

Aide-Memoire: Update on the National Careers Strategy and Key Careers Initiatives

To:	Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister of Education
From:	Tim Fowler, Chief Executive, Tertiary Education Commission
Date:	08 March 2022
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Purpose

1. The purpose of this aide-memoire is to provide an update on the development of a national careers system strategy and a summary of progress on our three key careers initiatives:
 - a. Online career planning solution
 - b. Inspiring the Future
 - c. Direct Career Service
2. We recommend that this aide-memoire is proactively released.

TEC officials are leading the work to develop a national careers system strategy

3. During the Ministerial careers meeting on 1 July 2021, TEC committed to leading the development of a national careers system strategy. The scope of this strategy will be a single national coordinating strategy and direction for careers activities across New Zealand. It will explore what is needed to provide lifelong careers support for all people of Aotearoa New Zealand aged 7 to 70 (Aide-Memoire AM-21-00433).
4. TEC are committed to developing the careers strategy in collaboration with the sector. This will include iwi, economic development agencies, CDANZ, CATE, BusinessNZ and other employer peak bodies, plus other relevant stakeholders.
5. In addition, we are working across Government and are closely involving the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the Ministry of Social Development, Te Puni Kokiri, the Ministry for Pacific Peoples and the Ministry for Women. We are progressing the work through the Education Employment and Training Chief Executive's group.
6. To date we have engaged with partner agencies and peak bodies to establish a current view of the careers system and we have undertaken a review of recent international career-system strategies.

7. An outline on the national careers system strategy work and core findings from the current state review is provided in Appendix 1.

Sector groups are anxious to see the strategy progress

8. We have already engaged directly with a wide number of business and industry groups in New Zealand to gather feedback on the development of the strategy.
9. However peak bodies such as CDANZ, CATE and the EMA are anxious to see progress. In October, the EMA published a white paper calling for a national careers strategy and careers owner. It states that careers support is not widely available and recommended that the careers advisory industry be professionalised, and that resourcing be provided and tagged for careers activities in schools. (A copy of the white paper is included in Appendix 2). The TEC CEO has engaged directly with Brett O'Riley of EMA on this issue, and they are very supportive of our work to ensure it is a national approach.
10. In December 2021, we published an item on the TEC website outlining our intentions to develop a national careers strategy and provided a high-level roadmap for this development. This item included details as to how people could engage and provide feedback.

Three key careers initiatives are making good progress and providing a positive impact for New Zealanders

11. As part of the Careers System Strategy agreed in 2019 [metis B-19-00773] TEC is leading three key careers initiatives. A progress update for each is provided below.

The online careers planning solution (Tahatū) has reset its governance and project structure and is tracking green

12. Budget 2020 provided funding to develop a national free, personalised online careers information tool. A programme was formed in 2021 to design and build the foundation level elements of the tool.
13. Concerns from the Project Steering Committee around aspects of the programme led to the commission of an IQA in September. As a result, several changes to the personnel and approach were made in the last quarter of 2021. A key change is the significant increase in TEC staff with direct involvement in the build, a consequent decrease in external supplier effort and a 3-monthly increment-based delivery model, releasing tested and working software at each increment.
14. The project has recently returned to a green status and a follow-up IQA is targeted for mid-March 2022, in line with the first software increment delivery (online profile and editorial content) due at the end of the month.
15. From June 2022 we will start testing key features with groups of pilot users (school students, teachers, career advisers, and consumer panels) with a national launch planned for 2023.
16. The national launch will not signal the end of development. Incremental improvements and targeted features will continue to be developed year on year, based on feedback, user testing, career development theory and best practice.
17. The existing careers website (careers.govt.nz) will be the main public-facing website until Tahatū has been launched, after which it will be decommissioned (estimated 2024).

Inspiring the Future has reached thousands of tamariki since launch last year

18. You launched Inspiring the Future at Avalon Intermediate on 27 May 2021. Since then, 78 individual schools across New Zealand have proactively signed up to the platform and 28 events have either been held or scheduled, reaching approximately 2,000 school students to help broaden their horizons and challenge stereotypes.
19. In October 2021 we launched a marketing campaign to attract volunteers to register as role models using role models who have already participated in an event. In the video that is distributed through social media they talk about their experience of inspiring young people and encourage others to do the same. As a result, 457 role models have signed up across a range of regions, industry backgrounds and ethnicity. Our target is to reach 800 role models by the end of June 2022.
20. School and student feedback has been very good, but uptake and our ability to aggressively market the work has been significantly impacted by COVID-19 related closures or restrictions. We are confident that numbers will significantly improve over time.

