T R A N S C R I P T

ECONOMIC, EDUCATION, JOBS AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Inquiry into career advice activities in Victorian schools

Melbourne — 19 February 2018

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Witnesses

Ms Bernadette Gigliotti, Chief Executive Officer,

Mr Frank Thompson, President,

Mr Phil Newnham, Treasurer, Career Education Association of Victoria; and

Mr Allan Moyle, National Vice-President,

Ms Louise Walsh, Member, National Learning and Development Committee, Career Development Association of Australia.

The CHAIR — Good morning. Welcome to the public hearing for the Economic, Education, Jobs and Skills Committee's Inquiry into career advice activities in Victorian schools. All evidence taken at this hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege. Any comments you make outside the hearing are not afforded such privilege. Hansard is recording today's proceedings. We will provide a proof version of the Hansard transcript so you can correct any typographical errors. I do not know who is going to make the statement, but between you two you have 5 minutes, and then allow us time to ask questions. Please provide your name for the Hansard record before you start.

Ms GIGLIOTTI — Thank you. My name is Bernadette Gigliotti. I am the CEO of the Australian Centre for Career Education, also known as the Career Education Association of Victoria.

Mr THOMPSON — I am Frank Thompson. I am the President of the Career Education Association of Victoria.

Mr NEWNHAM — I am Phil Newnham. I am the Treasurer of the Career Education Association of Victoria.

Mr MOYLE — Allan Moyle, the National Vice-President of the Career Development Association of Australia.

Ms WALSH — Louise Walsh, Member of the Career Development Association of Australia and Member of the National Learning and Development Committee.

Ms GIGLIOTTI — Thank you for the opportunity to present this morning and for receiving our submission. I would like to kickstart our response to you in the first 5 minutes—I know I have only got 5 minutes. Just to give you a bit of background, a bit of context, the Career Education Association of Victoria was founded in 1975 actually by the state government of Victoria to provide training and support to schools in career education so that school leavers were well prepared to transition to work and to undertake work experience, as the new work experience legislation had just been passed.

In those very early years the focus was on qualifying teachers as career counsellors, and the position was full-time in Victorian Government schools. Teachers undertook a four-week intensive training and then completed their graduate diploma in career education. I just wanted to give you a little bit of that context, so you know that there is quite significant history in terms of the association but also our work with schools.

There has been a number of policy approaches that have been delivered to address the changes to career education right across Victoria and over the past 43 years, and during this time the association has gathered quite extensive data and evidence that has been used in a range of research papers commissioned by successive governments to review career education in schools.

We currently have a membership base of 654 members; 550 of those are across Victorian schools. We would like to make a few notes for you. The first is that the careers position in Victorian schools has been substantially eroded each decade since 1975, and that primarily has been a result of not mandating of career education classes in schools, the VET agenda in the early 90s, the absence of a defined policy direction and a lack of career services delivered by qualified practitioners in schools. And it is not just in schools. I note that this particular review is looking at schools, but I think there is also a need to mention TAFE, higher education and the community as well.

The careers position appears as an education support officer role in government and Catholic schools, with no mandatory qualifications for the position. The introduction of mandatory Managed Individual Pathways has also meant that in government schools at least a lot of the careers role has now become administrative and focusing very much on the transition points. Fewer teachers are delivering career education in curriculum. There is no preservice methodology as a subject offered in Victoria.

Victoria produced the first careers curriculum framework—it was quite groundbreaking—in 2010, and the Victorian Government led the way at that time in terms of putting forward a curriculum across schools. Delivery, however, was not compulsory and schools could ignore it. Currently careers education does not feature as a subject in the new Victorian curriculum. There is reference to it in the humanities curriculum only,

as one unit in relation to work and work futures. Resources provided for careers education in schools have not kept pace with resourcing available for VET and higher education.

Careers education is often marginalised by school principals and administrators, and there is a view that the service is not necessarily core business in the school: it is nice to have, but it is not essential. There is an assumption also held in the general community by parents as well as industry and other education sectors that schools do deliver career education classes and that career advisers are well resourced, when this is certainly not true in most Victorian schools.

