For the State or for the Student: Changes in Career Advice in New South Wales Secondary Schools in the Twentieth Century

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Introduction

The decisions made by a student when they leave school are some of the most important made in the life of an individual. Decisions relating to training, further study and careers have significant ramifications for the life and career paths of the individual and for the composition and economic development of society at large. By understanding the forces at work in this critical period of a school student’s life, we gain a more complete understanding of why students have taken certain pathways in the years after school. By looking at the forces at work on a student and who is exerting them, insights are revealed into how different actors have viewed the purpose of education. This thesis explores the role of one of the key forces in this period of a school student’s life; the role of career advice in New South Wales (NSW) secondary schools.  

Since 1927, secondary schools in NSW have provided formal mechanisms to deliver career advice to students. The individuals and agencies involved in the provision of career advice have changed throughout the twentieth century. This thesis examines the role of the primary agents in the provision of career advice to NSW secondary school students during the twentieth century.

This thesis argues that changes in career advice in NSW schools during the twentieth century have primarily been driven by the economic ambitions of the Australian Federal Government. The changes in the economic policy of the Federal Government have affected career advice in three main ways. Firstly, it has changed the nature and content of the career advice provided to students. Secondly, it has driven changes in the mechanisms used to

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1 The term ‘career advice’ is used in the introduction and conclusion of this thesis as a generic term referring to the wide variety of practices and actors involved in providing guidance and advice to NSW secondary school students. Throughout the thesis, the prevailing terminology of the periods being written about will be used.
provide career advice to students. Thirdly, it has altered the relationship between agents involved in career advice and the educational establishment.

To investigate this thesis, I have looked at how career advice has responded to two structural economic changes in Australia that were driven by the economic policies of the Federal Government. The first of these is the move into industrialisation that began in the 1920s and was accelerated after World War Two. The second of these is the move into a post-industrial economy that occurred primarily from 1983 – 96. It will be shown that from 1927 – 75, career advice was used to facilitate the achievement of the economic goals of the Federal Government, revealing that career advice in this period was wedded to the idea that it was the purpose of education to produce workers for society. Thus, despite much rhetoric that spoke of the need of career advice to assist students in making life decisions, the economic interests of the state and not the needs of students drove changes in career advice. From 1975 – 96, the role of career advice and Careers Advisers were significantly diminished in their importance. This is attributable to the professionalisation of the role of school Careers Adviser, which had the effect of estranging Careers Advisers from the educational establishment and preventing them from being used as a tool to service the economic ambitions of the Federal Government.

If we consider career advice as the distillation of orthodox views of a period, then analysis of career advice generates insights into the society that produced it. Thus, in conjunction with exploring the link between economic change and career advice, the thesis will also examine career advice to reveal the attitudes, beliefs and prejudices embedded within it. Career advice sits at the juncture of numerous issues in society – attitudes to work, the role of work in society, the relationship between gender and occupations and beliefs about the capacity of the individual for self-improvement. By closely examining career advice we can observe the interplay of these different issues across the twentieth century.
A study of career advice is also a useful analytical tool for a broader study of education in NSW. Education debates in NSW have consistently focused on whether the purpose of education is to produce workers or liberal minded citizens. Actors involved in providing career advice have always occupied an unusual position within the educational establishment. By virtue of operating within schools they have links with education policy but by the very nature of their role in guiding students out of school they have to respond to the interests from outside of the school environment. Career advice is determined by inputs external to the school, yet it operates within schools. By looking at the changes in career advice we can see if there is an accord or conflict between numerous relevant groups including educators, government, business and the public about the purpose of education. In twentieth century NSW, it appears that support for extensions in career advice have largely come from parties external to the process of education. This support has mainly occurred in response to periods of economic distress and high youth unemployment when it was perceived that education was failing the practical needs of students.

There has been scant historical analysis of career advice within the Australian historical context. Allyson Holbrook, currently a Professor in the School of Education at the University of Newcastle, has published a small amount of work on models for career advice schemes in Australia in the 1920s and 1930s with a focus on the conflicting influence of American and British educators.² While Holbrook’s work primarily focused on the contest between British and American ideas in Australian career advice, she provides insights as to how industrialisation and concerns about adolescents were formative to the introduction of career advice in NSW schools. The work of Holbrook on this period has been illuminating but its preoccupation with tracing the competing influences of American and British educators

has neglected a thorough examination of the broader historical forces at work in the introduction of career advice in NSW schools in the 1920s.

Career advice is sometimes explored in broader histories of education. However, in these instances the treatment of career advice is not a central focus and is generally dealt with in conjunction with a broader discussion. For example, education historians Geoffrey Sherrington and Craig Campbell have argued that the use of scientific methods in education during the early twentieth century was fundamental to schemes that looked to quantify student differences; these schemes included intelligence testing and career advice schemes.³

In contrast to the lack of interest by historians in career advice, there is a significant body of work on issues pertaining to practitioners involved in the broader field of career development. This consists primarily of journals published from the 1990s in response to the ongoing professionalisation of the field. The prime purpose of these journals has been to present relevant methodological and theoretical information to practitioners in the field. Some of these titles include: *Journal of Career Development* (1972), *Australian Journal of Career Development* (1992), *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* (1996) and *International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance* (2001).

Historical treatment of career advice rarely occurs in these journals. Furthermore, many of them are written for an international audience, which means there is little information relevant specifically to Australia or NSW. Where articles do feature a historical comment, it is generally to illustrate a new methodology in the field by way of comparison to previous practices. The following is an example of the cursory historical treatment prevalent in these journals:

The changing nature of the world of work and of career has led to a changed focus in the practice of guidance, which traditionally emphasised the expert guiding, or “matching” individuals to jobs. More recently, the activities incorporated within the

practice of career guidance aim to enhance an individual’s own decision-making based on their own understanding of their abilities, skills, interests and values, and of the options open to them.4

No serious attempt at understanding the historical forces at work in the changing conceptions of career advice is made in this passage. The observation about the state of career advice of a previous era is accepted and investigation into the formative historical forces is absent. Such is the common historical treatment of the topic in these journals.

In order to assess how the changes in career advice have evolved in response to the economic goals of the Federal Government, I have undertaken a comprehensive review of materials distributed for the consumption of those involved in career advice in NSW schools. This has included relevant reports and periodicals. There were two periodicals that formed the majority of the primary source material. One of these was the Education Gazette that has been published by the NSW Department of Education since 1915. The Education Gazette contained regular updates pertaining to how career advice was to be conducted within schools. The other periodical was the journal of the Careers Advisers Association of NSW, Prospects, published from 1981. There was one source that I was not able to obtain which also would have likely proved useful. This was the Careers Advisers Bulletin. This source was referenced in a 1941 issue of the Education Gazette but I was unable to locate copies of it.

The first chapter of this thesis ‘Larrikins and Factories’ looks at the beginnings of careers advice in NSW schools in the 1920s and 1930s. It examines how the dislocating experience of industrialisation, coupled with concerns over the potential for societal disturbance by idle youths, led to the implementation of career advice schemes. The second chapter, ‘The Light on The Hill: building a better Australia’ traces the beginnings of the

disharmony between the rhetoric surrounding education policy and career advice in the aftermath of World War Two. Specifically, it shows how despite the abundance of rhetoric advocating the need for a liberal education, career advice practices in schools were further extended in line with the Federal Government’s economic goals in the post-war reconstruction effort. The third chapter, ‘The Professionalisation of the Careers Adviser’ looks at how the move towards professionalisation of the role of in-school Careers Adviser during the 1970s led to Careers Advisers gaining intellectual and professional autonomy. It shows how the backdrop of economic recession was fundamental to giving this move towards professionalisation momentum. The final chapter ‘Building a Competitive Australia: the declining role of the Careers Adviser’ looks at how the Federal Government exerted influence directly onto secondary schools in line with its ambition of building a highly skilled workforce during the 1980s and 1990s. It shows how the disassociation of Careers Advisers from the educational establishment, which had occurred due to the professionalisation of Careers Advisers, meant that their role was marginalised in a context in which education and economic policy were becoming interrelated.
Chapter One

Larrakins and Factories: the introduction of vocational guidance

During the 1920s and 1930s Australia took its first significant steps towards industrialisation of the economy.\(^5\) In the nineteenth century Australia had survived by shipping load after load of its primary products, particularly wool and wheat, to the ever-hungry factories and mouths of Great Britain. Even in 1925, ninety-five per cent of Australia’s exports were primarily products in the form of materials and food.\(^6\) However, the international circumstances that had made such an economy successful in the past had changed. Britain was ‘no longer the workshop of the world’\(^7\); increasing economic competition had meant that Britain’s financial supremacy had diminished and it was no longer snapping up Australia’s goods as it had once done.\(^8\)

The Australian economy needed to change as these circumstances meant that business as usual could not continue. This would become even clearer in the aftermath of the Depression as demand for Australian exports declined during the 1930s as other nations reduced their spending. Encouraging the process of industrialisation that had been accelerated by World War One was seen as the solution.\(^9\) The changing course was signposted clearly at the 1932 Imperial Conference when Australia committed itself to solving its economic woes by encouraging the growth of industry.\(^10\)

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\(^7\) Ibid.

\(^8\) Ibid, p. 173.


The issue of returned soldiers and the allocation of post-war migrants were two other factors causing trouble for the economy. As a result of agreements made at the Imperial Conference of 1923, Australia received a wave of over 200,000 migrants throughout the 1920s. The government needed to find work for both these new arrivals and for returned servicemen.

The solution to this dilemma was to encourage migrants and returned servicemen to establish farms and to promote rural growth. Thus, the Australian government took measures to encourage both migrants and 40,000 ex-servicemen to establish farms and cultivate the abundant Australian land. The policy was premised on the belief that Britain would maintain a high demand for Australian products. The belief proved to be incorrect and by the end of the decade many of these farms had failed and the drift of the unemployed into the cities accelerated.  

The end result was the persistent dull-ache of unemployment that stubbornly hovered above five per cent throughout the 1920s.

It was in this context of persistent economic difficulty and the acceptance of the need to industrialise that the Federal Government started to intervene and manage the Australian economy. The move to intervention was also bolstered by the experiences of the USA and Britain whose movements into industrialisation had seen problems with unemployment and social dislocation. Given that Australia was itself moving into an industrial age, the need to safeguard against the experiences of the USA and Britain was seen as important.