The direct career service has helped over 10,000 job seekers impacted by COVID-19

21. The direct career service was launched in October 2020 as a temporary response to COVID-19 [metis No.1235325]. Due to the successful delivery of this service, MSD opted to fund the continuation of the service when Cabinet funding expired at the end of June 2021. The MSD partnership supports the continuation of the national phone service (4 Career Practitioners for phone and online engagement), and 32 local services (offering a blend of phone, online and face-to-face engagement).
22. Since the service began, over 13,000 individuals have accessed the service, either face-to-face or online, plus over 50,000 Job Hunter Workbooks have been distributed. This financial year, we have helped 5,475 job seekers with this service.
23. Priority groups are accessing the service with 60% of customers being women, an increase of youth from 18% to 25% over the past 6 months and Maori make up 34% of local service access.
24. The two main reasons clients are accessing services include needing assistance with CV and applications and seeking options for a career change. Career change is driven by mandates, restrictions and the impacts of COVID on local industries.
25. Clients who opted into client surveys expressed high levels of satisfaction with their experience, with 95% of respondents “absolutely” recommending services to their friends and whānau. 88% of clients said they will apply immediately, or soon after, for work. They exit with the knowledge, skill and confidence to take the next step in their career, feeling empowered to successfully navigate their own careers and apply skills independently.
26. A review of the service will be held in early 2022 to enable recommendations to be made on whether the service should continue post June 2022 and if so, how it could transition fully to MSD.



Tim Fowler

Chief Executive

Tertiary Education Commission

08 March 2022



Hon Chris Hipkins

Minister of Education

31 / 03 / 2022

I'm also keen to see faster progress in this area. I'd be keen to see an overview of existing spending in this area, along with possible re-prioritisation opportunities given future Budget pressure is likely to be considerable. CH

Appendix 1

Development of the national careers system strategy is progressing well.

TEC's role is to lead, coordinate and facilitate stakeholders including Government agencies and peak bodies to develop the strategy.

1. The Careers system includes a large number of stakeholders all with differing needs. In developing a national careers strategy, TEC's role will be primarily to coordinate and facilitate stakeholders in developing the strategy. Working collaboratively will ensure the strategy is collectively owned, widely supported, and not biased to any one view of the system.
2. Many iwi have well advanced career development strategies. Partnering with iwi will be a critical aspect of our work. We will engage with Te Arawhiti to discuss our proposed approach to ensure we are honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi and supporting Māori-Crown relationships.
3. We will also work with the Education, Employment and Training (EET) groups to coordinate and support this work.

A refreshed careers system strategy will respond to the significantly changed post-COVID-19 environment, the maturing of the current strategy, and calls from the sector for TEC to develop a broadly scoped national careers strategy.

4. The economic shock and structural changes associated with the COVID-19 pandemic are driving significant shifts that will considerably impact the careers system.
5. The refresh of the strategy will also enable us to reflect the new Tertiary Education Strategy (TES).
6. CDANZ, CATE and the EMA have all called for a Government led, national careers strategy to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the careers system.

The refresh builds on the foundation set by the current 2019 strategy.

7. The review of the careers system strategy will aim to deliver three outcomes:
 - I. Strengthen and future-proof New Zealand's careers system
 - II. Support the system to help New Zealanders make better work and education decisions.
 - III. Support New Zealand to grow the skills and capability needed now and in the future.

TEC have engaged with partner agencies and peak bodies to establish a current view of the New Zealand careers system.

