Career Management in the NSW Public Service—the Experience of Secondary School Careers Advisers

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B Ec (Syd), Dip Ed (Syd), M Ed (Syd)

A Thesis submitted to the University of Western Sydney in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Commerce (Honours)

March 2009
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Dedication

To the hard-working, dedicated professionals who gave freely of their time, ideas and insights when interviewed during 2007, I owe a debt of gratitude. Their enthusiasm for what they do was both refreshing and uplifting. It is my hope that the recommendations that will form a report on this research are accepted and implemented for the benefit of NSWDET careers advisers and the students who are guided by them.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr Fernanda Duarte, Dr Nikola Balnave and Dr Ben Imbun for accompanying me along this journey. Dr Duarte was there for the full time, taking on the role of principal supervisor when Dr Imbun was seconded to another institution for some months. Dr Balnave stepped up to the task of principal supervisor while Dr Duarte was on leave. Dr Duarte’s excitement about the research data was infectious and she kept me to the task of writing (and rewriting) as the deadline approached.

To my work colleagues both past (Mrs Mary O’Brien and Mrs Priscilla Leece) and present (Dr Terrri Mylett and Ms Marion Cornish) who have offered encouragement and companionship through the last five years, I offer my thanks.

Thanks also go to Mrs Marian Paap for transcribing the interviews, formatting the final version of this document and cheerfully dealing with the last-minute challenges of file transfers. And to Ms Lynne Frolich, I offer thanks for editing the various iterations of the chapters that make up this thesis. Both of you made the task of completing this thesis so much easier.

Finally, special thanks are due to my wife Lynne whose support in both editing this thesis and in keeping body and soul together during the writing task is greatly appreciated.
Statement of Authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in part or in full, for a degree at this or any other institution.

Signature:  .....................
Name:      Ronald P Kelly
Date:      31 March 2009
Table of Contents

Dedication .................................................................................................................................................. ii
Acknowledgements .................................................................................................................................. iii
Acknowledgements .................................................................................................................................. iii
Statement of Authentication .................................................................................................................... iv
Table of Contents .................................................................................................................................. v
List of Tables .......................................................................................................................................... viii
List of Boxes .......................................................................................................................................... ix
List of Abbreviations ............................................................................................................................. x
Appendices ........................................................................................................................................... xii
Abstract .................................................................................................................................................. xiii

CHAPTER 1
Careers and Career Management in the Twenty-First Century-An Extemporised Journey ................................................. 1
  1.1 Introduction .................................................................................................................................... 1
  1.2 Justification for the study ........................................................................................................... 2
  1.3 Definitions of concepts and contextualisation ........................................................................ 3
  1.4 Research Approach .................................................................................................................... 8
  1.5 Thesis Structure .......................................................................................................................... 9
  1.6 Summary ...................................................................................................................................... 10

CHAPTER 2
From Traditional to Boundaryless Career: What is known in the Field of Career Management? .................................................................................................................. 12
  2.1 Introduction .................................................................................................................................... 12
  2.2 The meaning of work .................................................................................................................. 12
  2.3 Career and associated concepts .................................................................................................. 17
      2.3.1 Career and its changing meaning ...................................................................................... 17
      2.3.2 Contextualisation of careers .......................................................................................... 22
      2.3.3 Career development .......................................................................................................... 24
      2.3.4 Career development theories .......................................................................................... 27
CHAPTER 5
Understanding the Extemporised Journey of Careers Advisers—Career Management and Career Issues.................................................................96
5.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................96
5.2 Adequacy of NSWDET career management for careers advisers...............97
   5.2.1 Adequacy for what purpose? .................................................................97
   5.2.2 Training and educational opportunities as the major career
       management intervention........................................................................98
   5.2.3 Adequacy of other identified career management interventions ......101
   5.2.4 Adequacy of non-identified career management interventions ..........104
5.3 Role expansion and workload increase of NSWDET careers advisers in the ....
    last decade...................................................................................................106
5.4 Lack of a clear career path for NSWDET careers advisers .......................110
5.5 Image problems of NSWDET careers advisers .........................................111
5.6 Importance of career self-management .......................................................113
5.7 Conclusion.......................................................................................................115

CHAPTER 6
Conclusions, Recommendations and Future Directions for NSWDET Careers
Advisers..............................................................................................................119
6.1 Thesis description ..........................................................................................119
6.2 Discussion......................................................................................................120
6.3 Major findings ..............................................................................................121
6.4 Recommendations .........................................................................................124
6.5 Limitations of this study ..............................................................................126
6.6 Prospects for future research ......................................................................127
List of References...............................................................................................129
Appendices.........................................................................................................140
List of Tables

Table 1.1: Career management interventions in organisations ........................................ 9
Table 2.1: Comparisons of traditional and boundaryless careers ................................. 21
Table 2.2: Roles in Career Development .......................................................................... 36
Table 2.3: Key words used by 104 middle managers to describe the relationship
between employer and employee ................................................................................. 38
Table 4.1: Stakeholders associated with the career management of NSWDET
secondary careers advisers ....................................................................................... 67
Table 5.1: Career management interventions in organisations .................................... 98
List of Boxes

Box 3.1: Basic secondary teacher qualification requirement in NSWDET schools .......................................................... 55

Box 3.2: Role expectations of careers advisers in NSWDET secondary and central schools ........................................... 57, 77, 97

Box 6.1: Additional career management interventions ................................. 124
### List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AACC</td>
<td>Australian Association of Careers Counsellors Inc</td>
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<td>AECRC</td>
<td>Australian Education Council Review Committee</td>
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<td>ACDS</td>
<td>Australian Career Development Studies</td>
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<td>ACU</td>
<td>Australian Catholic University</td>
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<td>ABCD</td>
<td>Australian Blueprint for Career Development</td>
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<td>ANA</td>
<td>Australian National Airlines</td>
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<tr>
<td>BCE</td>
<td>Before the Christian Era</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAs</td>
<td>Careers Advisers</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAANSW</td>
<td>Careers Advisers Association of New South Wales</td>
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<tr>
<td>CICA</td>
<td>Career Industry Council of Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEEWR</td>
<td>Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEST</td>
<td>Department of Education, Science and Training (Commonwealth Government)</td>
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<td>DET</td>
<td>New South Wales Department of Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAP</td>
<td>Employee Assistance Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>ETIS</td>
<td>Education and Training Information Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSC</td>
<td>Higher School Certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>HSIE</td>
<td>Human Society and its Environment</td>
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<td>KLA</td>
<td>Key Learning Area</td>
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<td>LCPs</td>
<td>Local Community Partnerships</td>
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<td>NBEEET</td>
<td>National Board of Employment, Education and Training</td>
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<td>NSWDET</td>
<td>New South Wales, Department of Education and Training</td>
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<td>NSWDETVED</td>
<td>New South Wales, Department of Education and Training, Vocational Education Directorate</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSWTF</td>
<td>New South Wales Teachers Federation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSWSPC</td>
<td>New South Wales Secondary Principals Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>OH&amp;S</td>
<td>Occupational Health and Safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPEC</td>
<td>Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>PCFNSW</td>
<td>Parents and Citizens Federation of New South Wales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>RVEC</td>
<td>Regional Vocational Education Consultant</td>
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<td>RMIT</td>
<td>Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>Social-Economic Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEO 1</td>
<td>Senior Education Officer, Level 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>SERAP</td>
<td>State Education Research Approval Process</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPCNSW</td>
<td>Secondary Principals Council of New South Wales</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAA</td>
<td>Trans Australian Airlines</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Technical and Further Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>TPL</td>
<td>Teacher Professional Learning grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>UAIs</td>
<td>University Admission Indices</td>
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<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>VET</td>
<td>Vocational Education and Training (programs)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Appendices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1</td>
<td>Information Statement for School Principals</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2</td>
<td>Information Statement for Research Project Participants</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 3</td>
<td>Consent Form</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 4</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews for participants in the Career Management* in the NSW Public Service- A Case Study of Secondary School Careers Advisers- Research Project</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 5</td>
<td>Newsletter text</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 6</td>
<td>UWS Human Ethics Approval October 2006 to June 2007</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 7</td>
<td>UWS Human Ethics Approval June 2007 to December 2007</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 8</td>
<td>NSWDET SERAP Approval April to June 2007</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 9</td>
<td>NSWDET SERAP Approval June to December 2007</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abstract

This research sets out to identify (i) the perceptions of careers advisers and other relevant stakeholders about current career management practices provided for secondary school careers advisers by the NSWDET and (ii) the current and future career issues faced by NSWDET careers advisers in view of social political and economic changes in the last decade in so far as they impact upon their careers.

In this thesis, career management is conceptualised as a process which involves employees becoming aware of their own interests, values, strengths and weaknesses, obtaining information about job opportunities within their organisation (and by implication, with other potential employers), identifying career goals and creating plans to achieve such goals. As such, the process is not exclusively driven by the employer, but is rather a joint responsibility. However to discover what the career management stakeholders viewed about the career management received by NSWDET secondary careers advisers, it was necessary to focus on what this employer had provided. To establish a set of criteria to discover the types and support for such career management, the schema of career management interventions provided by Arnold’s (1997) see Table 1.1, was used as an investigative tool.

The conclusions reached are that there remain unmet challenges for the career management of secondary school careers advisers and indeed to the careers of these practitioners in NSWDET schools. An important outcome of this thesis will be to create a set of recommendations to guide the future course of managing the careers of these secondary school careers advisers.
Chapter 1

Careers and Career Management in the Twenty-First Century—An Extemporised Journey

1.1 Introduction

Careers and the management of careers have, in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, become much less predictable as a result of the impact of globalisation and technological change. The relationship between these two phenomena is complex with the former often viewed as facilitating the latter. During 2008, the global financial crisis and spreading economic recession have added to this unpredictability and volatility. Indeed the nature and future of work and jobs is subject to rapid and often unforeseen changes. Thus it is appropriate to refer to work in the context of an extemporised journey undertaken by employees and employers. Based on a qualitative study carried out between January and August 2007 in Sydney, this thesis will explore this journey by addressing the following questions:

Q1. What are the perceptions of careers advisers and other relevant stakeholders about current career management practices provided for secondary school careers advisers by the New South Wales Department of Education and Training (NSWDET)?

Q2. What are the current career issues facing NSWDET careers advisers in view of social and economic changes in the last few decades and the way in which they impact upon their careers?

Q3. What are the views of careers advisers and other relevant stakeholders on future issues that may be faced by NSWDET careers advisers?

The focus of this thesis is on the career management actions of the NSWDET because of its pivotal role as the employer of the target group for this research—secondary careers advisers. As such, the NSWDET is one of the primary stakeholders in the career management of these careers advisers. Based upon the research findings, a
critique of current career management practices and a guide for improvements in such practices will be provided.

The research methodology used in this thesis is qualitative, including the following techniques: semi-structured interviews of stakeholders (face-to-face, telephone and email), stakeholder surveys, web-searches, and analysis of media outputs (e.g. newspapers, press releases, brochures) and official documents (obtained from websites and in printed form). Such techniques were used because the research context was that of a contained study (O’Donohue, Sheehan, Hecker and Holland, 2007), rather than a broader survey that might have lent itself more to quantitative and/or mixed mode methods. As indicated above, the purpose of the research is to foster a more informed understanding of the career and career management experiences of NSWDET secondary careers advisers.

1.2 Justification for the study

The importance and justification of this investigation into the career management of secondary school careers advisers rests upon two reasons. Firstly, there has recently been increased interest in the quality of career guidance, planning and information provision for secondary students (Organisation for Economic and Cultural Development (OECD), 2003; Maguire, and Killen, 2003; Sweet and Watts, 2004; and Sultana, Watts and Sweet, 2004). Significant projects have also been commenced and supported by the Commonwealth (DEST, 2002; Nelson, 2004, 2005 and Bishop, 2006a, 2007) and State Governments (MCEETYA, 2003). Maguire and Killen acknowledge the importance of these processes when they state:

*The chances of market failure can be alleviated by effective career guidance, through reducing the propensity of learners to embark upon and subsequently drop out of education or training courses, by reducing the amount of mismatch between job vacancies and the available pool of unemployed labour, and by re-enervating previously discouraged workers, who were not aware of potential opportunities for them to regain employment. A reduction in the length of job search may also be a valid ‘positive’ measure. (2003:5)*
Secondly, as a consequence of this increased interest in career guidance for secondary school students, the career management provided for secondary school careers advisers has become both topical and crucial because of its impact on the appropriate employment of new entrants to the Australian workforce and the future growth of the national economy. But while this view can be easily appreciated, it needs to be stated that the majority of secondary school careers advisers see their work in a more personal context and they would include in their role more individual objectives such as facilitating their clients’ ‘human fulfillment, …well-being, social and cultural development’ (Kossy, 2004: 1).

Finally, this topic was chosen because of the writer’s own experience both as a secondary careers adviser in a non-government school in the 1980s and as a tertiary careers adviser in a number of NSW universities in the 1990s. In both roles, he came into contact with NSWDET secondary careers advisers and was intrigued to discover how they did their work and how they were managed in their own careers. The research for this thesis has facilitated this search for the story of these careers advisers’ work life.

1.3 Definitions of concepts and contextualisation

The key concepts of work, career, career development, career management and psychological contract are central to this thesis. Their meanings are briefly noted below and then explored at length in Chapter 2. Blustein, Kenna, Gill and DeVoy (2008) presented the meaning of work within a psychological context that views its functions as a means of survival, power, social connection and self-determination. Career is defined as ‘the process of managing life, learning and work across the lifespan’ (Miles Morgan, 2007). Career development is defined as ‘a series of activities that contribute to the person’s career exploration, establishment, success and fulfilment’ (Dessler, Griffiths and Lloyd-Walker, 2004:337), that is planned and self-directed (Desimone, Werner and Harris, 2002). Career management is a set of ‘processes to encourage the progression of individuals in line with personal

[1] Kossy, 2004 a. Janet Kossy has worked as the Career Adviser at St George Girls High School, St George, Sydney, NSW. She provided written feedback on 4 November 2004 relating to the Master of Business (Honours) Thesis Proposal upon which this thesis is based.
preferences and capabilities and organisational requirements … to give employees opportunities for development and (to) feel valued and (allow their employer) to fill posts internally’ (Beardwell and Claydon, 2007:11).

