- 8.53 The OECD review noted that integration of career education programs into a range of subjects attracts particular problems, and that such strategies are 'an enhancement of, rather than a substitute for, custom built career education provision'.³⁸ The Committee believes that the approach adopted in NSW and Tasmania, especially with the provision of dedicated careers advisers to provide individual guidance in addition to curriculum based career education, can achieve significant outcomes in the absence of separate career education courses.
- 8.54 The enhancement of dedicated career education courses that teachers of other subjects can provide is very important. Subject teachers must not assume that the presence of a careers adviser in the school means that they have no role or responsibility for the issue. As one witness told the Committee:
- Career advisory services need to be a whole school activity, from running the career expos for the Year 9 and 10 students to subject teachers talking about this subject leading to that career. It cannot be left to one person.³⁹
- 8.55 Just as literacy across the curriculum and the concept that every teacher is a teacher of English has been largely accepted for some time, there needs to be an awareness that all teachers can have some input, albeit often informally, to students' awareness and consideration of careers issues. This often involves subject teachers working with the careers adviser to ensure that complementary, consistent and up to date information and advice is being provided to students.
- 8.56 The Committee notes that each of the approaches described above can go a long way towards meeting the career education needs of students in the

37 Mr Nicholas Evans, Director (Strategic Planning and Development), Tasmanian Department of Education, *Transcript of Evidence*, 1 October 2003, Hobart, p. 1379.

38 *OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies*, Australia Country Note, 2002, p. 16, <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/47/1948341.pdf>>.

39 Ms Susan Hyde, District Superintendent, Central South West, SA Department of Education and Children's Services, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 August 2003, Adelaide, p. 1041.

respective systems. The essential elements are a clearly defined structure and effective delivery of the program.

- 8.57 There is also a strong need for courses to include locally and regionally specific information about education and training options, possible career paths and employment opportunities. A feature of curriculum frameworks in recent years has been the flexibility they allow to schools to design programs which cater to the needs and interests of particular student groups. It is important that career education takes the same approach and is adapted to the circumstances of the local community while delivering a comprehensive general program.

Recommendation 29

The Committee recommends that careers education be a mandatory part of the core curriculum for the compulsory years of secondary schooling. It should include a clearly defined and structured program, distinct from VET programs.

Careers advice and VET

- 8.58 The development of VET in Schools, and general vocational learning programs, provide significant opportunities for career education, for developing the skills and competencies that will equip school leavers to manage their careers. However, as noted previously, careers advice is a distinct element of general vocational learning and is separate from, and embraces more than, VET. As one witness told the Committee:

very often we do not realise that vocational education and training is a subset of the overall career development of our students. It offers one input ... but there is so much more that needs to be done with students.⁴⁰

- 8.59 The two are separate and although there are obvious synergies and each can benefit from links between the two, it is crucial that careers advice is properly resourced and neither a 'poor cousin' to the VET program nor a

40 Ms Cathy Moore, Careers Counsellor, Mater Dei College, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 August 2003, Perth, p. 969.

narrowly focussed activity within it. VET is just 'one element in broadening pathways and opportunities for young people'.⁴¹

- 8.60 The Committee was told that where VET has been really successful in schools 'it goes hand in hand with integrated career education and career guidance programs', but that generally 'the amount of career guidance available is minimal'.⁴² One witness told the Committee that:

one of the things that has been missing in the whole VET agenda is quality career education for students entering these types of programs ... structured programs in schools and professional career practitioners in schools to be able to help and guide these students.⁴³

- 8.61 Vocational programs can be delivered in a narrowly focussed way and fail to deliver broader career education. Where a school offers a limited range of vocational options, without an accompanying broad career education program, there is a danger of those options focussing students' views and restricting their awareness of other opportunities available to them.

- 8.62 The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry expressed the view that:

there is a gap in some schools between the information and advice offered by careers advisors and that being offered by teachers who deliver VET. There is a strong need to establish links between these two groups that will ensure that information delivered to students is consistent.⁴⁴

- 8.63 Paradoxically, the growth of VET in Schools has created the danger of career guidance becoming marginalised within broader guidance services such as student welfare, while it is assumed that the VET program deals with career issues. In its submission to the inquiry the Career Education Association of Victoria expressed the view that:

The downgrading of career guidance and work education programs, based on the mistaken view that VET programs solve the problem, contributes to many of our members' inability to empower young people for the future.

41 Ms Julie Ryan, President, Career Education Association of Victoria, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 September 2003, Melbourne, p. 1149.

42 Mr Joe McCorley, Executive Director, and Ms Gabrielle Power-West, Queensland Catholic Education Commission, *Transcript of Evidence*, 9 April 2003, Brisbane, pp. 318, 321.

43 Mr David Carney, President, Career Education Association of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 August 2003, Perth, p. 937.

44 ACCI, *Submission No. 95*, p. 14.

For example, the new national website, *myfuture.edu.au*, cannot be powerfully brought to young people in schools whilst there is no classroom time for formal career/work education. It is a highly sophisticated website that requires initial guidance and support to fully support and facilitate student access.⁴⁵

8.64 MCEETYA's New Framework for Vocational Education in Schools locates career education within vocational learning as part of student support services. The OECD review notes the 'risk that it will be subordinated to other aspects of the framework'.⁴⁶

8.65 There is, in fact, evidence that the growth of VET pathways in schools has had some negative effects on careers programs. Careers staff have often been expected to play significant roles in establishing and supporting VET courses and associated work placements, and inevitably this has meant that they have had less time for other careers activity. According to the Career Education Association of Victoria, 'One of the dilemmas that we face is that VET in Schools is seen as the answer to careers education and to vocational learning':

in most cases careers teachers in Victoria have taken on the role of VET in Schools coordinators ... When VET was first introduced, it was thrown into the careers basket, for good or for bad, so most of our members have taken on the role at some stage – and many continue to do so.

