



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

Submission number: 010

Submitter: Career Advisers Association of NSW and ACT

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29 September 2026

Mr Thomas Emerson
Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory
Standing Committee on Social Policy
196 London Circuit
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Dear Members of the Standing Committee on Social Policy,

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

On behalf of the Careers Advisers Association of NSW & ACT Inc. (CAA), we enclose our submission to the Inquiry into E-PET-078-25 and PET-041-26 – Make career guidance a right for every ACT Year 7–10 public school student.

We welcome the opportunity to contribute to this important Inquiry and to provide the Committee with the perspective of an association representing and supporting career development practitioners working with school students across NSW and the ACT.

We thank the Committee for considering our submission and welcome the opportunity to provide any further information or clarification that may assist the Inquiry.

Yours sincerely,



Linda Drenkhahn
President

Response: Inquiry into E-PET-078-25 and PET-041-26 – Make Career Guidance a Right for Every ACT Year 7-10 Public School Student

1. INTRODUCTION

The Careers Advisers Association of NSW & ACT Incorporated (“CAA”) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory Standing Committee on Social Policy's Inquiry into E-PET-078-25 and PET-041-26 – Make career guidance a right for every ACT Year 7–10 public school student.

CAA is a professional association established in 1975, representing and supporting school-based Careers Advisers across NSW and the ACT. CAA is committed to promoting quality career development education in schools as well as supporting Careers Advisers in their delivery of this important education and their guidance to school students to be prepared for, and make informed decisions about, education, training and employment.

The importance of students having access to appropriately qualified career development practitioners and career development education and guidance throughout their schooling is well-established both overseas and locally. Career development education is not simply the provision of information about courses or occupations, nor should it commence only when students reach the senior years in school. It is a developmental process across K-12 through which young people progressively develop self-awareness, explore occupations and pathways, understand the relationship between their education and future opportunities, and build the career-management skills required to make informed decisions and successfully navigate transitions throughout their lives.

The quality, professional expertise, accessibility and continuity of school-based career development education and guidance is critical to student well-being and student outcomes. Students need access to school-based career development practitioners who have the specialist knowledge and professional qualifications to provide accurate and appropriate career development support, as well as sufficient allocated time to work meaningfully with students.

CAA supports the intent of the petitions and, in particular, considers two of the elements fundamental to the provision of an effective school-based career development service in ACT schools:

1. **Professional qualifications:** ACT school-based career development practitioners should hold career development qualifications in accordance with the Career Industry Council of Australia (“CICA”) Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners, including a Graduate Certificate in Career Development or higher qualification.

2. **Adequate career development practitioner allocation:** ACT school-based career development practitioners should be appropriately resourced, with a minimum benchmark of 1 full-time equivalent (1 FTE) qualified career development practitioner for every 450 students, supported by appropriate administrative assistance.

These two elements cannot be considered independently. A professionally qualified career development practitioner cannot provide a comprehensive career development service if they are not given sufficient time to do so. Equally, adequate allocation cannot compensate for the absence of the specialist professional knowledge and competencies required to provide quality career development education and guidance.

CAA's experience and research with NSW and ACT school-based Careers Advisers demonstrates that where career development practitioner allocation is insufficient, career development education and related services, support and guidance become increasingly reactive rather than proactive. Individual career counselling is limited or non-existent, career development education is fragmented, early intervention is limited, support for subject and pathway decisions is constrained, and students have less access to things like school-based and external programs for knowledge and skill development, Work Experience, vocational pathways, tertiary application assistance, employer and industry engagement and transition planning.

The consequences for students can be significant. Insufficient access to careers support, education and guidance can contribute to things like poorly informed subject choices, misunderstanding of university prerequisites and entry requirements, course application errors, incorrect course preference decisions, missed entry deadlines and scholarships, unsuitable pathway choices, missed vocational and workplace opportunities and students leaving school without a clear or viable transition plan.

