

# The ACP

**THE AUSTRALIAN CAREER PRACTITIONER**

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Youth unemployment  
crisis

.....

Confessions of a  
professional trapped in  
regional Australia

.....

Q&A with CDAA Life  
Members

.....

A golden opportunity



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**LEADING, BUILDING, GROWING THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROFESSION**

Career Development Association of Australia Inc.

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# From the EDITOR



Zoë Wundenberg

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It's a crazy time right now. We are recovering and rebuilding from bushfires, dealing with COVID-19 and dealing with the fallout from everything across careers, employment and business. I can't help but feel like we need a 2020 reboot - can we just turn this year off and on again? Seems to work with most things...

Failing that, innovation has never been more important, especially in business practice. Thinking creatively about how we can keep things going, adapt to the changing market needs and supply issues, change our approach to the people that we employ and find ways to work flexibly, smarter and sustainably.

I have found myself wondering, what are the changing needs of my clients? How are the events of 2020 going to change the way we view the labour market? When it's all under control are we just going to go back to normal, or will we exist in a new kind of normal? These are all ideas to explore this year, and I would welcome submissions from members who would like to engage with the emerging changes in our landscape.

This edition, our theme is crisis management - although at the time of developing the theme, I didn't realise quite how much crisis we would be in on a global level. We start this journey with a look at youth unemployment, regional living and the internal paradox of self reflection.

We read about trauma and crisis from Leah Hutton at MYST, tap into the well-timed and much needed wisdom of our newest Life Members, Dr Ann Villiers, Andrew Rimington and Joanne Shambler, and we explore both a golden opportunity and gender bias.

As we go forth in this changing world under the quarantine tents and kitted out in toilet paper, please allow me to remind you we are all in this together. Reach out, connect, partner - together, we've got this.

-Zoë

From

# THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S DESK



Wanda Hayes | National CDAA President ✉ nationalpresident@cdaa.org.au

Dear colleagues,

The community in which I work chooses a 'theme' for each year. The aim is to use the theme as inspiration to focus our energy, activity and innovation. It works surprisingly well. I can't help wondering if it would be a good thing for our CDAA community to do.

Anyway, the theme in my work community this year is 'student agency and efficacy.' When they chose the theme, the leadership team couldn't have known the surprises 2020 had in store for us. It seems to me that 2020 is doing its best to make sure it is a memorable year - and not all for the right reasons! There seems to be so much going on around us that is beyond our control, and I reckon for many it's tempting to feel helpless about it all. So, it's interesting to watch how the community is responding to this theme.

This week, the student leaders literally took over an assembly - the teachers got out of the way, and watched. Students were allowed to sit wherever they wanted to - not in their house or even year level groups. The student leaders started a conversation with the whole school cohort about what integrity means to them, and how it manifests in their context. They invited students to talk among themselves. They roamed the gym with microphones, asking students to share their opinions. There was a lovely moment, when they stopped everything and asked the students to raise their hand if they had been actually talking about integrity. About a third of students raised their hands. Everyone laughed, and the student leaders said 'It's natural to want to just chat about stuff, because you are sitting with your mates. Can we ask you to just take the next 30 seconds to focus on integrity?' And the students (mostly!) did. The whole thing was magical. It was fun. And the students created a palpable energy - a wonderful way to start a school day. The teachers were bemused. And impressed.

The night before, I had spoken with Year 10 students

and their parents about how they could exercise their individual agency, becoming seekers of learning and growth, rather than sponges: such a core concept for career development. I was a bit enthusiastic, as is my want. They smiled. They told me they liked the idea.

Later in the week, I sat down to do a body of work I've been mulling over (and procrastinating about!) for six months. The theme genuinely helped me focus my work. I'm pulling together threads of conversations I have been having in the community to develop a new program concept focussed on supporting and encouraging students to be seekers, and building their sense of self-efficacy. I'll be asking students to work with me, to flesh out the detail of the program, and the implementation plan.

As I write this, it's just week three of the school year, and all of these things were inspired by some people sitting down with an OECD report that talks about education in 2030 and mentions the importance of student agency and efficacy; and deciding 'that will be our theme for next year!' Sure, not everyone is getting as excited as I am by this theme, but enough people are for it to be noticeable. And there are good things happening, as a result.

So, now I'm thinking about our CDAA community, and about our Strategic Plan, which will be re-launched at our AGM at the beginning of April. I'm daring to hope that each of you will ask yourself what action you can take, to achieve our shared goals, and live out our shared principles.

And in the meantime, I'm thinking about how we can make the 'annual theme' concept work for our community. If you have any ideas, I'd love to hear them!

Cheers!

Wanda



## Advertise in the ACP magazine

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*"The CDAA marketing team offered graphic design insight and provided useful recommendations in the advertising campaign for my new business, EVOLVE Career Design and Training. I am grateful for the support and found the brand exposure gained in the ACP magazine led to both networking and contract opportunities."* - Michel Viner



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It's fantastic to be back for another year and great to see that so many members have renewed their memberships for 2020.

If you have not renewed yet, there is still time to pay your membership on the CDAA website, or you can contact Kay Scutter on [memberservices@cdaa.org.au](mailto:memberservices@cdaa.org.au) for an invoice.

We encourage members to renew as soon as possible to ensure continuity with your Professional Indemnity Insurance and so you continue to receive your other member benefits.

**Bushfire Recovery – Steps to Employment**

Individuals impacted by the devastating bushfires this summer may be struggling with multiple barriers to gaining or re-gaining employment.

CDAA has submitted proposals to the Australian Government via the National Careers Institute and the Business Council of Australia (BizRebuild Initiative), for funding for CDAA members to provide bushfire victims with assistance towards re-employment.

We have called this initiative Bushfire Recovery – Steps to Employment. If funded, the program would include the assessment of a person's current situation, assistance with essential & immediate tools and advice, and referral to other agencies as appropriate for further ongoing support.

We will keep you up to date with the progress of this proposal in upcoming national newsletters.

**Mentor Program**

CDAA is running a six-month mentor program from April until September this year. We were pleased with the number of responses from interested mentees and are now in the process

of finding suitable mentors for our mentees.

**Deirdre Hughes Workshops**

Due to the declared COVID-19 global pandemic, Deirdre Hughes Workshops have been cancelled.

**Annual General Meeting**

The CDAA AGM is being held on Thursday, 2 April, 2020 as an online meeting via Zoom. All members are invited to attend to help shape the future of the Association. To register for the AGM, [click here](#).

**CDAA Events**

The Association has already hosted several successful professional development events this year.

WA's annual Career Development Network Day attracted more than 100 registrants, with the event including updates from all six WA universities and TISC.

NSW also held a fantastic event on evolving your practice in the changing world, with a panel of speakers including Heidi Winney, Allan Gatenby CMF, and Leonie Lam. The panellists wrote a blog post for Career Panorama about how their practice evolution.

And we had a webinar with CDANZ Fellow Russell Booth, who spoke to 75 registrants about the science of teenage brains and making timely career decisions.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the ACP Magazine and take advantage of our new magazine bookshelf to access back issues.

Please note, the staff at National Office will be working from home starting Monday, 23 March until concerns around COVID-19 have subsided. We are hoping to return after Easter. Please contact us until then by email.



