What choice? An evaluation of career development services for young people

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Publisher's note

Additional information relating to this research is available in *What choice? An evaluation of career development services for young people: Support document*. It can be accessed from NCVER's website <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1943.html>.

To find other material of interest, search VOCED (the UNESCO/NCVER international database <http://www.voced.edu.au>) using the following keywords: *career development; youth; decision making; vocational guidance; skill development; transition from school to work.*

Foreword

Assisting Australia's youth to make a smooth transition into work and giving them skills to manage their career paths through their working lives is a high priority for the Australian Government. To this end, the government is making a significant investment in developing career resources and services. This includes developing websites, such as *Job Guide* and *myfuture,* which assist young people to identify potential career paths and the skills they will need to succeed in these paths, and supporting the Australian career industry to build its expertise and professionalism.

This report, funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations on behalf of the Australian Government and state and territory governments and undertaken through the National Vocational Education and Training Research and Evaluation program, provides a timely review of the effectiveness of career development services in Australia. It examines these services from both the training providers' point of view and the viewpoint of the young people who are accessing career development services, looking particularly at the promotion of vocational education and training opportunities.

The findings reveal that young people want to manage their own careers and are therefore inclined to use services that are free, convenient and relevant. This has implications for the design of websites, which need to contain not just information but also easy-to-use assessment tools, and for career professionals, who need to be able to help young people make the best of those tools.

Both the young people involved in this study and the providers considered that there was not a satisfactory level of information about opportunities in vocational education and training. This reinforces the message coming from other studies that there is more work to be done in marketing the benefits of vocational education and training to young people, their parents and teachers.

This study will be of particular interest to those involved in developing or providing career development services to young people. Readers interested in the area of career development may also find the following reports useful:

✧ Harris, R, Rainey, L & Sumner, R 2006, *Crazy paving or stepping stones? Learning pathways within and between vocational education and training and higher education*, NCVER, Adelaide.

✧ Martin, B 2007, *Skill acquisition and use across the life course: Current trends, future prospects*, NCVER, Adelaide.

✧ Miles Morgan (forthcoming), *Exploring career management competence and the course expectations of VET students*, NCVER, Adelaide.

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Key messages

This study evaluates a selection of career development services available to young people in Australia. It examines the characteristics of services provided, including the provision of information about vocational education and training (VET) and assistance with career decision-making.

✧ Career service providers in technical and further education (TAFE) institutes, universities and government agencies believe they are most effective in helping young people to explore, and make decisions about, their options for work and further learning.

✧ Career providers find that, while many young people are willing to consider vocational education and training, they often express a preference for university pathways.

✧ Only a small proportion of eligible TAFE and university students are accessing available career services. Developing an understanding about what motivates young people to use career development services is an important step in providing services to attract them.

✧ Young people like to manage their own careers. Easy-to-use, comprehensive computer-based resources, and guidance in using these services, could further support their career development. Career providers need to present services in a way that is likely to enhance their take-up by young people; they also need to help young people to make the best use of available services.

Executive summary

Context

The effective transition of young people from secondary education to working life is important for their social and economic wellbeing and therefore ultimately for the country as a whole (OECD 2000). In today's world young people need to navigate a pathway which has become increasingly complex, with the modern career now viewed as a continuous journey of adaptation in an ever-changing environment and expressed in the term 'career development'. A variety of personal support systems are available to young people, as well as a wide pool of career-related services, arrangements and agencies to assist them in both the public and the private sectors.

The study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of career development services available to, and utilised by, young people aged 15 to 24 years at the transition point of post-compulsory schooling and in the early years of their careers, with a particular focus on career decision-making and outcomes relating to vocational education and training (VET). This study evaluated these services from the viewpoint of: these young people and key influencers; the agencies providing the services; and stakeholders in the education bureaucracy. These findings may help in understanding the interaction between client need and service provision and may assist in identifying ways in which career development services could be enhanced to better meet the needs of young people in contemporary school-to-work transitions.

Research design

The research questions focused on evaluating a selected number of career development services available to young people. The research design included:

◇ a preliminary analysis of career development services from information obtained through scoping interviews with state and territory VET and education authorities

◇ an extensive literature review of mainly Australian, but also a number of international publications relating to career development services

◇ telephone interviews with a number of providers of career development services in the tertiary education sector

◇ an online survey made available to selected groups of providers in the public and private sectors

◇ a self-administered questionnaire survey of young people to explore their experiences of using career services at school as well as outside school

◇ an evaluation of relevant websites.

Additional qualitative data were collected in interviews conducted with a sample of tertiary students as part of the *Crazy paving or stepping stones?* project (Harris, Rainey & Sumner 2006).

The career development providers invited to participate in the study were drawn from national career development services located in: universities and technical and further education (TAFE) colleges; private providers of VET; private practitioners; private agencies who were contracted to deliver federal government programs; and the Australian Government Career Information Centres. Other than Career Information Centres, most of the remaining agencies had eligibility criteria of some kind which shaped access, although services within the tertiary sector often extended beyond servicing students and provided services to the general public, by virtue of their being potential students.

While the sample of clients comprised young people who had accessed these services, the selected interviews included both users and non-users of services. In this way, it was possible to obtain some useful insights into career development services from people who did not use them routinely.

Further information about the research is available in appendices A–I of the accompanying support document (see <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1943.html>).

Summary of findings

Characteristics of the services provided

In analysing the career development services included in the study, we looked at specific components of their delivery: career education, information, guidance, advice, placement and referral (see glossary for definitions). Based on responses from the young people, it seems that the major focus of service provision in schools is largely on print-based career information, with some individuals participating in interviews with a career teacher/officer. The next most frequently delivered services were opportunities for work experience, followed by: participation in class-based career education; use of the internet for information and guidance; and participation in educational visits, for example, to worksites. Almost one-third of respondents accessed computer-based guidance software while at school.

While service providers claimed that they delivered these six services—the extent of delivery of each service depending on the mandate of the agency—this view was not entirely shared by the young people, who claimed that services were more focused on providing information (mostly print-based). Career development services such as work experience, industrial placements, assistance in finding employment or educational visits were reported to be offered less frequently. However, there was a high level of agreement among service providers that their delivery of career development services was determined by what young people had asked for, and that these processes had the potential to deliver the best outcomes for them.

The components of the career development process investigated in the survey of young people covered self-evaluation (that is, the individual's particular interests, skills, personality etc.), exploring work and learning options, making decisions, and making plans for future action. There was a high level of agreement between service providers and clients that all these elements of career development were comprehensively delivered, although with less focus on decision-making. Websites were a significant place for career development activity, but were found to be highly variable, with services largely determined by the provider and, as might be expected, mainly focusing on delivery of information with little guidance content. Users of such websites were usually referred to other sites for assistance with career decision-making, and were reasonably effective in this single element, although there was some indication that these sites were difficult to access and complex to use. In effect, young people often relied on informal resources when making career decisions; these included help from family and friends and were sometimes coupled with more formal sources of information and support available from designated career development services.

While providers generally agreed that they delivered information about VET options in a wide variety of ways, this perspective was slightly qualified by clients, who claimed they had received less information delivered in fewer ways. This viewpoint was qualified even further by those interviewed

as part of the Harris, Rainey and Sumner (2006) study. However, most young people surveyed and those interviewed seemed open to VET possibilities and would consider undertaking VET studies.

Effectiveness

The young people who responded to the survey and those interviewed for the 2006 study provided mixed responses about their satisfaction with the services they had received at school, with the survey group generally being more satisfied, while a larger proportion of the second group were less so.

Service providers were asked to evaluate their own effectiveness on the six dimensions of service delivery identified earlier. Providers estimated that they were most effective in encouraging these young people to explore and make decisions about work and learning options. This was followed by (in descending order of effectiveness): assisting them to make career plans for future action; providing them with the opportunity for self-exploration; and targeting their services to young people. Providers rated themselves as being least effective in presenting young people with information about VET. On the whole, providers agreed on the nature and extent of the services they offered. There were examples of extremely effective and comprehensive service delivery, as well as instances of inadequate services, raising issues of provider responsiveness, quality and consistency. The usefulness of websites was dependent on the extent to which they were accessible, useable and comprehensive.

The client satisfaction rating of the majority of these dimensions corresponded with the provider evaluation of the effectiveness of their service delivery. Where clients had been given information about VET, most were satisfied with what had been provided. Effectiveness in targeting services to young people was a more contested issue. Furthermore, there was little evidence in many of the providers surveyed of the voluntary use of career development services.

Implications

In most respects this broad sample of providers appeared to be providing comprehensive career development services suited to the target populations. However, there is some evidence that access to comprehensive and responsive services remains an issue for some young people. While those who are able to access services claim that it is easy to do so, estimates from tertiary providers suggest that, even in TAFE institutes and universities, services are only used by a small proportion of the student body. What seems to be at issue here are the 'help seeking' behaviours of young people in relation to their careers and the motivations underpinning these behaviours.

While it may be practicable for providers to specialise in one type of service delivery (for example, assisting with employment), in order to maximise outcomes for young people providers should also include the complementary services of career education, information, guidance, advice, placement or referral. Service providers do not appear to be as responsive as they believe they should be, with consequent gaps in service delivery in some sectors.

Services appear to be heavily dependent on information and personal delivery, with inadequate use/ availability of relevant computer-based services and insufficient experience-based interventions, such as placement and referral. Young people are generally positively disposed to VET study; therefore, the distribution of VET information should be improved to take advantage of this. Improved support and education are needed in the career decision-making aspect of career development services. Young people tend to want to manage their own careers, but they may not have access to the resources to accomplish this. User and non-user surveys, national collections of data and closer attention to service quality are required to support enhanced outcomes for young people.