These impacts are particularly significant for students who rely most heavily on school-based support, including students with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students with English as an additional language or dialect, students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, students with diverse learning needs and students who are disengaged or at risk of leaving school early.

2. AUSTRALIAN AND INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL-BASED CAREER DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

The importance of high-quality, appropriately resourced, school-based career development education and guidance has long been recognised through international research, Australian Government policy, national professional frameworks, state and territory governments' strategies and school curriculum and planning frameworks.

2.1. International Recognition

2.1.1. Investing in Career Guidance

The *Investing in Career Guidance* Report¹ reflects longstanding international recognition of the strategic role of career guidance in education. Importantly, the report emphasises that career guidance should begin early, from primary education and form a regular part of education and training. It also identifies the importance of equitable access to high-quality guidance, connections between learning and the changing world of work, access to reliable labour market information, engagement with employers, and delivery by appropriately trained and qualified career development professionals. These principles provide strong international support for career development education that commences early, occurs progressively throughout schooling, is accessible to all students, connects education with employment and the labour market, and is underpinned by high-quality professional career development practice.

2.1.2. Career Readiness Research

The OECD's Career Readiness research² provides significant international longitudinal evidence concerning the relationship between career development during adolescence and later employment outcomes. Through analysis of longitudinal datasets across multiple countries, the OECD identified indicators of greater teenage career readiness associated with the ways in which young people explore, experience and think about their potential futures in work. The research found that students who demonstrate these forms of career readiness frequently experience more positive employment outcomes in adulthood, including lower levels of unemployment, higher earnings and greater career satisfaction.

¹ European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, European Training Foundation, European Commission, International Labour Organization, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Investing in Career Guidance: Revised Edition 2021*.

² OECD (2021), *Indicators of Teenage Career Readiness: Guidance for Policy Makers*, OECD Education Policy Perspectives, No. 43, OECD Publishing, Paris; Covacevich, C., Mann, A., Santos, C. & Champaud, J. (2021), *Indicators of Teenage Career Readiness: An Analysis of Longitudinal Data from Eight Countries*, OECD Education Working Papers, No. 258, OECD Publishing, Paris.

The research reinforces the importance of career development occurring progressively during schooling.

2.1.3. The State of Global Teenage Career Preparation

The OECD's 2025 report *The State of Global Teenage Career Preparation*³ provides further contemporary evidence of the importance of career development during adolescence drawing on wider longitudinal evidence showing associations between career development activities and better subsequent employment outcomes. The OECD calls for greater investment in career development systems that begin early in students' educational journeys and provide frequent and meaningful engagement with employers. This supports an approach in which career development is embedded throughout schooling rather than concentrated in the final years of schooling.

2.2. Australian National Recognition

2.2.1. Australian Blueprint for Career Development

The *Australian Blueprint for Career Development*⁴ ("the Blueprint") provides a nationally relevant framework for the design, implementation and evaluation of intentional career development learning. Fundamentally, the Blueprint identifies the knowledge, skills and attitudes individuals require to make sound choices and effectively manage their careers. It recognises that life, learning and work are interconnected, that career development is a lifelong process, and that individuals develop their careers through different phases across the lifespan.

Importantly, the Blueprint applies to people of all ages and stages, beginning in early childhood. Career management competencies are developmental and can be learned and strengthened over time. This provides a strong Australian framework for career development education that begins early and develops progressively, rather than being confined to the later years of secondary schooling or provided only when students are approaching an immediate education, training or employment decision.

The Blueprint also recognises the important relationship between career development, learning and the labour market. By developing career management competencies, individuals are better equipped to understand themselves, explore opportunities, make informed decisions and manage transitions across life, learning and work. In a school context, this supports career development education that enables students to understand the relationship between their education, further education and training pathways, employment opportunities and the changing world of work.

³ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2025), *The State of Global Teenage Career Preparation*, OECD Publishing, Paris. DOI: 10.1787/d5f8e3f2-en.