The lack of general understanding of the language of careers in a modern context and the equation of career development with work and job matching, has led to at best a patchy delivery of careers in schools and at worst a system designed for the workforce of the past. There is great confusion in sectors that we deal with, whether it be government, education or industry, about what constitutes careers and what constitutes career education. Even though we have national professional standards for the career industry—we have a code of ethics and we have an agreed terminology for careers in Australia—however, it has not been adopted locally across the state.

Our submission outlines a course of action and strategies that the CEAV has advocated over quite a number of decades, and we would like to put forward on the table that we believe a possible way forward is the legislating of career development entitlement for all Victorians, commencing in the early years of schooling, carried throughout the transition stages across the life span; and mandating and quality assuring career education curriculum in all Victorian schools, so that all Victorians can feel confident that the services provided are delivered by qualified, unbiased career professionals, are age-appropriate and are ongoing to meet their life stages.

Ms WALSH — I will try to not go over the same grounds that Bernadette has, because I think we are in enthusiastic agreement with what she said. I just wanted to give you a little bit of background about the CDAA submission. It is based on feedback from our members, specifically for this but also over a number of years, information from research in Australia and overseas and recurring themes in our experiences in careers expos and fairs throughout Australia. The *National Career Development Strategy* of 2013 describes career development as the ongoing process of a person managing their life, learning and work over their lifespan. It involves developing the skills and knowledge that enable individuals to plan and make informed decisions about education, training and career choices. It describes career development services as including career education, career exploration and career information, advice and guidance.

The Career Industry Council of Australia notes that in a school setting, career development services can be provided by professional or teaching staff in a variety of ways and settings and include things like individual counselling sessions between a career development practitioner and a student; classroom learning that is made relevant to potential careers; experiential learning; careers information days; production of up-to-date careers information; or discussions with industry and educational and employer representatives.

As Australians we are currently being told that young people leaving secondary school today are likely to have 17 jobs over five different industry sectors. Our members see Australians of many different ages and stages of life facing career transitions by choice as well as by the decisions of others. Individuals and businesses seek the services of career development practitioners because they recognise a need for expertise and support in navigating through the job market, whether that be paid or unpaid.

As an example, General Motors Holden embarked on a significant career development program to support its employees in the lead-up to the closure of its automotive manufacturing in Australia. In particular, the program focused on understanding the job market and the differences between the open and hidden job markets; understanding, identifying and exploring training and retraining opportunities; and developing personal marketing documents, such as résumés, LinkedIn profiles and cover letters. For many of these employees, this was the first real experience they had to a structured career development program.

In some respects, our students in secondary schools face very similar challenges in the beginning of their lifelong career journeys. Students' experiences of career development in schools, as Bernadette has said, are not consistent, and their experiences often depend on a number of factors. I will include in what Bernadette has said things like the passion and knowledge of the career teachers or advisers and other teachers in a school potentially make quite a difference to the experience that a student has; the knowledge and understanding of

industries and professions that other people can provide them; the importance placed on it by parents and the broader school community; and the funding and the resources allocated to it.

An individual's career development is a lifelong journey that encompasses a young person's development of what might be called foundation skills and knowledge—a bit of understanding about how to go about finding out things about workplaces; knowing how to write a résumé, knowing that there is a thing called LinkedIn or whatever other particular social media there might be that is relevant; the gaining of that first part-time or casual job; the completion of secondary education; and entering relevant and appropriate post-secondary education and training—and one of the things that we have noticed often, anecdotally, is that a lot of parents focus very much on the degree qualification after school and ignore the possibility of alternative pathways to achieving appropriate qualifications and skills; the gaining of the first post-qualification job; the potentially many different roles and life stages; and finally, to a post-paid work retirement and older age. So it is very much a lifelong journey.

We believe that embedding career development within the secondary system can contribute to or positively influence things like the flexibility of the workforce and adapting to the changes that are brought about by changes in technology, as well as outcomes for different socio-economic groups, including those with a culture of entrenched unemployment. Where career development is part of the school curriculum, we believe that that will have a positive influence on that group.

