Centre for Inclusive Employment

Centre for Inclusive Employment & Disability Employment Australia
Lunch & Learn Session | Wednesday, 7 October

Setting people up for the next job

Speaker:
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SALLY: Good afternoon everyone. My name is Sally. I'm the IEA policy manager here at DEA. I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which each of us are connecting from today. For me, that's the land of the people… and I pay my respect to Elders past and present and I recognise this is land that was never ceded.

So today our Lunch & Learn is delivered in partnership with the Centre For Inclusive Employment and Disability Employment Australia. Centre For Inclusive Employment exists to develop practical resources, training and tools to help and providers to give high quality employment services and Disability Employment Australia is a national representative body for disability employment providers.

The centre is delivered by a national consortium. That is led by CSI Swinburne and brings together research, lived experience and sector expertise.

For anyone who would like to turn the captions on, Renae is going to post links and directions on how to do that in the chat. And there will be the opportunity

to ask questions about today's presentation. You can ask those questions through the chat or through the Q&A function and we'll be monitoring for those and there be time to come to them at the end.

Any of the resources that we share, including the slides, recording and transcript, will be made available after today's session.

Today we are joined by David Carney. David is the Executive-Director of the Career Industry Council of Australia. And the session he'll be presenting to us today on setting people up for their next job. So I will hand over to David. Thank you.

DAVID: Thank you very much. It's great to be with you for this series and thanks very much for the invitation. I'd like to acknowledge also the Traditional Owners I'm coming to you today from the lands of the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation. I'd like to pay my respects to Elders past and present and extend that to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people who are with us in the session today.

So I'm the Executive-Director of the Career Industry Council of Australia, so we're the national peak body for the career development profession. We have been in existence for 26 years. We're made up of 10 member associations. So we don't have individual members as a peak body. The council is made up of 10 professional associations spanning schools, tertiaries, so higher education, private practice as well as organisational settings.

As the peak body we are responsible for advocacy of the profession throughout Australia and advocate for the need for career development. We have four frameworks, quality frameworks which we manage. One which we are focusing on today which is the Australian blueprint for career development but

we have the professional standards for Australian career development practitioners, the guiding principles for career information guidance and services and later this month we're launching the new benchmarking resource which some of you might be interested in where you can actually benchmark how career development is undertaken in your organisation.

Together as the council and obviously the 10 member associations who operate independently as well, we have one shared person that is to ensure that the career element support is provided to all the Australians at every age and every stage of their life.

So when we talk about career development why does it matter and in particular like when we're talking about employment services today, for people with a disability or more broadly about employment services or more broadly about why career development actually matters, when we're talking about employment services it's definitely more than the next vacancy or the next job. We know that career development has the ability to impact individuals through three main areas, well become, identity, and capability for life. So we know that an individual's wellbeing about shaping their work income, social connection and their purpose, it supports and treats career as being a whole of life, a thing that protects obviously their wellbeing not just their employment status.

When we look at an individual's identity, it's about the ways in which they express who they are, and when we talk about career development very much starts from a person's own story and their strengths and aspirations which we'll look at today. Then capability of life. About building skills and building self-knowledge and decision making and giving the individual the confidence to be able to manage their career development throughout their life.

So when we look specifically today about employment services and one of the things that we talk to government about all the time is why career development should be an integral part of employment service delivery. What we talk about is that the cost of actually not having some level of career development in employment services does run the risk of what we call about these four main areas. So churn and repeat. We know that a placement for somebody who comes into employment services without any sort of career thinking behind it or career planning does likely lead to sort of a breakdown which brings the person back into the system, which is obviously not what we're wanting.

Also about some poorly informed choices. So without the opportunity within the service to be able to explore options, people tend to default sort of what is familiar or immediately available or what hasn't worked for them in the past or in the case of an individual with a disability, you know, limiting their thinking and their opportunities based on the disability they actually have.

The international evidence consistently links quality career guidance with reduced time on income re... so there has been a lot of evidence out there and you can look for that and it's freely available which talks about the ability for some sort of quality career guidance to be included, is important. Disengagement and lost confidence. We know that repeated short term placements where people are moving in and out of work, where the job doesn't fit for whatever reason, tends to then impact on their own self-belief and self-confidence if they've got to keep coming in and out of the actual system.

