



Career Development  
Association Australia

**Securing future innovation  
and global competitiveness in  
NSW**

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Submission to NSW  
Industry Policy May 2022

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# Securing future innovation and global competitiveness in NSW

Submission to the Investment NSW Industry Policy White Paper



Career Development  
Association Australia

Career Development Association Australia [www.cdaa.org.au](http://www.cdaa.org.au)

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## Introduction

The Career Development Association Australia (CDAA) welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the NSW Government White Paper *Securing future innovation and global competitiveness in NSW*.

The NSW Government is seeking responses from NSW business and citizens. While CDAA is a national Association, this submission is provided on behalf of the more than 250 NSW businesses and individuals who are members of CDAA.

The Career Development Association Australia (CDAA) is Australia's national, multi-sectoral professional association for career development practitioners, with more than 1300 members across Australia working in all sectors of the profession. This broad membership means CDAA grasps the interconnections within the careers ecosystem, speaks for career-related issues that impact Australians across their lifespan, and explains the connections between multiple policies and diverse programs.

CDAA members are recognised Career Development Practitioners who conform to a Professional Standards Framework and a Code of Practice. Members are governed by ethical standards, require substantiated, industry-related qualifications, and are obliged to complete a minimum number of professional development hours every year.

Career Development is a specific discipline underpinned by accredited qualifications, proven theory, and recognised practice. Engaging a Career Development Practitioner to assist a person's career journey is like seeking advice from a medical professional for a condition, compared to consulting "Dr Google". Or, engaging a qualified tradesperson to undertake certain repairs, compared to DIY.

Please refer to the [CDAA website](http://www.cdaa.org.au) for further information or contact Peter Mansfield , National Manager [peter.mansfield@cdaa.org.au](mailto:peter.mansfield@cdaa.org.au)

## Context: Workforce Transformation is a critical component of securing future innovation and global competitiveness in NSW

In the context of industry transition and transformation, managing the re-engagement of the existing workforce into new jobs is as critical as providing education pathways for new entrants. This submission is not focussed on a particular industry or sector, because the identified principles, challenges and opportunities are consistent across all.

Every NSW citizen will experience multiple career transitions across their lifespan. The NSW Government is commended for recognising that the increasing pace and breadth of transition now requires planned workforce transformation.

Career transitions are processes not events. Career transitions fall along a continuum - some small, some large; some short, some longer-term; some self-imposed, some externally imposed; some expected, others unexpected. Regardless of type and character, a career transition is a process, not an event, and it requires skilful management by all those involved.

Career transition processes are complex and messy. When facing any type of career transition, people need to apply skills, knowledge and understanding, and behaviours based on their personal circumstances. The specifics may vary depending on the transition. For example, the needs of a teenager moving from school to work differ from a 45-year old facing retrenchment.

Making a career decision is not as simple as it sounds. Decision-making can be difficult, complicated by a person's readiness to make a decision and the amount and quality of information available to assist decision-making. Some people lack motivation, some are hesitant to decide, some hold beliefs that hinder decisions. Decisions may be difficult because of lack of information about themselves, occupations, the local labour market, or access to resources. Plus, people might rely on inconsistent or unreliable information. Without professional help, people grappling with a career transition may stall at making a decision or make one that is flawed.

<https://defenceveteransuicide.royalcommission.gov.au/system/files/2021-09/defence-background-paper.pdf>

<https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2021-08/apo-nid313731.pdf>

[Nguyen, Tam, Why career decision-making is so hard. Career Trends, Asia Pacific Career Development Association, 18 April 2022. https://asiapacificcda.org/Career-Trends#Decision](https://asiapacificcda.org/Career-Trends#Decision)

Managing a career, with its ups and downs of job changes, upskilling and reskilling demands, workforce adjustments, business closures, family demands, is both complex and unique to each person. Each person has their own set of values, interests, and experiences, and is influenced by personal characteristics such as their age, gender, cultural background, family, and community circumstances, as well as geographic, economic, and political factors. People's careers develop in unexpected and unintended ways, as demonstrated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

When career practitioners talk about a 'career', they are talking about how the various work and other life roles that a person has, interact with each other, and influence their choices, decisions, and how they live their lives. Career includes paid and unpaid work, parenting, care work, volunteering, leisure activities, learning and education. Rather than focusing on specific jobs or occupations, career practitioners encourage people to examine the many influences in their lives, how they affect each other and the choices made.