8. TEC have engaged with partner agencies and peak bodies CDANZ and CATE (Careers and Transition Education Association NZ Inc.), based on the information gained through these meetings, we have established a view of the current careers system. The information below is a summary of the core outtakes from that work.
9. Careers activities sit across a number of government agencies and many government strategies rely on the provision of quality careers information, advice and guidance and a functioning careers system. For example, the TES, The Employment Strategy and supporting employment action plans, skills strategy, and active labour market policies and immigration settings.
10. The careers system includes a complex mix of career guidance providers, influencers and other stakeholders that contribute to the delivery of education, skills development, career development support and employment for New Zealanders.
11. The careers sector comprises career practitioners, educators and professional bodies such as the Career Development Association of New Zealand (CDANZ) and the Careers and Transition Education Association (CATE); these groups are a subset of the wider careers system.
12. Government investment in careers initiatives is predominately targeted at youth, and as people move through their lives they are supported more by online solutions, social benefits and the advice of influencers.

Careers systems contribute to improving the efficiency of education systems and labour markets and improving social equity.

13. The OECD (2004) noted that career guidance contributes to public policy objectives. Specifically, making education systems more efficient; contributing to the improved efficiency of the labour market; and helping to improve social equity.
 - I. Career guidance “can increase confidence and motivation and improve adults’ attitudes towards learning.” (OECD 2021)
 - II. “Exposure to guidance increases the likelihood of adults participating in education and training relative to similar adults not exposed to guidance. If this guidance is available widely throughout the lifespan of people’s careers, it supports lifelong learning strategies.” (OECD 2021).
 - III. Forty-seven independent studies showed a person that received a job search intervention from a career practitioner was 2.67 times more likely to secure a job. (Career Development Association of Australia 2020).

At the core of the system is an individual’s capability to make effective life choices that enable them to move through fulfilling pathways.

14. Having the capability to make effective education, training and work decisions leads to people being employed in positions aligned with their and their whānau and communities chosen pathways. This increases the individual’s wellbeing, and their knowledge and skills over time.
15. However, individuals experience challenges in determining what effective life choices look like and finding available employment aligned to their chosen pathway. In addition, for some individuals, factors in their lives require them to take employment unaligned to their pathway (e.g. financial or geographical reasons).

The quality of careers guidance relies on its provision by highly skilled and qualified people.

16. Quality careers guidance supports individuals to lift their career aspirations and their capability to make effective life choices. As the benefits of careers guidance are seen by the individual and others this can lift the perceived value and importance of career guidance and increase demand for it.
17. Poor quality guidance has the opposite effect and discourages individuals from future engagement with careers information and guidance. A current challenge is how to engage those people who have previously received poor quality guidance.
18. The structure of the system (e.g. regulation and standard-setting, funding) leads to varying levels of professionalisation, training and capability of career professionals. Raising standards of careers guidance and increasing the supply of high-quality providers is a current challenge across the system and in particular within the school system.

Access to careers guidance should be equitable.

19. Quality careers guidance supports the increased representation of Māori, Pacific people and other underrepresented groups across all areas of work and learning over time.
20. Disadvantaged groups can be less confident in understanding different career options and navigating the pathways to maximise their talents. Disadvantaged groups often have limited networks to leverage to find career information and gain access to different employment opportunities.
21. Career guidance can increase the visibility of options and support individuals in realising their aspirations. A current challenge is how to reach and support individuals who haven't been able to make effective life choices to get back on a pathway to fulfilling education, training and work.
22. The private sector generally only responds to segments of the system that are commercially viable, and those who can afford to access high quality career support.
23. To ensure there is equitable access to quality careers guidance, careers resources (information, advice and guidance) need to be developed based on an understanding of the needs of Māori, Pacific and other underrepresented groups. Increasing the visibility of role models and providing access to networks for underserved groups will also improve equity for underrepresented groups.

A closer engagement between education providers, industry and careers professionals is needed to better understand where the greatest needs exist.

24. Stakeholder engagement is key to understanding where greatest need across the system exists. The needs of communities and industries should be understood by:
 - I. education providers to allow them to align their offerings to the needs of learners;
 - II. careers professionals to assure they provide up-to-date advice; and
 - III. individuals and their whānau to support their decisions.
25. Core to building a closer engagement are the processes to facilitate connections and coordinate information flows across the system to ensure clear signals are sent to individuals and the education sector. Workforce Development Councils and Regional Skills Leadership Groups (when fully established) will be an important coordination point.

Those with financial security are more likely to be able to invest in and build greater skills and knowledge.

