



Career Development
Association Australia

NAVIGATING LIFE'S CAREER TRANSITIONS: ESSENTIAL SUPPORT AND SERVICES

Parents and Carers' Brief

Discover why career support is essential to Australia's future...



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Australians of all ages have been subject to major challenges in recent years, disrupting lives and livelihoods, impacting mental health, and affecting career decisions.

We are regularly reminded of workforce changes, skill gaps and shortages, and the need for upskilling and reskilling. Change and uncertainty are ubiquitous.

Much is written about 'future-proofing' careers, making school-leavers and graduates 'job-ready', and ensuring they have employability skills.

Young people's career aspirations are formed early, by age 7. They often follow traditional gender stereotypes, change little between age 7 and 18, and may not sync with labour market demands.¹ Young children are hugely influenced by who they know, particularly **parents and carers**, and what they see on TV or in the media.

This means that career education for primary school children is essential. It also means that **parents and carers** need to build their understanding of what career services are available for their children, and how to judge their quality.

Children face several transition points across their education and will experience multiple career transitions across their lifespan. These career transitions fall along a continuum, varying in size, type and origin. Regardless of their character, a career transition is a process, not an event, and requires skilful management.

Australians are expected to manage their own career and learning, but this expectation may be unrealistic given contemporary workforce challenges. Many people either don't know how to manage their career or feel they don't need to.

The Career Development Association Australia (CDAA) supports **parents and carers** by encouraging governments to build greater awareness of available career services and to ensure that all Australians receive a sound foundation in career management skills by:

- embedding career education in the early education and primary school curriculum, making sure educators² have the necessary skills, knowledge, and support.³

¹ Walsh, L, Gleeson, J., Magyar, B & Gallo Cordoba, B., 2021, *Life, Disrupted: Young People, Education and Employment Before and After COVID-19*, Monash University, Melbourne
DOI: 10.26180/15580980

² The term 'educators' refers to pre-school and primary teachers, early childhood educators, and day-care workers.

³ Hooley, T. (2021). Career education in primary school. myfuture Insights series. Melbourne. Education Services Australia. Cahill, M. and Furey, E. (2017). *The Early Years: Career Development for Young Children. A Guide for Educators*. <https://ceric.ca/wpdm-package/early-years-career-development-young-children-guide-educators/>.



**Adults
facing career
transitions
Brief**

- making career education in all schools, including distance education schools, and TAFE colleges a priority by embedding career education in the school curriculum, and providing resources to employ qualified Career Development Practitioners.

Parents and carers are critical players in Australia's careers ecosystem, as demonstrated in Chapter 2 of *Navigating Life's Career Transitions*. This chapter describes 16 types of career transitions (summarised in Table 1) and highlights how critical career management skills are to these processes.

Table 1: SIXTEEN CAREER TRANSITIONS AUSTRALIANS EXPERIENCE

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Primary to secondary school to college to further education and training and/or to work | Elite athlete to post-sport careers |
| University to further study and/or work | Community re-entry for offenders |
| Unemployment to employment | Migrant transition to Australia |
| Job promotions and role changes | Organisational changes |
| Rehabilitation | Industry transitions |
| Balancing carer roles and work | Transition to self-employment |
| Australian Defence Force to civilian careers | Managing career breaks |
| Employment of partners of ADF members | Retirement |

Chapter 3 identifies 12 lessons from these transitions (summarised in Table 2), which **parents and carers** can use to judge the quality of career services.

Table 2: TWELVE LESSONS FOR EFFECTIVE CAREER TRANSITIONS

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| A multifactorial, holistic and tailored approach is essential | Career services need to be planned |
| The importance of identity | Career services need to be evaluated |
| Building skills in anticipating biases | Offer in-person services, both live and online |
| People need a strong support network | The value of multidisciplinary research |
| Recognising the value of work | 'Lived experience' and career development expertise essential |
| Collaboration essential amongst multiple service providers | A 'one-size-fits-all' approach doesn't work |



Access to quality career services is particularly important given the many challenges people face during career transitions. These are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: EIGHT CATEGORIES OF CHALLENGES PEOPLE FACE DURING CAREER TRANSITIONS

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Knowledge gaps | Skills issues |
| Lack of familiarity with processes | Lack of self-confidence |
| Fear and concerns | Barriers due to diversity and life circumstances |
| Accessibility | Unhelpful beliefs |

CDAA wants every young Australian to be able to look forward to their futures with hope and confidence. Let's seize this chance to lead change and make the most of everyone's skills and talents.

CDAA invites you to read *Navigating Life's Career Transitions: Essential Support and Services*.



Executive Summary

Every Australian will experience multiple career transitions across their lifespan and some people may experience several simultaneously.