In light of these views, the Federal Government established a Royal Commission on National Insurance that produced reports from 1924 – 28 recommending the establishment of the Employment Council to control the supply and allocation of labour. The Development and Migration Commission, established to investigate employment and occupational trends in

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Australia, made similar recommendations in its 1928 report. The general recommendation of the Development and Migration Commission’s report was the establishment of industrial committees to forecast changes in industrial conditions so that the needs of the economy could be assessed and responded to. With regards to children and students this report specifically recommended that:

It would be a fitting culmination of the education of boys and girls if they could be guided toward the occupations in which their chances of success are greatest. If this is to be successfully done, it is necessary to have a knowledge of the individuals to be advised; the abilities required for the various occupations; and the condition of the labour market.\(^\text{13}\)

It was in this context of increasing economic management that the NSW Department of Education created the Vocational Guidance Bureau (VGB) in 1927 to assist in the placement of youth in the workforce. In the words of S.H. Smith, then Director of Education in NSW, the purpose of the VGB was to ‘render help to teachers towards directing boys and girls into suitable callings.’\(^\text{14}\)

In prior decades, there had been no formal practice for the provision of advice or guidance to students entering the workforce. There was a broad expectation that members of staff would confer with students and their parents about career options that might suit a student but there was no procedural or philosophical basis to this distribution of advice. Members of staff were not required to have any specialised knowledge or training in the provision of career advice. The recommendations about appropriate pathways given to students were primarily based on a teacher’s general knowledge about the nature of various occupations and the state of the economy. The common practice for informing students and


parents about a student’s potential career had been informal consultations between students, their parents and a member or members of staff.\(^\text{15}\)

Allyson Holbrook and Jan Kociumbas have offered a different perspective, arguing that the introduction of the VGB was the result of Australian concerns about idle youths rather than a product of increasing government intervention in the economy. Kociumbas and Holbrook contend that the primary motivation for a vocational guidance scheme stemmed from Australian fears about juvenile delinquency. These fears prompted the need to enforce stability on youth by ensuring a quick transition from school to work. Australia’s history of ‘larrikinism’ is central in this argument. Larrikinism was a term associated with ‘out-of-control adolescents who gathered in loosely-composed street gangs’ in Australian cities in the 1880s and 1890s.\(^\text{16}\) Problems with larrikinism were a serious issue for Australia and it was often considered as ‘the scourge of urban colonial society.’\(^\text{17}\)

Jan Kociumbas argues that immense concern about youth led to the creation of a vocational guidance scheme to ‘ensure steady progress from school to employment, which would also prevent any lapse into larrikinism along the way.’\(^\text{18}\) Holbrook, in her work on vocational guidance in the 1920s and 1930s, puts forward the similar view that it was concern about rising juvenile crime that was the primary force in bringing vocational guidance to Australia.\(^\text{19}\) Both Holbrook and Kociumbas claim that these fears were further heightened by the work of the American educator and psychologist G. Stanley Hall. In his 1904 work *Adolescence*, Hall showed how the adolescent period was of key importance in shaping the nature of an individual and that mismanagement of this hazardous period could have adverse

\(^{15}\) Ibid.


\(^{17}\) Ibid.


\(^{19}\) Holbrook, ‘Models for Vocational Guidance in Australia 1920s-1930s’, p. 46.
consequences for society.\textsuperscript{20} In the eyes of Holbrook and Kociumbas it was Australia’s particular historical problems with youth set against this backdrop that was the primary motivation for introducing a formal vocational guidance scheme in 1927.

The language surrounding the period of the early 1930s is imbued with anxiety about the need to protect and employ youth. In 1932, G.R. Giles, a Vocational Guidance Officer of Victoria, stated that ‘action is necessary to \textit{protect} boys and girls from \textit{the dangers of enforced idleness}’ due to unemployment.\textsuperscript{21} Similarly in 1931, the NSW Minister for Education was ‘\textit{concerned with the problem} of how to provide a suitable training for boys and girls who have been prevented, by the present economic situation, from following the occupations which they would have ordinarily pursued.’\textsuperscript{22} During this period the NSW Department of Education was ‘\textit{anxious} that youths leaving school should avail themselves of the facilities afforded by the [Vocational Guidance Bureau]’ as to prevent students from becoming unemployed.\textsuperscript{23} We can see that there quite clearly was a concern about unoccupied youths causing civil unrest that contributed to the establishment of vocational guidance. However, it should be noted that all of the above comments were made in the aftermath of the Depression when national unemployment skyrocketed to 28 per cent in 1931 – heightened concern is unremarkable in such severe circumstances.\textsuperscript{24}

While it seems likely that fears about youth were a factor, I argue that the introduction of vocational guidance in schools was more a response to economic changes than to concerns about Australian youth. This conclusion is most clearly evidenced by a comparison of the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} G.R. Giles, \textit{Reports and Enquiries: Vocational Guidance in Australia in 1932}, (Melbourne: Education Department of Victoria, 1932), p. 534.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Anon., ‘Provision of Training for Unemployed Boys and Girls’, \textit{Education Gazette} 25, no. 2 (February 1931), p. 11.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Anon., ‘Vocational Guidance’, \textit{Education Gazette} 31, no. 12 (December 1937), p. 380.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Macintyre, \textit{A Concise History of Australia}, p. 176.
\end{itemize}
1890s and the 1920s. Historical consensus has agreed that the 1890s was the highpoint of larrikinism in Australia.\(^{25}\) Furthermore, during the 1890s Australia experienced significant economic turmoil and recession when the economy shrank by thirty per cent between 1891 and 1895.\(^{26}\) However, there was no movement towards the idea of vocational guidance in any of the states. Given that when larrikinism was at its rowdiest it failed to catalyse a move towards a guidance scheme, it is hard to accept that it was the primary force in the move towards vocational guidance over thirty years later in the 1920s. The thing that had changed between the 1890s and 1920s was the projection of the Australian economy; the planned shift from primary producer to industrial economy. Finally, in 1932 the VGB was integrated into the Department of Labour and Industry – a further testament to the fact that its primary operation was an economic one.

The economic argument for the introduction of vocational guidance is further strengthened when we consider that the national efficiency movement heavily influenced education policy during this period. Education historians Geoffrey Sherrington and Craig Campbell have noted how education policy in the first half of the twentieth century was heavily influenced by educators ‘whose primary vision was for a socially, economically and nationally efficient population.’\(^{27}\) It can be seen that vocational guidance was one of the culminating steps of a broader process of refining education towards the achievement of national economic goals. The work of Peter Board as NSW Director of Education from 1902 – 22 was fundamental in this process. Board oversaw the creation of a highly differentiated education system that offered a range of secondary schools in order to provide education

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appropriate to the likely vocations of students after school. Most notably this included the
growth in technical colleges that taught skills relevant to various trades because earning a
living was seen as ‘an essential part of life which cannot be disregarded in a child’s
education.’ It is clear that the VGB was created by the Department of Education in line with
this broader move to align education with the accomplishment of economic objectives.

This is supported by the fact that much of the language used to justify vocational
guidance drew upon the idea that it was the place of education to produce workers. In a 1932
report on the status of vocational guidance in the Australian states, G.R. Giles, a Vocational
Guidance Officer of Victoria, called the placement of students into occupations ‘the climax of
the educational drama’. Giles argued that the failure to secure employment for students was
a failure of ‘the national responsibility for the future citizens of this great island continent’ and that the introduction vocational guidance in the 1920s was the beginning of rectifying the
‘failure to recognise officially the responsibility of schools towards this end.’ The 1928
Report by the Development and Migration Commission promoted the idea that it would ‘be a
fitting culmination of the education of boys and girls if they could be guided toward the
occupations in which their chances of success are great’. This general attitude persisted
throughout the 1930s. In 1938, the NSW Department of Education published an article in its
monthly gazette in which the author stated that ‘it is the first task of education to discover for
what kind of work each has most ability, and to give him what will best fit him for it’.

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28 For more on the history of technical education in NSW, see: Joan Cobb, *Sweet Road to
Progress: The History of State Technical Education in New South Wales to 1949*, (Sydney:
Department of Education and Training, 2000).
29 Lord Riddell, ‘An Educational Revolution’, *Education Gazette* 22, no. 11 (November
31 *Ibid*.
33 Development and Migration Commission, *Report on unemployment and business stability
Education during this time was premised strongly on the belief that the application of scientific methods in education could lead to improved outcomes. There was a strong belief that, through testing, the traits of a student could be objectively classified, which would allow for the prescription of educational pathways appropriate to the characteristics of the student. For example, educators believed they were able to measure human differences and specifically human intelligence.\textsuperscript{35} When we look at how vocational guidance operated, we can see that it was a product of this intellectual milieu in which education policy was dominated by the scientific ‘impulse to select and differentiate.’\textsuperscript{36} This scientific streak in NSW was particularly pronounced because of the links between the VGB and Psychology Department at the University of Sydney.\textsuperscript{37}

Vocational guidance in schools was an immensely structured process predicated on the belief that accumulated observations about a student could lead to the provision of accurate vocational guidance. At the conclusion of a student’s final year of primary school they would sit an examination created by the VGB that aimed to assess the intelligence of a child. The student was also issued with a Cumulative History Card on which teachers would make recommendations and observations pertaining to appropriate occupations for the student. The results of this test, in conjunction with the comments made on the student’s Cumulative History Card, were used to direct the student towards an appropriate secondary or post-primary school.


\textsuperscript{36} Sherrington & Campbell, \textit{The Comprehensive Public High School}, p. 33.

Upon reaching the next level of education, the school that received the student was asked to create ‘Rotary Committees’ for each student; a group of staff members who would oversee the progress of a student and make appropriate notes in their Cumulative History Card as they moved through school. When a student completed their education or elected to finish it, they were strongly encouraged to attend a meeting at the VGB. At these meetings, students would sit through a series of psychological examinations as well as other aptitude tests. The results derived from these tests, in conjunction with the results of their schooling, the information contained on the Cumulative History Card and knowledge about the current economic situation would be used to direct students into an appropriate occupation.38

The intensity of this desire to classify students is reflected in a 1930 article published by then Director of Education, S.H. Smith, in regards to the way staff members were recording information about students on their Cumulative History Cards. Smith expressed dissatisfaction with the notes made in the Cumulative History Card as being ‘more or less character studies’ that did not aid the in the process of directing children towards a suitable vocation. He cited phrases such as ‘good student’ and ‘a fair pupil’ as being superfluous.39 Smith was keen to cut through the fluff and catalogue the fundamental characteristics of students. Even for students as young as those leaving sixth grade, the machinery of vocational guidance was trying to find them an occupation.