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Jenny Gleeson

# RESPONSE TO YOUTH IN CRISIS IN WA

Jenny Gleeson | Career Coach and Owner, LifeWorx <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jennygleeson>

The Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) states that ‘Young people are amongst those most at risk of being left behind in the changing world of work.’ Currently 12% of young people across Australia, aged between 15-24 are unemployed. In 2018, the South West and Peel district (Western Australia) was ranked tenth highest in Australia for youth unemployment with 21.6% of people in this age bracket unable to find a job. Even though the state government is investing in job creation infrastructure, increased and improved efforts at the school level are the best way to mitigate youth unemployment.

With this in mind, Jenny Gleeson, Career Start Coach, agreed to be involved in a six-month pilot program aimed at assisting Year 10 – 12 students who are in school but very close to disengaging and are at risk of falling into unemployment. The schools observed that many Year 10 students returning to school to complete Year 11 became disengaged within the first few weeks of first term and therefore became disruptive and/or dropped out of the education system. They also noted that some of their Year 11 and 12 students were becoming disillusioned and/or disheartened with mainstream education and

were looking to find alternative pathways.

What started as a six-month pilot in 2019, was extended for another six months and has again been funded for another 12 months due to the program’s high success rate. The three schools involved are directly funding the program through their discretionary funds as they can see the positive difference one on one career coaching is having on the individual students and those around them.

When the program started, the original forecast was for 25% of students to either reengage with mainstream education or successfully transition into an alternative pathway such as training or employment. By the end of the first six months, 75% of young people had either re-engaged or transitioned into a more appropriate pathway. By the end of the additional six months, students were requesting to be a part of the program as they saw how beneficial the program was for those who had already gone through it. 2020 sees five students per school engage in the Career Start Program and undergo one on one intensive career coaching. Each time a student successfully re-engages or finds a more appropriate way forward, a

“ By the end of the additional six months, students were requesting to be a part of the program as they saw how beneficial the program was for those who had already gone through it. ”

new student is referred thus keeping the number at five per school for the duration of the program.

### **Jenny's reflections on what makes this program so successful**

One of the most important factors that contributes to the program's success is that it is not directly tied to the school. As the Career Start Coach, I have no hidden agenda or affiliation with the school, so am able to remain neutral to the culture and star ratings. Nor do I know anything about the student when I first meet them. Even though I have access to their records, I have specified that I am not interested in their school grades, results, attitude or background. When I meet the student, I meet them at face value without bias, prejudice or already formed opinions.

Comments from youth on the FYA website supports the call for a shake-up in the current school career counselling programs. Comments such as, 'I think high school careers counsellors need to be abolished and external advisors brought in,' and 'careers education in schools is extremely dated,' highlight the need for non-biased, objective and external support.

To be a practising and recognised Career Adviser, there are National Standards that must be adhered to. Unfortunately, many staff who work within schools to support young people in career decision making, do not hold accredited qualifications and have limited knowledge of contemporary career practices. As a Fellow of the Career Development Association of Australia and National Award Winner in Career Development, schools are confident in the services I provide to their students. The data and feedback from students, parents and teachers is also evidence of the program's success.

Another contributing factor to the program's success is time. The schools allow me to spend one-on-one time with the students they have referred. Every single student is different, and I can be flexible and adaptable in my approach with each of them. Some students know exactly what they want to do when they leave school whilst others need to work through their ideas to bring them to fruition. Some simply need their hand held through managing their schedules to understanding and completing schoolwork, whilst others are desperate to leave mainstream education to gain employment. Others may need a gentle, but firm hand, and someone they can rely on and turn to in times of uncertainty.

### **Why Jenny?**

Since becoming a qualified career practitioner over 20 years ago, my primary driver has been to support youth

at risk. As a youth at risk myself, I was seeking a role model, someone to guide me and reassure me that I had a purpose and was worthy of being part of this amazing world. Many of the parents I speak with also say they wish they had someone to support them, like this role is supporting their child now.

I like to think of this role as a pre-career coaching role, hence the name 'Career Start'. It gives the students an opportunity to speak with someone about their fears, dreams, hopes and uncertainties without bias or judgement. Someone they can turn to and rely on to help them navigate their way through an uncertain world. Once the student has shown signs that they can go it alone and an exit strategy has been put in place, the next student on the school's list of referrals is then engaged in the program.

Although it has taken some time for all stakeholders at the school to understand the purpose of the program, each of the schools have proven to be flexible, patient and supportive of the students who participate. All student service support staff and teachers are informed of the student's participation and are free to contact me with any observations, concerns and compliments they have

for the student. Students feel they have a team of adults supporting them, which may very well be a first for them.

### **What does Jenny do?**

Many stakeholders have asked me why the program is such a success. As mentioned above, it is a whole of school approach with parental consent, and a matter of spending one on one individually focused time with each student. Added to this, I utilise a variety of career coaching tools such as personality profiling. I have created a series of workshops called LIFEWORX4ME and CAREERSWORX4ME, and written a resource guide about

engaging young people through their personality type called *Personalities in the Classroom*. I am now in the process of writing a step by step guide for the Career Start Coach role so that the program can expand to other regions and schools.

### **And finally...**

The main success of this program is listening without judgement, staying true to your word, and being honest. Young people are very discerning and know when someone is being disingenuous.

With a success rate of 75%, everyone associated with the students going through the program can see the benefits for the individual, their friends and family members, the whole school and ultimately the community. An innovative approach that can easily be replicated throughout the rest of Australia.

“ It gives the students an opportunity to speak with someone about their fears, dreams, hopes and uncertainties without bias or judgement. ”



# CONFESSIONS OF A PROFESSIONAL TRAPPED IN REGIONAL AUSTRALIA



Jade Fitzgerald | Psychology & MBA Graduate, Stand Up Comic <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jadefitzgerald/>

For some time now, I've felt like I'm trapped on a deserted career island. You know the movie Cast Away? Well at least Tom Hanks has Wilson. Me? I'm sitting here dishevelled with my undergraduate degree in Psychological Science and MBA in hand. Both stare back at me blankly while I cry at the sky and ask why.

I am going to talk about something taboo - about being over educated and out of work in regional Australia. I'm going to talk about horrible things like being lumped into 'the great unwashed' of the Jobactive network and being treated like an idiot who needs the threat of punitive financial measures if I don't comply by attending a 'how to write a resume' workshop. I'll tell you of my experience with so called recruitment professionals locally, who have told me when I sought feedback on applying for an entry level recruitment role, that having an MBA is of no use and that I need a Cert IV in Human Resources as a minimum (I won't bother to tell you the garbage uttered to me when I asked, 'how can an MBA be of no value?'). I'll also tell you how tiring

it is to hear I came second or that, 'it was really hard to pick between you and the chosen candidate.' I might even tell you how it feels to have an interview effectively euthanised when a panel member says, 'Wow Jade! You have such an INTERESTING resume.' Remember, I'm dishevelled. I'm on a deserted island with two expensive pieces of paper that don't even have smiles drawn on them - yet. I'll be honest, I don't even know what day it is. You're the first person I've spoken to.

