Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd

Response to the parliamentary Inquiry into Career Advice Activities in Victorian Schools

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The senior years of schooling should provide all students with the high quality education necessary to complete their secondary school education and make the transition to further education, training or employment. **Schooling should offer a range of pathways to meet the diverse needs and aspirations of all young Australians, encouraging them to pursue university or post-secondary vocational qualifications that increase their opportunities for rewarding and productive employment.** This requires effective partnerships with other education and training providers, employers and communities.

*Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians December 2008*
Section 1 – Executive Summary

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Limited (CECV) welcomes the opportunity for input into the Parliamentary Inquiry into Career Advice Activities in Victorian Schools.

The CECV values and understands the importance of career education and the vital role that it plays to:

- equip students with the necessary skills to navigate the complex and rapidly changing world of work
- prepare and empower students so that they can manage their career planning and decision-making throughout the continuum of their future pathways, work and life
- develop capabilities for life-long learning and for leading fulfilling lives.

The CECV recognises that there are various models of practice within Catholic schools across the state, but advocates that ideally, career advice activities would be best positioned within a framework of career education embraced by the whole school. Ideally, successful career education programs would reflect the following common elements of good practice:

- placing the student at the centre
- having school leadership actively supporting career education
- engaging appropriately qualified careers practitioners
- providing access to supportive and enabling curriculum
- drawing on and involving mutually beneficial partnerships.

Recent research and publications, such as the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) The New Work Order report series, and reports from the Mitchell Institute, highlight the rapidly changing nature of the world of work and provide compelling evidence on the need for a significant ‘rethink’ on how schools can best prepare young people to meet this landscape into the future. This validates the importance of developing skills (including employability and enterprise skills) that are flexible, adaptable and transferable across a range of jobs, occupations and industries, and capabilities, so as to develop knowledge, understanding and resilience to successfully navigate work, learning and life choices.

The CECV acknowledges the critical importance of continuing high level collaborative working partnerships between key stakeholders, for the ultimate benefit of students in Victorian schools, including all education authorities and sectors, the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority. The CECV also recognises the contribution of the Career Education Association of Victoria to career education and the networks and resources developed to support careers practitioners.

The CECV hopes that this Inquiry will not only duly recognise the work and significant responsibilities incumbent on careers practitioners and schools in providing quality career advice activities and career education, but also create a catalyst to further strengthen their critical role in helping to shape the future of young people in Victoria.
Section 2 – Common Elements of Good Practice

As outlined in the national framework for vocational learning and VET delivered to secondary students, *Preparing Secondary Students for Work*, schools play a critical role in preparing young people for a successful transition into further education, training and/or employment, and for life-long learning.

Schools must equip students to make informed work and study choices throughout their lives ... Students who have achieved a senior secondary certificate of education (or equivalent) are substantially more likely to make a successful transition to further education, training and work than early school leavers. Governments have recognised the importance of this and introduced changes to increase the numbers of students who complete Year 12, including raising the school leaving age to 17. This has driven changes in the population of secondary schools. Students who would once have left school early to go to an apprenticeship or a job, or disengaged entirely from education, training and employment, now remain in school ... Schooling must meet the needs of all these students so that they can successfully transition to a job, a university degree, a VET course, or a combination of these.

The CECV recognises and endorses this national framework. The development of the Career Education Self-Assessment Tool for Schools as part of the suite of supporting resources provides an invaluable mechanism to reflect on good practice within individual schools, and identify possible areas for improvement.

The CECV has been active in supporting the credentialing of careers practitioners, with dedicated funding support for this purpose. The CECV sponsored 90 teachers to gain the Graduate Diploma in Careers Education and Development (2007-9) and a further cohort was sponsored through funding from the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions (2010-12).

The CECV produces an annual publication *Supporting Pathways and Transition in Victorian Catholic Schools* which is disseminated to all Catholic secondary schools across the state. This resource includes sections profiling the importance of Career Development, advocating for the Victorian Careers Curriculum Framework, Workplace Learning, Partnerships, and the Career Education Self-Assessment Tool for Schools.

The CECV recognises that there are various models of practice within Catholic schools across the state, but advocates that ideally, career advice activities would be best positioned within a framework of career education embraced by the whole school. Ideally, successful career education programs would have the following common elements of good practice:

Student at the centre

A student-focused approach where:

- Individual student needs are addressed
- all pathways information is presented and portrayed as valid and all options are valued (such as access to opportunities for undertaking Vocational Education and Training (VET), including School Based Apprenticeships or Traineeships)
- the career education program is inclusive and caters for younger cohorts, to build on the phases...
of career development, not just focusing on the senior secondary cohort at the perceived ‘pointy end’

- the development and review of individual Career Action Plans is supported, including strategies to address at risk cohorts (such as students with special needs, Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander students, English as an additional language students, low-SES students, rural and regional students).

**School leadership actively supports career education**

*School leadership:*

- embraces career education as ‘core business’ within the school
- supports a whole school, team approach, where the school’s career education plan is linked to the school’s strategic plan
- articulates a clear vision, aims and objectives for career education
- has oversight of an overall career education plan for the school
- considers how accountability can be demonstrated (such as reporting processes; producing an annual careers report)
- employs appropriately qualified personnel to lead career education in the school
- ensures that the curriculum provision caters for the diverse needs of the students
- ensures that there is a regular evaluation and review of the career education program and the school’s career education plan, including seeking feedback from stakeholders - student surveys/feedback; parent/staff input etc), in order to reflect on how the service might be improved.

