

Career Practitioners Needed to Reduce Gender Gap in STEM Careers

5 October 2016

Greater emphasis must be placed on career development in schools and higher education to reduce the continued gender gap in STEM Careers, according to the Career Development Association of Australia.

[New research by the Women in New South Wales unit of the Department of Health](#), demonstrated that in 2015, just 31.3 per cent of girls completed STEM subjects compared to 45.5 per cent of boys

Similarly, in higher education STEM-related fields made up just 36.5 per cent of women's undergraduate course completions, compared with 44.5 per cent of men's.

CDAA spokesperson Rebecca Fraser said qualified career practitioners can help reduce this gender gap by providing quality and effective career advice.

"Qualified practitioners are trained to interpret labour market information that can assist clients make effective career decisions regardless of gender," Ms Fraser.

"Our members are aware that just 16 per cent of the current Australian STEM workforce are female with around half of current occupations expected to be redundant by 2025.

"Therefore, the knowledge and skills of career practitioners is going to be necessary to help reduce this gender gap to ensure Australia has the necessary skills for the future."

Ms Fraser said CDAA members are already contributing to reducing the gender gap, however more needed to be done to promote career development in schools and higher education.

"For example in schools, we need to move away from this system of sporadic career advice in schools, often taught by already overstretched teaching staff," Ms Fraser said.

Prior to the federal election, the Government promised to develop a National Career Education Strategy with consultation from career professionals and to invest \$31.2 million in internships and post-school career advice to support women and girls choosing to work and study in STEM industries.

Ms Fraser said the Association looks forward to working with the Government on these initiatives now they have been elected back into government.

The Career Development Association of Australia (CDAA) commenced as the Australian Association of Career Counsellors in 1989, and is Australia's largest cross-sectoral association of career development professionals working in a diverse range of roles, delivering services in industry, government, education, employment programs and community organisations. The primary purpose of the CDAA is to support its members by leading, building and growing the career development profession.

Georgia Kelly-Bakker, Communication & Events Officer CDAA

Phone: 08 82116961 | 0415 619 180

Email: communications@cdaa.org.au