***Consultation Q7. Considering the transformative forces underpinning economic structural change, such as those described above, what are the benefits to NSW citizens of adequate and well-coordinated industry policies that accelerate this change?***

Industry policies that incorporate career development support provide demonstrated benefit.

**Job seekers participating in qualified career development interventions are 2.67 times more likely to obtain employment**

*Whiston, S. C., Li, Y., Goodrich Mitts, N., & Wright, L. (2017). Effectiveness of career choice interventions: A meta-analytic replication and extension. Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 100, 175–184.*

Meta-analysis of the effectiveness of career development interventions demonstrate that:

- The odds of obtaining employment are 2.67 times higher for job seekers participating in qualified career development interventions compared to jobseekers in a control group
- The most valuable ingredient is one on one counsellor support
- The least valuable ingredient (on its own) is computer guided or passive online support
- These outcomes only occurred when motivation enhancement and skills development were both included
- The outcomes are consistent for:
  - Young jobseekers
  - Older jobseekers
  - Jobseekers with special needs and conditions, and
  - Jobseekers unemployed for less than six months.

Everyone deserves to find fulfilling, satisfying work. Understanding what is actually happening to work and jobs is not simple or easy. The sheer volume of material is daunting. Deciding what information is relevant, accurate and credible takes insight and discernment. Distinguishing between chance events, informed guesses and speculation affects choices. Being able to repeatedly respond to changes takes adaptability, resilience, and hope.

Comprehending and navigating an unpredictable, changing labour market requires relevant and expert career guidance. Having a sound understanding of the local and wider employment markets, regularly thinking about skills and achievements, and being prepared for the right opportunity when it arises are all vital aspects of sound career management.

Much is said about ‘future-proofing’ careers, making school-leavers and graduates ‘job-ready’, and ensuring workers have employability skills. While no one can literally protect their lives from any future disruption, what people can do is take steps to manage any changes so they will continue to be useful and successful. This may mean taking concrete steps to research, prepare, enhance knowledge of employment trends, strengthen skills and networks, and embrace lifelong learning. People may have misconceptions about occupations, hold inaccurate beliefs about employment details, be reluctant to make a decision today for fear it won’t match tomorrow’s employment reality, and remain uncertain about how to tackle career transitions. It can be tempting to simply focus on lists of ‘hot jobs’ or most ‘in-demand’ skills. Some may explore the mountain of career information and advice online, but much of it is generic, and some of it is inaccurate, out-of-date, and unsuited to people’s circumstances. Gaining career management skills is a long-lasting investment and a valuable asset when confronting transitions.

The careers ecosystem – the collective, interdependent components (individuals and organisations at the local, national, and global levels) that contribute to and influence people’s careers – is complex, multi-layered, and impacts Australians’ social, mental, economic wellbeing.

The work of Career Development Practitioners is far more complex than people imagine. These professionals know how the careers ecosystem works, where to find credible information, and most importantly, have the specialised skills to adapt information to a person’s interests, skills, ambitions, age, and circumstances.

***Consultation Q8. Where do you think the NSW Government could make the biggest difference to encourage industry innovation and growth?***

**The establishment of accessible, fully funded, and effective transition programs**

Much is known that can inform effective future transitions. Transition challenges, mistakes and success factors have been identified. Knowledge gaps and research priorities are known.