Background to the research

Purpose of the research

It is generally acknowledged that both the concept and reality of a career have changed over the last century. Significant elements in an individual's career have expanded, from an often unequal bipartisan relationship between employer and employee, to a multi-elemental construct incorporating various 'systems' (Patton & McMahon 1999). In order to successfully navigate through a career a person may require an ongoing process of career development, focusing on 'planning and action directed towards personal work and life goals' (Patton & McMahon 2001).

Although career development has become recognised as a lifelong activity, the point of entry remains a significant transition which may have a long-term influence. The needs of young people at this time are particularly important. Assistance is required to extend the perspectives of young people beyond the immediate next step of the process to embrace the concept of career development. In order for this to occur, a range of activities needs to be made available to young people.

This study was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of a selected number of career development services available to young people. The study was particularly focused on nationally available mainstream services (not those targeted at special-needs groups) provided to young people up to 24 years of age. For the purposes of the study, effectiveness was viewed in terms of the extent to which the services provided information relating to vocational education and training (VET) options and pathways; the ways in which services informed young people's career decision-making; and the scope and perceived effectiveness of service provision to young people. The key objectives of the study were to:

✧ examine the characteristics of a selected sample of career development services available to young people

✧ assess the effectiveness of these services in terms of the experiences of the young people using these services and those providers involved in delivery of career development services

✧ examine the implications of this assessment for ways in which providers, policy-makers and other interested stakeholders might work to further enhance career development services provided to young people.

Issues in the literature

The value of career development services

In a complex environment, career development services play a role in assisting individuals to manage and construct their own careers across the lifespan and in supporting them in 'the learning of skills, interests, beliefs, values, work habits, and personal qualities that enable each client to create a satisfying life within a constantly changing work environment' (Krumboltz & Worthington cited in McMahon, Patton & Tatham 2003, p.9). It is widely acknowledged that career development services bring benefits to individuals, society and governments. For example, personal benefits can accrue to individuals in areas such as lifelong learning, job satisfaction, skills acquisition and labour market mobility. These outcomes, in turn, may impact on the social and economic success of the

country. Social equity goals relating to equal opportunity and social inclusion can be achieved through successful and effective career development (Jarvis 2002; McCowan & Hyndman 1998; McMahon 2004; McMahon & Tatham 2001; Sweet 2001; Watts 2004b).

Definitions

Although the roots of career development can be traced back to the beginning of the twentieth century, the career 'industry' as such continues to be dogged by a lack of clarity associated with some of its key concepts. An important general feature of the terminology is the use of 'career', rather than 'careers' in composite terms such as career adviser, career development etc. The plural form places *career* within the organisational context, where a change of organisation meant a change of career and where the task of guidance was to help people choose between careers. The singular form locates *career* much more as a personal construct within the individual's whole-of-life experience (Collin & Watts 1996). While the term 'career' was historically used to describe a particular occupation or advancement through a particular organisation, it was subsequently used to refer to a sequence of occupations, both paid and unpaid, which an individual undertakes in a lifetime. More recently, within a wider lifetime and lifespan context, 'career' includes life roles and leisure activities, and the term 'life/career' is becoming used more frequently. The definition used for the development of the Australian Blueprint for Career Development was the 'lifelong process of growth through life, learning and work' (Haines, Scott & Lincoln 2003, p.9), although the evaluation feedback for the prototype was that this might be too broad a definition to be described by 'career', and a definition such as 'personal management, learning and work' might be more suitable (Arnold 1997; Chen 1998; Hall & Mirvis 1996; Jackson et al. 1996; McMahon, Patton & Tatham 2003; Miles Morgan 2002, p.15; 2003).

While the term 'career development' in the linear, organisation-based context inferred upward progression, in the modern environment it more commonly describes the way a career unfolds from a personal perspective, which may not necessarily be perceived as positive (Arnold 1997). Patton and McMahon (2001) favoured a definition of career development as a lifelong process which 'encompasses the individual, the environment, interaction, and change as the key elements' (p.4). This broad definition of career development as 'an overarching term for describing this complex process of managing life, learning, and work in the 21st Century' is used in the development of the Australian Blueprint for Career Development (Haines, Scott & Lincoln 2003, p.9). However, while the term is commonly used in Canada and the United States, it is not used extensively in Australia (McMahon 2004, p.13).

The career development process can be facilitated by a career intervention. This intervention is sometimes called 'career management', which is an attempt to influence a person's career development (Arnold 1997, p.19). The term 'career management' is often used within organisations to describe career development activities which meet organisational needs, whereas activities designed to meet the needs of individuals are often referred to as 'career planning' (Bernes & Magnusson 1996). However, McCowan describes the self-managed process as career development (McCowan 2000).

Career interventions can be delivered through various mediums, which are often grouped together as career education, information or guidance (CEIG) or information, advice and guidance (IAG). 'Career education' usually refers to the classroom activities undertaken in schools and includes a range of teaching and learning activities through which people learn to plan, prepare, develop skills and acquire knowledge to assist in post-school career options and hence maximise their effective participation in working life. It contains three major elements: self-awareness/preparation; opportunity awareness relating to the world of work; and decision and transition learning to enable skills transfer and career planning. 'Career information' assists individuals to make and implement informed choices about their career development. It includes: information about employment, education and training trends and opportunities; labour market issues, information about industry sectors and job and occupational descriptions; details about courses and qualifications; and information about costs, remuneration and financial assistance associated with educational and

vocational options. Career information can be communicated via print, electronic and personal contact resources, including computer-based delivery systems, the internet, print and media materials, interviews, presentations and classroom activities. Guidance implies activity—'career guidance' is delivered by qualified practitioners who support a person's movement towards understanding their specific career options. It is a comprehensive program which may include career information, education and counselling and may be delivered in a variety of ways—individually or in groups (Collin & Watts 1996; Haines, Scott & Lincoln 2003; Miles Morgan 2002; Patton 2001).

Career education, information and guidance can all be components of 'career counselling', which is an activity conducted by a qualified practitioner either on an individual basis or in small groups. It involves personal exploration; training in career management skills; providing targeted information and assisting individuals to personalise this information; and assisting individuals to plan their careers and manage their transitions. 'Career advising' is usually a more informal activity, which may be undertaken by a wide range of personal and professional practitioners who may be qualified, but not necessarily in the area of career counselling, and usually will not provide the in-depth personalised assistance provided by a career counsellor (Haines, Scott & Lincoln 2003; McCowan 2000; Miles Morgan 2002; Patton & McMahon 2001).

Service provision in Australia

Providers of career development services can be found in federal and state and territory jurisdictions, in private and public sector educational institutions, in business and industry, and in a range of private sector agencies. Practitioners function in a variety of roles, reflecting the educational, information and guidance elements of practice, and operate in a number of industries, including health, rehabilitation, employment, education and training. In effect, there is an opinion that no cohesive national system exists, with resulting gaps and overlaps in service provision (Miles Morgan 2002; Prime Minister's Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce 2001; Watts 1996, 2004a).

In Australia, the focus for career development policy and practice has been on transition points. This is not the case in other countries, such as Canada and the United States, where there is a lifelong perspective of career development (Jarvis 2002; McMahon, Patton & Tatham 2003; OECD 2000). While there is concern at an international level with the transition from school to work and its impact at all levels, and a growing concern for young people at risk, there is also a need to broaden the understanding of career to embrace a 'whole of life' construct, in terms of both breadth and duration. Hence, while existing careers services focus on those in educational institutions, the unemployed and on special groups, there is a need for services for all adults throughout the lifespan (OECD 2002; Watts 2004b). A lack of infrastructure reflects an undervaluing of career work, unlike in other countries where the career advisory system is recognised as important (McCowan & Hyndman 1998, p.40). This flows down to the personal level for the general public, where the professional nature of career work is not recognised (McCowan 2000, p.21).

A wide variety of delivery models, which can be tailored to meet the needs of young people, is available. Career development services can be delivered in a variety of ways: as a one-on-one service, as a stand-alone course/workshop, embedded in the curriculum, as an accredited course, and through computer/media-based delivery. They can also include opportunities for work experience and building profile and portfolio systems. In addition, individuals need not be totally reliant on career development services but could be assisted in developing the skills to manage their own careers. Within the framework of lifelong learning, all career development services need to be part of a coherent system and as seamless as possible (Grubb 2002; Haines, Scott & Lincoln 2003, Jackson et al. 1996; McMahon 2004; Watts 2004b).

Career education in schools is an important socialising influence and is appropriately placed to shape career management skills and can facilitate the school-to-work transition (Patton 2001). However, it is not consistently or effectively delivered in all schools and there is a focus on the

transition from school rather than on lifelong career development (Department of Education, Science and Training 2003; House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training 2004; OECD 2002; Prime Minister's Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce 2001). There is also a need to make a clear distinction between career education and vocational education and training. VET in Schools should not be provided at the cost of wider career education. There is also a need to recognise the career opportunities afforded by vocational education as an alternative to tertiary education. Career information is an essential component of career development but is inconsistent, variously sourced and may not be effectively distributed (Prime Minister's Youth Pathways Action Plan Taskforce 2001; Patton & McCrindle 2001; OECD 2004b). While there has been an emphasis hitherto on the provision of information to help people make career decisions, there is a dearth of services to help them individualise that information and undertake the decision-making process (Grubb 2002b).