It's frustrating feeling alone on this island, although I should be used to it by now having always been here. In the birth lottery, I was born into a military family who attained their trades through service in the Australian Army. Seriously persuing education was rarely entertained and if it was, my family had no idea what to do with it. As far as career aspirations, mentors and access went, I was out of luck. I had the desire as I wanted to study medicine when I was in high school, but unbeknownst to 16-year-old me I had an acute lack of social capital and had not yet become

“ I'm going to talk about horrible things like being lumped into 'the great unwashed' of the Jobactive network and being treated like an idiot who needs the threat of punitive financial measures if I don't comply by attending a 'how to write a resume' workshop. ”



aware of the effects of the ‘degrees of rurality.’ When I first told my family that I wanted to study medicine their response was ‘study medicine in the Army, Jade.’ I wasn’t too interested in owing years of my life to an institution and the two universities where I live almost mirrored each other with their limited offerings.

So, my plans fell by the wayside. It’s the perfect (and not so uncommon) storm experienced by regional students in late adolescence; where the old chestnut of potentially being ‘first in family’ combines with geographical and financial barriers to pursuing relevant higher education. It sees us fall far short of the transition rate experienced by our metropolitan peers to university. For me, I became

disheartened, I gave up in Year 12 when I realised the access barrier and didn’t see the point. I finished school not even bothering to attend my graduation. I went from high school to fighting tooth and nail for unskilled work in a regional economy which already had the hallmarks of rising youth unemployment long before it was a headline. I found work. It was menial and the pay was mediocre. Whatever. I probably had depression by this point and didn’t notice.

Fast forward to now, and over the last decade or so I combined two degrees with the intention of going somewhere interesting and getting out of here. I have two children now and I need to leave before they think it’s normal to tolerate lower rates of life expectancy and to expect limited educational and career opportunities; all because they live in regional Australia. Not that I’ve ever tolerated it. I’ve always been critical of systems that create inequality and I’ve been out here too long: I’m sick to death of the lack of policy to close the gap between metropolitan and regional/rural Australia. It’s kind of fitting actually that I was initially made an offer by a university in Melbourne to study Bachelor of Social Policy (Research). I was elated - I was finally leaving, but in an unsurprising twist of ‘regional living’ fate external factors required me to remain in the region. As soon as I found out, I enrolled in a psychology degree to keep myself occupied and to remain sane. After three years of studying something I’d never given thought to previously, I learned that I was very good at it and upon completing

“  
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”

my undergraduate degree, I was offered places in the cities to complete my honours degree: A requirement to continue on the pathway to full registration.

Things were looking up right? Not at all - geography struck again. By this point I had a fiancé and 6-year-old and it seemed impossible to move when we knew most of our friends in the cities could barely afford living in their share houses. I also knew I had to study honours face to face as the value of university is SOME parts the award and MOST parts networking. At that point I refused to study via distance and after exams I had my first graduate job interview. It went really well.

They loved me and tried to pull strings to offer me the role. It might sound underhanded, but they did that and in doing so learnt that I wasn’t eligible for the role they were offering, as I wasn’t a full or provisionally registered Psychologist. If I was an OT, Social Worker, anything else registered with APHRA I would have been fine. That there was when I realised it was another rough ride on the regional job market train that I didn’t really want to book a ticket to. I had no choice through and it was awful. When I finally got a casual role that was ‘relevant’ to my degree NOTHING prepared me for the pain of having my degree valued to be the equivalent of a 6-month Certificate III in Community Services. That... that was the most bitter pill I’ve ever been forced to chew in my life - and I’ve swallowed a LOT of bitter pills.

Yuck.

I still feel dirty writing that – Literally like I have gravel in my mouth.

So that’s my psych degree and its regional value of almost nought because recruiters and HR Practitioners have a very limited understanding of transferrable knowledge, skills and abilities. There’s more to the disappointment than that but you’re probably wondering how I got the MBA? In short, I won a scholarship and I completed the degree face to face via regional delivery. It was great. Academically enriching. I travelled all over Victoria and made amazing connections - just not many where I live. I’ll tell you the long of it and how I’ve inadvertently made myself even more unemployable in another article.

# GUARDING YOUR BRAND ON SOCIAL MEDIA



**Michelle Gibbings** | Career & Change Management Specialist,  
Change Meridian 📧 [www.michellegibbings.com](http://www.michellegibbings.com)

*Michelle Gibbings*

When five Federal election candidates were dumped for offensive social media posts it was a timely reminder of the damage that a poorly managed social media profile can do to a person's career. An ill-timed comment, a thoughtless response, an opinion that you may change or an action you may come to regret later can't be erased in a digital era, and so your social media profile can haunt and derail your career.

## We are quick to assess

In a face to face context, when we meet someone for the first time, we very quickly make an assessment as to whether we like them, trust them, want to work with them or want to do business with them. Research highlights we have somewhere between 7 to 15 seconds to make a first impression face-to-face. This is based on what is known as 'thin slicing'. Professor Frank Bernieri of Oregon State University has found we assess people relatively quickly, without a lot of data. This assessment is made on a raft of factors. It might be a glance, their handshake, what they wear, their demeanour, whether they maintain eye contact and how they smile.

As much of our lives now play out on social media, the same holds true, albeit in a different way. A statement, a comment or liking an article, which only takes a few seconds to post will be attached to your reputation forever. While that action may not represent your whole perspective on an issue, it will shape how people see you and how they assess your character and reputation.

## One you, one brand

It was Tom Peters who said: All of us need to understand the importance of branding. We are CEOs of our own companies: Me Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You.

In a digital world there is no separation between a personal brand and your professional brand. What you post in your personal life on a private Facebook or Instagram page will impact how you are seen professionally. Your reputation is one of your most important career

assets, and so it pays to treat it as such. You may invest in building up your educational qualifications and your leadership skills, and yet not consider the attention that needs to be given to how you develop and maintain a social media profile that enhances your career.

## Know what you stand for

To do that effectively goes beyond just taking care of what you say and do online. It's important to know your values and what you stand for, so you actively take charge of your online reputation and make sure it aligns with what you want to be known for. When you own your reputation you actively seek to understand how others see you, and how you see yourself. This includes identifying where there are gaps between your desired and actual reputation, and then setting about consciously constructing a reputation that works for you in the long term, by being positively and sustainably developed. Maintaining a positive and progressive reputation requires work – daily – and it isn't something you can take for granted.

## Think long-term

With rapid changes in the workforce now and into the future, a person's career can go in many different directions. For example, those entering the workforce now are likely to have at least 17 different employers, and five different careers during their lifetime.

Consequently, this heightens the importance of taking a long-term view of your reputation. In an era where you can never be entirely sure where your career will land, you don't want to find your career ambitions thwarted by something you did many years ago when you weren't paying close attention to your reputation. Your reputation is a vital ingredient in having a long term, successful and sustainable career, and so it pays dividends to treat it carefully.

“  
What you post in  
your personal life on  
a private Facebook or  
Instagram page will  
impact how you are  
seen professionally.”



Leah Hutton

# SUPPORTING PEOPLE IN CRISIS

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## What is crisis?

Everyone has their own point of reference with regards to what a crisis is for them and as such depends on what's going on for the person at the time. It can also encompass types of crises, such as housing, emotional, environmental crises etc. Essentially, a crisis is anything that need immediate response, and it can be complex and multilayered, e.g. if your house burnt down, you are going to have an emotional and a housing crisis at the same time. Having an immediate response to a crisis is a really important part of recovering from this sort of thing and it's often an accumulation of factors.

When an individual is faced with varying adversity, there is going to be a breaking point and sometimes to come back from a crisis, a person has to start from ground level. This can be practical, but often, this comes down to emotional support.

