



Submission cover sheet

Inquiry into E-PET-078-25 and PET-041-26: Make career guidance a right for every ACT Year 7–10 public school student

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ACT Government Submission to Standing Committee on Social Policy

Inquiry into E-Petition 078-25 and E-Petition 041-26

*Make Career Guidance a Right for Every Year 7-10 Public High School
Student*

Introduction

The ACT Government is committed to an inclusive, equitable and high-quality public education system that recognises the right of every child and young person to learn, thrive and benefit from the opportunities that education provides.

As part of this commitment, the ACT Government recognises career education as a foundational element of schooling that supports student engagement, wellbeing, successful transitions and informed decision-making about future learning, training and employment pathways.

The ACT Government acknowledges the important role of qualified career practitioners in helping students navigate key transitions, explore career options, and make informed pathway decisions in increasingly complex education and labour market environments. We also recognise that effective career education extends beyond individual career counselling and cannot rely on a single role within a school. Consistent with the *Australian Blueprint for Career Development*, career development is a lifelong process that begins in childhood and is supported by teachers, families, employers, career practitioners and the broader community.

Evidence demonstrates that the most effective career education models adopt a whole-school approach, where career learning is embedded across curriculum, wellbeing supports, transition planning and engagement with industry and community partners. Such approaches strengthen student engagement, increase the relevance of learning, support wellbeing and enable students to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to navigate an evolving world of work. Within this model, qualified career practitioners provide specialist support to students and lead the implementation of school-wide career education by working in partnership with teachers and school leaders, providing workforce insights, facilitating industry engagement and supporting career learning across the curriculum.

This whole-school approach is reflected across ACT public schools and underpins a range of career education initiatives from primary through to senior secondary education, including curriculum-based programs, professional learning, digital career resources, transition supports and targeted pathway opportunities. The ACT Government is also contributing to national reform through involvement in the development of the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority's (ACARA) Future Pathways curriculum connection and alignment with the *Australian Blueprint for Career Development*.

Accordingly, the ACT Government supports:

- Access to qualified career practitioners.
- Career education as a whole-school responsibility.
- Career learning embedded across curriculum and year levels.
- Early career development beginning in primary school.
- Strong partnerships between schools, industry, training providers and the community.
- A focus on student transitions from primary school through to post-school pathways.
- Alignment with the *Australian Blueprint for Career Development* and emerging national initiatives, including ACARA's Future Pathways curriculum connection.

- Professional learning and capability building to support teachers and school leaders to embed career education across all learning areas.

This submission outlines the ACT Government's approach to career education and guidance, existing programs and supports available to students, and opportunities to further strengthen a consistent, evidence-based and system-wide approach to career education across ACT public schools.

Current Career Education and Guidance Arrangements

The ACT Government supports career education across ACT public schools through a range of school-based and centrally delivered initiatives.

The Student Resource Allocation (SRA) for ACT public schools includes a funding allocation for transition and careers support. Nine colleges and two specialist schools are funded for one Education Teacher Level (ETL) at an average teacher cost for a Transition and Careers Officer (TaCO). In 2026, each of these 11 schools received an allocation of \$117,020, which supports colleges to deliver high quality transitions and careers support for all students.

The SRA also provides for transitions and careers support to high schools and primary schools through Transition Network Groups (TNGs). This investment provides ongoing transitions and careers support to high schools and primary schools through centralised facilitation of TNGs, and ACT Teacher Quality Institute (TQI) accredited professional learning offerings for teachers, careers advisers and TaCOs.

The Government also provides opportunities for ACT public students to access centrally funded digital career education, career information and workplace learning platforms that support career exploration, career development learning, pathway planning and workplace opportunities for students. These platforms include:

- A careers education digital platform provides tools and resources to support the delivery of career education, including curriculum-aligned learning activities, career planning resources, e-portfolios, career assessments, virtual job experiences and tools that support students to explore education, training and employment pathways.
- myfuture is Australia's National Career Information Service, a government-funded online platform that provides tools for career exploration, labour market insights, and information on education and training pathways for students, teachers, and parents. It offers a comprehensive resource to support young people's career development and self-awareness, enabling informed decision-making.
- A workplace management system supports ACT public high schools and colleges to coordinate, manage and monitor work experience and structured workplace learning placements, strengthening students' access to authentic industry engagement and career development opportunities.