The psychological contract is defined as ‘…what the individual and organisation expect to give and receive in the working relationship’ (Dessler et al., 2004:643), however a current definition of this term also needs to include the specification that for many employees, the psychological contract has been transformed from being relational to transactional, ‘ … that is, specifying a short-term exchange of benefits rather than a long-term relationship with expectations of mutual loyalty’ (Inkson, 2007:9). For NSWDET secondary careers advisers, the relational expectation still appears to predominate for both them and the NSWDET. This aspect is explored in more detail later in this thesis.

For the purpose of this thesis, the social, economic and political context is that of the ‘post-industrial society’ of the early 21st century. This context has been chosen because it explains a number of changes experienced by careers advisers in both their careers and the career management they have received. According to Bell (1999), a post-industrial society is one that has shifted from the manufacturing of goods to a service economy and in which theoretical knowledge, technology, and information become the key commodities. It is a ‘… white collar society dominated by service work’ (Edgell, 2006:62) and the ‘centrality of theoretical knowledge’ (Bell, 1976 [1973]:112). A post-industrial society is one in which there exists a new ‘… division between the scientific and technical classes and those who will stand outside’ (Bell, 1976 [1973]:112. The ‘… central person is the professional, for he is equipped by his education and training to provide the kinds of skill, which are increasingly demanded in a post-industrial society’ (Bell, 1976 [1973]:112). He dates the ‘birth’ of this type of society to between 1945 and 1950 and links it in the United States of America (USA) with the early uses of nuclear energy facilitated by strong working relationships between the scientific community and federal government.

The post-industrial societies that emerged in a number of the westernised, developed economies of the world are characterised as being based on designing, producing and marketing ‘high quality’ goods and services, which are increasing being
individualised to meet consumers’ needs (Gee, Hull and Lankshear, 1996). Jones (1995:1) notes in relation to such societies that ‘services such as welfare, education, administration and the transfer of information dominate employment’. Given the high output and labour productivity that exist in such economies, the production of basic products such as food and clothing is easily met. So production is moving further towards the creation of elaborately transformed manufactured goods and personal services, which until quite recently were either too expensive for or unknown to the average consumer. Examples of this process include: high-speed computers, mobile phones, digital televisions, short, expensive holidays in exotic resorts, personal trainers and life coaches.

Post-industrial societies are characterised by the use of rationality, planning and foresight, as they increasingly adopt a technocratic mode of production and place emphasis on theoretical rather than empirical knowledge. Over time, the proportion of manual workers declines and knowledge workers come to dominate in the workforce of the nation (Bell, 1976). While post-industrial societies tend to emphasise technocratic solutions to problems (Bell, 1976), this is not to argue that those employees who devise and apply such solutions will necessarily become more powerful themselves because of the exercise of such skills and abilities (Bell, 1976). They are more likely to remain as technicians unless they acquire broader and more sophisticated knowledge and understanding, usually provided through the completion of further and/or tertiary studies.

What does not seem debatable is the drive towards more professional jobs (Sullivan, 1999), especially in westernised and developed economies such as Australia. As far as the education of children is concerned, parents are increasingly focused on assisting their offspring to move into professional and knowledge-based employment, rather than manual or technical work. The recent shortage of skilled tradesmen and women in Australia and elsewhere results from the previous preferences of students and their parents to enter jobs that emphasise service, administrative or knowledge management functions rather than physical skilled manual work. However, there are labour shortages in some professional jobs too, such as doctors, nurses and specific teaching fields. (Such shortages are also related to the ageing of the existing workforces in a number of western economies.) Currently, the recent international
financial and economic crisis, triggered by the ‘sub-prime’ loans crisis in the USA that started in November 2007, has clearly impacted on the labour market conditions for a range of skilled employees in both physical production and service industries (for example car manufacturing (Cook, 2008), and financial services (ABC, 2009; Koster and Laurance, 2009).

A significant feature of post-industrial societies is the rapidity of change and the diminution of the time period between the creation and implementation of change factors in these societies (for example, decreasing time intervals between the introduction of new technologies and subsequent generations of such technologies—mobile phones and computers being two such cases).

The societal and economic structure and direction identified by Bell (1976) and Sullivan (1999) above is supported by Gee, Hull and Lankshear, (1996), in their conceptualisation of ‘new capitalism’. These authors define new capitalism as being:

... based on the design, production and marketing of ‘high quality goods’ and services for now saturated markets...selling newer and ever more perfect(ed) customised (individualised) goods and services in niche markets...(with) the emphasis ... on the (active) knowledge and flexible learning needed to design, market, perfect and vary goods and services as symbols of identity, not on the actual product itself as a material good (or service) (Gee, et al., 1996:26).

This approach supports the need for ‘... fully informed workers who actively participate in the quality culture of the organisation and ... (who) take full responsibility for all the organisational ramifications of the jobs they do ... (and are thus) empower(ed)...(Gee, et al., 1996:xvi).

These authors highlight an aspect of new capitalism that has been described elsewhere as managerialism. Under conditions of new capitalism, competition is intensified which in turn leads to greater managerial control to ensure greater organisational performance. This gives rise to a phenomenon that has been called managerialism, described by Pinnington and Lafferty (2003:253) as ‘an approach to
the planning, organisation, control and administration of work that gives the concerns and interests of managers priority to such an extent that it sometimes will exclude the legitimate issues facing other stakeholders’. In other words, under a managerialist regime, employees’ interests may be ‘neglected’ and workers are often viewed, as easily disposable when their services are no longer required.

The notion that post-industrial society focuses on service, knowledge and information has important implications for career management. The notion of ‘new capitalism’ emphasises the organisational impacts of increased globalisation and competition, which also have important ramifications for the study of career management. That is, under conditions of new capitalism in a post-industrial society the notion of a ‘job for life’ is largely undermined, as careers become flexible and changes of jobs occur more frequently during one’s working life. It is argued therefore, that the post-industrial society and new capitalism provide an interlinked social, economic and political background for this thesis.

It should be noted that the NSWDET has essentially remained an older style government bureaucracy that relies mainly on full-time, permanent employees to provide its services and thus still tends to and is seen to provide long-term employment. Attempts to introduce a more managerialist approach—for example, school principals being able to appoint teaching staff rather than accepting teaching staff through the long-standing transfer program—were commenced in 2008. But this approach appears to have a stronger impact on NSWDET staff in regional and head office positions. At the school level, the strong action of the New South Wales Teachers Federation (NSWTF) has in the past rebuffed or blunted such actions when they apply to teaching staff, or ensured that any changes that are implemented contain rewards for school staff—for example the January 2009 pay agreement that covers teachers and provides a 12.4% salary increase over three years and resolves the NSWDET’s attempt to remove the priority ranking of teachers to be able to move schools if they had spend a prescribed number of years in a ‘remote area or region where it was difficult to attack staff’ (The Australian, 2009).
1.4 Research approach

This thesis is interdisciplinary in its approach, integrating the epistemology, concepts, methodologies and terminology of a number of different disciplines, including: education, personal/career development, employment relations, psychology, management and sociology. It is based on a qualitative study conducted in 2007 that entailed a series of interviews with individuals who have an interest in the career management of NSWDET secondary careers advisers. This thesis adopted a stakeholder perspective so as to identify, recruit and select interviewees who provided as broad as possible a perspective on the topic of the career management provided for NSWDET secondary careers advisers.

A stakeholder is a person, group or organisation that has a direct or indirect stake or interest in an organisation because it can affect or be affected by the organisations’ actions, objectives or policies (Freeman, 1984; Pesqueux and Damak-Ayadi, 2005). While the term and theory derive from a business and human resource perspective (Kochan, 2003), the concept of stakeholder has broadened in recent decades and is now used by individuals, community organisations, special interest groups (Stakeholder, 2009), and business executives to help them examine relationships between individuals, groups and organisations that impact on each other. This perspective can in some ways be seen as analogous to the 360-degree review as used in human resource management staff assessment activities. Stakeholder theory can also be a useful tool to examine business ethics and managerial obligations (Phillips, 2004).

The stakeholders in this research are drawn from: professional associations that have an interest in and/or an affect on careers advisers; the industrial union that represents careers advisers; staff in the NSWDETVED who have responsibilities for the career management of careers advisers; NSWDET staff with general human resources, staffing and retraining functions and; practicing NSWDET careers advisers (see Table 4.1). In designing a number of the interview questions, Arnold’s (1997:46) schema or framework of career management activities or processes was used as a tool to identify and investigate the practices used by the NSWDET for its secondary careers advisers. This schema is shown below in Table 1.1.
Table 1.1: Career management interventions in organisations

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<tr>
<td>Internal vacancy notification</td>
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<td>Career paths</td>
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<td>Career workbooks</td>
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<td>Career planning workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>Computer–assisted career management</td>
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<td>Individual counselling</td>
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<td>Training and educational opportunities</td>
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<td>Personal development plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career action centres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development centres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentoring programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job assignments/rotation</td>
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<td>Outplacement</td>
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While now 12 years old, Arnold’s schema of career management was used in the study because it is simple and straightforward and lists a number of employer-driven interventions that could be identified via interview questions. It is also based on a useful definition of career management that is examined in more detail later in this thesis. It is argued that the fields of career management and development are active because of the broad range of stakeholders they encompass and their intellectual activity in turn generates a breadth of theoretical perspectives that inform the analysis provided. The research methodology used in this thesis is explained in greater detail in Chapter 4.

1.5 Thesis structure

This dissertation is structured as follows: Chapter 2 gives an overview of the key aspects of work, career, career development and management and the psychological contract that people have experienced and relates these aspects to the central themes of the thesis. Chapter 3 provides the historical background of careers advisers in
NSWDET secondary schools and provides a picture of their work changes and career management. This is given within the larger social, economic and political contexts of the time period under review—1941-2008. Chapters 4 and 5 focus on the qualitative study that provides the bulk of the data for this thesis. They are based on interviews with various stakeholders from the NSWDET, professional associations and the NSWTF. The key issues being investigated in Chapter 4 are: (i) the perceptions of careers advisers and other relevant stakeholders about current career management practices provided for secondary school careers advisers by the NSWDET (ii) and the current and future career issues facing NSWDET secondary careers advisers in the current socio-economic and political context.

Chapter 4 briefly recapitulates on the conceptualisation and historical background of careers advisers’ work and the career management they had experienced. It addresses the key research questions and describes the interviewees’ responses. These responses are arranged as thematic patterns. Chapter 5 briefly notes the thematic patterns and then analyses these responses within the framework of the research questions. Chapter 6 draws upon the literature review and collected data to finally address the research questions, provide a guide for improvements to current career management practices, note the limitations of the research undertaken and indicate future directions that this research may follow.

1.6 Summary

This chapter has firstly identified the key questions to be answered in this thesis—perceptions about the career management that NSWDET secondary careers advisers have received in order to assist them in their work and the current and future career issues that they face. A brief overview of the research methodology to be used was noted. Next a justification for the selection of the topic and questions was offered — that the work role experiences and career management of careers advisers are important issues because of the recent and ongoing interest and actions by State and Federal governments in Australia, plus broader actions by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and its members to institute effective career guidance for secondary students and thus to ensure that those entrusted with this responsibility are themselves ‘up to the task’. This is a crucial
role as it ensures secondary students make informed career decisions and that national economies do not waste the human potential of their emerging workforce.

The core concepts that inform this thesis—work, career, career development, career management and psychological contract were briefly defined. The social, economic and political context for such conceptualisations was identified as that of ‘new capitalism’ that has introduced a number of changes that have affected the role of careers advisers. Following on from this, the chapter presented its interdisciplinary theoretical approach, and noted the use of Arnold’s (1979:46) career management schema to help frame a number of the research questions about the nature and impact of the career management provided by the NWSDET. The chapter also identified and justified the use of a stakeholder approach to select the interviewees to provide the data for this study. Chapter 2 will be used to investigate the nature of work, career and other core concepts that inform the analyses that will ensue.
Chapter 2

From Traditional to Boundaryless Career: What is known in the Field of Career Management?

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the current literature on the nature and meaning of work as a foundation step to investigating the concept of ‘career’ and how changes in careers have been conceptualised, experienced and managed over the past few years. An understanding of work is needed because it is the process through which a career is experienced, or the vehicle that carries the individual through their career. Thus, discovering what work is and identifying aspects of the history of work are used as a starting point to support the investigation of how the concept of career has changed in more recent times and how such changes have impacted on career management.

Next this chapter examines the nature of career development and the role of the psychological contract of work. This is followed by conceptualisation of career management that provides a justification for the use of the career management perspective and theoretical approach chosen for this thesis. In taking this approach, the chapter provides a conceptual background to Chapter 3 that provides a brief history of careers advisers’ work in NSWDET schools and the career management that they have experienced. This historical background also provides support for the study presented in Chapters 4 and 5, that deal respectively with careers advisers’ perceptions regarding their career management and issues facing NSWDET careers advisers in the present and the future.