The validity of vocational guidance was fundamentally predicated on certain beliefs about the nature of individuals and the capacity to analyse them. It was believed that accumulated observations and testing could reveal objective characteristics that made a student innately appropriate to a certain occupation. The language surrounding vocational guidance frequently spoke of trying to discover the innate abilities of students and putting

them on occupational pathways that matched their natural aptitude and intelligence. For example, the broad purpose of the VGB was described as to ‘render help to teachers towards directing boys and girls into suitable *callings*.40 Another particularly illustrative example of this idea that pupils have inherent capabilities is found in the following description of the purpose of vocational guidance:

> On the one hand, it is sought to test and to measure the various capacities which boys and girls may have – both their general intelligence and their special aptitude for particular types of occupation…In this way it is hoped to prevent some of the fitting of square pegs into round holes which must result if the choice of a job is left to be largely a matter of chance.41

This language of square pegs, round holes and ‘callings’ reflects a romantic notion that there was a ‘right’ job for everyone. Indeed, the term vocation itself has connotations with a spiritual imperative to fulfil a divinely ordained function.42 The idea that there was a certain job uniquely appropriate to the individual was also mutually reinforced by the fact that during this era most people had a single occupation throughout their life.

The idea that there are callings for individuals is not necessarily a negative idea. However, the application of this mentality in vocational guidance operated in a way that limited the capacity of students for self-improvement or change. For example in 1928, S.H. Smith spoke of the need to ‘discourage students from selecting courses which require superior native ability to that which they possess.’43 There was little optimism about the potential for self-improvement and students were not encouraged to take charge of their career.

Looking at this process in its entirety, we can see that vocational guidance was a mechanism designed to link the worlds of school and work. Its role was to systematically

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41 Anon., ‘Educational Guidance and What it Means’, *Education Gazette* 33, no. 5 (May 1939), p. 118
43 Smith, ‘Vocational Guidance: Cumulative School History Card and Rotary Committees’, p. 167
classify students and place them within the workforce. The child was a discrete unit of labour with objective characteristics that could be catalogued through scientific methods of observation and testing. The need to develop the workforce trumped any notion of developing the individual’s potential.

The vocational guidance system was also limiting as it entrenched social divisions along class and gender lines. The integration of the vocational guidance system into recommendations about educational pathways for primary school leavers meant that students from lower-socio economic groups were predominately sent to technical and post-primary secondary schools. These schools prepared students for trade and unskilled jobs. The effect of this was that tertiary education remained the domain of the elite as many other students were prescribed pathways that did not make entry feasible.

Vocational guidance during this time was premised on a sexualised vision of society and occupations that led to the maintenance of gender inequalities. Throughout 1935 the *Education Gazette* published a series of articles that gave descriptions of various occupations. In many cases, job descriptions were not framed as being preferable for a certain sex but it was simply assumed that they were only available to a certain sex. For example, nursing was assumed to be a career option only for women: ‘No matter what branch of nursing a girl desires to take up, she must first of all produce certification of her educational fitness to undertake the course’.

Business was described in a similar fashion but for men: ‘The chances to-day for a young man in business…are as bright as, if not brighter than, ever before’ and the most important characteristic for a prospective businessman ‘is a manly character’.

These are just two of many examples that demonstrate the inherently sexist approach to vocational guidance during the 1930s.

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44 Anon., ‘Nursing as a Career’, *Education Gazette* 32, no. 1 (January 1938), p. 3.
The fundamental purpose of vocational guidance during this period was to extend government influence and control over the youth labour market. However, the ironic thing is that it was actually the student that dictated the results of the guidance process. This may at first seem confusing in light of the fact that the educational and occupational agency of the student was diminished through a comprehensive vocational guidance scheme. However, it is because of the very fact that it was believed that students were unchanging that their innate characteristics – sex, intelligence, class etc. – were the determinants as to what vocation they could pursue. Thus, while the student was entirely a passive participant in this system, the system that had been created was equally unable to influence what a student would do because it assumed the inability to change a student’s inherent capabilities. So while it may have been economic concerns about rising unemployment and industrialisation that had led to the creation of a vocational guidance scheme, it was founded on beliefs about the individual that limited the capacity of the system to intimately link vocational guidance to servicing the specific needs of the economy. Students were placed in work but they themselves passively determined where that was. Vocational guidance may not have served the best interests of the student but so too was it unable to comprehensively enhance the economic objectives that underpinned its creation.

The capacity for vocational guidance to serve the economic ambitions of the government is one of the areas that witnessed the most change since its inception in the 1920s and 1930s. Learning from the inability of vocational guidance to work closely with the needs of the economy during this period, policy makers in the aftermath of World War Two implemented practices that would more closely align the work of vocational guidance and the needs of the economy.
Chapter Two

*The Light on the Hill: building a better Australia*

Influenced by trends in Europe, Australia had started taking small steps towards a centrally planned economy prior to World War Two. Indeed, Richard White has noted that many Australian bureaucrats and businessman had shown enthusiasm for the centrally planned economies of the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany during the 1930s.\(^{47}\) The onset of World War Two gave the Federal Government a mandate to extend its control of the economy in order to coordinate the Australian war effort.\(^{48}\) By 1942 the wartime government had assumed unprecedented control over many areas of national life. Well before the guns of war had stopped firing, the Federal Government had started planning for the future through the creation of the Department of Post-War Reconstruction in 1942. The Department of Post-War Reconstruction was in charge of planning a better future for Australians with improved standards of living through ‘regulation of the economy for industrial expansion, immigration, maintenance of full employment, housing, health, education and social welfare.’\(^{49}\) The election of the Liberal Party led by Robert Menzies in 1949 marked a slight move towards relaxation of Federal Government control. However, the goal of creating an advanced industrialised economy with full employment remained one of the guiding ambitions of Federal Governments during the period from 1942 – 72.

An embrace of Keynesian economic management was central to fulfilling this vision of comprehensive national development and the maintenance of full-employment. During this period, particularly under the Labor Governments of John Curtin (1941 – 45) and Ben Chifley (1945 – 49), the state provided a level of demand to promote full utilisation of the labour

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\(^{48}\) *Ibid*.

market. To ensure this, ‘the government prepared a raft of public work schemes to soak up any surplus labour that might emerge once the pent-up demand from the war was satisfied.’

Other steps that were taken to bolster economic activity included supporting the expansion of industry behind the tariff wall, the modernisation of rural industries and generous concessions to American General Motors to establish a local car industry – in 1948 the first Holden rolled off the assembly line.  

The work of in-school Careers Advisers, introduced by the NSW Department of Education in 1941, was to be central in the ambitions of the Federal Government. Careers Advisers, in conjunction with the VGB and the newly created Commonwealth Employment Service (1946), were to be integral to maintaining full-employment and facilitating the economic goals of the Federal Government during the post-war decades. This was achieved by changes in the procedures of vocational guidance that more intimately linked secondary school students to government objectives.

An analysis of the Education Gazette during this period reveals that much of the rhetoric surrounding education was not focused on an extension of vocational guidance practices within schools. The gross acts of inhumanity that defined World War Two caused many people within education circles to call for education to promote moral progress for all of humanity. Education was seen as fundamental to creating a peace-loving citizenry. In 1943 John Medley, Vice Chancellor of Melbourne University, said that if Australia ‘was serious about planning for a better world’ then ‘the first thing to start thinking about is education.’ The idea that education could serve to create a better world was reflected in titles of articles and books like ‘How Can Public Education Best Serve Democracy Now?’ and Education for

50 Ibid, pp. 198-200.
The urgency of the situation and the important role that education was to play was captured perfectly in a speech made by the NSW Minister for Education after the war’s conclusion in 1946: ‘It is so obvious that it would not need stating were it not so vital that, unless education positively prepares man for the wider field of world citizenship, the future of the world will be tragedy.\textsuperscript{53}

Those who believed that education could improve the post-war world saw the need to reinvigorate a liberal conception of education with an emphasis on the production of good citizens. The idea that education should produce ‘breadwinners’ still had some currency but the practical concerns of employment were subsumed beneath the greater imperative of education ‘to help make human beings.’\textsuperscript{54} The role of education was to furnish young people with a mastery of the supreme ‘art of living together in a great co-operative effort to develop a better world’\textsuperscript{55} and ‘to safeguard the moral and spiritual outlook of the future generation.’\textsuperscript{56}

This fervour for a more liberal education stemmed from the perception that the vocationally focused education of the 1930s had allowed the atrophy of values necessary for peace. In 1945 one commentator lamented that education prior to the war was ‘exclusively concerned with the mind of man’ while ‘the heart has been left to its own devices.’\textsuperscript{57} During this period, the prevailing view was that a liberal education was not compatible with vocationally oriented outcomes. Through analysing articles in the \textit{Education Gazette}, it seems

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{54} Richard Livingstone, ‘Excerpt from a Radio Broadcast to Sixth Form’ quoted in \textit{Education Gazette} 36, no. 12 (December 1942), pp. 258-259.
\item \textsuperscript{55} Alice Howard Spaulding, ‘The Purpose of Education’ quoted in \textit{Education Gazette} 39, no. 2 (February 1945), p. 67.
\item \textsuperscript{57} Alice Howard Spaulding, ‘The Purpose of Education’, p. 67.
\end{itemize}
that, during this period, vocational goals and liberal goals were seen to be incompatible in the minds of many.

In this context, it would seem that the enthusiasm to move back towards a more liberal education would necessitate a declining role of vocational guidance in schools. The opposite occurred - vocational guidance practices were further expanded in schools during this period. Thus, there appeared to be an ongoing tension in education debates. While those in favour of gearing education towards forming liberal citizens had won the rhetorical battle, the new demands of state planned industrialisation saw governments support an expansion of vocational guidance in NSW schools.

