

Submission

Proposal: enabling individual workers to enhance their productivity.

A National Workforce & Career Development strategy for individual workers to access independent career development services to enable them to be more productive, and more adaptable in response to rapid changes in the labour market.

Process: career development facilitation.

Workers to engage in a facilitated process of self-assessment of the relevance of their current values, skills, interests, aptitudes, personal preferences and priorities and alignment to the current and future labour market, and to initiate self-development strategies.

Outcomes: Empowered and productive workers with the ability to make informed choices about working and learning.

Individual workers would gain more clarity around their sense of purpose and engagement, an enhanced ability to utilise their creativity to find solutions, access relevant information, identify opportunities for further learning, and make more effective and informed choices about their future participation in the workforce.

Rationale: Positive Impact on productivity and cost benefits.

The impact of globalisation and constant change are no longer mitigated by time and distance, and world events have an immediate impact on our economy and our communities.

In the developed world lower skilled workers are now in direct competition with lower paid workers in developing countries.

It is this cohort of workers in particular who are expressing, across the developed world, that they feel isolated from prosperity, marginalised, unheard, and fearful of their future. They have recently identified themselves through the ballot box, voting for Brexit, Trump, and minor parties in Australia to indicate that they have not been heard by the elite and that the concentration of wealth and power has relegated them to the status of second rate citizens.

Engaging these workers to identify training and employment opportunities for themselves is a political imperative, and a productivity and social justice issue. Career self-management is an ongoing process that allows people to make provision and preparation for their career journey, ensures employees are engaged with the work they undertake and take responsibility for their contribution in developing success in the workplace. It is not prudent or productive to delay assistance until they reach crisis point when they are made redundant.

To survive and thrive in a productive economy all Australian workers need to embrace the concept of contributing to the development of creativity-driven, innovative and value-added services and products.

While creativity can be the motivation for innovation and contributes to productivity, it counts for little if it is not embedded in and motivated by a sense of purpose, with clear achievable goals that make a contribution to the overall well-being of each individual and their families, communities, families and the economy.

If the drivers of the economy are investment and innovation, they are dependent on the capacity of each individual worker to recognise, understand and embrace these qualities to be truly productive throughout their working life, well-past traditional dates of retirement.

People are only productive when they have a sense of purpose, are valued for their contributions, able to utilise their skills and experience, confident to meet the challenges of a constantly changing work environment, engage in continuous learning, and find personal and professional satisfaction in their lives.

Workers who are self-directed in managing their careers are involved in a dynamic and recursive process of applying their formal and informal learning to their paid, unpaid work and relationships over their lifespan. Lifelong career development is underpinned by lifelong learning.

Benefits: Strong communities build strong economies.

The insights gained from facilitated career exploration enables workers to add value to their contribution to their family, community and the workforce through applying ongoing formal and informal learning to their paid and unpaid work, and in the development of their life roles and relationships, with purpose and meaning.

Specific benefits to the economy and of direct benefit to the employer include more focussed attention while attending work; fewer sick days and down-time; a strong solution-focus; confidence in taking initiative; utilising creativity; ability to deal with change; willingness to undertake further training; and positive engagement with fellow employees, clients, stakeholders and systems.

Many people require expert and independent facilitation to achieve these outcomes, and to redefine their purpose, revitalise their desire to contribute, reinvest in their learning, revive their creativity and push the boundaries of what they are able to achieve. Workers are also able to identify niche markets for self-employment where they have the experience, and desire to learn new skills to succeed.

Catalyst for change: The key role of career development practitioners.

While HR professionals may help to increase productivity in an enterprise, postgraduate qualified Career Development Practitioners focus on the individual's ability to navigate the increasingly complex and ever changing demands of work, identify learning opportunities aligned to their values, interests, skills, aptitudes, experience, qualifications and constraints which are also congruent with those of their employer, or have implications for self-employment.

If workers are able to construe themselves as self-employed, with their employer as their customer, they will be more productive, and continue to reinvent themselves to meet the changing needs of the labour market.

