



STAKEHOLDERS



OUTCOMES



INTEGRITY



BOLDNESS



TEAMWORK



DRAFT

CLIENT SERVICES INDUSTRY
REFERENCE COMMITTEE
INDUSTRY SKILLS FORECAST 2018

DRAFT Client Services 2018 Industry Skills Forecast

Skills Forecast

Name of IRC: Client Services

Name of SSO: SkillsIQ Limited

About SkillsIQ Ltd.

SkillsIQ supports 17 Industry Reference Committees representing diverse ‘people-facing’ sectors. These sectors provide services to people in a variety of contexts such as customer, patient or client. The Industry Reference Committees are collectively responsible for overseeing the development and review of Training Package Products, including Qualifications, serving the skills needs of sectors comprising almost 50 per cent of the Australian workforce.

Sector Overview

Workers within the Client Services sector perform a variety of roles and deliver a wide array of services which are mainly focussed on the Community Services industry. 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. celebrants are predominantly sole traders). This will differ between subsectors and in some sub-sectors there are a significant number of workers who are either self-employed, or who operate as stand-alone professionals such as celebrants and some counsellors who operate in sole or multi-professional group practices. However the majority are employed in not for profit organisations such as in support worker roles in the child protection sub-sector or community workers or case managers.

Career Development

What comprises this sector?

The Career Development sector provides services to the community to build the capacity of individuals to make well informed and productive education, training and employment choices. 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.

Types of job roles

Career practitioners enter the industry either as a Professional or Associate. They are required to have completed a Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) endorsed 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.

Types of businesses operating in sector

Career development practitioners work in education, training, employment, vocational rehabilitation, elite athlete programs, in hospitals, prisons, in private and public organisations and in 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 as vocational counsellors.

Structure of sector (overarching demographics, regulations, etc)

The Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) is the national peak industry body for career practitioners in Australia. CICA members provide services in public and private organisations with 45% being in their role for over 10 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 qualified professionals since 2015. 87% hold formal career qualifications.

Celebrancy

What comprises this sector?

Celebrants can provide a range of ceremonies, celebrations, and related services for major life events, from birth to death. Ceremonies and celebrations that they provide can be categorised as related to love, life and loss:

- love - betrothal or engagement, marriage, celebration of marriage, civil union, commitment, renewal of vows, wedding anniversaries
- life - christening, baby blessings, namings, coming of adolescence, coming of age, graduation, major birthdays, retirement, house warmings, coming of wisdom age, liferals, boat blessings, living wakes, community ceremonies for occasions such as citizenship affirmation, national or international days
- loss - funerals, memorials, companion animals' funerals, divorce, community ceremonies for occasions such as military losses or natural disasters.

To perform a valid marriage under Australian law¹, 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 officer (Subdivision B), or an individual authorised by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department. The latter group are comprised of two sub-divisions C (civil celebrants) and D (religious celebrants) must complete the Certificate IV in Celebrancy, which includes three marriage celebrancy units of competency, to be authorised by Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department.

Structure of sector (overarching demographics, regulations, etc)

The peak body Coalition of Celebrant Associations (CoCA) Inc' National Celebrant Survey 2016² indicated that 90% of independent celebrants offer general ceremonies in addition to marriage ceremonies with 60% offering funerals, memorials and loss based ceremonies. The workforce is predominantly female (71%) with 46% over the age of 60 years, 41% between 40 and 60 years and only 13% under the age of 40 years³. Civil marriage celebrants perform over 75% of all marriages in Australia, even though they comprised only 25% (8620 in July 2016⁴). The remaining 75% are Ministers of Recognised Religions (Subdivision A) and independent authorised religious marriage celebrants (Subdivision D).

Counselling

What comprises this sector?

This qualification reflects the role of counsellors, who work with clients on personal and psychological issues using established counselling modalities. They use communication, micro-counselling and interviewing skills and draw on varied counselling therapies to assist clients. At this level, the counsellor will be working in defined and supported counselling roles in established agencies rather than in independent practice.

As a result, of the Vet Fee loan scheme, the Diploma of Counselling saw a large increase in enrolments 2014 – 2016. Over this period a total of \$34,987 students enrolled. However, poor marketing and sales practices saw many vulnerable and disadvantaged students enter this course. Poor practices also saw training being done in less than nominal hours, thus decreasing the perception and value of course within the community sector.

The Diploma of counselling states that this is not the qualification for commencing independent practice. Despite this it has become obvious that many graduates are running small practices from home. Furthermore, there is evidence of students who partly completed the qualification commencing their own practice. This is of serious concern as the Diploma of Counselling is designed for new entrants entering established agencies under supervision. Lone practitioners without supervision comes with serious risks, however given the industry is not yet accredited there is nothing stopping this occurring.

¹ 2018 Coalition of Celebrant Associations (COCA) Inc's Submission to Expert Panel on Religious Freedoms
<http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/issues/content/134-expert-panel-on-religious-freedoms>

² Coalition of Celebrant Associations (COCA) Inc's National Celebrant Survey 2016
<http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/for-celebrants/content/103-coca-celebrant-survey-2016>

³ <http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/issues/119-raised-with-the-ag-department/487-additional-statistics>

⁴ Marriage Programme Statistics provided for 27th October 2016 Stakeholders Meeting with the Attorney-General's Department.

Types of job roles

A search on seek.com.au and other job search links usually require higher level qualification for counselling positions such as a Bachelor of Counselling, social work or specialised Diplomas such as Drug and Alcohol, youth worker etc. After interviewing a variety of community organisations, it was found that they value the specialised qualification as above.