2.2 The meaning of work

It is necessary to provide some explanation about the meaning and history of work for the discussion of career to proceed. As noted in Chapter 1, the meaning of work is complicated and changing. Weber for example, links work with ‘pleasure in craftsmanship’ (2002:200), as a ‘protection against temptation’ and a ‘purpose in life’
Jones discusses historical attitudes about and meanings of work. These range from work as ‘... a punishment (imposed) on Adam and Eve for their disobedience in eating fruit from the tree of knowledge’ (1995:193), to the Greek creation myth of Pandora, in which work is one of the ‘ills (or evils) afflicting humanity’ which she releases on the world, to the Aristotelian view that ‘work was an unnecessary interference with a citizen’s higher duties— the pursuit of virtue and truth, cultivation of the arts and participation in public affairs’ (Jones, 1995:193), but with the realisation that such esoteric life is not possible unless work is done by ‘inanimate instrument(s)’.

More recently, the collective attitude of Western civilisation towards work appears to have been more strongly influenced by the Judeo-Christian tradition—in short, a rejection of both idleness and slavery and the encouragement of the ‘... the idea of self-sufficiency and the dignity of labour ... work could be noble, but the rich should not exploit the poor’ (Jones, 1995:194-195). This somewhat relaxed attitude towards work changes after the Christian Reformation. This change is marked by the views of Luther and Calvin (Jones, 1995). Weber (cited in Jones, 1995:195) argues that the reformation of Luther and Calvin represented the explosion of a spirit of individualism, self-advancement and competition that encouraged the growth of a ‘philosophy of avarice’. As such, the accumulation of capital becomes an aim in itself and ‘... economic acquisition (is) no longer subordinate to man as the means for satisfaction of his material needs’ (Weber, 1905, cited in Jones, 1995:195).

Jones (1995) argues that the links made by Weber between Protestantism (the values of people who adhere to Protestant Christianity) and capitalism can be over-emphasised, as it is not only such people who have been and are economically successful. Yet he does note, through the use of writings by Paz, how Spanish Catholicism and English Protestantism respectively have had differing impacts on those people who live in ‘New Spain’ (i.e. Mexico and South America) and the United States of America. In relation to the former and then the latter, Paz notes that work was not redemptive and:

... had no value in itself ... manual work was servile ... (and) the superior man neither worked nor traded. He made war, he commanded.
He legislated. He also thought, contemplated, wooed, loved and enjoyed himself. Work was good because it produced wealth, but wealth was good because it was intended to be spent. Work is the precursor of the fiesta. The United States has not really known the art of the festival … A society that so energetically affirmed the redemptive value of work, could not help chastising as depraved the cult of the festival and the passion for spending … Work is purification … Capitalism exalts the activities and behaviour patterns traditionally called virile, aggressiveness, the spirit of competition and emulation, combativeness (cited in Jones, 1995:196).

Edgell (2006) analyses how work has changed as a consequence of the advent of industrial capitalism and more recently, the post-industrial society. He argues that work (in pre-industrial capitalist societies—stone age, horticultural and agrarian) has changed from being viewed:

... negatively and ... embedded in wider social relations, notably those of kinship (to human activity in a societal setting which) ... include the use of machinery powered by inanimate sources of energy, the separation of home and work, specialist work roles and places, a profit-oriented market system, free wage labour, and a positive value associated with work (Edgell, 2006:25-26).

Grint (2005) identifies work as: labour, objective, a contribution to the economy and the state, and employment. In addition, this author discusses various ‘historical rhetorics of work’ that encompassed: ‘the language of work, work and power, work and Christianity (the so-called Protestant work ethic), work and social class’ (Grint, 2005:14-19). In addition, Edgell (2006) and Grint (2005) examine various political approaches to work, including those offered by: anarchists, Hegel, Mark, Blauner, Braverman Morris and Gorz. Grint (2006) provides an overview of contemporary Western orientations to work, such as work as part of the social construction of meaning, affluent workers and their orientation to work (the embourgeoisement thesis) and finally, the origins and significance of orientations to work.
Mackay (1993:85) views work for Australians as ‘occupational therapy… (in) that the work group supplies an important source of stimulation and social contact’. As such this author argued that work provided a welcome refuge for women whose ‘emotional lives (were) in turmoil as a result of their (then) redefinition of gender roles’ (Mackay, 1993:85). Grint viewed work as more a social than an individual set of actions, even for those who worked alone, as this is done within a ‘socially constructed network of relations’ (2005: 46).

So it is possible to argue that work is more than an essential component of an economic system or evidence of economic forces; it transcends and operates beyond such boundaries and is ‘quintessentially a social phenomenon’ (Grint, 2005: 46). Grint argues that work embodies ‘social inequalities, such as ‘… gender, ethnic and class divisions’ (2005:46) and that these issues existed before the rise of capitalism. Also Grint (2005) points out that the place of work is not conceptually separated from and unrelated to the home, as both are connected via ‘a seamless web of social interdependence’ (Grint, 2005:46). As such, Grint argues for an appreciation of the historical nature of work, to avoid the erroneous view that work is simply the result of the current players on the scene. Rifkin (2000) argues that work has had a crucial role in the creation of present day civilisation (at least in Western developed countries).

Blustein et al., (2008:295, citing Quick and Tetrick, 2003) argue that work ‘… is a central part of our real life, a primary factor in the overall well-being of individuals and a key to understanding human behaviour … (and as such) … the role of work can vary considerably, ranging from promoting health to leading to distress and strain, These authors (Blustein et al., 2008:295, citing Richardson, 1993) acknowledge that work may allow extra means ‘… for self-expression and self determination’, but point out that such a view of work is based on studies of the opportunities available to a small proportion of workers who themselves have been middle class and experienced a privileged life and had the opportunity to exercise choice in their work (Blustein et al., 2008).

Such freedom of choice is not generally the experience of working-class, poor or other marginalised people around the world (Blustein, et al., 2008). These writers argue that for most people, an essential function of work is to provide for their basic
survival and some control over their lives. Also that the ‘... grand career narrative (Blustein et al., 2008:297, citing Super, Savickas and Super, 1996) ... that people have the opportunity to obtain work that manifests their personal interests and serves as a natural outlet for their self-concepts’ (Blustein et al., 2008:297), while desirable, is not really what happens for most people. These authors (Blustein et al., 2008) accept the benefit of work as a chance for people to select activities that fit their personal interests and attributes or develop their concept of self. But they point out that this is not the lived experience of many employees for whom work may be boring, repetitive and at worst ‘painful, tedious and sometimes demeaning’ (Blustein et al., 2008:298). To sum up, these authors present work within a psychological context that views its functions as a means of survival, power, social connection and self-determination (Blustein, et al., 2008).

The conclusion that can be drawn from the above is that constructions about the nature and meaning of work have been and are based upon how it is perceived by individuals and societies. In contemporary western societies, work generally relates to being paid for mental and/or physical exertion, but there is no unambiguous or fully objective way to explain what work is. That which is viewed as work depends on the specific social circumstances in which such activities are undertaken. And the view of work is influenced by how these circumstances and activities are interpreted by those involved (Grint, 2005); for example, while most workers would argue that work is what they do for an income, this definition excludes those who provide unpaid domestic labour, or volunteer their time to charitable causes. Subsistence farmers would also be excluded.

Globalisation, reductions in tariff barriers, the corporatisation and/or privatisation of government business enterprises are forces that over the past few decades led to changes in work and the labour markets in developed economies— and thus the social class structures which have evolved to support the range of work available (Jones, 1995, Edgell, 2006 and Grint, 2005). Such changes in both the external and internal determinants and environments of work have relevance to what secondary careers advisers tell and explain to students in helping them make sense of the world of work and in planning their own careers. Clearly the meaning of work is complicated and evolving, yet as is explained immediately below, this process of
evolution has continued for many millennia and has been refined more recently into a perhaps more elegant expression of human activity—the transmutation of work into a career.

2.3 Career and associated concepts

2.3.1 Career and its changing meaning

Two key questions arise at this point: what is a ‘career’ and how is a career different from and yet related to employment and/or work? O’Keefe (1981: 298) defines career as ‘… (the) general course of action or progress of a person through life, as in some profession, in some moral or intellectual action etc, (and as) … an occupation, profession, etc, followed as one’s lifework …’. Employment, according to this same source is ‘… that on which one is employed; (one’s) work, occupation, business’ (1981:589). The latter appears a less appealing version of the former. As such it is perhaps easy to see why the term career is favoured over employment by employees and employers alike and explains why many (but not all) organisations have come to see employment in terms of a career—or at least work presenting in the guise of a career.

It has been argued that at a basic level, a career has a direct link with work and paid employment (Hartel, Fujimoto, Strybosh and Fitzpatrick, 2007, and Inkson, 2007). Stone (2002:837) defines career as ‘All the jobs that an employee has held in their working life’. Dessler et al., (2004) agree with this view and add that a career offers ‘opportunities for progress’ (2004:337). Arnold (1997: 1), views a career as including:

\[
\text{… a wide range of sequences of occupational experiences \ldots (which) \ldots}
\]

\[
\text{does not necessarily involve promotion and (that) may well cross}
\]

\[
\text{occupational and organisational boundaries, frequently in many cases.}
\]

Beardwell and Claydon (2007) discuss how the traditional concept of a career has existed in the past as paid work for the elite or as only available to those members of a society who already occupied a privileged position. In a similar way, Inkson (2007) distinguishes between those who had a profession, for example in the military, law or
medicine and those who worked as trades people or had an occupation or simply, as Beardwell and Claydon, note, ‘hav(e) a job, (or) mak(e) a living (or are) employed’ (2007:3). Donohue (2006) argues that a causal connection exists between a traditional career and the creation of organisations.

Thus, in the industrial era, the meaning of career came to be associated with linear, stable, seamless and sequential progress and promotion within the confines of one large organisation or industry (and often after some initial job experimentation). Career theories, such as those developed by Holland, Parsons and Super and human resource development practices created during the industrial era, tend to incorporate such conceptualisations of career (Donohue, 2007). Such a view or expectation about a career was less likely in small-to-medium sized organisations as they did not in general have the resources or the longevity to provide such a career path for their employees.

Yet the meaning of ‘career’ has changed in recent decades—from the certainty of a clearly delineated job pathway within a particular field (McCowan and McKenzie, 2003) to that of self employment (Bridges, 1995), being a ‘portfolio’ person (Handy, 1995:26), having a ‘portfolio’ career (Handy, 1995 cited in Holland and DeCieri, 2006) a ‘boundary-less career’ (Arthur and Rousseau, cited in Parker and Inkerson, 1999: 76) or a ‘protean career’ (Noe, 2002).

Haines, Scott, and Lincoln define career as ‘… the sequence and variety of work roles (paid and unpaid) which one undertakes throughout a lifetime… (it) …includes life roles, leisure activities, learning and work’ (2006:14). Most recent definitions of career are based on the implied or explicit assumption that lifetime employment with one organisation is ending (Oxley, 2004). This trend appears to be the case even in countries such as Japan that once had a reputation for creating jobs with lifetime employment (Ono, 2007). It is argued by Sullivan that as a consequence of workplace ‘… restructuring and the alterations to the psychological employment contract (between employees and employers) … researchers have begun to examine careers across multiple firms and boundaries’ (1999:458).
An important cause of this continual change of meaning for career appears to be the erosion of the traditional psychological contract (Sullivan, 1999) between employer and employee—from one that is relational to one that has been characterised as transactional (Rousseau, 1997 cited in Holland and DeCieri, 2006). Considerable research has been conducted into the changing nature of this psychological contract and indeed, the conceptual construction of the boundaryless career and protean career both reflect strongly this changing contract. The impact of the changing psychological contract is examined in more detail below.

Inkson (2004a and 2004b) presents a number of influential ‘images of careers’ or ‘metaphors’. These images include careers as: an inheritance; a construction (which ‘emphasize(s) the role of the individual in creating his or her own career and psychological and behavioral processes’ (Inkson, 2004b: 101), and highlights the concept of individual empowerment and personalised future creation through career planning; as a cycle (as in stages or age-related phases); a fit; journey; encounters and relationships; a role; a resource (human capital and its development, Stone (2002); and as a story. Further exploration of some of these metaphors is warranted.

Research conducted by Inkson (2004a) in New Zealand reveals that people’s careers have become more mobile, improvisational and learning-based and that such changes have been driven by economic and political transformations between 1985 and 1995 (also see Arthur, 2003). Inkson (2004b) views a career as being self-directed wherein it is compared to a ‘journey’. However this journey is not to be seen as a predictable climb up the decreasing pyramidal corporate hierarchy or an idealised personal life-long learning process in one industry or occupational field. This writer draws attention to the dramatic changes in the ‘careers landscape’ since the late 1980s. Significant changes, themselves driven the processes of ‘globalisation, restructuring, downsizing, de-layering… outsourcing … casualisation of the workforce, (and the) feminisation of previously male only jobs and occupations and multiskilling’ (Inkson, 2004a: 4), have caused organisational transformations. Inkson’s journey construct of career can be compared with that provided by Biolos (2004). This writer focuses on managerial employees, entrepreneurs and consultants.
and single operator positions. He posits at least five career models or roles: the expert, the traditionalist, the portfolio manager, the planful manager and the spontaneous manager.

As is indicated above, being in control of (i.e. self-managing) one’s career is a strong theme in contemporary management literature. It can be viewed as an aspect of a managerialist approach that tends to leave employees to their own devices. Writers such as Boyatzis, McKee and Goleman (2002), Komisar (2000), and Drucker (1999), reinforce this theme and also emphasise, in different ways, the need for managerial employees to be passionate about and successful in their own careers. So a career is now becoming ‘… an improvised journey through an ambiguous and changing landscape, along unique pathways that travellers create as they go’ (Inkson, 2004a:9).

While the organisation, through career management interventions, may have a role in this ‘journey’, this role is as likely to be a receptor of the travellers’ energy and as a contributor to their journeys. More recently, Inkson has relied on the definition of career as, ‘… the evolving sequence of a person’s work experiences over time’ (2007:3, citing Arthur, Hall and Lawrence, 1989:8).