The CHAIR — Well done. Thank you very much. My question is: what should be the minimum standards for school career advice if the Victorian Government mandates career education for all students?

Ms GIGLIOTTI — I am happy to answer that. I think it needs to be at the postgraduate level with a graduate certificate in career development practice. As the national peak body, the Career Industry Council of Australia has that as the entry level qualification. I do not think it stops there, and I think that they need to continue then towards a masters qualification. However, that should be the entry-level standard for all career advisers in schools across Victoria.

Mr MELHEM — How does that fit in with the 2010 curriculum you talked about?

Ms GIGLIOTTI — In 2010 the Career Education Association Victoria was commissioned by the state government to design the first framework for career education in schools across Victoria. It was part of the national partnership agreement, and that was one of the strategies, along with a range of strategies. At that point the Victorian Government was leading the way right across the country. We also had what was called regional career development officers—there were 10 of those—right across the state, and we also had an injection of resources into qualifying career practitioners. That was the first time that scholarships had been offered in this particular space for government schools in particular but also across the three sectors. Four hundred practitioners were qualified to the graduate certificate level at that point. Many of them have moved on. They have taken the qualification and moved on, so we have to be aware of that. I think that in terms of qualifying the practitioner as an entry requirement to go into the school, it would be the minimum at the graduate certificate. I am not sure if my colleagues would like to add something.

Mr THOMPSON — First of all of course, as you mentioned before, that framework, whilst it was very well thought out and funded, is not and was not compulsory, so it was up to schools whether they adopted it. Secondly, as has been said, many people have moved on. Many of them have moved on to independent schools who see the value of that additional qualification and that additional edge, if you like, that it might give their students to have someone with that experience and knowledge and expertise. We have had people who have come through the state system and been trained at the state government expense to do that program and a couple of years later said, 'There's a better job with maybe a full-time careers load rather than being a mix of teaching and so on'. That is where a lot of the shift has happened.

Ms RYALL — Just to clarify, you mention that it is no longer in the curriculum?

Ms GIGLIOTTI — Correct. What has happened is in the new curriculum the reference to careers does not exist as such. We have a reference to work and work futures, which is the humanities curriculum, sitting in business and economics. It is one unit. It certainly does not cover everything that needs to be covered in a comprehensive career education curriculum. The CEAV has mapped, as best it can, the framework across to the new curriculum to support our members who are delivering careers in the curriculum currently.

Mr MOYLE — Excuse me, Chair. I would like to go back to the qualifications area and just say that I think we need to stick with the Career Industry Council qualifications as they are stated. I think the other part of that process really is about ongoing professional development and mandating professional development, specifying hours—whether it is 30, 40 or whatever hours—per year. That is obviously going to be an impost in terms of schools as well, finding 30 or 40 hours for a teacher to actually take time off or after hours or whatever, but we do need to have that ongoing exposure to ongoing professional development.

The CHAIR — There are multiple terms for career advice and career adviser. How important is it to have consistent terms across schools, and which terms should we use?

Ms GIGLIOTTI — I would like to jump in there again. A lot of the body of work around this has been completed by the Career Industry Council of Australia, and we have got an agreed terminology. The members of CICA have agreed to the terminology, and the word that we are using is 'career practitioner' because it encompasses so many different roles. A career practitioner could include career guidance, managed individual pathways and anybody working in an employment agency. That umbrella term, if you like, is the term that we use and we had adopted as the correct terminology for Australia. You will find that there is consistency across the associations that are member associations of CICA.

Ms RYALL — Thank you. You mentioned about obviously graduate certificate then graduate diploma and even heading towards the masters level and that many have moved on that previously were qualified. What percentage of career practitioners would have qualifications now across our school system in Victoria?

Ms GIGLIOTTI — From our member base? From the CEAV member base?

Ms RYALL — That is probably a good sample that would give us a percentage across overall.

Ms GIGLIOTTI — Across the schools?