Structure of sector (overarching demographics, regulations, etc)

Enrolments are predominately women aged from 25 – 60. The economy is shifting towards more part-time and self-employment. These shifts reflect changes to the traditional employment relationship which will continue to become more fluid with people holding portfolios of activities, including paid employment, unpaid employment (internships or volunteering) and self-employment.

Financial Counselling

What comprises this sector?

Financial counsellors provide information, 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 usually work in not-for-profit community organisations.

Financial counsellors joining the profession since 2014 need to obtain the Diploma of Financial Counselling. This course 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 have either since obtained the Diploma of Financial Counselling or have undertaken recognition of prior learning.

Some of the work undertaken by financial counsellors involves activities which are regulated by ASIC. Examples include advice about credit contracts or bank accounts. Financial counselling agencies however are exempted from holding the relevant licences as long as they ensure their financial counselling staff are adequately trained and are eligible to join the financial counselling peak body in their State.

Structure of sector (overarching demographics, regulations, etc)

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 board, 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 (three years is common). The peak body for financial counsellors, Financial Counselling Australia estimates that there are around 800 financial counsellors in Australia. A number of people work on a part-time basis, with an estimated FTE of 500.

The sector is predominantly funded by State and Federal Governments, but there is some direct industry funding 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 phone financial counselling service), \$6.2 million for

specialist gambling financial counselling and \$13 million for financial counselling where there is income management. Total State government funding is \$25.8 million but varies dramatically between jurisdictions. Victoria provides the highest funding of \$8.9 million (excluding gambling financial counselling). In some States, funding is very uncertain and whether it continues or not will depend on election results.

Employment Services

What comprises this sector?

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

1. the organisations (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 flow from providers to the departments and vice-versa, and provides capacity development, professionalization and project management services across the sector.

Currently, there are three major employment services programmes (contract types)

- **jobactive** including Work for the Dole, which is the “mainstream” employment services programme, managed by the *Commonwealth Department of Jobs and Small Business*. This initiative services approximately 750,000 job seekers, with over 370,000 people placed into work in 2017. There are 40 provider organisations who manage contracts through 1,702 provider sites (shopfronts) across 51 regions.
- **Disability Employment Services (DES)**, managed by the *Commonwealth Department of Social Services*. New DES arrangements were brought in in March 2018, to be implemented on July 1 2018. At the time of writing, there are 142 DES providers servicing 110 Employment Service Areas (ESAs) with 1,247 sites nationally.
- The **Community Development Programme (CDP)**, focussed on rural and remote Australia, managed by the *Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet*, with 39 providers servicing 61 regions.

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

Types of job roles

The Cert IV in employment services is a qualification designed to provide key skills necessary to become a frontline Employment Consultant. This role is at once enriching and challenging, requiring the consultant to identify and help overcome the barriers that a job seeker may have to finding work.

Job seekers experience disadvantage in the labour market for a number of 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 skills and time management as well as a solid awareness of the policy landscape in order to effectively target opportunities for each client on a case-by-case basis. It also requires familiarity with the Department of Jobs and Small Business's data entry interface, ESSWeb.

Consultants are the point of contact for job seekers – the face of the employment services sector. This is a service role, but one which clients are frequently uncomfortable accessing. Depending on their individual circumstances, job seekers may be in states of considerable anxiety and distress. Although job seekers can approach providers directly, the majority are referred by Centrelink as part of the mutual obligation requirements that accompany their receipt of unemployment benefits (income support). As providers are responsible for ensuring that job seekers meet their mutual obligation requirements, consultants can also be perceived as being personally responsible for the suspension of income support in cases of job seeker non-compliance. All of these factors may contribute to interactions that can be challenging and emotionally charged, and that consultants must be prepared to handle calmly and professionally.

But above all, the position requires compassion and a genuine desire to help people in need. It is a crucial role, contributing as it does to an element of social organisation that underpins not only questions of national economy and productivity, but also of individual social inclusion, self-worth and mental health and all the broader societal benefits that flow on from attention to these key considerations at an individual level.

Types of businesses operating in sector

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 all the way up 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 the relevant qualifications (such as the Cert IV in employment services) in 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. "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.

Structure of sector (overarching demographics, regulations, etc)

Although different employment services programmes all have their own operational characteristics, the mainstream employment services programme – jobactive – operates in a unique "quasi-market". Providers win contracts through a competitive tendering process, and are allocated a "market share" – the number of job seekers they are permitted to take on. Their contracts operate within a strict compliance framework which requires constant reporting and they are monitored closely by the relevant government department(s) throughout their contract period. Natural market forces are simulated through regular business reallocations which add or remove market share based on performance. Consistently underperforming providers will lose their contract altogether.

The DES programme formerly operated on a similar basis, but as of July 1, 2018 will be altered significantly in that market share will no longer be controlled by the Department. DES clients will be able to choose their provider in a much more open market environment and providers will therefore be required to maintain performance standards in line with Departmental compliance guidelines as before, as well as managing real demand-driven market forces and competition.

“Performance” in the employment services is measured essentially in terms of “outcomes” (getting job seekers into sustained employment), and uses a complex assessment metric known as the Star Ratings that takes into account a significant range of variables covering the details of individual job seekers’ situations as well as local labour market characteristics.

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

What comprises this sector?

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.

Types of job roles

In some jurisdictions, most child protection workers are social workers. In some States child protection workers with VET Certificates work in related roles as what might be termed child protection support worker roles.

Structure of sector (overarching demographics, regulations, etc)

In 2009, the Council of Australian Governments 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 will agree to take under this National Framework are all aimed to achieve the following high-level outcome:

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

As a measure of this outcome, government and the non-government 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 the 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.

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*, which was tabled in Parliament on 17 November 2017. This report has become an important piece of work, not only for the NT 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 property, money or children 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 other⁵.