In summary, young people may be served by career services in the education system or as part of a targeted group, and there are arguably few services available for them if they do not belong to one of these two cohorts. In addition, service provision is located within a culture where the value and use of these services is not well developed. There is little evaluation of identified need, of the impact on young people of any services they may have received, of their satisfaction with these services, or the attitudes of those who have not received any career development services. A recent forum on setting the agenda for career guidance research found that there is a requirement for impact research, for qualitative studies which give insight into how impact is achieved, and research which examines the particular approaches or tools in use by career practitioners and which may be used to improve practice (Hawthorn, Barham & Maguire 2005). The issue of particular relevance to this study is the experience of young people from a cross-section of sites outside the schooling sector who are accessing career development services, and how these experiences fit with the aspirations and perspectives of those responsible for providing these services to young people. A full literature review is presented in the support document.

Design of the evaluation

The purpose of the study was to explore the characteristics of a selected group of career development services and the perceptions of the effectiveness of these services from two perspectives—the providers and the users of these services. In order to meet these purposes, data collection was undertaken using a series of discrete strategies.

The first strategy was a scoping study, which used telephone interviews to collect information from representatives from state and territory education and training authorities, national professional bodies and other relevant national groups. Secondly, a census was conducted of all career development services located in technical and further (TAFE) institutes and universities around Australia. This was followed by an online survey with a purposive sample of career development services, including:

✧ private registered training organisations providing career development services

✧ Job Network agencies contracted by the former federal Department of Employment and Workplace Relations[1] to provide employment services to eligible job seekers referred through Centrelink

✧ Jobs Pathway providers contracted by the former Department of Education, Science and Training to provide services to 13 to 19-year-olds at risk for up to six months after leaving school

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[1] The responsibilities of the former Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and the former Department of Education, Science and Training are now undertaken by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

- ✧ Career and Transition advisers contracted by the former Department of Education, Science and Training to provide support for all young people (students and leavers) aged 13–19 years, including tracking young people for 18 months post-school

- ✧ private and corporate providers of career guidance who were members of the Australian Association of Career Counsellors

- ✧ Career Planning Programme administered by the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service and provided to 15 to 20-year-olds, not in full-time education or training who are registered job seekers with Centrelink

- ✧ Career Information Centres funded by the former Department of Education, Science and Training.

Subsequent to the census and online survey of service providers, data were also collected from young people using career development services via the completion of a self-administered questionnaire, which was distributed by providers to clients on behalf of the researchers. Further qualitative data were extracted from selected questions on career development services included in one-on-one interviews with a sample of tertiary students taking part in the earlier project conducted by Harris, Rainey and Sumner (2006). Finally, in recognition of the growing importance of web-based information services, an evaluation of a sample of publicly available websites was undertaken. This included federal and state government sites, VET and private sector sites and those targeting people with a disability. The selected sites were evaluated against predetermined criteria, including: find-ability/availability; the effectiveness of links; accessibility/usability; catering for disability; the quality of career information provided; promotion of VET options; and guidance through and accomplishment of the career planning process. A full description of the research design and method, along with copies of all the data collection tools can be found in the support document.

Limitations

Since the purpose of the evaluation was primarily interpretive, that is, to examine specific instances of career development service provision from the perspectives of both providers and users, the findings from this study cannot be generalised to all career development services. However, some degree of generalisability can be gauged in relation to the use of a sample of career development services that is diverse enough to allow assertions of broader applicability.

Data collection methods were purposively selected, systematically applied and documented. While every effort was made to ensure that respondents were encouraged to express their own views about the career development services relevant to them (either as a service provider or a user) in an open and frank manner, the absence of any direct observation of service provision (with the exception of the web-based resources) and a reliance on self-report data from respondents willing to take time to complete the survey offered to them necessarily place some limitations on the findings.

A snapshot of career development services

In this chapter the outcomes from the scoping study and the survey of service providers are presented. These findings highlight the operating context for service providers and frame the experiences presented to young people accessing career development services.

The scoping study

The purpose of the scoping study was to determine the broad parameters of the career development services field, to gain an overview of how services are provided and to identify relevant issues related to service provision. In all, 31 scoping interviews were conducted with representatives from a number of stakeholder groups, including: state and territory government departments of education; the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs; state and territory Catholic education offices; state and territory independent schools associations; the National Association of Graduate Career Advisory Services; the Australian Association of Career Counsellors; the Australian Parents' Council; one state department of education and training responsible for VET; two VET practitioners; the Department of Education, Science and Training manager of the Jobs Pathways Programme; and a representative of the group training organisations.

Understanding of term 'career development services'

Respondents demonstrated a broad understanding of career development services. While some definitions demonstrated a narrow employment focus, most adopted a more holistic and lifespan understanding of the term. Career development services were understood to cover the provision of information, educational programs, counselling and advice. Key aspects included: skills training; assisting with subject selection; vocational testing; provision of web-based resources; assisting with career choices and matching, career management skills, self-evaluation, decision-making; attending to ethics and values; and the development of employment-related and generic skills.

Provision of services to young people up to the age of 24 years

The availability of services varied across jurisdictions, as well as across particular groups of sites (for example, schools). Both formal (within curricula across a range of subject areas, through specific programs, the provision of specific forms of information, counselling,) and informal ('talking to young people', pastoral care, networking) processes were being utilised. Mechanisms such as portfolios, job-seeking skills, transition support and follow-up, visits, work experience and placements and individual learning plans were also highlighted by respondents.

Services were provided by a range of personnel, including specialist careers staff, as well as teachers and staff attached to community and government agencies. In some instances clusters and networks of professionals worked together to provide services; in other instances staff worked individually within and external to organisations. Role descriptions included those of 'brokers', vocational education coordinators and youth workers.

Quality of career decision-making process

Respondents expressed some ambivalence about the quality of career decision-making undertaken by young people, with the overall tenor of these comments being more negative than positive. Along with well-known factors (influence of parents, expectations of families, school, poorly resourced and staffed services), issues such as a poor understanding of the relevance of careers guidance by young people; different value systems and approaches to decision-making; values and attitudes towards work, status, financial security; and interpersonal issues (for example, lack of self-awareness) were offered as explanations for these assertions. Respondents also acknowledged the role that family, role models, significant teachers (particularly in relation to decisions to pursue further study), the media and peers play in decision-making processes. Parents in particular were viewed as the 'hidden client' in career development services as they support the young person and seek to influence the decision-making process.

Data on service utilisation

Respondents were almost unanimous in their claim that there was a lack of available data on the numbers of students accessing career development services at a systemic level (although there were some notable state and regional efforts). Lack of available data was generally attributed to poor resourcing, difficulties associated with calculating participation/usage of a wide range of services and products, and a variety of understandings of what might be included or excluded under the term 'career development services'.

Specialist services for young people with a disability or located in regional areas

Current service provision was diverse but considered generally to be inadequate to meet the needs of young people with disabilities or who live in remote locations. Lack of accessibility was attributed to a range of factors, including lack of qualified staff, a dearth of quality standards, lack of resources, the diversity of student needs and the role of parents. Linkages with external agencies and accessibility within other education sectors (especially TAFE institutes) were also mentioned as impacting (mostly negatively) on accessibility for these groups of young people.

Information available on VET options

Opinions on the usefulness of information about VET varied from 'very good' to 'fair'. It was also acknowledged that this information was available through a very diverse range of sources. A view was put that, while the information is available, a significant number of young people appear to remain confused about VET options and this may be attributable to the variability in the pathways that lead to counselling and other services related to VET options. In addition, other factors, including a strong bias towards university pathways (promoted by schools and parents) necessarily mean that there are significant attitudinal barriers. Values and opinions attached to issues such as the esteem with which particular types of work are held, as well as economic factors (skills shortages, projected growth in areas of the job market etc.), were also mentioned as playing a role in shaping the approach young people might take towards any potential VET options.

Respondents suggested that the career development services are generally viewed as effective in assisting young people to make career transitions and encourage participation in VET, but overall there was 'a long way to go'. While a range of factors can affect overall quality of service provision, broader systemic issues which promote collaboration and coordination were viewed as essential, as was the need to develop a 'culture' that valued career development for all people across the life cycle.

Evaluating career development services

Respondents generally believed that comprehensive evaluation of career development services has been hampered by a lack of understanding of all the activities associated with the notion of 'career development'. Suggestions of measures of effectiveness for career development services varied

widely, from simple measures (for example, getting into work and study), through to a framework which included a number of indicators, such as access to qualified and knowledgeable staff, timeliness of service provision, the extent to which young people's needs are being met, and inclusiveness and accessibility of services for all young people across multiple points in time.

Survey of service providers

Surveys were undertaken with samples of providers to: map the field of providers delivering services to young people; explore the characteristics of service provision; explore services focusing on VET options and career decision-making; and evaluate service provision. The survey of providers of career development services captured data from two groups of respondents in two ways. The first phase of data collection targeted Australian TAFE institutes and universities using telephone interviews (appendix C in the support document available at <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1943.html>). For ease of reporting, this group of providers are referred to as 'tertiary providers' in this report.

The second phase used an online survey (appendix D of the support document) to collect data from targeted private sector providers, organisations delivering four federal government-funded career development programs (Job Network providers, Jobs Pathways providers, Career and Transition providers, Career Planning Programs), private registered training organisations which offered career development services and the Career Information Centres administered by the federal government (this group is labelled 'public/private providers' in this report). Table 1 indicates the total numbers and types of career development service providers who participated in the surveys. Service providers were located across all states and territories (appendix I, table 1 of the support document).

Table 1   Participating service providers

Phase 1	% organisations (n = 55)	Phase 2	% organisations (n = 111)
TAFE institutes	60	Individual private providers	60
Universities	40	JNPs and RTOs	20
		Other federal government specialised programs (CATs; CICs; CPPs & JPPs)	20
Total	**100**	**Total**	**100**

Note: JNP = Job Network provider; JPP = Jobs Pathways provider; CAT = Career and Transition providers; CPP = Career Planning Programs; RTO = registered training organisation; CIC = Career Information Centre.