So today I've been asked to focus specifically on the Australian blueprint for career development which is a national framework for skills that people need to able to manage their life learning and work. This is freely available. And the URL is on your screen there now and so you can go - it's actually hosted on

the your career website which is a government website.

Where was this borne out of. The Australian blueprint for career development had been around for nearly 20 years. The first adaptation of this came out of a Canadian version of this which was customised for Australia in the year 2000. And it was reviewed in 2022 and the government at the time through the national careers institute, through the work that we were doing with them, first of all undertook it as to whether or not there was a need to review this particular framework and once that repeated research had been done the government committed to providing some funding for a new version to actually be created. That's the version that's now available on the your career website.

So it was actually written by the career industry council of Australia but funded by the government which is why it sits on both the CICA and the Australian Government website.

So what does it actually do? As I said it's a national framework for the skills that people need to be able to manage their life learning around work. It sets out eleven career management competencies which maps it out. It talks about the areas of personal management, learning around work exploration and career building. It describes what career development should look like for an individual from all the way from primary school right through to their latter years of working life.

It makes a natural fit for services that are supporting people at any stage. So if we look at the actual blueprint and this is the actual blueprint on your screen at the moment, is that you can see that the career phases obviously run across the top of the actual blueprint and then running down the left-hand side of it are those 12 career management competencies.

I do apologise it is probably a bit small on your screen. When you go toe that your career website you'll be able to download a version of this. But you can see it running across the top the different career phases. So awareness, exploring, starting out, groundwork and advancing. And the framework or the blueprint is specifically designed not to be age specific or age related. It talks about your different career phase. When you are thinking about clients that you are working with in your employment services, you could have a particular client, no matter what age they are, that could under personal management be very much working at a range of sort of awareness and exploring, competencies, but when they're, looking at learning at work exploration under learning area B you might find they may be advanced in some or starting out in others.

So it's just a way of you being able to, on one page, be able to work through with an individual to be able to sort of map where they are currently sitting in each of these different career management competencies and where obviously we now need to move to get them to.

And so this can be a very easy task that you can actually do in in your employment service organisations and with the clients that you are actually working with. You can actually build this into the work that you are actually doing with clients.

I think it would be fair to say that we would not be expecting, and I'm sure the government is not expecting that obviously in all of these employment service providers that everybody working with clients has a professional career development qualification, but what we would argue is that there needs to be some sort of upskilling of staff so they can have more meaningful career conversations with the individuals that they're actually working with.

So as I said, if you go to that URL that yourcareer.gov.au/ the blueprint you'll be able to download the full handbook as well as this particular poster, and also on that particular website when you go there there's a range of other resources that if you wanted to share it with colleagues there's a webinar, a video recording on our YouTube channel that you can watch which is an introduction to the blueprint with a range of other resource. They're freely available. You can download those and use those as you see fit.

So interesting enough we did a piece of work in 2012 where we were trialling some guidelines for career development for young people with a disability. It was a piece of work that we were funded to do with government. And interestingly enough we circled back on this probably three years ago and I suppose the concern for us is why we started talking to government again is what we were finding, what our research found in 2012, I'm not going to spend too much on this, this is on the website if you want to read about it, our concern is that not a lot of this had actually moved in the period of time where we'd gone out and done this research, albeit with young people, not some older people.

But we found that a placement was very much rewarded that careers that the idea of a career was not. There was this one size needed tailoring that networks and relationships were critical and the practice change really released. We did produce a self-assessment tool for young people and for people working with young people with a disability.

I suppose interest in this area with both disability employment services and broader employment services is how this thing that we call career development can actually make a difference to the individual and we think that the blueprint is a vehicle by which you can actually do that.

So very much for us it's about we talk about career development is the relationship very much is the intervention. So it needs to be very much a person-centred practice. Understand what the person's story, not what the vacancy lists are that trust builds over time. That's what allows for honest conversations and aspirations. And every quality framework that I was talking about earlier that we publish puts the relationship at the centre. Today we're all obviously dealing with the advent of AI and generative AI and there's some discussions about what role that's going to play in employment services moving forward.