ACT public schools also support students to participate in career-related activities appropriate to their level of career readiness including Work Experience (WEX), Vocational Learning Programs (VLPs) and Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASbAs). Centrally facilitated, TQI-endorsed professional learning is also provided throughout the year for teachers and career development professionals. Examples include the Successful Student Transitions Workshop (3 hours, TQI accredited), and Career Education in Secondary School (2 hours, TQI accredited) and Career Education in Primary school (2 hours, TQI accredited).

The Government offers scholarships through the ACT Teacher Scholarships Program, which provides ACT teachers and school leaders with financial support to undertake further education, training and research. Scholarships are available up to \$2,000 for the Certificate IV in Career Development and up to \$8,000 for the Graduate Certificate in Careers Education and Development.

The Education Directorate has also embedded career education across ACT public schools through integration of the Australian Curriculum General Capabilities across all learning areas, implementation of Australian Curriculum Work Studies, and delivery of targeted programs that support career development and transitions across the years of schooling. These include:

- the Career Learning and Pathways program for years 5 and 6, which supports students to identify their strengths, interests and aspirations and assists their transition from primary school to year 7;
- career education initiatives in years 7 to 10, including the Understanding Building and Construction Program (UBCP) Try-a-Trade initiative and Work Studies opportunities; and
- Pathways to Work and Learning, an accredited Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) course for years 11 and 12 that supports students to develop career management competencies, transition planning skills and informed post-school pathway decisions.

Together, these programs provide a developmental and sequential approach to career education from primary school through to senior secondary education. Consistent with the Australian Curriculum, career learning is embedded across the curriculum through the General Capabilities, supporting students to develop the transferable skills, knowledge and attributes required for lifelong learning, employment and active citizenship.

At a national level, ACARA is progressing the Future Pathways curriculum connections resource to support educators to identify and deliver these connections across the curriculum. The directorate has been an active contributor to the national working group responsible for the development of this resource. In the ACT, this approach is reflected through curriculum-based initiatives, including the UBCP Try-a-Trade, which provides students with opportunities to explore careers, industries and future pathways through authentic learning experiences.

As part of a pilot initiative within the Tuggeranong Network, schools are working collaboratively to strengthen career education through alignment with the *Australian Blueprint for Career Development* and the *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Career Readiness project*. This pilot is trialling a whole-school approach to career education by embedding career development learning across curriculum, transitions, pastoral care and industry engagement activities, with a focus on building student aspirations, career management competencies, career readiness, and informed pathway decision-making.

The Education Directorate is developing a student transition dashboard to support schools at key transition points. The dashboard will provide valuable information to teachers about student learning, supports, engagement and transition planning and may, over time, include career-related information and vocational pathway data.

Through the National Skills Agreement, the ACT Government will scope and deliver an ACT Careers Hub (the Hub) to provide guidance about the different VET pathways and qualifications to both prospective and existing learners in the ACT. This will support learner access to training and pathways advice and improve completions by ensuring there is comprehensive information provided to ensure that these cohorts have a realistic picture of industry work settings when they commence on- and off-the-job training.

These programs demonstrate how career education can be delivered in developmentally appropriate ways, enabling students to build aspirations, develop transferable skills, and make informed decisions about their future pathways.

Data and Evidence

Research consistently demonstrates that quality career education contributes to:

- higher student engagement;
- improved educational attainment;
- increased career readiness;
- stronger post-school transitions; and
- enhanced wellbeing and sense of purpose.

As noted above, evidence indicates that career education is most effective when delivered through a whole-school approach. Students benefit when career development learning is embedded across curriculum areas, supported through pastoral care programs and reinforced through authentic industry engagement and personalised guidance.