The utilisation of youth labour to service the needs of the nation seems to have its origins in World War Two. On numerous occasions throughout the war, the Department of Education facilitated the movement of students out of education into industries that needed employees. For example, in November 1944, the Director of Youth Welfare urged that boys who had an interest in Industrial Chemistry, Cadet Draftsmanship, Electrical Apprenticeship and Pharmacy should contact him as he had information on ‘the probable requirements of employers in the metropolitan area’ that would allow them to fast-track their movement from school to work.58 Similarly, female students were encouraged to depart education during World War Two and take up work in the production of munitions.59 In 1943 it was noted that there was need for teachers of science with a home science bias. Consequently, girls were strongly encouraged to leave school if they wanted a career in these fields.60 If circumstances allowed students to move into employment for the immediate benefit of the state, then the education process was readily compromised.

59 Anon., ‘Opportunities for Girls in Munitions Laboratories’, Education Gazette 37, no. 7 (July 1943), p. 171.
60 Anon., ‘Careers for Girls’, Education Gazette 37, no. 4 (April 1943), p. 82.
During and after the war, numerous vocational guidance practices for students were extended both within schools and in institutions outside the school system. The activities of the VGB were extended further into schools during this period. In 1950, the VGB started sending members of its staff to schools in instances where the school’s Careers Adviser believed they could not offer good advice or to assist in instances where a student had not taken part in state wide vocational aptitude tests.\(^{61}\) Furthermore, during the 1950s the VGB further infiltrated the school routine when Departmental approval was given for students to miss school in order to attend appointments at the VGB.\(^{62}\) Prior to this, consultations involving staff members of the VGB only took place via appointment, on the VGB’s premises and outside of school hours. The fact that the normal function of the school was interrupted in order to allow the provision of vocational guidance represents an unmistakable perception of the increased emphasis of vocational guidance in this period.

There were also changes implemented by the Department of Education that extended vocational guidance within schools. The first of these measures was the introduction of Careers Advisers into schools in 1941 to ‘assist adolescents in making sound vocational choices.’\(^{63}\) The next significant measure was the introduction of the School Leavers Card for male students in 1944. These cards were filled out when a student elected to leave school. The student was asked to evaluate himself on the card; their interests, their best subjects and the occupation they hoped to have. This information was cross-referenced and amended by the school’s Careers Adviser based on their own observations.


\(^{62}\) Anon., ‘Guidance Services’, *Education Gazette* 47, no. 10 (September 1953), p. 270.

In 1948 the School Career Card was introduced for all students, male and female. The School Career Card served to create a formal record of advice for the student as well as to amass information about the occupational trends of leaving students for government purposes. Through these measures, the act of concluding schooling coincided with the provision of advice that aimed at ensuring a quick transition into employment. It is interesting to note that the delay in extending the card system to female students is indicative of the belief that a career was predominantly the domain of men. Similarly, gendered versions of jobs were still promoted in periodicals providing information on different occupations.

In addition to these initiatives, schools were also encouraged to start organising excursions to various factories and ‘industrial enterprises’ to ‘assist pupils in obtaining a background of knowledge of the world of work which will help them in their final choice of an occupation.’ Excursions were now aimed at aiding the occupational decisions of students rather than to serve educational ends.

However, by far the most important developments of this period were the extensive linkages made between schools and government bodies responsible for the allocation of workers. These were developments that inextricably connected the provision of vocational guidance within schools to the levers of government economic policy. The Commonwealth Employment Service (CES), established in 1946, was the primary mechanism that linked the economic ambitions of the post-war governments with vocational guidance practices in schools. By the creation of district agencies, the CES compiled an extensive database of vacant jobs across Australia ‘as an instrument of its declared policy to create and maintain a

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64 Anon., ‘Directions for Completing School Careers Card’, *Education Gazette* 22, no. 10 (October 1948), pp. 326-328.

65 In the post-war decades, government bodies published pamphlets that provided information on different occupations. Many of the job descriptions have embedded assumptions about what genders they are appropriate for, see: *Choosing a Career*, (1955 – 1971), *Background to Careers*, (1964 – 1990).

condition of full employment in Australia.\footnote{Anon., ‘Directions for Completing School Careers Card’, \textit{Education Gazette} 22, no. 10 (October 1948), pp. 326-328.} Within the CES, the Youth Employment Section provided information to the VGB and school Careers Advisers about job vacancies in a school’s region. In doing this, the advice delivered to students about viable industries to work in was based extensively on information that worked towards the Federal Government’s goal of achieving full employment.

In 1946, there were practices developed between schools and the Division of Youth Welfare within the NSW Department of Labour and Industry to keep track of finishing students to ensure that they had entered employment. If a student did not attend school and appeared to have “dropped out”, the Principal was required to forward the information contained on the student’s School Career Card through to the Director of Youth Welfare. The student was then sought out and was forcibly placed in an occupation utilising the information gathered by their school Careers Adviser. While the transition between school and work was one that had already been watched closely throughout the 1920s and 1930s, this tracking down of students after school to force them into work can clearly be seen as an advent of the hardened determination to maintain full employment in post-war Australia.

Although students had the final say in taking a job, the way the advice was structured reflected the Federal Government’s embrace of a fully planned economy. The aim of placing students to fulfil the economic ambitions of the Federal Government meant that students were treated like cogs in a machine more important than themselves. This is reflected in subtle but significant changes in the practices of vocational guidance that further objectified the student. Although the student was largely passive in vocational guidance procedures of the 1920s and 1930s, there were still periodic references to the need to include input from the student and their parents. Throughout the 1940s the input from the student and parents was systematically eliminated. The process began in the late 1930s and early 1940s when articles in the
Education Gazette pertaining to vocational guidance stopped mentioning the need to include parents in the guidance process. The input of students was further reduced when they were allowed only a few brief remarks about what occupation they hoped to have in the cursory self-assessment on the School Leavers Card that remained in operation until 1948. While the input was only small, the recommended career on a School Leavers Card at least took into consideration the student’s wishes.

The blanket introduction of the School Career Card in 1948 removed all student input in the information that was relayed to the CES. The Student Career Card was completed entirely by a school’s Careers Adviser based on test results and their personal assessment of the student. Implicitly, the Careers Adviser and the staff of the CES and VGB were accorded almost total power to decide the advice and career path prescribed to a student. In doing so, students were completely disempowered in the formulation of advice that pertained to their career. Although the process of education was coloured by the rhetoric of liberal ideals, these ideals had no place within the process of vocational guidance itself. The focus on the achievement of national economic objectives trumped individual interest as students increasingly became pawns of Government based institutions such as the VGB and CES. The individual’s autonomy was systematically reduced in the process of vocational guidance as the importance of the Federal Government’s centrally planned economy took priority.

The links between vocational guidance and the national economy that had started to emerge during the 1940s were further developed during the 1950s. However, there were slight differences between the decades that are attributable to the economic ideology of the Liberal Menzies Government that came into power in 1949. Menzies came to power on a platform that promised to promote private enterprise and cut-red tape.68 Although Stuart Macintyre has noted that Menzies still remained firmly committed to a strong public sector and government

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control, the Menzies era did witness some changes in accordance with his government’s slightly different economic outlook.\textsuperscript{69}

The primary change came in the form of increased integration of private commercial interests into vocational guidance. This introduction of private sector interests into vocational guidance was a two-way process. Business was becoming interested in school leavers as much as those involved in vocational guidance were fostering connections with business. Initially, the Department of Education resisted the infiltration of business interests into the school system. In 1955, the Department of Education issued a warning to school Careers Advisers that they were not allowed to distribute any material to students that had not been approved by the Department. This came as a reaction to the growing practice of large businesses providing employment advertising to Careers Advisers in the hope that they would distribute it to students.\textsuperscript{70} Although these attempts of the private sector to lure students were stifled, it is indicative of increasing interest by business in intervening in the vocational pathways of students.

It appears that the attempted seduction of students by business could not be resisted. The following year the Department of Education organised a Careers Exhibition to take place in August 1956.\textsuperscript{71} The aim of the convention was to expose students to a large number of jobs in one setting and the event had ‘the support of a large section of industrial and commercial organisations’.\textsuperscript{72} There had been precursors to this type of event. In 1946, the Department of Labour and Industry and Social Welfare had organised for leaders of various industries to talk

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
  \bibitem{ibid} Ibid.
  \bibitem{ibid} Anon., ‘Vocational Guidance: Career Information to Schools’, \emph{Education Gazette} 49, no. 11 (November 1955), p. 334.
  \bibitem{ibid} Anon., ‘Careers Exhibition, August 27\textsuperscript{th} to 31\textsuperscript{st}’, \emph{Education Gazette} 50, no. 7 (July 1956), p. 204.
  \bibitem{ibid} Ibid.
\end{thebibliography}
about their work at an event attended by students, Careers Advisers and parents. Nonetheless, the 1956 Careers Exhibition was still a landmark moment, not just for the fact that it was the first of its kind, but also for what it represented. The event symbolised the coalescence of the interests of the Department of Education, Careers Advisers, agents involved in vocational guidance, the private sector and the economic ambitions of the Federal Government. Never before had the interests of these various groups so visibly met.

The motivating force for staging the Careers Exhibition was the need to address costs incurred by individuals changing jobs. In the advertisement of the event the NSW Department of Education expressed its concern: ‘[it] has been estimated that the total cost to manufacturers of job-changing last year was 56 million pounds. Such a bill must inevitably have a great effect on the national economy, and therefore every effort should be made to ensure that each initial choice of occupation is the correct one.’ The event strengthened the link between vocational guidance and the national economy by promoting vocational guidance as a means of eliminating inefficiency and waste within the Australian economy.

Concern with the economic cost of job changing was also echoed at a Federal level. From 1955 – 71 the Department of Labour and National Service published periodicals containing descriptions of occupations. Each instalment was prefaced with the warning that: ‘Not to choose the right job may well mean future dissatisfaction and lack of progress and also waste of time.’ This intense concern with eliminating waste and inefficiency through vocational guidance had developed during World War Two. In 1944 the Australian Council for Educational Research published a report that cited the ‘economic losses inherent in

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74 Anon., ‘Careers Exhibition’, p. 204.
excessive labour turnover’ as a reason to improve vocational guidance. In this report it was argued that increased funding to vocational guidance:

[May] be regarded as a small premium to insure even a fractional reduction of labour turnover in the community at large, of personal unhappiness and discontent arising from occupational misplacement, of wasted and unused talent in a community that can ill afford to be prodigal with its talent, of juvenile delinquency and associated social problems and of the hard cash which all these cost Australia.\(^{76}\)

Prior to this, vocational guidance had never been thought of with such explicit consideration to the way it could benefit the national economy. This conceptualisation of vocational guidance as a tool that concurrently served the interests of students, the national economy, the state and the private sector, represented a significant step in the creation of a much more interconnected understanding of the relationship between vocational guidance and the broader society.