...

The careers areas in secondary schools are huge. They are far bigger than one person, yet in most schools you will find only one careers counsellor, who deals with not only the careers needs of young people but VET needs, work placement and work experience, while also teaching as part of their allotment. That is not an uncommon role for many of our members. That is really what they do.

...

There are some schools in my region where I know for a fact that the position is called 'careers' but it is VET coordination and no careers counselling goes on, because it is not possible in the time.⁴⁷

45 Career Education Association of Victoria, *Submission No. 50*, p. 4.

46 *OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies*, Australia Country Note, 2002, p. 16, <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/47/1948341.pdf>>.

47 Ms Bernadette Gigliotti and Ms Julie Ryan, Career Education Association of Victoria, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 September 2003, Melbourne, pp. 1149-1152.

8.66 In Western Australia the Committee was told that:

The careers advisers in government schools have disappeared and have been replaced by VET coordinators. The VET coordinators are so busy coordinating work placements and following up students that they do not have time.

... lots of careers advisers all of a sudden realised that they were no longer a career adviser full time, they were now having to deal with a whole lot of VET issues; and the VET issues continue to grow and are enormous ... Probably the ideal in an ideal world is to have a full-time VET coordinator and a full-time career adviser and for the two to work fairly closely together.⁴⁸

8.67 The Committee is concerned that much of the undeniably good work being done with VET in Schools is being achieved at the expense of general vocational and career education, in many cases already inadequate and/or marginalised in schools, despite the best efforts of committed teachers.

8.68 On the other hand, the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) expressed concern that:

specialists in this area [career education] often have little knowledge of the VET sector. The training of teachers or others to take on this important role in counselling young people needs to focus more on the VET sector and work, not just on the university pathway.⁴⁹

8.69 Clearly there is a need for expertise in both areas and for effective connections between the two. The two roles should be complementary but separate and should be filled separately. A possible framework for schools might be a vocational learning course, managed by a senior member of staff such as the SOSE coordinator, within which the VET coordinator, the careers teacher and other members of staff work together to ensure a systematic and comprehensive approach to assisting young people to manage the transition process.

8.70 As always, a recurring theme in this chapter, appropriate training of staff lies at the heart of dealing effectively with the issue. This includes equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills to deliver careers advice which does not focus primarily on tertiary entrance or on VET or any other pathway but raises students' awareness of a wide range of possibilities.

48 Mr David Carney, President, Career Education Association of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 August 2003, Perth, p. 941.

49 ANTA, *Submission No. 90*, p. 31.

- 8.71 A coordinated approach of this kind, clearly articulated, might also avoid the confusion often felt by employers and industry in relation to career education, work experience, vocational learning, VET and VET-related work placements.

Resourcing and support

- 8.72 As is clear from a number of comments in this chapter, the essential careers resource in any school is a professionally trained and qualified careers teacher, available to deliver career education with the support of the school principal and staff in a sympathetic school culture.

- 8.73 The current situation is clearly inadequate, both in terms of the place of career education in the curriculum and the availability of staffing. One careers teacher told the Committee:

we would like to see one full-time careers counsellor in each school. I have 600 VCE students, for example, and I teach ... It is impossible to see every young person.⁵⁰

- 8.74 The Committee believes that every secondary school should have a minimum of one qualified specialist careers teacher, who can provide a dedicated career education service within the school and work with the VET coordinator where necessary. In small schools the two roles might be combined but a structured career education program, distinct from VET programs, should be clearly defined.

Recommendation 30

The Committee recommends that all secondary schools have at least one full-time professional careers adviser, with appropriate specialist training, who can provide a dedicated career education service within the school and work with the VET coordinator.

- 8.75 Beyond the issue of human resources and timetabling, however, there is a range of other material available to support career education, and to assist individual students.

50 Ms Julie Ryan, President, Career Education Association of Victoria, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 September 2003, Melbourne, p. 1153.

- 8.76 As noted earlier in this chapter, the Commonwealth funds a range of career information resources. Among other things, the Department of Education, Science and Training:
- project manages *myfuture.edu.au*. DEST provided over \$4.4 million to develop the system and contributes half of the recurrent annual funding of \$1.6 million;
 - collaborates with state, territory and non-government education authorities to introduce *The Real Game Series* in Australia;
 - funds a network of twelve Career Information Centres;
 - produces Job Guide which is distributed free of charge through schools for all Year 10 students; and
 - produces a range of career information booklets, leaflets and posters.⁵¹
- 8.77 *Myfuture* is an online career information system, *myfuture.edu.au*, agreed to by MCEETYA in 2000 and launched in July 2002. It is available free online to all Australians and provides lifelong support to career planning.⁵² In its first year it received 24 million hits and in the following six months a further 16 million.⁵³
- 8.78 *Myfuture* allows individuals to explore options and to make informed career decisions. Individuals are able to develop a career plan and research options for further study or training. They can access information on occupations, industries, starting a small business, relevant courses and training providers, financial support and more.
- 8.79 Since 1999 the Commonwealth has collaborated with state, territory and non-government education authorities to introduce *The Real Game Series* in Australia.⁵⁴ The series was developed in Canada and consists of six career education and life skills experiential programs. During 2000 more than 100 schools piloted *The Real Game*, designed for 12-14 year old students and adapted for use in Australia.
- 8.80 Two additional games in the series, for 10-12 year olds and 14-16 year olds were piloted in 2001 and two others, for 8-10 year olds and 16-18 year-olds,