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. 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. This Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department manages the accreditation of FDR practitioners in Australia. Practitioners can meet this accreditation requirement by:

- completing the full Vocational Graduate Diploma or 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 or Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution (or the higher education provider equivalent); or

⁵ *Family Law Act 1975* (Cwlth), s. 10F

- having accreditation under the National Mediation Accreditation Scheme and competency in the six compulsory units from the Vocational Graduate Diploma or Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution (or the higher education provider equivalent)⁶.

Nationally Recognised Client Services Qualifications (as at December 2017)

- 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

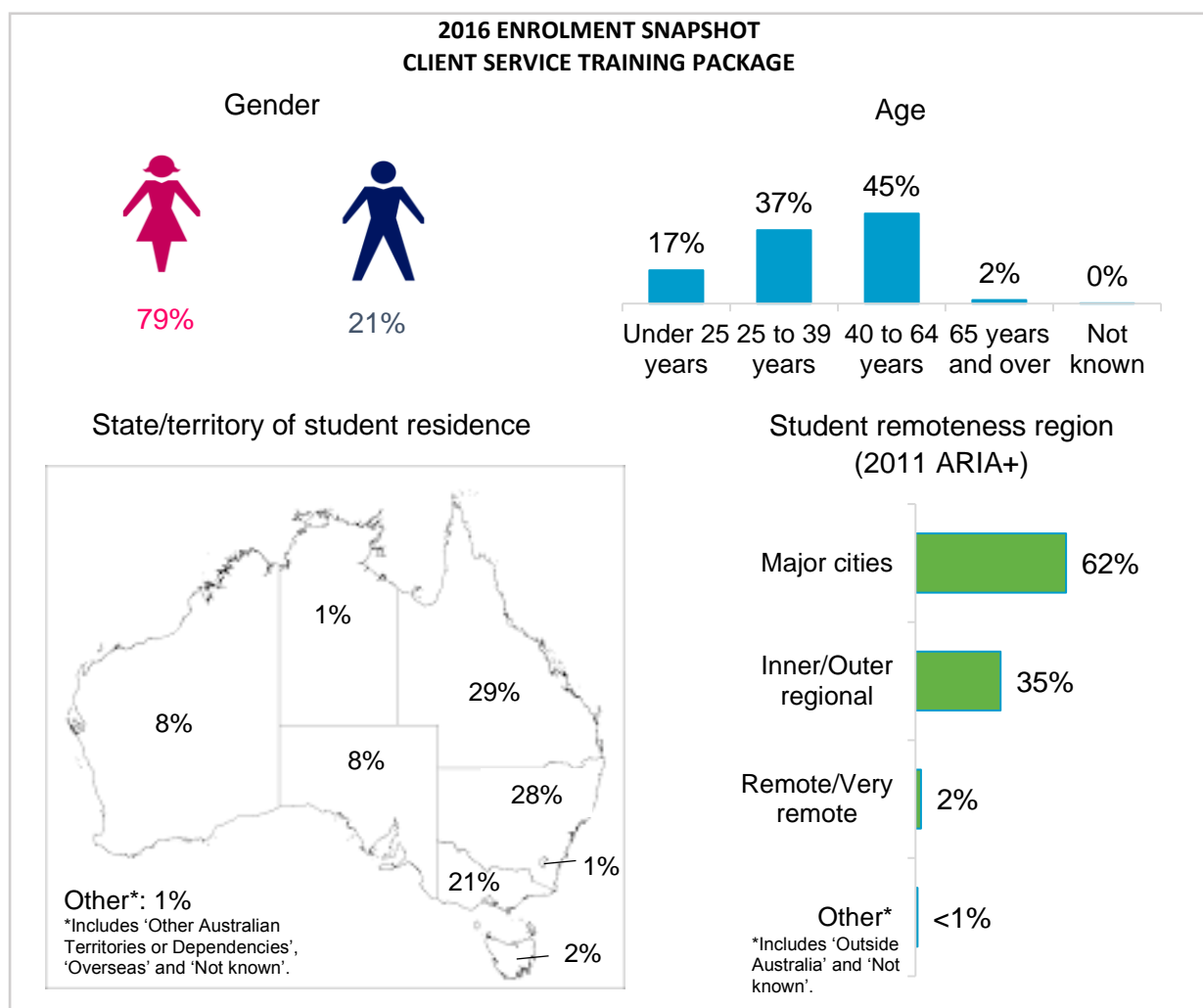
Table 1 indicates the number of Registered Training Providers (RTOs) with Client Services qualifications on scope. This data is current as at 05 December 2017, per the listing on the National Register of VET (www.training.gov.au).

Table 1

Code	Qualification name	No. of RTOs on scope
CHC41015	Certificate IV in Celebrancy	10
CHC41115	Certificate IV in Employment Services	24
CHC41215	Certificate IV in Career Development	11
CHC51015	Diploma of Counselling	76
CHC51115	Diploma of Financial Counselling	9
CHC81015	Graduate Diploma of Relationship Counselling	39
CHC81115	Graduate Diploma of Family Dispute Resolution	7
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 20th December 2017.

⁶ Australian Government, Attorney-General's Department 2012, *Fact sheet: Accreditation as a family dispute resolution practitioner*, viewed 25 July 2016, <https://www.ag.gov.au/FamiliesAndMarriage/Families/FamilyDisputeResolution/Documents/FactSheetAccreditationasaFamilyDisputeResolutionPractitioner.pdf>.



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

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. Industry engagement will include a broad and inclusive range of stakeholders beyond those included in this list as relevant to the nature of Training Package product review.

