

**Te Rautaki Pūnaha
Aramahi ā-Motu**
National Careers
System Strategy

Supporting
Information

The National Careers System Strategy has been refreshed to support the careers system to become more aligned and better prepared to meet the future needs of people, communities and industry.

1. On 1 July 2021 the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) committed to leading a refresh of the NCSS. The refresh was broadly scoped, encompassing the entire careers system and all people in Aotearoa New Zealand.
 2. The timing of the refresh responded to the economic and structural changes from COVID-19, the maturing of the current careers strategy, and calls by peak bodies (such as the Career Development Association of New Zealand (CDANZ) and Careers and Transition Education Association (CATE) for the government-led development of a national careers strategy to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the careers system.
 3. The refresh also ensured the NCSS's alignment with government priorities reflected in other strategies such as the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP), the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) and the Employment Strategy. These priorities included improving equity, inclusivity, and learner-centricity; building a skilled workforce; supporting regional development; and reflecting te ao Māori.
 4. The refresh also responds to the Productivity Commission's 2020 report *Technological Change and the Future of Work*, which noted a refresh of the careers system's strategy to support the quality and reach of careers advice and guidance could improve the ability of New Zealand and New Zealanders to adapt to, and benefit from, greater technological change.
 5. These drivers were reflected in the three objectives of the National Careers System Strategy:
 - to strengthen and future-proof New Zealand's careers system
 - to support the system to help people make careers decisions
 - to support people to grow the skills and capability needed now and in the future.
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In line with Minister Hipkins' expectations, we took a collaborative approach to the work and engaged widely across the careers system's stakeholders.

6. A collaborative approach saw us engage widely across the careers system's stakeholders – including Māori, government agencies, representatives of underserved communities, industry, the education sector, learners, and careers practitioners and their peak bodies.
 7. Our primary means of collaboration included:
 - partnering with Māori to understand Māori aspirations and specific needs from the careers system, which included engaging with iwi, hapū and rōpū
 - establishing and engaging with an Advisory Panel through a series of workshops during the strategy development. The panel included representatives from the Career Development Association of New Zealand, Careers and Transition Education Association, Employers and Manufacturers Association, NZUSA, AUT, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Education, Te Puni Kōkiri, Ministry for Pacific Peoples and Tertiary Education Commission
 - engaging with specialist stakeholders who represent specific areas of the careers system or perspectives of an underserved group that access the system, including Pacific peoples and disabled people
 - hosting seven online hui to reach a wide range of careers system stakeholders and community representatives. The hui included sessions dedicated to Māori and Pacific peoples' perspectives and were attended by a total of 500 attendees representing 300 organisations, who shared a wide range of viewpoints on the careers system.
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To support the strategy process, we initially worked with stakeholders to clearly define what the careers system is, the roles within it, and ultimately its purpose – “to provide careers education, information, advice and guidance to support people to make careers decisions and transitions”.

8. To develop an overall picture of the careers system and how it is currently operating, TEC completed research, causal loop mapping, international comparisons (Appendix 1), Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) analysis, and stakeholder interviews.
 9. This work showed the Aotearoa New Zealand careers system provides careers education, information, advice and guidance which equips people with the skills, knowledge, tools, support and confidence they need to make careers decisions (pathway, education and employment decisions) and transitions (eg, from secondary to tertiary education; education to employment; within employment; from unemployment to retraining and/or on to further employment; and on to retirement).
 10. Careers education, information, advice and guidance is delivered through a complex mix of stakeholders and other influencers (Appendix 2), which have interconnected but at times unaligned needs (Appendix 3). This includes a significant number of programmes funded by government (Appendix 4).
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This initial work made it clear that in Aotearoa New Zealand the careers system needs to have people at its centre – both individuals and their whānau – and needs to focus on supporting them to make good careers decisions.

