

Stronger futures for all young Victorians - Discussion paper

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development

Subject: Industry Training Australia response

Industry Training Australia (ITA) is responding in general terms to the “Stronger futures for all young Victorians” discussion paper.

ITA has developed and operates an Australian Apprenticeships information service under funding from the Australian Government’s Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). The Service includes: two Australian Apprenticeships websites, one aimed at organizations promoting Australian Apprenticeships and the other at the general public; information sessions delivered nationally; and a phone and email advisory service.

ITA’s response relates to several factors: information provision; careers support services; and professional standards.

While ITA broadly supports the policy initiatives in the Youth Transition area, the introduction of these initiatives adds complexity to the information landscape from the perspective of potential participants and also support service networks, whether State or federally funded.

In ITA’s view, initiative information must be communicated in a way that meets stakeholder needs. A prospective participant’s key questions often relate to the applicability of an initiative to their circumstances, and its availability in their area. Information must be provided in plain English, it should integrate information from a variety of sources, and connect people with the resources in place to provide specific services.

Ideally this approach should bring together information under a broad banner, for example “careers and transitions”, incorporating the full range of initiatives and service providers regardless of funding source, to a single website that enables searches for information based on likely participant key questions.

ITA has presented a proposal to DEEWR to develop a national ‘pre-apprenticeships course finder’ resource that would operate with these objectives. The approach could be extended to a more general “careers and transition” environment.

As the discussion paper indicates, careers information provision and support to the 20 to 24 year old cohort is particularly challenging as this group has left secondary school career advice support structures. People in this group who have not gone on to employment or training will most likely be engaged under some kind of government initiative. Some, however, work to earn cash without a long term plan. When their motivation or employment objectives become more focussed on the longer term, accessing careers information and advice is difficult.

Australian Apprenticeships statistics show that Australian Apprenticeships commencements in this age group are approximately half of either the 19 and under, or the 25 to 44 year old cohorts. Although there are likely to be many factors affecting this situation, access to overview careers information and, where needed, face to face

careers specialists at the time that an individual in this group demands it could be an important factor in generating good career decisions and increase take up of skills focussed occupations.

Existing support structures may be adapted and enhanced to provide an open access face to face careers service. For example, the careers service within schools, or an extended LLENs or 'Skill Store' network, resourced with staff meeting professional standards and housed appropriately, could be developed into local careers 'shop fronts'.

ITA also supports moves to establish professional standards for staff in service providers who provide careers advice. The implementation of these standards need to be supported, and their benefits established and promoted to service providers, including schools, as well as with general public stakeholders, including students, jobseekers and parents.

The Career Education Association of Victoria (CEAV) and the Victorian State Government, as outlined in the discussion paper, are working to establish professional standards in careers advice and to facilitate their achievement by relevant employees.

This direction could be enhanced through additional funding supporting "recognition of prior learning" fast tracking of relevant careers staff, from schools and other careers service providers, toward the achievement of the foundation qualification the Certificate IV in Career Development. This initiative would ensure that current skills are quickly recognised should a professional standard framework be introduced.

Additionally, an initiative that actively promotes to all stakeholders the importance and benefits of professional standards for career advisers, would help increase the standards' take-up within networks, and educate the general public on the accepted benchmark underpinning service quality.

Initiatives, as set out in the discussion paper, that coach career advisers and mentor youth are important. The introduction of these initiatives should be monitored to ensure they enhance current services in their target sectors, rather than being used by service providers to replace existing resourcing commitments.

Mentoring and pastoral care of Australian Apprenticeships is a positive initiative that may also be extended to small and medium sized employers. Foundation level, brief, focussed training in staff mentoring and management, particularly of staff in the youth demographic, may help SME employers develop essential management skills that will assist in staff retention.

Yours sincerely,



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