Types of service

All types of services were offered by most of the providers (appendix I, table 2), although the type of service delivered was somewhat dependent upon the mandate of the delivering agency. Over three-quarters of all providers always or frequently provided career guidance, career advice or career information to young people. Over half of providers always or frequently delivered career education, and a slightly lower percentage offered referral services. Delivery of placement services was less frequent, with between one-quarter and one-third of providers never offering this service. Some of the other types of services provided included mentoring by external personnel such as industry or alumni. Case management was used with clients considered 'at risk', and marketing and promotional activities were included by some respondents as types of service delivery. 'In course' career education was offered in tertiary institutions. Counselling was also offered by some organisations.

Ways of delivering services

Services were nearly always delivered by direct personal contact, which included email and phone, and by facilitating access to resources (appendix I, table 3). Where services were provided indirectly,

for example, through mentors, lecturers or parents, services could also involve some training of mentors and academic staff.

Respondents were asked to consider some reasons which might affect the way their organisation offers services to young people (appendix I, table 4). The client appeared to have high priority, with choice of service delivery method being most influenced by the belief that the method would deliver the best outcome for young people. Of lesser influence were considerations relating to cost-effectiveness and what might deliver the best outcome for the organisation. However, being directed to deliver services in particular ways had no influence for between one-quarter and one-third of organisations.

Involvement of parents/caregivers

Only small proportions of providers (11% tertiary providers and 26% of private/public providers) reported that parents were always or frequently involved in the process of providing career development services to young people. The majority said that parents were only sometimes involved (69% of tertiary providers and 54% of public/private providers).

Elements of career development

The core elements of career development practice—self-exploration, exploring work and learning options, making decisions in relation to these options, and making career plans for future action— were always or frequently included by 74% or more of both groups of practitioners in their work with young people (appendix I, table 5). However, within the different subgroups of providers, there were fewer providers focusing on decision-making and planning than the exploration elements of career development.

VET options

Organisations provided information on VET options to young people through interaction with a career practitioner or staff member and through printed information. A computer-based resource and self-help were used less often (table 2). Three universities and 12 individual private providers reported that they did not provide any information on VET options. 'Other' ways in which VET information was delivered included referral and assisting clients to attend another event, location or meet with another person who could provide VET information and special programs.

Table 2   Ways in which VET information was delivered to young people

	% of organisations	% of organisations
	Tertiary providers (n = 55)	Private/public providers (n = 111)
Through printed information/handouts/literature	20	26
Through computer-based resource	18	17
On self-help basis	6	10
Through career practitioner or staff member	29	35
Don't provide information about VET options	5	11
Information provided by 'other' means	16	18
No response	6	1

A significant proportion of respondents (59% from tertiary setting and 48% from private/public settings) believed there was a willingness on the part of young people to consider participating in VET (appendix I, table 6). A preference for study at university was offered by career service providers as the main reason why young people were not willing to consider VET options. Other reasons raised included issues relating to the cost and the availability of VET courses (table 3). Other objections to participating in VET suggested by staff from the career development services

related to lack of accessibility of VET courses, particularly for students in regional and remote areas; a perceived lack of flexibility to accommodate working students; difficulty in finding apprenticeships and the associated low pay; and the influence of parents.

Table 3 **Providers' perspectives on reasons why young people are not willing to consider participating in VET**

	% of organisations Yes		% of organisations No	
	Tertiary (n = 55)	Private/public (n =111)	Tertiary (n = 55)	Private/public (n =111)
Do not see VET as relevant	16	17	84	83
Prefer to go to university	49	43	51	57
Suitable VET courses not available	31	31	69	69
Fees or cost of VET course/s is problem	33	30	67	70
They don't want to do any further study	24	36	76	64
Other objection to VET participation	16	38	84	62

Perceived effectiveness of services

Respondents' ratings of their effectiveness in delivering services to young people were very high. Most respondents rated their services as either effective or very effective in encouraging clients to explore work and learning options and in assisting them to make decisions about these options (table 4). They rated their services almost as effective in assisting young people to make career plans for future action, but tertiary providers rated their effectiveness in providing the opportunity for self-exploration as slightly less than private/public providers. Conversely, private/public providers rated themselves as less effective than tertiary providers in targeting services to young people. Across all dimensions, providers felt they were least effective in providing clients with information about VET, although the rating for this was still high.

Administration

During the past 12 months, 62% of practitioners in the tertiary sector estimated that over half of the clients who accessed their career development service were aged from 15 to 24 years, with TAFE providers reporting fewer clients in this age group than did universities (appendix I, table 7). Clients of the private/public providers, overall, were older, with only 31% of the clients who had accessed their services being in this age group. Respondents from the tertiary institutions were fairly evenly divided regarding the overall proportion of students at their institution who accessed their career development services. One-half of respondents reported that they serviced between 6 and 20% of the total student population, with the other half considering that they serviced from 21 to 50%. Overall, universities claimed to service more of their total student population.

Being a current student was the most common criterion for determining eligibility to use career development services. This criterion was used by both provider groups and by 40% of total respondents (appendix I, table 8). Age was important for 25% of respondents. Employment status was used by 22% of these providers. The most common 'other' criterion used was that clients were at risk of not making a smooth transition from school or were in some other difficult personal situation.

Clients of tertiary providers were most commonly self-referred (65%), with only three providers in this group nominating formal referral sources (appendix I, table 9). However, the private/public providers had a wider source of referral sources. These were fairly evenly divided across the four sources (self, formal, semi-formal, informal), although individual private providers also seemed to gain clients via self-referral and informal referral. In some cases, visiting the provider was a course or program requirement. Once connected to a service, providers reported that most clients only needed to wait less than one week for an appointment/booking, with only four individual agencies claiming there was a wait of longer than two weeks.

Table 4　Providers' perceptions of effectiveness

	% of organisations Very effective		% of organisations Effective		% of organisations Somewhat effective		% of organisations Not at all effective		% of organisations Don't know/no response	
	Tertiary (n = 55)	Private/public (n = 111)	Tertiary (n = 55)	Private/public (n = 111)	Tertiary (n = 55)	Private/public (n = 111)	Tertiary (n = 55)	Private/public (n = 111)	Tertiary (n = 55)	Private/public (n = 111)
Effectiveness in targeting services	22	23	53	40	18	30	4	4	3	2
Effectiveness in providing self-exploration	24	39	40	38	34	20	0	0	2	3
Effectiveness in providing exploring work & learning options	29	40	45	38	22	20	2	0	2	2
Effectiveness in providing decision-making about work & learning options	31	28	47	49	20	20	0	1	2	2
Effectiveness in making career plans for future action	18	29	55	42	25	24	0	0	2	5
Effectiveness in presenting information about VET	38	30	24	33	25	24	7	8	6	5

Eighty per cent of tertiary providers reported that their services were free to students, with this student status being the only criterion used to determine eligibility for the service. Fourteen tertiary providers said that this eligibility extended to all prospective students and to graduates. Only six tertiary providers reported that they charged for assessment and testing services. Where fees were charged for some services, this was not always the client's responsibility. For example, fees might be paid to the agencies by schools. Fees were sometimes directed to specific groups, for example, clients who were not Australian citizens. The group of providers who charged most often for services was individual private providers (57%), which also had the highest percentage of providers charging for any particular service, which in this case was for one-on-one sessions with a career practitioner or staff member (64%). The most consistently charged service across all private/public providers was for group sessions and assessment and testing. There were no fees charged by Career Information Centres, except where assessment tools were used.

Client satisfaction with the services they received was most frequently evaluated using informal feedback from clients (67% of tertiary providers and 72% of private/public providers). Surveys of clients were used to a much lesser extent (35% for each group of providers). Informal feedback from referral sources was also used by approximately one-third of providers. Formal surveys to collect data from referral sources was the least used strategy for evaluating services. Periodic surveys, sometimes national, were employed, as were random surveys, conformity with International Standards Organisation audits, and compliance with a management plan and program evaluation (appendix I, table 10).

All groups of providers required staff who delivered career development services to have various levels of formal qualifications. The exception to this was Career Planning Programs, which required all staff to hold a degree. Of all providers, only 13% required no formal qualifications. Tertiary providers usually required staff to hold graduate or postgraduate qualifications, although 26% of tertiary providers required suitable experience only, with this being dependent on the position held by an individual. Approximately half of all providers expected staff to hold specific qualifications in career development/guidance or education (55% of tertiary providers and 45% of private/public providers). Of the 15 tertiary providers who nominated other qualifications, seven specified qualifications in other discipline areas such as counselling, education, training or human resources, and five specified experience plus a suitable qualification. The private/public sector providers were more likely to require industry-specific experience. Staff delivering career development programs funded by the Department of Education, Science and Training were required to complete module two from the Australian Career Development Studies.

The views of students and clients

In this chapter, data from clients are reported. Services participating in the study were asked to distribute up to 50 questionnaires to young people accessing their services during a defined period. For reporting purposes these respondents will be referred to as tertiary respondents and private/ public respondents. Outcomes from interviews conducted as part of the 2006 Harris, Rainey and Sumner study are also reported.

The respondents

A total of 240 responses were received from young people aged between 15 and 24 years (164 who accessed tertiary providers and 76 who accessed services delivered by private/public providers). These young people were located across all states; no respondents were located in the Australian Capital Territory or the Northern Territory (appendix I, table 11). Just over one-half of respondents were aged between 15 and 18 years (appendix I, table 12). Sixty-seven per cent of respondents using tertiary providers and 54% of respondents accessing private/public service providers were female.

As expected, tertiary respondents were dominated by young people who were students. Seventy-seven per cent were full-time students, and 11% were enrolled as part-time students. Only 2% reported that they were not students. Conversely, one-quarter of private/public respondents reported that they were not students, 30% reported they were full-time students and 7% indicated they were part-time students (appendix I, able 13).