Looking back at this period, the changes can be broadly summarised under three main themes. The first of these is the significantly increased role the Federal Government started to play in NSW education. The decades after World War Two witnessed the vast extension of Federal Government intervention in national life; particularly in education and the economy. Most notably this took the form of increased integration between vocational guidance in schools, Careers Advisers and the economic ambitions of the Federal Government. The precedent for Federal Government involvement in education had been set; Federal Governments would become consistently active in education, particularly during the period from 1983 – 96. The successful integration of vocational guidance into the government employment agencies, the CES and VGB, would provide a roadmap for future Federal Government programs that became involved in managing the transition of youth from school to work. These practices were validated, in the eyes of the government, by the fact that unemployment remained

remarkably low during this time. Broadly speaking, the period demonstrated the capacity for governments to utilise schools and their students as a means of achieving their economic ambitions.

The second observation to emerge from this period was the start of the separation between Careers Advisers and the educational establishment. During this period, education policy increasingly moved in favour of a liberal conception of education, reflected in the establishment of the comprehensive high school system in the 1960s. For educators, the role of education was to provide an equitable schooling experience with the fundamental purpose of producing a good citizenry. During this same period, the focus of Careers Advisers was to meet government economic objectives that did not move in harmony with prevailing education policy. Their role became firmly wedded to interests outside of the school and not the tides of educational thought. The disassociation of Careers Adviser from the education establishment was fundamental to the increasing movement of Careers Advisers to the periphery of education that occurred during the 1980s and 1990s.

The final observation of this period relates to the way that the interests of the student were significantly discarded by the developments in vocational guidance. In 1944, W.M. O’Neill, a regular writer on education issues, stressed the need for vocational guidance in building a better society but warned of the dangers of implementing practices used by the totalitarian governments that were wreaking havoc across the world: ‘Any form of vocational guidance which purports to tell the person what is best for him is hardly appropriate outside a dictatorial and authoritarian culture.’ While the nature of NSW’s vocational guidance was a far cry from that of the totalitarian regimes of Europe, O’Neill likely would have recoiled at the forceful vocational guidance measures introduced after World War Two. While the post-war boom created a buoyant economy in which employment was plentiful, it would be the experience for many students that their agency was significantly diminished as the
mechanisms of government guided them into certain jobs. While much of the material distributed to students spoke of the need for them to make decisions about their careers, the reality is that the underlying mechanisms at work in vocational guidance were servicing the needs of the economy and not the aspirations of the student. In doing so, it can be seen that vocational guidance and the economic goals of the state corresponded in a way that they did not in previous decades. Decision makers had solved the problems of the 1920s and 1930s that prevented an intimate integration of vocational guidance and the economic ambitions of the state.

Chapter Three

The Professionalisation of the Careers Adviser

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, the relationship between school Careers Advisers, the Federal Government and the education system would undergo significant changes. Driven by the need to produce a highly skilled workforce, the Federal Labor Governments of Bob Hawke (1983 – 91) and Paul Keating (1991 – 96) introduced measures to more closely link secondary education with employment and training. In this context, the importance of managing the transition of youth out of school was growing, while at the same time the role of Careers Advisers diminished. It was largely the professionalisation of the position of Careers Adviser during the 1970s that led to its diminished importance during the 1980s and 1990s.

From 1975 Careers Advisers became increasingly intellectually and practically autonomous. The creation of the Careers Advisers Association of New South Wales (CAA) in 1976, and the establishment of its own journal Prospects in 1981, gave birth to mediums in which Careers Advisers could develop independent and varied ideas about how to conduct their role. During this period the concerns of Careers Advisers shifted from assisting the Federal Government in fulfilling its economic policy to meeting the needs of the individual student. No longer could the Federal Government rely on Careers Advisers to direct youth labour in the ways it desired. This chapter looks at the specific forces at work in the process of professionalisation of Careers Advisers. The implications for this development are explored further in Chapter Four.

The backdrop of high youth unemployment in the 1970s was essential in giving momentum to the process of professionalisation of Careers Advisers. Throughout the third quarter of the twentieth century the vocational guidance procedures that had been
implemented in the years after the war remained near untouched. The economic good fortune enjoyed by the nation meant that there was no need to amend vocational guidance procedures that were seen to be working; the economy grew threefold, there was consistently low unemployment and people had discretionary income for their own enjoyment.\(^{78}\) In 1973 the NSW Department of Education published a report titled the *Aims of Secondary Education in N.S.W.* in which the need to amend schooling to assist students in finding employment was briefly mentioned once – a reflection of the confidence felt in the adequacy of current methods of vocational guidance.\(^{79}\)

However, the economic recession of the 1970s would shatter the confidence in these practices. In 1973 the Arab states placed an oil embargo on the West that precipitated a four-fold increase in the price of oil. The direct effects on Australia were minor but the indirect ones were devastating.\(^{80}\) As a result, from 1974 – 75 the overall unemployment rate in Australia more than doubled with an even greater rise in youth unemployment. Although it was the 1974 – 75 crisis that caused the bulk of youth unemployment, the disproportionate growth in youth unemployment had started to emerge earlier in 1972. Between 1972 and 1979 youth unemployment rose every year to seventeen per cent for individuals in the fifteen to nineteen year age group; nearly three times the national average of six per cent. Teenagers of this era were to become known as the ‘lost generation’ as job opportunities and employment eluded them.\(^{81}\)

Youth unemployment was not distributed evenly among the various demographics. Certain groups including migrants, Aboriginal Australians, women and geographically isolated populations were bearing the brunt of youth unemployment; groups that would have


previously found unskilled factory work. Throughout the 1970s numerous reports documented the inequitable post-school experiences of these groups with regards to employment prospects and career aspirations. One of the biggest issues that came under scrutiny during the 1970s was the disproportionately higher level of youth unemployment suffered by females. In 1975 the Australian Schools Commission published *Girls, Schools and Society*. The report highlighted female youth unemployment and directed blame at a schooling system that produced sexual inequality. The report drew attention to the significantly different retention rates and post-school opportunities for boys and girls. Shortly after, in 1977, the Federal Government’s Commission of Inquiry into Poverty published *School Leavers: Choice and Opportunity*. This report looked at the inequalities suffered by females as well as students in rural and isolated areas. Like *Girls, Schools and Society*, the report echoed the trends relating to school retention rates for female students as well as noting a pattern of under-preparedness in female students for life after school. The second half of *School Leavers* reported on the discrepancy in career aspirations between rural and metropolitan regions. Specifically, the report linked lower career aspirations in rural populations to lower socio-economic status and the effects of geographic isolation.

That there were quantifiable and identifiable disadvantages suffered by specific demographics was particularly concerning in the 1970s. This is because the Gough Whitlam Labor Government of 1972 – 75 had fostered an aspiration in which eradication of inequalities in education and related areas was of the highest importance. The Whitlam

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Government implemented a series of reforms that broadly aimed at achieving educational equity. Educational equity meant the removal of barriers to participation in education and creating equality in the experience of school by students. There were two particularly prominent education reforms under the Whitlam Government to this end. The first of these was abolition of university tuition fees in order to remove economic barriers to participation in tertiary education. The second of these was the move towards funding all schools on a ‘needs basis’. This came about after the Karmel Committee – named after its chairman Peter Karmel – produced a report advocating the need to fund all schools on a needs basis. In the context of changes in career advice, these two measures are more important for the mood they established rather than their specific effects.

The reforms made the issue of alleviating disadvantages experienced by certain demographics the *raison d’etre* of education reform in the 1970s. Education historians Geoffrey Sherrington and Craig Campbell have noted that the Whitlam Government began a precedent of ‘focusing on issues of equity throughout all Australian schools, both public and private’ that would be maintained throughout the 1970s. Because youth unemployment was disproportionately high in certain groups, there was a heightened imperative to address it in this era that was so sensitive to inequality. For Careers Advisers, it provided a backdrop that would allow them to think of their role as serving a broader social purpose rather than the delivery of workers into the economy.

As youth unemployment continued to worsen throughout the 1970s and the demand for new skilled workers grew, the number of reports that looked at the transition from school to work continued to mount. In 1976 the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published a report on the *Transition from Secondary Education to*

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Employment in Australia.\textsuperscript{89} Like so much of the material produced during this period, the OECD report documented the disadvantages suffered by certain demographics and broadly recommended improvement of mechanisms that linked school to the rest of society. In response to this report, the Australian Education Council – composed of State Ministers for Education and the Federal Minister for Education – established the 1977 Commonwealth State/Working Party on the Transition from School to Work or Further Study. This working party produced two reports. The first of these, published in October 1977, accepted the findings of the OECD report and provide guidelines on which to investigate solutions.\textsuperscript{90} A second report was then published in 1978 by the Working Party with suggested solutions.\textsuperscript{91} In 1979 the Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training (known as the Williams Committee) published a report investigating how linkages could be improved between education and employment.\textsuperscript{92} The findings of the Williams Committee were also accepted by the Federal Government to be investigated further.\textsuperscript{93}

The listing of these reports should serve to illustrate the significantly increased attention that was being directed to the issue of the transition of students out of school. All of the reports agreed that there were significant problems in the transition of students out of school and that the solution lay in changes to the structures and nature of education. The role of the school came under great scrutiny as the perception spread that schools were ‘failing to

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prepare students for work’ by not equipping students with skills necessary for them to survive in an economic environment that had significantly changed from the 1960s.\textsuperscript{94} Catherine Blakers, writing at the end of the 1970s, summed up the prevailing attitudes of the public in her work \textit{Issues in Career Education}: ‘Schools today are criticised for their irrelevance to the needs of either students or the society. They do not provide equality of opportunity; they do not equip students for work and life; they ignore the needs of the labour market; they are out of touch with community.’\textsuperscript{95}

The shift towards making education more responsive to the employment needs of students and of business gave rise to the concept of career education. The purpose of career education was to broadly educate students in the practical skills required to gain employment as well as arm them with the personal skills of decision-making and self-assessment to assist them after school.\textsuperscript{96} Proponents of career education wanted to see its inclusion as a subject within the NSW school curriculum. In discussions about career education, it was naturally assumed that Careers Advisers would play an important role in two primary ways.

