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Time for a policy on Career Development

Every new government brings about change and new directions in public policy. This government will be no exception. Already there is a change in Ministry focus on education and early signs of at least a possibility of improved consultation with non government stakeholders such as CICA.

In this dynamic landscape there are a larger number of political players with influence over the national agenda including independents, the Greens and state governments. Within government, Ministers with a responsibility for the careers agenda currently include Senator The Hon Chris Evans, The Hon Peter Garrett MP, Senator The Hon Mark Arbib, The Hon Kate Ellis MP, The Hon Jenny Macklin MP, The Hon Simon Crean MP, and The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP. Clearly there is a real opportunity for career development issues and priorities to be heard across a far broader range of agendas.

Certainly, the gaps are easy to spot. Regional and remote communities could do with better access to career services along with outer suburbs of every major city. Culturally appropriate career services for indigenous communities need further development; career services for mature age workers need development as do services for the large number of Australians undertaking vocational education and training.

It's clearly time for Australia to have in place a national career development policy that recognises the value of equipping all Australians with the skills and services to effectively manage and make informed decisions about their work and learning choices throughout their lives.

Clearly, national career programs and policies are weaker where there is a lack of input from career practitioners. There are examples of government funded programs targeted at disadvantaged groups where no one is required to be qualified to give careers advice. There are other examples of progress being impacted by departmental restructure or good practice being lost within a sea of competing career related programs unlinked to a national career development system.

DEEWR will soon embark on a review of its current range of national career development initiatives including any future funding of organisations like CICA. In doing so an opportunity exists to confirm the importance of quality assurance as part of the program structure and also highlight the need for a specific national career development policy.

CICA website

The new CICA website (www.cica.org.au) was launched recently including a vibrant new look, new content and increased functionality.

National Career Development Week (NCDW)

After an extremely successful NCDW 2010 the NCDW Team are busy planning NCDW 2011. What can you expect in the coming months from the National Career Development Week Campaign (NCDW)? It's not too late to register 2010 events nor is it too early to register 2011 events as although the calendar tells us that we are into end-of year countdown, like many of you, the NCDW Team are already planning 2011 activities.

During October the NCDW website (www.ncdw.com.au) will be undergoing a navigation refresh to make it easier to locate and use the vast number of resources. There will also be new resources including more career factsheets, updated event planning factsheets, new event templates, videos, podcasts and more. A new initiative in 2011 will be a regular webinar series providing a unique opportunity to engage in interactive event planning workshops run by the NCDW Team. NCDW will also be sending out specially tailored newsletters in the coming months to meet a variety of specific NCDW audience needs.

NCDW 2011 celebration week will take place from 16 to 22 May, 2011. The NCDW Campaign is an initiative of the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) and sponsored by the Australian Government.

NCDW has launched the *AusCareerWeek* page on Facebook which features the latest updates and news on the NCDW Campaign, its activities and its ambassadors. You can check out upcoming NCDW events and activities, read the regular careers in the news updates and discussion topics, watch a video from our ambassadors or follow the links to our webpage or YouTube Channel (*AusCareerWeek*).

You can subscribe to the NCDW Newsletter through the NCDW website – www.ncdw.com.au

Professional Standards

CICA is progressing with the implementation of standards for career practitioners. The next update on progress will be distributed in November. All CICA member associations have in place processes for ensuring their members meet professional standards. CICA is also investigating a range of quality assurance mechanisms to contribute to quality improvement in government and private sector programs. CICA is committed to ensuring that staff who have the task of providing careers advice and other career related services meet minimum standards. We are particularly keen to encourage a reduction in the use of unqualified career practitioners in programs that target low SES and other disadvantaged groups.

National Career Development Strategy

The DEEWR review of all of its career programs is an important initiative and one that CICA will engage with and support. The Commonwealth Government has been instrumental in moving a national career agenda forward to achieve outcomes against national priorities but there is more to be done. The review will take place over the next 12 months. We are particularly interested in highlighting examples of good practice across the country and opportunities for improvement. If you have examples that you would like to share please contact peter.tatham@cica.org.au.

VET needs to strengthen career services

1 in 3 students take a VET course as part of their HSC. 4 in 10 of all VET in Schools graduates make an immediate transition to post school VET. This is good news but the transition to completion of certificate courses is a bumpy road.