- **Government departments and agencies**
 - Department of Jobs and Small Business (Commonwealth)
 - Department of 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 (Western Australia)
- Department of Health and Human Services (Tasmania)
- Department of Community Services (Australian Capital Territory)
- WA Community Services Health and Education
- **Peak and industry associations**
 - Australian Community Workers Association
 - Australian Counselling Association
 - Career Industry Council of Australia
 - Australian Council for Private Education and Training
 - Case Management Society of Australia
 - Coalition of Celebrants Associations
 - 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
- **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 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 year⁷.

The **Personal Welfare Services** industry provides community and welfare services to disadvantaged individuals, including children and the aged. Many users of the industry'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 industry 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

⁷ IBIS World 2017, Q8700, *Community Services in Australia*

provide an effective means of improving the lives of individuals, couples and families⁸. Industry 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. Industry growth has been aided by the partial introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)⁹.

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 is set to be almost 800,000 school graduates in the next three years making the role of a career practitioner particularly important as more than half of students identify teachers/advisors in their top two people they are most comfortable to approach about career advice¹⁰. Not only do students require career advice, but also workers who have been made redundant during organisation restructure or staff layoffs. Outplacement organisations now help these workers with career advice on how to transition to a new role with help on career guidance, resume-writing advice, 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 million¹¹.

Family Dispute Resolution

The **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Services** industry (which includes such activities as mediation services, conciliation services and arbitration services) in Australia 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 2.0% over the five years through 2022-23, to reach \$1.6 billion. However, some ADR providers, such as Legal Aid and community legal services providers, are anticipated to face ongoing funding pressures over the next five years. This has the potential to reduce their capacity to provide ADR services for individuals who are unable to afford legal advice¹².

Celebrancy

The most recent ABS report¹³ indicates:

- 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 81.0% recorded in 2015.

⁸ Moloney, L, Australian Institute of Family Studies 2016, *Defining and delivering effective counselling and psychotherapy*

⁹ IBIS World 2017, Q8790, *Personal Welfare Services in Australia*

¹⁰ Career Industry Council of Australia, Media release 21 July 2017, As key influencers, school career practitioners need more time to assist students make well informed decisions

¹¹ IBIS World 2017, OD5518, *Outplacement Services in Australia*

¹² IBIS World 2017, OD4116, *Alternative Dispute Resolution Services in Australia*

¹³ Australian Bureau of Statistics Report 3310.0 - Marriages and Divorces Australia <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3310.0>

- 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 sector¹⁴ over the previous five years saw a decline in marriage numbers. This continues a six decade trend, since the 1960s, of decreasing crude rate of marriages (i.e the rate per head of population). The highest actual number of marriages was been between 2009 and 2012 and 2014 (ie. Over 120,000 pa).

Whilst it is estimated that the wedding industry generates over \$2 billion¹⁵ 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 pa gross from their marriage and other ceremony work, 78 % earning less than \$20,000 pa 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 and over¹⁶.

The 2016 CoCA National Celebrant Survey conducted in 2016¹⁷ found that 54.5 % of independent celebrant perform less 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 the on-the-job experience. The peak body CoCA considers the minimum standard for professional development. (i.e. an average of 24 marriages per celebrant per annum¹⁸ for the Subdivision C marriage celebrants).

Ensuring that graduates of the VET system have all the skills and knowledge required as 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 the average Australian full time wage¹⁹. 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 rather than traditional religious ministers. IBIS World anticipates that civil marriage celebrants will gain market share due to the ongoing preference for secular marriages, rather

¹⁴ Australian Institute of Family Studies - Marriage in Australia Source Data <https://aifs.gov.au/facts-and-figures/marriage-australia/marriage-australia-source-data>

¹⁵ Wedding Industry, Hints and Tips, viewed 12/01/2018 at <http://www.weddingindustry.com.au/>

¹⁶ Coalition of Celebrant Associations (COCA) Inc's National Celebrant Survey 2016 <http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/for-celebrants/content/103-coca-celebrant-survey-2016>

¹⁷ Coalition of Celebrant Associations (COCA) Inc's National Celebrant Survey 2016 <http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/for-celebrants/content/103-coca-celebrant-survey-2016>

¹⁸ 2012 Submission on Professionalism and Cost Recovery - Recommendation 2- Implement Limited Numbers of Appointments <http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/issues/70-2012-coca-submission-on-cost-recovery-and-increasing-professionalism/165-2-0-implement-limited-appointments>

¹⁹ Coalition of Celebrant Associations (COCA) Inc's National Celebrant Survey 2016 <http://www.coalitionofcelebrantassociations.org.au/for-celebrants/content/103-coca-celebrant-survey-2016>

than those performed by ministers of religion. This trend is expected to continue over the next five years²⁰.

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 2016-17²¹.

In 2016–17, 233,795 were the subject of an investigation, 112,164 were subject of a finalised investigation, 49,315 children were the subject of substantiation, 54,66 were on a Care and Protection Order and 47,915 were in out-of-home care²².

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are overrepresented in the child protection systems²³. *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 governments²⁴. It is therefore critical that the workforce is equipped with cultural competency skills to best engage with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in addressing child protection issues.

The Victorian government in 2015 established a Royal Commission into Family Violence. The establishment of the Royal Commission is an acknowledgement of the seriousness of the issue. The Commission was tasked with identifying more effective ways to prevent family violence, improve early intervention so as to identify those at risk, support victims, make perpetrators accountable, develop and refine systemic responses to family violence, better coordinate community and government responses to family violence and, finally, evaluate and measure the success of strategies, frameworks, policies, programs and services introduced to a stop family violence²⁵. Some of the 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. As at the time of writing, the recommendations outlined by the Victorian Royal Commission are being initiated

²⁰ IBIS World 2017, S9539, Babysitting and Other Personal Services in Australia

²¹ Australian Government 2018, Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services – *Child Protection Services*

²² Australian Government 2018, Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services – *Child Protection Services*

²³ Australian Government 2018, Productivity Commission, Report on Government Services – *Child Protection Services*

²⁴ Council of Australian Governments 2009, Protecting Children is Everyone's Business, National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020

²⁵ State of Victoria, *Royal Commission into Family Violence: Summary and recommendations*, Parl Paper No 132 (2014–16).

and are still coming into effect and it will take some time before these recommendations are realised²⁶.

