

2018

# Client Services

INDUSTRY REFERENCE COMMITTEE  
INDUSTRY SKILLS FORECAST



**SKILLSIQ**

CAPABLE PEOPLE MAKE CLEVER BUSINESS

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## Skills Forecast

### Name of IRC:

Client Services

### Name of SSO:

SkillsIQ Limited

### About SkillsIQ:

SkillsIQ supports 18 Industry Reference Committees (IRCs) representing diverse 'people-facing' sectors. These sectors provide services to people in a variety of contexts such as customer, patient or client. The IRCs are collectively responsible for overseeing the development and review of training package products, including qualifications, serving the skills needs of sectors comprising almost 50% of the Australian workforce.

*Our qualifications deliver skilled people that are valued and make a difference to others.*

**- Cross Sector Skills Committee, February 2018**



# Executive Summary

The Client Services Industry Reference Committee (IRC) is responsible for ensuring that nationally recognised Client Services qualifications deliver the skills and knowledge required to equip its sectors with a highly skilled workforce, both now and into the future.

The Client Services IRC has responsibility for ten qualifications packaged within the CHC Community Services Training Package and aligned to the following job roles within various 'people-facing' sectors:

- **Career Development/Employment Services Consultants**, who provide a range of programs and services to individuals and groups of clients and employers to support them in planning their careers or locating, securing and maintaining suitable employment
- **Celebrants**, who plan and deliver ceremonies of various types, including meeting the legislative responsibilities required of marriage celebrants
- **Child Protection Officers**, who provide assistance to vulnerable children (and their families) who have been, or are at risk of being, abused, neglected or otherwise harmed, or whose parents are unable to provide adequate care or protection.
- **Community Services Case Managers**, who provide support services to individuals via health provision and social assistance programs, and welfare services to disadvantaged individuals
- **Counsellors and Financial Counsellors**, who work with clients on a range of issues drawing on various counselling therapies which, depending on modality, will determine their clients' level of life satisfaction, functionality or independence
- **Family and Relationship Services Practitioners**, who provide dispute resolution services and interventions for families experiencing high levels of relationship conflict and/or who may be involved in the Family Law system.

The Client Services sector is varied. However, most of the organisations within this sector are not-for-profit, with a few exceptions depending on the sub-sector (e.g. self-employed celebrants and counsellors, or individuals working within Child Protection Services that are commonly provided by government).

Employment growth in the Client Services sectors is expected to be strong. Of the sub-sectors, Counsellors (+25%) and Welfare, Recreation and Community Arts Workers, which include Welfare Case Workers (+23%), are expected to have the strongest growth over the next five years. However, there are some issues with recruitment, retention and workforce planning within the Family and Relationship Services and Child Protection sub-sectors due to uncertainty regarding funding and issues linked to highly stressful, emotionally taxing jobs that can result in secondary trauma.

Currently, the sector is experiencing a number of challenges impacting workforce skills needs, including:

- The above-mentioned issues relating to the attraction and retention of staff
- The provision of services in regional and remote areas of Australia
- The outcome of the 2017 Same-Sex Marriage (SSM) plebiscite that may open up a new potential customer stream for celebrants performing civil ceremonies
- Domestic and family violence and the implementation of the initial actions contained in the first National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020, endorsed by all Australian governments
- An increase in gambling activities among Australians, especially fast-growing online and interactive gambling
- The provision of, and access to, work placements involving confidentiality issues, and work placements being seen as a restrictive factor for new entrants
- The use of technology (e.g. video counselling).

This Industry Skills Forecast identifies a number of future skills needs that will impact the sector. Among the most critical of those that have been identified by this IRC are 'soft' or interpersonal skills that include communication, teamwork, problem solving, emotional judgement, professional ethics and global citizenship. While these skills are inherent in many of the units of competency and qualifications used by the Client Services sector, their continuing importance will require that training package products be regularly reviewed to keep pace with industry standards and expectations.

The National Schedule details the training package update and development work commissioned by the Australian Industry and Skills Committee (AISC). The National Schedule is informed by this Industry Skills Forecast, which outlines the proposed timing for the update of existing training package products. This Forecast has been compiled using a number of information sources, including academic literature, statistical data, IRC member input and expertise, and an industry analysis of both new and emerging workforce skills needs within the various Client Services sub-sectors.

No training package development work has been proposed in this Client Services Industry Skills Forecast for the 2018–19 year, as at this time no pressing skills gaps have been identified that require immediate change to training package products.





# Sector Overview

Workers within the Client Services sector perform a variety of roles and deliver a wide array of services mainly within the wider Community Services sector. Most of the organisations within the scope of this Industry Reference Committee (IRC) are not-for-profit, with a few exceptions depending on the sub-sector (e.g. most celebrants are predominantly sole traders, and there are some counsellors who are stand-alone professionals or who operate in multi-professional group practices). However, the majority, including Child Protection Officers, Community Workers and Case Managers, are employed in not-for-profit organisations.



## Career Development

The **Career Development** sub-sector provides community services to individuals to assist them in building their capacity to make well-informed and productive choices regarding education, training and employment. *Career development* is the overarching term used to define the lifelong process of managing learning, work and leisure transitions. Career development practitioners support the development of current and future workforces through planned interventions that include career education, vocational assessment and career counselling.

Career development practitioners enter the industry either as a Professional or an Associate. They are required to have completed a Career Industry Council of Australia-endorsed (CICA) career development qualification, adhere to a code of ethical standards and a code of practice, and maintain a minimum standard of ongoing learning through continuing professional development. This ensures that their knowledge and skills are updated and the advice being provided is timely, current and responsive to a client's developmental needs. The entry

level for Professional standing in the industry is the *Graduate Certificate in Career Development Practice* while the entry level for Associate is *Certificate IV in Career Development Practice*.

*Career Development Practitioner* is the agreed term as identified by CICA in the *Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners*. This job role refers to any direct service provider in the career development field.

Career development practitioners work in education, training, employment, vocational rehabilitation, elite athlete programs, hospitals, prisons, private and public organisations and government departments. They can provide services as career counsellors, employment counsellors, career educators, career information specialists, career management consultants, career coaches, rehabilitation counsellors, work experience and structured workplace learning coordinators, employment support workers, job placement officers, vocational rehabilitation workers and vocational counsellors.

The Career Industry Council of Australia is the national peak industry body for career practitioners in Australia. CICA members provide services in public and private organisations with 45% of them being in their role for over ten years. Four out of five career practitioners are female and 78% are aged 45 years or above. The sector has seen a 6% increase in the number of qualified professionals since 2015. 87% hold formal career qualifications.



## Celebrancy

Celebrants can provide a range of ceremonies, celebrations, and related services to mark major life events, from birth to death. The ceremonies and



celebrations that they provide can be categorised as related to love, life and loss:

- **Love** - betrothals or engagements, marriages, the celebration of marriages, civil unions, commitments, the renewal of vows, and wedding anniversaries
- **Life** - christenings, baby blessings, namings, coming of adolescence, coming of age, graduations, major birthdays, retirements, house warmings, coming of wisdom age, 'liferals' (to celebrate friendships before they are dissolved by death), boat blessings, living wakes, and community ceremonies for occasions such as citizenship affirmations, national or international days
- **Loss** - funerals, memorials, companion animals' funerals, divorces, and community ceremonies for occasions such as military losses or natural disasters.

To perform a valid marriage under Australian law<sup>1</sup>, the celebrant must be authorised as a Minister of a Recognised Religion (Subdivision A), a Marriage Officer with a state or territory Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages or other state or territory officer (Subdivision B), or an individual authorised by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department. The latter group is comprised of two sub-divisions: C (civil celebrants) and D (religious celebrants), who must complete the *Certificate IV in Celebrancy*, which includes three marriage celebrancy units of competency, to be authorised by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department.

The peak body is the Coalition of Celebrant Associations Inc. (CoCA), whose National Celebrant Survey of 2016<sup>2</sup> indicated that at that time 90% of independent celebrants offered general ceremonies in addition to marriage ceremonies, with 60% offering funerals, memorials and loss-based ceremonies. The workforce in 2016 was predominantly female (71%) with 46% of celebrants being over the age of 60 years, 41% being between 40 and 60 years of age and only 13% being under the age of 40.<sup>3</sup> Civil marriage celebrants performed over 75% of all marriages in Australia, even though they comprised only 25% of the overall sector workforce of 8,620 in July 2016.<sup>4</sup> The remaining 75% were Ministers of a Recognised Religion (Subdivision A) and independent authorised religious marriage celebrants (Subdivision D).