26. The ability to invest in increasing skills and knowledge through training and education requires some degree of financial security, which is generally derived from being in employment (or self-employment). Although some individuals may also be able to gain financial security from whānau or other means (e.g. scholarships or employer support).
27. Not being able to overcome barriers to invest in ongoing skill development can cause individuals to become stuck in cycles of low-skilled work. An important aspect of the careers system strategy will be in supporting people to overcome barriers to accessing skill development, understanding and leveraging their transferable skills, and promoting the importance of on-the-job skill development in low-skilled and entry-level jobs.

Initial stakeholder engagement suggests many of the challenges identified in the 2017 strategic work undertaken by TEC remain applicable.

28. Nine system challenges were identified in the 2017 careers system strategy work and many of these remain highly relevant to today's context.
 - I. Potential "Future of Work disruption and impacts.
 - II. The nature of work is changing significantly with a reduced focus on jobs and an increased focus on skills, yet there is a lack of system focus on increasing skills.
 - III. Lack of alignment, shared understanding and common language across the system.
 - IV. The estimated 500,000 people in the workforce with basic levels of literacy and numeracy, the same group of people most at risk from having their jobs and livelihood disrupted. An estimated 35% of the population currently lack digital literacy, meaning they lack the skills and experience to engage effectively and safely in a digital world.
 - V. The duplication, replication and inconsistency of careers services, advice, tools and products offered by a range of government agencies and private sector providers.
 - VI. The urgent need to address the demand side and help learners, workers, industry, local and regional agencies, parents, family, iwi, whānau, 'aiga and communities better understand what education offers.
 - VII. Inconsistent employer engagement and the need for stronger connections with industry.
 - VIII. Quality of the support and advice in the career system is not consistently at an acceptable level for the learner entering the world of work or their influencers.
 - IX. The limited availability and access to quality careers and prospects advice for adults already in the workforce – the most underserved group in the current careers system and are the most at risk of being impacted through disruption in their future.

International career system strategies are largely focused overcoming similar challenges to the New Zealand context.

29. We reviewed eleven recently published international careers/skills strategies, the review highlighted a number of common themes across the strategies, and these are similar to the challenges and context of the New Zealand career system.

30. All commented on the importance of inclusivity and the need to ensure equitable access to career, information, advice and Guidance (CIAG). Some also mention targeting high-needs groups, either seeking to avoid 'drop-outs' or supporting people with weak labour market attachments. Both the Norwegian and Manitoba strategies include initiatives supporting indigenous populations.
 - I. Norway's Norwegian Strategy for Skills Policy 2017-2021 (2017) recognises the different skills needs of the Sami people and tailoring career guidance and interventions accordingly. Examples of initiatives within the strategy include strengthening the expertise of guidance counsellors on Sami culture and business needs, and documenting traditional skills knowledge.
 - II. Manitoba's Skills, Talent and Knowledge Strategy (2021) focuses on driving innovation and cultivating more entrepreneurial talent. In addition, it builds on and promotes the assets and strengths presented by Manitoba's indigenous population.
31. At the heart of each strategy is the notion that CIAG should be targeted, tailored, and personalised to the individual. Further, several strategies recognised that career needs are different at different life stages and as such, a lifelong learning approach should be adopted.
32. Australia's Student Focused National Careers Education Strategy (2019) places emphasis on instilling people with ongoing careers management skills and maintains a future-proof focus that promotes the importance of transferrable skills.
33. Also central to each of the strategies was a collaborative and integrated approach that engages government, the education sector, learners, communities, business and industry. Most strategies also included the need for their system to be flexible and responsive to meet the needs of learners and industry as well as a rapidly changing world.
34. Most other countries are focused on working with a wider group of stakeholders, nine of the eleven strategies reviewed were targeted at individuals of all age groups.
35. A number of strategies express the view that CIAG should be developed and delivered by independent and impartial careers professionals. For example, South Korea's strategy has a key focus on the qualifications and credentials associated with providing different types of career guidance. England's Careers Strategy (2017) is grounded in the Gatsby Benchmarks, a world-class set of standards for schools that define excellence in careers provision.
36. Research showed that although, careers guidance, supported by accurate labour market information can help learners make tertiary education choices that match their interests, and abilities, and lead to rewarding employment access to information alone is not sufficient to provide effective support to student choice. *OECD Education Working Papers No. 229 – The role of labour market information in guiding educational and occupational choices, (October 2020).*

Appendix 2