Noe (2005: 352) draws on the work of Hall to define careers as ‘...the individual sequence of attitudes and behaviour associated with work-related experiences and activities over the span of a person’s life’. This author and others such as Dessler et al., (2004), also note the development of a ‘protean career’, both as a construct and a description of how employees are pursuing their careers. Such a career is self-directed and with a goal of psychological success in one’s work. As such the protean career has much in common with Sullivan's (1999) ‘boundaryless’ career. Also, Noe (2005) identifies four meanings of the concept of careers: advancement, a profession, a life-long sequence of jobs and a life-long sequence of job-related experiences.

The concept of ‘boundaryless careers’ has been developed to describe workers who possess ‘transferable skills and knowledge’ that can be used in a number of firms or organisations in which an employee may seek employment. Early work by Bridges (1995) explored the changing nature of employment that moved workers from a reliance on employers to a much greater dependence on themselves to find and create jobs in the ‘new economy’ of the mid 1990s. Such an economy was increasingly
reflecting the rise of managerialism. Sullivan (1999) provides a useful summary of the traditional and boundaryless career that is reproduced below (Table 2.1).

### Table 2.1: Comparisons of traditional and boundaryless careers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Boundaryless</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment relationship:</td>
<td>Job security for loyalty</td>
<td>Employability for performance and flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boundaries:</td>
<td>One or two firms</td>
<td>Multiple firms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills:</td>
<td>Firm specific</td>
<td>Transferable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success:</td>
<td>Pay, promotion, status</td>
<td>Psychologically meaningful work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsibility for career management:</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Individual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training:</td>
<td>Formal programs</td>
<td>On-the-job</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milestones:</td>
<td>Age-related</td>
<td>Learning-related</td>
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A number of the significant differences between these two conceptualisations, such as the provision of psychologically meaningful work and learning-related milestones for employees, are key pointers to later developments in the contextualisation of career that are examined below.

More recent research by Arthur (2003) sheds light on the nature of a boundaryless career in that such a work trajectory can bestow upon the individuals who pursue it, a range of benefits not always achieved by those whose career is within the boundaries of one organisation or industry. These so called unbounded benefits can include broader ‘… skills and knowledge enhanced personal networks, (raised) self assurance, personal growth, broader viewpoints, and (enhanced) communication skills’ (Arthur, 2003:3). The current post-industrial conceptualisations of ‘career’ are broader and in some ways no less elitist than those that existed in the industrial era, as they rely on intensive and on-going training and education, expressed in the form of life-long learning that supports an individual’s employability (Beardwell and Claydon, 2007). Thus it can be seen that the role of secondary schools career advisers has become more important in this era. While the meaning of a ‘career’ varies and has been viewed as both an objective and more recently a subjective
construct (Patton and McMahon, 1999), there appears from the above discussion to be a number of key features writers identify when attempting to define this concept. These features have been summed up as ‘the process of managing life, learning and work across the lifespan’ (Miles Morgan, 2007).

Thus while taking all of these views into consideration, the meaning of career used in this thesis will rely on that proposed above by Miles Morgan (2007) because it is the most comprehensive and reflects the post-industrial society/new capitalism contexts of career advisers’ work outlined above in Chapter 1. It is now appropriate to acknowledge and explain the impact that other influences have on careers—in short to contextualise careers. In doing so, the career management of NSWDET secondary school careers advisers can be more realistically understood, a more grounded analysis created and potentially, a more effective set of recommendations can be provided concerning future career management interventions for this target group.

2.3.2 Contextualisation of careers

The major influences impacting on people’s careers have been identified as social and economic systems, the organisation in which people work and their family circumstances (Inkson, 2007). This author identifies the following specific factors which impact on people’s careers: (i) individual preferences and choices, (ii) demographic factors, (iii) economic factors, (iv) labour market factors, (v) social factors, (vi) organisational factors and (vii) technological factors.

The demographic factors include the makeup of and changes in the population (especially the part which is seeking employment, and within this part such factors as numbers, age, gender, ethnic origin, education, skills and experience). The economic factors are the growth or decline in the economy, business confidence, international trade conditions, interest rates and other factors influencing business commencements and current wage rates. Next are the labour market factors as they affect employment opportunities, because the rise of some and fall of other industries has impacts on individuals’ careers. Social factors include the demand for traditional and new products and services and the desire to enter the workforce, have a career, have more than one job, protect individual financial security or seek affluence.
Organisational factors include business or occupational bureaucracies, the prevalence of large versus small organisations, the conditions for self-employment organisational structures and restructuring, and the trends of permanent versus temporary employment and full-time versus part-time employment. The final factors are those associated with technology, including substitution of machines for manual labour and skills and computerisation of clerical and coordination activities as well as changes in jobs and occupations that can be caused by technological advancement (Inkson, 2007:4-5).

Given the variable nature of the above factors, it has been argued that individuals in contemporary society are less able to plan their future employment or career path, and this uncertainty can impact upon their decisions about such key issues as ‘… starting a family, taking out a mortgage, changing (their) occupations, re-entering education or retiring from employment’ (Beardwell and Claydon, 2007:286). If people are unsure about their future employment they may have fewer or no children than would otherwise had been their choice and this could reduce the size of the next generation. Such a development could impact on the demand for housing and the size of houses built, which could in turn reduce employment levels in the building and associated industries and as consequence, ‘…could damage the social fabric severely’ (Beardwell and Claydon, 2007:286).

Current views about the likely nature and variety of future careers offer the following picture: (i) bureaucratic, professional and entrepreneurial (Kanter, 1989 cited in Beardwell and Claydon, 2007:285), (ii) subjective—‘dissolved objective careers, replaced by an externalised format which emphasises career growth and useful for future organisational self-design—a career development format akin to a ‘protean career’ (Noe, 2002: 369) of experiments and explorations (Weick and Berlinger, 1989, cited in Beardwell and Claydon, 2007:285) and boundaryless (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996, cited in Beardwell and Claydon, 2007:285). This thesis draws upon a number of these contextual aspects of a ‘career’ in the analysis that follows and based on this changing landscape of career, the matters of career development, career management and the psychological contract can now be examined.
2.3.3 **Career development**

The task of defining career development is not straightforward given its interchangeable use with the concept of career management. So it is important to address this potentially confusing issue before proceeding to investigate the range of career development theories that can inform the work of NSWDET careers advisers. While career development may be the ‘term of choice used by the careers research and counselling movements to describe their work’ (Inkson, 2007:81) and thus create a body of theory, professional activity and practical pursuit (Brown (2002), providing a definition of it (and a brief account of career development theory) can be a challenging task. However Inkson provides a reasonably simple starting point by defining career development as a ‘…career being actively developed by the individual whose career it is’ (2007: 81). It is relevant at this point to distinguish career development from skill development. Career development, according to Desimone et al., (2002) is an ongoing process that allows individuals to make progress through a set of issues, tasks and themes that are relatively unique to the individual. Career development can be seen as the employer ‘ensuring that there is an alignment of individual career planning and organisation career-management processes to achieve an optimal match of individual and organisational needs’ (Desimone et al., 2002:11). Career plans can be implemented, at least in part through an organisation’s training program.

However skill development is the acquisition of ‘key competencies that enable (an employee) to perform current or future jobs’ (Desimone et al., 2002:11). Such processes are usually initiated and implemented through training and development activities that are initiated by the employer.

The concept of career development is in some respects very similar to that of career management, especially if the focus is placed on the individual. However where the difficulty comes is when the definition of the two concepts takes the form as proposed by Desimone et al., (2002). These authors make a clear distinction between career development and career management, in which career development is ‘an ongoing process by which individuals progress through a series of stages, each of which is characterised by relatively unique issues, themes and tasks’ (and) career
management which is ‘an ongoing process undertaken by organisations to prepare, implement and monitor the career plans of individual employees, usually in concert with the organisation’s career management system’ (Desimone et al., 2002:657).

While such a distinction appears to be reasonably clear, a more recent attempt to identity these concepts, it again tends to blur. For example Inkson (2007) provides the following meaning for career management. He defines it in relation to the role of the individual, the organisation, and as a shared role between these two agents. In the case of the first meaning, the management of one’s career is facilitated, by planning (Fayol, 1949, cited in Inkson, 2007:90). So career management becomes career self-management (and is thus similar to the meaning of career development as proposed by Desimone et al., (2002) above. In the case of organisational career management, this has been encapsulated within the field of human resource management (HRM). Inkson (2007:201) states ‘human resource management tends to define career management as management of employees’ careers by the organisations in which they are employed … (which thus exists within) an overall approach to staff management that integrates’ other HRM functions to achieve the strategic goals of the organisation. As will be shown later in this thesis, this is similar to the type of career management that is experienced by NSWDET secondary careers advisers. The third definition of career management is as a shared role, which combines the individual and the organisation, (in well-managed organisations), ‘… into a virtuous circle of complementary career management activities’ (Inkson, 2007:209). As will be seen below, all of these meanings of career management have a place in the career management of secondary careers advisers.

One key similarity is that both conceptualisations, career development and career management, include the process of career guidance. Career guidance itself is a current worldwide issue and focus of research and governmental and world organisation activity (Maguire and Killen, 2003; OECD, 2003; Sweet and Watts, 2004; and Sultana, Watts and Sweet, 2004). Carey (2007) also notes that the terms ‘career development’ and ‘career guidance’ are used interchangeably in the international arena and interprets these concepts in the same way as that used by Miles Morgan, (2007). On the other hand, Gomez-Mejia, Balkin and Cardy (2007:279-289) take a focus on career development that refers to a number of the
traditional career management interventions such as organisational assessment, assessment centres, psychological assessment and performance appraisal. Hartel et al., (2007:318) describes career development as ‘… the series of related training activities, experiences, tasks and relationships an employee undertakes… underpinned by the employee’s own initiatives (or career planning) and employer’s initiatives (or career management)’. Thus, according to these authors, the conceptual ‘equation’ is simple:

Career development = career planning + career management.

A useful practitioner perspective on career development is that articulated by Stevens (2004)\(^2\). For Stevens (2004), career development requires the resetting of personal career goals, for example applying for one’s first job or a new job. These changes he conceptualises as ‘career action steps’ (2004:1) and they are steps that need to be repeated through one’s life. He asserts that such steps should be based on achieving a goal, and that the process of real career development is based on: ‘self-search (the inner self), exploration (outer self) which will (and has to) lead to decision-making’ (Stevens. 2004:1). In closing his analysis of career development, Stevens (2004) claimed that we all need to learn how to make a decision (decision learning). Such a perspective is also reflected in the definition of career development provided by Dessler et al., (2004:337) as ‘… a series of activities that contribute to the person’s career exploration, establishment, success and fulfilment’. So it is important to keep in mind the meaning of career development as a planned and self-directed journey (Desimone et al., 2002 and Inkson, 2007). Thus the definition of career development used in this thesis is that provided by the combination of Dessler et al., (2004:337) and Desimone et al., (2002). This definition is useful because its helps in gaining an insight into the careers and career management of NSWDET secondary careers advisers. This is so because (i) these practitioners use a combination of career

\(^2\) Stevens 2004: Transcript of interview conducted with Paul Stevens on 12 November 2004. Paul Stevens has worked as a private career consultant in Sydney, NSW for 28 years. He previously directed the ‘Centre for Worklife Counselling’ (http://www.worklife.com.au/) in Sydney and provided a range of career development services to individual, practitioners, university and corporate clients.
development theories in their work with secondary students and (ii) the career management they receive from their employer is, to varying extents, informed by the application of such career development theories.

2.3.4 Career development theories

NSWDET secondary careers advisers use career development theories to inform their practice in assisting students to develop their own careers. The application of such theories is part of their professional training to become a careers adviser (RMIT, 2009). Thus it is useful to briefly describe the range of theories that may influence their work with such students. Early career development theory as produced by Parsons in 1909, provided a paradigm of matching people to jobs. This approach was incorporated into trait and factor theory which itself includes the perspective of individual differences (Savickas, 1997). Super builds upon this basic structure to include other perspectives or segments—developmental, self and contextual, which he models as a ‘life-span, life space theory of careers’ (Savickas, 1997:248). His theoretical work is based on and refined by a functionalist approach (Savickas, 1997).

To further integrate Super’s theory; Savickas (1997) proposes the use of the construct of adaptation in order to create a broader theory that would bridge the various elements Super’s theory contained. Career adaptability and planfulness are key elements in Savickas’s career adaptability construct. In 1964, Tiedeman published a contemporaneous career development theory, that of career construction or constructivism. His theory adds three significant ‘truths’ to the field of career development—‘career emerges from self-organisation, purposeful action bridges discontinuity and decisions evolve through differentiation and integration’ (Savickas, 2008:217).

A specific attempt to incorporate a postmodernist perspective into career counselling theories is provided by Thorgren and Feit (2001). Savickas introduced his own career construction theory in 2001 (Busacca, 2007:57) and brought out a refined version in 2005 (Rehfuss, 2007:68). His theory draws upon Super’s ‘Career Development Theory’ of 1957 and adds the constructivist perspectives of individual
differences, developmental and coping tasks, and psychodynamic motivators (Busacca, 2007). According to this author, this career development theory was developed to help careers counsellors assist their clients ‘... address the evolving economical, work and life changes in our global society’ (Busacca, 2007:64). Given the theory’s recency, it will be interesting to see how useful it may be in achieving such goals in the face of the current (2008) world financial and economic crises.

From time to time, career development theorists attempt to create ‘integrative perspectives’ that either seek to bring together different theories or, more ambitiously, theories and practices. As indicated above, Super and Savickas attempt to achieve this goal and more recently Chen (2003) has drawn attention to a number of such efforts by career development theorists. These efforts include those by: (i) Sharf (1997, cited in Chen, 2003:203) who combined a number of theories in career counselling practice (combining Super’s theory with trait and factor and career decision-making theories); (ii) in systems theory of career development, Patton and McMahon (1999 cited in Chen, 2003:203) who attempted to incorporate key constructs from Holland’s personality typology theory; Brown’s 1996 values-based model, Super’s 1990 life-span approach, Krumboltz’s (Mitchell and Krumboltz, 1996) social learning theory and Young, Valach and Collin’s 1996 contextual approach; and (iii) from Savickas (2001) who proposes a four level model to help understand careers theories and integrate them into one comprehensive theory of careers—‘self-organisation of personality dispositions, self-regulatory concerns, self-definitional narratives and selective optimisation processes’ (Chen, 2003:203).