Strategic approach: access for working Australians

All working Australians over the age of 45 have access to independent and individual career development services as part of a funded National Workforce and Career Development Strategy for adults to revisit their sense of purpose and stimulate productivity.

Funding: Low cost investment with high returns

Option 1: tax deductions for five hours of service every two years from a post-graduate qualified career practitioner who can assist them to gain insight into their current workplace situation, make informed decisions about their contribution, or manage their transitions into a more satisfying occupation or self-employment.

Option 2: Full contribution from employer for lower paid workers (tax deductible), co-contribution from individual and/or employer, or fully paid and tax deductible contribution from individual.

Indicative cost of services: Liaison with career development industry

Suggested five hours @ \$120 per hour GST inclusive each two years.

Initial target group: experienced workers.

Individuals who want to, or have to embrace changes often beyond their influence or control, and work through retirement, and those who need assistance and further learning to transition into a different area of work, or self-employment.

Innovation: external career development services for working adults.

Introduction of workforce and career development services would not duplicate existing Commonwealth or State services for unemployed workers but could be applied to those who are underemployed or facing retrenchment.

The main objective of the service would be to assist employed and experienced people to explore options for more motivated and productive learning and working within their current occupation, and also to make a more seamless transition into other areas of work.

The Experience + telephone help line (DEEWR, 2009 – 2013) provided good personal services, but people often need to have face-to-face services that are tailored to their needs. A good analogy is the Executive coaching model in the Public Service and in industry which assists senior workers to be more creative, more productive and enhance their leadership skills.

Cautions: Professional Standards, methodology and governance.

Professional Standards: Career Industry Council of Australia Incorporated

Caution 1: to ensure that the highest professional standards are maintained career development practitioners would need to be screened for post-graduate qualifications and extensive experience to ensure that the lessons learned from other sectors are not repeated. A Quality Assurance process would need to be implemented, and a National Register established.

Methodology: consistent with current theory and best practice.

Caution 2: methodology would need to be consistent, with minimum use of psychometric testing, and a reliance on evidence-based practice which involves listening to people's stories and helping them to more deeply understand themselves and their situation. This involves facilitation, coaching and the development of insight and self-management skills.

Governance: Board including government and industry representatives and experienced leaders in career development policy, research and practice.

Caution 3: It is recommended that a Governance group be established including senior career development professionals to establish QA measures incorporating inputs, outcomes, impact, return on investment, and increases in productivity, worker satisfaction, continuous improvement, and other relevant measures.

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27 December 2016

Recent Research on benefits of career development to workforce development.

Hooley, T., & Dodd, V. (2015) Economic Benefits of Career Guidance. Careers England.
<https://cica.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Careers-England-Research-Paper-The-Economic-Benefits-of-Career-Guidance-July-2015.pdf>

Andrews, D. (2016). New strategy to transform the quality of careers education, advice and guidance for young people. Derby. iCeGS.
<http://hdl.handle.net/10545/612784>

Hooley, T., & Barham, L editors (2015) Career Development and Practice: The Tony Watts Reader. Highflyers Resources Ltd. Staffordshire, England

Hughes, D. (2004). Investing in Career: Prosperity for Citizens, Windfalls for Government. Winchester: The Guidance Council.

Hughes, D. (2010). Social Mobility of Young People and Adults in England: The Contribution and Impact of High Quality Careers Services. Careers England.

Hughes, D. and Borbely-Pecze, T. (2014). Youth Unemployment: A Crisis in Our Midst: The Role of Lifelong Guidance Policies in Addressing Labour Supply and Demand (ELGPN Concept Note No. 2). Jyväskylä: ELGPN.

Bimrose, J., Barnes, S. -A. and Hughes, D. (2008). Adult Career Progression and Advancement: A Five Year Study of the Effectiveness of Guidance. London: Warwick Institute for Employment Research, DfES.

Warwick Institute for Employment Research

Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE proposed and recent publications.

<https://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/people/dhughes/publications/>

Career Industry Council of Australia

<https://cica.org.au>