Firstly, the demand for improved linkages between schools, tertiary institutions, training programs and employment naturally fell into the realm of work currently being undertaken by Careers Advisers. Careers Advisers had long acted as the primary liaison for students and the range of institutions available to them after school. As such, the demand for improved coordination between these agencies and school naturally entailed an increased role for Careers Advisers moving forward.

The second reason that the push for career education placed increased demands on Career Advisers was because the 1970s drew attention to the fact that current advisory

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\textsuperscript{95}Ibid, p. 20.
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practices were no longer valid and needed to be more sophisticated. One of the main things to emerge during the 1970s was the inadequacy of thinking of students as a homogenous group. The numerous reports during the period consistently documented the fact that youth unemployment, early-school departures and reduced career aspirations were experienced most heavily in certain demographics. This came in response to the growing awareness that many students felt external to educational structures because they perceived that education did not cater for them. This criticism was echoed in other reports, particularly that of the OECD, which criticised the Australian secondary school system for catering primarily to students with aspirations to attend university.97 The result of this was that students felt a lack of ‘school commitment’ and were predisposed to dropping out early without acquiring skills that would allow them success in life after school.98

The solution to this problem was seen to lie in providing educational pathways and career advice that resonated with the particular needs of certain student groups. This meant that Careers Advisers, Educational Guidance Counsellors and School Counsellors increasingly worked hand in hand to direct students through school and to provide detailed career advice that took into greater account the circumstances that they would likely encounter during and after school. An illustrative example can be found in an article published in *Prospects*, in which the author gives their opinion about how to work with mentally challenged students. In this article, the author notes that one of the main impediments for mentally challenged students obtaining work is a lack of social skills. As such, the educational pathway of a mentally challenged student should look primarily to arm the student with basic skills and improved social skills so that a Careers Adviser can assist

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them in directing them to work that is appropriate to their circumstances.\textsuperscript{99} Furthermore, during this period the work of Careers Advisers was integrated into the Division of Guidance and Adjustment within the NSW Department of Education. The Division of Guidance and Adjustment was responsible for the ‘development of careers advisory services and in-service training of counselling and guidance staff’.\textsuperscript{100} Career advice was increasingly being conceived in similar terms to pastoral care stemming from the recognition of the need for advisory practices to work sympathetically with students throughout school.

It is interesting to note that this shift back in favour of specialised educational pathways ran in direct opposition to the spirit of the comprehensive high school system that came to fruition in the 1960s. The comprehensive school system had aspired to provide a unified educational experience to students. In many ways the arguments being made in favour of individualised education pathways mirrored the way in which a range of secondary schools -technical colleges, post primary schools etc. – proliferated during the 1920s and 1930s in line with the goals of the national efficiency movement. Thus it does appear that there is a correlation between times of economic distress and support for making education more specialised in order to address the needs of the economy. This will be looked at further in the following chapter.

The idea of integrating career advice throughout schooling and increasing levels of cooperation with students fundamentally challenged advisory practices that had largely remained unchanged in their philosophy since their inception in the late 1920s. No longer was it seen as appropriate to submit students to a battery of psychological and intellectual tests, interview them and send them on their way with a Student Career Card to the CES or VGB. In 1978, Catherine Blakers noted that: ‘The years since the 1950s have seen an erosion of the

pre-war confidence felt by counsellors that, on the basis of batteries of appropriate tests and one or two brief interviews, they could predict job suitability.’ ¹⁰¹ Many who had enthusiastically supported the vocational guidance schemes after World War Two now realised the inadequacies of the practices they had championed. The education academic W.M. O’Neill was one of these men. In 1941 he submitted a paper to the Australian Council for Educational Research about the imperative of vocational guidance in constructing a better civilisation in Australia. In 1976, he would sadly reflect on the inadequacy of these practices in the new social and economic circumstances of the 1970s: ‘We were altogether too naïve in that we almost certainly over-estimated both the reliability and the validity of the tests we were using…In our relative ignorance and innocence we were altogether too directive in our advice and too restricted in the range of vocations to which we drew our clients’ attention.’ ¹⁰²

The movement towards ongoing career advice during school went hand in hand as ‘the concept of career education as an injection of information appropriate to the defined abilities and aptitudes of the student and administered in one or two shots towards the end of schooling’ fell into disuse. ¹⁰³ For Careers Advisers, the student was no longer a unit of labour whose appropriate job was to be discerned by testing and observation. Instead, the student became a client. It was now the role of the Careers Adviser to facilitate a process in which each ‘individual should be encouraged to develop his/her maximum capacity, thus fully utilising the available resources for the benefit of everyone.’ ¹⁰⁴ For Careers Advisers, the emphasis went from guiding students into an occupation to nurturing a process of self-realisation regarding career choice.

Given the increased demands for linkage between schools and society and for improved methods of career advice, it seemed natural that there would be an increasing role of the Careers Adviser in schools. However, just as much as these demands would seem to naturally broaden the role of Careers Advisers, Careers Advisers themselves were also making sure that they were seen as being central to fulfilling them. Careers Advisers were prosecuting the case for career education more vigorously than anyone else. For example, in May 1977 the Career Education Association of the Australian Capital Territory organised a national conference on career education. The aim of the conference was to discuss issues involved in getting career education into school curriculums.¹⁰⁵ A cursory inspection of the list of officially registered attendees reveals that the great majority of them, nearly all of them, were either Careers Advisers themselves or had an affiliation with a body representing those involved in career advisory services within schools. At the conclusion of the Conference, the attendees made a submission to the Curriculum Development Centre. The Federal Government had established the Curriculum Development Centre in 1975 to provide recommendations and instruction on the curriculum of Australian schools. The submission advocated three main measures: i. To have career education recognised officially within the curriculum; ii. To establish a curriculum of career education and; iii. The improved training of staff involved in career education.¹⁰⁶

Careers Advisers were not just pushing career education because they saw it as an important aspect of education; it also served their own professional and financial interests. Throughout the 1970s, Careers Advisers in NSW secondary schools began organising themselves professionally with the ambition of establishing themselves as compulsory full-

time members of staff within the state’s secondary schools. In 1976 the Career Advisers Association of New South Wales (CAA) was formed after their inaugural meeting in 1975. Improving the position of Careers Advisers in schools was to be achieved through convincing decision-makers of the necessity of their role and career education. This was reflected in their charter: ‘CAA promotes career education as a central and vital part of schooling and supports the work of Careers Advisers in assisting young people in making decisions about work, study and training.’\textsuperscript{107} Throughout the 1970s and 1980s the CAA would vigorously prosecute the case for the extension of career education in schools. In their founding document, the CAA stressed the dire state of career education in schools and the urgent need to improve it by arguing that: ‘[Decisions] about careers priorities are far too important to be left to the individual school and that the only way for fundamental improvements to take place is for the Department of Education to establish careers as a mandatory part of every child’s education.’\textsuperscript{108} As well as the economic benefits of career education the CAA stressed the emotional imperatives as well:

It would not be overstating the case to suggest that the problems of choosing a career/being dissatisfied or unfulfilled in a career could quite easily affect young peoples’ personal adjustment, self-image, social and family relationships and even their attitudes to society…the student who finds job satisfaction and fulfilment seems less likely to get into trouble.\textsuperscript{109}

Pressing the importance of career education was fundamental to the achievement of the two interrelated ambitions of the CAA; according greater professional respect for the role of Careers Adviser and improving the material and financial situation of Careers Advisers. The CAA held the view that Careers Advisers were undervalued, frequently citing that ‘the response to Careers Advisers in schools is not good’ and that they were seen as ‘an “add on”

\textsuperscript{108} Glover & Glover, \textit{Some Proposals for the Advancement of Career Education}, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{109} \textit{Ibid}, p. 7.
situation and not seen as respected staff members.'\textsuperscript{110} The CAA also argued that there were insufficient periods in the timetable allocated to Careers Advisers to conduct their work and that the small amounts that were given to them were frequently misused.

There were two main reasons that Careers Advisers and career education was looked down upon. Firstly, the role of Careers Adviser did not require any formal qualifications; any member of staff within a school could fill the role. In response to this, the CAA pushed the case for formal qualifications to be introduced in order to become a Careers Adviser and promoted the idea of an official tertiary qualification to be established.\textsuperscript{111} Similarly, in 1983 the CAA advocated, through the Working Party on Careers Advising and Career Education in N.S.W., the establishment of an Approvals Committee that would be empowered to make decisions as to whether an individual possessed appropriate levels of qualification to become a Careers Adviser.\textsuperscript{112} The ambition to have formally recognised criteria for employment can be seen as the CAA trying to give integrity to the role of Careers Adviser.

The other major demand of the CAA was for Careers Advisers to become a compulsory full-time position within NSW secondary schools. The position of Careers Adviser was only a part-time role and consequently was not an attractive position, as it did not receive the equivalent wage of a regular full-time teacher. Furthermore, the position did not offer opportunities for promotion that would increase either the prestige or financial reward of an individual who chose to commit to the role. This meant that it was often the case that one of the least able or least valuable staff members was unwillingly relegated to the role of Careers Adviser, which often led to them performing the role poorly. In the current circumstances the CAA saw that ‘it is highly unlikely that many teachers would be


\textsuperscript{111} Glover & Glover, \textit{Some Proposals for the Advancement of Career Education}, p. 60.

willing to give up their teaching subject, transfer to full time careers and put in a lot of effort.”

Thus, in the 1981 Annual General Meeting of the CAA, the Association passed a resolution that committed it to putting sustained pressure on the Department of Education to convert all part-time Careers Advisers in Government schools to full-time Careers Advisers. Other related demands included the maintained push for a promotional structure and for Careers Advisers to be guaranteed tenure within schools.

The demands made by the CAA are really of secondary importance to the intellectual and occupational autonomy that Careers Advisers gained throughout the 1970s. Armed with the ambition of becoming a respected part of the educational establishment and the conviction of their own importance, Careers Advisers increasingly saw themselves as autonomous practitioners of their chosen profession. The publication of the CAA’s journal, Prospects, from 1981 was fundamental to this. Prospects provided committed Careers Advisers with a medium through which they could communicate and share techniques, theories, opinions, information and more about career education. The vast majority of the articles in Prospects gave an author’s opinion about projected changes in the Australian economy and the implications this would have for the profession. The creation of the CAA and Prospects also saw the beginnings of annual conferences and similar congregations of Careers Advisers in the state. In short, the professionalisation of the role produced an environment in which the academic interchange of ideas about career advice could flourish. The result was that different opinions, methods and ideas proliferated in relation to what was best practice for Careers Advisers.