Chen (2003) contributes to the integration of career development theory and practice by proposing a theoretical integration based on the conception of career as ‘self-realisation, growing experience and context conceptualisation’ (Chen, 2003:213) with the latter concept explained in that ‘human understanding is subject to influences from conditions and situations surrounding the very perceptions and experiences of individuals’ (Chen, 2003:210). As part of the effort to create a more international career development theory, Guichard and Lenz (2005) report upon the proceedings of a symposium conducted at a joint meeting of the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance and the National Career Development Association in San Francisco in June 2004. The symposium’s Career
Theory in an International Perspective Group, notes 7 different career theory approaches: action research, self-construction model, transition model, dynamics of entering the workforce, narrative in career guidance, dilemma approach and interactive identity construction (Guichard and Lenz, 2005:17). They conclude that there were three main characteristics that:

... appear to be common to all the contributions made during the symposium: (a) the emphasis placed on contexts and cultural diversities, (b) the emphasis on self-construction or development more than on occupational choice or occupational career development and (c) constructivist approaches to these questions (Guichard and Lenz, 2005:26).

Dissatisfaction with and criticism of traditional person-environmental fit models such as trait and factor and Holland’s personality typology career development theories led some career theorists to explore other approaches that view the individual and the environment ‘…in more complex and dynamic terms than the traditional person-environment approaches…(that include)…the multiplicity of contextual factors in career development (and)...explore the role of unplanned events in career choice’ (Bright and Pryor, 2005:292). This ‘chaos theory’ as it has been called, has as its basis two key concepts that challenge the person-environmental fit models that are based on the traditional scientific world-view of linearity. The two key concepts of chaos theory are nonlinearity and recursiveness (the ongoing influencing of one factor by another and the continuation of such interactions) (Bright and Pryor, 2005).

Chaos theory is advantageous when applied to the field of career development because it incorporates, in a more realistic way, factors such as change and variability between people, their life and work circumstances and the workplaces they inhabit. Nevertheless, it is often more difficult for careers counsellors and their clients to understand its application. Thus careers practitioners use ‘metaphors, myths, archetypes, poetry, heroes, and stories to deal with the challenges of complexity, change and chance that their clients face’ (Bright and Pryor, 2005:294).
McMahon and Watson (2008), in an attempt to facilitate the application of constructivist career development theories, for example the type created by Tiedeman (Savickas, 2008), Savickas (Busacca, 2007, Rehfuss, 2007) and Chen (2003), add and incorporate a quantitative career assessment instrument—the My System of Career Influences (MSCI) to create a Systems Theory Framework (STF) of career development. As such, the STF can and has been used in career counseling interventions to assist individuals to ‘… recount their experiences, elaborate meanings around their influences and tell their stories’ (McMahon and Watson, 2008: 287).

To conclude this section, it is relevant to have an overview of the range of career development theories as this helps to understand how secondary careers advisers may engage with their students to help them determine their work futures. Career advisers are themselves able to select which theoretical approach (or approaches) to use with their students. However, the application of professional development standards and certification to their continued work as careers advisers may influence the choices that they make. While personality type theories appeared to be quite influential in the 1980s, more recent approaches such as Chaos theory (Bright and Pryor, 2005) and constructivist career theory with a systems approach (McMahon and Watson, 2008) now occupy an important place as ways of understanding and assisting the career development of students under the guidance of NSWDET career advisers.

2.3.5 Career management

Despite the abundance of definitions, research and literature dealing with career development, this thesis uses as its main theoretical framework the concept of career management (this framework is described below in 2.3.5.1). It is legitimate to ask why this decision and direction have been taken. The conceptual framework of career management is used in this thesis because of the nature of the employment relationship and organisation that provides this employment for the target group—secondary careers advisers in NSWDET schools. The NSWDET is the largest public sector educational provider in Australia and still follows a very public sector approach in its employment practices. Many of its professional employees who work as teachers have traditional, relational psychological work contracts in their work
orientation, although, as noted below, this orientation may not be so common or strong in newer and/or younger professional employees.

The NSWDET still appears to demonstrate a relational workplace psychological contract as an employer. There is an expectation of employee loyalty and dedication and in return, the NSWDET offers long-term employment, a structured salary scale and for most employees, a clear career path (but as will be seen not for careers advisers). Thus for most of the current set of careers advisers, their work expectations are catered for through a generally conventional career management focus that is reflected in part by Arnold’s (1997:46) career management schema as shown in Table 1.1. The next section defines career management, and then investigates the strategies and rationale for using such career management interventions in the workplace.

2.3.5.1 Definition of career management

Noe (2005:349) referring to work by Feldman (1998) states that career management is a process that allows employees to:

(i) become aware of their own interests, values, strengths and weaknesses,
(ii) obtain information about job opportunities within the company,
(iii) identify career goals and (iv) establish action plans to achieve career goals.

Organisational career management, according to Stone (2002), is comprised of the following processes: recruitment, selection, performance appraisal, training and development, use of assessment centres, development of skills inventories for particular job positions, provision of career ladders, succession planning and outplacement (2002:360). This is similar to the definition provided by Inkson (2007). However, as Arnold (1997) notes, at least one aspect of such a set of organisational strategies may be subject to change where he characterises career ladders as ‘hamster wheels’. In such situations employees caught up in, for example, organisational change, may be required to move laterally rather than vertically
upwards—a will be seen below, this has certainly been the case for NSWDET secondary careers advisers. Alternatively, employees may seek employment outside the organisation with the possibility of returning at some time in the future once suitable positions arise and the employees have acquired a broader and deeper range of skills and experiences provided by other employers.

Stevens (2004), giving a practitioner perspective, views career management as the development and application of personal navigation skills (for example to survive in the workplace). Such skills are more commonly known today as career self-management skills and are used to initiate, grow and maintain interpersonal relationships/behaviours and the protection of self in the workplace (Stevens, 2004). To the extent that employers or organisations do have a role in career management, Stevens acknowledged that as being, essential training and subject to the alternative human resource strategy of hiring new staff who already possess the required skills. However, his overall assessment of the employer’s role in career management was that it was 'punitive to those people who do not have (the personal) navigation skills' (Stevens, 2004:1). This translates to the removal of such staff from the workplace under strategic human resource management regimes that aim to maximise returns on investment over retention of such staff and the use of longer-term staff training and development strategies in an attempt to raise their productivity.

Yet these views of career management do not allocate clear responsibility to employees and employers/organisations for driving specific aspects of the process. Stone (2002) does provide such an allocation. This writer identifies career planning and development as part of an overall process of human resource planning. He places the responsibility for career planning on the individual and for career management on the organisation. This division is dealt with below as part of the analysis of career management strategies.

Career management can also involve organisational actions to influence how individuals experience the sequence, positions and roles which they have in a job or jobs (Arnold (1997). Noe (2005) supports such actions that can enhance career motivation, for example the positive subjective response of an employee to the provision of training and development opportunities by their employer.
A sophisticated and strategic human resource management approach (Stone, 2002) can achieve both better trained, more effective and more efficient employees as well as more workers who are more highly motivated because they perceive the provision of training and development as a positive act of ‘faith’ by their employer. While the use of such approaches has been reduced in recent years because of the drive for cost-reduction in the face of increased international competition and associated organisation restructuring, this trend may have become counterproductive (Arnold, 1997) and result in organisations experiencing inefficiencies and lower productivity.

It is important to note that different career management stakeholders are likely to have varying aims. Employees and employers are, to an extent, likely to view such a process from a different perspective (and their individual perspectives may change with the passage of time). For example, a new employee in a medium to large sized organisation is likely to want to manage their career through processes such as internal networking and applying for a range of in-organisation vacancies, whereas the management within an organisation may want employees to specialise and may indeed introduce or enforce existing policies which restrict some types of job changes (Arnold, 1997).

Given the post-industrial society and new capitalism context outlined above (by Bell, 1999 Gee et al., 1996 and Sullivan, 1999), it is clear that career management is (or should be) an important component of what happens to employees throughout their working lives. One of the intriguing issues here is who is responsible for the provision of such management. In previous decades, many employees of larger organisations expected their employers to provide and develop career paths for them. For workers in smaller organisations, such expectations were generally more limited to the expectation of long-term employment in return for loyalty (the relational psychological contract). Given the increased variability and insecurity (as noted above) that accompanies employment of workers in the early 21st century and the need for organisations to have employees who are dedicated, productive and efficient, then at its most simple, career management has been redefined and restructured as ‘an organisation’s management activities aimed at helping employees with preparing, implementing and monitoring their career planning process’ (Hartel et al., 2007:319).
More broadly, Beardwell and Claydon (2007:11) explain career management as ‘processes to encourage the progression of individuals in line with personal preferences and capabilities and organisational requirements ... to give employees opportunities for development and (to) feel valued and (allow their employer) to fill posts internally’. As noted above, for the purpose of research design, this thesis used the schema provided by Arnold (1997:46) as its basic set of employer-driven interventions. Such interventions are used to help stakeholders identify, describe and discuss their perceptions about the current career management provided by the NSWDET for its secondary school careers advisers. While this thesis does focus on employer-driven career management interventions, it is important to clearly acknowledge that self-management of one’s career is extremely important; both to ensure general employability in roles which may be outside one’s current employment, and to provide some personal sense of control over one’s career direction and life. Given the above description and analysis of career management it is now appropriate to investigate the rationale and nature of career management interventions.

2.3.5.2 Career management strategies

Dessler et al., (2004) assert that in the context of career management, employers are obliged to ‘...use their employees' abilities to the fullest... (allowing them to)... realise their full potential and develop successful careers’ (2004:336). They also note that such employer action involves joint exploration of career options and decision-making (Dessler et al., 2004). Arnold (1997) emphasises the importance of career management having clearly defined goals. This requirement necessitates determination of ‘better’ or ‘worse’ outcomes, specification of what ‘better’ means, planning and then action to achieve such goals, evaluation of the success of the career management and use of the results of such an evaluation to modify goals or actions if required. This approach reflects a managerialist orientation in which resources need to be used to achieve maximum effect and/or greatest efficiency with least cost.

Arnold (1997) provides a comprehensive set of strategies that he characterised as ‘career management interventions in organisations’. This list is provided in
Table 1.1. Arnold’s schema of employer-driven career management interventions was used in this thesis as a tool to design a number of the interview questions, because it provides clear categories or types of career management activities or processes. Other conceptualisations such as ‘organisational career development’ (Dunn, 1997), ‘career development and guidance and planning’ (Nankervis, Compton and Baird, 2005; Noe, 2005) tend to obscure the territory of career management and thus reduce one’s understanding. So the use of Arnold’s set of interventions ‘… overcomes the problem of interchangeability and/or incorporation of the concept of career management with other concepts associated with people’s careers’ (Kelly, 2007:58).

While these listed interventions are not the full set identified by Arnold (1997:46), the ones selected appeared to represent those that would be most relevant to NSWDET secondary school careers advisers and more easily identified as being or not being contemporary NSWDET career management interventions. Arnold’s collection of career management interventions is not without fault—for example it is used despite the existence of more recent innovations in career management, but as explained above it does provide a clearly expressed and useful set of career management activities and processes to elicit stakeholder responses about NSWDET’s career management of its secondary careers advisers. However, it is necessary to point out that:

...organisationally-driven career management is also affected by at least two other factors: (i) the number of employees to receive or be the subject of this management and (ii) the variations in the tasks which they are required to perform (Kelly, 2007:58).

If there are many staff requiring career management and the tasks that they are required to perform are quite varied, then implementing such management becomes a more costly exercise and would require a higher level of justification. Thus careers adviser staffing levels and role changes have resource implications that need to be taken into account by the NSWDET in its career management strategies for careers advisers. An example of this consideration was shown when the New South Wales Department of Education (NSWDE), as it was known in the 1990s, changed its
careers advisers’ training program (see Chapter 3) from one that had an emphasis on
direct instruction by trainers to one that required more individual completion of set
tasks and exercises. This change both reflected changes in pedagogical practices for
the training of adults and responses by the NSWDE to the costs of face-to-face
training of prospective secondary school careers advisers.

It is interesting at this point to compare and contrast Arnold’s interventions (Table
1.1) with those provided from a more human resource management perspective
supplied by Dessler et al., (2004). These latter authors categorised the roles of
employees and employers in relation to career development rather than career
management. Dessler et al., (2004), allocate the various roles of career development
to three key stakeholders— the individual employee, the manager and the
organisation as show in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2: Roles in Career Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Manager</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Accept responsibility for your own career</td>
<td>• Provide timely performance feedback</td>
<td>• Communicate mission, policies and procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assess your interests, skills and values</td>
<td>• Provide development assignments and support</td>
<td>• Provide training and development opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seek out career information and resources</td>
<td>• Support employee development plans</td>
<td>• Provide career information and career programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Establish goals and career paths</td>
<td>• Utilise development opportunities</td>
<td>• Offer a variety of career options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Talk with your manager about your career</td>
<td>• Follow through on realistic career plans</td>
<td>• Participate in career development discussions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Management 2e, Pearson Education Australia, Frenchs Forest, NSW, Table 10.3,
p. 338.