**Appropriately qualified careers practitioners**

*Career education:*

- is led by appropriately qualified careers practitioners
- is supported by access to targeted professional learning opportunities to further build understanding, knowledge and connections and maintain currency of information, systems and processes
- operates efficiently, supported by enabling processes, systems and tools (such as software programs to support career exploration for students; tools for capturing workplace learning and ensuring requirements and regulations are met etc)
- is informed by data and quality resources (such as destination data e.g. the On Track Survey and the school’s own data; but also drawing on information such as labour market data and trends; skill shortages; current resources etc)
- involves all teachers. All teachers contribute to and have a role to play in supporting career education as part of a team, underpinned by the qualified careers practitioner/s
- is appropriately resourced (such as adequate time allocated to enable the careers practitioners to fulfil their responsibilities)
- includes a dedicated budget
- offers a dedicated, inviting careers space accessible to all students, with materials and resources mirroring the diversity of pathways options
- is supported with access to technology.
Curriculum provision

Career education:

▪ is best when supported by access to a broad curriculum provision which reflects the diversity of pathways options and is shaped to address student needs
▪ is embedded within the curriculum, not operating as ‘stand-alone’ or isolated from curriculum provision, and is supported through the curriculum content and delivery
▪ is linked explicitly to the Victorian curriculum, with the Victorian Careers Curriculum Framework mapped to the Victorian curriculum.

Partnerships

Career education:

▪ encourages and facilitates engagement with employers and the wider community, including networking with the diverse range of pathways providers etc
▪ encourages work exploration and exposure to the world of work
▪ is strengthened by collaborative partnerships that the school is involved in and draws on as valuable resources (such as local businesses and employers, organisations e.g. Rotary; local council; past students/guest speakers/parents; Local Learning and Employment Network (LLE)N; etc)
▪ involves and engages parents/guardians/carers in career education activities through programs such as PACTS (Parents as Career Transition Support) or EPiCC (Engaging Parents in Career Conversations, freely available on the Victorian

Department of Education and Training (DET) website), recognising the instrumental role they play in influencing the education and career decisions of their children. The suite of career development tools on the DET website also includes ‘Strengthened Pathways Planning for Young People with Disabilities’
▪ has established and varied communication channels with students, families, staff, the school community and the wider community, to maximise the dissemination of information
▪ capitalises on opportunities for incorporating the use of and access to technology to support the service (e.g. social media).
Section 3 - Opportunities and challenges

Some of the perceived challenges experienced in the delivery of career education and services include:

- providing appropriate time allocation for career practitioners
- providing enabling processes, systems and tools (such as software programs to support career exploration for students; tools for capturing workplace learning and ensuring requirements and regulations are met etc)
- maintaining currency of information, in light of the diversity of pathways options available, and incorporating any emerging initiatives and opportunities (e.g. STEM, Tech Schools etc)
- ensuring that all pathways are valued (e.g. university/TAFE/apprenticeship/traineeship/ or employment or a combination of these)
- preparing young people for the rapidly changing nature of the world of work and the conditions facing young people into the future (such as underemployment; casualisation of the workforce; globalisation; etc) and equipping them with the necessary skills, knowledge, understanding and capabilities.

The extracts from the Career Education Self-Assessment Tool for Schools (please see above and below) highlight the importance of career education, and reflect common elements of good practice espoused by the CECV.

The importance of career education

Every young person should be provided with the best possible opportunities to transition successfully from school to further education, training or employment. Career education assists students to reflect on their ambitions, interests, strengths and abilities. It helps them to have a greater understanding about career options, pathways, the labour market and employment, and to relate this to what they know about themselves. Comprehensive career education aims to teach students to plan and make decisions about work and learning. Career education provides information about the labour market and about educational opportunities and supports students to use this information. Information needs to be made accessible to students by organising it, systematising it, and making it available when and where students need it. A contemporary school career education plan is essential for all Australian schools to ensure they are meeting the career development needs of their students within a rapidly changing and evolving world of work...

Career Education Self-Assessment Tool for Schools

The source of this copyright material is the Australian Government Department of Education and Training.

The importance of career education

...Successful transition through school and on to further education, training and employment requires students to be provided with high quality information as well as access to suitably qualified career development practitioners to assist them in this process. Students need to develop a knowledge and understanding of themselves in relation to the workforce and need to be aware of current labour market trends before making and following decisions about careers. Schools should consider the differing needs of particular student groups including Indigenous students. This requires students to be able to consolidate the skills required for further learning as well as to develop employability skills through the course of their everyday learning at school.

Career Education Self-Assessment Tool for Schools

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Section 4: Further Opportunities for Consideration

The CECV submits the following suggestions, for consideration, to support career education within Victorian schools:

- the allocation of ongoing funding to support the credentialing of careers practitioners, and that this funding be inclusive of all sectors
- the allocation of ongoing funding to enable access to professional learning opportunities to continue to build capacity, knowledge and maintain currency of information
- the inclusion of career education within pre-service teacher training, so that all teachers have the potential to contribute to career education within the curriculum, in support of the qualified careers practitioner/s
- the development and maintenance of good practice tools, resources and Case Studies in support of career education services, that are freely available to all sectors (through the Victorian Department of Education and Training)
- the ongoing support for the LLEns to maintain the Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) Statewide Portal and continue their role as an integral link between schools and community partners (e.g. industry and employers)
- support for LLEns to disseminate current information and labour market data as independent stakeholders
- mapping the Victorian Careers Curriculum Framework to the Victorian curriculum and that the rollout be supported by targeted professional learning sessions
- advocating for the use of the Career Education Self-Assessment Tool and associated support resources, in addition to the suite of existing resources
- consideration of particular challenges faced by student cohorts based on their individual circumstances (e.g. additional costs, challenges and barriers arising from regionality, travel, transport, time and distance, living away from home etc)
- consideration of long-term student tracking, in addition to the annual On Track Survey.

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Name

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