⁴ [Australian Blueprint Career Development.pdf](#)

2.2.2. Future Ready: A Student Focused National Career Education Strategy

The Australian Government's *Future Ready: A Student Focused National Career Education Strategy*⁵ ("the Strategy") reflects nationally agreed objectives for governments, schools and employers to support the provision of high-quality career education for all school students. The Strategy emphasises the importance of:

- (a) early development of career management and navigation skills that enable young people to make informed decisions throughout their working lives;
- (b) building the skills and general capabilities young people will require in the workplace;
- (c) strengthening collaboration between schools, employers and local communities;
- (d) developing students' career-management and navigation skills;
- (e) preparing students for successful transitions beyond school.

Importantly, *Future Ready* establishes high-quality career education as a national objective rather than an optional addition to schooling.

2.2.3. Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners

The Career Industry Council of Australia ("CICA") *Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners*⁶ ("Professional Standards") demonstrate that professional career development practice requires specific education, competencies, ethical practice and continuing professional development. Accordingly, career development education and guidance is not simply a function that should be assigned to any available member of school staff without consideration of professional preparation and qualifications.

2.2.4. CICA National Survey of Career Development Practitioners

CICA's *2024 National Survey of Career Development Practitioners*⁷ provides contemporary evidence concerning Australia's career development workforce. The findings position career development practitioners at the intersection of education, skills and employment, supporting individuals to navigate education, employment and life transitions. The survey identified one-to-one career conversations as particularly beneficial and impactful, reinforcing the need for adequate allocation to career development practitioners in schools. The report also highlights the importance of accessible and responsive career development services and that achieving equitable access requires appropriate investment in service delivery, digital infrastructure and practitioner capability. These findings support both elements of CAA's submission: professional qualifications matter, as

⁵ Australian Government Department of Education and Training (2019), *Future Ready: A Student Focused National Career Education Strategy*, Commonwealth of Australia, ISBN 978-1-76051-639-0.

⁶ [CICA-Professional-Standards-for-Australian-Career-Development-Practitioners-5th-ed-published-2026.pdf](#)

⁷ Career Industry Council of Australia (2025). *2024 National Survey of Career Development Practitioners*. Career Industry Council of Australia, May 2025

does an appropriate allocation that allows practitioners to use that professional expertise effectively.

2.2.5. The Australian Career Development Workforce: Comparative Analysis Based on National Workforce Studies

CICA's *The Australian Career Development Workforce: Comparative Analysis Based on National Workforce Studies*⁸ provides a longitudinal perspective on the development of Australia's career development profession. Drawing on national workforce studies undertaken in 2020 and 2024, the report examines changes in practitioner demographics, professional qualifications, working conditions, service delivery, professional practice, performance evaluation and digital integration. Importantly, the comparative analysis reinforces the importance of maintaining a skilled, qualified and professionally supported career development workforce capable of delivering high-quality and responsive career development services.

2.2.6. Australian Government Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System

The Australian Government's *Improving Outcomes for All: Australian Government Summary Report of the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System*⁹ identifies career development education as an important component of improving outcomes for Australian students. The Review was undertaken to inform future school education reform and identified priorities directed towards improving student outcomes, addressing disadvantage, supporting student wellbeing and strengthening the education workforce. Of particular relevance, the expert panel recommended that "every student" receive support to successfully transition to post-school education, training or employment through enhanced career development education and targeted programs, while also recognising that targeted programs may be required to respond to differing student needs and circumstances.

2.3. NSW State Government Recognition

Although the current Inquiry concerns ACT public schools, NSW provides a useful neighbouring jurisdictional example of how career development is increasingly embedded within education, curriculum, pathways, skills and school-improvement policy.

⁸ Career Industry Council of Australia (2025), *The Australian Career Development Workforce: Comparative Analysis Based on National Workforce Studies*, Career Industry Council of Australia, Melbourne, May 2025

⁹ Australian Government Department of Education (2023), *Improving Outcomes for All: Australian Government Summary Report of the Review to Inform a Better and Fairer Education System*, December 2023

2.3.1. NSW Department of Education Pathways for Secondary Students Strategy

The NSW *Pathways for Secondary Students Strategy*¹⁰ is particularly relevant because one of its strategic priorities is to provide high-quality career education and development, referencing the importance of:

- (a) increasing student access to quality career education and development;
- (b) improving resources and training for careers and transition advisers;
- (c) increasing the average time each student is engaged in career education and development.