Career transitions fall along a continuum, varying in size, type and origin. Regardless of their character, a career transition is a process, not an event. As some are complex and messy, transitions require skilful management. This process nature of career transitions is one of the most critical qualities to appreciate.

Australians are expected to manage their own career and learning, but this expectation may be unrealistic given contemporary workforce challenges. Many people either don't know how to manage their career or feel they don't need to. While no one can literally protect their lives from any future disruption, what people can do is take steps to manage changes effectively.

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

The analysis in this report is based on a combination of desk research, a survey of CDAA members, and case studies drawn from CDAA award winners, whose work has been recognised for its excellence.

Given the multiple challenges facing Australians, this report aims to increase understanding of key aspects of career transitions: The nature and complexities of career transitions.

- **The nature and complexities of career transitions.**
- **The difficulties people face during career transitions and what help they need.**
- **What Career Development Practitioners offer that is essential to successful career transitions.**
- **The effectiveness of Career Development Practitioners' work.**
- **What factors contribute to successful industry transition processes.**
- **How to further strengthen career transition support and services.**

A glossary of terms used by career practitioners is included to aid understanding, as some terms have meanings different from their use in other contexts. (Appendix C)

Appendix D sets out material recruiters, employers, and contractors can use when seeking to employ or contract professional Career Development Practitioners.

Investing in essential career transition support and services will help Australians meet workforce challenges. CDAA recommends seven actions to support this investment.



1. Update and further implement the Australian government's National Career Development Strategy.

The 2013 National Career Development Strategy¹ takes an all-ages perspective and has fit-for-purpose goals. In consultation with stakeholders, including career development associations, the Australian government needs to quickly update the strategy, include specific outcomes to reflect current workforce and industry transition issues, and ensure that it is applied to relevant policies, including employment, education, training, regional development and industry.

2. Increase awareness of career support and services by the National Careers Institute

The National Careers Institute (NCI) needs to promote career development services by:

- conducting targeted public awareness campaigns about available career services, the importance of developing career management skills, and the value of consulting qualified Career Development Practitioners during any career transition process.
- building industry stakeholders' understanding of the economic and social benefits of designing quality transition processes that include career services delivered by qualified Career Development Practitioners

3. Establish a sound foundation in career management skills by all governments.

Governments across jurisdictions need to ensure that all Australians receive a sound foundation in career management skills by:

- embedding career education in the early education and primary school curriculum, making sure educators² have the necessary skills, knowledge and support.³
- making career education in all schools, including distance education schools, and TAFE colleges a priority by embedding career education in the curriculum, and providing resources to employ qualified Career Development Practitioners

4. Evaluate all government career services.

All existing, and future, government-funded career services need to be evaluated, and evaluation reports made public

¹ <https://www.dese.gov.au/school-work-transitions/resources/national-career-development-strategy>

² The term 'educators' refers to pre-school and primary teachers, early childhood educators, and day-care workers.

³ Hooley, T. (2021). Career education in primary school. myfuture Insights series. Melbourne. Education Services Australia. Cahill, M. and Furey, E. (2017). The Early Years: Career Development for Young Children. A Guide for Educators. <https://ceric.ca/wpdm-package/early-years-career-development-young-children-guide-educators/>.

5. Further adjust employers' recruiting and retention practices.

Employers need to respond to labour and skill shortages by further adjusting their recruiting practices to consider a combination of experience and transferable skills and willingness to learn new skills, and their retention practices by providing staff with development opportunities

6. Ensure regions affected by major transitions are supported with quality, long-term transition processes.

Regions and communities facing major transitions due to business and industry closures and structural adjustments must be supported with quality, long-term, transition processes. Stakeholders involved must:

- ensure any transition process is well-planned, locally-driven, orderly, fair, sufficiently and reliably funded, flexible in design, and where needed, phased-in over multiple years.
- provide holistic, worker-centric support that delivers a tailored, flexible approach to addressing all workers' needs, including career services delivered by qualified Career Development Practitioners. (Workers refers to employees, contractors, casual staff.)

7. Ensure career services are provided by qualified Career Development Practitioners.

When recruiting staff for services that involve providing career guidance, including career information, advice and support, qualified Career Development Practitioners with the appropriate skills, knowledge and experience must be sought. (See Appendix D for guidance.)

And finally, whether you are:

- a person seeking help with understanding career transitions or with embarking on a transition
- an organisation recruiting, contracting, or procuring Career Development Practitioners or career services
- an organisation involved in researching transitions or
- an organisation collaborating on an industry transition process

You can search for suitably qualified and experienced Career Development Practitioners on CDAA's website.⁴

⁴ <https://www.cdaa.org.au/CDAASite/Web/About-Career-Development/Find-a-Career-Specialist.aspx>



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Navigating Life's Career Transitions.

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