But we would always argue that AI is an addition, a valuable addition to the work that we do, but we obviously need to make sure, especially when dealing with individuals, that there is a human centred approach and that the human is always at the centre of what we're doing, especially in relation to employment services.

So if we look at career development and disability, so if we have a look at that, as I said, you being able to use the blueprint, so we look at three main areas. A lifetime entitlement tailored not different, and the next job after this one.

So when we look at the first one about a lifelong entitlement, the blueprint is mapping career development across the lifespan. So if we reflect on that poster that I showed you, that is across the whole lifespan from one stage to the next. People with a disability are on exactly that same lifespan. They have the same right to a career, not just a job. So when we're talking about trying to empower people, and get them into work, it's not just about any job. It should be about getting to understand them as the individual, getting to understand where they sit in relation to sort of their career management skills and capabilities and what work can be stone in that area. The competency is universal. So how they're developed, obviously may need adjusting. As I

said, every individual is unique and they're all going to be operating at different levels and they're all going to be offering different stages.

So it may need some adjustment. This is not just pick up a blueprint, let's use this in our organisation, everybody will be at this level. So there is going to be adjustment needed in relation to how long it will take, individuals to move through to build up those career management competencies. What format that training or that skill development is going to need to take place. How we communicate those particular competencies and how we involve other supporters in the individuals journey.

Then obviously the third one about the next job after this one is, it's sustainable careers which is what we're all after for people that end up in employment services is that we obviously want to be able to work with an individual who comes into our service, we want to be able to support them and we want to make sure they gain successful, meaningful employment so they're not coming back into the system.

So sustainable careers are obviously built on one transition at a time. And that post placement support is a natural place for career conversations to live.

So talking about obviously the functional impact, not the label and ask about aspirations not only barriers to employment.

So what does success mean? When we talk about success obviously in from a career development perspective but also from an employment perspective, how people with a disability most often describe career success is a job that they enjoy with room to progress, earning enough to live independently and being seen as just another member of the team.

So again not being labelled as that person with a disability or that's the person that's given extra support. They just want to fit in. They want to be seen in as a normal part of society and being able to make that contribution. None of that actually changes at whatever stage of life that they're in. So whether they're a young person obviously looking to enter work for first time or whether they're 40, 50 or 60 or so forth that doesn't change.

In practice, what does that look like for you, as someone who is working in disability employment, we talk about the functional aspect of the work that we provide, not the label, not the disability label. So it's about asking about aspirations and not only the barriers.

And obviously the deficit model starts from what a person can't do and limits their options very much from the outset. We would say flip that, we don't want to start with what you can't do, let's get to understand to know the person, to understand what their looking for from employment and what is going to give them the greatest level of fulfillment moving forward.

It's not to say we should ignore obviously what some of those barriers are. We know that people with a disability are going to experience different levels of support. They're going to be required in employment. But very much it's just the way of changing that language a little bit and the language becomes very, very powerful, and it's very powerful about the way that they interpret and hear the messages that are being portrayed or in conversation with them.

Again, just being conscious of just flipping that language, flipping the conversations that you are having, very much empowering the individual and coming from a very much positive model rather than starting at the deficit about what they can't do.

So we talk about employment consultants, where can you start with this, what can you actually do? Again, we would say what are some four takeaways you can take away from today. To go back into your organisations and if you are not a manager here today, if you are, you want to go back into your team or you want to talk to your manager about it. First of all ask one of those aspiration questions.

Not what job do you want, but what does a good working life look like for you? And sometimes that's difficult for them to answer. So sometimes it's difficult if they've not had a high-level of experience in working life or they've had a negative experience as a result of the disability in work. Is that they do tend to - individuals do tend to focus on the negative aspect not the positive aspect.

There's that very fine shift between asking someone what do you want versus what does good working life actually look like for you.

And then if we look at the blueprint which we're focusing on today, again, the blueprint is a very big piece of work. So again it's about downloading the blueprint and just picking one competency perhaps to work with an individual on. So work with one competency and work out whichever - where they're sitting at at that level and look at how you can support them to move from where they're working at, what phase they're at now and move to the phase they would want to be moving to.