Counselling

In the Counselling sector the increase in self-employment will see more graduates commencing counselling practices under an ABN, which as previously stated is of concern to industry. Given this is occurring more and more should the Diploma of Counselling include a further unit to equip graduates with the skills and knowledge to competently commence practice? At the very least until such time, as the industry is accredited. Feedback from a variety of community organisations the question has been raised as to why this qualification does not have a practical component of work placement included, similar to, youth, drug and alcohol, early childhood etc and 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, 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 supply. Increasingly, financial counsellors receive referrals from banks, superannuation companies, telcos, energy companies, Centrelink, Child Support, 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

The 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 the 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 of the employment services turn around 30,000 people. The major employment programmes (jobactive, DES and CDP) represent complementary geographical distributions which between them cover the entire nation.

²⁶ ABC News, Family violence: In the year since Victoria's royal commission, how much has changed?, March 2017, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-03-30/how-much-has-victorias-response-to-family-violence-changed/8399540>, viewed 27/02/2018

The employment services contribute directly to the mental and physical well-being of Australian society as a whole by assuring individual opportunity through employment and inclusion. The importance of the sector's contribution cannot be understated, and yet its "visibility" in Australian society is low. Few people who have not had direct interaction with the employment services know anything about it, 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 the employment services are a function of Centrelink, which is the Commonwealth welfare payment service, but has no central role in the provision of employment services. Few people appear to be aware of the unique and internationally recognised model that the Australian employment services represents.

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 negatives. Rendering the employment services career path an attractive one would be greatly assisted by improving public perception of the sector, which would assist the goal of sector professionalization.

Challenges and Opportunities

Marriage, Divorce and Death

The impact on the Celebrants' 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 with reference 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, consider there are a number of factors that mean Australian celebrants are unlikely to benefit to the same extent as their NZ 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 is now covered with SSM. Marriage rates are expected to grow²⁷, although it is unclear what role the SSM sector will play in providing opportunity 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 3 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 7 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 population²⁸. As the population ages and increases the need for civil celebrants to perform funeral ceremonies will become more sought after. However new VET graduates coming into the industry without attention on making funeral/ memorial work and general ceremony work their major focus, the majority still seem to see

²⁷ McCrindle Research 2015, *Marriages and Weddings in Australia Report*, <http://mccrindle.com.au/the-mccrindle-blog/marriages-in-australia>

²⁸ Australian Government, Department of Treasury 2015, *Intergenerational report*

marriage work as the core work, and many graduate without having done the loss / grief and related ceremony units.

While divorce still occurs, the rate at which it does in Australia has been declining. 10 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 people²⁹. There is still a need for family dispute 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 Australia³⁰. 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 DFV³¹. 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 (DFV) through a comprehensive and strategic public health approach³². Policy frameworks such as the National Framework for the Safety of Women and their Children seek to understand the evidence on the violence against women and identify the drivers and what contributes to violence, in order to inform and support the development of policy and legislation, prevention strategies, programming and advocacy that target and seek to reduce the drivers of violence against women³³. This presents an opportunity for workers in this 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 represent one of the most significant obstacles for women seeking to leave abusive relationships³⁴. 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 have 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.

²⁹ MCCrindle Research 2015, *Marriages and Weddings in Australia Report*, <http://mccrindle.com.au/the-mccrindle-blog/marriages-in-australia>

³⁰ Australian Government 2017, Australian Institute of Criminology, *Homicide in Australia 2012-13 to 2013-14: National Homicide Monitoring Program report*

³¹ White Ribbon Australia, <https://www.whiteribbon.org.au/understand-domestic-violence/facts-violence-women/domestic-violence-statistics/> viewed 18/01/2018

³² Kaspiew, R., Horsfall, B., Qu, L., Nicholson, J. M., Humphreys, C., Diemer, K.,... Dunstan, J. (2017). *Domestic and family violence and parenting: Mixed method insights into impact and support needs: Final report* (ANROWS Horizons 04/2017). Sydney: ANROWS.

³³ Our Watch, Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS) and VicHealth (2015) *Change the story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia*, Our Watch, Melbourne, Australia.

³⁴ Braaf & Meyering, 2011, *'Seeking Security: Promoting Women's Economic Well-Being Following Domestic Violence'* Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse

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-government organisations to protect children. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW, 2017a), 162,175 (one in 33) children had an investigation, Care and Protection Order and/or were placed in out-of-home care (OOHC)³⁵. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were seven times more likely than non-Indigenous children to receive protection services³⁶. Given that this issue is of national importance it is essential that workers within the sector are continually equipped with skills (e.g. cultural competency skills) and resources to provide services to families that require them.

Gambling

Australians spend an estimated \$8.6 billion nationally on gambling³⁷. 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 sports³⁸.

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) stated that problem gambling has been recognised as a mental disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) as a disorder similar in brain origin, comorbidity and treatment to substance abuse. Online gambling also increases the risk of consumers developing gambling problems due to the ease and constant accessibility; privacy, anonymity and extended periods of engagement without interruption³⁹.

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 Indigenous⁴⁰. 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

³⁵ Australian Government 2017, Australian Institute of Family Studies, *Prevention of child abuse and neglect*

³⁶ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2017. Child protection Australia 2015–16. Child Welfare series no. 66. Cat. no. CWS 60. Canberra: AIHW.