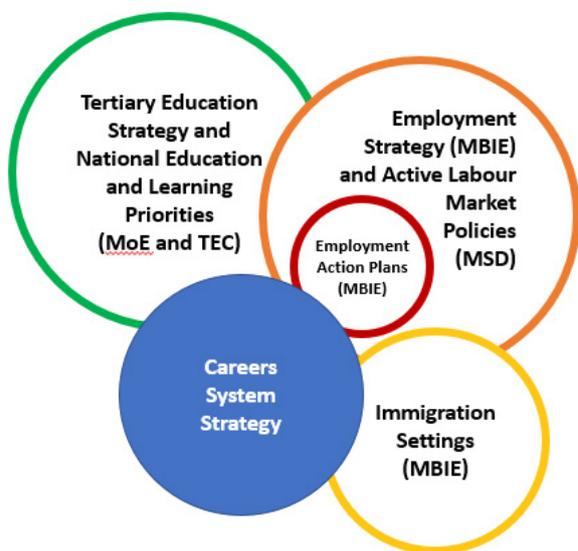
11. At the core of the careers system is people's capability to make effective careers decisions and transitions that align to their chosen pathways and aspirations.
12. People's capability to make (or support others to make) effective decisions and transitions can be lifted, when they can access high-quality careers education, information, advice and guidance. This careers support can also help lift their aspirations.
13. When people know they have made a good decision and feel adequately supported, they can take their next step in learning or work with confidence. They enter a cycle that builds their knowledge and skills, further improves their employment opportunities, and may encourage them to invest in further learning throughout their lives.

The work also showed government support was needed to better connect industry, employers and communities to the careers system to ensure people receive high-quality, accessible careers information.

14. Government is a key intermediary in the system, bringing these stakeholders together. It sits at the centre of the system, providing trusted, aggregated information for people making careers decisions and those that support them. Ensuring this information is accessible is key to reaching the system's wide audience.
 15. A flow of quality information and good communication within the careers system can help ensure careers guidance reflects both the needs of individuals and the evolving needs of industry, employers and communities.
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We also noted the value of the careers system, its connections to other systems, and the importance of a variety of quality careers services being available to people throughout their lives.

16. The Aotearoa New Zealand careers system and its strategy sit at an intersection of major government strategies, systems and settings, including the education system, employment system and employment support system.



17. The NCSS has a clear role in supporting the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) and the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES), the 2019 MBIE Employment Strategy and its Employment Action Plans, and many active labour programmes.

18. The OECD noted careers guidance in all countries is expected to contribute to public policy objectives: making education systems more efficient, contributing to the improved efficiency of the labour market, and helping to improve social equity.¹

19. The careers system needs to deliver across multiple time horizons. Its work today with those in work and not in work can support short-term skills and labour needs, and its work with youth can support the same skills and labour needs in the medium to long term.

20. The OECD noted in relation to students that research had shown access to information alone was not sufficient to provide effective support.² We also clearly heard from our engagement that careers advice needs to be provided in a range of formats, such as kanohi-ki-te-kanohi kōrero (face-to-face discussion), phone, online and at community locations. The need for more accessible careers advice was strongly supported in our engagement with Māori and Pacific peoples.

1 OECD, Career guidance and public policy, 2004.

2 OECD, *The role of labour market information in guiding educational and occupational choices*, Education Working Papers no. 229, October 2020.

Current-state research also showed that the careers system was doing a significant amount of work, but initiatives often took place in isolation. This was echoed by our stakeholders throughout our strategy design process.

21. We heard a relatively cohesive view from the Advisory Panel that the careers system is currently operating in silos, which are disconnected and unaligned.
22. This was reinforced by our engagement with Māori, Pacific peoples, disability advocates and others in the careers system, whose collective view was that the system lacked leadership and coordination.

The findings from the early strategy work were reflected in the future-state vision and set of guiding principles we developed with our stakeholders. These supported us in the collaborative development of three focus areas.

23. The three focus areas are:
 - I. **Strengthen Connections:**
Establish a leadership function for the careers system to improve coordination and support stronger connections between the system's users, stakeholders, government agencies and related systems.
 - II. **Grow Quality Careers Support:**
Improve the quality and availability of careers support, and the diversity of those who deliver it.
 - III. **Ensure Equitable Access:**
Work collaboratively with Māori, communities and other stakeholders to understand and remove barriers preventing people and their whānau from accessing the careers system.
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The first focus area, Strengthen Connections, reflects that while we believe all parts of the system are currently there (or soon will be), many parts appear to be working in isolation from one another.

24. We heard from the Advisory Panel that “all the parts of the system are there”. This was supported by our research, which showed that current government-funded initiatives (eg, the online career planning solution Tahatū) appear to be filling, or when completed will fill, perceived gaps in the careers system.
25. The Advisory Panel noted that the careers system is currently operating in silos, which are disconnected and unaligned. Our research found examples of duplication of work and of NGOs providing services that crossed over with existing public-sector services.
26. There is also a risk of initiatives that are unsupported, unaligned to related initiatives and systems, using poor quality or incorrect careers information, and disconnected from the people using the system.
27. We heard through our engagement that some people attributed these issues to the 2017 merger of Careers NZ and TEC, and considered that the different mandate of the merged organisation created some new gaps, most notably within the school system.