Ms RYALL — Yes.

Ms GIGLIOTTI — We have over 80 per cent that are qualified to professional level.

Ms RYALL — And that would be the certificate or further on?

Ms GIGLIOTTI — That is the graduate certificate or higher.

Ms RYALL — And the graduate certificate is a year?

Ms GIGLIOTTI — One year, that is correct.

Ms RYALL — All right. So 80 per cent, and you are suggesting the further 20 per cent as a minimum?

Ms GIGLIOTTI — Correct. The other 20 per cent are either not qualified or they will have a certificate IV in career development practice, which is the VET entry-level qualification and what we would deem at associate level. There are two categories that we have in our membership: associate entry level and professional level. I think CDAA is similar.

Mr MOYLE — Yes.

Ms RYALL — Given that it is no longer in the curriculum, how do we measure any of the effectiveness of careers advice to students?

Mr MOYLE — Anecdotally it is about parents actually ringing up and asking for advice about their children and what courses they should be taking because they do not believe the career practitioner at the school.

Mr WALSH — Or the career practitioner at the school has not been able to provide the service that the parents think they should get.

Ms GIGLIOTTI — Perhaps we should take a step before that, if that is okay. We have never measured the success of career education. It is not a subject, so what we measure is the transition of young people from a

school and how well prepared they are to select a course, an apprenticeship, a university qualification or prepared for work.

Ms RYALL — And what is that showing you?

Ms GIGLIOTTI — That is showing us that we are getting them into university, we are getting them into their TAFE courses. They are transitioning; they are not staying. We have got a lot of evidence that suggests that there are quite high dropout rates once they have transitioned. I do not know that it is necessarily the measure at the school level that is the problem at this stage.

Ms RYALL — Just on that then, what about not into courses but into work?

Ms GIGLIOTTI — In terms of measuring that, government schools in particular, perhaps Phil can comment on what happens in government schools, because Phil is from a government school, in terms of transitioning them beyond their final year.

Ms RYALL — Just to clarify, it is not measured at the school level?

Ms GIGLIOTTI — Not as a subject.

Ms RYALL — But there are measurements that show the dropout levels. I am particularly interested in those who are not going on to higher education. Is there any measure of the effectiveness of those that are transitioning into work?

Ms GIGLIOTTI — We have On Track data, which you would be familiar with. Students are tracked certainly from their point of transition beyond their final Year 12, and that measures the success of also the career activities because there are questions related to career activities in the On Track data.

Mr THOMPSON — Most schools would publish the data each year of the number of students who went into higher education, VET-based education and direct into employment et cetera. It is not always possible to track 100 per cent of your cohort because not everybody responds to surveys and the like, but most schools would publish the data along those lines.

Ms RYALL — How many then drop out of education or transition to another course but we do not know perhaps how long they might stay in employment?

Mr NEWNHAM — I think that is fair to say. I think our process of tracking the transition works quite well at a school level. Possibly we have a little bit more buy-in from our former students because they hear a familiar voice when we are tracking them, but in the long term it is much more difficult to get that information. I think we know what happens in that immediate transition. As I said, the data is pretty good in terms of being able to track, but I think that is a challenge. That is where we need to look at other research, I think, of more longitudinal-type studies.

Mr CRISP — How can the Victorian Government encourage schools and employers to offer more work experience? It is a complicated work situation out there. How can we get around this?

Ms WALSH — I wonder whether some of the solution lies in better links with industry. From a personal perspective, I was involved in arranging work experience for a government agency a number of years ago, and it was always a case of, 'We've got to find work experience for these students. What can we get them to do? Photocopying and filing is always good stuff to get them to do'. It is not terribly interesting and not terribly good in terms of an experience within a government agency. It got to the point, I think, after a number of years that we stopped doing work experience because managers found is a difficult thing to address.

To some extent we have a lack of understanding about what work experience is about. It is not about free labour for a couple of weeks or whatever to do some terribly boring things; it really should be about exposing students to what it is like to work in a particular industry. I think building those relationships is part of the solution, but I do not think it is the only thing that we can do.