Employment status also varied across the two groups of respondents. One-third of clients attending tertiary service providers and one-fifth attending private/public service providers reported that they were employed part-time. Conversely, only 8% of tertiary clients and 11% of private/public clients indicated that they were in full-time employment. Sixteen per cent of tertiary clients reported that they were not employed at the time of the survey. The corresponding figure for private/public clients was 40% (appendix I, table 14).

Approximately one-fifth of respondents had only completed Year 10 or less while at school. The majority of respondents had completed Year 12 (appendix I, table 15). Forty-three per cent of tertiary clients and 38% of private/public clients indicated that they were either currently undertaking or had undertaken a VET course in the past. Smaller proportions of respondents reported having ever been or currently being enrolled in a university or other higher education course (29% and 25% for tertiary and private/public respondents, respectively, appendix I, table 16).

School experience of help with careers

The survey respondents were asked about their experiences and satisfaction with the careers help they had received before leaving secondary education. Seventy-five per cent of tertiary respondents and 65% of private/public respondents said they had received careers help at school. Respondents reported receiving this help with their careers at school in a number of different ways (table 5).

Table 5   Type of careers help received at school

	% receiving type of service	
	Tertiary clients (n = 123*)	Public/private clients (n = 49*)
Individual appointment with career adviser or career teacher	70	71
Career education	55	65
Received printed information about careers	74	69
Accessed internet about employment/courses/ career guidance	50	51
Accessed computer-based career guidance software	30	29
Participated in educational visits about career development	43	47
Participated in work experience while at school	60	69
Other careers help received at school	7	0

Note: * Question only applicable to those respondents who reported receiving careers help at school.

While they were at school, printed information and an individual appointment with a career adviser or teacher were the two main forms of careers help received by respondents. Over half of both groups also reported participating in work experience and receiving career education while at school. About one-half of both groups of respondents had accessed the internet for employment, courses or career guidance. Less than one-half of both groups participated in educational visits. Computer-based career guidance software was the least reported type of careers help received at school.

Levels of satisfaction with the careers help they received at school were positive, with over one-half of both groups reporting that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the help they received. One-quarter of each group expressed a neutral view about the help they received. However, a proportion of both tertiary clients (20%) and public/private clients (12%) indicated they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the careers help they received while at school (table 6).

Table 6   Satisfaction with careers help received while at school

	% of participants	
	Tertiary clients (n = 123*)	Private/public clients (n = 49*)
Very satisfied	15	20
Satisfied	41	41
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	23	25
Dissatisfied	13	10
Very dissatisfied	7	2
No response	1	2

Note: * Question only applicable to those respondents who reported receiving careers help at school.

Current experience of career development services

The survey respondents were then asked about their experiences and satisfaction with the careers help they had received at the provider location where they had received the questionnaire.

Services sought by clients

The type of careers help most commonly sought by respondents was information about work and learning options and career advice. Next, respondents sought career guidance and, to a lesser extent, placement associated with their course, work experience or employment, and career education (table 7). There was a higher requirement for assistance for all services (except career

education) from private/public clients than tertiary clients. The most significant 'other' service sought was help with job applications and interviews, although arguably this could have been embraced by several of the nominated types of help.

Table 7   Type of career development service sought by respondents

	% of clients who sought service type	
	Tertiary (n = 164)	Private/public (n = 76)
Career guidance	40	63
Career advice	48	55
Career education	35	33
Information about work & learning options	48	70
Placement options	38	55
'Other' service	9	3

Fourteen per cent of tertiary respondents and 20% of private/public respondents reported that they did not receive the service they were seeking from the career development service they approached.

Way services were provided

The most commonly reported method of receiving services was via printed careers information. An individual appointment with a staff member was the next most frequent way services were provided, followed by using the internet and attending group sessions with a staff member (table 8). Guidance software was not often used to assist the process, and vocational testing was used more in the private/public sector than in the tertiary sector. In general, career services such as work experience, an industrial placement, or an interview for job were used less often. Referral to other sources of careers help was used with a quarter of all clients.

Young people reported a very high level of satisfaction with the careers help they received at the time of the survey. Only a very small percentage of clients in each group (9% of tertiary clients and 11% of public/private clients) reported they were unsure about the services they received (table 9).

Table 8   Ways careers services were provided to young people

	% receiving type of service	
	Tertiary clients (n = 135*)	Public/ private clients (n = 56*)
Individual appointment with staff member	53	68
Group session with staff member	37	52
Vocational testing	19	52
Printed careers information	73	68
Access to internet about employment/courses/ career guidance	48	52
Access to career guidance software	23	18
Educational visits about career development	24	32
Work experience/industrial placement/job interview	34	27
Referral to somewhere else for careers help	23	32
Other careers help received from current provider	9	0

Note: * Question only applicable to those respondents who reported receiving careers help at the place where they received the questionnaire.

Table 9   Satisfaction of clients with current services received

	Tertiary clients	Private/public clients
	% of participants (n = 142*)	% of participants (n = 60*)
Very satisfied	35	32
Satisfied	54	55
Unsure	9	11
Dissatisfied	<1	0
Very dissatisfied	<1	0
No response	1	2

Note: * Question only applicable to those who reported receiving careers help at the provider location where they received the questionnaire.

The young people reported on the different elements of career development that were part of the services they received at the time of the survey. Over half of the tertiary clients and almost three-quarters of the private/public group reported they were assisted with self-exploration. Similar proportions of each group also reported that they examined work and learning opportunities that might suit them. In the private/public group, almost two-thirds of the group (63%) were assisted to make career plans for the future; just over one-half of tertiary clients reported participating in this element of career development (53%). Slightly lower proportions of clients in each group (45% tertiary and 62% private/public) were provided with assistance in making a decision about what they would do next (table 10).

Table 10   Elements of career development reported by clients receiving services

	% Yes	% Yes
	Tertiary clients (n = 142*)	% of participants (n = 60*)
Self-exploration	52	70
Looking at work & learning options	56	78
Making a decision about what they would do next	45	62
Making a career plan for the future	53	63
None of the above options apply	15	10

Note: * Question was not applicable to all respondents.

Respondents reported high levels of satisfaction with the various elements of career development they received from the providers they attended. Over 83% of both groups of respondents reported they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the various elements of service provision (appendix I, table 19).

While it was not possible to establish a link between particular forms of career development service and any outcomes, respondents were asked questions about future intentions in relation to careers that might arise from the help they received (appendix I, table 20). The highest proportion (44%) of the young people attending tertiary service providers reported that their next step would involve undertaking further study. By way of contrast, the most common step nominated by private/public clients was to get a job or work experience (35%). For half of the young people, the decision relating to the next step in their career was rated as being easy or very easy, while approximately one-quarter were neutral on this issue (table 11). A smaller proportion, 18% of respondents in both groups, suggested that the decision was difficult for them.

Table 11   Ease of decision relating to next step in career

	Tertiary clients	Private/public clients
	% Yes (n = 123*)	% Yes (n = 54*)
Very easy	12	18.5
Easy	39	33
Neither easy or difficult	23	24
Difficult	18	18.5
Very difficult	2	2
No response	6	4

Note: * Question only applicable to those who reported receiving careers help.

One final aspect of decision-making was exploring the extent of parental/caregivers' involvement in helping these young people to decide on the next step of their career. Parental/caregiver involvement was very high across both groups of young people (82% tertiary clients and 83% private/pubic clients). Approximately half of this involvement (across both the groups) was rated as 'sometimes' (appendix I, table 21).

VET options

Just over-one half of respondents who participated in the survey received information and/or advice about VET (52% of tertiary clients and 56% of private/public clients). The ways in which information was provided was predominantly through verbal information or printed literature (table 12).

Table 12   Provision of information about VET

	Tertiary clients	Private/public clients
	% Yes (n = 64*)	% Yes (n = 30*)
Printed information/handouts/literature	72	73
Computer-based information	22	30
Verbal information	72	70
'Other' VET information	0	3

Note: * Question only applicable to those who reported receiving VET information.

On the basis of the information they had received about VET, approximately half of respondents (51% tertiary clients and 46% private/public clients) reported they were prepared to undertake VET studies. However, this only included one client in the university cohort. In addition, 22% of tertiary clients and 33% of private/public clients selected that they were 'maybe' willing to consider VET options (three of these were university clients). There were no particular reasons for not participating in VET given by those who claimed they were 'unlikely' to undertake VET studies.

Accessing the services

The main reason respondents came to the service providers varied across the two groups of respondents. For young people using services delivered by TAFE institutes and universities the main reason they attended was that the service seemed like a place that could provide the help they needed (52% of respondents) or it was recommended by others (22% of respondents). However, the main reason respondents came to private/public service providers was because they were directed to come (49% of respondents) or that the service seemed like it could provide them with the help they were seeking (25%) (appendix I, table 22). The few tertiary clients (7%) who indicated that they were directed to come appeared to understand the term loosely, since they nominated a range of organisations, mostly secondary and tertiary institutions, as well as a handful of personal

contacts who had 'directed them'. However, clients of private/public providers clearly nominated referring agencies such as Centrelink, Green Corps and Mission Australia. Other reasons for coming to the service provider were associated with convenience or a need to move to the next stage of their career. Most clients did not need to book or had to wait less than a week for an appointment with the service provider they had attended and were not charged a fee for the services they had received.