We believe the lack of several key components is likely preventing the careers system from functioning effectively.

28. Researching the components of effective systems, we found that the careers system appears to lack several key components that would enable it to function effectively:
- **Identity:** including a clear purpose, direction, definition and parameters (which are being addressed through this strategy refresh)
 - **Coordination and leadership:** serve as kaitiaki of the NCSS, facilitate increased communication, create connection and collaboration, provide thought leadership and advice, champion the system and its services, and support pooling of resources across the system
 - **Reporting/information:** provide reporting and information on the system’s performance to support stakeholders to make effective investment decisions and show the value of the careers system and its services.
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Establishing a leadership function is an important first step in coordinating and connecting the system, and would align us to international peers. TEC will undertake this leadership role and continue to work with stakeholders to shape the function.

29. Internationally we have seen system coordination done in several different ways, including through:
- reporting structures
 - service level agreements (SLAs)
 - the standing up of government and state-level bodies.
30. TEC will undertake the leadership function so the NCSS implementation can start immediately. We should work with stakeholders to consider any further shaping of the function, to ensure it will meet the long-term needs of the careers system and Aotearoa New Zealand.
31. The leadership function should reflect our partnership under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, our ongoing commitment to work collaboratively with communities and other stakeholders, and the broader definition of the careers system compared to many of our international peers.
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The leadership function would also play a key role in facilitating stronger connections – initially focusing on better connecting employers and industry, and the system’s users and their whānau, to the careers system.

32. We have heard throughout the strategy development that the connection between employers and industry, and those people accessing careers services, could be improved. This was strongly supported by education and industry stakeholders, who emphasised the importance of regional connection between schools and businesses.
33. The recently established Workforce Development Councils and Regional Skills Leadership Groups are currently considering how they can influence the careers system. A leadership function working with these groups to develop and share insights into the skills and workforce needs, at a regional and national level, needs to be a priority.
34. As an additional priority, the careers system needs to better connect with users and their whānau to ensure they are aware of the availability and benefits of careers support. This would respond to what we heard throughout our stakeholder engagement:
- people are unsure how to access careers information, advice, or guidance
 - people do not understand careers development and therefore don't see the value in it
 - different cultures perceive careers differently and don't see themselves in the current system
 - aspirations are being impacted by bias and stereotypes (particularly for Māori, Pacific peoples, and disabled people).
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The second focus area, Grow Quality Careers Support, recognises that by supporting the careers workforce and careers service providers to lift their capability, and by developing tools, we can ensure all people can access careers services when they need them throughout life. This is also an opportunity to make the careers workforce more diverse and responsive to users.

35. In the 2018 census, 520 New Zealanders classed themselves as careers counsellors (a descriptor of 12 occupations, including practitioners, careers advisors and CV consultants).
 36. The careers workforce is likely considerably larger than this, as people are connected to the system in different ways. They may work in professional to administrative roles for schools, tertiary providers, private practices, iwi employment programmes, NGOs/charities, church and community organisations, and HR departments in businesses that support transitions or outplacement of their people. They also work for other organisations that support transitions (often from unemployment to work and education to work) such as the Ministry of Social Development, ACC, Corrections and TEC.
 37. Due to the nature of the roles above, many in the careers workforce have another primary role and may not identify as a careers counsellor. There may also be people who do not recognise they are offering careers services as part of their roles (eg, a case manager offering wide-ranging advice that includes a work component).
 38. Working with these parts of the careers workforce that are less connected to the careers system, and supporting them and their employers to lift their capability to deliver quality careers support, is a key lever to increase the proportion of the careers workforce able to deliver quality careers support. Better connections with these parts of the careers workforce will also increase access to quality information and advice that enables effective career transitions for individuals in their early, and late career.
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39. Growing the careers workforce is also an opportunity to increase its diversity and make it more responsive to the make-up of the careers system users. 2018 census data suggests that the careers workforce is around 80% women, and Māori and Pacific peoples are underrepresented.
 40. Developing and providing frameworks and resources for careers service providers can help them deliver high-quality careers services. By developing these frameworks and resources collaboratively they can reflect different world views and careers theory. They can also be regionally responsive, focused on different life stages and events (such as mid-career transitions, people returning to the workforce or displaced workers), and better supported by providers.
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We have heard strongly that lifting the capability of the school system must be a priority, and that this should be done in conjunction with other changes, to support schools to increase learners' access to quality careers support, learning time and resources.