2.3.2. NSW Department of Education K–12 Career Learning Framework

The NSW Department of Education’s (“DoE”) *K–12 Career Learning Framework*¹¹ (“Framework”) provides strong NSW-specific support for embedding career development learning progressively throughout schooling. Designed to assist school leaders, careers and transition advisers, curriculum leaders and teachers, the Framework supports a continuum of quality career learning experiences across K–12. The Framework promotes inclusive access for diverse learners, with appropriate differentiation and adjustment to support meaningful participation.

A central focus is connecting classroom learning with future education, training, employment and the world of work. This includes developing students’ career management and navigation skills, workplace capabilities, and collaboration between schools, employers and industry. Overall, the Framework supports career development education that begins early, occurs progressively throughout schooling, is inclusive of diverse learners, and connects learning with future pathways and opportunities.

2.4. What this body of evidence means for the ACT Inquiry

Taken together, the above referenced international, national and state reports, research, policy and frameworks support many principles directly relevant to the Committee's consideration of the petitions:

- (a) Career development should begin early and continue progressively throughout schooling, rather than commencing only when students are in their senior years at school;
- (b) Students benefit significantly from personalised, one-to-one career conversations;
- (c) Students benefit significantly from workplace exposure and opportunities to explore and experience work;
- (d) High-quality career development education and guidance assists students to make informed education, training and employment decisions and successfully transition beyond school;

¹⁰ NSW Department of Education (2022), *Pathways for Secondary Students Strategy*, NSW Government

¹¹ NSW Department of Education, *K–12 Career Learning Framework*, NSW Government

- (e) Career development education and guidance has an important equity function, because disadvantaged students often have greater need for this while participating less in career development opportunities;
- (f) Career development education requires specialist professional knowledge and qualifications. To meet Australia's Professional Standards for Career Development Practitioners. A CICA-endorsed Graduate Certificate in Career Development or higher is required;
- (g) Practitioner allocation, capacity and resourcing matter;
- (h) Quality provision requires practitioner time.

The important considerations for the Committee are whether every student has equitable access to high-quality, ongoing career development education and personalised guidance delivered by appropriately qualified professionals who have sufficient time and resources to undertake that work effectively.

3. ACT SCHOOL-BASED CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS SHOULD HOLD PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

For professional recognition under the CICA Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners, career development practitioners must hold a Graduate Certificate in Career Development or a higher qualification in this field.

Career development is a specialist professional discipline. Providing quality career development education involves considerably more than supplying students with information about courses, occupations or tertiary entry. Career development practitioners require specialist knowledge and skills in career development theory, career counselling and guidance, labour market information, career assessment, ethical practice, transition planning, employability and career management skills, vocational education and training, tertiary pathways, and supporting students with diverse needs.

Formal career development qualifications provide practitioners with the theoretical and professional foundations necessary to apply this knowledge appropriately to individual students. This is particularly important in schools, where practitioners work with young people making decisions that can have significant educational, employment and personal consequences.

Qualified career development practitioners help students navigate an increasingly complex range of pathways, including university admission and early entry schemes, vocational education and training, apprenticeships and traineeships, school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, employment, alternative entry pathways, scholarships, adjustment factors and other post-school opportunities. Requirements, deadlines and pathways change regularly, making professional knowledge, continuing professional development and ethical practice essential.

The need for appropriately qualified practitioners is also an equity issue. Students with disability, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, EAL/D students, rural and remote students, students experiencing disadvantage and students at risk of disengagement may require considerably more individualised career guidance, advocacy, transition planning and liaison with families, education providers, employers and support services. Insufficiently specialised career support risks widening existing differences in access to information, opportunities and successful transitions.