## Counselling

This qualification reflects the role of counsellors who work with clients on personal issues using evidence-based psychological therapies. They use communication, micro-counselling and interviewing skills and draw on varied counselling therapies to assist their clients. At this level the counsellor will be working in defined and supported counselling roles in established agencies, or under clinical supervision in private practice.

Diploma of Counselling graduates fulfil a vital role in the employment market. This has been quantitatively validated through the Australian Counselling Association's (ACA's) career centre, where, in 2016/17 over 2,200 counsellor-specific jobs were advertised with 40% of these being open to Diploma graduates. The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has recognized Diploma of Counselling graduates as being eligible to apply to offer therapeutic support. The Department of Health has also stated in discussions with the ACA that it recognises the importance of counsellors with vocational qualifications in early intervention within mental health services.

It is noted that during the period of the VET Fee Help loan scheme, the Diploma of Counselling saw a large increase in enrolments. Over the 2014-2016 period, a total of 34,987 students enrolled in this Diploma. This is of concern, as the sector is unregulated and individuals who have not completed their qualification and operate in private practice could have a negative impact on the broader sector. The ACA operates an industry accreditation scheme whereby Diploma of Counselling graduates who have a minimum of 12 months' post-qualification supervised practice can register with the ACA. This accreditation is recognised by several health funds. It is noted that the ACA as the peak body for counsellors



does not provide professional accreditation for graduates unless they have met all requirements of the qualification.

Enrolments in the Diploma of Counselling are predominantly comprised of women aged 25–60. The economy is shifting towards more part-time and self-employment. These shifts reflect changes to the traditional employment relationships, which will continue to become more fluid, with people holding portfolios of activities, including paid employment, unpaid employment (such as volunteering) and self-employment.

While some organisations state a requirement for higher level qualifications, such as the Bachelor of Counselling or Social Work, or more specialised qualifications such as the Diploma of Alcohol and Other Drugs and the Diploma of Youth Work, it is noted that Diploma of Counselling graduates are now moving into private practice to meet the growing demand for contractual services. Traditionally, Diploma of Counselling graduates have not been encouraged to enter this market. However, Diploma of Counselling graduates who operate in the private sector under close supervision by competent and qualified clinical supervisors are fulfilling the growing need for counsellors within the general population.



## Financial Counselling

Financial counsellors provide information, advocacy, support and advice to people experiencing financial difficulty. Financial difficulty can affect people from all walks of life and is often the result of external factors such as unemployment, illness, or relationship breakdown. Financial counselling services are free, independent and confidential, and financial counsellors work in not-for-profit community organisations.

Financial counsellors who have joined the profession since 2014 need to obtain the *Diploma of Financial Counselling*. This qualification includes units covering consumer and credit law, bankruptcy, debt collection practices, industry hardship practices and counselling skills. Financial counsellors who were already working in the sector prior to 2014 have either since obtained the Diploma of Financial Counselling or have undertaken recognition of prior learning (RPL).

Some of the work undertaken by financial counsellors involves activities which are regulated by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC). Examples of regulated activities include the provision of advice about credit contracts or bank accounts. Financial counselling agencies, however, are exempt from holding the relevant licences if they ensure their financial counselling staff are adequately trained and are eligible to join the financial counselling peak body in their state.

The demographic profile of the workforce is predominantly female (over 70%) and over 50 years of age (over 60%). Approximately 3% of financial counsellors are Indigenous. Attracting and retaining adequately trained financial counsellors is a challenge across the sector, but particularly in rural and remote areas. One broad reason for this is funding uncertainty, with government contracts only lasting for relatively short periods of time, with three years being a common duration. The peak body for financial counsellors, Financial Counselling Australia, estimates that there are around 800 financial counsellors nationwide. A number of people work on a part-time basis, with the estimated full-time equivalent (FTE) workforce numbering 500.

The sector is predominantly funded by state and federal governments, and some organisations self-fund positions. In 2014–17, the federal government provided nearly \$12 million to financial counselling and financial capability face-to-face services, \$2.5 million to the National Debt Helpline (the financial counselling service offered by phone), \$6.2 million to specialist gambling financial counselling and \$13 million to financial counselling involving income management. Total state government funding was \$25.8 million but varied dramatically between jurisdictions. Victoria provided the highest level

of funding at \$8.9 million (excluding financial counselling relating to gambling). In some states, funding for financial counselling is very uncertain, and whether or not it continues will depend on future election results.



## Employment Services

The employment services sector is broadly made up of three types of entity:

1. Employment services providers contracted by the federal government to provide labour market assistance to Australian job seekers and employers
2. The federal government departments responsible for the management of particular employment services contracts (see below)
3. The sector's peak body, the National Employment Services Association (NESA), which advocates on behalf of the sector, provides a conduit for information to flow from providers to government departments and *vice versa*, and provides capacity development, professionalisation and project management services across the sector.

Currently, there are three major employment services programs, or contract types:

- **jobactive**, which includes Work for the Dole, the mainstream program managed by the Commonwealth Department of Jobs and Small Business. This initiative services approximately 750,000 job seekers, with over 370,000 individuals being placed into work in 2017. There are 40 provider organisations who manage contracts through 1,702 provider sites across 51 regions.
- **Disability Employment Services (DES)**, managed by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services. New DES arrangements were introduced in March

2018 and implemented on 1 July 2018. There are currently 142 DES providers servicing 110 Employment Service Areas (ESAs) with 1,247 sites nationally.

- The **Community Development Programme (CDP)**, focused on rural and remote Australia and managed by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, with 39 providers servicing 61 regions.

In addition to these, several complementary programs offer services to more targeted groups. These include **Transition to Work**, **ParentsNext**, **Youth Jobs PaTH**, **Time to Work**, and the **New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS)**.

The *Certificate IV in Employment Services* is a qualification designed to provide the key skills necessary for an individual to become a frontline employment consultant. This role requires the consultant to identify and help overcome the barriers that a job seeker may encounter in finding work.

Job seekers experience disadvantage in the labour market for various reasons, including disability, mental health issues, age, ethnicity and language. Addressing barriers to work can include addressing homelessness, family violence, illiteracy, poverty, motivation and confidence and numerous other non-vocational support issues, as well as vocational skills development. The job of the frontline consultant requires excellent communication and time management skills as well as a solid awareness of the policy landscape to effectively target opportunities for each client on a case-by-case basis.

Job seekers are frequently uncomfortable accessing consultants and the majority are referred by Centrelink as a requirement for retaining their income support. Consultants are therefore sometimes perceived as being able to suspend job seekers' benefits in cases of non-compliance with the regulations. Interactions can therefore be challenging, and key skill requirements for consultants are the ability to be both calm and professional, mindful of the fact that recipients are prone to feelings of low self-worth, anxiety and exclusion from mainstream society.

Providers within the sector represent a mix of not-for-profit and for-profit organisations. Sizes of providers





also vary considerably, from single-site, local businesses to multinational companies. Providers offer the core services required by their contract(s) but many are diverse organisations covering allied social service sectors such as Career Guidance and Recruitment, and may also be RTOs with relevant qualifications (such as the *Certificate IV in Employment Services*) on their scope.

Employment services are free to the client. Providers are remunerated by the Commonwealth government with a mix of administration fees and outcomes-based fees. Providers are allocated a set number of job seekers they are permitted to take on. 'Outcomes' in this context are, essentially, the number and type of job seekers that the provider places into sustained employment or, in some cases, into targeted vocational training. Market share reallocations occur regularly based on performance and those providers that consistently underperform risk losing their contracts.

A significant shift in the DES program from 1 July 2018 means that DES clients will now be able to choose their provider in a much more open market (similar to the shift in service delivery under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)).

Workers in this sector are predominantly women, with one-third aged over 45 years. The majority work full-time (more than 70%) and are remunerated according to the Labour Market Assistance Industry Award or through enterprise agreements.