Experience of structural adjustments and industry transitions has delivered valuable lessons, about how to design just, effective, and well managed transition processes. Success factors include:

- Early notification of business or industry closure with extensive lead time.
- A process that is well-planned, orderly, fair, sufficiently, and reliably funded, flexible in design, is phased-in over many years.
- A focus on all parts of an industry, including its supply chain, and the wider community.
- Inclusion of First Nations communities, ensuring they have resources to fully participate in transition processes.
- Holistic, worker-centric support that provides a tailored, flexible approach to addressing workers’ needs. Workers include employees, contractors, and casuals.
- A local coordinating authority to ensure solutions reflect a community’s needs, skills, and opportunities.
- Expanding opportunities for all workers and community members, including young people, women, people with disabilities, and other vulnerable and marginalised groups, people have a voice, are heard, and participate in decision-making.

- Widespread and continuous collaboration A strong partnership and collaboration between all stakeholders, respectful and inclusive engagement with workers, communities, and all relevant stakeholders.
- A detailed and ongoing communication strategy.
- Access to expert support on career advice, labour markets, retraining, financial advice, and counselling that is easily accessible, unrestricted, high quality, and tailored to specific sectors. It should also be made accessible to families, supporting them to plan ahead.
- Use of a case management model.
- Liaison between service providers to reduce overlap, duplication, confusion, and provide a more seamless worker-centric service.
- Resources for technical and vocational education to help with upskilling and reskilling.
- Ongoing research and evaluation throughout transition programs
- Ongoing worker career support post closure/transition process, including job search support and information on available government and community support.

Shirley Jackson with Sam Ibrahim, Per Capita, A Blueprint for Better, Cleaner Jobs. Industrial strategies for the post-carbon economy, April 2022

<https://percapita.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/A-Blueprint-for-Better-Cleaner-Jobs-SCREEN-VERSION.pdf>

<https://theconversation.com/how-can-aboriginal-communities-be-part-of-the-nsw-renewable-energy-transition-181171>

How can Aboriginal communities be part of the NSW renewable energy transition?

Published: May 5, 2022 12.03pm AEST

Heidi Norman Professor, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Technology Sydney

Chris Briggs Research Director, Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney

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Department of Education, Skills and Employment, THE TRANSITION OF THE AUSTRALIAN CAR MANUFACTURING SECTOR, Outcomes and best practice, May 2020

<https://www.dese.gov.au/whats-next/resources/transition-australian-car-manufacturing-sector-outcomes-and-best-practice-summary-report>

Aaron Atteridge & Claudia Strambo, Stockholm Environment Institute, Closure of steelworks in Newcastle, Australia, Lessons from industrial transitions, June 2021

<https://cdn.sei.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/closure-of-steelworks-in-newcastle.pdf>

### **The engagement of qualified and experienced Career Development Practitioners in transition programs**

The research evidence is clear: the work of Career Development Practitioners is effective.

[The Career Development Works report](#) commissioned by CDAA, summarises empirical research and case examples of the effectiveness and benefits from investing in qualified, professional career development practices.

Career Development Practitioners provide services that enable people to make good occupational and study decisions, find career information, plan, and manage their careers and plan career transitions. They assist individuals and organisations to prepare for their futures by making informed decisions about career and workforce development.

By partnering with a Career Development Practitioner, clients gain accurate, current, tailored knowledge, understanding and skills associated with career transition practicalities, including interpreting job jargon and occupational information, job search skills, effective decision-making, and goal setting, building social support for choices and plans, and self-presentation skills, identifying transferable skills, all of which build confidence and the ability to take action.

Career development practitioners help workers to understand the diversity and interrelationships between sectors and occupations. For example, Australia's technology sector is much more than software, hardware, and media platforms. As the Tech Council of Australia has explained, the technology sector's economic contribution is not confined to the direct impact of tech businesses as a standalone industry. Digital technologies are an essential part of the value chain and operations of most businesses in the economy. Transferable skills like problem-solving and people skills are in high demand.