Recently, NCVET released a report on the likelihood of completing a VET course (see http://www.ncver.edu.au/popups/limit_download.php?file=statistics/vet/publications/2272a.html)

Key Messages:

- The national estimated completion rate of VET course enrolments at certificate I level or above commencing in 2005 is 27.1%. For full-time VET students aged 25 years and under in 2005, this rate is 34.7%.
- When cut by fields of education, the completion rates in 2005 range from 13.3% (for course enrolments in Mixed field programs) to 48.3% (for course enrolments in Education).
- Course enrolments at certificate III level had the highest rate of completion at 33.5% compared with other qualification levels.

The report made an interesting observation “One of the distinctive characteristics of the VET sector is that many students wish to learn specific skills and have no intention of completing a full qualification. For these students a more sensible measure of success is the proportion of modules passed (the load pass rate). Overall, the load pass rate of 2005 enrolments was 79.1%.”

Work/Life webinar by Barbara Pocock

Gillian Considine from Mission Australia and Elyane Palmer from the Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Worker's Union will take part in a discussion as part of Professor Barbara Pocock's webinar on Friday, 22 October 2010. Barbara's presentation will consider factors that affect the skill development and utilisation of low paid workers in the aged care, food processing and retail sectors in Australia. For further information and to register visit <http://www.ncver.edu.au/newsevents/webinar/2010.html>

NCVER Research Funding Round closing soon

NCVER is seeking the high quality researchers to undertake a three-year program of research aligned to the five new national research priorities. Established research centres, or consortia formed in response to this request, are eligible to apply. A total budget in the order of AUD \$2.75 million is available. Proposals to be submitted by close of business 11 October 2010. For further information, please visit <http://www.ncver.edu.au/research/funding.html>

Asia Pacific career development policy network

In April 2011 CICA will co-host a meeting to take the next steps in the formation of an Asia Pacific career development policy network. Globally, there are many formal and informal regional career development networks including a Pacific careers network but there is now an opportunity to develop a broader Asia-Pacific career development network. It is important because we are at a time in our regional history when many of the citizens of the region are working and learning across several countries throughout their career. As skills shortages, demographic issues and other factors impact on how work is undertaken, the role of career development will become increasingly important to assist people of all ages to make informed learning and work choices. In recent times there have been a number of informal meetings to discuss how an Asia Pacific career development policy network could be established - most recently at the IAEVG conference in San Francisco. In addition, in 2009 at the 5th International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy in New Zealand a meeting was held by representatives of Pacific Island nations to establish a Pacific Career Development Network. An important next step is to build on work that has already taken place to develop and establish an Asia Pacific network to share policy research and best practice. A potential model for this network is the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (<http://ktl.jyu.fi/ktl/elgpn>). An Asia Pacific career development policy network may also look to research of more culturally appropriate models of career service delivery.

Over the next few months discussion papers and other information will be developed and disseminated for pre-meeting discussions.

Korean Studies Workshop for Oceania Educators

Korea is Australia's 6th largest trading partner and it is likely that levels of co-operation and partnership will continue to gain strength over the coming decades. One example is the Korean Studies Workshop for Oceania Educators coordinated by The Asia Education Foundation and funded by the Korea Foundation. Essentially, this workshop is concentrated over a two week period and 10-12 hours per day and is a great learning experience and CICA was invited to take part in the 2010 program.

In Korea, career education is currently being introduced into the school curriculum. Employment and career development subjects are undertaken as an elective extracurricular subject for two hours per week for one semester - a total of 68 hours.

One interesting work change program is the Smart Work initiative - within five years Korea will have a sufficiently networked WiFi environment for around 30% of the public sector workforce to work from home for at least part of their working week or at nearby "Smart Work" centres.

In schools, the student day is much longer than in Australia often ending at around 10.00pm in the evenings because most students attend an after school program/academy (hagwon) for several hours each evening. Costs can be considerable and the key focus is to prepare for University entrance (College Scholastic Ability Test also known as *Suneung*).

Getting into a good university such as Seoul National University, University of Korea or Ewha is important for a student's future career. Accordingly, for some Korean students, studying overseas may be a fallback position. There is therefore quite a complex marketing challenge in play for Australian Universities. Interestingly, around 75,000 foreign students are currently studying at Korean Universities. For more information contact Peter Tatham (peter.tatham@cica.org.au)

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