Reframing the disclosure. Functional impact and adjustments not just diagnosis. Most people don't know what they can actually ask for. And say the quiet part, treat every placement as a step in a career and tell job seeker what that is. I suppose what we would say, if you are a manager here or you're managing a team and you're going to use the blueprint which we would strongly advocate for you, one team, one competency, one review every three

months. It's not a case of picking up this document and say, we've got to implement this in one go straightaway. We would say, identify where you think the areas are that you can actually make a difference and slowly start to implement it over time.

So let's look at one work example of how this might actually work. So competency one talks about building and maintaining a positive self-concept. And so this is the sort of competency, especially when talking about employment services and people come in and out of a system is that this is a particular competency which is most damaged by an individual feels most damaged by repeated short term work or long-term unemployment at any age.

If they're continually moving in the and out of work and it's not work that's where the positive self-concept takes a hit.

So if we have a look at three things that we could do when talking to an individual about this we could say tell me about a time where work went well for you, paid or unpaid. Ask them your story. It's about getting people to tell you their story. Tell me about a time that work went well for you. Be it paid or unpaid.

Name the strengths that you heard specifically in their words. You're listening very carefully for them to - and for you to be able to identify as the consultant, what are the strengths that you heard them talk about in the words as though they're telling their story. When you take those words it's about putting those words into the plan and reading that plan back to them. So again it's moving very much from a transactional process that we tend to move through about here is the individual, they've come into the service, I need to get them a job, this is the job that will fit for them. I know this employer will be able to take them, let's go. That becomes very transactional. Very much it's a case of

spending the time asking them to tell them to tell you their story. It's about storytelling. It's about listening and then reflecting on what you've heard and then repeating back just to clarify that that's actually what they're actually saying to you.

And then if you want to bring obviously this into your organisation, again, I think for people that are in middle management or making the case for sort of senior managers in the organisations, very much the take away, I think, probably from today is what can you do straightaway when you finish this session today, if you have time or in the next couple of days leading into next week.

Go to that blueprint page that I told you about. And you can also visit our website and on the resources page of our website you can click on quality ecosystem and all the frameworks are there. Download them and start to have a read through them.

Very much it's about framing, if you are wanting to move in this space it's about framing very much retention and sustainability outcomes, leaders in this organisation are very much interested in sustainable outcomes and trial what we would call career conversations in post placement support with one team.

Over time you can obviously use the blueprint along with a range of other resources which again are all freely available from us. Our benchmarking resource is coming out at the end of the month. It's an all sector. You can use this benchmark against national practice you can use that benchmark resource over time. We also run a range of professional learning webinars that you can attend. So if there's anything in that that you think is most linked to supporting your practice.

Then there may be opportunities, I think, you know, and this is what we've spoken to government about, as part of our review for employment services review is that there are professionals that exist called career development professionals, that's what they do. As I said, there may be opportunities for you as an employment service provider to be able to connect with and engage with professional registered practitioners, who for some of those cases where you think the scope of the work that you are actually doing, you need a professional, a career professional to work with you, they're obviously opportunities for you to be able to connect with them to be able to do that.

So it sort of brings me to the end. I think we're very much we talk about a job is an outcome and a career is for life. But again today, very much is a focus on that blueprint. As I said, the blueprint is free, it's available on that your career website and there are a range of other resources there for you as well that you can obviously go and download free of charge. And start the work. I think this is a short snippet as I said, also on that resources page there is a link to seekers YouTube channel where there is a 30 minute introduction to the blueprint which will take you into more depth than I've gone into today because I don't have that much time. You can obviously watch that and see how that blueprint works in real life as well.

I think I'm three minutes early. I have time for questions if anyone is happy to ask any questions I'm happy to answer them.

SALLY: Thank you so much for that David. Awesome feedback about the blueprint from Tracey and some thoughts on potentially expanding that into the later stages and transition into retirement.

We'll be providing a link to the resources that David has mentioned. Perhaps we can also dig out the link to that YouTube video to share with the blueprint

as well for anyone who is interested in learning some more. Simon or Renee do you have any questions coming through to you?

RENAE: No, those couple of comments there in the chat there, Sally. So just around the transition to retirement which we'd be pointing to.