Other sources of assistance

Forty-eight per cent of respondents attending tertiary providers and 61% of respondents accessing private/public providers reported that they had accessed career development services from places other than their current service provider. A tertiary training provider or friends and relatives was most often named as another source of help by tertiary clients, followed by a careers and employment website (table 12). Approximately one-fifth of tertiary clients had received additional careers help from a Career Information Centre, a government department, a Job Network agency, a private career adviser/counsellor and/or their employer. Clients of private/public providers reported that they had accessed a Career Information Centre (37%) or a Job Network agency (54%) or career/employment website for help with their careers.

Table 13   Other places where young people had sought help with their careers

	Tertiary	Private/public
	% Yes (n = 78)	% Yes (n = 46)
University/TAFE/other VET provider	63	39
Careers Information Centre	22	37
Government department	17	13
Job Network provider	26	54
Other commercial recruitment agency	8	15
Private career adviser/counsellor	17	22
Employer	18	13
Friend or relative	64	46
Careers/employment website	36	39
Other places	14	7

The majority of respondents considered it very easy or easy for young people to get careers help or were neutral on the topic (table 14). However, although the percentage who considered it difficult was quite low, this was largely accounted for by Career Information Centre clients, of whom 43% found it easy and 43% found it difficult.

Table 14   Young people's assessment of ease in accessing careers help

Assessment of accessibility of careers help for young people	% Tertiary clients (n = 164)	% Private/public clients (n = 76)
Very easy	15	26
Easy	40	38
Neither easy nor difficult	29	19
Difficult	11	13
Very difficult	2	3
No response	2	1
Invalid response	1	0

Interviews from the *Crazy paving or stepping stones?* study

Forty-nine students with a history of attendance at both VET and higher education institutions in South Australia who had participated in a previous survey examining pathways between VET and higher education (Harris, Sumner & Rainey 2006) were interviewed for the study. These participants were located in one state, were aged up to 35 years and had made multiple transitions between and within VET and higher education.

Type of services accessed

Respondents sought careers help in approximately half of their (165) educational transitions—from school to the tertiary sector, and within and between VET and university. The most common single source of help was self-help through publications and websites. However, these were usually not fully utilised, and interviewees usually reported on seeking information relevant only to the next step in their career. The sources of information used were those most readily available and these included the *Job Guide* and tertiary admissions guides, which were used by people leaving school. Newspaper advertisements were a source of information about opportunities; websites and institutional handbooks directly relevant to the transition (for example, those of the educational institutions) were also utilised.

Respondents consulted a range of formal service providers in the public and private sectors. At school, approximately one-quarter of interviewees accessed careers support, which was sometimes compulsory. Only a handful reported having an individual meeting with a careers officer/teacher. Of the 165 total transitions made by these participants, about 10% were assisted by Centrelink, the Commonwealth Employment Service, Job Network agencies or the Career Information Centre. However, interviewees often did not know about Career Information Centres or believed that all government-provided services were for those on income support.

Another 10% of transitions were assisted by TAFE institutes and registered training organisations, either through publications or by direct service delivery. A further 10% of transitions were assisted by universities, usually through open days, course information personnel, information sessions and seminars. In approximately 10% of transitions, respondents cited people as being their main source of career advice and information. A few of these sought out professionals and academics for direct information about particular courses and occupations; friends, co-students, family and social contacts were also used. Assistance was sought from private recruitment agencies and specialised public recruitment agencies in some 5% of transitions, with professional career counselling only sought in two transitions. Overall, students used only one of these broad sources of careers support; very few used more than one source for each transition.

Respondents most often accessed information from the various provider agencies and institutions. Other services received were dependent upon the role of the service provider, with many services often being biased towards employment rather than guidance and advice, which in these instances were rarely given.

Some schools provided handouts, literature, a careers fair, a core subject in Year 12, help with subject selection or gave information about pathways. Individual support was rarely given in schools. Information was also the main service provided by government agencies, although some respondents thought that this information was out of date. These government agencies sometimes offered a formal interview, but the advice was sometimes considered too general to be of any assistance, especially to those already working in a particular industry.

Job Network agencies provided a wider range of services. However, their knowledge about learning pathways and qualifications was reported by respondents as limited. The focus of services provided in TAFE institutes, universities and by VET private providers on exit also seems to have been on employment. Paradoxically, the services available to university students on entry were restricted to course information, with limited, and sometimes (in the eyes of respondents), biased information

on the employment outcomes from these courses. Only a few students used one-on-one careers assistance at TAFE institutes and university careers services. Some respondents were aware that in-depth assistance was available, but did not avail themselves of this.

Recruitment agencies obviously focused on preparation for employment, which included some aptitude testing. Services provided by specialised public recruitment agencies and industry groups were more personalised and very focused on a particular pathway. Personalised general career advice was only supplied by the handful of individual private providers consulted by some respondents and this usually included some testing.

Reasons for accessing services

Ease of access was the main criterion given by respondents for choice of the support they accessed. This applied to information sources such as websites and newspapers, as well as school services, Australian Government agencies and educational institutions. Some of these services were compulsory, such as those in schools and federal agencies, and were free of charge. Trust in the support they would get was a consideration for some students; for example, using a service because friends had used it. Specific organisations elicited trust because of the assistance provided by particular staff members. Educational institutions had the benefit of being convenient, free, specific to the area of study and in some cases being part of the general student culture and 'a good place to hang out'. Respondents who did their own research by contacting people working in the field did so because it seemed logical to go to people who were actually in the profession they were considering; this included specialised public recruitment agencies. Commercial recruitment agencies were consulted because the respondent needed a job, but these services also sometimes gave useful feedback in terms of aptitudes and skills which assisted future career planning.

Those who believed that no one could help you if you didn't know what you were interested in chose not to use any support at all (even though they were aware of agencies). Other reasons given for not accessing services were that they were not advertised or available for people studying in the evening or for mature-aged people preoccupied with employment rather than study.

Career decision-making

Three-quarters of the total respondent transitions said that it was easy to make a decision about the type of learning they would undertake. Their decision was often based on their current interest, experience or research. About a quarter of the respondents found the decision difficult. The first transition from school was cited as being particularly difficult.

Despite the reports in the literature of the influence of parents on their children's career pathways, this was not supported by these interviewees. Some 10% of parents were happy to support their children's decisions, without any involvement. A further 7% did not get involved and did not give any opinion on their children's career choices. Some parents did participate in the process and generally supported their children even when they disagreed with the decisions. A few parents were glad that their children had received some assistance, but a slightly larger number were unimpressed by the help their children had received. Most young people said that they had not received any careers assistance that their parents could comment on, or they could not remember what their parents thought about the careers help they had received, or that their parents' opinions were not relevant.

VET options

Options and information about vocational education and training pathways were provided in approximately 5% of educational transitions. There was frequently perceived to be a push to university by schools. Agencies did not provide VET as an option to university graduates and students themselves sometimes only had university as a goal and did not seek out alternative pathway information.

Effectiveness

Participants who had used career services of some kind were asked how helpful or effective these had been. Media-based information sources were considered helpful and effective, when they were accurate, relevant, and up to date, but institutional websites were generally rated as overwhelming. Some reported that university websites were especially difficult for those making first contact with the university and who were not familiar with the jargon.

Providers in schools were generally considered unhelpful by respondents, although the student who had a ten-minute appointment with a careers officer found it 'pretty good' and gave it '4 out of 5'. At the other extreme, another student said that the school services were 'the bane of my life'. She perceived that her choice of career did not align with the current 'feminist' career culture of the school and she was advised to take an alternative route, which caused a 'delay of 14 years getting into what I wanted'. School teachers sometimes seemed out of touch, with a perception that all learning would lead to a qualification which would magically open up an occupational pathway.

Government agencies, such as Centrelink, were considered to be helpful, with their effectiveness being dependent on individual staff members. The Career Information Centre was considered moderately helpful. A criticism of Job Network providers was tied to a perception that because services were contracted out they were 'unprofessional'. TAFE institutes and universities were helpful for getting work, but the services were sometimes viewed as 'simplistic' and 'superfluous' for those who had been in the workforce. Similarly, recruitment agencies were helpful for getting a job but not for careers help. Specialised industry recruitment agencies and industry groups were helpful and effective. Private service providers, although used infrequently, provided helpful careers advice, which respondents found to have long-term validity.

The use and value of web-based career services

The evaluation of web-based career services involved an internal desktop assessment of a sample of websites, mapping them against criteria relevant to the study, and an interview involving user tests based on scenarios. The internal evaluation of a sample of 30 publicly available websites included federal and state government sites, VET and private sector sites, and those targeting people with a disability. (Full details of the sites included in this component of the study can be found in appendix F of the support document <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1943.html>.) A desktop evaluation of useability for the sight-impaired was also undertaken by a sight-impaired student (see appendix G of the support document for protocols used in this evaluation process).

The user tests involved twelve Year 11/12 students. Students were first asked questions to gauge their previous experience with careers websites. They were then asked to use a predetermined site to explore their career options, based on a scenario. The students were observed during the exercise and feedback was obtained on their feelings about the sites in terms of their success in completing the exercise, finding information, making a career decision and their willingness to use the website again.

Internal evaluation

Findability/availability

Findability and availability of sites was examined by use of search words 'career guidance' and 'careers' and the test was that the site appeared on the first page of the search results. The only site found using these search words was *myfuture*. The consequence of this is that many potential users of the sites might not be able to find them using these fairly generic terms. Two-thirds of sites had names that were simple, relevant and easy to remember. This means that a third of the sites tested may be missed because they do not have names which meet this criterion. Some of this latter group have web addresses which are so convoluted as to make memorising them almost impossible, causing a high risk of incorrect entry and potentially deterring users from even trying.

