

The Career Education Association of Victoria

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**Response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into career advice activities in
Victorian schools**



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Background

The Career Education Association of Victoria (CEAV) trading as the **Australian Centre for Career Education (ACCE)** is pleased to provide our response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into career advice activities in Victorian schools. The association welcomes the opportunity to provide information from our extensive membership base to this inquiry.

We acknowledge the Victorian Government's interest in supporting and making improvements to career advice activities in Victorian schools. We believe this is long overdue and we would be pleased to attend the hearings into this inquiry to be held in early 2018 to provide further insights into the review.

In our response to this inquiry, the CEAV would like to highlight the following quality assurance measures that we believe are needed in order to improve the delivery of career services and programs in all Victorian schools.

To ensure young people get the skills they need for the jobs they want, the Victorian government needs to:

- Mandate and make accountable career education through legislation for all Victorian students from Year 3 to Year 12. This will ensure consistency across sectors and the delivery of accurate, timely, professional and unbiased advice. Legislation should outline the requirements for delivery, the outcomes and the quality measures needed to ensure that career education is an entitlement in the education state.
- Ensure that all career advisors working in Victorian schools meet the required industry standard of post graduate qualification in career development practice. That career advisers in schools undertake a minimum of 30 hours of continuing professional development in careers practice annually to maintain their position.
- A government mandated full time careers qualified teaching position in every Victorian school for every 450 students.
- Career education is introduced as a methodology in four year education and teaching degrees.
- Introduce targeted funding for the specific delivery of careers services and programs in schools to meet local needs, increase work integrated learning in classrooms and deliver system improvements.
- Develop an agreed set of career development principles to be adopted by the Victorian government for all Victorians to support their ongoing workforce participation.

Now more than ever when governments are investing significant public funds into skill development, training and work place learning, we need to review how young people, young adults and working adults are being prepared for workforce participation.

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There is a greater need in ensuring that students have access to quality unbiased careers advice from qualified professional career development practitioners before they are committed to selecting

subjects and courses. Career development is a process that requires time and review over many years. Our current system that focusses on single post compulsory choices is inadequate for future workforce development.

The over reliance on the ATAR as a sole predictor of transition success is a legacy that we have inherited from the 1990's and is no longer servicing the needs of young people, their parents, the workforce and the economy.

The CEAV is a not for profit educational charity providing professional services to 650 members across Australia, 550 are primarily members in secondary schools. We have a forty two year history of supporting career practitioners (advisors) in schools and have a range of activities offered through our three divisions; CEAV Inc., CEAV Institute (RTO) and CEAV Careers Counselling Australia (Charity Counselling). We have gathered extensive evidence over the past decade and provided reports and information back to government in the position of careers in Victorian schools. We work across Australia with other state jurisdictions and we have worked internationally, to build the capacity of career advisors, teachers and leaders in schools in career development practice.

The CEAV has seen a significant decline in the effectiveness of careers education services in Victorian schools. In the past 17 years, we have seen careers education resources cut to the lowest amount since the introduction of Work Experience in 1975. While at the same time we have seen exponential growth in the need for effective course planning with the introduction of VCAL, VET in schools, school based apprenticeships, more young people in alternative educational settings and increased demand from industry for a skilled workforce.

One solution adopted by a number of schools is to use online technology to drive careers services supplemented by unqualified information officers. Technology can assist in the delivery of career information but as research demonstrates young people seek assistance to interpret and process the information to suit their career planning. Whatever the medium used to provide careers information, telephone, online, email or Skype the effectiveness and impact will be determined by whether the careers adviser has the skills to assist the student.

Another solution has been the significant financial investment by government to establish, programs or networks outside of schools to work with schools. As there is no mandate for career education to be delivered these networks have struggled to improve careers practice and engagement directly with schools. They work outside the principles of career development and provide stop gap solutions for long term problems.

'Career' today is a far more complex and holistic concept than our 20th century understanding of the term leads us to believe. Career, as defined by the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA 2006) encompasses *the whole of life learning, training and work experiences*. From early childhood to the years beyond formal work, the capacity to develop a career offers all people the opportunity to find meaning in their lives, a place in their communities and in their cultures. Career development includes; career education and career management skills. Career development describes a range of interventions that enables people of all ages and at any point in their lives to identify their capabilities, competencies and interests, to make informed educational training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and in their communities.

