
Australian Curriculum Consultation Review
Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)
Level 13, Tower B
Centennial Plaza
280 Elizabeth Street
Sydney NSW 2000
7 July 2020

Submission to the Australian Curriculum Consultation Review

The Career Education Association of Victoria (CEAV) trading as the Australian Centre for Career Education (ACCE) is pleased to provide feedback to the Australian Curriculum Consultation Review.

About The Australian Centre for Career Education

The Australian Centre for Career Education (trading as CEAV Inc) is a national association, subject expert, and thought leader in career education and development. We were established in 1975 by the Victorian Department of Education. CEAV Inc delivers more than 30,000 career interventions across Victoria each year and is an endorsed provider of training careers services by the peak industry body, the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA). We are a not for profit, national charity that works for the good of all Australians.

CEAV Inc has a proud 45-year history of supporting career education and positive employment outcomes for youth and adults of all abilities. Our mission is to ensure all Australians have access to quality career education and accredited career counselling, particularly those in the community who need additional support. Our career training and career services are based on a model of person-centred support that ensures students and jobseekers receive quality career interventions and best practice career tools suited to their individual needs. Our community career counselling service (CEAV Career Counselling Australia) focusses on increasing the work readiness of our community's most vulnerable jobseekers so they can gain and sustain employment.

Career development in Australia and overseas

In many western countries career development is integral to workforce capacity to ensure the right mix and number of people, with the right skills and knowledge, are available to meet current and future demand. As such it informs policy and government investment in long term employment outcomes. Both national and international research has consistently demonstrated there is a strong nexus between school career education and advice, and positive transition outcomes for young people.

- An evaluation of the career questions on the 2012 PISA Survey demonstrated that career activities consistently increased young people’s understanding of the benefits of school to their post school options.¹
- In 2014, The European Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) undertook a significant examination of the effectiveness of career guidance internationally and cross all sectors of the community including schools. The research concluded that young people who receive school career guidance are more likely to have better engagement and success in school and achieve better outcomes in the labour market.²
- The Gatsby Charitable Foundation PricewaterhouseCoopers’ report on career services in UK schools identified a range of positive benefits including that; those who had access to quality career advice were “*less likely to become NEET*” (not in education, employment or training).³

Career education programs have gained greater recognition internationally for their benefits and many countries are implementing mandated career education programs in schools including Canada, the US, and New Zealand. In 2018 CEAV Inc responded to the Parliamentary Inquiry into career advice activities in Victorian schools with a submission. While all of CEAV Inc’s recommendations were accepted, not all have been adopted. However, Victoria remains one of the most progressive states with its education department introducing compulsory career guidance support to students in all year 9 state secondary schools through its *My Career Insights* program.

CEAV Inc is engaged by The Department of Education and Training Victoria to deliver *My Career Insights*. This includes administering the Morrisby@Profile online vocational tool to students in state government schools and ensuring they receive interview discussions with career professionals about their results. Each year, over 30,000 year 9 students in state schools and equivalent settings are supported by *My Career Insights* across Victoria.

The Department of Education and Training Victoria is also committed to ‘*transforming career education*’ in government schools so that students have the skills and capabilities to navigate multiple careers and are capable of meeting the challenges of the rapidly changing world of work. However, this is not the case in other states as there is no national jurisdiction that mandates for standardised career education in schools. This leaves many Australian students at risk of being unable to successfully plan, manage and navigate their future and the changing labour market.

If school education aims to prepare students for the future, then it needs to include a vibrant and structured career education subject area within the curriculum from primary through to secondary school. Any new curriculum designed without the inclusion of career education is incomplete and

¹ Kashefpakdel E, Anthony M and Schleich M (2016) *The Impact of Career Development Activities on Student Attitudes Towards School Utility: An Analysis of Data from The Organisation For Economic Cooperation and Development’s Programme For International Student Assessment (PISA)*, Education and Employers Research, London

² Hooley T (2014) *The Evidence Base for Lifelong Guidance: A guide to key findings for effective policy and practice. Lifelong Learning. European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network. Saarijarvi.*

³ Kashefpakdel E and Schleicher M (2017) *The impact of career development activities on PISA mathematics tests. An analysis of data Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Education and Employers Research, London*

will not prepare students for ongoing learning and critical decision making needed for their future development.