## Child Protection

According to the report on Government Services, *Child Protection Services (2018)*:

*'State and Territory governments have responsibility for funding and/or providing child protection*

*services in Australia. Each jurisdiction has its own legislation that determines the policies and practices of its child protection system, and while this legislation varies in detail, its intent is similar across jurisdictions.'*

Child protection exists to help provide support and assistance to children who cannot live with their parents. This can occur for many reasons: for example, if both parents are dead, or have serious drug problems or mental illness; or if the children are sexually or physically abused; or if the parents subject the children to emotional abuse or are simply incapable of caring for them. In all jurisdictions child protection is provided by each government due to its statutory nature. In some jurisdictions, most child protection workers are social workers. In some states child protection workers with VET qualifications work in related roles in what might be termed child protection support worker roles.

In 2009, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed on a *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020: Protecting Children is Everyone's Business*. The actions and strategies that governments and others have agreed to take under this National Framework are all aimed at achieving the following high-level outcome: namely, that

- Australia's children and young people are safe and well.

As a measure of this outcome, both government and the non-governmental sector have set the following target:

- A substantial and sustained reduction in child abuse and neglect in Australia over time.

To demonstrate progress towards achieving this target the following measures have been identified:

- Trends in key national indicators of children's health, development and wellbeing
- Trends in hospital admissions and emergency department visits for neglect and injuries to children under three years
- Trends in substantiated child protection cases
- Trends in the number of children in out-of-home care.

The Northern Territory Royal Commission's *Report of the Royal Commission and Board of Inquiry into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory* was tabled in Parliament on 17 November 2017. This report has become an important piece of work, not only for the Northern Territory but nationally, as it is thought that the findings of the Royal Commission will also be used by other jurisdictions when considering how their juvenile justice systems can be improved. This will include the training of workers in the sector and the framing of the way in which the career pathways of staff can be improved in the interests of youth justice and child protection.



## Family Dispute Resolution

Under the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth), separating families who have a dispute relating to children, property or money must make a genuine effort to try to resolve it through Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) before filing an application in court. A certificate from an accredited FDR practitioner must accompany an application to the Family Court or the Federal Circuit Court of Australia. Under the law, Family Dispute Resolution is defined as a process (other than a judicial process) in which an FDR practitioner, as an independent party, helps people affected, or likely to be affected, by separation or divorce to resolve some or all of their disputes with each other.<sup>5</sup>

FDR does not focus on the emotional side of relationships. It concentrates on resolving specific disputes. The FDR practitioner can help to explore family issues objectively. FDR services are provided by a range of individuals and organisations; for example, Family Relationship Centres, community organisations, Legal Aid commissions, and individuals such as lawyers, social workers or psychologists. For people in remote areas, FDR services

can be accessed via telephone to provide dispute resolution services for families in conflict, sometimes as part of the Family Law system.

To be a certified FDR practitioner a person must meet the accreditation standards in the *Family Law (Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners) Regulations 2008*, which include having been assessed as competent in units that involve screening and assessing families for family violence and child abuse. The Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department manages the accreditation of FDR practitioners in Australia. Practitioners can meet this accreditation requirement by:

- Completing a full Vocational Graduate Diploma or the *Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution* (or the higher education provider equivalent);
- Having an appropriate qualification and competency in the six compulsory units from the *Vocational Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution* or the *Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution* (or the higher education provider equivalent); or
- Having accreditation under the National Mediation Accreditation Scheme and competency in the six compulsory units from the *Vocational Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution* or the *Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution* (or the higher education provider equivalent).<sup>6</sup>

According to figures obtained from the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department there are 2,293 accredited Family Dispute Resolution practitioners on the current register. The gender split within the sector is very close to 75% female and 25% male. The average age of a practitioner at the time of accreditation is 47, with an individual aged 21 being the youngest to date to become accredited and the oldest aged 76.



## Nationally Recognised Client Services Qualifications - Current as at June 2018

- CHC41015 Certificate IV in Celebrancy
- CHC41115 Certificate IV in Employment Services
- CHC41215 Certificate IV in Career Development
- CHC51015 Diploma of Counselling
- CHC51115 Diploma of Financial Counselling
- CHC81015 Graduate Diploma of Relationship Counselling
- CHC81115 Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution
- CHC81215 Graduate Certificate in Statutory Child Protection

- CHC81315 Graduate Certificate in Career Development Practice
- CHC82015 Graduate Certificate in Client Assessment and Case Management.

## Registered Training Organisation Scope of Registration

Table 1 indicates the number of Registered Training Providers (RTOs) with Client Services qualifications on scope. This data is current as at June 2018, per the listing on the National Register of VET ([www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au)).

**Table 1:** Number of RTOs by nationally recognised qualifications on scope – Client Services Training Package Products

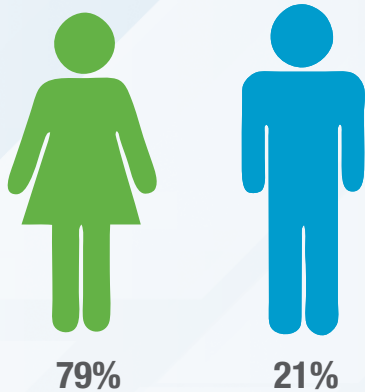
Qualification Code	Qualification Title	No. of RTOs with Qualification on Scope
CHC41015	Certificate IV in Celebrancy	11
CHC41115	Certificate IV in Employment Services	25
CHC41215	Certificate IV in Career Development	10
CHC51015	Diploma of Counselling	74
CHC51115	Diploma of Financial Counselling	9
CHC81015	Graduate Diploma of Relationship Counselling	9
CHC81115	Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution	6
CHC81215	Graduate Certificate in Statutory Child Protection	2
CHC81315	Graduate Certificate in Career Development Practice	4
CHC82015	Graduate Certificate in Client Assessment and Case Management	10

Source: Training.gov.au. RTOs approved to deliver this qualification. Accessed 21 June 2018

## 2016 ENROLMENT SNAPSHOT

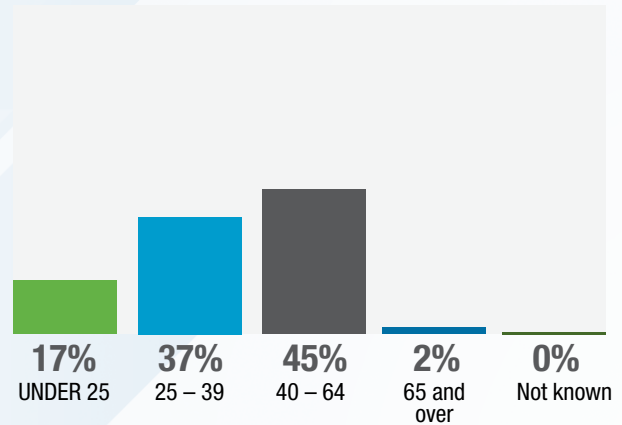
## CLIENT SERVICES TRAINING PACKAGE PRODUCTS

### GENDER

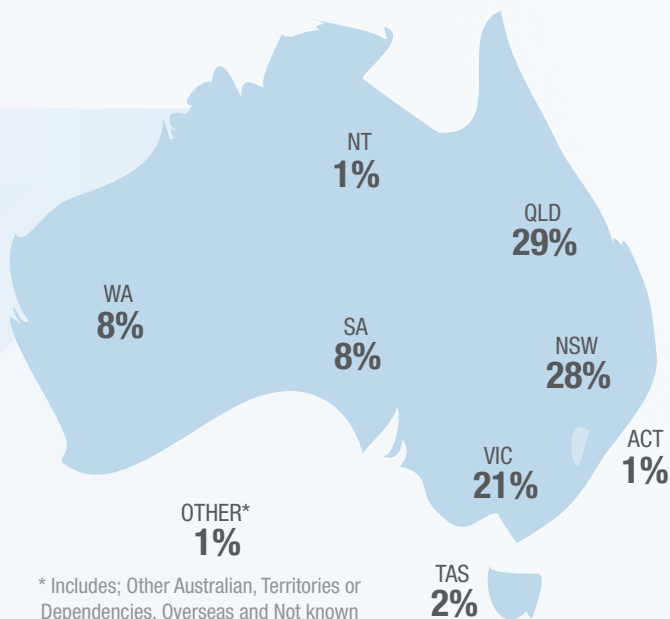


### AGE

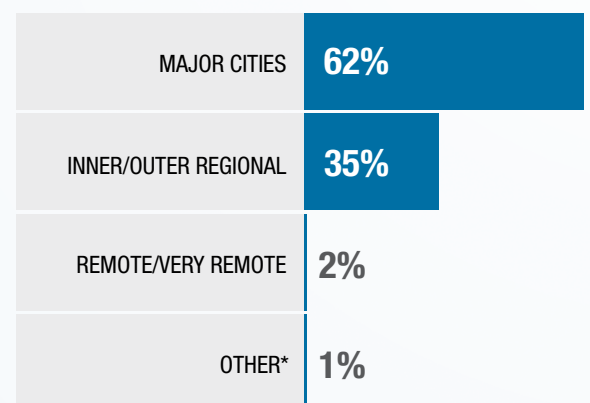
Percentage Years of age



### STATE/TERRITORY OF RESIDENCE



### STUDENT REMOTENESS REGION (2011 Accessibility and Remoteness Index of Australia ARIA+)



\* Includes; Outside Australia and Not known

Source: NCVER VOCSTATS (Program enrolments 2016 by various breakdowns)  
Base count n = 19,052