The word 'career' in our day to day language has often been replaced or interchanged with words such as skills training, pathways, managed individual pathways, transitions, structured work placements, work experience, work integrated learning and the list goes on, yet the concept of career in the modern context is avoided and initiatives designed to improve or engage career development principles are at best limited in their uptake and at worst unsuccessful and wasteful of public funds.

Development of a common or agreed terminology for use by governments, schools, industry and the general public would be an important outcome from a review of career advice activities in Victorian schools. It would also provide a context and framework for future policy and initiatives. It would provide a central point for informed conversations across education, training and industry and the development of effective system wide improvements.

Understanding the complexities associated with navigating career in this context highlights the need for a government review to test the effectiveness of current careers services not only in schools but also in , Learn Locals; TAFE's; Private RTO's, Higher Education and the new Skills and Jobs Centres.

The CEAV is aware of the extensive evidence base that recognises there are many beneficiaries of quality career development services including; individuals, their families and communities and the organisations where they study and work as well as society as a whole. ***Career development impacts on; educational outcomes, economic and employment outcomes and social outcomes.***¹

International bodies such as the OECD, International Labour Organisation and the European Community view career development as an important element of workforce development and a number of countries have taken this approach.

CEAV Response to Inquiry Terms of Reference Questions

- **The relationship between school career advice and youth employment outcomes**

*“Over recent years, the evidence base surrounding the impact of careers-focused provision has improved considerably, offering validation to the OECD’s confidence that school-mediated work-related engagements can be robustly associated with better employment outcomes”.*²

This statement exemplifies the current international recognition of the value of school based career advice and the strong link to successful outcomes for young people.

Research, both nationally and internationally, has consistently demonstrated there is a strong nexus between school career advice and positive transition outcomes for young people.

- In 2014, The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) undertook a significant examination of the effectiveness of career guidance internationally and across all sectors of

¹ Professor Tristram Hooley *The Evidence Base for Lifelong Guidance June 2014*

² *The impact of career development activities on PISA mathematics tests An analysis of data* Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Elnaz T. Kashefpakdel and Matteo Schleicher Occasional Research Paper 12: September 2017

the community including schools. The research concluded that young people who receive school career guidance are “*More likely to achieve better outcomes in the labour market*”.³

- The Gatsby Charitable Foundation / Pricewaterhouse Coopers report on career services in UK schools claimed a range of positive benefits including that; those who had access to quality career advice were “*Less likely to become NEET*”.⁴

While unemployed young people have complex problems a common characteristic is that they have left school early or have not undertaken any post school education. Early school leavers often leave school not because they have a job or training course to go to but it is their negative academic experiences and view of school as irrelevant to their future employment that “encourages” them to exit. As a result, they face many problems in finding work or accessing training. It is also important to note that in longitudinal studies early school leavers often state that they regret leaving and that if they had better career advice they may have stayed.⁵

Career advice has a strong impact on assisting young people to view school completion as a vital factor in their future options. ***Recent 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.***⁶ The evaluation highlighted the positive benefits of having the time to discuss options with a career adviser.

While youth unemployment is a problem, a growing issue is the increase in the number of young people who are experiencing underemployment with recent ABS data reporting that 18% are not getting enough hours to provide sufficient income. Many of these young people have completed Year 12 and may have obtained a tertiary qualification. These young people are also experiencing periods of unemployment as contracts and short-term positions end.

A comprehensive and well-resourced career education program can assist young people to develop the knowledge and skills to navigate and thrive in this increasingly insecure and rapidly changing labour market. This approach has been recognised internationally and many countries are now implementing **mandated career education programs in schools**, these include Canada, the US and New Zealand.

It is important to recognise that career decisions and judgements are not made in the final years of schooling but are made as early as Year 3. Research undertaken by Watson and McMahon revealed that the majority of primary children could “make curricular, extra-curricular, or general school connections to future jobs that interested them”.⁷ Such findings suggest that the current focus on

³ Op cit *The Evidence Base on Lifelong Guidance: a Guide to Key Findings for Effective Policy and Practice* The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) research 2014

⁴ *Assessing benchmarks of good practice in school career guidance* Gatsby Charitable Foundation/ PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) 2014)

⁵ *The Destinations of School Leavers in Victoria* The On Track Survey 2007 Statewide Report Department of education and early Childhood Development

⁶ *The impact of career development activities on student attitudes towards school utility: an analysis of data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)* Occasional Research Paper 8: December 2016 Elnaz T. Kashefpakdel, Anthony Mann and Matteo Schleich

⁷ *School and work: connections made by South African and Australian primary school children* Mark Watson and Mary McMahon South African Journal of Education Vol 27:565–577

the final years of secondary school may be too late particularly if these young people have negative experiences of schooling.