## How do crises affect people?

Everyone has their own thresholds. It really depends on how much community support individuals have: It affects people differently. Some people respond to stress really well, harness it, run with it and do what they need to do in the moment, and then there are other people who shut down and within that, they can't really act. It depends on the type of person that they are and what they've experienced previously as to whether they are going to rally or fall apart. But then, one person can fall apart and then pick themselves back up, but another person might fall apart and take years to recover from that. It's not a one size fits all situation.

As a result, when supporting people in crisis, it's really important to have an adaptable approach that is versatile to offer different things to different people based on their needs.

## Do natural disasters impact people differently?

An Act of God crisis could be a tipping point for a vulnerable person because belief systems are what drive us. If a person is being told by their belief system that a certain event, like a bushfire or a flood, is an act of God, this could make a person believe they've done something wrong, which then might facilitate their previous insecurities around any previous experiences.

If a person is already in crisis and they have a structure of support (Protective Factors) around them and then something like a bushfire happens, they could be better

able to manage it because the support structure in place could reduce the likelihood of this person going over the edge. This is not to say that it is always going to be like that but that it could act as a preventative measure, a safety net. Familiarity in the process – 'I've been here before, I know what the first step is' – improves accessibility to services to support them through the challenges. If a person has knowledge regarding the accessibility of services they are more likely to seek them.

## How does the crisis experience impact our employability?

Experiencing a crisis impacts our ability to engage in work. The way it affects people depends on the individual. It can affect your motivation, drive, confidence, self-belief etc. A person experiencing depression for example, might be able to present to an interview, but not hold down the job.

Past crises and trauma can also affect employability. Sometimes, people have specific triggers such as weather, dates, smells, personality types, etc., and they might not even know what their triggers are so they might not know that they have been triggered. If a person is in a crisis, they might not even be able to look online and find employment that is suitable for them to apply for.

## What can we do?

Trauma informed care is a really good avenue to look into. If an employer or career practitioner was open to understanding trauma from a practical standpoint, utilising trauma informed practice or training would be very beneficial: with knowledge comes understanding and when you can understand if a person is reacting because they've experienced something traumatic in their lives, you can make a difference to them - and your workplace.

Be inclusive and have information about local services available. However, it's important to recognise that the individual might not be ready for the confrontation to explore their options, so recommending they visit their GP is an important starting point to be aware of.

It's vital that the person who provides the information about referrals, is a person whom the client trusts already. Be very gentle, open, non-judgmental and understanding.

*If you or someone you know needs help, you can call Lifeline on 13 10 14 or Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636.*



# THE INTERNAL PARADOX

Ann Wilson | *Careers Consultant & Psychologist* ✉ [ann1wilson@optusnet.com.au](mailto:ann1wilson@optusnet.com.au)

A paradox lies at the heart of the career decision making process which hopes, if not assumes that your clients have good self-knowledge. That is while they are undoubtedly an expert on themselves (after all, who else should know them but themselves?), they often lack personal insight into their motivations, actions and values, which would be useful, if not essential, for the process.

Many decades ago, Carl Jung put it in a delightful, politically correct way, that, 'In respect of one's own personality, one's judgement is, as a rule, extraordinarily clouded.'

Or as Mirra Komarovsky stated, hitting the nail right on the head, 'The most elusive knowledge of all is self-knowledge.'

Other people often have a better insight into a person because, usually over a period of time, it is based on their observations of actions and behaviours, noting what is said, as well as when and how it is said. After all, referees are asked about a candidate's strengths and weaknesses to balance what the candidate claims.

It is important to differentiate between your conscious mind and the unconscious mind. The conscious mind is the 'I' that thinks it is in control of your thoughts, actions and motivations and only processes a very small part of all the incoming information, whereas the unconscious mind automatically processes all the vast rest.

Timothy Wilson calls this the 'adaptive unconscious mind' with this useful

description, which I often use in counselling:

'The adaptive unconscious is a pervasive yet hidden engine humming beneath the surface of the mind, and there is no engine hatch that we can open to take a direct look at its operation.'

In counselling, I will often draw an iceberg diagram with the small part of the iceberg above the water line and the much larger chunk under water, noting that the self-reporting tests such as *Myers Briggs*, *Self-Directed Search*, and *Work Aspect Preference Scale* to name a few, are revealing what is readily known above the water level, but that there is a great deal more about that client below the water level. At this point, I might directly reference Wilson's engine analogy which can be very appropriate for some clients.

It follows then that the conscious mind has the explicit knowledge while the unconscious mind holds that vast reservoir which is implicit. The task of the counsellor then becomes to make explicit what is implicit so that

“ Other people often have a better insight into a person because, usually over a period of time, it is based on their observations of actions and behaviours, noting what is said, as well as when and how it is said. ”

the client does gain that insight into the underlying core beliefs, values etc.

I have never really been quite comfortable with the unconscious mind and was recently delighted to read how Daphne Hewson & Michael Carroll call this the non-conscious mind and I now follow their lead in using this useful term. They note that this non-conscious mind directs our clients' emotions, judgements and actions and that we have to infer its assumptions.

This we do by observing what triggers their emotions, establishing their core values, their patterns of behaviours and choices.

Having gone to his excellent workshop in Sydney last year, I am currently reading Allan Schore's *The Science of the Art of Psychotherapy*, where he states, 'the unconscious processes lie at the centre of the self.' This is relevant whether you are a counsellor, coach, psychotherapist, or psychologist because analysis of the self lies at the centre of the problem.

As counsellors, we should then be examining our clients at both a macro and micro level: interests, values, attitudes, pattern of choice as well as interview behaviours, nuances of conversations, word emphases, facial expressions to infer what is under the engine hatch for this client, and what drives the engine for this particular client.

At this point in the counselling process, you can uncover what I have come to call the 'deeply cherished illusions' which your client holds, where the beliefs of the client are not compatible with the actions or evidence. That then becomes a focus to resolve and give some insight.

At the beginning of my first face-to-face session with a client, I often outline these or some of these concepts and I explain that our sessions are a journey of self-discovery and insight.

To anchor and analyse this idea, I have developed an additional activity to use in conjunction with Robert Pryor's Work Aspect Preference Scale which is usually part of my assessment tool kit. Before I give them their results and interpret those, I ask them to pick the Aspects they think are most important. I give them a sheet with the thirteen subscale Aspects with their definitions and ask them to rate them by importance.

For those not familiar with this Australian test, they are Independence, Co-Workers, Self-Development, Creativity, Money, Life Style, Prestige, Altruism, Security, Management, Detachment, Physical Activity & Surroundings.

“  
As counsellors, we should then be examining our clients at both a macro and micro level: interests, values, attitudes, pattern of choice as well as interview behaviours, nuances of conversations, word emphases, facial expression...  
”

Having already marked the test, I can quite specifically tell them to pick the two of these that were equally most important to them; pick the top three; what eight out of the thirteen are significant, what five are not important? Then I show them their rankings and what they got right. This can be a practical demonstration of how much insight they have into themselves and can help in the validation of the results.

For most of my clients, and remember this is a biased population of people who are seeking help and most likely not happy with their work situation, this is often a difficult task. Generally, most do not pick the right Aspects or their degree of importance. This activity reveals to some degree the client's insight – sometimes a client will quickly go to the most important ones and that is always encouraging. Sometimes they will indicate that they want most of them, which can identify part of the problem they are facing. If they become anxious or it is too hard, I don't press it.

It is however a useful activity to incorporate into the exploration of the client's insight into self.