The *Australian Blueprint for Career Development* identifies career development as a lifelong process beginning in childhood. It emphasises the development of career management competencies through coordinated support from teachers, career practitioners, families and communities.

Research such as the *Career Education: Every Teacher has a Role* publication further demonstrates that students engage more strongly in learning when teachers help them understand the relevance of curriculum content to future pathways and real-world opportunities.

Whole-school Career Education and Career Readiness Pilot: An Emerging Practice in the Tuggeranong Network

National and international evidence indicates that career education is most effective embedded throughout a student's learning journey rather than delivered solely through individual guidance interventions. The *OECD Career Readiness Project* highlights the importance of providing students with opportunities to explore a broad range of careers, engage with employers and understand the connections between education and future work. Such approaches are associated with improved career readiness, student motivation and employment outcomes.

This evidence is reflected in current practice within ACT public schools. Schools across the Tuggeranong Network are working collaboratively to align career education programs with the *Australian Blueprint for Career Development* and the *OECD Career Readiness Project*. Through a whole-school approach, career development learning is being integrated across curriculum, transitions, pastoral care and industry engagement activities to support student aspirations, career readiness and informed pathway decision-making.

Aligned with the Government's *Inclusive Education Strategy 2024-2034* and its focus on successful transitions, the Inclusion, Transition and Career Coach (ITACC) supports schools across the Tuggeranong Network to strengthen inclusive career education practices. Drawing on the *Education and Employers Work Exposure, Exploration and Experience – The WE3 Continuum* and the *Australian Blueprint for Career Development*, this work is piloting innovative approaches to whole-school career education within the Tuggeranong Network, building staff capability and providing students with access to sequenced career development opportunities.

Through authentic experiences across school, community, industry, education and employment settings, students develop transferable skills, explore pathways and make informed decisions about their futures. This emerging model strengthens the connection between inclusive education, career development and successful post-school transitions, contributing to more equitable access to meaningful education, training and employment pathways for students with diverse learning needs.

The WE3 Continuum demonstrates that repeated and meaningful engagement with employers, workplaces and career learning activities can lift student aspirations and increase career readiness, educational engagement and successful transitions. The framework emphasises that career education is most effective when it is embedded across the school experience and supported by teachers, career practitioners, industry and community partners.

Research underpinning *The WE3 Continuum* highlights the importance of authentic exposure to the world of work. Students who participate in sustained career education and employer engagement activities develop a broader understanding of available pathways, stronger career decision-making skills and greater confidence in managing future transitions. Evidence suggests that increased engagement with employers during schooling can contribute to improved employment outcomes later in life. The collaborative work occurring across the Tuggeranong Network reflects these principles, demonstrating how embedding career education across a school community can strengthen student agency, aspirations and work readiness.

The *Australian Blueprint for Career Development* aligns with these findings by promoting a developmental approach to career education that supports students to build aspirations, develop career management competencies and successfully navigate learning and work throughout their lives.

Future Work and Reforms Already Underway

The ACT Government is already progressing several initiatives that will strengthen career education across the public school system.

Future of Education Reform

On 27 May 2026, the then Minister for Education and Early Childhood announced the *Future of Education: One Public Education System* reform as the ACT Government's interim response to the ACT Public School System Resourcing Review (the Review). The reform provides an opportunity to consider a more consistent, equitable and system-wide approach to career education and career support across ACT public schools.

Careers education was included in the Terms of Reference of the Review, recognising its importance in supporting student engagement, transitions and post-school pathways. While career education was not specifically addressed in the final report, *Supporting the delivery of an effective and equitable public education system in the ACT*, the broader reform agenda provides an opportunity to consider future approaches to career education delivery, workforce capability, and resourcing across ACT public schools, including schools with years 7-10 students.

ACARA Future Pathways Curriculum Connections

Nationally, ACARA is developing the Future Pathways curriculum connection resource. This initiative supports a whole-school approach to career education by providing practical guidance for educators to embed career learning across all learning areas from Foundation to Year 10. The resource is intended to help students connect their learning with future pathways, aspirations, career development and workforce participation.