Catering for disability

Generally, only the first page was tested for JAWS (a computer screen reader) compatibility, and all but one were compatible. Only three sites had links to disability services, two of these being sites targeting people with disabilities. The third was the New Apprenticeships site which provided a link to DNAWS (Disabled New Apprenticeship Wage Support) and National Apprenticeship Centres. Twenty-four sites did not have a 'text only' version; at least nine of these were simply structured with minimal graphics and so a text-only option may not have been considered necessary. Fifteen sites appeared to be not universally accessible. Font size, font colour and colour contrast are the main areas found to reduce accessibility. Generally, the sites tested appear to have attempted to comply with international standards for accessibility, although there were a few which so far have apparently made little or no effort.

Guidance through the career planning process

The site *myfuture* appeared to be the primary site for facilitating the initial stage of career choice, guiding people through a self-evaluation process in order to determine what they might like and be suited to. Ten of the other major sites provided a link to *myfuture* for the self-evaluation process (table 15). However, the tester noted that they 'found this part of *myfuture* to be difficult and time consuming to use'. Very few sites referred to the changing or current nature of work. Those that did were *myfuture, Year 12 – What next?* and the *Job Guide*. The site *Year 12 – What next?* presented information in a logical way and guided the user through the career choice process reasonably effectively, with *JobSearch* considered to be the most effective.

Table 15   Website guidance through the career planning process

Guidance through career planning process (n = 30 sites)	Yes	No	N/A
Self-evaluation	16	10	4
Reference to changing nature of work	3	23	4
Support through entire process	13	12	5

Quality of career information

On one-third of the sites, the nature of the information being provided did not appear to be clear on the front page. While relevant information was provided on 18 of the sites, some of the information was not particularly accessible on some (table 16). The six recorded as not applicable were sites whose objective was to provide information relating to only a part of the career decision-making process. At least 27 of the 30 sites tested (90%) were rated as providing information relevant/appropriate to the target group and using appropriate language (table 16). Currency of information was established by checking the date the site was last updated. This date was not found on 20 sites.

Table 16   Assessing quality of career information on websites

Quality of career information (n = 30 sites)	Yes	No	N/A
Nature of information provided is clear on front page	20	10	
All relevant career information appears to be provided	18	6	6
Information appears relevant/appropriate for target group	27	3	
Information appears to be up to date	9	1	20
Language appears appropriate for target group	28	2	

Overall rating of sites in relation to guidance on the career-planning process

Taking into account the above assessments, five sites were rated as 'very good'. These sites guided a user through the entire career decision-making process and they were relatively easy to access and follow. The links provided from the sites were effective and the information and language were assessed as appropriate for the target group. Ten sites were rated as 'fair'. These sites provided most of the information necessary for a user to complete the entire career decision-making process but had some shortfalls; for example, lack of guidance through the process, links to inappropriate sites, confusing to use or blocks of missing information. The sites that were rated as 'poor' contained such serious shortfalls that it was unlikely a user would successfully use the site to work through the career-planning process. Nine sites were determined as not applicable for assessment because they did not appear to be designed to take a user through the entire career decision-making process. Many of these sites did however offer guidance and information for one or more parts of the process and provided useful links.

User tests

Twelve Year 11/12 students were asked to use a predetermined site to explore their own career options. The sites tested were *JobJuice, JobSearch, Year 12 – What next?, Careers OnLine* and *myfuture*. Their views on these sites were obtained via a series of questions.

Nine of the students had used careers websites before. These sites were quite diverse and largely reflected the students' interests in their post-school destinations. Only one of these sites had been located using a search engine. Most were accessed on the basis of information from other sources, including newspapers, Centrelink, school, newspaper advertisement and a job agency. Nine students had been able to locate the information they were seeking. However, when asked about other websites that might be able to give them information on careers, only two of the 12 students were able to name any additional sites.

When testing the predetermined sites, almost all of the users (n=10) reported that they were able to find the information they were looking for, although a few comments suggested that getting started in most sites was a little challenging and the process was 'complicated … if you don't know what you are looking for'. Students using the *JobJuice* sites struggled with finding the correct words to use in the search engine. Another commented that the link from this site to *JobSearch* was 'good'.

Most reported that they were able to access information from all the sites they believed would assist them in making a decision about their careers. Similarly, most were able to find information about what training they might need for their chosen career. However, in one instance there was apparently a broken link, which impeded the students from locating this information.

Almost all students did not recall reading any information about the changing nature of work on the sites they visited. Only two students commented that they would not use the primary site they were directed to start with again. In both these cases, however, the students stated a preference for another site they were able to access via the initial site.

Conclusions and implications

Context

Career development services for young people operate in a context where understandings of career development vary widely and where the scope and purpose of these services are undergoing considerable change. On the one hand, scope and purpose can be narrowly defined in terms of a focus on employment. On the other hand, career development can be viewed as encompassing a wide range of services, including the provision of information, educational programs and counselling. Within this context, the field of career development services is very diverse. Services are offered as stand-alone entities by a wide range of public and private providers. Career development services are also embedded in a wide range of other programs; for example, as part of school curricula. Provision is characterised as formal (that is, established or sponsored by the state or another group) or informal (that is, the process whereby people accumulate information about career development from daily experiences and interactions with other people; as such it is often 'unorganised, unsystematic and sometimes unintentional' [Tight 2002, p.72]).

Service provision

The services evaluated in this study frequently provided career guidance, advice and information services. Career education, referral and placement services were offered to young people less frequently. Delivery of different types of service was dependent on the mandate of the provider, but was perhaps broader than expected. Most of the time all agencies delivered services by direct personal contact and through access to resources. There was a high level of agreement on the rationale that drove approaches to service delivery, with young people being a priority and mandated approaches to service delivery having minimal influence. Services tended to be delivered to young people with at least some involvement of parents and caregivers; the exact nature of this involvement was not ascertained in this study. Providers reported that the major process elements of career development were comprehensively included in service delivery, but a lesser focus on decision-making and planning was reported.

Providers in the tertiary sectors arguably have ready access to a significant segment of young people aged between 15 and 24 years. However, estimates from these organisations suggest that only a proportion (between 10 and 50%) of all students utilise these services. Private/public services, while offering an alternative source of career development services for young people, estimated that young people made up only 30% of their client base.

Providers in this study also appeared to derive their clients from related, but different referral bases. While providers located in tertiary institutions tended to attract clients who referred themselves, private/public providers were attracting clients from a wider referral base. This suggests that these two segments of the career development services market may operate in particular niches.

A wide range of qualifications were required by service providers, ranging from postgraduate qualifications to experience only, or some combination of these two, with a growing requirement for qualifications in career development. Some respondents to the interviews presented mixed opinions on the professionalism of providers, suggesting a wide variation in standards of service

delivery for different provider groups; the increasing impact from government initiatives in this area was also noted.

The web is often presented as a common and desirable source of careers support and is utilised by a range of providers as part of an overall integrated service delivery model or as a stand-alone strategy. However, the evaluation of various websites included in this study rated the sites as highly variable in terms of quality and scope. The emphasis of many sites was on the provision of information. These observations were supported by data from clients in both interviews and the survey, who reported using websites independently for information, but largely not for guidance.

Service uptake and satisfaction

The majority of young people in this study reported receiving careers help at school in various forms. However, all types of service were not evenly accessed, with computer-based services and visits appearing to be accessed less frequently in the school environment. Three-quarters of respondents had received some form of careers assistance at school and their levels of satisfaction with the services were positive; however, a small proportion indicated some level of dissatisfaction.

Young people primarily sought information and advice about work and learning options and careers advice from their current service provider. They were all provided with a broad range of services, which were strongly focused on the provision of information and personal delivery by staff, and they expressed overall satisfaction with the help they received.

Clients were satisfactorily assisted with all major elements of career planning by service providers. Half of all clients reported that career decision-making was easy for them, with one-third of clients reporting that they had decided their next career move. VET information appears to have been satisfactorily provided to approximately one-third of clients who were open to VET opportunities. In regard to their reasons for attending career development services, there was more 'push' than 'pull' for clients attending services in the private/public sector, with the reverse in the tertiary sector. Services were generally free and readily available. When reflecting on past experiences with career development services, clients had primarily accessed informal sources and educational institutions and, to a lesser extent, publicly available agencies. However, a paucity of services in the public sector meant that young people who needed assistance but did not meet the criteria for specific agencies found great difficulty in accessing support and needed to rely on their own resources. Otherwise, clients generally considered it easy to get help.

However, it would appear that the overall utilisation of these services by young people outside the school sector is not significant, particularly when viewed in the light of literature stressing the need for lifelong career development. This apparent under-utilisation of services is also implicit in the interviews from the *Crazy paving or stepping stones?* study (Harris, Rainey & Sumner 2006), where respondents reported that they had not sought assistance for half of the transitions in their learning careers, and a quarter of them had not been able to find appropriate help when they needed it. The majority of these respondents often felt they did not need help and usually only accessed services which were convenient, immediately relevant and free. Arguably, access to existing services continues to be restricted, with national, free, publicly available services only being found in the tertiary institutions and the Career Information Centres. Factors such as fees, convenience, 'comfort' and the ability to self-refer to services appear to play a part in the ways in which young people seek out and utilise services.

Promotion of VET pathways

The Australian response to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) review of career guidance policies described the progress which had been made in promotion of VET pathways (Miles Morgan 2002). Providers and respondents in the scoping study

presented the view that information about VET options was generally freely available through a variety of means. They perceived a willingness on the part of young people to consider these options. However, young people's perspectives give a slightly different story. Only one-third of the young people responding to the survey claimed that VET information was provided, with low utilisation of self-help and computer-based methods of delivery. Those who received this information were satisfied with the information they received. Information obtained from the interviews from the 2006 Harris, Rainey and Sumner study suggested that few of the young people in this study were given VET information by providers. The website evaluation conducted for this project found that, while VET information was often of good quality, its accessibility was highly variable. This sentiment was also echoed in the 2006 study.