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# DR ANN VILLIERS

2019 Life Member | *Mental Nutritionist & Author*  
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*Dr Ann Villiers*

## How important has membership of CDAA been for your career? What role has it played?

Membership of CDAA has been critically important in giving me a professional identity with clearly articulated competencies, standards and ethics. It has also given me a theory base, credible tools and information, and most importantly, supportive colleagues. Being involved in my division and the NEC gave me an understanding of the broader issues facing the Association, members, the profession, and the role of governments in supporting career development. This knowledge has then informed my contributions to the ACT division, CDAA conferences, and submissions to government.

## What have been important aspects of the profession to contribute to in recent years?

My contributions have been driven by identifying gaps that I can help fill from my experience. As a private practitioner, I have drawn on my business and professional speaking experience to help members learn how to develop ebooks, build financial literacy to boost their income, and build presentation skills. When I represented private practitioners on CICA's Professional Standards Working Group I supported expanding the scope of the diversity competencies and including the need for private practitioners to apply sound business practices.

One of my passions is language. In recent years, I've been examining the nuances of career development discourse and now advocate for dropping the use of 'soft' and 'hard' skills. Arguing that these terms are inaccurate, out-of-date, and gender-biased, I have lobbied multiple government, professional, and private organisations, and written nationally and internationally, seeking support for dropping the use of these unhelpful terms.

The most recent gap I've sought to fill relates to grandparents and their influence on kids' career choices. While there are growing resources for parents, there is very little for grandparents. Given grandparents' work experience is likely to differ from what their grandchildren will encounter, I've compiled career-related material

so they can play a more informed role in broadening grandchildren's aspirations, building confidence and motivation, countering stereotypes, valuing education, and improving social-emotional skills.

## What is one thing that you have learned over your career that you believe is an invaluable lesson?

One thing I've learned is the value of a strong support network. In my case, linking with other private practitioners to learn, support, make referrals, and generally 'chew the fat', has been invaluable. I'm indebted to Kate Flaherty for initiating and leading the ACT's Private Practitioner Network for the last six years, giving me a continuing source of professional nourishment.

## What's been your experience of career transitions as a private practitioner?

As I clock up the years, I've been downsizing my business, shifting the focus to leisure and pleasure rather than work. One of the lessons of this transition is to know when to let go. In part, that's a financial decision, but it's also recognising when your motivation has changed, and you're no longer committed to performing some types of work. Staying 'in flow' is still important. I continue to do what I enjoy, what I'm good at, and what gives meaning and enrichment. For now this means some clients, more writing, research and learning, and advocating for skill discourse changes.



# ANDREW RIMINGTON

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Andrew Rimington

## What was your pathway to the profession?

I commenced work in the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) in the mid 1970s when the government dramatically reduced tariffs in the TCF sector, which increased local unemployment at a time that there was an influx of refugees from Vietnam and the Middle East including Lebanon, Turkey and other countries. The CES increased formal inhouse training in interviewing and assessment skills when the government introduced wage subsidies & training programs. There were specialist counselling services also for people with a disability, Indigenous, ex-prisoners, youth and the long-term unemployed. We also did school visits to discuss services and career options: all very embryonic compared to today.

## How has the profession evolved over the time that you have been working in this space?

The emphasis on training increased in the 1980s at a time I moved into a specialist role as an Employment Counsellor (EC): this role worked closely with a Vocational Psychologist and the EC was a conduit for referrals for assessment or more complex resolution of problems. I was outposted in Victoria and visited three Psychiatric Hospitals (Plenty, Larundel, & Mont Park) for two days and also had two days at Pentridge Prison whilst on call for emergency referrals for the fifth day in central Melbourne. The level of training was much higher, but formal qualifications were not required. Whilst the last decade has seen Certificate, Diploma & Graduate Certificate and Diploma in Careers Counsellor/Development qualifications, it is not a universal requirement for anyone to commence a practice in career development. There has been an increase in take-up of these quals but even in school education there is not a universal requirement for 'careers teachers' to have formal qualifications. There is a heightened policy framework by several state & territory governments to build career development into curricula as well as provide access to formal training, which is a significant move, but more needs to be done.

## What do you love most about this profession?

When I first commenced my consulting business in 1999, I had also joined CDAA as I worked a 0.5 contract managing the La Trobe University's Bendigo

campus Careers Advisory Service. I found many highly passionate & committed people whom I can say have been great friends for over 20 years now. In fact it was this network that allowed me to put together a national network of practitioners that enabled my business to win a five-year Defence Department contract to deliver Career Transition Services for civilian staff. So the people I met then and since have been strongly committed to professionalism, ethical behaviour and upskilling of the profession more broadly. The 10 years on the Victorian division committee and six years on NEC brought great friendships, a fantastic network of people and also fostered my international contacts through CDANZ, NCDA, APCDA and also through ICCDPP.

## What role has CDAA played in your own career development?

My journey was enhanced through CDAA and brought recognition of the importance of the profession in Australia at both state and Commonwealth Government levels. CDAA played a strong role in now seeing many government contracts requiring credentialed and qualified practitioners to be used in contracted program delivery. My dual role within the Australian Chamber of Commerce sector also brought much closer & stronger links between the profession & industry. Since resigning my policy role in 2015, I have really enjoyed building a practice in career transition and working with clients to build strategies and skills to take them to their next step in their own journey. I have met some wonderful people and many of them don't fully understand or appreciate their wonderful skills & achievements and it is a humbling experience to assist them in 'seeing the light.'

## How would you like to see the profession change in the future?

There is a need to enhance training & credentialing within the profession with stronger linkages to applied research which assists government and the community to better understand the value of what 'career development professionals' provide to individuals & the workforce. The demands & pressures in coming years will only increase the needs for a profession to become highly skilled, innovative and responsive to need. I have enjoyed my journey and hope it continues for some time yet!

# JOANNE SHAMBLER

2019 Life Member | Professional Career Coach  
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Joanne Shambler

*Thank you for the opportunity to write a few words about my experience as a career development professional. Can I start by saying how humbled and delighted I was to be awarded Life Membership. This truly came out of the blue and I really have no words to describe how this made me feel. My contribution to CDAA and to supporting other practitioners has always been based on my values of service and to be honoured with Life Membership is something I never anticipated. Thank you to all involved in the process – I am extremely grateful.*

- Jo Shambler

## When you first started out in career development, what did the profession look like and why were you drawn to it?

I'll start with the second part of the question first. I had been a late entrant to university study (2002) and whilst doing my undergrad, I chose electives focussing on career development (because this was a new field for me). I was also fortunate to have an excellent undergrad course coordinator who organised my last elective from the postgraduate program and I spent a week's intensive with the amazing Mary McMahon. Also at this time, I was working alongside and being mentored by a very experienced career development professional who taught me and encouraged me to undertake a Masters in Career Development.

As a HR professional of many years, I had had no exposure to career development and really didn't know it even existed or what it meant at a practical level. During my post-graduate studies, I began to gain a better idea and was sure that I was making the right choice for my own career and could start to consider where my future lay. It ticked all the boxes for me in terms of drawing from my HR background and managerial experience, my strong focus on service and helping, and the potential to move away from full-time work into my own business over time. I had been in government all my life and was keen to have a career plan beyond that.

It was also during this time that I discovered CDAA and I thought it would be good to connect with others. I started going along to some of the CPD offerings in Brisbane and getting to know some of the Brisbane-based practitioners. This, in turn, opened my eyes to the diversity of those in career development and the wealth of experience around me.