In response to Dessler et al.’s (2004:338) representation, it needs to be made clear that
the position adopted in this thesis is to accept that career management is best
understood as a joint responsibility of employees and their organisation (which includes managers), but nevertheless concentrates, in this research, on those actions that deal with organisational initiatives to manage the careers of employees. This approach does not ignore the aspect of joint responsibility, but includes it in relation to the actions of secondary school careers advisers in NSWDET schools, when and where it is deemed to be relevant as revealed by the literature reviewed and the research undertaken. The matter of responsibility for or origin of career management is identified by the career management stakeholders who participated in the current study (examined in Chapters 4 and 5).

However it should be noted that the career development or career management that takes place for an individual is mediated by the nature of the psychological workplace contract that exists between this person and their successive employers. For example, if the psychological contract is relational in a workplace, it is more likely that a number of the career development roles (as shown above in Table 2.2), will be played out by the employee, manager and the organisation. But, on the other hand, if the relationship is transactional, then relatively few such roles or career interventions will exist. It is therefore important to understand the nature of this contract in the particular organisation.

### 2.3.6 Psychological workplace contract

Discussion of the psychological workplace contract is included in this thesis because recent changes in its nature, from relational to transactional, are likely to impact upon the perceptions of NSWDET secondary careers advisers, especially those new or younger ones whose previous experience of employment is more likely to reflect transactional psychological workplace contracts. The psychological workplace contract, or psychological contract as it is more generally known, has been defined as expectations held by the individual employee that ‘… specif(y) what the individual and organisation expect to give and receive in the working relationship’ (Dessler et al., 2004:643). However, it is important to recognise that the psychological contract is, at its most simple level, two-sided. Employers and employees are the builders of this relationship and as such, it is subject to both short-term and long-term changes (Tipple, 1996:25, citing Herriot, 1992). Atkinson (2002) and Inkson (2007)
provide a similar perspective. The latter author draws on writings by Rousseau (1995) and others to make the point that, under the conditions of new capitalism, the psychological contract has been transformed from being relational to transactional, ‘… that is, specifying a short-term exchange of benefits rather than a long-term relationship with expectations of mutual loyalty’ (Inkson, 2007:9), plus training and development for the employee.

Table 2.3, which shows an early employer perspective about the changing nature of the relationship between employer and employee that was occurring during the 1990s, gives a richer understanding of this change. The relationship descriptors in the left column correspond with an expectation by management of a relational psychological contract. Those descriptors in the right column are more representative of a managerial expectation of a transactional contract. The occurrence of such a change in this period corresponded with the rise of a more managerialist approach to employees in both medium and large-scale organisations in many developed economies.

Table 2.3: Key words used by 104 middle managers to describe the relationship between employer and employee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Past</th>
<th>Present (1990s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long-term</td>
<td>Immediate results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predictability</td>
<td>Uncertainty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality</td>
<td>High risk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuality</td>
<td>Constant change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certainty</td>
<td>Personal gain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tradition</td>
<td>Employability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>Self-reliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>Opportunism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdependence</td>
<td>Professional loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual trust</td>
<td>Doing better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company loyalty</td>
<td>Personal accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing well</td>
<td>Making a difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared responsibility</td>
<td>Pay for results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title and rank</td>
<td>Impatience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay for status</td>
<td>Fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual respect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A second way to view how organisational responses to external forces, such as new capitalism and technological change, are leading employers towards a transactional contract, is captured by Thithe (2001:313) when he notes how, within the contemporary framework of career management driven by:

... hyper competition at a global level (and) technology intensi(tivity),
the organisational response is characterised by ‘delayering, multi-dimensional career movements (jungle gym)... (with) a small component of core employees and a big component of part-time, casual and contract staff (to undertake the workload).

This change in the psychological contract has and is being driven by unpredictability in the economic environment that is in turn caused by significant factors that have forced the need for organisational restructuring and change. Two of these important factors are (i) increased competition created by the growth of global markets and (ii) ongoing technological change (Inkson, 2004a and Atkinson, 2002). Watts (cited in McGowan and McKenzie, 2003) notes that the effects of these forces are flowing through into the careers of many employees as a ‘career quake’. This led him to define a career broadly as ‘…the individual’s lifelong progression in learning and work’ (Watts, cited in McCowan and McKenzie, 2003:10) so as to incorporate the change element required for individuals’ continued employability. Managerialism is also a factor in this change in the psychological contract, but the task of teasing out the inherent strength and interrelationships of these forces is a discussion for another place and time.

Consequently, organisational expectations of employees have changed from ‘…career dependence to career resilience, from employment to employability’ (Atkinson, 2002:16). The possession of career resilience, defined by Hind, Frost and Rowley (1996:18) ‘…as ‘maintaining adaptive functioning in spite of experienced risk or stress’ thus becomes more important for employees. Employees have responded to the changed nature of employment by seeking general employability in the longer term as a compensation for losing job security and general stability in their work life (Whymark, 1999). Such changes, as manifested in the impact of
organisational restructuring upon individual employees have, according to Inkson (2007), made them more independent and assertive in pursuing their own career plans.

However, as noted by Saunders and Thornill (2006) in a study of employees who had experienced forced employment contract change (from permanent to temporary), the nature of attachment that these employees had to their employer was not a simple or smooth transition from relational to transactional. Such employees felt resentment of their employers because of this change and the authors noted that productivity levels could be adversely affected as a consequence (Saunders and Thornill, 2006).

In the case of professional employees within the context of new capitalism which relies on enhanced managerial control, it appears that they may ‘... (refocus) their allegiance and career aspirations away from the organisation, onto their occupations to anchor their self-esteem and identity in the workplace...’ (O’Donohue, Sheehan, Hecker and Holland, 2007:80) Moreover, this latter research into the contracts of knowledge workers (CSIRO scientists) led O’Donohue et al., (2007) to conclude that for these employees, the additional dimensions of ideological rewards (for example the opportunity to benefit society and the opportunity to advance scientific knowledge) should be included as part of the definition and framework of the psychological contract. If these elements of the contract are missing, as reported by the interviewees in this research (O’Donohue et al., 2007), then such employees will realign their work energies as indicated above.

To sum up, employer responses to increased national and international competition and technological change in many industries have led to changes in how they view and implement the psychological contract. As such the nature of the psychological workplace contract reduces the proportion of staff that would be likely to have a relational contract and increase the proportion of those whose contractual view would be transactional. The changing psychological contract has a significant impact on the subjective and objective aspects of both the career development and career management experienced by employees.
2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has provided the building blocks of definitions—work, career, career development, career management and psychological workplace contract; career development theories; and career management strategies to explore both the career management and career issues of NSWDET careers adviser. Understanding these definitions, theories and strategies allows the reader to more deeply appreciate aspects of what careers advisers need to explain, use and experience in their working lives. The literature reviewed shows that work and careers for many have become more complex and unpredictable, subject to external forces such as globalisation and technological change, shaped by a managerialist and economic rationalist agenda. For NSWDET careers advisers, history, tradition, job security and union opposition to managerial extremism have tempered such forces. However, for clients, their students, the workplace offers a broad range of psychological experiences that range from the relational to transactional and often contain elements of both.

While there is an acknowledged abundance of theoretical and applied literature that deals with career development, this thesis explores the conceptualisation of career management as it appears to be that it is more appropriate to the perceived working relationship between the two primary stakeholders — secondary careers advisers and the NSWDET. The following chapter uses an aspect of the constructivist approach to careers to tell the story of careers advisers’ work role, and career management in NSWDET schools from their initial introduction in 1943 to 2008. This historical approach will contribute to a better understanding of the journey of careers advisers in New South Wales and also of study on which this thesis focuses.
Chapter 3

Placing the Career Management of Careers Advisers into an Historical Perspective

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the historical context for a better understanding of the careers and career management of secondary school careers advisers in NSWDET schools that will be explored in Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 3 provides a chronological account of the role of careers advisers in secondary schools between 1941 when the first careers advisers were appointed and 2008. It examines the rationale for the establishment of careers advisers in secondary schools, investigates their recruitment patterns, training and career management, and analyses their evolving roles within the different phases of Australian economy up to the present day.

It is important to take into account the historical context of the careers advisers’ work roles and their career management because it is difficult, to say the least, to grasp the complexities of their current situation and future outlook without understanding past events and processes. To know what careers advisers have done and how their careers have been managed in the past is important in understanding their current work roles, career management and career issues and what they are likely to face in their future work.

As will be seen below, the role that careers advisers have been called upon to play in NSWDET schools has changed considerably since 1941. Significant reasons for such changes have already been discussed in this thesis. To quickly refresh the reader’s thoughts, these reasons include the impact of global capitalism and technological change (Jones, 1995; Atkinson, 2002), which has prompted the emergence of post-industrial societies (Bell, 1976 [1973]; Bell, 1999; Edgell, 2006; Gee, Hull and Lankshear, 1996), or as some authors’ term it ‘new capitalism’ (O’Donohue, Sheehan, Hecker and Holland, 2007). The rise of neo-liberalism and ‘managerialism’ (Pinnington and Lafferty 2003) in the 1980s has also had a
significant impact on the trajectory of Australian career advisers. Given the onslaught of these factors and forces it is not surprising that secondary careers advisers find their role, careers and career management changing. The sections below are organised around three eras that impacted differently upon the work of career advisers in Australia: 1941 to 1971, 1971 to 1992, and 1992 to 2008. The relevant events unfolding during these periods will be described, and then linked to the broader socio-economic context that produced them.

### 3.2 1941-1971: Helping adolescents to evaluate vocational potential

Some early steps to create a role for secondary careers advisers in NSWDET schools can be traced back to at least the 1940s (Doherty, 1983; Gambley, 2005)\(^3\) as the first advisers were appointed in 1941. The main function required of these practitioners was to help ‘adolescents in making sound vocational choices’ (NSW Department of Education (1) cited in Doherty, 1983:31). Over the next 30 years, advice from the NSW Department of Education to secondary school principals as contained in the “Career Advisers’ Bulletin” stated that careers advisers’ functions consisted of four main activities:

- Assisting children to evaluate their own vocational potentialities.
- Directing the adolescent’s review of vocational possibilities. Offering wise guidance on future possible vocations. Pointing out where information regarding available vocational training may be obtained (NSW Department of Education (2) Doherty, 1983:31).

Following World War II (WW II), all 15 year-old secondary school students were put through a process of vocational guidance testing supported by the NSW Vocational Guidance Bureau (Gambley, 2005). Non-specialist school teachers who had a part-time role as careers advisers, were then required to report back the tests’ findings to students in order to provide them with assistance in deciding on (i) their

\(^3\) Gambley, 2005, personal interview 2\(^{nd}\) March, Sydney. Margaret Gambley was an active participant in and contributor to the career education field in NSWDET schools from the 1970s through to 1996. Her work as a Careers Adviser Consultant in the then NSW Department of Education is well remembered by secondary careers advisers of that time.
subject choices, (ii) which courses they might wish to consider for post-secondary education and (iii) which career they might wish to pursue.

Until the mid 1960s, when the balance started to change and both parents and their adolescent children started to look more closely at post-secondary education and training, the main emphasis was on this last decision. Certainly apprenticeships were considered important for adolescent boys and to a lesser extent, clerical training for girls, but university education only started to become a consideration towards the end of this period as parental expectations and final year school leavers’ goals started to include the opportunity to obtain a ‘good’ secure well-paid job through the acquisition of a tertiary education: a job in which hard physical work or repetitive clerical tasks could be replaced with generally non-physical, mentally challenging and stimulating activities undertaken in a clean and safe working environment.

So in the period from 1941 to 1971, the role and function of careers advisers was clearly established. It reflected the application of the contemporary theories of vocational guidance by way of a cocktail of personal interviews (of students), psychological assessment and the dissemination of printed information. In addition, an expected task for careers advisers was to inform students which career they should follow (Doherty, 1983).

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4 Author’s personal observations of an era in which he grew up.
5 The career development theories that were in use during this period were firstly those based on the three part framework of Parsons (1909), later called ‘trait and factor’ theories, that encouraged people to actively seek their vocation, there was a requirement, to assist in finding the appropriate people that they should be classified into occupations for which they were suited. This was achieved through a process of testing their intellectual functioning. Next there were the career theories that posited that career development is a life long process and that career choices are characterised by compromise and once made are, for the most part, irreversible. However this approach did not dislodge the trait and factor approach. Super (1953) proposed a career choice and development theory that included trait and factor theory, development psychology and sociological theory. However by 1990 he had admitted that his theory still lacked cohesiveness and that a truly comprehensive model of career choice was still to be developed. In 1959, Holland set out a comprehensive trait-oriented explanation of vocational choice that extended the trait and factor theory from a static to a dynamic model. He expanded his theory in 1973 and substantially revised it in 1985 and 1997. A psychodynamic-based theory was published in 1963 by Bordin, Nachmann and Segal, and in 1969, Lofquist and Davis published a work-adjustment theory (Brown and Associates, 2002:4-6). In general, it appears that during the period 1941-1971 the dominant theoretical model was that of the trait and factor type.
3.3 1941-1971: Social, political and economic environment

A picture of this period is not complete without considering the larger social, political and economic changes that were impacting on careers advisers’ work, New South Wales (NSW) and Australia in general. The first five years of part-time careers advisers working in NSWDE schools corresponded with the remaining years of WW II. The end of hostilities in 1945 ushered in a new economic era with the emergence of the United States of America (USA) and the Union of the Soviet Socialists Republics (USSR) as developing ‘superpowers’. In the Pacific area, countries such as the USA, Canada and Australia had economies that had remained generally intact during WW II. These countries faced the massive challenge of redeploying the thousands of military personnel who were now seeking to resume (or begin) a normal life. For the Australian states of NSW and Victoria in particular, in the late 1940s and 1950s there was also an extended influx of migrants, firstly from the UK and then also from European countries (war refugees making up a portion of the latter source) (Horne, 1964). Post-war construction projects such as the Snowy Mountains Hydro Electricity Scheme and broader government efforts to further industrialise the NSW economy ensured a continuing and expanding demand for both unskilled and semi-skilled (generally) male employees (Clark, 1969). The early 1950s also saw the Korean War wool boom that benefited Australia’s export income and flowed through as an increase in economic growth (Clark, 1969).