Ms GIGLIOTTI — I hope that the new Tech School system that is coming into play in Victoria will bring those partnerships together. I think that the junior students being exposed to new models of work and different

innovations that are happening in the workplace will encourage them to seek out those partnerships between schools and industry. I think that is where, if we can encourage strong partnerships between schools and industry, we may start to see the growth of more opportunities for students to actually undertake a work experience placement.

There is a significant amount of preparation required for work experience. It is not simply a tick-and-flick exercise. We need to prepare the student well prior to exiting into the workplace. We need to prepare the employer as well. At the moment that is a little problematic for some schools.

Mr CRISP — Some of the feedback I have is that most employers, if you are looking at the trade level, say it is too hard, too difficult, too many forms, too many risks about a loose comment being bullying and all those sorts of things, and workplaces just say no.

Mr MOYLE — They are not set up for it, and they need assistance in terms of developing their forms and processes and that sort of stuff.

Ms WALSH — I sometimes wonder too whether the industry associations could be more engaged in this process to help their members to actually support work experience, and I do not know that they are.

Mr THOMPSON — And perhaps if they are involved with the new technical schools, for instance, and they start to see the sort of work that is going on there and maybe support that work, they will see the enthusiasm of the students who are there. At the moment one of the issues with work experience increasingly is that because many of the tertiary and VET-level courses, post-school courses, have increasing amounts of industry-based learning many industries, many employers, have tended to say, 'Well, we don't take as many secondary-age school students anymore because we have a commitment to industry-based learning', which is very valuable of course, but, 'We have that commitment and we have limited resources that we can put into supporting'. So that is a bit of an issue there. But I think if they see the sort of work that students are doing at the younger level and it is encouraged by government for them to take an active role, then maybe we might see a bit more improvement.

Mr CRISP — Can I explore one of your comments? I strongly support technical education because I came out of that, but what I am seeing is that it is very much focusing on STEM and not getting that trade experience early to work out who is good at what. Do you want to add some comment? Have I got that observation correct?

Mr MOYLE — Yes, and I think we ask the wrong question. We do not ask what people want to do; we ask them what we want to be. But if we do not ask or do not expose people to different industries and activities, then they are not going to be able to answer the question: what do I want to do rather than be?

Ms WALSH — I think, too, if I can expand on that a little bit, in terms of 'what do I want to do', the question often is answered by somebody saying, 'I want to make a difference to something' or, 'I want to help people'. They do not necessarily want to be a police officer or a teacher or whatever, but to actually think about what sort of outcomes in their lives might be satisfying to them. 'I want to work with figures', 'I'm really excited about maths and I love analysing things, and I want to work with figures. I don't know where that could take me'. Of course that offers many, many opportunities that students might not actually have thought about because they have been focused on, 'Do you want to be a statistician or do you want to be a teacher?' or that sort of thing. I think there is that dilemma between the 'be' and the 'do'.

Mr THOMPSON — Which is where an early exposure to career development education comes in again, so they start to think about that. They start to make those connections—'If I'm interested in these things, what sorts of jobs involve doing that?'. It is not something that you suddenly do at Years 10 or 11 when you are making choices about subjects and worrying about your exams and you think, 'Well, I'd better try and find a course that suits me'. If they have started thinking about those issues and those connections early on, then they are much more ready to make the decisions.

The CHAIR — Can the advice be different to what the student might want it to be? I want to be a lawyer and your advice might be that no, you can't because it is difficult.

Mr THOMPSON — We try not to say, 'No, you can't'—we try to explore other possibilities.

The CHAIR — So if there is no access to it, how can you advise them?

Mr MOYLE — If I could just say that probably early testing is important.

Ms WALSH — Assessment testing.

Mr MOYLE — Getting some assessment testing done so that you can actually start to look at some of the possible areas that they can start to explore.