Career Development back then (and to a certain extent now) is still not well known and I think the most common form of practitioner was still based in schools or tertiary institutions. Private practice was not so common but has become more common since.

## What role has CDAA played in your own career development?

CDAA has been the catalyst for me moving into private practice and successfully running my own business. But it is more than that - joining CDAA changed my life. It has enabled me to meet and learn from others and to build some amazing relationships and connections. I have built a national profile and been guided and mentored by some of the most amazing professionals across this land of ours. I don't think I would have survived in small business without the relationships I have built through my involvement in CDAA and the advice and support I've been given.

Serving on both the Queensland Committee and the National Executive Committee enabled me to develop skills and knowledge that I didn't possess and this has helped me running my own business as well. It also grew my confidence as a career professional through working closely with others and hearing their stories.

## How has career development practice changed over the years? Has it?

I think career development practice has changed and will continue to evolve based on the needs of our clients. Less face to face and more use of technology is one of the ways my practice has changed, but I think fundamentally clients still need someone to help them discover who they are and through that, identify better career choices. We bring an independent eye, a non-judgmental ear and a questioning voice that assists clients to see their whole selves and what is possible.

I think the diversity of those working in the career development profession has continued to develop with practitioners specialising in niche areas more.

I have seen a much stronger focus on understanding borderless careers and collaborating with our near neighbours and those more widely dispersed and learning with and from them can only add value to our context here in Australia.



More recently, I think there has been a stronger focus on career practitioners being suitably qualified and experienced to work with clients and engage in continuing professional development. We all have a responsibility to ensure that clients are aware of our credentials in supporting them.

And I would like to think that we will all continue to raise the profile of career development and the benefits of good quality career support across the lifespan.

### **What do you love most about this profession and what would you love to see change?**

What do I love most? For me, I love the relationships I have gained through my involvement in career development. It has been life changing as I mentioned earlier. In south-east Queensland we have a wonderful network of practitioners who regularly cross-refer and support each other.

I also love the opportunity to learn with and from others who are all passionate about what we do, either through formal CPD or less formal gatherings.

I remember standing at the back of the room at the Cairns

conference just after I had been elected to the NEC and feeling an overwhelming sense of belonging. I had found my peeps!

### **What advice would you give to someone just starting out in career development practice?**

My advice would be to think about who you wish to serve and how. In my experience, private practice is hard work unless you diversify or are in a salaried situation. Depending on the hours you want to work, relying purely on seeing individual clients most likely won't provide enough income. And let's face it, we all need an income. I have found what works for me. And that's what I would encourage others do. Treat yourself as a client - think about your strength areas, your passions, your experience, what you have to offer and what you love doing. Then look at your own contexts and the practical aspects of running a business or get some good quality advice to help you.

And find a mentor! Good ones are priceless.

# WHAT IS LIFE MEMBERSHIP?

*And how do I achieve it?*



Life Membership is bestowed on a Professional or Fellow Member in recognition of their outstanding service and leadership to CDAA. It is not a category for which a member can apply; they must be nominated for consideration by another CDAA member.

## **What is the eligibility criteria?**

Life Member nominees shall evidence and be recognised by current CDAA Life members as:

- A pro-active Professional and/or Fellow Member of the Association for a minimum of 10 years;
- Consistently modelling the CDAA Code of Ethics and other Codes and Policies of the Association;
- Proactively and strongly promoting the CDAA and the purpose & ideals of the Association both internally and externally; and
- Having given exceptional and prolonged service in a National Executive position of CDAA, actively implementing innovative ideas to strengthen the Association.

## **Recognition**

Life Members are entitled to use one of the following post-nominal's following their name:

- FCDAA Life (where the Life Member was a Fellow member immediately preceding the awarding of Life Membership); or
- PCDAALife (where the Life Member was a Professional member immediately preceding the awarding of Life Membership); and
- Life Members are also entitled to use a CDAA logo specifically identifying the member to the Life category membership.

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# A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

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*Catriona Byrne*

This edited excerpt from a whitepaper published by Randstad RiseSmart (Gouldsberry 2019) highlights research and trends to inform and buoy the efforts of mature age workers and the professionals who coach them. Take heart that mature age workers – those who have been in the thick of business for 30 years or more - represent a still largely underused source of talent and a golden opportunity for businesses with the wisdom and internal structures to take advantage of this rich resource.

## **Attitude, not age**

RiseSmart has long had a catch-cry that it is not so much the age of a person that determines their working life, but their attitude, and the attitudes of potential employers. History is brimming with examples of ‘mature-age’ inventors, writers, scientists, businesspeople and others for whom age was and is merely a number.

Consider Mercury mission astronaut and U.S. Senator John Glenn who, at age 77, became the oldest human to venture into space on the Discovery space shuttle to participate in a series of tests on the aging process. Businessman Ray Kroc, at age 52, became ‘fast food’s founding father’ after joining McDonald’s and building it into a global franchise, an endeavour he ran until age 72. Ita Buttrose, at the age of 78 is the very active Chair of Australia’s national broadcaster – the ABC.

## **The changing face of the workforce**

The concept of retirement is evolving to include a variety of life and work structures, including full-time employment. This mindset shift is important for those wanting to work longer, but differently.

Who are mature workers? Age definitions vary, but for the purposes of this paper, we have defined them as those 55 and older, in line with the tail end of the baby boomer generation. But chronological age, as the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) has noted, is one-dimensional. Any definition must also consider an individual’s physical and mental health, career stage, job experience and life experience.

‘To respond to the exodus of mature talent that is

leaving the workforce, organisations need to put in place intentional strategies to engage and retain them, offering the opportunity to work longer but differently,’ according to Alison Hernandez, Managing Director APAC, RiseSmart. ‘Companies with valuable and highly skilled subject matter experts in their organisations should be igniting career conversations, not retirement conversations, and looking at ways to create a positive and productive late-career path. Otherwise, their competitors might be.’

Globally, 29% of organisations offer phased retirement or other employer programs that allow for a transition into retirement (AEGON 2018).

Creative retirement programs for employees who are preparing to transition out of the organisation can help them evaluate options and prepare for a variety of roles, such as:

- Entrepreneurship
- Gig, part-time or contract work consulting
- Volunteerism and philanthropy
- Board of directors’ member
- Full retirement

To enable these programs, companies may need to rethink existing employment structures and wage and benefits policies. Globally, 57% of workers aspire to a transition into retirement that involves working as they currently are or working part-time. Yet, only 26% are currently offered the option of moving from full-time to part-time work as an alternative to retirement (AEGON 2018).

By implementing a thoughtful talent mobility strategy, companies will also be better prepared for ongoing future success with millennials. This age group perceives work-life balance not as a phase of work, followed by a final season of non-work. Rather, this generation’s members, who will comprise three quarters of the workforce by 2025, envision a life spent working in multiple capacities with breaks taken at various intervals to relax, pursue creative endeavours

and reinvent themselves.

A comprehensive approach enables companies to be more agile in the near and long term. In the short term, flexible work structures allow employees to continue working, sometimes at a different pace, thereby helping companies retain the technical and social skills of older workers. In the long term, companies can grow or shrink their workforces as the economy fluctuates, thus providing greater agility in response to market conditions.