One specific ongoing impact from WW II on the work role of NSWDE careers advisers was the use of psychometric testing for secondary students. Such testing had been used in the USA’s defence forces for the selection of its personnel for particular types of work roles, during both World War 1 and more extensively in WW II (Scroggins, Thomas, Morris and Jerry, 2008). Such tests were now used in NSWDE secondary schools to help match students to particular types of work and reflected the early career development paradigm developed initially by Parsons of matching people to jobs, based on the perspective of individual differences (Savickas, 1997).
The use of such testing and links with industrial psychology practitioners was strongly supported by the Scientific Management movement, pioneered by Frederick Taylor in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Scroggins, Thomas, Morris and Jerry, 2008). This movement demonstrated a singularly managerialist approach to influencing employee behaviour to achieve organisational goals and objectives. Psychometric testing is still a strong element in aspects of contemporary HRM practice (Thornton and Krause, 2009). In the case of employee selection (especially but not exclusively for university graduates), psychometric testing is a common practice. So there was, from an early time in the history of careers advisers’ work in NSWDE schools, a substantial element of the use of a managerialist tool to guide students in the task of vocational choice.

During the 1950s and 1960s Germany, Western Europe and Japan experienced economic and political recovery; there was further growth of the USA and USSR in terms of their economic and political power and a period of long economic growth for Australia. Australia’s manufacturing, financial, communications and telecommunications sectors continued to operate under the protection of an extensive system of tariffs and quotas. This regime also included government-run service monopolies and private/public duopolies (for example, Ansett ANA and TAA airlines) or officially supported and legislated private/public oligopolies, for example in the banking industry (Clark, 1969).

During this period employees also experienced the benefits of a centralised wage fixing system at the national and state levels, based on principles such as comparative wage justice and the ‘flowing on’ of wage increases won by stronger unions to workers in industries covered by weaker unions (Bray, Waring and Cooper, 2009). The economic disadvantages of such arrangements included higher prices for Australian consumers of both imported and locally produced products and limited domestic markets for local producers of goods and services. Despite these disadvantages, the employment environment was generally positive during this period except for the economic downturn of the early 1960s (Bray, Waring and Cooper, 2009).
The task for secondary careers advisers in this economic environment was therefore to provide students with a realistic picture of the current employment options and help them make informed career choices. Yet the seemingly static nature of work opportunities was based upon the artificial stability created by the regime of government economic regulatory protection (i.e. tariffs, quotas, restrictions on foreign banks and government business monopolies) and a slower introduction of modern technologies because of this protection and the resultant limited local market size. It was a situation that was about to change abruptly in the next decades of the 20th century.

3.4 1971-1992: Increasing school retention rates under adverse conditions

A major goal in secondary education (and for careers advisers in particular) during the late 1970s was to increase retention rates in the post-compulsory years of secondary education. There was also an attempt to provide assistance for students to make more informed decisions about their post-compulsory secondary, further and tertiary education. Another important function for secondary school careers advisers that arose at this time was to organise ‘work experience’ for Yr 10 students.

To achieve these and other goals, in 1979 the NSWDE started to appoint full-time careers advisers. This was appropriate given the expansive role envisioned for them in the Doherty, 1983 Report as summarised below. In this report, NSWDE careers advisers were seen to be moving to undertake the following roles in their work: careers teaching; interviewing; curriculum; coordination; staff liaison; assessment and evaluation; information storage and display; organisation of work experience, link courses and other careers activities (such as excursions to workplaces or training centres, careers nights/markets, visits from guest speakers and presentation of multi-media resources); integration of career agency services; parent education; community liaison; staff development (to provide insights for other staff about changes in the world of work) and coordination with other schools/regions (Doherty, 1983:34-5).
The appointment formula used was one careers adviser per secondary school (Davis and Braithwaite, 1990; Kossy, 2004) and these appointments were phased in from 1979 to 1983 (Doherty, 1983:77). A large proportion of these careers advisers came from a social science background, some had gained scholarships to undertake tertiary training as careers advisers and others were nominated by their secondary school principal to undertake formal training (Gambley, 2005). However, according to Kossy (2004), the implementation of the ‘one careers adviser per secondary school formula’ came at the price of the demise of publicly provided vocational guidance testing by the NSW Vocational Services Branch. By November 1989, 95 per cent of NSWDE careers advisers were full-time. In those schools that had over 1300 students, a further 0.2 of a careers adviser’s time could be allocated under the staffing formula (Davis and Braithwaite, 1990:31). Thus the remaining 5 per cent of careers advisers were likely to have been working part-time in schools.

During 1979, in response to the adverse economic conditions of the time, (stagflation, low economic growth, rising unemployment and rising prices), the Federal Government introduced a transition education program to deal with the growing number of unemployed school leavers who had experienced educational difficulties (Doherty, 1983; George, cited in Heys, 1981). This program, at least initially, created confusion about what was career versus transition education (Doherty, 1983). Careers advisers were often placed in charge of such programs in their schools without a full understanding of what was to be done. This caused a further problem for some of them because they were often not well established in their own careers and thus they were confronted with something of a professional identity crisis (McKenzie, 2005).

This dilemma went unrecognised by the NSWDE at the time. Yet it was made aware of the need to redefine transition education in order to extend its application to all schools and be more integrated with career education (Doherty, 1983). This new perspective was provided in the seminal ‘Report of the Working Party on Careers Advising and Career Education in N.S.W.’ (Doherty, 1983). The role/function of secondary careers advisers in NSWDE schools was, to say the least, broad and an early example of work intensification, a practice whereby a person experiences a gradual, or rapid increase in the range of work tasks for which
they are responsible, without any corresponding delegation of tasks to others. Careers advisers were envisaged as moving towards a broad set of roles or tasks (as set out above in 3.1.3).

The importance of career education and the need for trained secondary school careers advisers was identified by the Australian Education Council Review Committee (AECRC) (1991), in the context of the emerging agenda to increase ‘young people’s participation in post-compulsory education and training’ and to respond to the then emerging changes in the world of work and the ‘increasing integration of education and training pathways’ (AECRC, 1991:160). In their report, the Committee identified a broad range of responsibilities for secondary school-based careers advisers that required advanced skills such as liaising, coordinating and counselling. It advocated a ‘… complex program of education and training provision contributed by a number of sources, including systems and school authorities, (Higher Education Institutions), employers, DEET and unions, and taken in a range of settings’ (AECRC, 1991:160). In addition, the Committee recommended that ‘Governments act on the National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET) recommendation that every school with a large secondary enrolment and appropriate clusters of smaller schools, have a full-time careers adviser’ (AECRC, 1991:160).

During the 1970s, the issue of a careers path for careers advisers became evident (Davis and Brathwaite, 1990). The NSWDE was already aware of this issue because it had been included in the recommendations provided in the ‘Report of the Working Party on Careers Advising and Career Education in N.S.W.’ (Doherty 1983: 99-100). But, while careers advisers in NSWDE schools had improved training and some recognition from their employer (via increased time allocation) of their rising workload, no clear career path was provided for them. This resulted in the loss of many careers advisers from the NSWDE. It led Davis and Braithwaite (1990:74) to make the stark observation that in Australia, ‘career paths for career educators wishing to continue practising career education are generally non-existent’.
Ramsey (1991:34) also drew attention to the continuing lack of career paths for careers advisers by stating that: ‘… promotion prospects appear to be limited. The career coordinator is often marginalised within the school and system, a tendency that militates against good teachers wanting to progress their careers by becoming careers coordinators’. He advocated the creation of such career paths and provided some strategies to achieve this goal. But, as McKenzie (2005) noted fourteen years later, once they were eligible for promotion with the NSWDE, many practitioners left careers advising (if able to) for other school-based curriculum areas in which they had initially taught. Indeed, this matter is still unresolved, as will be seen later in this thesis.

This lack of action by the NSWDE is not explained in the available literature, but perhaps it reflected both the historical role of these now full-time careers advisers and organisational inertia on the part of the NSWDE. When careers advisers had been part-time, they had still had access to promotion on the basis of their existing and on-going subject teaching experience. However, when they became full-time careers advisers it appears that, despite the acknowledgement of the importance of these matters for careers advisers (Doherty 1983: 99-100; Davis and Brathwaite 1990; and Ramsey 1991), the NSWDE found it too difficult to respond or simply ignored the recommendation to provide a clear career path. Certainly careers advisers could apply for promotion in their original teaching field/s, but there was not a clear career path based on their work as a careers adviser. Also, if they were applying for subject head teacher or higher positions, they were competing with other teachers who had stayed in the classroom teaching academic subjects.

### 3.5 1971-1992: Social, political and economic environment

Again it is important to place what was happening to the careers and career management of NSWDE careers advisers into the broader social, political and economic context. Firstly, from a social perspective, in the post-compulsory years (now called Years 11 and 12), adolescents were increasingly wanting to proceed to a university education (the teenage cohort participation in university studies rose from 6.5% in 1983 to 10.6% in 1990 [Phillips, 1991:15]) to provide the opportunity
for more rewarding employment. Their parents shared this desire and were often instrumental in helping their offspring apply to go to university. Secondly, from a political perspective, the requirement was placed upon careers advisers by both the NSW and Commonwealth governments to be active in the goal of increasing the percentage of secondary students remaining at school in the post-compulsory years. This was done because these governments were concerned to reduce the rising levels of youth unemployment. The stagflation that marked the mid-1970s meant that the low-skilled members of the workforce were the first to lose their jobs or not be able to find work. Youth were the most unskilled and therefore more likely to experience this result. The number of unemployed youth (15-19 years of age) increased from: 195,000 in May 1970 to 695,000 in May 1975 (ABS, 1301.0, 1974; ABS, 1301.0, 1975/76).

Thirdly, the economic environment of the early to mid part of this period has been labelled one that was characterised as stagflation—low economic growth, rising unemployment and rising prices and this was the result of a number of factors. According to Ian Macfarlane (a former governor of the Reserve Bank of Australia), these factors were: the long-term overuse of Keynesian economic ‘pump-priming’ (that is, deficit budgets to stimulate demand with little concern that rising interest rates could led to inflation); large increases in across-the-board wage increases in December 1970 and July 1971, and Federal public sector wages increases that led to a wages growth of 30% in Australia during 1974 (MacFarlane, 2006); a booming resources sector that led to rising commodity prices and a rapid growth of the money supply. According to Macfarlane (2006), these factors placed the Australian economy in a ‘vulnerable position once the world economic downturn arrived’ and the trigger for this downturn was ‘… the fourfold increase in crude oil prices announced by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in December 1973’. This event resulted in both an increase in the price of an essential input into the production of goods and services in Australia and elsewhere and reduced real spending in the economy (MacFarlane, 2006). This combination of factors led to the end of the long economic boom that had, with some interruptions, lasted in Australia from the late 1940s.
The adverse economic phenomenon of stagflation prompted a rethinking of the impact of global forces on the Australian economy: this resulted in political decisions during the 1980s to reduce and/or eliminate the extensive range of protectionist trade regulations, float the Australia dollar, permit the entry of foreign banks and move towards making the public sector more efficient. Neo-liberalism had been established as the dominant political ideology in Australia, with severe social impacts as a result of the reduced government role in the country’s economy. There was a significant reduction in the number of government-run business enterprises in the banking, insurance, airline and telecommunications industries with their sale to private owners. Apprenticeships also declined, as both remaining public sector and newly privatised business enterprises sought to cut operating costs. The privatisation of these formerly government-owned enterprises led to consequent reduction in both employment levels (Bray, Waring and Cooper, 2009) and employee perceptions of job security.

In the 1980s, the forces of international and domestic capital were to be given a freer reign to operate to expand the Australian economy and provide more employment opportunities. According to Wilkie and Grant these economic reforms were successful in that they ‘…substantially improved the competitiveness, flexibility and resilience of the economy. Living standards in Australia (have risen) substantially since the 1980s, (and this reversed) a sustained decline’ (2009:47). However, as a consequence of these changes in the economy, the work role of careers advisers with their secondary students now included explaining to students the changed and changing world of work (Gambley, 2005), a work world that offered fewer apprenticeships, different job opportunities and added employment uncertainties, in particular the undermining of the ‘job for life’ view of employment in the public sector and the formerly protected industrial sectors of the Australian economy.

The recognition of Australia’s position in the global economy during the 1980s is shown in the Australian Education Council Review Committee (AECRC) 1991 report mentioned above. Secondary students in NSWDE schools and elsewhere were seen to be in need of additional training and access to higher education in a seamless process that would facilitate their more rapid and smooth acquisition of
broader skill sets. These skills would be acquired in post-secondary educational institutions, in particular universities, would exceed simple technical competence and would include a range of personal transferable skills (Allen, 1991)\(^6\) or graduate skills, as outlined by Sinclair (1992)\(^7\). Thus to better meet the needs of international capitalism, young Australians needed to both up-skill (Bell 1976[1973]) and broaden their skills. Secondary careers advisers too needed to broaden their skills as noted in the AECRC 1991 Report, in order to be able to assist and guide their secondary students to understand the types of jobs then being created. The career management actions that were recommended (and implemented) for careers advisers also demonstrated how they too were part of the process of serving the broader needs of the Australian economy and international capitalism.

3.6 1992–2008: Strategic interest in careers advisers

To its credit, the NSWDE had previously recognised the need for trained careers advisers in its schools. A small pilot training program was introduced in 1976/77 and was expanded to become the ‘Teacher Re-orientation and Induction Unit Training Course in Career Education’ (Doherty, 1983:33). So since 1978, the NSWDET has provided an appropriate training program for secondary school careers advisers (Kossy, 2004, NSW; DET, 2009a). Currently, the NSWDET has accredited a career education graduate course by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology that awards a Graduate Certificate of Career Education and Development (DET, 2009a) to successful students. Where an untrained teacher is appointed as a careers adviser by a school principal, the NSWDET pays for them to undertake this course.