³⁷ Armstrong, A., & Carroll, M. (2017). *Gambling activity in Australia*. Melbourne: Australian Gambling Research Centre, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

³⁸ Armstrong, A. R., Thomas, A., & Abbott, M. (2017). Gambling participation, expenditure and risk of harm in Australia, 1997–1998 and 2010–2011. *Journal of Gambling Studies*, doi:10.1007/s10899-017-9708-0

³⁹ Australian Government 2017, Environment and Communications References Committee, *Participation of Australians in online poker*

⁴⁰ Armstrong, A., & Carroll, M. (2017). *Gambling activity in Australia*. Melbourne: Australian Gambling Research Centre, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

and separation; the costs of emotional distress associated with relationship breakdown, divorce and separation; and the cost of gambling-related violence⁴¹.

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 of this IRC is an issue that needs to be addressed. The 2014 Australian Community Sector Survey highlights that 80% of sector services reported being unable to fully meet demand, with services that prioritise people on low incomes or with specific needs are least able to meet demand⁴².

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 workforce⁴³. The 2016 survey *Your Workforce Your Future* 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 lack of career pathways; the difficulty of client demand; lack of security of employment and burnout of staff⁴⁴. In New South Wales the Public Service Association believes that the Department of Family and Community Services is under resourced and 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 2016/17⁴⁵. In Victoria the department has the challenge of recruiting an extra 452.6 positions due to the governments investment in growing and developing the child protection workforce in 2017/18⁴⁶.

The family and relationship services sector is another sector 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 (Workforce Development Strategy 2012-2017). This strategy's purpose is to secure and develop the capacity of

⁴¹ Browne, M, Greer, N, Armstrong, T, Doran, C, Kinchin, I, Langham, E & Rockloff, M 2017, *The social cost of gambling to Victoria*, Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation, Melbourne.

⁴² Australian Council of Social Service, Australian Community Sector Survey 2014

⁴³ Lewig, K., & McLean, S. (2016). *Caring for our frontline child protection workforce* (CFCA Paper No. 42). Melbourne: Child Family Community Australia information exchange, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

⁴⁴ Queensland Government 2016, Queensland Family & Child Commission, *Your Workforce, Your Future: 2016 Survey Report: Queensland's Child Protection and Family Support Workforce*

⁴⁵ NSW Government 2017, Department of Family and Community Services, Legislative Council. General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2, *Child Protection*

⁴⁶ Victorian Government 2018, Department of Health and Human Services, *Child protection workforce strategy 2017-2020*

the family and relationship services workforce to meet the needs of Australian families now and in the future⁴⁷.

The employment services know a very high rate of staff turn-over (near 42% in 2014-2016). The reasons for this are diverse, but greater validation of the sector as 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 are an issue that needs to be addressed as a stepping stone to a fully professionalized sector.

Regional and remote areas

The Australian Bureau of Statistics for the Australian population shows that 16.24 million people (67% of total Australian population) lived in greater capital cities and that the remaining 7.97 million (33%) lived in the rest of Australia⁴⁸. With one third of Australians living in regional and remote areas the delivery of services need 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 right for these places is a key to supporting these communities and their economies⁴⁹.

It is generally accepted that providing services to regional and remote areas in Australia is 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 long time required to foster community acceptance;
- the challenge of managing confidentiality in small communities;
- limited access to other support professionals, especially specialists;
- difficulty recruiting and retaining staff; and
- the limited ability of communities to pay for services⁵⁰.

Being able to overcome these obstacles is a going to be a challenge in providing a sustainable workforce now and in the future in regional and remote areas for workers. 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 these issues.

The employment services’ peak body, NESA, has been working closely with the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet in the development and delivery of community-oriented programmes in

⁴⁷ Family & Relationship Services Australia 2012, *Workforce Development Strategy 2012-2017*

⁴⁸ <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3218.0> viewed 27/03/2018

⁴⁹ Bourne, K., Nash, A., Houghton, K. (2017) *Pillars of communities: Service delivery professionals in small Australian towns 1981 – 2011*. The Regional Australia Institute.

⁵⁰ Roufeil, Dr L, Battye, Dr K, *Effective regional, rural and remote family and relationships service delivery*, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse

remote Australia for over a decade. The accumulated experience, expertise and community trust built up over this period as well as the nation-wide supply chain and professional links with regional and Indigenous businesses places NESAs 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.

NESA continues to contribute strongly to advocacy and policy development within the Community Development Programme, 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 paid or unpaid work experience in supervised organisations that provide counselling or related services. This gives the student the opportunity to put theory into practice in the workplace to gain particular competencies required to have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude refined through this experience.

While work placements are seen to be critical in terms of providing realistic workplace experience, in order to assist graduates to be “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 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 has also been changes in terms of accreditation requirements. For example within family dispute resolution, workers require 50 hours of supervision to attain accreditation. This has the potential to further impact on recruitment.

Technology

With the constant evolving of technology, it is starting to be used in different ways within this sector. One example is video counselling. Rather than meet up face to face, video counselling allows the client to obtain the service through their computer or personal electronic device. Having up-to date technological skills means that people can use 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 sectors. People may also prefer to use this type of service for a number of reasons, including being time poor or having personal circumstances which makes 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 that previously would have not been able to have access to 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. But increasingly 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 transferrable skills** (see “Future Skills”, below) that will remain relevant as the nature of the labour market, and of the tools available to the Employment Consultants and job seekers continue to change.