While lack of experience is a significant factor, through our CEAV Careers Counselling Australia Community Centre, we have observed through conducting a number of programs for unemployed young people that many have achieved employment or become engaged in further education and training by assisting them to:

- develop a personalised career action plan through one on one careers guidance
- effectively identify and promote their skills
- develop their understanding of the demands of the labour market
- develop their knowledge of further education and learning pathways
- increase their awareness of support services

These career management skills are recognised by a plethora of international and national research as an essential element of good practice and that they need to be practiced during a young person's school years.

For over 100 years, research on the effectiveness of career advice has consistently demonstrated that it can have a positive impact on those who are having difficulty entering employment. In 2004 the OECD reviewed career education in a number of countries including Australia one of the findings was that:

“School career guidance services have often not been part of strategies to prevent early school-leaving, particularly by young people who are at risk of social exclusion. A challenge for policy-makers is to make sure that career guidance is part of schools’ strategies to detect and assist young people who leave school early or without qualifications: to help them to find meaning in staying at school; or to have well planned exit strategies...”⁸

Unfortunately this recommendation is yet to be implemented in Victorian schools.

There is no one single piece of information that will improve the ability of students to make an informed choice in regards to training and employment if they are not ready to make the choice in the first place. Without sound career development preparation which takes students through a planned program of career education activities during their school education, trying to improve employment outcomes will continue to elude all institutions and the government.

We see that the initial problem is not one of lack of career information, but information overload at a time when students are trying to concentrate on achieving a result that will assist them to transition beyond senior secondary schooling. Students have access to career information, what they don't have is time at school for reflection and planning, career exploration, self-awareness and career decision making that comes with the career readiness to transition successfully.

⁸ Career Guidance and Public Policy Bridging the Gap OECD 2004

- **The challenges faced by school career advisers**

Current career programs in schools are struggling to meet the need of preparing young people for the workplace of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

There is no mandate requiring schools to deliver any career advice provision, which means that the level of support for the careers advisor is at the “whim” of the school community and Principal. This is compounded by the lack of knowledge in the Victorian education community, despite the wealth of evidence, of the very positive contribution that quality career advice can make to the outcomes of young people. This results in the career adviser being undervalued and the role as an add-on that can be eliminated when necessary. Also the resources available to provide a range of career experiences are often inadequate.

This situation is intensified by the fact the department has for a number of years not invested in supporting career advisers in schools. The loss of the position being tagged and supplementary to teaching requirements has led to high turnover and increasingly staff without the professional qualification that the national peak body Careers Industry Council of Australia (CICA) requires, despite international practice. In addition there has been limited professional development other than the programs and support provided by the CEAV which can challenge school funding, particularly for low socio-economic and rural schools.

- CEAV receives \$22,000 per year to provide professional development and upskilling of career advisers in Victorian schools (550) state-wide as part of the Strategic Partnership Program (SPP) and this funding is now in danger of disappearing as careers is not part of the Victorian curriculum. In comparison, other networks and organisations have received significant funds over the same time period approximately \$13 million for one program- Structured Workplace Learning.
- Over the past decade a significant amount of public funds have been provided to improve engagement in workforce participation for our ‘*opportunity youth*’ those young people classified as Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). While we agree this is needed a more equitable distribution of support funding is needed for career activities in Victorian schools to provide prevent rather than intervention programs that affect disengagement.
- CEAV is currently working with other state departments (South Australia, ACT and Tasmania) who are realising the benefit of investing significant funds in the sound preparation of teachers and career advisers in secondary schools.

School advisers are left to operate with no state-wide benchmarks with which to demand a base level provision of career advice leading to inadequate time available to develop quality programs and provide one on one advice. This leads to a ‘just in time’ model that is limited to Years 10 and 12 ignoring the evidence that career decision making is a lifelong process and that decisions are made as early as Year 3.

The Victorian Careers Curriculum Framework (VCCF) Years 7-10 developed by the CEAV in 2010 has provided support for career advisers but the primary school framework was not adopted. The VCAA has removed all reference to career and career activities in the new compulsory P- 10 curriculum. The VCCF was never mandated and while many schools adopted the framework there has been no consistent response to its delivery across the state.

Access for students to workplace experiences has become difficult due to factors such as increased legal and other compliance requirements, decreased funding for vocational learning, and the ability to obtain support from teaching staff for students to undertake activities that expose them to the workplace is problematic. This is despite evidence that providing opportunities for students to meet employers has positive benefits on their career decision making and post school outcomes.