### General notes on statistics

1. Enrolment and completion data is sourced from NCVER VOCSTATS (program enrolments and completions 2014–2016), accessed November 2017.
2. It is important to note that not all training providers are currently required to submit enrolment and completion data, and some figures presented may therefore under-represent the true count of enrolments and completions for a qualification. From 2018, all training providers will be required to submit data, and the current discrepancies noted between the national NCVER figures versus actual attendance should therefore be minimal in future releases. The data presented in this report is shown for indicative purposes.
3. Figures reflect public and private RTO data.



## Stakeholders

### National Peak Bodies and Key Industry Players

The list below represents a range of organisations that perform a variety of key roles in this sector. These organisations and their networks are well placed to offer industry insights at the time of training package review. Engagement and consultation activities will include a broad range of industry stakeholders beyond those included in this list.

- **Government departments and agencies**
  - Department of Jobs and Small Business (Commonwealth)
  - Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet - Indigenous division (Commonwealth)
  - Department of Human Services (Commonwealth)
  - Department of Social Services (Commonwealth)
  - Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (Queensland)
  - Department of Family and Community Services (New South Wales)
  - Department of Human Services (Victoria)
  - Department for Education and Child Development (South Australia)
  - Department of Children and Families (Northern Territory)
  - Department for Child Protection and Family Support (Western Australia)
  - Department of Health and Human Services (Tasmania)
  - Department of Community Services (Australian Capital Territory)
  - WA Community Services Health and Education Training Council
- **Peak and industry associations**
  - Australian Community Workers Association
  - Australian Counselling Association
  - Career Industry Council of Australia
  - Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET)
  - Case Management Society of Australia
  - Coalition of Celebrant Associations (CoCA)
  - Family & Relationship Services Australia
  - Financial Counselling Australia
  - National Employment Services Association

- **Employee associations**
  - Australian Services Union
- **Regulators**
  - Australian Government Attorney-General's Department
  - Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC)
- **Registered training organisations both public and private**
- **Large and small private employers across metropolitan, regional, rural and remote areas.**

## Sub-sector Issues

As the Client Services sector is varied, each sub-sector will be looked at individually in terms of its social, political and economic impact.

### Community Services

Community service providers offer support services to health provision and social assistance programs, such as homes for the mentally ill or victims of substance abuse. The community services subdivision's not-for-profit and private enterprises are projected to have raised \$50.6 billion in revenue in 2016–17 (once figures are confirmed and published), derived from government funding, donations and private income. The subdivision is expected to grow at an annualised 7.8% over the five years from 2016–17, including anticipated growth of 7.6% in the current year.<sup>7</sup>

### Personal Welfare Services

The personal welfare services sector provides community and welfare services to disadvantaged individuals, including children and the aged. Many users of the sector's services are enduring economic hardship, and others have long-term disabilities. Welfare services include those designed to assist the frail and disabled within community settings, thereby circumventing the need for institutional care. Other services involve early intervention, prevention and counselling. The sector is dominated by small, non-profit social service organisations that rely on government funding and volunteers to operate. Welfare providers in Australia have benefited from high levels of government funding over the past decade, as spending



on welfare has grown significantly. Federal, state and local governments throughout Australia support a large range of counselling services in the belief that they provide an effective means of improving the lives of individuals, couples and families.<sup>8</sup> Sector revenue is expected to grow by an annualised 7.8% over the five years from 2016–17, to total \$15.5 billion. This includes expected growth of 8.6% in the current year. Sector growth has been aided by the partial introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).<sup>9</sup>

### Career Development

Career development practitioners are in an important position to be able to guide school/university leavers on the best career path for them. There are set to be almost 800,000 secondary school graduates in the next three years making the role of a career development practitioner particularly important, as more than half of students identify teachers/advisors as the ‘top-two’ people they are most comfortable in approaching about career advice.<sup>10</sup> It is not only students who require career advice. So do workers who have been made redundant during organisational restructure or staff layoffs. Outplacement organisations now help these workers with career advice on how to transition to new roles and provide help on career guidance, advice on writing resumés, interview skills training and other related services. Within the outplacement industry revenue is expected to increase at an annual rate of 4.2% over the five years from 2017–18 to \$190.7 million.<sup>11</sup>

### Family Dispute Resolution

The Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) services industry in Australia (which includes such activities as mediation services, conciliation services and arbitration services) provides individuals and corporations with avenues to resolve disputes without litigation. ADR services primarily consist of mediation, conciliation and arbitration services, and can be provided by any individual accredited with a relevant industry body. Over the past five years, ADR has been increasingly used to settle commercial, family and workplace disputes, which has driven industry growth. ADR provides several benefits relative to litigation. ADR is generally cheaper, faster, more flexible and confidential, and less adversarial than going to court. The trends that have supported industry growth over the past five

years are forecast to continue over the next five years. As a result, industry revenue is projected to grow at an annualised 2% over the five years through 2022–23, to reach \$1.6 billion. However, there is increasing pressure on government-funded services under threat of funding contractions. This has the potential to reduce their capacity to provide ADR services for individuals who are unable to afford legal advice.<sup>12</sup>

### Celebrancy

The most recent Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) report<sup>13</sup> indicates the following statistics:

- There were 118,401 marriages registered and 46,604 divorces granted in Australia in 2016.
- Couples who lived together prior to marriage accounted for 80.8% of all marriages registered in 2016, a decrease from the 81% recorded in 2015.
- The median age of couples marrying for the first time has continued to slowly rise over the past two decades, with grooms now likely to be closer to 30 years and the bride in her late twenties.
- Australian men and women are getting married later but also staying married longer, with the number of divorces granted declining over the last 20 years. The marriage sector<sup>14</sup> over the previous five years saw a decline in marriage numbers. This continues a six-decade trend since the 1960s of a decreasing crude rate of marriages (i.e. the rate per head of population). The highest actual number of marriages took place between 2009 and 2014 (i.e. over 120,000 per annum).

Whilst it is estimated that the wedding industry generates over \$2 billion<sup>15</sup> annually, authorised marriage celebrants receive a tiny proportion of that income. Despite performing over 76% of all marriages, 67% of independent civil celebrants report earning less than \$10,000 per annum gross from their marriages and other ceremony work, with 78% earning less than \$20,000 per year for conducting marriages and other ceremony work, and only 1.4% earning close to the average Australian full-time wage equivalent with an annual gross income of \$75,000 or over.<sup>16</sup>

The *2016 CoCA National Celebrant Survey* conducted in 2016<sup>17</sup> found that 54.5% of independent celebrants perform fewer than 9 marriages, with 7% performing no

marriages at all. A further 21% of celebrants performed 10 to 19 marriages. This means that over 75% of independent celebrants are unable to gain on-the-job experience. The peak body, CoCA, considers the minimum standard for professional development to be an average of 24 marriages per celebrant per annum<sup>18</sup> for Subdivision C marriage celebrants.