Employment Skills and Outlook

Labour Force Data

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

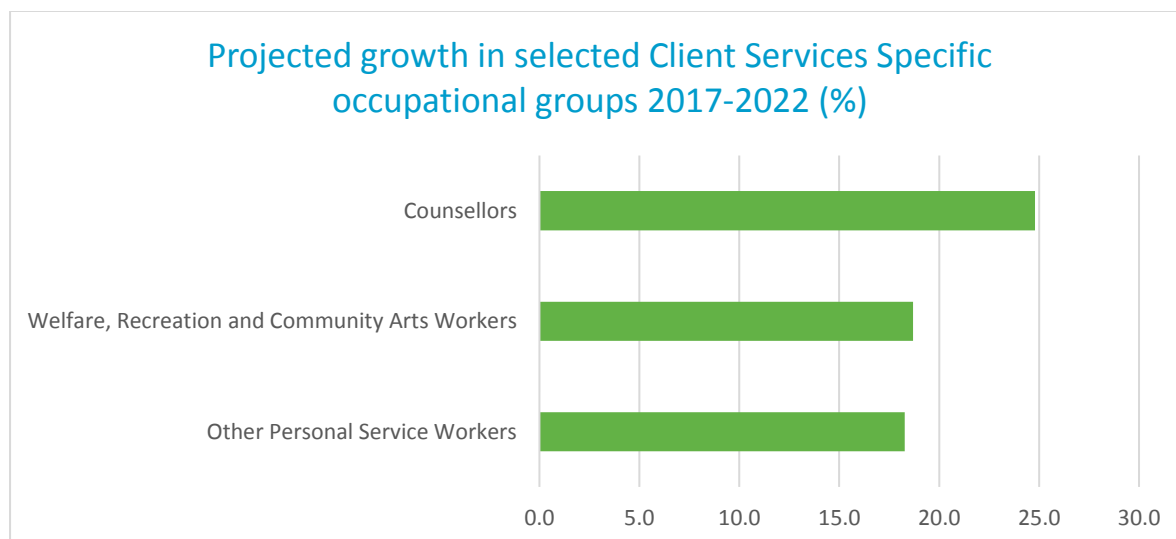


Figure 1

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

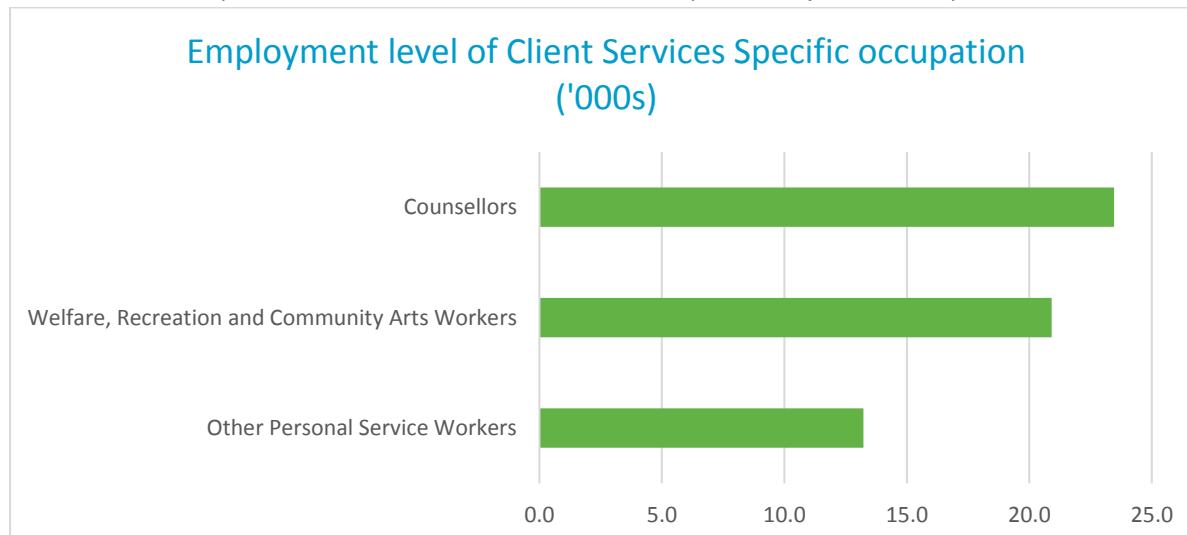


Figure 2

Source: Australian Department of Jobs and Small Business, 2017 Occupational Projections – five years to November 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, psycho-social 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%)⁵¹.

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 work⁵². The research also shows that the time allocation of school based career advisors only 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 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 role⁵³.

Counsellor Role
Top Skills Areas

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

The wider Counsellor workforce in 2017 employed 23,500 workers. This included but was not limited to Family and Marriage Counsellors, Careers Counsellor or Advisor, Student or School Counsellor. The median age of counsellors was 46 years old, with 79% of the workforce female with the remaining 21% male. 82% of the workforce was located in the eastern states of Australia (NSW, Victoria and Queensland)⁵⁴.

Source: Australian Department of Jobs and Small Business, Job Outlook, ANZSCO ID: 2721

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

Welfare, Recreation and Community Arts Workers Role
Top Skills Areas

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

Health Care and Social Assistance Industry (59%). Nearly 40% of the workforce was located in NSW. The median age for workers within this occupation was 40 years. The gender split of the occupation sees 72% are female with 28% male. The education level of workers within this occupation sees that 17% have attained a Certificate III/IV while 16% have achieved an Advanced Diploma/Diploma⁵⁵.

Source: Australian Department of Jobs and Small Business, Job Outlook, ANZSCO ID: 2726

⁵¹ Family & Relationship Services Australia 2012, *Workforce Development Strategy 2012-2017*

⁵² Career Industry Council of Australia, Media Release 3 May 2017, *Equipping the next generation in an increasingly complex environment*.

