



Pre-Budget 2018/19 Recommendation

Career Guidance in NSW Schools

About Youth Action

Youth Action is the NSW peak body for the state's 1.25 million young people aged 12 - 25, and the services that support them. Our work helps build the capacity of young people, youth workers and youth services, and we advocate for positive change on issues affecting these groups.

Career Guidance: The Case for Support and Change

NSW has a record high youth unemployment rate of 13% -- and as high a 26% in some regions -- and young people face a rapidly evolving and dynamic employment future where they will hold, on average, 17 jobs in five different career areas. The transition from secondary school to work or study is harder than ever and getting good information, support and advice about work and their future careers has never been more important.

Responding to this climate and the feedback and concerns of young people that they are not being effectively informed, engaged or advised about their careers options in schools, Youth Action published a research paper in 2017 titled [*Career Guidance: The Missing Link in School to Work Transitions*](#).

What we found is that careers guidance is a great way to improve a young person's chances of employment. It keeps kids in school, builds confidence and self-awareness and connects pathways to education and employment. Some highlights were:

- Effectively delivered career guidance services have the potential to improve engagement and increase completion rates by 10 to 20%.¹
- Young adults surveyed who recalled more than four career activities while at school were five times more likely to be engaged in education or employment.²
- When young people develop an understanding of the labour market and how it works, and cultivate an ability to set realistic career goals, their employment prospects increase dramatically.

¹ P Tatham, Using career development services to strengthen student retention and attainment, Career Industry Council of Australia, 2009, p. 3

² A Mann, It's who you meet: Why employer contacts at school make a difference to the employment prospects of young adults, Education and Employers Taskforce, London, 2012.

Career Guidance Today – Not Delivering On Its Potential

In NSW schools today, career guidance is not delivering on its potential to create employment and training outcomes for young people:

- Approximately 50% of schools in Australia (with populations of over a 1000 students) dedicate less than \$3 per student for career guidance.³
- 1 in 4 career practitioners don't know what their annual budget is and of those who don't know what their budget is, 1 in 3 have less than \$1,000 to spend across the school year on all of their students combined.⁴
- More than half of career practitioners do their work on a part-time basis and two-thirds of these practitioners split their time between careers work and classroom teaching, counselling, managing and administration within a school environment.⁵
- There is no dedicated funding for career advisors in schools to implement programs or undertake activities to link young people to employers, VET and higher education providers, community organisations and services.

Youth Action's Budget 2018/19 Recommendations

Youth Action urgently recommends a \$43.25 million investment in career guidance in the 2018/19 budget.

Addressing the urgent need for improved career guidance in schools, Youth Action is calling for a **\$43.25 million targeted funding package** for careers guidance to be introduced in the 2018/19 budget to increase the effectiveness of and extend the whole-of-school and support services on offer in NSW schools by bolstering career guidance services.

We know careers guidance works and we have already have many of the tools and systems in place in schools; what young people need is the NSW Government to increase funding and improve delivery in the approximately 400 NSW Government school and for the 300,000 secondary students in NSW. Youth Action recommends the NSW Government take immediate action to boost the number of career advisors and funding for their activities while simultaneously determining a sustainable future approach to career guidance in schools. The \$43.25 million package should include:

\$28 million to hire 100 career advisors

- **Invest \$28 million over four years to hire 100 full-time equivalent career advisors** to boost career guidance in schools immediately where there is currently no dedicated career advisor, or the Principal of the school identifies that a critical need for an increased number of hours or for a new position to be created.

³ Career Industry Council of Australia, A snapshot of career practitioners in Australia, CICA, 2015.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

Additional guidelines for most appropriately allocating career advisors based on need to the student can include school size, industry standards or ratios of students per career advisor.⁶

\$12 million to deliver programs and activities

- **Invest \$12 million over four years for career guidance professionals to deliver programs and activities that actively engage students** in structured career activities with external organisations including employers, VET and higher education providers, community organisations and services. These career information and career exploration activities form the backbone of informing young people about the rapidly changing labour market and their options for further education, guiding them through the most difficult transition of their lives. Programs and activities should ideally bring experts and providers into schools, or take students to organisations relevant to their career development.
- This funding allocation should be delivered directly to the career advisor's budget and spent within the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) and Career Advisors Association NSW (CAA) frameworks for career activities that include information and exploration, such as work experience, industry visits, career expos and education open days, guest speaker presentations and work-based programs and activities.⁷

\$3 million for training and professional development

- **Invest \$3 million in funding over four years to deliver the latest training and professional development programs to current and aspiring career advisors.** This funding should be delivered to professional development budgets within the school, or directly to career advisor budgets, and be used in line with industry standards for professional development established by CICA and the CAA.

\$250,000 to determine a funding framework for career guidance

- **Providing \$250,000 to conduct a study to determine the framework for introducing base allocation of career advisors in schools.** Right now, there is no standard baseline for the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) career advisors within a school. There is also limited data regarding the number of full-time equivalent career advisors in NSW schools. This has resulted in huge variations in the levels of career guidance students receive from school to school. Establishing a minimum FTE number of career advisors -- based on school size, career adviser ratios per student and industry standards -- will ensure that all students in NSW have access to the career guidance they need for better employment and study outcomes. The independent study's recommendations should be implemented in a dedicated career development policy within the Department of Education.
- Additionally, the study should determine funding levels for each school and career advisor budget to fulfil the goal of providing at least four structured career guidance activities during secondary school, or the minimum number of activities determined.

⁶ Career Advisor Association of NSW & ACT. *Framework for Career Education and the Role of a Careers Advisor in NSW and ACT Schools*. 2017.

⁷ Ibid.

Support for Funding and Improving Careers Guidance

Support within the community, business and organisations that work with young people is strong, and includes support and current advocacy efforts towards better career guidance in NSW schools by:

- **The NSW Business Chamber.**
- **Careers Peaks** – Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA), the Career Development Association of Australia (CDAA) and the Career Advisors Association of NSW and ACT (CAA).
- **Service groups** including Brotherhood of St. Laurence, Smith Family, Mission Australia, Uniting.
- **Youth organisations** including Year 13 and Youth off the Streets.