### The economy of demographics

In 2018, mature workers were the fastest growing segment of the US labour pool. While they represented just under a quarter of the workforce, they filled almost half of the nearly three million jobs gained by the economy that year — the largest share of any age group. By comparison, workers age 25-54, who make up nearly two thirds of the workforce, accounted for 45% of the jobs gained. By the end of the year, almost 40% of people aged 55 and older were working, the highest level since 1961 (Davidson 2019).

### More people

The trend of mature individuals working longer shows no signs of slowing. By the year 2020, 13 countries will have populations where about a third of citizens will be over age 65, including major economic powers such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany and South Korea. By 2050, the percentage of the worldwide population over age 65 will approximately double from what it is today to nearly 17% —about 1.6 billion in all. In short, people are living longer and the birth-rate is falling. By the year 2050, 22% of the workforce will be over age 55, representing a 250% increase from today (Bersin 2019).

### More financial need

As people live longer, they will need to continue earning wages later in life to manage financially. The global survey from AEGON asserts that older employees are working longer to continue saving money and to delay drawing down their retirement benefits and savings. While the 2008 recession brought older workers back into the labour market after their retirement savings had been hobbled (only a quarter of people age 55 and older have enough money to retire on), many have also returned because their vision of 'retirement' incorporates work in some form or another. They are motivated by a desire to 'give back' and achieve personal fulfilment. Age has become merely a number.

### More spending

While hiring statistics clearly show an increase in the numbers of mature individuals staying on the job or returning to work, older workers remain an underutilised treasure for businesses. The exceptions are countries such as Iceland, Sweden, and New Zealand, where more than three quarters of the over-55 population work (PwC 2018). Even though millennials will soon overtake baby boomers in sheer size, boomers outstrip their younger counterparts in spending power. In 2015, boomers accounted for near half the GDP in the U.S. Consumers age 60 and over are expected to reach a 33% share of aggregate spending by 2025. Part of this increase is driven by the fact that more people are working later in life.

In the OECD countries, the PwC Golden Age index estimates that raising the employment rate for individuals 55 and older could result in a long-term GDP gain of \$3.5 trillion, thus increasing consumer spending power and tax revenues.

The reality for businesses is that competitive advantage will, in part, be driven by having products, services and employees that mirror the customers they serve. It is also a well-established fact that multigenerational work teams achieve higher productivity and organisational performance.

### The hard currency of social skills

While technical skills, especially technical ones, are needed in an era dominated by rapid technological change, such as AI and the digitalisation of the workplace, employers increasingly want people who can communicate, problem solve and innovate—social skills that can't be taught. According to numerous surveys, such as LinkedIn's 2018 U.S. Emerging Jobs Report, the largest skills gaps are social skills. While many technical skills can be learned—and will need to be re-thought, re-taught and upgraded over the course of an individual's career—social skills are primarily cultivated, tempered and refined through real-world business experiences and life experiences. The yield: maturity and wisdom that's not available from a course or webinar.

'Often it is not the explicit knowledge that is most highly sought after, but the tacit knowledge,' Alison says. 'The lessons learned, the go-to people in their internal and external networks, the project post-mortems. There is gold in identifying what knowledge is powerful and how it can be successfully shared with future generations in

“The trend of mature individuals working longer shows no signs of slowing.”

the workforce.'

### Overcoming outdated stereotypes and bias

The abundance of statistical data suggests that there is great value in retaining or hiring mature workers. Yet, multiple studies have shown that despite legal protections and many positive changes, we have a long way to go. Mature employees still experience widespread age bias in recruitment, hiring and promotion, and through involuntary job separation (Terrell 2017). Older women face even greater job bias because of the compounding effect of sex discrimination. A quick search online yields ample evidence, news and anecdotal stories of these ongoing problems.

The myths around mature workers are many: They are harder to train (meaning slower to learn) and are technology-skills challenged. They are less engaged, productive, flexible and loyal than their youthful counterparts. They have higher accident rates and are not cost effective to hire.

Let's dissect each one of these preconceived notions.

#### Training

Continuous learning, reskilling and upskilling will become the new normal as the effects of digitalisation of the workplace, automation and AI take full effect. PwC estimates that up to 20% of jobs held by older workers are at risk due to automation in developed countries and developing nations alike.

Much more can be and will need to be done in this area to ensure that mature workers are treated inclusively and fairly when it comes to retraining, particularly for technical skills. Baby boomers developed—and used—technologies such as the scanning microscope, DNA fingerprinting, semiconductors, computers and the World Wide Web. Historically, boomers are one of the most educated, technically competent labour groups ever available to industry.

'Mature workers represent a generation who have experienced an incredible amount of change in their lifetimes, and can adapt and flex just as well as younger generations if given the opportunity and investment,' Alison says.

The idea that older employees cannot keep up with technical demands is not supported by the science. Researchers at the Montreal Neurological Institute and

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*The engagement level of mature employees is more than 65%, compared with 58-60% for younger employees...*  
”

Hospital have examined the effects of aging on brain neuroplasticity, which is necessary for learning. 'Our research showed that the aging brain is, contrary to a widely held notion, more plastic than the young adult brain,' Dr. Mike Cisneros-Franco says. What researchers did find was that increased plasticity meant that changes achieved through training were unstable, both easy to achieve and easy to reverse.

Similar research by the National Institutes of Health supports the position that older adults can learn new tasks as easily as younger workers, and suggests that there are training methods that can optimise long-term retention and memory (Aumann 2008). Perhaps research

such as this will guide the way training is designed and conducted for various employee age groups to maximise outcomes.

#### Engagement

The engagement level of mature employees is more than 65%, compared with 58-60% for younger employees, according to research by AARP. The Families and Work Institute found that mature workers do not want to 'coast' in their jobs; to the contrary, both retirement and non-retirement age employees listed 'job challenge and learning opportunities' as the most critical factors to engagement. Mature workers who had not yet reached retirement age cited a climate of trust and respect, supervisor task support and autonomy as critical to engagement (Ameriks 2018).

#### Productivity

In our survey, 'work ethic' ranked third as the top social skill desired by employers, exceeded in importance only by communication and leadership. And 71% strongly agreed that mature workers bring a strong work ethic to their roles. Other studies have debunked the perception that mature employees are less productive, instead finding that these workers bring to their roles more experience and maturity, a commitment to getting the job done and a strong work ethic.

Sometimes, simple adjustments in work environments can boost productivity. BMW, for example, increased productivity by 7% on an assembly line staffed with mature workers simply by providing cushioned floors and adjustable work benches.

#### Flexibility

Mature employees are not more resistant to change

than their younger counterparts.

Both groups show an equal inclination toward innovation. A German study found that there is no relationship between age and resistance to change among blue-collar workers. Among white-collar workers, mature employees were less resistant to change than younger employees (SHRM 2014).

When it comes to scheduling flexibility, mature workers, including those who have been retired for a while, show a strong willingness to work, particularly if they can have flexible schedules. According to a recent study from the National Bureau of Economic Research, about 60% would be willing to return to work if they had a flexible schedule, and 20% would be willing to take a 20% hourly wage cut to do so (Ameriks 2018). Home Depot and others, such as CVS, provide flexible scheduling and part-time positions as a way of engaging mature workers. Baby boomers also tend to be at a life stage where they may have more financial resources and fewer responsibilities, making them more open to part-time, project or gig work.