This situation has been substantiated by the benchmarking program undertaken by the CEAV of 60 schools, from all sectors. Using the *Quality Benchmarking for Career Development Services Tool*⁹ the program identified that no Victorian school meet the quality benchmarks, often due to a lack of recognition of the importance of delivering a coherent and comprehensive program resulting in poor resourcing.

As the Gatsby report states *“When done well, these services: reduce dropouts from and backtracking within educational systems; improve pathways between different levels of education, thus raising levels of educational attainment; and improve transitions to the labour market.”*¹⁰

- **How well current career advice programs meet the needs of school leavers**

There is no mandated career education from primary through to secondary in most jurisdictions in Australia, Tasmania is the exception. Its ‘pot luck’ what each school in Victoria provides in the preparation of school leavers. We then wonder why students fail to successfully transition into appropriate post-secondary study and training for their interests, abilities, values, skill level and employment.

The position of the career adviser in Victorian government schools is also ‘pot luck’. Principals can appoint from the lowest administration level of Education Support Officers and the position appears in many schools at Level 1 Range 1 on the ESO Scale, a basic administration and information management position. An alarming trend that the CEAV is currently seeing is that experienced and qualified ESO Careers Advisers who have built the capacity of the service at their school over a number of years and have achieved Level 1 Range 5 on the ESO Scale are being replaced with unqualified junior administration staff with no experience at Level 1 Range 1, 2 or 3.

Careers and career advice is part of a social science discipline and as such requires underpinning theory and knowledge and pedagogical delivery. If you are ill you would see a doctor, but being ill does not qualify you to be a doctor. In the same way just because you have been involved in industry, or have worked in business or as a teacher doesn’t not make you a careers advisor. Yet this analogy is applied to the position in schools. School administrators are less concerned about the sound preparation of young people to successfully transition into the workforce than they are about their global budgets.

⁹ CEAV Career Development Quality Benchmarks for good practice (2010)

¹⁰ *Assessing benchmarks of good practice in school career guidance* Gatsby Charitable Foundation/ PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC) 2014)

Career information is different from career guidance and this difference needs to be recognised. In Victorian schools there is a very basic understanding of what careers services should be provided. This is often limited to a space in a library area or corridor with information brochures and an individual with some time allowance allocated to provide information to students at peak transition times. While career information is essential, it is not sufficient. Information rapidly gets out of date, and young people need preparation to cope with the fast changing and evolving world of work. Few schools provide a developmental program with portfolio or competency outcomes designed for the specific age levels.

The CEAV provides advice to member and non-member schools on the development of their career service and we are often contacted by principals and assistant principals to provide information on the role and responsibility structure. What we provide and what is eventually advertised are often not the same.

Career planning and decision-making is not a one-off event or a one size fits all. It is a life-long process. As students face the future, they need relevant skills, knowledge and attributes. This includes reliable and valid career decision-making models which can be utilised throughout their lives. Career guidance systems need to be well researched and evidence driven, cater to all ability levels, take account of disabilities, and connect with specific career pathways and the labour market.

The Victorian government needs to action improving career education services in all schools so that student preparation in career decision making commences much earlier than in August of their graduating Year 12. The flurry of activity to select courses in two months with little to no preparation is the main reason why we have high attrition rates in first year university courses, lack of completion in second and third year, poor uptake of VET courses, high dropout rates in apprenticeships and traineeships and consistent employer dissatisfaction with young people trying to enter the workforce.

- **Specific career advice needs of young people in regional Victoria and how to address them**

Young people in regional Victoria do have needs beyond their city based contemporaries. International and national career development research suggests that living in regional areas can create significant career decision-making issues that may often result in poorer outcomes for young people.

For students in these locations important factors include:

- A small economic base that leads to less exposure to a range of occupations resulting in narrower vision of career options, this can be particularly significant for young women
- Whether to remain in the community or to relocate, which involves not only economic considerations or accessibility but also the emotional attachment to their local community and environment
- Financial costs of undertaking further education and training

- Transport accessibility as an important factor in the post school options that rural and regional students undertake this is often a challenge for those who wish to undertake an apprenticeship

A comprehensive career education program that includes work integrated learning, would assist students to identify the challenges early in their career planning by increasing their knowledge of the support available and encouraging the use of problem solving strategies to these issues. In addition, the program would provide opportunities to explore and engage in a wide variety of employment options both locally and beyond.