Ms GIGLIOTTI — A qualified practitioner provides unbiased opportunities, so you would present everything. My colleagues are talking about vocational assessment, which is a possible tool that you could use when you are discovering about your interests and what you think you might like to pursue, and starting at an early age. We do have an evidence base to show quite clearly that in primary school young people can make quite formative decisions in terms of what they would like to explore into the future. So having those opportunities at that early stage, having an opportunity to either be immersed in industry—if industry is unable to provide on-the-job experiences as such—but still being able to immerse a group of young people in a particular interest area.

One of the projects we ran last year on behalf of the Department of Education and Training was Exploring Work Futures through VET, where we actually took students into workplaces to allow them an opportunity to be immersed and to speak with a range of people within that workspace about how they got into that particular industry. It was not all STEM focused; obviously STEM is prolific in our workplaces at the moment simply because technology is driving the future forward so they need to be aware of it. But it is also important that students have an opportunity to explore in their formative years before they come to make a bit more of a definitive decision.

Mr MELHEM — Can I ask three questions that are interrelated so we can save a bit of time. I think you have touched on these issues, but I would like to explore them a bit more. Can you describe the potential impact of a high-quality career education in a young person's life? Then can you give us some good examples from other jurisdictions? The third part of it is: what sort of barriers do we have in place now to delivering on that high quality? Because we are talking about young lives. They need guidance with everything. So if are you able to take us through that, that would be wonderful. Anyone on the panel.

Ms GIGLIOTTI — I am happy to start it. I think that high-quality career education commences with a sound framework and a platform within curriculum. I think it needs to be a whole-school approach. There needs to be an understanding from the top levels and from within the community and the teachers that it is not the domain of one individual; it is actually the whole school that needs to come on board and have a very focused vision as to what they want the career development of all their students to look like. We have schools now with vision and mission statements. It is not a quantum leap to ask the schools to start to look at a way of quality assuring the process from point of entry, from when they come into school, until they transition out and that these staged processes of career development commence at an early age.

The component that we do reasonably well in schools is the career exploration. There is quite a bit of information around labour market knowledge, and we have lots of websites and yes, students can go to tools. The bit that is missing is the self-reflection. We do not seem to be doing sufficiently well in that space yet, so being able to be very reflective individuals, having an opportunity to think before they try and before they actually make the choice. If we were able to structure a career education course or a program from about Year 3, quite comfortably, right through to transition, I think we will start to see that students make the link. They start to use the right terminology, they understand where they are actually going, and they become reflective people.

That is what quality career development looks like. And it involves time; it is not something that can happen in a moment. So it is sequential, age-appropriate and moving towards their completion. So that is what quality would look like: a whole-school approach, quality assured, delivered by professionals that also have the support of their teaching colleagues if they are not teachers themselves, but being able to design it.

Mr MELHEM — Where do you see the parents' role in this?

Ms GIGLIOTTI — The parents' role is being part of that overall conversation. A parent plays an extremely influential role in the decision-making process. If the school is able to present how they are developing their child, not just in literacy but also in career literacy, then we are going to have more buy-in from the parents in

terms of supporting perhaps a work experience program, perhaps connecting with industry. So there are other ways of ensuring that the parents are central to that conversation. Victoria has a very good program called Engaging Parents in Career Conversations. It is a program that is readily available to schools We train in the use and delivery of that program, and schools that are embedding it are finding that the parents are buying into that conversation with their young person, having a much broader understanding of what is career in the modern context and then having a conversation that is far more enriching and affords the young person an opportunity to develop. So we have that opportunity if we start with a whole-school approach.

What was the last component of your question?

Mr MELHEM — The other point was about other jurisdictions, if there are some other jurisdictions that do better than ours, and what are the barriers. I mean, you talked about the barriers already but other jurisdictions. While I have got the floor here, I think someone—I am not sure whether it was you—mentioned the principals and administrators. The way I understood it, they could be either a problem or barriers to actually act.

Ms GIGLIOTTI — Yes.

Mr MELHEM — So what do we need to do with these people?