51 DEST, *Submission No. 75*, p. 38.

52 DEST, *Submission No. 75*, p. 75.

53 Ms Shelagh Whittleston, Branch Manager, Transitions Branch, DEST, *Transcript of Evidence*, 26 June 2003, Canberra, p. 708; Mr Tony Greer, Group Manager, Indigenous and Transitions Group, DEST, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 November 2003, Canberra, p. 1427.

54 DEST, <<http://www.realgame.dest.gov.au/index.htm>>.

in 2003. According to DEST, feedback from students, teachers and parents has been overwhelmingly positive.⁵⁵

- 8.81 In Victoria, some schools are embedding career education into the 7-10 curriculum using *The Real Game Series*.⁵⁶ The Committee was told that in Western Australia, even though the then Department of Education chose not to be involved in the pilots, the series has had a very significant take-up.⁵⁷
- 8.82 The Department of Education, Science and Training told the Committee that the MCEETYA Taskforce on Transition from Schools was examining another Canadian product for possible adaptation to an Australian model. A draft prototype, the Australian Blueprint for Career Development, has been created and is an integrated national framework for career services and programs that specifies the competencies that all Australians need to build their careers. Chapter 8 focuses on schools.⁵⁸
- 8.83 The Blueprint:
- identifies the eleven career competencies that all Australians need to build their careers⁵⁹;
 - provides a process for planning, implementing, developing, redesigning and evaluating career programs and resources;
 - provides a common language for career development initiatives throughout the country; and
 - enables career resource producers to design products, programs and services that address specific competencies.
- 8.84 The Blueprint's broad scope means that it can be used by a range of career professionals: curriculum developers, teachers and adult educators, career resource producers, work experience coordinators and career and

55 DEST, *Submission No. 75*, pp. 75-76.

56 Victorian Government, *Submission No. 86*, p. 19.

57 Mr David Carney, President, Career Education Association of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 August 2003, Perth, p. 942.

58 Ms Shelagh Whittleston, Branch Manager, Transitions Branch, DEST, *Transcript of Evidence*, 26 June 2003, Canberra, p. 709;

DEST <http://www.dest.gov.au/directory/publications/australian_blueprint.pdf>.

59 1. Build and maintain a positive self-image; 2. Interact positively and effectively with others; 3. Change and grow throughout life; 4. Participate in life-long learning supportive of career goals; 5. Locate and effectively use career information; 6. Understand the relationship between work, society and the economy; 7. Secure/create and maintain work; 8. Make career enhancing decisions; 9. Maintain balanced life and work roles; 10. Understand the changing nature of life and work roles; 11. Understand, engage in and manage the career building process. DEST, <http://www.dest.gov.au/directory/publications/australian_blueprint.pdf>, pp. 22-23.

employment counsellors. Witnesses spoke very positively about the Blueprint but also spoke of the need for appropriate support for teachers using it:

I think it is this resourcing that underpins the success of that model ... I think it is going to be very sad, for instance, if that careers blueprint comes in and people are not given the time and support to do it properly. If a poor old teacher gets it as just another load with no time to do it, something that could be really fantastic could fall a bit flat.⁶⁰

- 8.85 It is anticipated that the Taskforce will recommend to MCEETYA that the Blueprint be trialled. The Committee believes that the Blueprint has the potential to be a very valuable resource and that its further development is desirable.
- 8.86 There are many other resources available. For example, in relation to new and emerging industries, which are the focus of one of the terms of reference for this inquiry, the Queensland Department of Innovation and Information Economy has a careers website www.smartfuture.qld.gov.au offering advice on careers in new and emerging industries, especially in mathematics and technology fields.
- 8.87 The Committee reiterates, however, that whatever the range and value of online resources and other support material, it is clear that the opportunity for students to discuss career options face to face with a trained adviser, possibly on a regular basis over an extended period – which may be two or three years – is essential. According to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry:
- There are many products and resources in the marketplace today. However, these resources are produced by many organisations, with no coordination, little industry involvement and little or no delivery mechanisms.⁶¹
- 8.88 A trained and appropriately supported careers teacher can add value many times over to whatever resources students are accessing for themselves, and can provide the necessary coordination and deliver effective programs.
- 8.89 A further initiative funded by the Commonwealth is the Career and Transition (CAT) pilot program, introduced in 2002 as part of the response

60 Mr Bernie Fitzsimons, Senior Education Advisor, Catholic Education South Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 August 2003, Adelaide, p. 1061.

61 ACCI, *Submission No. 95*, p. 14.

to the *footprints to the future* report. The twenty-three pilots across the country are designed to test and evaluate innovative ways of improving the quality of career information and advice to all young people aged 13 to 19, including students and those who have left school.