Ensuring that graduates of the VET system have all the skills and knowledge required to become a celebrant by graduation is difficult in the current context. As noted above, the role of the VET system is to ensure celebrant graduates have developed *'the skills and qualifications needed to allow them to participate effectively in the labour market'*, and yet almost all independent celebrants (98%) are not able to make the equivalent of the average Australian full-time wage.<sup>19</sup> Celebrancy training has specific limitations because graduates must be competent to deliver high quality once-in-a-life events every time and, due to the competitive context in which independent celebrants work, trainees do not have access to hundreds of hours of placement or mentoring/supervision, as is possible in other qualifications.

As Australia continues to become a more secular society, celebrants will become more sought-after to perform these services than traditional religious ministers. IBISWorld anticipates that civil marriage celebrants will gain market share due to this ongoing preference. This trend is expected to continue over the next five years.<sup>20</sup>

### Child Protection

In Australia, state and territory governments are responsible for statutory child protection. Each responsible department assists vulnerable children who have been, or are at risk of being, abused, neglected or otherwise harmed, or whose parents are unable to provide adequate care or protection.

Total recurrent expenditure on family support services, intensive family support services, protective intervention services and out-of-home care services was \$5.2 billion nationally in 2016–17.<sup>21</sup>

In 2016–17, 233,795 children were the subject of an investigation, 112,164 were the subject of a finalised investigation, 49,315 were the subject of substantiation, 54,66 were on a Care and Protection Order and 47,915 were in out-of-home care.<sup>22</sup>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are over-represented in child protection systems.<sup>23</sup> *The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020* report states that 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities experience intergenerational cycles of adversity and trauma, leading to social problems including poverty, high levels of violence, psychological distress, destructive behaviours, and individual, family and community dysfunction. These problems are also associated with heightened rates of abuse and neglect'. Addressing the disadvantage is essential to addressing the factors that put Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children at risk of abuse and neglect. In order to provide culturally appropriate responses, strategies developed under the National Framework need to be based on partnerships between Indigenous families and communities, and between Indigenous agencies, mainstream service providers and governments.<sup>24</sup> It is therefore critical that the workforce be equipped with cultural competency skills to best engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in addressing child protection issues.

In 2015 the Victorian government established a Royal Commission into Family Violence whose findings resulted in a number of recommendations being made specific to the child protection system.<sup>25</sup> Some of these recommendations include a boost in funding to services that support victims and families, which will have direct consequences for the workers in the child protection area in terms of access to resources. At the time of writing, the recommendations outlined by the Victorian Royal Commission are being initiated and are still coming into effect, and it will take some time before these recommendations are fully realised.<sup>26</sup>

More recently, the NT Government conducted a Royal Commission and Board of Inquiry into the Protection and Detention of Children in the Northern Territory. The Final Report was tabled in Parliament on 17 November 2017 and contains a number of recommendations specific to the out-of-home care sector with the potential to impact both the overall sector and the workforce.<sup>27</sup>

### Counselling

In the counselling sector an increase in self-employment will see more graduates establishing counselling practices under an ABN, which, as previously stated, is of concern





to industry. Given the fact that this is occurring more and more, industry supports including a further unit to equip graduates with the skills and knowledge to competently commence practice within the Diploma of Counselling, until such time as the industry has been accredited. Feedback from a variety of community organisations raises the question as to why this qualification does not have a practical component of work placement, similar to that required by students of the *Diploma of Alcohol and Other Drugs* or the *Diploma of Youth Work*, as a commitment to social responsibility.

### Financial Counselling

Many people in Australia are living precariously close to financial hardship. We have some of the highest levels of household debt in the world. The loss of a job, a relationship breakdown, a habit that becomes an addiction or a problem with mental health can tip people into financial crisis.

The demand for the free and impartial advice that financial counsellors give already significantly outweighs its supply. Increasingly, financial counsellors receive referrals from banks, superannuation companies, telecommunications companies, energy companies, Centrelink and Child Support (both via the federal Department of Human Services), and a variety of community sector organisations.

In 2016–17, it is estimated that financial counsellors provided face-to-face support to approximately 120,000 clients around Australia. The National Debt Helpline received approximately 160,000 calls, an increase of 11% on the previous year.

### Employment Services

Australian employment services in their current form were established in 1988 and are unique. No other country has developed a completely outsourced public employment service like Australia's, and its two decades of refinement have led to an approach that attracts considerable interest and praise from organisations such as the OECD, as well as from national governments the world over. The sector's peak body, the National Employment Services Association (NESA), has analogues in South Korea and has served as a model for the United Kingdom, Finland and Sweden following direct contact with public employment services'

stakeholders from these nations. These contacts and negotiations are increasing in frequency as the Australian model shows that it can withstand the test of time and remain responsive to constantly changing labour market conditions.

Although exact numbers are difficult to establish, estimates of the total employee population within employment services number approximately 30,000 people. The major employment programs (jobactive, Disability Employment Australia (DES) and the Community Development Programme (CDP)) represent complementary geographical distributions which between them cover the entire nation.

Employment services contribute directly to the mental and physical wellbeing of Australian society as a whole by assuring individual opportunity through employment and inclusion. The importance of this sector's contribution cannot be understated, and yet its 'visibility' within Australian society is low. Few people who have not had direct interaction with employment services know anything about the sector, and when queried about their understanding of what 'employment services' are, many people still evoke vague notions of the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) (which was disbanded in 1998) or think that employment services are a function of Centrelink, which is the Commonwealth welfare payment service but which has no central role in the provision of employment services. Few people appear to be aware of the unique and internationally recognised model that Australian employment services represent.

Many issues facing the sector are undoubtedly related to this negative public perception. There are still powerful stigmas associated with being out of work and claiming income support. These stigmas act to keep the public profile of the sector low, reinforced by the tendency of the popular media to focus on scandal and on negatives. Rendering the employment services career path an attractive one would be greatly assisted by improving public perception of the sector, which would in turn assist the goal of sector professionalisation.





# Challenges and Opportunities

## Marriage, Divorce and Death

The impact on the celebrancy industry of the 2017 Same-Sex Marriage (SSM) plebiscite and its recent ratification in Parliament is assumed to be significant in that it may open up a new potential customer stream for celebrants performing civil ceremonies. Some assume a significant positive impact by referencing our neighbour New Zealand's experience, which led to a wave of international same-sex wedding tourism when same-sex marriage became legal there in 2013. The peak body, CoCA, considers that there are a number of factors that mean Australian celebrants are unlikely to benefit to the same extent as their New Zealander colleagues. Australia already has excellent laws giving *de facto* couples almost all the same rights and privileges as married couples - kinship relationships being the major exception - that are now covered by SSM. Marriage rates are expected to grow,<sup>28</sup> although it is unclear what role the SSM sector will play in providing opportunities for celebrants over the coming years.

As the population continues to increase there is an opportunity for celebrants to perform ceremonies including marriages and funerals. The Intergenerational Report (IGR) shows that both the number and proportion of Australians aged 65–84 and 85 years and over are projected to grow substantially. In 2015, approximately three million people, or 13% of the population, were aged 65–84, and 500,000 people, or 2% of the population, were aged 85 years and over. By 2054–55, the 65–84 cohort is projected to be around seven million people, or just under 18% of the population, and the 85 years and over group is projected to be around two million people, or 5% of the population.<sup>29</sup> As the population ages and increases, the desire for civil celebrants to perform funeral ceremonies will become more sought-after. However, new VET graduates are coming into the industry without the goal of making funeral, memorial or general ceremony work their major focus, and the majority still seem to see marriage celebrancy as their core work. Many graduate without having undertaken the loss- and grief-related ceremony units.

While divorce still occurs, the rate at which it takes place in Australia has been declining. Ten years ago, the divorce

rate was 2.7 per 1,000 people, and one year ago it was 2.2. It is now 2.1 per 1,000 people.<sup>30</sup> There is still a need for family dispute counsellors and financial counsellors, as with divorce often comes the need for emotional and psychological assessment and support services for the couple and for any children involved.

