

Country Name: Australia

Australian Country team

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Australian Country Paper

Section 1	A brief outline of your country – demographics, population and career service provision – target groups and providers
<p>Geography</p> <p>Australia is the sixth largest country in the world, an island, and a continent located in Oceania.</p> <p>Demography</p> <p>Australia is governed through a ‘federal’ system with responsibility divided between the Australian Government and six state and two territory governments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population: 22.5 million • Growth: 1.5% annually • Majority of the population in major state capitals • Highly multicultural, with 24% of the population born outside of Australia • New South Wales has the largest population (7 million) and the Northern Territory the smallest (229,900). <p>Labour market</p> <p>In July 2011, unemployment was 5.1% nationally (11.2% for 15-24 year olds) with 8,055,100 15-69 year olds in full time employment and 3,395,400 in part-time employment.</p> <p>Education</p> <p>In 2010 approximately 3,510,900 young people were in Australian schools. In 2010, 85.6% of 20-24 year olds had attained a Year 12 or equivalent (Certificate II) qualification and the Government has set a target to increase this to 90% by 2015. Australia has 39 Universities and over 200 publicly funded vocational education and training institutions (VET). In 2010, 34.2% of 25 to 34 year olds had attained a higher education qualification at bachelor level or above. By 2025, the Australian Government aims to increase this to 40%.</p>	

Main national career guidance services

The Australian Government has a leadership role in career development working with states and territories to implement identified priorities and national resources, such as *myfuture*, the national career information website and the Experience+ Hotline for mature age workers.

State and territory governments are responsible for providing career programs in schools. For example, in the state of New South Wales the School to Work program provides students in government secondary schools with an entitlement to career development and transition planning services. Most vocational education and training institutions and universities have a career service, and a number of private career practitioners provide services across the country.

Section 2	Taking each of the four general symposium themes (see below), describe the two greatest strengths and two greatest weaknesses relating to each theme in your country
Theme 1: Political, economic and social changes and the changing role of career guidance and career guidance policies	
Strength 1	Weakness 1
<p>The Australian Government and State/Territory Governments are committed to improving career guidance policies at a national level and state/territory levels particularly through the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians and the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions.</p> <p>The South Australian Certificate of Education has re-focused the attention of educators on career development through improved vocational education and training pathways and personal learning plans.</p> <p>Victoria also provides a broad range of education and training options and career development support for young people.</p>	<p>Australia consists of eight States and Territories therefore a national agreement and national consistency must involve many different portfolios across each state and territory and a shared understanding of the benefits of strong career development practice.</p> <p>Although policy intentions may be clear, often the implementation of these policies is not achieved in a systemic way across the eight states and territories.</p> <p>The career development agenda is integral to many sectors and government policies. However current government infrastructure separates policy agendas for employment, vocational education and training, higher education and schools.</p>
Strength 2	Weakness 2
<p>The Australian Government in consultation with key stakeholders is currently developing a National Career Development Strategy to inform future policy and practice.</p> <p>This process included analysis of current career development service provision, the role of business, governance, use of technology, and professionalisation of the career industry. Existing gaps have been assessed in order to develop a national strategy that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • builds on the current landscape and improves career development for young people aged 5-24 • links reforms, and • influences future policy development in areas of importance such as productivity, social justice and workforce development. 	<p>Australia is not currently using emerging technology to cater for the variety of client demographics. Current and emerging technologies including social networking via facebook, twitter, sms, coupled with messenger functionalities for web chatting and instant messaging, are underutilised in the current career development landscape.</p> <p>Clients seeking career development services include long term unemployed, adults not in education, rural and remote Australians, people with disabilities and culturally and linguistically diverse/refugee communities. These diverse groups would benefit from emerging technology and access to quality career development support.</p>