An example of an innovative career education program in a primary school setting that is highlighting local employment is Passions and Pathways. The program provides the opportunity for Year 6 students to work with local Bendigo business people demonstrating the range of opportunities in their local area. This program has the support of 40 employers and has been operating successfully for five years.

- **Interstate and overseas best practice models that could be implemented in Victoria**

When examining best practice models it is important to note that schools must be able to have the ability to adapt their delivery to meet the needs of their students a one size fits all does not always deliver the best outcomes for everyone.

A number of Australian states have been revising their delivery of career advice in schools and have some elements that could be incorporated into quality career education activities in Victorian schools.

- Tasmania has the My Education program that is mandated for both primary and secondary schools. There have been some issues around the qualification of staff to manage the program, the adoption of a challenging course that needed to be integrated into the curriculum. CEAV Institute is providing accredited training in career development for Tasmanian teachers.
- In South Australia students in Year 10 can gain up to 10 credits towards their ATAR based on their Personal Learning Plan. The Personal Learning Plan (PLP) identifies the plans and goals of the young person for their future. It is designed to explore further education and career options. The students are introduced to seven capabilities such as literacy, numeracy, ethical understanding and critical and creative thinking. The students are assessed on their ability to identify strengths, focus on areas for development, investigate potential pathways and figure out how they are going to achieve their goals. They keep a record of their learning in a folio and provide a review their goals.
- The ACT is working towards government guidelines for the delivery of careers services and programs in all ACT schools.

Canada has numerous examples of best practice with many provinces recognising that career development is a lifelong process therefore they begin at the primary school level. CEAV was recently advised by our colleagues at the Canadian Career Development Foundation that the government has announced career development as the fifth pillar of Canadian government policy.

- The province of British Columbia has career development mandated as one of the three goals of the education system and provides a comprehensive careers curriculum from Grade 3 to Grade 12. To graduate, students require a total of 80 credits, and this includes two Career Education courses (8 credits total)
- The province states that when students complete secondary school they should have developed all of the following:
 - competencies to be self-directed, responsible individuals who can set and meet career goals
 - knowledge of a range of career choices, and actions needed to pursue those choices
 - employability skills required to work effectively and collaboratively in a workplace.

Many European countries have career advice in their secondary level education in many there is an emphasis on work integrated learning though some countries are adopting other strategies.

- Ireland has a Transition Year (TY) for young people aged 16 to 17 years. While the program is optional the regular curriculum is replaced by a less structured format that prepares for life beyond school, involving work experience, personal skills development, visits to universities and businesses, enterprise education, overseas visits and other experiences arranged by the school.

The CEAV acknowledges that previous State governments have made significant progress in improving the understanding of the importance of informed decision making at the time of transition planning.

We note that Victoria has led the way nationally in the development of a Careers Curriculum Framework for Year 7 to 12 and by supporting schools to implement this framework through the use of Regional Career Development Officers. There is a growing body of evidence that suggests sound career planning at multiple transition points is vital if successful outcomes are to be achieved for future workforce development. ¹¹

¹¹ The Evidence Base on Lifelong Guidance: a Guide to Key Findings Effective Policy and Practice. Tristram Hooley University of Derby UK 2014

The support of the CEAV through the Strategic Partnership Program has enabled Victoria to ensure that more than 80% of career advisors in Victorian schools are members of the CEAV and hold professional qualifications in career development practice.

CEAV has evidence to suggest that there are a number of long term strategies that would greatly improve the outcomes of young people participating in education, training and skill development and improve the return on investment for the government.

These include:

1. Career education in schools can contribute to increasing students' engagement and success in school by clarifying the relevance of subjects and opportunities, and supporting their transitions from school through providing information and skills to underpin good decision making and helping them to establish successful lives and careers.
2. Career education in vocational education has an important role to play in supporting individuals to see opportunity and value in vocational options and helping those in vocational education to make the most of their skills, knowledge and training dollar.
3. Career education in higher education can support good career decision-making and effective transitions to the workplace and can help ensure graduates' learning and skills are well used to meet workforce needs. ¹²

The CEAV acknowledges that a Victorian policy on career education in schools would be a long term strategy that would provide the best possible outcome for skill development at all levels of education and that such a policy would be unique in Australia.

Key Features of Effective Career Development Activities

Effective career development starts with a well-defined evidenced based policy and strategy for delivery.¹³ This strategy has at its core a person centred conversation.