DAVID: We have a webinar coming at the end of the month which is focusing on that. It's supporting people that are transitioning to retirement because retirement - a lot of people don't think about retirement as a career development phase, but it's a career development phase. A lot of people retire without actually thinking about it, if you don't put time into doing that, retirement, that's where people tend to struggle in retirement. But in relation to Tracey's point about the blueprint, at that advancing stage there would be elements in career management competencies that are advancing, if you had those competencies from the blueprint at advancing they will equip you to be able to transition into retirement successfully.

SIMON: David another question here where can you register for seekers webinar. Obviously through the website.

DAVID: They're on the website if you click on the events tab, there's a link there which takes you to human ticks page which lists the webinars that are coming up. There's also a link on the website if you wanted to be added to our e-mail list where you would be then sent as the webinars start to rollout you would get sent an e-mail saying this is the next webinar which is coming up in two weeks and so forth. On our website is the place to find that.

SIMON: Can I ask you a quick questions around certified practitioners. Who are these mythical creatures. What do you need to be - be a certified practitioner, like a Cert IV, like a diploma qualified.

DAVID: It's a good question. You need a postgraduate qualification. So a graduate certificate in career development is the qualification you need to be a professional. The certificate for in career development is a para professional qualification. So it doesn't allow you to practice in Australia as a professional. So it allows you to do allied support, career information, type work. It doesn't allow you to undertake proper counselling per se.

So seeker has a register again on our website. So people that have professional career development qualifications and belong to a seeker member association because the member association connection is important for ensuring that their CPD is up-to-date and they also are bound by code of ethics. So those people are listed on the register page. So if you were looking for somebody or you're wanting to verify whether an individual was actually on the national register, you can do that on the seeker website. You would need to know their name and the state they were operating in. But you can put that in on the website and it will tell you whether they're registered or not registered or whether it's expired. They're definitely not mythical creatures. There's between, at any given time, depending what ABS is telling us, it's anywhere between 6,000, and 8,000 career practitioners operating in the country. Definitely not mythical.

They have in the past predominantly worked in schools but what we are now seeing is, I think, over the last 10 years, we're definitely seen professional career practitioners working in a range of employment service, in some employment service providers do have them. They work with elite athletes. They like working in TAFEs and universities and so forth. They're working right across the community, but I think potentially where there is some opportunities for service providers to be able to engage them as I said, is probably at some of those times when some cases can be handled by the staff

that are working in employment services but sometimes an individual may need to be able to be on referred to somebody who has actually got specialist skills in being able to support them with their career.

RENAE: Can I ask do you have a lot of uptake with NDIS participants and providers supporting NDIS participants about finding keeping job line item of career counselling. Is that something that's common?

DAVID: I'm laughing because we have for so long been talking to NDIS who will not recognise career practitioners as supporting that particular line. It is ridiculous. So there are a lot of career practitioners who are out there working in the NDIS system that have reached out to us going why can we not access - why can't our clients access NDIS funding for this particular work. It's been a laugh because it's an ongoing challenge. If you understand - you do, you understand the bureaucracy of the NDIS, trying to get anywhere in that field, especially at the moment, now there's particularly they're cutting a whole lot of services is becoming harder.

We lobby very heavily when NDIS was being set up because we believed for the role of a career practitioner and the work they can do in NDIS was valuable and there were already career practitioners working in the space. And didn't get a look in. And then have gone back, subsequently when there's been reviews on NDIS over the years. And even when there hasn't been reviews, talking to ministers and talking to the NDIS themselves, just got nowhere.

SALLY: Thank you for sharing that, David. Good for us to know Renae is our NDIS policy manager. It's definitely something that we can keep on the radar. Thank you to the couple of people who have sent links to the Career Industry Council of Australia and also the event page and they're in the chat if you

would like either of them. Renae popped up our survey. If you have a moment and you wouldn't mind providing your feedback, it will help us shape future sessions. Don't forget to log your professional development points. You can do that through DEA member log in, resources for today will be sent out in the next couple of days and also available through the Centre For Inclusive Employment website. And I would like to finish by thanking Renee and Simon for their work in the background and especially thanks to David for coming along and sharing the blueprint and all of that information and knowledge with us as well as the other resources and links that we will pass on to you as well. Thank you for your time David and to the rest of your team. Much appreciated.

We look forward to meeting with you all again in a fortnight's time. Thank you very much.

DAVID: Thanks, Sally.

(END)