Theme 2: Lifelong guidance policy as a part of integrated human resource development policies – challenges and opportunities	
Strength 1	Weakness 1
<p>Business and industry are beginning to recognise the value of workforce development and how with strong career development long term rewards translate into future growth and prosperity of individual organisations and the economy as a whole.</p> <p>Skills Australia is an independent statutory body, providing advice to the Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Jobs and Workplace Relations on Australia’s current, emerging and future workforce skills needs and workforce development needs.</p> <p>Following Victoria, other states are beginning to implement reforms to their vocational education and training systems including elements such as a student entitlement, greater contestability for funding and a demand driven funding model.</p>	<p>There is no framework to support the business sector to develop strategic long-term human resource policies.</p> <p>Small to medium enterprises have a limited knowledge of the relevance and importance of career development to the overall achievement of their businesses.</p> <p>Strategic workforce planning for staff, providing better support and career guidance is lacking. The diversity and competitiveness of the private sector mitigates against staff development strategies across workplaces. Workplaces can range from excellent to non-existent in their career development practices.</p>
Strength 2	Weakness 2
<p>The development of various career development frameworks that can be flexibly implemented has assisted communities at a local level to make the connection between career development and employability, e.g., the state of Victoria acknowledging young people as the future workforce.</p> <p>Victoria has developed a Careers Curriculum Framework (CCF) for young people in Years 7-12 and in vocational education and training that provides the foundation for lifelong career development. The Framework is based on the Australian Blueprint for Career Development and supports the work of teachers, trainers and careers practitioners in the preparation of young people to make a successful transition into further education, training or employment.</p>	<p>There is no national mandated strategic approach to career development service delivery in the employment, university, vocational education and training, and school sectors.</p> <p>Consequently not all people have access to quality career development services.</p> <p>In addition there is no national robust mechanism to ensure career services in universities, vocational education and training and schooling sectors meet quality benchmarks. Some states have regional specific benchmarks (e.g. Victoria).</p>

Theme 3: The changing world and the changing role of career guidance – skills and competencies for lifelong guidance practitioners	
Strength 1	Weakness 1
<p>The Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations funded the development of national standards for career practitioners through the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA), which will be in place by 1 January 2012. This has provided the impetus for the career development industry to professionalise its workforce.</p>	<p>Although the Australian Government funded the professional standards, this has not translated into workforce development of the career industry and regulation/legislation of the qualifications of practitioners (e.g., issues with paraprofessionals and lack of qualifications). Some professions, e.g., psychology, have a registration process that is independent of professional associations. A similar process may be an option for future consideration.</p> <p>There is also a need for a mechanism to continually inspire an increased professionalisation of the industry. This mechanism may require further refinement and continuous improvement of the standards with a particular focus on the diversity and specialisation of roles within the career industry.</p>
Strength 2	Weakness 2
<p>In some states additional support for improvements across sectors have been provided to communities by tailoring career development at a local level.</p> <p>Victoria is enhancing the capacity of career practitioners to deliver effective career development to young people in schools, vocational education and training through study grants for the Graduate Certificate in Career Development and the support of Regional Career Development Officers.</p> <p>In Western Australia, 14 Workforce Development Centres provide free career advice and training information via multiple delivery channels, including walk in, face to face delivery, telephone services and online services.</p>	<p>Due to the broad scope of the career development industry there are issues around specialisation requirements of practitioners particularly to tailor services for key cohorts and improve access to services for these cohorts e.g. rural and remote, indigenous, adults not in education, culturally and linguistically diverse/refugee, early intervention, special needs/disabilities, and long term unemployed.</p> <p>Furthermore there is a lack of clarity around the specific needs of these cohorts.</p>