- 8.90 The pilots aim to enhance, complement and build upon existing career and transition services in local communities. One of the key components of the program is the funding of CAT advisers, who assist young people to explore a range of career options and to develop a range of pathways to achieve their goals. A primary responsibility of the CAT adviser is the development and implementation of Learning Pathways Plans. These plans are flexible documents which set out the goals of a young person and outline the strategies required to achieve these goals.⁶²
- 8.91 In practice there are some elements of the CAT pilots which overlap or are similar to some state and territory initiatives which have been developed in response to the Framework for Vocational Education in Schools. However, none of those initiatives are designed to cover the broad range of activities, services, and level of investigation covered under the CAT pilots. The pilots present an opportunity for the Commonwealth and the states and territories to work more closely together to avoid areas of duplication and maximise use of resources.⁶³
- 8.92 The Department of Education, Science and Training told the Committee in November 2003 that funding for the pilots would continue in 2004.⁶⁴ The Committee is encouraged by the preliminary evaluation of the pilots and welcomes the continuation of funding in 2004. The Committee hopes that successful outcomes of the program can be incorporated into long-term programs with secure recurrent funding.

Industry and other external providers

- 8.93 The MCEETYA Career and Transition Services Framework notes that career information, guidance and counselling will include the 'organised and systematic use of community members such as employers,' that it will 'include the use of current industry based information' and be 'provided in a variety of settings'.⁶⁵

62 DEST, <<http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/catspoems/cats.htm>>.

63 DEST, *Career Services in Australia*, February 2002, p. 32, <<http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/careers/CareerservicesAustraliareport.pdf>>.

64 Mr Tony Greer, Group Manager, Indigenous and Transitions Group, DEST, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 November 2003, Canberra, p. 1425.

65 MCEETYA, Career and Transition Services Framework, p. 4, <http://www.mceetya.edu.au/pdf/c_t_services.pdf>.

- 8.94 There is no doubt that career education programs can be enriched by the active involvement of industry, employers, parents and other stakeholders. Some witnesses even suggested that school based career advisers could not keep up with the changing nature of the labour market and career opportunities.
- 8.95 Mr Eamon Moore, Executive Officer, Education, of the Western Australian Chamber of Minerals and Energy, told the Committee that:
- career advisers in schools are overwhelmed with the information that they have to provide to students at any particular time and for them to have perhaps a shallow view of a wide cross-section is really all we can ask for in terms of their time.⁶⁶
- Mr Moore suggested that a teacher placement scheme would be one way of addressing that issue.
- 8.96 In South Australia a representative of the Construction Industry Training Board referred to its school visits and said of one visit that:
- The career counsellor said to me, 'I didn't know there were so many careers in the building and construction industry' ... career counsellors in schools and career advisers need to have a lot of information ... it is very hard. There are all these industries out there. There is a huge range. That all needs to be presented to students.⁶⁷
- 8.97 Ms Carol Frost, Chief Executive Officer of the Northern Territory Chamber of Commerce and Industry, told the Committee that she would recommend specialist careers advisers who might have industry rather than education backgrounds and who could visit schools and take industry people with them.⁶⁸ There may well be benefit in careers advice coming from someone who is closer to the labour market than teachers tend to be, and who has a perspective that is not formed in part by belonging to a school and having associated institutional interests.
- 8.98 While having inherent value in itself, such a system could also provide a service that is clearly needed during the period before any targeted training of specialist careers teachers produces significant numbers of careers teachers to fill positions in schools.

66 Mr Eamon Moore, Executive Officer, Education, Chamber of Minerals and Energy of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 August 2003, Perth, p. 964.

67 Ms Catherine Carn, Entry Level Training Manager, Construction Industry Training Board, *Transcript of Evidence*, 7 August 2003, Adelaide, p. 1080.

68 Ms Carol Frost, Chief Executive Officer, NT Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Transcript of Evidence*, 28 April 2003, Darwin, p. 476.

8.99 However, Mr David Carney from the Career Education Association of Western Australia told the Committee that it is important in a school setting that students can relate to a person who is a permanent member of staff.⁶⁹ As noted earlier, part of the role of a careers adviser in a school should include forming networks with employers, industry and the community. A balanced careers program will include inviting industry representatives to talk to particular school groups, taking students to career expos and holding career information evenings, in which industry representatives participate.

8.100 The Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce told the Committee that for three years it has been running a mobile careers unit, which visits schools:

It is a big van. It has a lot of audio-visual stuff in it; hands-on stuff where young people can get in, sit behind a computer and so forth. It is equipped with videos. We try and give those young people who go through the van what we believe to be the correct idea of what the industry is all about and encourage them to look at the career opportunities, not necessarily just as apprentices, but in other occupations within the industry.⁷⁰

8.101 The Committee applauds initiatives such as this but believes that for such a visit to have more than novelty value or passing interest for students, there needs to be a careers teacher with whom the relevant industry group can liaise, who can prepare students for the visit and follow it up with students later.

8.102 The difficulty for careers advisers to keep abreast of developments and opportunities was noted by a variety of witnesses. One way of addressing the difficulty is through cluster arrangements, in which schools share information and combine resources. The Department of Education, Science and Training told the Committee that with the transfer of ECEF programs the Department had become responsible for 220 school/industry/community clusters which manage the Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) initiative. The Manager of the Indigenous and Transitions Group in the Department stated that:

69 Mr David Carney, President, Career Education Association of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 August 2003, Perth, p. 939.

70 Mr Kevin Redfern, General Manager, Industrial Relations and Training, Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce, *Transcript of Evidence*, 3 September 2003, Melbourne, p. 1228.