It is interesting to note that the professionalisation of the role was in fact following the well-beaten path of numerous other subjects in NSW secondary schools. For example, in 1960 the English Teachers Association of NSW was established and began publishing a

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113 Glover & Glover, Some Proposals for the Advancement of Career Education, p. 57.
regular newsletter and journal from 1961. Similarly the Science Teachers’ Association of New South Wales Inc. was established, in its current form, in 1951. The History Teachers’ Association of NSW was established in 1954 and published the journal Teaching History from 1961.

The fact that the teachers of the major subjects had organised themselves into associations indicates that there was an innate impetus towards forming associations based on specialisation. However, the case of Careers Advisers is a slightly more interesting one. As has been discussed, Careers Advisers for most of the twentieth century had been treated non-seriously by the Department of Education. In an effort to assert their role as a serious position, Careers Advisers may have been compelled to create the CAA seeing this as a prerequisite for becoming a respected part of the educational establishment.

By the end of the 1970s, the relationship between Careers Advisers, schools and the Federal Government had irreversibly changed as a result of the professionalisation of the role of Careers Adviser. From 1941 to the start of the 1970s, Careers Advisers had serviced the economic ambitions of the state in its project of national development and its endeavour to maintain full employment. During these decades the role had predominately been filled by a member of staff who, for the most part, was ambitious to move out of the role and into a traditional teaching position that offered both better pay and promotional opportunity. The Federal Government could expect that these reluctant Careers Advisers would be compliant in sending students to either the VGB or CES armed with a Student Career Card at the

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conclusion of their schooling. From here the student could be pointed in the direction of industries and professions that the government believed needed labour. The Careers Adviser was a middleman; a disinterested occupant of the role who could be expected to serve the goals of the government. Although the stated role of the Careers Adviser was to serve the interests of the student, the integration of the Careers Adviser into government employment agencies meant that, in practice, the interests of the government prevailed.

The events of the 1970s comprehensively changed this situation. As Careers Advisers began to take their role seriously, the attitudes towards the student changed significantly. While the Careers Adviser’s role necessitated the provision of advice that took stock of the projected course of the economy, their responsibility was to the interests of the student. Much of this is due to the fact that Careers Advisers professionalised in a context in which the need for specialised pastoral care for different demographics in schools was becoming increasingly important. The general period in which the professional Careers Adviser was borne was witnessing an attitudinal change whereby students were not a homogenous group but a diverse constituency that had varying needs. The frame of reference for Careers Advisers was narrowing to assisting the individual student. By contrast, during the 1980s and 1990s the Federal Government was talking about the need to manage ‘youth’ in its entirety. Though the advice of Careers Advisers may naturally coincide with the interests of the state, the state could no longer rely on them prescribing advice that linked students into pathways and government agencies that served the needs of the economy.
Chapter Four

Building a Competitive Australia: the declining role of the Careers Adviser

In many ways the economic woes of the 1970s were a precursor for the far-reaching economic reform and restructuring that occurred during the 1980s and 1990s. The moves towards deregulation and tariff reduction under Gough Whitlam and Malcolm Fraser would pale in comparison to the host of reforms implemented by the successive Labor Governments led by Bob Hawke (1983 – 91) and Paul Keating (1991 – 96).

From 1983 – 96 the Federal Government took extensive measures to transform the Australian economy. The globalisation of world economics and the increasing competition it brought revealed unsustainable practices in Australia. The country could no longer rely on its commodity exports and there was a need to move into a post-industrial age. The inability of the economy to provide regular growth and employment under the Keynesian methods that had prevailed since World War Two saw a shift in economic ideology towards deregulation. Some of the most prominent of these reforms included the floating of the Australian dollar in 1983, allowing increases in foreign investment and lifting of controls on domestic banks. Further moves were initiated in 1986 after the Australian Dollar lost nearly half its value and foreign debt accounted for thirty percent of Australia’s gross national product. In 1986 Paul Keating, then Treasurer of the Federal Labor Government, warned that Australia could become a ‘Banana Republic’ if it did not correct these problems. Further deregulation in the form of further tariff reduction and moves towards decentralised wage fixation was the answer. Thus, by the end of the 1980s numerous reforms had been undertaken that broke down what has been called the ‘Australian Settlement’ – that is,

118 Stuart Macintyre, A Concise History of Australia, p.239.
government measures and economic protections that had guaranteed security and a basic quality of life.\textsuperscript{120}

The movement into a post-industrial economy had massive implications for the occupational landscape of the country.\textsuperscript{121} The growth of service-based industries was arguably the most significant of these. The nature and levels of employment in service-based industries is highly contingent on fluctuations in consumer demand. As such, participation levels in part-time work grew enormously as it allowed employers to vary the size of their workforce in response to demand. This had two important implications for youth. Firstly, the growth of part-time work, in conjunction with the rapid proliferation of new types of jobs, made ‘the expectation of a career, of committing oneself to a lifelong vocation that valued experience and allowed workers to retire with dignity’ seem ‘antediluvian.’\textsuperscript{122} Secondly, it was overwhelmingly young people that were involved in part-time work. From August 1966 to August 1984 the number of teenagers working part-time grew 355.3 percent.\textsuperscript{123} Youth unemployment also remained disproportionately high, particularly in certain disadvantaged demographics.\textsuperscript{124} In November 1985, there was 17.6 per cent unemployment in the teenage labour force; significantly higher the national average of 7.3 per cent.\textsuperscript{125}

The ongoing problems with high youth unemployment meant that the calls for change in education that began in the 1970s persisted throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Reports urging the need for increased integration between school and work continued to pour in from

\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Ibid}, p. 242.
\textsuperscript{121} Peter Dwyer, et al., \textit{Confronting School and Work: Youth and class culture in Australia}, (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin Australia Pty Ltd, 1984), pp. 112-113.
\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Ibid}, p. 246.
\textsuperscript{125} B. Wilson et al, \textit{Education Work and Youth Policy}, p. 4.
government and independent bodies.\textsuperscript{126} In 1983 a discussion paper on \textit{Future Directions in Secondary Education} in New South Wales was published. The paper advocated the idea of reforming education to have a ‘core of learning’ but to allow for specialisation in schools in terms of curriculum.\textsuperscript{127} This discussion paper led to the \textit{Future Directions of Secondary Education} report. This report encouraged the acquisition of a broad range of skills in education but urged that there should be a closer relationship between theoretical and applied studies with improved provisions for integration of Technical and Further Education Colleges (TAFE) into study.

One of the most significant reports of the period, and in a way the culminating one, was the Finn Report published in 1991 by the Australian Education Council. Like so many of the reports of this period it reaffirmed the idea that ‘both individual and industrial needs are leading towards the convergence of general and vocational education’ and that there was a need for ‘schools to become more concerned with issues of employability and the provision of broad vocational education.’\textsuperscript{128} One of the suggested solutions was ‘to raise the profile of careers education’.\textsuperscript{129} Education historians Geoffrey Sherrington and Craig Campbell have noted that ‘the pressing nature of anxieties around youth, youth unemployment, and a suitable secondary curriculum for young people saw continuing activity at the state level to clarify the purposes of secondary education and to produce effective reform.’\textsuperscript{130}

The Federal Government was similarly concerned about the need for improved connections between school and work. The need to build a ‘competitive Australia’ via


\textsuperscript{127} Sherrington & Campbell, \textit{The Comprehensive Public High School}, p. 106.


\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Ibid}, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{130} Sherrington & Campbell, \textit{The Comprehensive Public High School}, p. 106.
improved linkages between school, employment and training was one of the primary catchcries of Federal education policy throughout the 1980s and 1990s.\textsuperscript{131} The disappearance of unskilled jobs that could absorb unskilled youth labour meant that there was an imperative to develop a highly skilled workforce that could obtain employment and adjust in an economy in which occupations were changing and developing at a pace never before witnessed. Government documents testifying to this need appeared in droves. In 1986 Prime Minister Hawke urged for Australians to see their economy as an ‘interconnected system’ and to be particularly aware of ‘the interconnection between our education system and the capacity to produce efficiently.’\textsuperscript{132} In 1985 the Federal Government published \textit{The Commonwealth Government’s Strategy for Young People}. It is worth quoting at length as the ideas espoused were trudged out in different guises throughout the period:

Thus a fundamental goal of the Government’s strategy is to increase young people’s access to employment, education, and training, with priority being given in the first instance to the years immediately after the completion of compulsory schooling. This will provide more young people with the opportunity to acquire the greater range of skills needed to cope with the increasingly rapid changes in technology and society.\textsuperscript{133}

Thus, it would seem that the stage was set perfectly for Careers Advisers to step up and take on an immensely increased and important role in education. For over a decade there had been calls for improvements in career education and mechanisms linking students to post-school training and education. Finally there seemed to be a genuine move to adopt these recommendations. State and Federal governments were enthusiastically endorsing the idea.


The public was angry about an educational system that seemed ill equipped for the needs of a modern economy. Business leaders felt that students were underprepared for work. It seemed that Careers Advisers were the natural candidates to lead these changes and that they would be an integral part in fulfilling the goal of linking students from education into training, employment and further study. This was not to be the case.

Despite this seemingly perfect backdrop, Careers Advisers had very little success in establishing themselves as having an important place in education during this period. From 1975, the CAA prosecuted the case for an increased role of Careers Advisers and career education in NSW secondary schools with very little success. The CAA urged that the ‘schools program needs to be re-organized so that “work” permeates all topics’ because ‘work experience and transitional education are rarely integrated into programs.’ Many of the demands being made in the late 1970s by the CAA were still falling on deaf ears in the 1990s.

Two of the CAA’s primary aims had not been satisfied by the 1996 Federal election; career education was not significantly incorporated into the curriculum and it was not compulsory for schools to have a full-time Careers Adviser. While there had been some moves towards implementing career education in the curriculum, it fell well short of the hopes of the CAA. Instead of a stand-alone career education syllabus, career education was woven into the existing curriculum to be administered in small doses in the context of other subjects in years seven to ten. The CAA was not impressed with the situation: ‘The Association does not consider that an indicative allocation of hours included in another curriculum area is adequate to implement a program which meets the needs of students.’