⁵³ Career Industry Council of Australia, Media Release 3 May 2017, *Equipping the next generation in an increasingly complex environment*.

⁵⁴ Australian Government 2017, Job Outlook, <http://joboutlook.gov.au/Occupation.aspx?search=Career&code=2721>, viewed 27/02/2018

⁵⁵ Australian Government 2017, Job Outlook, <http://joboutlook.gov.au/Occupation.aspx?search=Career&code=2726>, viewed 28/02/2018

Other Personal Service Workers which includes	Independent Celebrants within its occupation classification employed 13,200 in 2017 ⁵⁶ . 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 ⁵⁷ . There was no data on education level of workers within this occupation.
Other Personal Service Workers Role Top Skills Areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Active Listening ✓ Critical Thinking ✓ Management of Personnel Resources ✓ Social Perceptiveness ✓ Speaking 	

Source: Australian Department of Jobs and Small Business, Job Outlook, ANZSCO ID: 4518

Frontline **Child Protection** work is highly stressful, emotionally taxing and, at times, can result in secondary trauma. This has led to child protection organisations consistently experiencing high turnover and staff shortages, creating adverse workplace cultures and extra stress for their workforce. 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), 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 changeable and, therefore, the research provides clear direction for improving practitioner wellbeing⁵⁸.

In New South Wales according to more recent statistics from the Caseworker Dashboard in 2017, there are 2,128 full time equivalent positions in child protection. Of these 240 are Aboriginal caseworker roles⁵⁹. According to the *Child protection workforce strategy 2017-2020* in Victoria there are 1,600 child protection practitioners. Practitioners are predominately full-time, ongoing employees. 86% are females and have an average age of 40. There are 35 Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander currently employed in child protection in Victoria⁶⁰. In Western Australia at June 2017 the department for Child Protection and Family Support employed 2,741 people of which 82% are female and 8% are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders⁶¹. The 2016 survey *Your Workforce Your Future* 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 make up approximately 8% of the total reported workforce⁶².

⁵⁶ Australian Government 2017, Job Outlook, <http://joboutlook.gov.au/Occupation.aspx?search=Career&code=4518>, viewed 27/02/2018

⁵⁷ Australian Government 2017, Job Outlook, <http://joboutlook.gov.au/Occupation.aspx?search=Career&code=4518>, viewed 27/02/2018

⁵⁸ Lewig, K., & McLean, S. (2016). *Caring for our frontline child protection workforce* (CFCA Paper No. 42). Melbourne: Child Family Community Australia information exchange, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

⁵⁹ NSW Government 2017, Department of Family and Community Services, Legislative Council. General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2, *Child Protection*

⁶⁰ Victorian Government 2018, Department of Health and Human Services, *Child protection workforce strategy 2017-2020*

⁶¹ Government of Western Australia 2017, Department of Communities, Child Protection and Family Support, *2016-17 Final Report*

⁶² Queensland Government 2016, Queensland Family & Child Commission, *Your Workforce, Your Future: 2016 Survey Report: Queensland's Child Protection and Family Support Workforce*

Future Skills Needs

Soft or inter-personal skills are critical for the future skill needs of workers within 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 2030⁶³. The 2016 Department of Education and Training report *Everybody's Core Business*⁶⁴ 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 focussed 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 to remain mobile in the labour market, but also as a means to remain up to date and fully productive within a given job. 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 – feed them once. Teach someone to fish – feed them for a lifetime”.

As jobs within Client Services are highly focussed on soft/inter personal 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 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 via social media/online. 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.

⁶³ Deloitte Access Economics 2017, *Soft skills for business success*, DeakinCo, May 2017

⁶⁴ Department of Education and Training/Ithaca Group, *Everybody's Core Business*, Research into the non-technical capabilities needed for successful participation in work or further study: Final Report (Aug 2016)

Generic Skills Data

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 required highly specialised skills, for example communication and problem solving.

1	LANGUAGE, LITERACY & NUMERACY (LLN)	Foundation skills of literacy and numeracy.
2	COMMUNICATION / COLLABORATION / SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE	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	CUSTOMER SERVICE / MARKETING	Ability to interact with another human being, 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	LEARNING AGILITY / INFORMATION LITERACY / INTELLECTUAL AUTONOMY / SELF-MANAGEMENT	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	DESIGN MINDSET/ THINKING CRITICALLY / SYSTEM THINKING / PROBLEM SOLVING	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	MANAGERIAL / LEADERSHIP	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 achievement of goals.
7	TECHNOLOGY AND APPLICATION	Ability to create/use of technical means, understand their interrelation with life, society, and the environment. Ability to understand/apply a scientific or industrial processes, inventions, methods. Ability to deal with mechanisation/ automation / computerisation.
8	ENTREPRENEURIAL	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 / closer to the ultimate goal. Ability to sell ideas, products or services to customers, investors or employees etc.
9	DATA ANALYSIS	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	FINANCIAL	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	STEM Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM)	Sciences, mathematics and scientific literacy.
12	ENVIRONMENTAL / SUSTAINABILITY	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, 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. Therefore, industry proposes that these training products be scheduled for an update in 2020–2021. Given that in 2020 there will be a new Job Active contract, the review after the introduction of this would be more prudent.

Proposed Schedule of Work

Year	Project Title	Description
2018-19	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;</i> and <i>CHC81315 Graduate Certificate in Career Development Practice.</i>
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>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>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>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>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>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>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>Graduate Assessment and Case Management.</i>

2018-19 Project Details

As outlined in the Key Drivers for Change section there is no training package work proposed for 2018-2019.

IRC Sign-off

The 2018 Industry Skills Forecast will be signed off by the IRC Chair prior to submission to the AISC.