We would like to have the capacity to embed within these clusters a dedicated or an additional career and transition service that would service the students within these cluster schools.⁷¹

- 8.103 As pointed out elsewhere in this report, the effective use of cluster arrangements can add value and provide significant support to the work of teachers in individual schools. Dedicated career support in a cluster could be used, among other things, for the coordination of industry visits and the provision of material designed to keep school based careers staff up to date with developments in various fields.

Indigenous career education

- 8.104 The Committee received little evidence specifically focussed on career education for Indigenous students. A number of the comments made in relation to vocational education for Indigenous students also apply to the more specific area of career education. Centralian College in Alice Springs identified a range of difficulties associated with the delivery of programs to Indigenous students, including remoteness, high cost of delivery, low levels of literacy and numeracy, dysfunctional communities and a lack of engagement with the formal education and training system. The College noted that ‘simplistic solutions ... are almost always doomed to failure’ and that building relationships with Indigenous communities and individual families is vital.⁷²
- 8.105 In noting the need to examine how vocational education can assist in achieving improved participation, retention and learning outcomes for Indigenous students the DEST submission stated that: ‘Access to appropriate career information and guidance is also recognised as critical for Indigenous young people.’⁷³
- 8.106 It is clear that the support required to enable Indigenous students to participate in education and to develop literacy and numeracy skills, general employability skills and specific vocational skills, will also assist them in pursuing post-school options, but as with all students, targeted career guidance provides a structure and focus to career planning, and an introduction to possible pathways which students may not be aware of or know how to access otherwise.

71 Mr Tony Greer, Group Manager, Indigenous and Transitions Group, DEST, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 November 2003, Canberra, p. 1427.

72 Centralian College, *Submission No. 30*, pp. 10-11.

73 DEST, *Submission No. 75*, p. 9.

8.107 As with the delivery of vocational education generally, the provision of culturally appropriate career services is an important strategy to address the low school retention rate, high unemployment and social disadvantage of Indigenous communities. The Australia Country Note of the OECD review of career education states that:

A number of initiatives are targeted at Indigenous groups. The Commonwealth and states provide funding for the development of programmes ... Around 3.5% of school-age children are of Indigenous descent; some live in isolated communities. Effective strategies need to be grounded in Indigenous culture and to include active involvement of parents and families. There is a need for more Indigenous staff with some guidance training to take part in such programmes.⁷⁴

8.108 The MCEETYA Taskforce on Transition from School is currently managing a project funded by ANTA, *Career Guidance and Advice for Indigenous Students*, the aim of which is to provide career and VET in Schools information and guidance to indigenous students, commencing below Year 8. The project will develop, trial and evaluate career guidance materials and appropriate structures for the delivery of career guidance to Indigenous students.⁷⁵

8.109 The final report of the project was presented to the Project Steering Group in November 2003.⁷⁶ It made eleven recommendations in the areas of programs and resources, training and professional development and funding and sustainability. The recommendations broadly reflect the Committee's findings in these areas. Interim reports of the project identified the following barriers to the provision of career guidance to indigenous students:

- low student expectations and too few successful Indigenous role models;
- limited exposure and experiences in the work community;
- lack of support and uncertainty about moving away from family and home in pursuit of education and training;
- the often short-term and temporary nature of specially funded projects and programs;

74 *OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies*, Australia Country Note, 2002, p. 9, <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/47/1948341.pdf>>.

75 MCEETYA, <<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/indigenouscareers/background.htm>>; DEST, *Submission No. 75*, p. 80.

76 <http://www.curriculum.edu.au/indigenouscareers/FinalReport_execsummary.pdf>.

- the limited number of Indigenous workers in education and community career pathway agencies;
- insecure positions and preparation for people working with young Indigenous people, and limited opportunities and time for career teachers and counsellors to develop relationships with Indigenous students and their families and communities;
- limited case management and individual support for work experiences given unfamiliarity with workplaces and culture.

8.110 Factors contributing to successful programs have included:

- successful Indigenous role models;
- practical activities and workplace experiences in real settings, where students can combine practical experience with school work;
- strong links with relevant people and the establishment of trust and mutual respect with a few significant people (e.g. the Aboriginal Education Worker);
- partnerships and parental and community involvement and support; and
- people working with young Indigenous students using case management approaches and mentor programs.⁷⁷

8.111 The Commonwealth funded Aboriginal Career Aspiration Program (ACAP) is designed as an early intervention strategy targeting the Year 7-9 transition period, which is seen as critical. The NSW Board of Studies has produced a range of resource material for the program.⁷⁸

8.112 The Commonwealth also provides funding through the Vocational and Educational Guidance for Aboriginals Scheme (VEGAS) to encourage innovative programs to assist Indigenous students in making successful choices about their education and careers. The scheme targets Indigenous students enrolled in school from the final year of primary to the final year of high school, and their parents or guardians.