The Education Directorate has been an active contributor to the national working group responsible for the development of the Future Pathways curriculum connection. Through this involvement, the directorate has contributed to the design of the resource and the development of evidence-based approaches that support career education across the curriculum.

The ACT supports this direction and is well positioned to align future career education initiatives with the emerging national framework. The Future Pathways curriculum connection presents a significant opportunity to strengthen the integration of career education across curriculum, pedagogy, student wellbeing and transition planning, ensuring students develop the knowledge, skills and self-awareness required to successfully navigate future learning, training and employment pathways.

myfuture

The ACT Government, together with all Australian states and territories, maintains a service agreement with myfuture, Australia's national career information service. myfuture has played a significant role in supporting career education across Australia for more than 24 years, providing students, educators, parents and carers with free access to trusted, evidence-based and impartial career information, career exploration tools, labour market insights, and education and training pathway information.

In a rapidly changing world of work, myfuture continues to play a critical role in supporting jurisdictions to implement career education policies and initiatives. The platform provides a high-quality, secure and unbiased source of career information that supports informed decision-making, career exploration and pathway planning for young people across Australia.

The Directorate has been an active contributor to ongoing development and improvement of the myfuture service, providing feedback on platform functionality, user experience, resources and service delivery. This engagement helps ensure the platform continues to meet the needs of students, teachers, career practitioners and families in the ACT and nationally.

A significant redevelopment of the myfuture platform is currently underway. The redevelopment will modernise the service and enhance its ability to support contemporary career education and career development practices. Future enhancements are expected to improve access to career information, strengthen career planning and pathway tools, and better support educators in embedding career learning within school programs. The ACT Government will continue to work collaboratively with myfuture and other jurisdictions to support implementation of the renewed service.

System-wide Career Education

The Education Directorate will continue working across curriculum, pedagogy and student pathway teams to strengthen career education through:

- Curriculum integration, including alignment with the Australian Curriculum and emerging national initiatives such as ACARA's Future Pathways curriculum connection.
- Teacher professional learning to build capability and confidence in embedding career learning across all learning areas.
- Career development resources that support students, teachers and families to make informed pathway decisions.
- Improved transition processes that support students at key transition points throughout their education.
- Better use of student pathway, transition and career development data, including opportunities presented through the development of the Transition Dashboard.
- Procurement and implementation of contemporary and ethical online career education and workplace learning platforms that support student career development, career exploration, work experience, industry engagement and informed pathway planning.

- Strengthening partnerships between schools, industry, tertiary education providers and community organisations to expand students' access to authentic career and workplace learning experiences.
- Expanding delivery of the Understanding Building and Construction Program (UBCP) Try-a-Trade, supported through ACT Government investment of more than \$1.4 million over four years. This expansion will enable up to 250 year 9-10 students annually to participate in curriculum-aligned Work Studies programs and provide career development learning opportunities for up to 2,000 year 8 students, supporting career exploration, industry engagement and informed pathway decision-making from an early stage of secondary schooling.

This work will support a more consistent, evidence-based and whole-school approach to career education across ACT public schools, ensuring students have access to reliable information, meaningful advice and rich learning experiences that prepare them for future learning, work and life.

Conclusion

The ACT Government recognises that career education is critical to preparing young people for successful futures in learning, work and life.

Qualified career practitioners are an important component of effective provision. However, evidence demonstrates that the greatest impact is achieved through a whole-school approach that embeds career education across curriculum, wellbeing, transition planning and authentic engagement with industry and community partners.

As recognised in the *Future Ready a Student Focused National Career Education Strategy*: “Everyone has a role in ensuring students are ready for the future of work. Government, parents and carers, school leaders and teachers, employers, career practitioners and the youth sector can all contribute to this important task.”

The ACT Government’s approach reflects this principle by supporting career education as a shared responsibility across the education system. Through existing programs, national partnerships, ongoing reform and targeted investment, the Government will continue to strengthen career education and career guidance to ensure all students are supported to make informed decisions about their future learning, training and employment pathways.