## Family Violence

Domestic and family violence (DFV) is a major issue in Australia. On average, one woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner, according to the most recent analysis of homicide statistics in Australia.<sup>31</sup> One in four children are exposed to DFV and this violence is the principal cause of homelessness among women and children. Indigenous women and girls are 35 times more likely than the wider female population to be hospitalised due to DFV.<sup>32</sup> DFV may impact negatively on women and children and the parenting capacity of both perpetrator and victim. Australian governments have acknowledged the prevalence and harm of violence against women and their children in the community. National policy aims to prevent, reduce, and respond to domestic and family violence through a comprehensive and strategic public health approach.<sup>33</sup> Policy frameworks such as the National Framework for the Safety of Women and their Children seek to understand the evidence on violence against women and identify its drivers and what contributes to violence, in order to inform and support the development of policy and legislation, prevention strategies and programming and advocacy that target and seek to reduce the drivers of violence against women.<sup>34</sup> This presents an opportunity for workers in this Client Services sub-sector to provide counselling services to women, children and men with regards to DFV as federal, state and territory governments have made this a priority.

Family violence comes in many guises including physical, sexual, emotional, psychological, and financial abuse. A lack of financial independence represents one of the most significant obstacles for women seeking to leave abusive relationships.<sup>35</sup> Financial abuse in particular restricts victims' capacity to leave abusive relationships and establish their independence. It is therefore imperative that victims in this position have access to the support





of financial counsellors to help them gain the skills and confidence to gain financial independence. It also important that financial counsellors are equipped with the skills and knowledge to recognise and manage clients who need assistance with DFV.

### Child Protection

Child protection has also become an issue of national concern. All Australian governments have endorsed the first *National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009–2020* and are committed to implementing the initial actions it contains. The National Framework represents an unprecedented level of collaboration between federal, state and territory governments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to protect children. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW, 2017a), 162,175 (one in 33) children in Australia had an investigation, a Care and Protection Order and/or were placed in out-of-home care in 2015–16.<sup>36</sup> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were seven times more likely than non-Indigenous children to receive protection services.<sup>37</sup> Given that this issue is of national importance

it is essential that workers within the sector be continually equipped with the skills (e.g. cultural competency skills) and resources to provide services to families that require them.

### Gambling

In 2015 Australians spent an estimated \$8.6 billion nationally on gambling.<sup>38</sup> The gambling activities that Australians prefer are changing. Compared to two decades ago, far fewer now participate in activities that emphasise chance, including lotteries, scratch tickets, Keno and Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs). Much greater numbers now participate in activities that emphasise skill and experience in predicting the outcome, including some casino table games, horse and dog racing and especially sports.<sup>39</sup>

One of the fastest growing forms of gambling is online and interactive gambling. Technology, such as betting apps, has made it easier for people to have access to gambling. While gambling can be seen as a form of recreation, it can have serious consequences for individuals, their families and society. The Royal Australian

and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists (RANZCP) has stated that problem gambling has been recognised as a mental disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) similar in brain origin, co-morbidity and treatment to substance abuse. Online gambling also increases the risk of consumers developing gambling problems due to the ease of constant accessibility, privacy, anonymity, and extended periods of engagement without interruption.<sup>40</sup>

Traditionally, problem gamblers have been over-represented by males whose main source of income has been from welfare payments and who have been statistically more likely to be Indigenous.<sup>41</sup> The impact of gambling involves financial costs such as debts imposed on others, including family and friends, financial institutions and those obtained from informal sources such as loan sharks. It also has personal and family costs, including the cost of emotional distress to immediate family and parents; costs associated with depression, suicidal ideation and suicide attempts; the financial costs of divorce and separation; the costs of emotional distress associated with relationship breakdown, divorce and separation; and the cost of gambling-related violence.<sup>42</sup>

Many Australians now and in the future will require access to financial counselling in order to overcome the financial burden caused by problem gambling. The sector will need to equip its workers with the skills to help struggling clients navigate the process of regaining financial stability or overcoming gambling addiction and also assist the families of clients who may now be in a dire financial situation and require support and advice. As gambling can lead to relationship breakdown and emotional distress within a family, family relationship workers will need to have the right skills and training to ensure families receive the right support to ensure the best outcomes.

### Attraction and Retention

Attracting and retaining staff within the sectors under the remit of this IRC are issues that need to be addressed. The 2014 Australian Community Sector Survey indicated that 80% of sector services reported being unable to fully meet demand, with services that prioritise people on low incomes or with specific needs being least able to meet demand.<sup>43</sup>

Frontline child protection work is highly stressful, emotionally taxing and, at times, can result in secondary trauma. Additionally, statutory child protection organisations consistently experience high turnover and staff shortages, creating adverse workplace cultures and extra stress for their workforce.<sup>44</sup> The 2016 survey *Your Workforce Your Future* carried out by the Queensland Family and Child Commission and the Health and Community Services Workforce Council, reported that 75% of respondents identified that attracting, recruiting and retaining adequately qualified, skilled and experienced staff was a significant workforce challenge. The respondents also identified that reasons for difficulties in retention of the workforce included a lack of career pathways, the complexity of client demand, lack of security of employment, and burnout of staff.<sup>45</sup> In New South Wales the Public Service Association believes that the Department of Family and Community Services is under-resourced and that more caseworkers are needed, as the number of children who require out-of-home care has increased. This coincides with the loss of 56 full-time positions from statutory child protection in 2016–17.<sup>46</sup> In Victoria the department has the challenge of recruiting an extra 452.6 positions due to the government's investment in growing and developing the child protection workforce in 2017–18.<sup>47</sup>

The family and relationship services sector is another area that faces pressure in the attraction and retention of workers. This has been recognised by Family and Relationship Services Australia who, along with the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), the Attorney-General's Department and the Community Services Health & Industry Skills Council (CSHISC), formed a working group on workforce development (the Workforce Development Strategy 2012–2017), the purpose of which was to secure and develop the capacity of the family and relationship services workforce to meet the needs of Australian families now and in the future.<sup>48</sup>

The employment services sector has experienced a very high rate of staff turnover (nearly 42% in 2014–2016). The reasons for this are diverse, but greater validation of the sector as offering a respected professional career path would undoubtedly go a long way toward lowering



these figures. Such high turnover rates represent, aside from anything else, a substantial and unwelcome financial burden on providers, and present an issue that needs to be addressed as a stepping stone to a fully professionalised sector.

### Regional and Remote Areas

The ABS indicates that, in terms of the total Australian population, 16.24 million people (67% of the total population) lived in greater capital cities in 2016–17 and that the remaining 7.97 million (33%) lived in the rest of Australia.<sup>49</sup> With one-third of Australians living in regional and remote areas, the delivery of services needs to reflect this. Providing access to services for small towns is a national challenge in Australia. Our geography and our settlement patterns are dominated by large cities and their hinterlands, making service networks difficult to sustain for many small and distant places. Yet, as difficult as this might be, getting basic services in place in these locations is a key to supporting these communities and their economies.<sup>50</sup>

It is generally accepted that providing services to regional and remote areas in Australia is both similar to, but also different from, service delivery in metropolitan regions, and not just because of the obvious issue of distance that impacts on service costs, productive time on-site, and staff exhaustion due to travel commitments. Rural service providers have identified a range of issues that are more likely to impact on service delivery in non-metropolitan regions. These factors include:

- community pressure to be ‘all things to all people’ in the absence of an adequate range of health and welfare services
- the significant time investment required to foster community acceptance
- the challenge of managing confidentiality in small communities
- limited access to other support professionals, especially specialists
- the difficulty of recruiting and retaining staff, and
- the limited ability of communities to pay for services.<sup>51</sup>



Being able to overcome these obstacles is going to be a challenge in providing a sustainable workforce now and in the future in regional and remote areas. Issues such as how best to support a workforce that generally has a lower qualification profile and greater difficulties accessing training and professional development, as well as the broader concerns ranging from the higher cost of living to housing shortages, must be addressed, or plans put in place on how best to overcome them.

The employment services' peak body, NESAI, has been working closely with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in the development and delivery of community-oriented programs in remote Australia for over a decade. The accumulated experience, expertise and community trust built up over this period, as well as the nationwide supply chain and professional links with regional and Indigenous businesses, places NESAI in a unique position to provide stewardship for social, community and health-related projects in areas of Australia where such services have traditionally been patchy and difficult to implement.

NESAI continues to contribute strongly to advocacy and policy development within the CDP and is fully committed to assisting the Australian employment services sector and the Australian government toward closing the gap.

### Work Placement

Work placements are periods of supervised paid or unpaid work experience in organisations that provide counselling or related services. These give students the opportunity to put theory into practice in the workplace and gain competencies in knowledge, skills and attitudes as a result of these experiences.