Even after two decades of broad enthusiasm for the idea of Career Education, the CAA noted

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that in 1993: ‘A major cause for concern arises from the fact that career education appears to be overlooked in documents from the Department of School Education despite recognition of its importance in national reviews, reports and statements.’

In light of the difficulty of having educators recognise the value of their work, the CAA tried to impart their worth by having it acknowledged by parties external to education. In order to do this the CAA increasingly aligned itself with bodies outside the educational establishment such as the Federation of Parents and Citizens. Career Advisers also made alliances with the NSW Department of Employment and Industrial Relations by endorsing and assisting in the creation of a ‘Career Planning Pack’ that was ‘designed to encourage students to develop their own ideas about which occupations may best be suited to their individual needs and abilities.’ Similarly, it was the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations that endorsed and assisted in the publication of privately produced handbooks to assist school leavers in making decisions about life after school. This can be seen in guidebooks such as Jobs, Careers and Further Studies. This was published in 1989 and was prefaced with an endorsement of the work of Career Advisers by Richard Brady, then Head of the Human Resources Division in the NSW Department of Employment and Industrial Relations.

In a similar move, the CAA established alliances with the business world. This was achieved by aligning the discontent amongst businesses about under-prepared students with the potential of Careers Advisers to provide a solution. For example, a 1982 article in Prospects bolstered the claim to increase career education in schools by citing the submission of the National Industrial Council Confederation of Australian Industry to a 1981 Senate

Standing Committee on Education and the Arts. In this submission the National Industrial Council Confederation of Australian Industry put forward their view that there was a general under preparedness of students entering industry and work.\footnote{Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts, \textit{Preparation for the Workforce}, p. viii.} Similarly, the CAA solicited endorsements of their work from the NSW Chamber of Manufacturers in 1992.\footnote{Anon., 'Chamber Puts It’s Muscle Behind Career Education’, \textit{Prospects}, no. 1 (1992), p. 1.} A good reflection of the developing relationship between business and the CAA is the consistent corporate sponsorship of its annual conferences.\footnote{Robyn Graham, ‘Communicating Careers’, \textit{Prospects}, no. 4 (1991), p. 5.} Given that the 1980s and 1990s were decades in which the primacy of business interests in Government decisions was being established, this was an extremely astute tactic, although it would still prove to be unsuccessful.

The result of these frustrated ambitions was that an antagonistic relationship developed between the CAA and the educational establishment. There was a sense that education decision-makers were disingenuous about their commitment to career education. A result of this was that the CAA took on a somewhat anti-intellectual bent as it perceived a resistance in the educational establishment to confronting the practical and economic realities of the times. The 1981 Annual Conference set the tone for future engagements with the Department of Education and the Board of Studies regarding the current inability of school to arm students for life after school:

The [Higher School Certificate] cannot provide these experiences because of the tertiary education domination of the courses. Schools have not been relating to the community and employers and they all need to come together…There is a lingering 19\textsuperscript{th} century notion of what education is all about. The system has been over influenced by theorists and professors…Intelligence doesn’t come out of a book.\footnote{Joanne Rowe, ‘A Summary of Participants Views of the 1981 Careers Advisers of N.S.W. Conference’, p. 8.}

Another good illustration of the frustration that was developing can be seen in the transcript of a “question and answer” session between attendees at the 1991 CAA Annual Conference.
During this session, many of the questioners used the time to criticise the lack of involvement of Careers Advisers in the development of measures to teach career education.

The reason that Careers Advisers were failing to make any headway during this period is because moves initiated by the Federal Government filled the role of providing links between school and life after school. During the 1980s and 1990s, the Federal Government pressed its desires upon education to an unprecedented degree. The introduction of programs by the Federal Government that provided links between students, work and training meant that the line between school and life-after-school naturally became increasingly blurred. Some of these measures included the integration of TAFE courses into the Higher School Certificate (HSC), traineeships based in schools and the creation of Vocational Education in Schools in 1994. In addition to these programs that integrated directly into existing educational structures, there was also the creation and the increased promotion and funding of a range of programs such as apprenticeships, the Group Volunteer Community Service Scheme and the New Career Start Traineeship. The Federal Government spun a network of government programs that surrounded the school and integrated into the school.

Understanding the specific characteristics of these programs is of secondary importance to realising the conceptual ramifications of these moves. The ambition of developing a highly skilled workforce meant that the Federal Government was determined to provide structures that more seamlessly integrated schooling into institutions that could provide skills to school leavers. By integrating the worlds of work, training and education, the need for a Careers Adviser to assist students to make decisions about life after school was significantly reduced. There was no need for a middleman if the move out of school was a

less pronounced one. A reflection of the reduced importance of Careers Advisers in this context is in the findings of a report by the Liverpool Apprenticeship and Traineeship Committee that found that only one in five students saw Careers Advisers as their primary source of information about issues related to career decisions.\textsuperscript{145} The report found that students were instead acquiring information about their options directly from TAFE and the CES. Similarly, less than five per cent of parents thought of obtaining career information for their children from Careers Advisers.\textsuperscript{146}

One of the primary reasons that Careers Advisers were marginalised during this period is a result of the professionalisation of Careers Advisers during the 1970s. The process of professionalisation saw the interests of Careers Advisers shift towards the individual needs of the students. Careers Advisers were now autonomous professionals and the Federal Government could no longer place them within structures and be guaranteed that Careers Advisers would direct students down the paths that they wanted them to. Furthermore, the antagonistic relationship that developed between the CAA and the Department of Education meant that Career Advisers were increasingly estranged from the educational establishment. Thus, even as educational and economic policy became more closely connected Careers Advisers were on the periphery. The Careers Adviser was no longer a quiet ‘add-on’ to existing staffing arrangements but an increasingly vocal professional whose demands for increased prominence in education had relegated them to the fringes of education during the 1980s and 1990s. As a result, Careers Advisers could no longer be trusted to blindly serve the economic vision of the Federal Government, as they had in previous decades, nor would they be carried in broader movements linking economic and education policy.

\textsuperscript{146} \textit{Ibid}, p. 29, 39.
It is hard to know whether or not the moves towards professionalisation and independence during the 1970s were the sole cause for the marginalisation of the role of Careers Advisers during the 1980s and 1990s. If we are to consider the broader forces at work in education policy throughout the 1980s and 1990s it does seem likely that the role of Careers Adviser would have diminished anyway. From the end of the long post-war boom in 1974 through to 1996, the calls for increased integration of school, employment and training were loud and consistent. It seems likely that the comprehensive integration of school, vocational education and training was a process that was highly likely to occur anyway. Given this, it is likely that the decline in influence of Careers Adviser would have been inevitable. The necessity to manage the transition of youth after school diminished in response to the very fact that this transition was itself diminishing. In any case, it is one of the greatest ironies in the history of careers advice in NSW that during the period in which it would naturally seem that Careers Advisers would acquire an increased role that the reverse happened.
Conclusion

The major changes in careers advice in NSW secondary schools in the twentieth century came in response to the changing economic goals of the Australian Federal Government. The economic visions of Australian Federal Governments resulted in two massive structural rearrangements of the economy. Career advice practices have been changed as a result of the measures implemented to aid these economic shifts.

From 1927 – 75, it was the role Careers Advisers and careers advice to aid the changes taking place in the economy. The Vocational Guidance Bureau was created in 1927 to assist the nation to navigate the hazardous course of industrialisation that it was undertaking. However, the effectiveness of vocational guidance to intimately serve the needs of the economy was crucially undermined by the beliefs it was founded upon. The student of the 1920s and 1930s was thought of as an unchanging entity; a unit of innate qualities to be analysed, observed, tested and placed in an occupation in accordance with their abilities. A student was regarded as having fixed capabilities so vocational guidance could do little more than tell a leaving student what job they would be good at.

World War Two precipitated the Federal Government’s strong embrace of a centrally planned economy to aid the ongoing industrialisation of the economy. As the state increasingly managed the nation’s affairs, so too did it extensively seek to manage the transition of students from school to employment in order to fulfil its vision of a fully-employed Australia. Vocational guidance practices were extended and amended to draw together students leaving school and industrial needs. The newly fostered connections between school Careers Advisers, the Vocational Guidance Bureau, the Commonwealth Employment Service and the Director of Youth Welfare did their best to direct school leavers towards industries needing workers.
During the 1980s and 1990s, Careers Advisers and the idea of career advice in schools were both on the periphery of education and of increasingly little use to the Federal Government. The process of professionalisation in the 1970s had firmly estranged Careers Advisers from the educational establishment. It also had the effect of reducing their utility to the state as their new concern for the welfare of the individual student clashed with the government’s ambition to manage youth labour on a large scale. Consequently, when the Federal Government embraced the idea of an integrated economic and education policy from 1983 – 96, Careers Advisers were relegated to the outer. They were of little use to the Federal Government and of little interest to the education system.

Thus, the economic ambitions of the Federal Government have shaped career advice in two distinct ways. From 1927 – 75, career advice was bound closely to the interests of the Federal Government by virtue of its compliance and utility in achieving the government’s goals. From 1975 – 96, careers advice was of reduced importance by virtue of the Federal Government’s integration of school, employment and training.

Looking to the future, it does appear that the relevance of Careers Advisers and careers advice in NSW secondary schools is likely to diminish further. This can be attributed to two major shifts that have occurred since the 1980s. Firstly, globalisation and the rapid development of technology have meant that every year new types of jobs are being created and many are disappearing. The occupational landscape is changing at a faster rate than ever. There is a growing need for individuals to constantly educate and retrain themselves throughout their lifetime. The need for broadly adaptable skills and retraining throughout life means the prescription of specific career paths after school is an increasingly antiquated idea.

The second change that is likely to reduce the role of career advice in schools is the pervasive idea of ‘the market’. The idea of the market has come to dominate the economic, political and social discourse in many areas of Australian society – career advice is one of
them. School leavers are now increasingly regarded as both a resource for business and a customer and source of funding for tertiary institutions. The overall effect of this is that more stakeholders are seeking to appeal to school leavers directly – we have seen the growth of the career convention, the job fair and privately published books offering career advice to young adults. The adoption of the market mentality to youth labour has meant that Careers Advisers are competing to provide advice in a much more congested arena. In this context, the need for a middleman to manage students, a Careers Adviser, seems unlikely to prosper.
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