The CICA Professional Standards provide a national benchmark for the profession. They define the competencies required of career development practitioners, provide quality assurance for students, families, schools and other stakeholders, establish expectations for professional and ethical practice, and require practitioners to maintain their professional knowledge through continuing professional development.

Where career development education is delivered within the classroom, CAA also recognises the particular value of practitioners holding teaching qualifications. Teacher training provides complementary expertise in pedagogy, curriculum development and delivery, differentiation, inclusive practice, classroom management, duty of care and whole-school educational practice. Career development qualifications and teaching qualifications therefore provide distinct but complementary professional capabilities.

4. ACT SCHOOL-BASED CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS SHOULD BE RESOURCED AT A MINIMUM OF 1 FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (1 FTE) CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONER TO 450 STUDENTS

4.1. Allocation

CAA supports a minimum resourcing benchmark of 1 full-time equivalent (1 FTE) qualified career development practitioner for every 450 students in ACT schools.

The effectiveness of a school-based career development service depends not only on the professional qualifications of the practitioner, but also on whether they have sufficient allocated time to deliver that service. Employing a qualified career development practitioner without providing adequate allocation substantially limits the benefit students can receive from their expertise.

Students do not have identical career development needs. Students require different levels of assistance at different stages of their schooling, while students experiencing complex circumstances may require multiple individual appointments, follow-up discussions and sustained support.

A practitioner requires sufficient allocated time to provide individual guidance and counselling, deliver career development education across year groups, maintain current professional and labour market knowledge, engage with parents and carers, build relationships with education, training, industry and community organisations, coordinate career and workplace learning opportunities, and support students through increasingly complex education, training and employment pathways.

When practitioner allocation is insufficient, career development services inevitably become more reactive rather than proactive. Practitioner time is increasingly consumed by urgent student matters, leaving less capacity for quality career development education, early career education, individual counselling, early intervention, follow-up and sustained support.

A minimum benchmark of 1 FTE career development practitioner per 450 students would provide schools with a clearer basis for protecting sufficient professional capacity to deliver things such as individual guidance, planned career development education, transition support, pathway assistance, parent engagement, employer and tertiary partnerships and early intervention.

Importantly, the 1:450 benchmark should be regarded as a minimum resourcing benchmark rather than an assumption that every school has identical needs. Consideration should also be given to school context, student complexity, disadvantage, disability, geographic location, cohort characteristics and the extent of administrative support available.

Ultimately, appropriate practitioner allocation, supported by suitable administrative assistance, enables career development practitioners to focus their specialist expertise where it has the greatest value.

4.2. Administrative support should complement career development practitioner allocation

Career development practitioner allocation should be complemented by administrative support for the administrative and compliance workload required by school-based career development education and programs.

Administrative assistance can appropriately support routine clerical, data-entry and logistical functions, allowing qualified practitioners to devote more of their allocated time to the specialist work for which they are trained.

By way of example, the delivery of a work experience program requires things like following up documentation, employer liaison, record management, and student and parent communication. Similarly, Vocational Education and Training and school-based apprenticeship and traineeship arrangements involve a range of labour-intensive administration. Without adequate administrative support, these administrative activities consume significant practitioner time and career development education and guidance is displaced by administrative tasks.

CAA's research demonstrates the scale of this issue. In its 2025 survey of 360 NSW high school Careers Advisers, 79% of respondents reported having no administrative support and the two biggest factors impacting the ability of the career development practitioner to achieve quality careers outcomes for students was:

1. Allocation for the career development practitioner role;
2. Time spent on administrative tasks (due to limited or no administrative support) that could be completed by administrative staff.

The fundamental principle is that every hour a qualified career development practitioner spends undertaking routine clerical work is an hour unavailable for direct career development work with students.

4.3. Impact of Insufficient Allocation

When practitioner allocation is insufficient, career development services inevitably become more reactive rather than proactive. Practitioner time is increasingly consumed by urgent student matters, leaving less capacity for quality career development education, early career education, individual counselling, early intervention, follow-up and sustained support.