Ms GIGLIOTTI — To unpack that a little bit more. So in terms of jurisdictions, I think Victoria has been leading the way. I believe that. I think we are now starting to see some movement in South Australia, where South Australia is talking about guidelines. ACT is developing guidelines for career educators in the territory. In Tasmania there has been a shift towards a program called My Education—with some success, not fully successful—and CEAV is training practitioners in Tasmania to deliver career development in schools there. So there has been some movement there. It is not consistent across the country.

In terms of international research, Canada is probably leading the way. There are three provinces in Canada at the moment that have mandated career education from kindergarten to Year 12, so quite comprehensive. They call it the Big Idea; that is the name of the framework. Then schools are mandated to deliver, but only in three provinces; it is not right across Canada. However, Canada has, as a central government federally, commissioned their education ministers to come up with a career development pillar for the whole of the country. So that is an additional piece of work that is being undertaken in Canada. In terms of some of the barriers that we are facing still, yes, school administration is one barrier. It is not by any means the only one, okay? Resourcing is an issue.

Mr MELHEM — I did not mean to blame the principals.

Mr THOMPSON — Well, principals are under enormous pressure.

Ms GIGLIOTTI — They are under pressure, correct.

Mr THOMPSON — It depends how they allocate their resources. Sometimes it is easier for them to say, 'Well, I need a body standing in front of 25 students', rather than a person who can talk one on one to individual students.

Mr NEWNHAM — Can I just make one more point to endorse what Bernadette said then. The whole-school approach is absolutely essential, and I think once you have that approach within the culture of a school, it can take on its own momentum, but I do also think that you need to have somebody who is generally at leading teacher level to be driving that. And talking about, I suppose, the commitments of principals, leading teachers tend to actually take on a lot themselves When that portfolio starts to shrink because they are taking on all sorts of other responsibilities as well, then you do run the risk of that culture starting to perhaps weaken and all of that I guess good work that a new teacher, whether they are a graduate or from another school, walks into and knows straightaway this is a school where career education is important, over time you do run the risk of losing that. So I think it is about having that coming from leadership. Not just the principal driving it, but to have a person in that position to do that.

Ms RYALL — Many of the schools that I come in contact with from time to time are very focused on the ATAR and their message to prospective students and parents is 'Our results, our results', you know, 'We got above this percentage of ATAR'. In terms of when we look at perhaps some of the career paths or decisions of students these days—if we look at the innovation space and schools starting to introduce the ideas and spaces for kids to actually innovate, to explore, invention, those sorts of things—if they make decisions that they

actually want to start their own business, and I know a number of young people who have, the ATAR is not so much the issue. So from a careers perspective, do we focus too much on that, as opposed to looking at the plethora of options that are available to young people in the future and the careers they might actually be passionate about?

Mr THOMPSON — I would argue that most careers teachers are doing exactly what you are suggesting they should be doing, but of course they are working within an atmosphere where the ATAR is the thing that is not only promoted by the school but by media, by everybody, so they do have to battle against that. One of the things you can do within a school, particularly if you have got some time and resources to do it, is ensure that you are bringing people into the school who are outside that, if you like, people who have been successful through other means, people who are entrepreneurial. Maybe you are in a school with a very high academic approach and you bring in some people who have gone into trades and been successful in that area and let them demonstrate that they are just as intelligent; they are applying their skills in different ways. But once again that needs time and resources to do that.

Ms RYALL — It was not so much a reflection on careers practitioners. This was more a reflection on the school and the culture of the school.

Mr THOMPSON — Yes, and that can be the case.

Ms WALSH — And it is a bit broader than just the culture of the school, too. A couple of things. When we talk to employers, they do not care what a person's ATAR was. They do not even care what their marks were in their qualification. They just want to know that they have got the qualification, and a few years down the track, unless that qualification is something that is essential to do the job, it is irrelevant, in a sense.

In terms of the ATAR itself, it is not just the ATAR. I had an experience just recently with a young man who went to one of the special entry secondary colleges, all of whose student colleagues were absolutely appalled that he had put as his first two choices a course at Swinburne University and a course at Deakin, because, 'Surely you are going to go to Melbourne or Monash'. We have this huge focus on the reputation or the prestige of things and the importance of getting an ATAR above a certain level. In a sense, in the space of a person's lifetime, 5 minutes after you have got the ATAR it is irrelevant, in a way. We put a whole lot of pressure on young people with the ATAR because of the prestige, I think, about it and the emphasis on getting students into universities, not just post-secondary education.