The value of careers

The term *'career'* is a holistic concept that has been defined by the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) to encompass whole of life learning, training, and work experiences. From early childhood throughout school and beyond, the capacity to develop and manage a career provides individuals with meaning in their lives, a place in their community and the ability to contribute to the workforce. The important role that structured career learning delivers should not be underestimated as it supports students with the following:

- information about roles and industry that support their learning and career journey
- self-reflective capacity through an understanding of their strengths and interests
- planning and decision-making skills that empower students with increased self-confidence and resilience
- a greater understanding of how school and their personal learning contributes to their future, their engagement with the community, and to the world of work.

Career development includes career education and career management skills. *"Career Education is the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes through a planned programme of learning experiences in education and training to assist informed work and study decision making. It enables effective participation in working life (MCEECDYA, 2010)."*⁴

Career development describes a range of interventions that enable individuals to identify their capabilities, competencies and interests, and make informed educational training and occupational decisions. It has been shown to have significant and positive impacts on educational outcomes, economic and employment outcomes, and social outcomes. It is most effective when implemented in a structured and measured way and is introduced early in life as a discreet subject in compulsory curriculum. Conversely, limited and narrow approaches to career education and development have been shown to be detrimental to preparing young people for the transitions they face and for later occupational attainment.

Canadian research reveals that, *"While Canada is an international leader on many indicators of K-12 education performance (OECD, 2019) and has among the highest rates of PSE attainment of all OECD countries (Buchanan, 2013), it still has a significant proportion of youth who leave the formal education system ill-equipped for their transition to the world of work."*⁵

This transitioning derailment is not dissimilar to student experiences in Australia. In both countries it includes:

- students leaving school before graduating

⁴ Keele S, Swann R, Davie-Smythe A (2020) Identifying best practice in career education and development in Australian secondary schools, *Australian Journal of Career Development*. 29(1):54-66. doi:[10.1177/1038416219886116](https://doi.org/10.1177/1038416219886116)

⁵Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (2020) *The role of career education on students' education choices and postsecondary outcomes: Theoretical and evidence base preparation*. Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, Ontario

- students graduating into the workplace but not being work ready
- school graduates moving into apprenticeship training, TAFE or university pathways who drop out or switch due to lack of fit
- graduates securing employment but being overqualified and dissatisfied with their study investment and work
- graduates who struggle to demonstrate employment work ready skills and switch to other occupations or further training.

Career development also helps school students understand other personal expectations required of them in the workplace such as flexibility, innovation, collaboration, communication, and analytical skills. These factors are a vital part of work readiness and impact an individual's ability to gain and sustain employment across their lifespan. Researchers have found substantial evidence that supports the link between school-based careers education and later economic outcomes.⁶

The future of work

Recent labour market impacts from natural disasters and the coronavirus pandemic have identified how important it is for individuals to manage and navigate career changes and challenges. Given the potential for further pandemics, shifting global wealth and environmental changes impacting labour markets, it is imperative that governments prepare individuals to adapt. Leaving Australian's unprepared to manage their careers through these uncertainties is imprudent and economically flawed.

Education offers one of the greatest opportunities for future preparation and career development is a process that can be taught. The Australian Government recognises the importance of career education and has established a student focused, national career education strategy⁷. However, the strategy requires curriculum formalisation across state jurisdictions to ensure every Australian student receives robust and structured career education throughout their school education. This will improve Australia's economic and workforce future by enabling school students to benefit from work integrated learning and decision making so they can navigate to the world of work. It also supports the premise upon which education is based – to prepare students for a viable and successful future as an active contributor to the community.

Recommendation

CEAV Inc commends The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's (ACARA) 2021 curriculum review for undertaking the 2021 curriculum review, clarifying curriculum terms, reducing duplication in learning, and improving teacher access through the updated website. However, as a subject area expert, CEAV Inc urges reviewers to ensure that career education is formally embedded

⁶ Hughes D, Mann A, Barnes S, Baldauf B and McKeown R (2016) *Careers education: international literature review*. London: Education Endowment Foundation. London.

⁷ The Department of Education and Training, (2019) *A student focused National Career Education Strategy*, Australia, The Department of Education and Training, <https://schooltowork.dese.gov.au/>

within the updated curriculum for all Australian school students from primary through to secondary school. In doing so, ACARA will help to reduce transition 'derailment' and improve the economic outlook for school students, parents and carers, transitioning students, employers and the Australian economy.

Yours sincerely,



Bernadette Gigliotti
CEO
The Australian Centre for Career Education

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