4.3.1. Equity implications

Career development practitioner allocation has significant implications for equity of access to career development support. Students requiring proactive identification, individual assistance and sustained support are at greater risk of not receiving the personalised career guidance, pathway planning and ongoing support they require to make informed decisions and develop career management skills and capabilities.

This includes students experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage, students with disability, EAL/D students, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, rural and remote students, students with diverse learning needs, students whose families have limited knowledge or experience of Australian education and training systems, and students who are disengaged or at risk of leaving school early. For these students, effective career development education and support may require substantially more than other students.

Where practitioner time is limited, there is also a risk that students requiring additional support are referred to the career development practitioner only towards the end of their schooling, when opportunities for meaningful early intervention and sustained transition planning may be significantly reduced or are no longer available.

Adequate career development practitioner allocation is an equity measure, not simply a staffing consideration.

4.3.2. Personalised Career Counselling and Guidance

Where practitioners have insufficient allocation, career education and guidance may consequently be more generic and increasingly dependent on students independently recognising that they need assistance and actively seeking it.

This has implications beyond the number of career activities a school can provide. It can affect the depth, continuity, accessibility and individualisation of career development support available to students, and ultimately their capacity to make informed decisions and successfully navigate transitions through secondary education and into further education, training and employment.

4.3.3. Subject Selection and its Impact on Future Pathways

Career guidance is important well before students commence senior years at school.

Insufficient allocation may impact the capacity for proactive subject-selection counselling in Years 8, 9, and 10. Students may therefore select subjects without understanding how those decisions relate to senior study, tertiary prerequisites / assumed knowledge, and vocational pathways.

4.3.4. Apprenticeships, Traineeships, VET and Alternative Pathways

Insufficient allocation can disproportionately affect students who are pursuing vocational learning and/or an alternative pathway.

Career development practitioners require time to identify and facilitate:

- apprenticeships and traineeships;
- Australian School-based Apprenticeships (ASbAs);
- VET and external VET opportunities;
- TAFE programs;
- employment opportunities;
- industry programs;
- alternative education programs; and
- employer and training-provider connections.

These opportunities can be time-sensitive and require significant coordination and administration. When practitioners are unavailable because they are teaching, completing mandatory administration or working under reduced allocation, opportunities can disappear before students are able to act.

4.3.5. Work Experience and Work Readiness

Career development practitioners need time to determine whether a placement is suitable, prepare students for workplace expectations, communicate with employers, manage documentation and safety requirements, monitor placements and respond to issues. Academic studies have shown that the sooner students engage with occupational work experiences the more likely they are to remain engaged in their school learning.

4.3.6. Disengaged and “At Risk” Students

Insufficient allocation may impact capacity for early intervention. Career development practitioners often identify disengagement through individual conversations and can help students reconnect education with a meaningful future goal. Without sufficient time for proactive follow-up:

- (a) disengaged students may not be identified early;
- (b) intervention occurs too late;
- (c) appropriate vocational alternatives may not be explored;
- (d) opportunities to use career planning as an engagement strategy may be limited or non-existent.

4.3.7. Parent and Carer Information

Parents and carers play an important role in student decision-making, however, career development education, training and employment pathways have become increasingly complex. Without adequate access to qualified career development practitioners, families may unintentionally provide incorrect advice. With less opportunity to remain aware of current information, and to ensure students, parents and carers have accurate information, there is often less opportunity to correct misinformation. Accordingly, practitioners also require sufficient allocation to maintain current, up-to-date information.

4.3.8. Reduced Employer, Industry, University and TAFE Engagement

Career development practitioners often create opportunities through building relationships with employers, universities, TAFE, training providers, industry organisations and community organisations - this takes time to build relationships.