While work placements are seen to be critical in terms of providing realistic workplace experience for the purpose of assisting graduates to become 'job-ready', there are a number of issues that can create difficulties for industry in terms of supporting access to student work placements, thus locking some new entrants out of the sector. Issues surrounding client confidentiality, the 'one-off' nature of some tasks, such as performing a wedding ceremony, and industry's capacity to absorb the number of required placements are examples of issues raised by industry in relation to work placements.

Within the sector there have also been changes in terms of accreditation requirements. For example, within family dispute resolution, there has been an increase in supervision hours from 10 to 50 hours. This is impacting on the cost of attaining qualifications and also potential recruitment to this sub-sector.

### Technology

Because of its constant evolution, technology is starting to be used in different ways within this sector. One example is video counselling. Rather than meeting up face to face, video counselling allows clients to obtain services through their computers or personal electronic devices. Having up-to-date technological skills means that counsellors can use a variety of service delivery models. It also means that they have access to a broader range of professional development and training opportunities. This is imperative to the ongoing health of all these sub-sectors. Those in receipt of counselling may also prefer to use this type of service for a number of reasons, including being 'time-poor' or having personal circumstances which make coming into an office difficult. This type of technology will also allow people living in regional, rural or remote areas to potentially access services via video/online technology and open up prospective clients to workers in the industry who previously would have not been able to access each other.

The impact of emerging technologies on the labour market is already profound. Remote work, the 'gig economy' and technological encroachment into all professions (not just, as is often implied, blue-collar industries) mean that the challenges facing employment services providers are themselves changing fast, and professional qualifications within the sector must be monitored closely to maintain relevance. The VET system cannot afford to remain simply reactive to change: the pace of change itself increasingly makes reactive approaches too slow to remain relevant. Effort must now be made to **intelligently anticipate** likely future developments, and to focus on **core transferable skills** (see *Future Skills Needs* later in this document) that will remain relevant as the nature of the labour market, and of the tools available to both employment consultants and job seekers, continue to change.



# Employment and Skills Outlook

## Labour Force Data

There is strong growth projected across the overall Client Services sector. Of the sub-sectors, Counsellors (+25%) and Welfare, Recreation and Community Arts Workers which includes Welfare Case Workers (+23%) are expected to have the strongest growth over the next five years. Please see Figures 1 and 2, below. 'Other Personal Services Workers' includes independent celebrants within its occupation classification.

**Figure 1** Projected growth in selected Client Services specific occupational groups 2017–2022 (%)

COUNSELLORS	25%
WELFARE, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY ARTS WORKERS	18.7%
OTHER PERSONAL SERVICE WORKERS	18.3%

Source: Australian Department of Jobs and Small Business, 2017 Occupational Projections – five years to May 2022

**Figure 2** Employment level of Client Services specific occupations ('000s), 2017

COUNSELLORS	23.5
WELFARE, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY ARTS WORKERS	20.9
OTHER PERSONAL SERVICE WORKERS	13.2

Source: Australian Department of Jobs and Small Business, 2017 Occupational Projections – five years to May 2022

## Workforce Characteristics

The **Family and Relationship Services** sector is diverse and difficult to define. There are issues with recruitment, retention and workforce planning due to uncertainty with regard to funding and with the complexities facing the current workforce. There are a number of federal and state government programs that provide funding for services that support families, children and young people. The workforce consists of a range of professionals, including (but not limited to) social workers, psychologists, counsellors, psychosocial therapists, educators, mediators, dispute resolution practitioners, experts in family law, support staff and managers. The majority of the current workforce is degree-qualified (55% postgraduate), has 5-10 years' experience in the community services sector (57%), is female (80%) and over 40 years of age (71%).<sup>52</sup>

The **Career Development Practitioner** workforce is characterised by a cohort that mainly works part

time. While only working on a part-time basis, career development practitioners juggle the responsibilities of other roles at the same time. More than three in five (64%) balance their time with other classroom teaching, 22% are in middle management and 7% are in senior management. 7% allocate the rest of their time to counselling within the school in which they work.<sup>53</sup> The research also shows that the time allocation of school-based career advisors seems to be decreasing despite an increasing need for their expertise, guidance and support. Additional time with students is what school-based career practitioners most need in order to be more effective in their roles. Whilst those who have had their time allocation reduced in the last three years are most likely to suggest that they need additional time (90%), almost three-quarters (73%) of those who haven't had their time reduced still indicate that they are in need of more time to be more effective in their roles.<sup>54</sup>



**COUNSELLORS ROLE**  
**23,500** employed

**Top Skills Areas**

- Social Perceptiveness
- Active Listening
- Critical Thinking
- Service Orientation
- Speaking

Source: Australian Government Department of Jobs and Small Business, Job Outlook.

The wider **Counsellor** workforce in 2017 employed 23,500 workers. This included, but was not limited to, Family and Marriage Counsellors, Career Counsellors or Advisors, and Student or School Counsellors. The median age of counsellors was 46 years old, with 79% of the workforce female and the remaining 21% male. 82% of the workforce was located in the eastern states of Australia (NSW, Victoria and Queensland).<sup>55</sup>



**WELFARE, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY ARTS WORKERS ROLE**  
**20,900** employed

**Top Skills Areas**

- Active Listening
- Service Orientation
- Social Perceptiveness
- Speaking
- Writing

Source: Australian Government Department of Jobs and Small Business, Job Outlook.

**Welfare Case Workers** come under Welfare, Recreation and Community Arts Workers and accounted for 20,900 workers in 2017. Most of the workers within this occupation classification work in the Health Care and Social Assistance Industry (59%). Nearly 40% of the workforce in 2017 was located in NSW. The median age for workers within this occupation was 40 years. The gender split of the occupation was 72% female with 28% being male. The education level of workers within this occupation stated that 17% had attained a Certificate III/IV while 16% had achieved a Diploma or Advanced Diploma.<sup>56</sup>




**OTHER PERSONAL SERVICE WORKERS ROLE**  
**13,200** employed

**Top Skills Areas**

- Active Listening
- Critical Thinking
- Management of Personnel
- Resources
- Social Perceptiveness
- Speaking

Source: Australian Government Department of Jobs and Small Business, Job Outlook.

**Other Personal Service Workers** (which includes Independent Celebrants within its occupation classification) employed 13,200 in 2017.<sup>57</sup> Most workers within this occupation were located in NSW (34%), Victoria (25%) and Queensland (20%). The median age for the workforce was 42 years old. The gender split for workers within this occupation classification was 60% female and 40% male.<sup>58</sup> There was no data on the education level of workers within this occupation.

Frontline **Child Protection** work is highly stressful, emotionally taxing and, at times, can result in secondary or vicarious trauma. This has led to child protection organisations consistently experiencing high turnover and staff shortages, creating adverse workplace cultures and extra stress for their workforces. Some research has shown that the psychosocial safety climate (i.e. employee perceptions of the priority given to psychological health and safety within their organisation), as well as role clarity, autonomy, hope, optimism and self-efficacy were all important workplace determinants of practitioner wellbeing (i.e. work engagement and emotional, psychological and physical wellbeing). These findings

are important for two reasons. First, they show that factors associated with the psychosocial work environment, rather than the psychological and emotional aspects of child protection work per se, exert the biggest influence on practitioner wellbeing. Second, workplace factors are able to be addressed where identified and, therefore, the research provides clear direction for improving practitioner wellbeing.<sup>59</sup>

In New South Wales, according to more recent statistics from the Caseworker Dashboard in 2017, there were 2,128 full-time equivalent positions in child protection. Of these, 240 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander caseworker roles.<sup>60</sup> According to the Child Protection Workforce Strategy 2017–2020, in Victoria there were 1,600 child protection practitioners. Practitioners in 2017 were predominantly full-time, ongoing employees. 86% were females with an average age of 40. There were 35 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders employed in child protection in Victoria in 2017.<sup>61</sup> In Western Australia at June 2017 the department for Child Protection and Family Support employed 2,741 people of whom 82% were female and 8% were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders.<sup>62</sup> The 2016 survey *Your Workforce, Your Future*, issued by the Queensland Family and Child Commission and the Health and Community Services Workforce Council, reported that there was a total headcount of 12,418 employees in child protection and family services in Queensland. Females accounted for 73% of the workforce while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders made up approximately 8% of the total reported workforce.<sup>63</sup>

#### Future Skills Needs

‘Soft’ or interpersonal skills are critical for the future skills needs of workers under the ambit of this IRC. Soft skills include interpersonal skills such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, emotional judgement, professional ethics and global citizenship. Deloitte Access Economics forecasts that two-thirds of jobs will be soft-skill intensive by 2030.<sup>64</sup> The 2016 Department of Education and Training report, *Everybody’s Core Business*,<sup>65</sup> underscored the necessity of providing solid ‘non-technical capability’ training for all Australians. The report uses the term ‘non-technical capability’ for what are more commonly, but not necessarily more appropriately-

termed, soft skills. Guidelines for the development of these non-technical skills exist in the General Capabilities definitions of the National Curriculum, the Core Skills for Work Developmental Framework, the Australian Core Skills Framework and the Australian Blueprint for Career Development. Although *Everybody's Core Business* is focused on the compulsory education stream, its findings are of general relevance to the design and implementation of VET training packages at all levels.