Tech Council of Australia. 2021 The Economic Contribution of Australia's tech sector

<https://techcouncil.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/TCA-Tech-sectors-economic-contribution-full-res.pdf>

<https://techcouncil.com.au/newsroom/common-tech-jobs/>

Applicants need to demonstrate their ability to do a job by explaining how they use multiple skills in a given set of circumstances. If people don't understand skill terminology and are unable to apply multiple skill terms to their own behaviour, they are disadvantaged in the labour market. If people facing redeployment, redundancy or other transitions are unable to see the transferability of their skills, they too will be disadvantaged. Without more refined behavioural distinctions, they will have difficulty making a case for higher levels of skill ability.

As explained in [The Career Development Works report](#), people make better career decisions when they "are confident of their own sense of career identity, know they are ready to make decisions, have the confidence to make decisions, and understand the supports and barriers that affect their decisions". P8

***Consultation Q9. Are there any risks or costs from intervention that the NSW Government should consider?***

The establishment of accessible, fully funded, and effective transition programs and the engagement of qualified and experienced Career Development Practitioners in transition programs, requires significant investment. A return of 2.67 (reference response to Q7 and Q15) justifies the investment.

This finding means that when it comes to establishing career transition programs, a balance needs to be found between the most effective one-on-one services, which are resource-intensive, and low-resource but least effective services (e.g., self-directed online services). The risk is to err towards low-resource but least effective services.

People make better decisions when they are partnered with a Career Development Practitioner who helps them to understand themselves and what meaningful work means for them, what supports and barriers affect their decisions, how to maintain their health and wellbeing, and how to manage any career transition process. This personalised support means authoritative, reliable tools and resources are tailored to the client and interpreted in the context of the client's circumstances. While computer-based tools may well be used during this process, research shows that their use is less effective if a client relies on such tools unaided by any support.

The return on investment to society and the economy is demonstrated by the research findings.

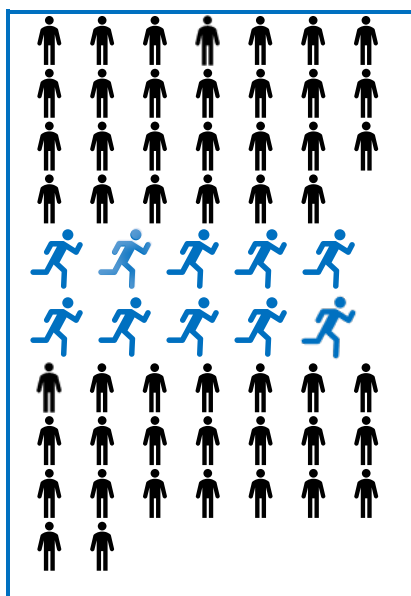
**Consultation Q15. How can the NSW Government generate program outcomes that drive growth and value? How should the NSW Government work to achieve these outcomes with your industry, private sector, and other levels of government?**

**Transition programs utilising qualified career development interventions are 2.67 times more likely to generate outcomes**

Whiston, S. C., Li, Y., Goodrich Mitts, N., & Wright, L. (2017). Effectiveness of career choice interventions: A meta-analytic replication and extension. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 100, 175–184.