8.113 VEGAS aims to help Indigenous students and their parents by telling them about options for further study and careers; introducing Indigenous school students to university life and teaching methods; helping them to develop study skills; providing access to Indigenous role models in further

77 MEETYA, <<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/indigenoucareers/news.htm#june>>.

78 DEST, *Career Services in Australia*, February 2002, pp. 86-87, <<http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/careers/CareerservicesAustraliareport.pdf>>.

education and employment; and by assisting Indigenous school students to participate in school-based work experience or VET programs. More than 700 VEGAS projects were funded in 1998, and nearly 600 in 1999.⁷⁹

- 8.114 In the Northern Territory the Aboriginal and Islander Tertiary Aspirations Program (AITAP) provides funding and central support for numerous initiatives that build the confidence and skills of indigenous youth. The focus includes all Indigenous students in Years 7-12. AITAP invests in resources and fosters networks of principals, parents and mentors, teachers and Aboriginal organisations that actively support the pathways of young people from school to career.⁸⁰
- 8.115 Of the twenty-three Career and Transition pilots introduced in response to the *footprints to the future* report five have a specific focus on Indigenous young people, two of those having a dedicated Indigenous CAT adviser.
- 8.116 The Committee acknowledges the work under way in the wider field of vocational education to enhance opportunities for Indigenous students and to encourage improved retention rates and successful post-school outcomes. The Committee also acknowledges the range of programs directed specifically at career guidance for Indigenous students. However, the Committee also notes the problems associated with the short-term nature of some projects and the need for long-term strategies.
- 8.117 The Committee notes the need for Indigenous staff with career guidance training to participate in the delivery of programs for Indigenous students and encourages education authorities to develop pathways for Indigenous career educators.

Training and professional development

- 8.118 In 1997 the Committee's predecessor stated that schools' provision of career guidance:

cannot improve until governments provide them with enough appropriately trained teachers who are equipped with comprehensive and up to date information.⁸¹

79 DEST, *Career Services in Australia*, February 2002, p. 87, <<http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/careers/CareerservicesAustraliareport.pdf>>.

80 DEST, *Career Services in Australia*, February 2002, p. 43, <<http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/careers/CareerservicesAustraliareport.pdf>>.

81 House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training, *Youth Employment: A working solution*, 1997, p. 53.

8.119 The statement still applies, but only more so. The OECD review of career guidance policies stated that the ‘extent of professional training in the guidance field in Australia is inadequate’ and that ‘a substantial expansion of training opportunities is needed.’⁸² Australia’s response to the OECD questionnaire, prepared by DEST, acknowledged that:

In Australia, career development practitioners enter the field through a range of pathways and many have no formal training in career related studies.⁸³

8.120 The Committee heard a consistent message across the country – that specialist training and continuing professional development are essential if career education is to be delivered effectively and credibly. It is a message repeated in research and policy statements; as noted at the beginning of this chapter, the Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce and the MCEETYA Taskforce on Transition from School clearly state that career education should be delivered by professionally trained and qualified staff.

8.121 Given the diverse and complex nature of possible pathways for students leaving school, individual careers teachers cannot be expected to be familiar with the details of all possible options. As one school principal told the Committee, career education has:

grown in complexity so much over the last decade that it is very difficult to come across one person who has an overview of all the opportunities and so on that are available for students.⁸⁴

8.122 However, a well-trained career education teacher can prepare students effectively for that transition to employment, training or further education by:

- providing knowledge of the world of work and general employability skills, including coordinating non-VET work experience for all students;
- raising students’ awareness of the variety of options available and broadening their understanding of the way in which particular courses of study and training options can lead to a variety outcomes;

82 *OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies*, Australia Country Note, 2002, p. 22, <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/47/1948341.pdf>>.

83 *OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies*, Australia’s response to questionnaire, p. 86, <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/27/40/2494499.pdf>>.

84 Mr Paul Billows, Principal, Willunga High School, *Transcript of Evidence*, 6 August 2003, Willunga, SA, p. 1014.

- working with subject teachers to support career education across the curriculum, and with the VET coordinator to maximise the effectiveness of the VET program;
 - providing one to one career guidance, including directing students to appropriate sources of information, whether printed and online resource material or individuals and organisations who can assist further, and assisting students in developing their transition plan; and
 - liaising with the local community, employers and industry groups, both on behalf of individual students and also to arrange a program of school visits and information sessions appropriate to particular groups and year levels, and following up those visits with appropriate activities in class.
- 8.123 The expertise of the careers teacher lies in the awareness of available resources and programs and the ability to develop a comprehensive and effective course of study which brings together the different elements of career education and responds to the needs of students in particular situations with a combination of measures.
- 8.124 In its response to the OECD questionnaire the Department of Education, Science and Training stated in 2001 that there were two Bachelor of Education (B Ed) awards that offered electives in career guidance and eight postgraduate qualifications in the field, with approximately 180 places available in the postgraduate courses.⁸⁵
- 8.125 The fact that as recently as 2001 only two of the country's forty-three universities offered B Ed courses with a career guidance option, indicates the extent to which career education has been neglected.
- 8.126 As indicated in this chapter, there is a general consensus that effective career education is essential in preparing young people for the transition from school to an increasingly complex and changing work environment, and to equip them for lifelong career development. It is also widely accepted that appropriate training is essential to deliver career education effectively.
- 8.127 Teacher education must reflect the context in which teachers operate and cater to the needs of schools. The Committee encourages universities to examine teacher education courses with a view to developing career education courses that can be included in Bachelor of Education, Diploma of Education and higher degree courses.

85 *OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies*, Australia's response to questionnaire, p. 86, <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/27/40/2494499.pdf>>.

- 8.128 It is ironic that in Western Australia, where Edith Cowan University offers career education units as part of its Bachelor of Education program, there is no state policy for career education in schools. In August 2003 the Committee was told that the university was.

looking at redesigning their Bachelor of Education program and putting a compulsory [career education] unit into their Bachelor of Education program for their secondary teachers.⁸⁶

The Committee commends Edith Cowan University for its approach.