Theme 4: Evidence-based practice; evidence-based policies	
Strength 1	Weakness 1
<p>There is a research base in the education sector in Australia that has led to an Australian Government commitment to much needed infrastructure to support lifelong guidance, e.g., myfuture, the Australian Blueprint for Career Development, a range of government programs targeting transition from school and older workers.</p> <p>Similar research bases in the states and territories have influenced their career development initiatives.</p>	<p>Existing research is fragmented and has not focused on policy issues that will inform future directions for the career development agenda in Australia. Some research has focused on youth and higher education with limited research on the workforce or a lifelong agenda.</p> <p>There has been little research that examines potential synergies between career development research and research in other fields, e.g. labour market research.</p>
Strength 2	Weakness 2
<p>There is a general recognition of the importance of evidence-based policies and the use of technology to facilitate sharing of information.</p> <p>Evidence-based research that supports policy development is critical particularly with federal and state and territory governments having a focus on young people, for example with the social inclusion and productivity agendas over the last few years.</p> <p>The National Career Development Strategy research project has focused on gathering evidence to guide the development of a national approach to career development. The evidence has looked at the role of technology; the career needs and wants of young people aged 5-24 years; their parents; career practitioners; teachers and employers.</p>	<p>Current research has not informed solutions/improvements to practice given the academic nature of the research and the area of research. Career research is largely dependent on individual researchers and follows their specific and often narrow area of interest.</p> <p>There is a great need in Australia for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) synthesis of the research to inform policy and practice b) the identification of substantiated gaps to enable specific targeted research to be commissioned c) action based research to include career practitioners d) a process that ensures research is accessible in a useful and user friendly way.

Section 3	Looking at the themes, prioritise them according to the most important ones for your country team to explore further and learn about at the symposium. (1= most important – 4 = least important)
Political, economic and social changes and the changing role of career guidance and career guidance policies	1
Lifelong guidance policy as a part of integrated human resource development policies – challenges and opportunities	3
The changing world and the changing role of career guidance – skills and competencies for lifelong guidance practitioners	4
Evidence-based practice; evidence-based policies	2

Section 4	Thinking about the themes, describe up to three high-level key public policy and/or practice initiatives currently being advanced or considered in your country.
<p>High-level key public policy/practice initiative 1</p> <p>Under the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations is developing a National Career Development Strategy to provide improved and strategic career development support to all young Australians (aged 5-24 years). Guiding the formulation of the Strategy is a Research Project due for completion in October 2011, that will provide an evidence base for the most effective national approach. The Strategy is anticipated to identify/address: existing gaps in service provision, use of technology, social inclusion, equity of access, quality of implementation, and evidence and governance issues.</p>	
<p>Linked most closely to Themes 1 and 4.</p>	
<p>High-level key public policy/practice initiative 2</p> <p>VIC example</p> <p>In Victoria Regional Career Development Officers (RCDOs) and Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) are improving career development at a local level.</p> <p>An RCDO is employed in each of the nine Department of Education and Early Childhood regional offices to support all education and training providers to drive system and service improvements and increase the capacity of careers practitioners to deliver improved career development services to young people in the long term, including through the Careers Curriculum Framework implementation.</p> <p>Victoria has also encouraged not only a whole-school approach to career development but also emphasises the critical importance of parental and community engagement and the support of networks such as the 31 Local Learning and Employment Networks to support the career development of young people.</p>	
<p>Linked most closely to Theme 3.</p>	
<p>High-level key public policy/practice initiative 3</p> <p>Industry example - CDAA</p> <p><u>Workforce development</u> of the profession – The National Standards for Career Development Practitioners have resulted in the development of policies and processes that guide the quality of educational qualifications for professional status through an endorsement process including mandated Continuing Professional Development of practitioners. These Standards will be in place by 1 January 2012 by professional associations and provide the foundation for the development of the career guidance workforce.</p> <p>The Career Development Association of Australia is undertaking further workforce development initiatives in building leadership development, partnerships with employer and industry bodies and improving specialist capability of practitioners to work with groups including indigenous people.</p>	
<p>Linked most closely to Theme 3.</p>	

Section 5	Future Focus – what are the key elements of your team’s overall vision for career policy, practice and research in your country?
<p>Whole-of-life quality framework with mechanisms to strengthen partnerships between governments, employers, communities, and the career development industry supported by evidence and practice that positions career development central to the nation’s future prosperity.</p>	