Recent international research suggests that career development services that have the most impact and provide quality outcomes and return on investment to government are:

- Focused on the individual
- Support learning and progression to employment and liveable wages
- Are best delivered by teams of qualified professional career development practitioners
- Are accessible to all across the lifespan

¹² The Evidence Base on Lifelong Guidance: a Guide to Key Findings Effective Policy and Practice.

Tristram Hooley University of Derby UK 2014

¹³ European Lifelong Guidance Policies Finland (2012)

- Are well resourced will public funds to meet demand in education, training and the workplace
- Provide differentiated services to accommodate career readiness
- Are holistic and integrated into other services
- Recognises and plans for diversity within the community

The CEAV acknowledges that in most schools in Victoria few of these benchmarks are active. Instead we have evidence which supports that careers practitioners are stretched to the limit due to discrepancies between large cohorts of students and the limited number of careers advisers. They spend the majority of their time attending to issues of crisis, academic failures, discipline issues, course planning, teaching, university admissions and coordinating duties for VET in schools. As a result very little time is devoted to providing preventive, comprehensive careers support services, and very little of the public dollars allocated to careers services in schools finds its way through the global budget.

In 75% of CEAV member schools the number of students per full-time careers adviser is greater than 1,000. In schools with enrolments of between 900 and 1,000 students, the careers staff allocation ranges from 0.2 to 1.57, and the number of students for each equivalent full-time careers adviser ranges from 633 to 1,688. In all schools the case load is greater than 1 EFT to 500 students and in many government schools is worse than this. This is well above OECD requirements for effective delivery of careers services in schools.¹⁴

For many CEAV members the introduction of Managed Individual Pathways has seen an eroding of the careers position in schools at a time when more public funds have been available for training and services than ever before. School administrators have actively diminished the role, cutting time allowances, resources and programs, and hiring unqualified service officers to fill the role. With the development of MIPS funding and the LLEN funding in early 2000 in Victoria, careers education has stalled because none of these programs made career education explicit. From 2009 – 2014 the Department of Education provided over \$100,000 per year to train and qualify career practitioners for Victorian schools to industry entry level standard. The vast majority of these grants were taken up by government schools where the position is made available yearly to anyone on staff and despite a requirement to remain in the position many schools did not honour this agreement.

The CEAV trains up to 60 new careers practitioners in schools each year because of the high dropout rate of practitioners appointed to the position. We conduct a 2 day intensive short course as our funding for training has also stalled with no increase in the past 17 years.

In Finland and Denmark, there is a requirement for all school based careers practitioners to have a minimum of a Masters in Career Development before they can work in secondary schools. In the USA and Canada there is a requirement for a minimum of a Master in Psychology – Careers Counselling, to work with students and the unemployed.

¹⁴ DEECD Making Career Development Core Business in schools (2010) Page 30

In Australia, while we have Professional Standards for Australian Careers Practitioners, no state or territory education department has adopted the minimum professional industry standard for careers practitioners in schools.

The CEAV highlights the following points from our submission for this inquiry:

1. The complexity of the modern workforce and labour market is much broader than just a careers adviser giving poor quality advice in secondary schools. We need to stop blaming the school based practitioner and start supporting them through structured policy development and strategies that identifies the complexities and importance of career development to principals and school administrators. We need to define the role of a careers practitioner for the next decade, not define it using information from 1980 when many people first experienced careers advice in schools.
2. Review the process of career development across the lifespan and target interventions that are preventive not reactionary to changes or downturns in the labour market. CEAV acknowledged that all our sited evidence suggests that the responsibility for career development is much wider than just secondary schools.
3. Develop a career development policy for schools and enact this in Victorian law clearly stating both the rights and responsibilities of respective agencies in the delivery of careers services. It needs to be bipartisan, across departments, responsibility lying with the office of the Premier, forward thinking to ensure that there is significant cultural shift in how careers services are provided to all Victorians.
4. When CEAV has delivered careers education programs for parents across all sectors, our pre evaluation has identified the deep concern that parents have about the future careers choices for their children. They voiced their concern about the quality, frequency and lack of access to careers advisers and they were confused and perplexed that careers education has such a low profile in our schools.
5. When CEAV has presented to industry we find a shock response from industry who assumes that career education and careers programs as mandatory in all schools and that schools work towards the sound preparation of young people for the future workforce. Equally, they voice their concerns by suggesting that career advisers are not providing information on their industry to young people. They are unaware that there is no means of introduction through the current careers service model in Victorian schools.