With insufficient allocation, schools may also experience:

- (a) fewer Work Experience placements;
- (b) fewer employer presentations;
- (c) fewer workplace visits;
- (d) fewer industry immersion activities;
- (e) fewer mentoring opportunities;
- (f) reduced access to vocational programs;
- (g) reduced awareness of local employment opportunities;
- (h) fewer direct connections to apprenticeships and employment;
- (i) reduced exposure to emerging occupations and industries.

4.3.9. Fragmented Career Development Education

Where allocation is inadequate, career development education may become reactive and concentrated around senior years rather than delivered as a planned developmental program. Students may consequently receive isolated career activities rather than sequential learning. Students make Year 10 subject selection decisions without having developed the skills, knowledge and understanding required to make those decisions confidently and appropriately.

4.3.10. The Cumulative Impact of Insufficient Allocation

The individual problems described above should not be viewed in isolation. Insufficient career development practitioner allocation creates a cumulative effect across a student's schooling.

5. TARGETED SCHOLARSHIPS FOR TEACHING AND NON-TEACHING SCHOOL STAFF TO GAIN PROFESSIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT QUALIFICATIONS

CAA supports the provision of targeted scholarships for teachers who wish to obtain professional-level career development qualifications in accordance with the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners.

The financial cost of postgraduate study can be a significant barrier. Targeted scholarships would help address this barrier and provide a practical mechanism for building the ACT's school-based career development workforce.

Post-graduate qualifications in accordance with the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners provide specialist knowledge that is not automatically acquired through general teaching, student support, administration, human resources, recruitment or other professional experience. A career development practitioner requires knowledge and competencies relating to career development theory, career counselling and guidance, labour market information, ethical practice, career assessment, employability and career-management skills, education and training pathways, transition planning and working effectively with diverse clients.

Targeted scholarships would therefore provide several benefits. They would:

- (a) reduce the financial barrier to gaining an appropriate professional qualification;
- (b) encourage existing ACT school staff with an interest in career development to enter the profession;
- (c) increase the number of professionally qualified practitioners available to ACT schools;
- (d) provide an upskilling pathway for staff;
- (e) support workforce succession where experienced career development practitioners retire or leave the profession;
- (f) strengthen consistency and professional standards across ACT schools;
- (g) improve student access to practitioners with recognised specialist career development knowledge and competencies.

6. ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR SCHOOLS TO IMPLEMENT THE STRATEGY AND REQUISITE ACTIONS

CAA supports the provision by the ACT Government of additional and specifically identified funding to ACT public schools to implement the proposed career development strategy and associated actions contemplated by these petitions.

If career development practitioner staffing must be funded entirely from existing school budgets, schools may be required to make difficult decisions between career development and other educational, wellbeing, staffing and operational priorities. This may particularly affect schools experiencing higher levels of disadvantage or more complex student needs – the very schools where access to individualised career development support may be especially important.

Additional funding is therefore important to ensure that access to quality career development is systematically provided rather than dependent on the financial capacity or competing priorities of individual schools.

Funding should recognise the full cost of delivering a quality school-based career development service, rather than simply the salary cost of employing a practitioner.

This includes provision for:

- (a) sufficient staffing to achieve the proposed minimum 1 FTE qualified career development practitioner to 450 students;
- (b) targeted scholarships and professional qualification pathways;
- (c) continuing professional development to ensure practitioners maintain current knowledge;
- (d) appropriate administrative support. CAA recommends that the funding model recognise the substantial administrative and compliance workload associated with school-based career development.;
- (e) career development resources and programs.

7. CONCLUSION

CAA believes that every ACT student should have equitable access to high-quality, professional career development support throughout their secondary schooling. Achieving this requires more than simply having a staff member designated to careers; it requires professionally qualified career development practitioners, sufficient allocation to provide meaningful and ongoing support, appropriate administrative assistance, and dedicated funding to ensure consistent provision across ACT public schools.

CAA therefore supports the establishment of a minimum 1 FTE qualified career development practitioner to 450 students, targeted scholarships to build a professionally qualified career development workforce, and additional funding to support sustainable implementation.