- 8.129 The Committee was encouraged by advice from the Department of Education, Science and Training that:

We are actually providing advice at the moment to the Minister on how we might address the need for professional development for careers teachers.⁸⁷

- 8.130 Opinions differed as to whether careers training for teachers should be pre-service or in-service. There is a case for all teachers having some training, at least at the level of awareness raising, in order for them to understand the nature and importance of careers advice and to enable them to support the careers adviser across the curriculum. This kind of training could form part of general pre-service teacher training, and was supported by DEST.⁸⁸

- 8.131 However, for specialist careers teachers the general view seemed to be that for someone providing advice to students on career options and possible pathways there was significant value in having some prior teaching experience. The person in that role is often required to coordinate work experience, negotiate release with classroom teachers, network with industry and individual employers and respond to a range of issues that arise for students.

- 8.132 It appears to the Committee that someone with experience of the classroom, of the various and often complex factors which impinge on the operations of schools and, perhaps most importantly, with an

86 Mr David Carney, President, Career Education Association of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 August 2003, Perth, p. 937.

87 Ms Shelagh Whittleston, Branch Manager, Transitions Branch, DEST, *Transcript of Evidence*, 26 June 2003, Canberra, p. 710.

88 DEST, *Transcript of Evidence*, 27 November 2003, Canberra, p. 1428. See also comments by the Minister for Education, Science and Training, Dr Brendan Nelson MP, *Taking Schools to the Next Level*, 13 November 2003, p. 10, <<http://www.dest.gov.au/Ministers/Media/Nelson/2003/11/n526131103.asp>>.

understanding of students' perspectives, is best suited to taking on the careers role.

- 8.133 Ideally, such a person would have a minimum of three years teaching experience before undertaking specific careers training. Such training would be in the form of a post-graduate diploma or as a substantial part of a post-graduate degree in education. This view was supported by the Career Education Association of Victoria.⁸⁹
- 8.134 If careers advice is as important as witnesses across the country have told the Committee it is – and the Committee agrees with their assessment – then it is necessary for the teacher responsible to have appropriate qualifications, just as a science teacher or a geography teacher is expected to have qualifications relevant to their subject. As one witness said, 'You would not get principals appointing a physics or calculus teacher with no training.'⁹⁰
- 8.135 It is time to dispel the notion of careers advice as something that can be 'picked up' and performed as a 'filler' by a member of staff with a few periods to spare. The development of structured career education frameworks in all schools, and the availability of appropriate training and professional development, should encourage the view that careers can be a valid pathway for teachers' own careers within schools.
- 8.136 Given the constantly changing nature of the labour market and the development of new industries and new career paths, it is vital that careers teachers have access to continuing professional development. The careers adviser must be in a position to provide students with accurate and up to date information.⁹¹
- 8.137 Professional development of occupation-specific skills and knowledge is generally provided by professional associations.⁹² In New South Wales the Department of Education and Training delivers retraining courses to teachers appointed as careers advisers.
- 8.138 In Victoria, the Government provides a grant to the Career Education Association of Victoria under a service agreement, for the provision of

89 Ms Julie Ryan, President, Career Education Association of Victoria, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 September 2003, Melbourne, p. 1159.

90 Ms Cathy Moore, Careers Counsellor, Mater Dei College, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 August 2003, Perth, p. 981.

91 Mr David Carney, President, Career Education Association of Western Australia, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 August 2003, Perth, p. 940.

92 *OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies*, Australia's response to questionnaire, p. 87, <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/27/40/2494499.pdf>>

training for new careers practitioners and other professional development activities.⁹³ The Association told the Committee that it runs a two and a half day conference for new careers coordinators but that this was the only professional development available and that more was required.⁹⁴

- 8.139 The Committee believes that continuing professional development is necessary for careers advisers, just as it is for all teachers, and that education authorities, professional associations and higher education institutions should work together to coordinate the development and provision of appropriate activities. The Commonwealth should take a more active role in supporting professional development through subsidising such courses.

Recommendation 31

The Committee recommends that the MCEETYA Taskforce on Teacher Quality and Educational Leadership (TQELT) pursue changes to teacher education programs to achieve a nationally consistent approach. This should include greater consideration of vocational education issues, including the need for:

- **all pre-service teacher education to include some career education training.**

Recommendation 32

The Committee recommends that the professional development needs of careers educators be better met by:

- **private and public tertiary institutions providing additional and more accessible post-graduate courses; and**
- **sufficient resourcing for teachers to access both formal courses and industry knowledge including:**
 - ⇒ **state and territory support through salary continuity and release from teaching, and**
 - ⇒ **Commonwealth support in meeting formal course costs.**

93 Victorian Government, *Submission No. 86*, p. 19.

94 Ms Julie Ryan, President, Career Education Association of Victoria, *Transcript of Evidence*, 2 September 2003, Melbourne, p. 1157.