41. Careers information, guidance and advice delivered in the school system is highly variable.
 42. Through our engagement we heard about many factors that may contribute to this, including that:
 - careers programmes are shaped by school management around competing priorities
 - funding provided to schools for careers is not tagged and does not have to be spent on careers education
 - resourcing is insufficient and leads to inadequate ratios of careers staff to students
 - minimal support is provided to schools to develop their careers programmes
 - careers programmes are not starting early enough
 - some schools find it challenging to connect with local industry and employers.
 43. We have also heard from careers staff in schools that they sometimes have additional duties, can feel unsupported and isolated, and lack opportunities to upskill.
 44. Where we heard examples of schools performing strongly, people often highlighted two factors – staff with high capability, and support from the school's leadership.
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Options to improve careers support in schools, and address the issues identified above, should be explored. However, this needs to be balanced with the need to make positive change in the school system now.

45. Based on our engagement and research, the short-term focus in schools should be:
- working with school leadership to promote investment in their careers programmes
 - supporting a lift in the capability of those delivering careers education in schools
 - promoting current careers guidelines and frameworks and supporting schools to use them to design and deliver high-quality career development programmes.
46. Whilst this short-term focus work is under way we recommend presenting different options for the future delivery of careers support in schools for the Minister to consider.

As the careers workforce has finite capacity, it should also be supported by online tools designed to be accessible to a wide range of users and their whānau.

47. Tahatū, the online careers planning solution being developed by TEC, is expected to commence a phased release from Term 1 2024. Tahatū will provide a consistent, culturally affirming, high-quality careers planning solution for learners, workers, and their whānau and supporters.

The third focus area, Ensure Equitable Access, supports everyone having access to the careers system and its benefits throughout their lives, which is critical to support equitable work and education outcomes for priority groups.

48. The demographics of Aotearoa New Zealand's population are changing, with Māori and Pacific peoples forecast to become a bigger part of the working population. Achieving equity for these communities now, and supporting all ethnic groups' broad representation across the workforce, is critical to developing the skills and capabilities needed in the future.
49. TEC research showed significant variations in the choice of education pathways by ethnicity. Under-representation of Māori and Pacific peoples at university, and disproportionately low literacy and numeracy skills,³ is limiting careers opportunities for these groups.
50. Ensuring Māori and Pacific peoples and other priority groups, including disabled people, youth at risk of limited employment, women, and those likely to be impacted by the changing world of work, can access careers support is critical to supporting equitable work and education outcomes.
51. Work currently under way as part of the Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP), the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES) and Employment Strategy will go some way to ensuring equitable access to the careers system.

3 OECD, Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), 2018.

Determining those who don't have equitable access and may need additional support to access the careers system has been a challenge.

52. Throughout our engagement we have heard that access to the careers system is not equitable. Factors that were commonly identified include:
- geography – in particular, people living in rural areas
 - culture – careers material is not culturally affirming
 - language – careers content may only be available in limited languages
 - accessibility – careers services may not be delivered in a way that is accessible, particularly for disabled people, older workers, and rangatahi who leave secondary school early, who may miss the opportunity to engage with careers services through school
 - employment focus – careers services can focus on short-term employment, rather than an individual's aspirations and longer-term career planning. We heard this issue can be particularly significant for disabled people.
53. There is little available information to help determine the impact of these issues. We have, however, seen the emergence of community-led careers programmes, which could be indicative of where the careers system is not currently working for all New Zealanders.
54. There is also an opportunity to leverage the coordination function and work with stakeholders to determine where additional support may be needed and what that support may look like.
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We have heard clearly that a key component of equitable access is supporting Māori and Pacific peoples to develop their own community-led programmes.

55. We heard from Māori throughout our engagement that “by Māori for Māori careers services” were more effective for their people, but there were limitations with capacity, availability, funding, professional body representation and not enough Māori currently in the careers workforce.
56. We also spoke to a number of iwi to understand their careers programmes. They echoed the statements above, but had often found ways to work around the limitations and support their people to transition to education and employment.
57. We heard that Pacific peoples’ values, culture and world view need to be reflected better in the careers system. There are examples of community-led careers support that is working for Pacific peoples, but they face significant barriers to access government funding.
58. There is again an opportunity for the coordination function to:
- support Māori and Pacific peoples to establish their own careers initiatives
 - work with these programmes to gather insights that could be shared with the wider system.
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