The report finds that 'work-readiness' is centrally a question of **adaptability**, and requires opportunities for learners to actively apply acquired skills to new situations, as well as for guided reflection on the successes and failures of that application process.

Training package design, and moreover **delivery**, must pay attention to the necessity of training students to be adaptable. Of course, basic identifiable skills are required for particular qualifications, but adaptability is rapidly becoming necessary not only as a means by which to remain mobile in the labour market, but also as a means to remain up to date and fully productive within a given job role. It is not the skills alone that are important. It is the learner's capacity to use those skills to **adapt to new challenges**. As the old adage has it, 'Give someone a fish and you feed them once. Teach someone to fish and you feed them for a lifetime'.

As jobs within Client Services are highly focused on soft/interpersonal skills requirements, many of the existing units of competency already reflect this. However, these units must continue to be updated to ensure that they are fit for purpose and assist workers within the sector to become equipped with the necessary skills to fulfil their jobs to a professional standard.

Digital skills, while important in terms of future skills requirements, generally are not as important to workers within the sectors under the remit of this IRC. However, having digital skills will allow workers to advertise and market their services on social media, receive feedback via online forums to improve services, and to connect with clients online or via social media. These types of skills can be acquired from other already established training packages and units of competency, rather than via the creation of new specific packages.





# Key Generic Skills

## – Ranked in Order of Importance

Note: The 12 generic skills listed below, including the descriptors, were provided by the Department of Education and Training for the purpose of being ranked by industry representatives. For the 2018 ranking exercise, an 'Other' generic skill option was included in the list to capture any additional key skills considered important for an industry. Please note that, in this case, no other generic skills were identified. While it is a requirement to rank these 12 generic skills, it is noted that, in many of these apparently generic skills areas, the Client Services workforce requires highly specialised skills, particularly in the areas of communication and problem solving.

1	<b>LANGUAGE, LITERACY &amp; NUMERACY (LLN)</b>	Foundation skills of literacy and numeracy.
2	<b>COMMUNICATION / COLLABORATION / SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE</b>	Ability to understand/apply principles of creating more value for customers and collaborative skills. Ability to critically assess and develop content with new media forms and persuasive communications. Ability to connect in a deep and direct way.
3	<b>CUSTOMER SERVICE /MARKETING</b>	Ability to interact with other human beings, whether helping them find, choose or buy something. Ability to supply customers' wants and needs. Ability to manage online sales and marketing. Ability to understand and manage digital products.
4	<b>LEARNING AGILITY / INFORMATION LITERACY / INTELLECTUAL AUTONOMY / SELF-MANAGEMENT</b>	Ability to identify a need for information. Ability to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use and cite the information. Ability to develop a working knowledge of new systems. Ability to work without direct leadership and independently.
5	<b>DESIGN MINDSET/ THINKING CRITICALLY / SYSTEM THINKING / PROBLEM SOLVING</b>	Ability to adapt products to rapidly shifting consumer tastes and trends. Ability to determine the deeper meaning or significance of what is being expressed via technology. Ability to understand how things that are regarded as systems influence one another within a complete entity, or larger system. Ability to think holistically.
6	<b>MANAGERIAL / LEADERSHIP</b>	Ability to effectively communicate with all functional areas in the organisation. Ability to represent and develop tasks and processes for desired outcomes. Ability to oversee processes, guide initiatives and steer employees toward the achievement of goals.
7	<b>TECHNOLOGY AND APPLICATION</b>	Ability to create/use technical means, understand their interrelation with life, society, and the environment. Ability to understand/apply scientific or industrial processes, inventions, methods. Ability to deal with mechanisation/automation/computerisation.
8	<b>ENTREPRENEURIAL</b>	Ability to take any idea and turn that concept into reality/make it a viable product and/or service. Ability to focus on the next step/move closer to the ultimate goal. Ability to sell ideas, products or services to customers, investors or employees etc.
9	<b>DATA ANALYSIS</b>	Ability to translate vast amounts of data into abstract concepts and understand data-based reasoning. Ability to use data effectively to improve programs, processes and business outcomes. Ability to work with large amounts of data.
10	<b>FINANCIAL</b>	Ability to understand and apply core financial literacy concepts and metrics, streamlining processes such as budgeting, forecasting, and reporting, and stepping up compliance. Ability to manage costs and resources, and drive efficiency.
11	<b>STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths)</b>	Sciences, mathematics and scientific literacy.
12	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL / SUSTAINABILITY</b>	Ability to focus on problem solving and the development of applied solutions to environmental issues and resource pressures at local, national and international levels.



## Key Drivers for Change and Proposed Responses

The *CHC41115 Certificate IV in Employment Services*; *CHC41215 Certificate IV in Career Development*; and *CHC81315 Graduate Certificate in Career Development Practice* qualifications were initially scheduled for review in the 2018–2019 year. These qualifications were extensively reviewed in 2015 and released on the national register, [www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au), on 8 December 2015. Industry notes that it is vital to allow the training package products to be properly implemented and tested within the system before

recommending any further revisions. These qualifications have been in operation for only two years and it may be too early to review them again in the current year. Therefore, industry proposes that these training products be scheduled for an update in 2020–2021. Given that in 2020 there will be a new jobactive contract, a review after the introduction of this would be more prudent.



# Proposed Schedule of Work

## 2019–2020

YEAR	PROJECT TITLE	DESCRIPTION
2019–20	Celebrancy	The IRC proposes to update the following qualification and any associated skill sets and units of competency relating to Celebrancy job roles: <i>CHC41015 - Certificate IV in Celebrancy</i>
2019–20	Counselling	The IRC proposes to update the following qualification and any associated skill sets and units of competency relating to Counselling job roles: <i>CHC51015 - Diploma of Counselling.</i>
2019–20	Financial Counselling	The IRC proposes to update the following qualification and any associated skill sets and units of competency relating to Financial Counselling job roles: <i>CHC51115 - Diploma of Financial Counselling.</i>
2019–20	Relationship Counselling	The IRC proposes to update the following qualification and any associated skill sets and units of competency relating to Relationship Counselling job roles: <i>CHC81015 - Graduate Diploma of Relationship Counselling.</i>
2019–20	Family Dispute Resolution	The IRC proposes to update the following qualification and any associated skill sets and units of competency relating to Family Dispute Resolution job roles: <i>CHC81115 - Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution.</i>
2019–20	Statutory Child Protection	The IRC proposes to update the following qualification and any associated skill sets and units of competency relating to Statutory Child Protection Counselling job roles: <i>CHC81215 - Graduate Certificate in Statutory Child Protection</i>
2019–20	Assessment and Case Management	The IRC proposes to update the following qualification and any associated skill sets and units of competency relating to Client Assessment and Case Management job roles: <i>CHC82015 Graduate Certificate in Client Assessment and Case Management.</i>

## 2020–2021

YEAR	PROJECT TITLE	DESCRIPTION
2020–21	Employment Services	The IRC proposes to update the following qualifications and any associated skill sets and units of competency relating to Community Services job roles: <i>CHC41115 Certificate IV in Employment Services;</i> <i>CHC41215 Certificate IV in Career Development; and</i> <i>CHC81315 Graduate Certificate in Career Development Practice.</i>

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