Standards and accountability

- 8.140 In 1992 a National Training Framework for Career Coordinators was developed by the then National Board of Employment, Education and Training, identifying the knowledge, understandings, attitudes and skills required by practitioners providing career guidance and related activities in different sectors.
- 8.141 In the twelve years since then there has been no systematic implementation of the framework, partly because of the splintered nature of the various professional associations. However, the formation of the Career Industry Consortium of Australia provides a mechanism to update and implement the framework.
- 8.142 The DEST report, *Career Services in Australia*, states that:
- As new categories of workers join an already diverse field, the implementation of an updated competency framework for practitioners should retain its priority on the workplan of the new MCEETYA Transition from School Taskforce. The involvement of the Career Industry Consortium of Australia will be critical to the successful development and subsequent implementation of a framework.⁹⁵
- 8.143 The workplan includes an intention to ‘facilitate professional associations to develop nationally agreed standards for career professionals’.⁹⁶ The Committee welcomes this development and encourages all jurisdictions to establish or maintain formal and informal links between the relevant professional associations and education authorities in order to develop the necessary framework.
- 8.144 In 1999 the Career Education Association of Victoria and the then Australian Student Trainee Foundation (later ECEF) produced the Careers Education Quality Framework. It is linked to the National Innovation in School Careers Programs Awards but participation in the scheme is voluntary.
- 8.145 The Committee believes that general implementation of this Framework or some other agreed set of standards as developed by the MCEETYA Taskforce is essential. The diversity of careers programs in different jurisdictions and in different educational settings responds to different
-

95 DEST, *Career Services in Australia*, February 2002, p. 11, <<http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/careers/CareerservicesAustraliareport.pdf>>.

96 OECD *Review of Career Guidance Policies*, Australia Country Note, 2002, p. 22, <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/47/1948341.pdf>>.

needs and complements different general education programs. Such a quality framework would provide the basis for ensuring minimum common standards and give credibility to that variety of programs.

- 8.146 A national framework would also facilitate the development of training programs by education systems and higher education institutions.
- 8.147 Career education teachers themselves acknowledge the ‘need to have schools accountable for the career education that they are offering to their students’ and see accountability as an essential step to achieving the appropriate recognition of their subject.⁹⁷
- 8.148 The ECEF submission suggested that accountability could best be achieved by:
- Developing nationally agreed guidelines for career education and guidance in schools, including a broad statement of entitlement.
 - Ensuring that there is a clear but flexible policy framework to implement these guidelines at state and local levels.
 - Expecting schools to develop their own programs within this framework.
 - Requiring schools to make their programs transparent and accountable - through school prospectuses, school plans and school reports - to their end-users: students, parents and the wider community.⁹⁸
- 8.149 As indicated in this chapter, careers programs are often marginalised in the curriculum and seen as something which can be given to any teacher to deliver. It is only in the context of accountability to a clearly defined set of standards that careers programs and teachers can achieve parity of esteem with other elements of the curriculum.
- 8.150 The other key element in accountability is reporting. The OECD review expressed concern about the lack of accountability in relation to the quality of schools’ careers programs, noting, for example, that state and territory systems are not required to report to ministers on the extent to which they have implemented Goal 1.5 of the Adelaide Declaration.⁹⁹ The Committee shares these concerns.
- 8.151 The DEST report which was the basis of Australia’s response to the OECD questionnaire stated that:
-

97 Ms Cathy Moore, Careers Counsellor, Mater Dei College, *Transcript of Evidence*, 5 August 2003, Perth, p. 982.

98 ECEF, *Submission No. 84*, p. 36.

99 *OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies*, Australia Country Note, 2002, p. 18, <<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/17/47/1948341.pdf>>.

There is room for substantial improvement in reporting. There are very little system-level data available for policy, planning or performance measurement of career guidance activities. Education and training authorities in some states and territories are unable to provide estimates of the numbers of staff who are engaged in career activities or the resources that are being applied.¹⁰⁰

- 8.152 The Committee finds the lack of appropriate standards for delivering career education disturbing. It is also concerned at the lack of appropriate data to inform policy, planning or performance measurement. The Committee believes that greater accountability and accurate collection and reporting of relevant data is essential, and that a clear set of national standards for the delivery of career education in schools, and a national system of reporting, are necessary.

Recommendation 33

The Committee recommends that in order to ensure consistency, transparency and accountability in the delivery of career education, a clear set of national standards for the delivery of career education in schools, and a national system of reporting, be adopted by MCEETYA.

Conclusion

- 8.153 The Committee cannot emphasise too strongly the importance of having appropriately trained, specialist career education teachers in schools, supported both by the curriculum structure within which general education and vocational education are delivered, and also by the specific courses and culture of individual schools.
- 8.154 A range of submissions and witnesses in all jurisdictions argued that career education should be a mandated part of the core curriculum, delivered by trained and committed professional staff.
- 8.155 There is universal agreement among researchers and policy makers on the vital importance of professionally delivered career education within the effective management of the transition to post-school destinations.

100 DEST, *Career Services in Australia*, February 2002, p. 10, <<http://www.dest.gov.au/schools/careers/CareerservicesAustraliareport.pdf>>.

- 8.156 The Committee has noted in previous reports the problems with career education, and has been calling for reform for several years. This system failure cannot be allowed to continue.
- 8.157 The Committee believes that this is an area which requires immediate, coordinated attention from education authorities in order to ensure a consistent, minimum level of career education, which can be tailored within jurisdictions to complement existing curricula and meet the particular needs of specific regions and school populations.
- 8.158 On 13 November 2003 the Minister for Education, Science and Training, Dr Brendan Nelson, stated that in coming months he would be making announcements regarding a new approach to careers advisers. Dr Nelson said that:
- Careers advisers need better resources attuned to their needs, and their timetable. They need better training and defined professional standards.¹⁰¹
- 8.159 The Committee welcomes the Minister's focus on matters raised in this chapter and looks forward to the announcements foreshadowed.

101 Hon Dr Brendan Nelson MP, Minister for Education, Science and Training, *Taking Schools to the Next Level*, 13 November 2003, p. 10, <<http://www.dest.gov.au/Ministers/Media/Nelson/2003/11/n526131103.asp>>.