



Career Development  
Association Australia

# **NAVIGATING LIFE'S CAREER TRANSITIONS: ESSENTIAL SUPPORT AND SERVICES**

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Policy makers Brief

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



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Discover why career support is essential to Australia's future

Government **policy makers** across all jurisdictions are facing multiple complex challenges that need widespread collaboration, coordination, multidisciplinary input, and wise insight.

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

Changes to the world of work affect all participants in the labour market. These changes are driven by multiple complex and interrelated national and international factors, including changes in technology, organisations, business models, demographics, employment arrangements, plus immigration, globalisation, and climate change.

Every Australian will experience multiple career changes and transitions across their lifespan, including upskilling, reskilling, industry restructures, and organisational changes and closures resulting in redundancy, relocation, retrenchment, or retirement.

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) encourages **policy makers** to include career services in their work by:

- Updating and further implementing the Australian government's National Career Development Strategy.
- Increasing awareness of career support and services by the National Careers Institute.
- Establishing a sound foundation in career management skills for young people.
- Evaluating all government career services.
- Ensuring regions affected by major transitions are supported with quality, long-term transition processes.
- Ensuring career services are provided by qualified Career Development Practitioners.



**Adults  
facing career  
transitions  
Brief**

**Policy makers** 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), some of which have direct relevance to **policy makers**, such as the need for career services to be planned, flexible, and evaluated. Also important is the need for employment and transition services to be collaboratively designed to provide an holistic service tailored to people's needs and experience, with access to qualified Career Development Practitioners.

**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



This access 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

*Navigating Life's Career Transitions* includes a chapter on designing effective industry transition programs. As Australia responds to changes in technology and moves to a carbon-neutral economy, **policy makers** can benefit from guidance on designing transition programs that deliver quality results for all concerned.

CDAA wants every person, no matter what their background is and no matter where they live, to be able to build a rewarding career. 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

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**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 Strategy<sup>1</sup> 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 educators<sup>2</sup> have the necessary skills, knowledge and support.<sup>3</sup>
- 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

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

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

<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> <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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