Ms RYALL — I was thinking about that innovation and entrepreneurial space. If a Year 12 student decides, 'I want to start my own business', they are not going to learn anything, are they, about how to do that through that careers transition necessarily or, as I said, that focus on further education?

MS GIGLIOTTI — I might go back to the point about what constitutes quality. If you were actually designing a quality career development program, students would have access to a range of guest speakers, a range of occupations and a range of gender-balanced occupations as well, and introduction of entrepreneurial—what does that mean, to be an entrepreneur? So having an opportunity right throughout their schooling to experience and be immersed in a variety of outcomes, not just a simple solution.

The ATAR serves a purpose. It is designed as an entry level, primarily for tertiary studies. In the context of reflective individuals, they learn to understand that. I think there is work to be done around this, absolutely.

Mr MOYLE — Can I also say that I know of at least two legal firms and a number of other companies that will not employ anybody that has not worked at McDonald's.

Ms WALSH — Or something similar.

Mr MOYLE — Or something similar.

Ms RYALL — That hasn't?

Ms WALSH — That hasn't. Because it is about the customer service that someone learns at McDonald's.

Mr MOYLE — Because hygiene, safety, all of those things that they learn are so important, and they see that their businesses are customer-service focused.

Ms RYALL — I am not laughing at you, but it just occurred to me, having a health background, that for doctors, before they go into medical school, it might be appropriate to have that as well.

Mr THOMPSON — I would like to also say that we have been talking quite a lot about a quality career service. I think it is also important to look at what is a quality outcome from that and then our product, if you like. I do not like to talk about our young people being a product, but a successful product of that would seem to me to be someone who understands his or her strengths, values and interests; is aware of the occupations and training opportunities that might link with those; is particularly aware of the resources, both human and other—whether they be electronic or whatever—available to help them explore that possibility; and has learned how to reflect and problem solve, so that they have some resilience when they do get into the workforce. A well-structured careers program will go a long way to providing that.

The CHAIR — On interstate and overseas best practice, how does Tasmania's My Education program work and what can Victoria learn from its implementation?

Ms WALSH — I do not know a lot about how successful it is, I am afraid.

Ms RYALL — I think you said only partly.

Mr THOMPSON — You are being very diplomatic.

Ms GIGLIOTTI — I am trying to be diplomatic. It is a course that has been designed to include career education, but it also has other elements to it as well. It is being delivered currently only in the secondary sector, not in the primary sector, even though there are elements that have been designed for the primary school.

I do not know enough about it, to be honest, to give you an outcome. It is very, very new. It has only just started or been established in the last couple of years. Our association is currently training career advisers to have an understanding of the contexts that they are delivering this program in, because the program was brought in, but what the government understood was that the teachers delivering it did not have a context. So we were commissioned to go to Tasmania to assist them with that.

Mr CRISP — For Louise and Allan: your submission recommends the development of career leadership teams to improve the quality of career services. How would these teams work, and have they been used elsewhere?

Ms WALSH — I will answer the second part of your question first. I do not know about their success elsewhere. The person who wrote our submission was not able to be here today. She may have some more information, and if I can take that on board and get back to you on that, I absolutely will.

In terms of the teams, I think that like any other teams, there are probably a number of different models that we could look at. But I guess it gets back to the comments that have been made earlier about it being a whole-school community approach, but also I think it is a bit broader than that in terms of also industry involvement and whether it is geographical or whether it is within particular sectors or areas of particular interest to students. I think you could look at a number of different models over that.

Mr CRISP — Thank you very much, Louise.

The CHAIR — As there are no further questions, on behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank you for your time and your contribution.

Mr MOYLE — Thank you for the opportunity.

Ms WALSH — Thank you for the opportunity.

Witnesses withdrew.