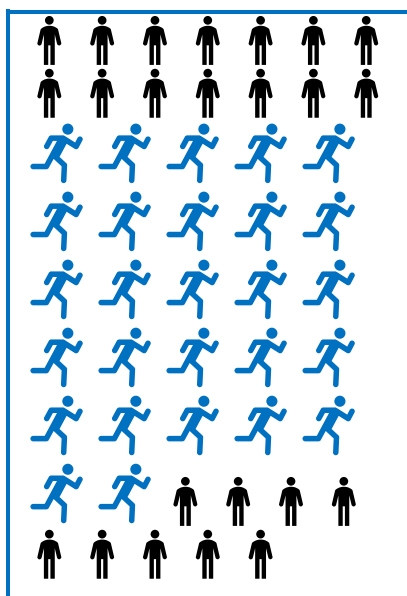
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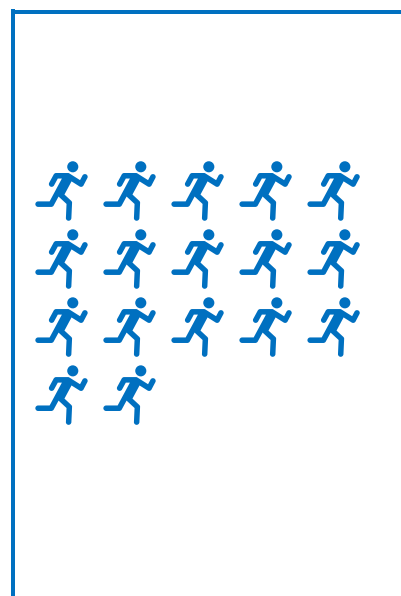
*If as an example:*

With no intervention, 10 of 50 jobseekers find work....



*Based on the research:*

Then with support from qualified career practitioners, 27 of 50 will find work.



*That's great news for 17 in 50 people, their families, the community, and the economy!*

**Careers NSW**

The intent of [Careers NSW](#) is to provide “Lifelong careers information, advice and professional guidance for NSW residents at any stage of their career, wherever they live”.

The NSW Government is commended for establishing the Careers NSW pilot program. It was established to provide career guidance and advice to NSW residents seeking to enter the labour market, upgrade skills or change careers, within certain target locations, population groups and industry sectors.

The full rollout of the Careers NSW program “for NSW residents at any stage of their career, wherever they live”, is timetabled for the second half of 2022

The research demonstrates the engagement of qualified and experienced Career Development Practitioners generate program outcomes that drive growth and value. A return of 2.67 justifies the investment. The full rollout of the Careers NSW program must allow for significant one on one personalised support by a Career Development Practitioner, either face to face or online.

People make better decisions when they are partnered with a Career Development Practitioner who helps them to understand themselves and what meaningful work means for them, what supports and barriers affect their decisions, how to maintain their health and wellbeing, and how to manage any career transition process. This personalised support means authoritative, reliable tools and resources are tailored to the client and interpreted in the context of the client's circumstances. While computer-based tools may well be used during this process, research shows that their use is less effective if a client relies on such tools unaided by any support.

### **Industry Transition Programs**

NSW citizens will face several career transitions during their lifetime. To handle these transitions effectively and build the career management skills that will sustain people throughout their lives, the careers ecosystem needs to be highly visible, accessible, holistic, tailored lifelong and one that delivers a strong foundation for life. Qualified Career Development Practitioners deliver career services in all sections of the education system, private and community sectors, and government-funded programs.

NSW will face multiple, complex social and economic changes, some anticipated, others unexpected. Whether supporting disadvantaged groups, identifying emerging industries and technologies, implementing workforce and skills development programs, or planning major structural shifts, governments, industry, unions and community groups need to respond to potential barriers, such as access to vocational training and higher education, awareness that help is available, sifting misguided, inaccurate or inconsistent information, and access to tailored services.

There is 'no one-size-fits-all' approach to transition processes. Every industry has its own characteristics, challenges, and opportunities. Strategies to create more and better jobs can only work if workers have the opportunity to develop skills, know about new jobs, and are helped to adjust to changing labour market demands, and have access to education and training programs.

Governments recognise and accept that collaborative partnerships are essential to the development and implementation of successful policy and programs. With policies being inter-linked in complex ways, cooperation and coordination are essential. It is vital that those planning transition processes include Career Development Practitioners during planning, designing, implementation and evaluation so that tailored, holistic career services are provided to all affected workers and their families.