Provision of information aside, the young people responding to the survey still expressed some ambivalence in relation to VET-related options, with only one-third of respondents overall expressing some preparedness to undertake VET studies. Indeed, it could be argued that service providers are correctly 'reading' the aspirations of young people when they suggest there are a range of reasons why they might not consider taking up studies in VET, with many of these reasons not related to relevance but to other factors such as personal aspirations, motivation with regard to further study, and issues relating to the availability and cost of VET courses.

Student decision-making

It is generally agreed that a comprehensive approach to career development practice comprises a number of key elements, including self-evaluation, exploring work and learning options, making decisions and making plans for future action (Brown, Brooks & Associates 1996; Haines, Scott & Lincoln 2003; Patton & McMahon 1999; Rogers & Creed 2000). Providers in the study generally believed they comprehensively delivered all these elements, but with a lesser focus on decision-making and planning. Clients agreed that this was the pattern of service provision and they were mostly satisfied with the assistance received.

While there is general agreement that information and communication technologies could be used to deliver a broad range of career development services in more effective ways (OECD 2004a), the websites evaluated as part of this study often did not assist users through the whole process, and decision-making was not found to be adequately supported. These sites often provided links to other sites for assistance with career decision-making, but these sites were sometimes difficult to access and complex to navigate.

Stakeholders interviewed as part of the scoping study felt that young people's career decision-making was poor. However, most young people reported in their surveys that they found the career decision-making process easy and relied on their own resources for this. A significant number of young people also reported that their decision-making included some involvement by their parents/ primary caregivers.

Interestingly, only half of the young people who responded to the survey could name the next step in their career planning, and only a third knew what their next career move would be. It is not possible, however, to determine the extent to which this outcome might be attributable to the career development services they experienced. Participants engaged in the Harris, Rainey and Sumner study reported that they found it easy to make decisions about their careers, but this was often based on their current interest, their own experience and their own research, which (for this sample) resulted in multiple sectoral moves. However, about a quarter of this sample found it difficult to make career decisions, especially during the first transition from school. It appears that young people might not be fully exploring factors relevant to their career decisions, despite assistance from service providers and primary caregivers. Young people may also not be strategic in their thinking about the outcomes of these decisions, both short-term and long-term. These findings appear to align with those of the OECD: that services often focus on immediate decisions rather than on developing people's career management skills (OECD 2004b).

Effectiveness of service provision

Young people attending career development services and looking back on their school experiences expressed only modest levels of satisfaction with school services. A less-than-positive response was also received from those interviewed in the 2006 study who were sometimes older and perhaps more discerning (and critical), given their multiple experiences with services over time.

Not surprisingly, providers of career development services were generally favourable in their evaluation of the six dimensions of their service delivery, attributing their highest effectiveness to their efforts to encourage young people to explore and make decisions about work and learning options. The next level of effectiveness was identified as assisting young people to make career plans for future action and providing them with the opportunity for self-exploration, while the third level covered targeting their services to the client group. Significantly, of all six dimensions, providers overall considered that they were least effective in presenting young people with information about VET. Using satisfaction as a measure of effectiveness, the young people in the current study also considered the providers to be effective in service provision. In regard to the 'six dimensions of service', clients considered the providers effective in assisting with the four elements of career planning (self-exploration, exploration of options, making decisions and making plans). They considered decision-making easy and had support in this process from elsewhere, but they were not all clear about their career plans. Clients also agreed with provider opinion in relation to a lower level of satisfaction in the provision of information about VET.

The career development services examined in this study were largely dependent upon the mandate of the provider, were biased towards information, and relied on 'static' service delivery, with little reported use of computer-based interventions. Static service delivery—heavily dependent on information and personal delivery—may not be the most efficient or effective way to deliver services. There also appears to be little use of experience-based interventions (activities designated 'placement' and 'referral' in this study). The websites evaluated by researchers and young people were found to be highly variable in terms of their quality, and reports also suggest that there was minimal use of guidance software and computer-based delivery of VET information. There appears to be an untapped potential for using web-based resources in the career development field.

Understandably, those young people who were able to access services claimed that it was easy to get help about careers. However, it could also be argued that the evidence from this evaluation indicates that access to services for young people should be enhanced. It seems to be clear that young people's 'help seeking' behaviours in relation to their careers at best combines resources from informal, as well as formal sources, and these sources are those close to them. However, even where career development services were readily available (for example, as part of the support services offered by an educational institution), it would appear that utilisation of these services by young people was not high (based on estimates received from providers themselves). In combination, this evidence suggests a number of issues that could be further examined.

The first of these issues relates to the extent to which we understand young people's motivations and behaviours in relation to seeking help to develop their careers. On the one hand, young people might take the view that decision-making about their careers is a private matter and seeking help is not only unnecessary, it is an intrusion by bureaucracies into their lives. At best, if young people are not able to 'manage' their careers and associated decision-making, information or 'help' might be sought, but this is generally a fairly low-key and non-intrusive activity. A range of personal contacts can be influential in the career development process but may not be effective in assisting these young people to make sound career decisions. Responses from providers should therefore embrace the full range of motivations and needs, but with an understanding that at least some young people may not be fully aware of the options available to them, nor are they perhaps cognisant, in the full, adult sense, of the implications of the choices they are making. On the other hand, the experiences of the young people who participated in the *Crazy paving or stepping stones?* study (Harris, Rainey & Sumner 2006), albeit significantly different in terms of their being tertiary students aged up to

34 years with a history of educational transitions, suggest that provision of services is in need of improvement, in terms of accessibility, consistency and appropriateness, as well as in terms of the providers' ability to address the needs of an untapped market beyond the immediate post-school years when transition into career(s) of choice might extend over a number of years and be an interrupted process.

It also needs to be acknowledged that there is some uncertainty over whether young people's attitudes towards career development services are determined by their experiences or vice versa. Inadequate provision of career development services at school or early in careers, or lack of available, accessible, effective services may predispose young people to rely on their own resources and decide not to seek out professional support later in life. It may then follow that underdeveloped and underassisted career decision-making is simplified to a short-term decision based on a range of current needs, which are mostly satisfied, meaning that long-term planning career needs are not investigated.

Implications

The sample of career development services included in this study reportedly delivered a comprehensive suite of services to young people. Despite this, reports from service users suggest that some work still remains to be done to ensure that all young people have access to comprehensive and responsive services. Tertiary providers in particular report that services are only reaching a small proportion of their overall student populations. Maximising outcomes for young people by ensuring the availability of a wide range of services, including education, information, guidance, advice, placement and referral, is an important facet of increasing accessibility of services. It would appear that services are also yet to explore or exploit the potential of web-based delivery platforms for career interventions.

The findings from this study also indicate that young people have a preference for managing their own careers. This necessarily requires service providers to have a better understanding of young people's 'help seeking' behaviours in relation to career development. Better support for decision-making is particularly warranted. The tendency for young people to be independent in their career development and to manage their own careers could be supported by improved, easily accessible, user-friendly, comprehensive computer-based resources. Further, while there is some evidence to suggest that young people seem to be favourably disposed to considering VET pathways, the distribution of VET information needs some improvement, as does continued efforts to educate the broader community about the value of vocational pathways for young people.

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Websites

Careers OnLine <http://www.careersonline.com.au>
Job Guide <http://www.jobguide.dest.gov.au>
JobJuice <http://www.jobjuice.gov.au>
JobSearch <http://www.jobsearch.gov.au/joboutlook/>
myfuture <http://www.myfuture.edu.au>
New Apprenticeships <http://www.newapprenticeships.gov.au>
Year 12 – What next? <http://www.year12whatnext.gov.au>

Glossary

Career development a lifelong process of growth through life, learning and work (Haines, Scott & Lincoln 2003)

Types of career development service

career guidance	assisting young people to understand their personal career options and to make their own educational, training and occupational choices; usually delivered by a qualified career practitioner
career advice	informing young people how to achieve a particular career goal, or recommending a particular goal or course of action
career education	activities, usually undertaken in a training or classroom setting, involving a range of teaching and learning activities related to work and learning options
career information	resources relating to work and learning options; this may be through print, electronic or personal contact and may include occupational and industry information and information about education and training
placement	assisting young people to secure work experience, employment or an industrial placement as part of a course
referral	assisting young people to attend another event, location or person who may assist them in their work or learning choices; may include educational visits to workplaces, external events such as careers fairs or referring them on to other career practitioners/organisations who may be able to assist them

Ways of delivering career development services

direct personal contact	may be either one on one or with a group; may also include using the phone or email to deliver services to these young people directly
through access to resources	for example, printed handouts, publications, libraries, the internet, and computer-based resources

Elements of career development

self-exploration	for example, exploration of an individual's interests, skills, aptitudes, personality and any social and environmental influences
exploring work and learning options	may include employment and learning trends and markets

Referral sources

self-referral	client attends from own volition
informal referral	client attends due to a suggestion from parents or friends
semi-formal	client attends following a suggestion from a person with authority such as a teacher
formal referral	client attends by direction from a government agency or department

Support document details

Additional information relating to this research is available in *What choice? An evaluation of career development services for young people: Support document*, which can be accessed from NCVER's website <http://www.ncver.edu.au/publications/1943.hmtl>. The document contains:

✧ Appendix A: Literature review

✧ Appendix B: Research and design process

✧ Appendix C: Protocol for telephone interview with service providers

✧ Appendix D: Online survey for service providers

✧ Appendix E: Questionnaire for young persons using career development services

✧ Appendix F: Websites included in the evaluation

✧ Appendix G: Website evaluation: data collection tools

✧ Appendix H: Interview protocol from the *Crazy paving or stepping stones?* study

✧ Appendix I: Further data.

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