### Loyalty

A loss of organisational loyalty can have dramatic implications when employees leave. Not only does the business suffer a financial loss from having to recruit, hire, onboard and train new employees, but departing talent may take skills and knowledge to competitors. Because mature workers tend to be happier and more settled in their roles, they are less likely to leave an organisation that treats them equitably. Studies completed by the Australian Government reveal that people over the age of 45 tend to stay with an employer 2.4 times as long as younger employees (Greber 2017), which can bring reliability and stability to an organisation, especially in a time of talent scarcity.

### Accident rates and absenteeism

The seriousness of health issues tends to increase with age, and it may take mature workers longer to return to work after an injury. It is equally true that mature workers have fewer sick days and voluntary absences. They are also less prone to workplace aggression and substance abuse. The rate of mental health problems and health-related behaviours are similar for mature employees and younger workers (SHRM 2014).

### The bottom line

The perception that mature workers are more costly than younger ones does not hold true when tested against the facts. An AARP study revealed that hiring and retaining workers over age 50 only raises annual labour costs by 1% or less. When other factors are weighed, such as higher engagement, productivity and loyalty, the benefits of adding mature employees to the employment rolls may far outweigh the initial costs (Wilkie 2015). In

addition, the value of retaining mature workers with institutional and mission-critical knowledge and social skills, while technical to quantify, is well-suited to the growing number of knowledge- and service-based jobs, as these tend to favour individuals with broad life and work experiences. In the end, a skilled individual should always be in demand, no matter the age.

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*This is an excerpt adapted and edited by Catriona Byrne, Creative Director, Randstad RiseSmart Australia from an original whitepaper published by Randstad RiseSmart on 12 September 2019. Randstad RiseSmart is a corporate partner of CDAA.*

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# THE THREE KEY LEVERS FOR BEATING GENDER BIAS



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Diversity of people and different ways of thinking improve accuracy of predictions, problem-solving, number and value of options and ideas generated, critical thinking, creativity and the ability to verify the truth (increasingly important in our times). If you do the kind of work that needs any of these – is there any marketing that doesn't? – you need diversity. You need gender diversity, and every other kind you can get. The problem is that most gender bias is unconscious which makes it hard to know when it's happening. Getting proof is tricky, and usually happens in retrospect, if at all.

through these shared beliefs and norms. As a design-oriented organisation, HASSELL needs creativity, and that means they need their people to be constantly learning and open to new ideas. In their firm, there's a clear intent to collaborate and they rely on a multi-disciplinary approach to promote it. How inclusive is your culture? Is it more likely that groups of similar people meet to discuss ideas and solve problems, or that people with different perspectives are brought together to identify new solutions? Make it the latter.

Rather than stop it in its tracks, or try to clean up afterwards, try these three proactive levers to reduce bias from happening. They are: knowing the value of diversity to the real work of your organisation, promoting an inclusive culture and behaviours, and actively championing diversity.

## Know the real value of diversity to your work

Can you articulate the particular value that diversity contributes to your work? If you can't, it's harder to make the case for it. When you can, it starts to look self-evident. In 2016 BHP committed to achieving gender balance. One in six employees was female; in February 2020, one in four were. Their most diverse and inclusive teams:

- delivered 67% fewer recordable injuries
- reported a 21% higher sense of pride
- had 28% lower unplanned absences
- had a work delivery rate 11% higher than others.

They're tracking the difference inclusion makes and it looks pretty compelling.

## Promote an inclusive culture and behaviours

Cultural norms define what we should do, what will be accepted or rejected in a group. Culture guides activity

*You need gender diversity, and every other kind you can get. The problem is that most gender bias is unconscious which makes it hard to know when it's happening.*

## Champion diversity

As CMO, you have the opportunity to leverage the power of your position to advocate for change. The more senior you are the more your voice carries authority and persuasive power. Use it! The more vocal and active you are in support of gender balance, the greater your ability to shift hearts and minds.

If you are a male champion, your advocacy reduces the perceived threat to other men. If Sally advocates for gender-balance, men who are already on board will listen and may be persuaded to support or follow her advocacy. Men who are opposed to equality are much less likely to follow. However, if Mike advocates for equality those men are more likely to listen and follow his advice. The role of Champions

in calling out gender bias, and stopping it, is equally critical.

Being a Champion is not a personal PR campaign; with it come challenges. When people don't do the right thing, Champions get straight on to it. A Champion doesn't walk past it, no matter how small it is. If you articulate the value of gender diversity clearly, promote inclusion and champion diversity, you're not just beating bias, you're making women more welcome in your workplace, and you're much more likely to achieve the bonus of diversity - better, more innovative work.

# From the CDAA Website...

If you haven't already visited the Career Panorama blog, you can catch a glimpse below through the selected post sneak peaks.



Joanna Maxwell

## Helping people over 40 rethink their careers

During my time as a career adviser, I specialised in helping older Australians rethink their careers and navigate the changing world of work. Now I work in age discrimination and so I see the picture from a different angle.

Australians are increasingly living and working longer. In 2018, Australians 65+ had a workforce participation rate of 13%, compared with 8% in 2006. 20% of people over 70 still work – including 6% of those over 100 years old.

[READ MORE](#)

## Tips in working with men for helping professionals: Creating male-friendly services

It is relatively rare in Australia for helping professionals to receive training on how to work with men as a diversity group. Most training for practice might be regarded as gender blind. Yet if we take a multicultural lens to gender, we can gain insights for how to better adapt services for both men (and women). In this article, I focus on men, and specifically those who hold more traditional male values. The

[READ MORE](#)



Dr Nathan Beel PhD

## STORE

The website also hosts an online store that provides a variety of resources for members including:



Webinar Recordings



Past ACP Editions



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Half-day Workshops

# CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

New approaches and tools to assist practitioners and policy makers deal with the increasingly complex, contradictory, and contested nature of career development for all



## Presented by Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE

a leading UK, European and international career development expert

(Twitter: [@DeirdreTalks](#); Blog: <http://dmhassociates.org/blog>; Website: [www.dmhassociates.org](http://www.dmhassociates.org))

The Career Development Association of Australia (CDAA), is excited to host five unique opportunities to learn and network in a practical and interactive half-day workshop.

### Learnings:

- Explore the meaning of sustainable career development for all in the current environment; the pursuit of happiness, and identify formation and transformation
- Access tools, techniques and approaches designed to strengthen career development, both within and outside of the workplace, with increasingly diverse client groups
- Review strategies that can be used with clients to help them achieve what they never believed they could
- Examine technological advances reshaping industries and societal behaviours that impact on how individuals are pursuing their careers
- Gain robust evidence and 'best practice principles' drawn from international career development policies, research and practice in education, skills and employment

### The Workshops:

The workshops will be practical and interactive and will address ways in which career practitioners, communities and nations can respond to the immense opportunities and challenges posed by demographic, cultural and social changes in society.

### Sessions

- Perth:** Monday 4 May, 8.30am - 12.30pm, Mantra on Murray
- Adelaide:** Wednesday 6 May, 1pm - 5pm, Adina Apartment
- Melbourne:** Friday 8 May, 10am - 3pm, Oaks on Collins
- Sydney:** Monday 11 May, 1pm - 5pm, Rydges Sydney Central
- Brisbane:** Wednesday 13 May, 2.30pm - 6.30pm, The Sebel

To register, visit [www.cdaa.org.au](http://www.cdaa.org.au) | Cost: CDAA Members & Partners \$200, Non-Members \$250

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