In addition, the ‘School to Work’ program developed by the NSWDET (and started as a pilot study in 1999 [DET, 2003]) offers professional career development

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6 Allen (1991): Such skills were categorised as core, group, organisational and environmental. The organisational skills were further divided into teamwork, problem solving, communication and management.

7 Sinclair (1992): These skills included ‘oral and written communication, interpersonal skills, numerical and economic literacy, some knowledge and understanding of Asian culture and values . . . worldliness and (the) ability to apply . . . knowledge’ (Sinclair, 1992:4). He also identified the importance of the ability to recognise, accept and constantly seek opportunities for change in the context of world best work practices (Sinclair, 1992). This range of skills was expected of graduates regardless of academic courses taken.
support for careers advisers (NSWDET, School to Work Program, 2007). The NSWDET also provides opportunities for all of its teachers (including careers advisers) to undertake a ‘teachers in business program to give them the opportunity to take part in an industry placement of up to two weeks to gain skills, knowledge and experience in areas of professional interest that will contribute to their school development plans’ (DET, 2009b). Training for existing teachers, including careers advisers, to deliver vocational education courses in schools, was also financially supported by the NSWDET (Ministerial Advisory Council of the Quality of Teaching, 2004).

The School to Work Program adopted by the NSWDET was a strong step to assist secondary school students. It was piloted in NSWDET schools during 1998 and 1999 (School to Work Planning, 2001) and has been operated as a statewide program since then. Its aims are numerous and are listed below. As noted above, it included training for NWSDET careers advisers to enable them to implement this program. Other State governments in Australia, and the governments in New Zealand (Sutton, 2000) and other Western countries (such as the USA – [Parsons, 1997] and UK) have adopted similar strategies in order to improve the career outcomes of secondary school students.

Also, the Australian Government has a strategic ‘interest’ in career advice and careers advisers. This has been demonstrated via a number of projects over recent years such as: the ‘Careers Education Quality Framework’ (Willett, 1999); the ‘New framework for vocational education in schools’ (Groves, 2001); ‘Career and Transition Services Framework’; ‘MCEETYA Taskforce on Transition from School’, 2003; funding to ‘assist in building professional standards and career opportunities for careers professionals’ (Nelson, 2004 and Bishop, 2006a); on-line

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8 The School to Work Planning function aims to assist students by: providing opportunities for them to analyse formally their interests and abilities, and develop their ability to understand and adapt to change; developing their understanding of the changing nature of work and workplaces, including trends in the labour market; providing them with opportunities to develop their decision-making abilities; developing an understanding of the use of technology in current and future work situations; developing their skills in applying for work or training; assisting them to set realistic and achievable goals; planning for the full range of employment, education and training options available and not be limited by narrow ideas of what is an appropriate career for their gender; developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes that facilitate lifelong learning and enhance their employability within a changing world; and assisting them to document their experiences and skills (School to Work Planning, 2001:10).
career information and career guidance (Job Guide, 2009); and the development of the ‘Australian Blueprint for Career Development’ (DEEWR, 2009). The latter project is designed to develop ‘comprehensive, effective and measurable career development programs (based on a national career competencies framework) … which help Australians to better manage their lives, learning and work’ (DEEWR, 2009). The OECD has also demonstrated interest in key aspects of career education (OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies—Australia’s Response to National Questionnaire, 2002). All these initiatives are placing greater importance on the skills and competencies of secondary school careers advisers to deliver the programs that have been developed and this in turn highlights the need for effective career management of these practitioners. In a number of these programs, careers advisers are faced with both role expansion and work intensification.

In 2008, for a person to become a careers adviser in NSWDET secondary and central schools, he or she must have a basic teaching qualification. The prerequisites to become a secondary teacher are set out in Box 3.1.

**Box 3.1: Basic secondary teacher qualification requirement in NSWDET schools**

- a three year bachelor degree plus either a Diploma of Education (Secondary), graduate entry Bachelor of Teaching (Secondary), or two-year Master of Teaching (Secondary); or
- a four-year Bachelor of Education (Secondary); or
- a four or five-year combined degree program such as a Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Teaching (Secondary)


In addition, all teachers in NSW must be accredited. This accreditation is overseen by the NSW Institute of Teachers and ‘… recognises … a teacher’s professional capacity against the Professional Teacher Standards’ (NSW Institute of Teachers, 2008a:1). There are four levels of accreditation that ‘… are mapped to the four key
stages in a teacher’s career—... graduate teacher, professional competence, professional accomplishment and professional leadership’ (NSW Institute of Teachers, 2008b:1). Such accreditation is carried out by designated Teacher Accreditation Authorities (that is, employers of teachers) and is a requirement of employment in NSWDET schools (NSW Institute of Teachers, 2008a:1).

Also, as noted above, a careers adviser must have successfully completed a recognised career education course (Kossy, 2004, NSW, DET, 2009a). Existing staff can apply for careers adviser positions via the NSWDET electronic job listing function. School principals can also recommend the appointment of teachers to become careers advisers: if they do not have recognised careers adviser qualifications, then they are able (and required) to undertake the relevant careers adviser-training program. This program is paid for by the NSWDET and paid time away from teaching is provided while the course is completed. In addition, NSWDET careers advisers, will by 2012, be required to meet professional standards requirements to be recognised as a careers adviser. These standards, the ‘Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners’ (CICA, 2007) are set out by the Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA).

The NSWDET views the current (2008) role of its careers advisers to be very broad. As well as helping students to manage their own career development, the expectation is also that such practitioners should assist students to discover employment related skills in each subject they take and for them to provide students, teachers and parents with access to (and explanation of) current career resources, career information and enterprise opportunities (teach.NSW, 2008a). These role expectations are spelled out in more detail in Box 3.2.
Box 3.2: Role expectations of careers advisers in NSWDET secondary and central schools

- assisting students to identify their abilities, skills and interests through a range of activities including computer-assisted guidance programs and Internet sites
- designing and developing a career education program that includes the implementation of vocational learning through the school curriculum
- playing an integral role within the school welfare team by providing high quality advice and guidance regarding student transition issues
- providing work place learning opportunities
- providing and clarifying information for students and their parents regarding the school curriculum, the HSC and further education and training
- providing a wide range of opportunities for students to learn and continue to learn about careers, industries and appropriate work/life roles and the world of work in general.


In addition to this range of activities, secondary careers advisers are required to liaise with private and public providers of further education and training, undertake professional development activities and maintain their knowledge and understanding of both the various labour markets and human resource management issues (teach.NSW, 2008a).

Work tasks carried out by these practitioners is subject to change as a result of: varying school and local demands; conflict between the use of careers advisers for career advising/education and vocational education (Kossy, 2004); and the continuing impact of the ‘Australian Blueprint for Career Development’ (Haines, Scott and Lincoln, 2003) which is still being implemented. This changeability is accentuated by the lack of a common job description/duty statement applicable to all NSWDET secondary careers advisers (Kossy, 2004). This absence has been an ongoing challenge for these practitioners in that their in-school roles can be quite varied and there is the risk of work role ambiguity and as mentioned above, work intensification.
3.7 1992–2008: Social, political and economic environment

In relation to the social context, the expectations of parents and their adolescent children still in secondary school now looked towards both higher levels of post-compulsory education and greater access to such education. In the political context, there was a realisation at NSW and Federal Government levels that there was an imbalance in the push for just university education, as there were emerging skill shortages in fields such as technical trades (Toner, 2005), childcare, (Campbell, 2003) and hospitality and tourism which reflected increased demands for these services in the early to mid part of this period (ABS, 1996). Campbell (2003) noted that a factor in the skills shortages in many traditional trades was a result of ‘the poor image of the trades, a community and education sector emphasis on higher education, and the demise of technical high schools in many jurisdictions. As noted there was a movement away from pursuing work in traditional trades areas which reflected both an appreciation of the relative decline in manufacturing in Australia and changed work preferences of youth (and often their parents). Increasing school retention rates, which result in later entry to the workforce, are also said to make apprenticeships, with their low wages in the early years, less attractive to young people.’ According to Campbell (2003) there were some industries in which these skill shortages had been present since the mid 1990s. While the causes of such shortages are often complex and vary from industry to industry, Campbell (2003:16) was able to provide the following reasons for such shortages:

the ageing workforce and impending retirement rates; poor image that translates to a smaller and lower quality pool of applicants; inadequate apprenticeship rates to ensure replacement training; problems in attracting and retaining people; changing employment arrangements increasing the demand for skilled workers or decreasing the supply of skilled workers; and changing skill needs within occupations.

The vocation education that has grown since 2001 in NSWDET schools (NSWDET, 2009), and the ‘School to Work’ Program (DET, 2003) are respectively two direct responses to reduce such skill shortages and to provide secondary students with
more sophisticated self management skills for their future careers. As will be seen in Chapter 4, pressure was brought to bear on careers advisers to ‘steer’ senior students into hospitality careers during the 1990s in order to overcome labour shortages in this industry.

The career issues for NSWDET secondary careers advisers that resulted from these initiatives were complex. Their job roles had emerged over five decades and they had set up their working arrangements to respond to re-occurring activities such as: organising work experience for various year groups; teaching careers classes linked to the NSW Board of Studies syllabus called ‘Career Education’; interviewing Yr 10 students about their subject choices for Yr 11 and 12; and advising Yr 12 students about work and/or further study options. Now there was also a requirement to implement the ‘School to Work’ Program and respond to an expectation from some school principals that they should deal with the vocational education courses as well9, plus continue to carry out their usual functions. The breadth of government funded research, policy development, program design and implementation that has occurred in this period appears to indicate a much more interventionist and managerialist approach to both the provision of career guidance and the career management of secondary careers advisers.

Finally, economic events taking place over the past decade or so have had an impact on the careers and career management of careers advisers. Between 1992 and 2008 the Australian economy has grown at rates that varied from 0.5% (in 1991-92) in a time of economic recovery (ABS, 1350.0, 1995) up to 5.3% in 1998-99 (ABS, 1350.0, 2002), with the figure for 2007-08 being 4% (ABS, 1350.0, 2008). This period witnessed the further emergence of the Australian economy as part of global capitalism and was marked by the continued application of economic rationalist solutions to economic issues such as payment for tertiary and post-secondary vocational education. Secondary careers advisers continued to experience the challenge of guiding students to make informed career and/or further education and

9 It should be noted that separate school-based positions do exist for staff to coordinate vocational education programs within each school. The point being made here is that careers advisers may feel collegial pressure that the careers adviser should deal with such programs as well as continue with their career adviser functions.
training decisions in an economy that was affected by the varied world economic conditions to a greater extent than in previous decades.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented an historical context for the role and career management of NSWDET secondary careers advisers. In the first period, 1941-1971, the role of careers advisers appeared relatively uncomplicated. Helping their students to make ‘sound vocational choices’ supported by vocational guidance tests results and providing vocational training information was to be undertaken by teachers who had a part-time role as a careers adviser and no mandated specific training to fulfil the role. The external social, political and economic environment was one that was generally supportive of such a role for careers advisers.

However, in the second period 1971-1992, change was required. Careers advisers were required to make a stronger contribution towards improving school retention rates as unemployment started to rise due to stagflationary economic conditions (an effect of the evolution of global capitalism and over-reliance on Keynesian stimulatory fiscal policy). A formal training program for careers advisers was introduced in 1978 and they became full-time employees in NSWDET schools. This full-time appointment was fortunate for them because the expansion in their expected roles was quite significant. However, careers advisers were not given a clear career path for themselves and this has remained a feature of their careers and an ongoing issue for them. The external economic environment caused a review of national economic policies that led to the adoption of a neo-liberal, economic rationalist approach to how the Australian economy should be run. The process of economic deregulation (which may now in turn be reviewed as a consequence of the world recession) created changed labour market conditions for school leavers and required NSWDET careers advisers to change the nature of the careers advice they were giving.

During the third period, 1992-2008, careers advisers benefited from the introduction of ‘Teacher Re-orientation and Induction Unit Training Course in Career Education’ and its subsequent development into a Graduate Certificate. This entry qualification
was augmented by training associated with the NSWDET, School to Work Program and the opportunity to participate in the Teachers in Business Program run by the NSWDET for all teachers. More recently, careers advisers are being required to meet professional accreditation standards to be a teacher and, by 2012, a careers adviser. This has and will affect the time they have to carry out their current duties. Technological change in the form of the Internet, emails and mobile phone has, in this period also added to role expansion and work intensification for careers advisers.

The addition of the School to Work program (and similar programs) and the professional development standards reflect a strategic interest that both the NSW and Commonwealth Governments have developed in the work of careers advisers because of the generally heightened interest by them and the OECD in career guidance. Behind this interest is the belief that the next generation of human capital (that is, secondary school leavers) need to be prepared to engage with the world of work as it has developed in response to the needs of global capitalism and the post-industrial society. In order for this to occur, career guidance provided by careers advisers needs to mould students to meet the needs of the labour markets which they are to enter. The introduction of professional development standards for careers advisers can be seen as a managerialist strategy to ensure that students are given the ‘correct message’. This theme is explored in a subsequent chapter.

In summary, having examined the defining features of each of the three eras, they were briefly analysed within the meta-context of an emerging post-industrial society, characterised by the rise of neo-liberalism and thus a new capitalist (or global capitalist) economic environment run on increasingly managerialist lines. This new system has required careers advisers to adapt to rapid technological change, both in the way their work is done and in how their ‘clients’ seek answers to their own career development. NSWDET secondary careers advisers now have employer-prescribed role expectations that are so broad that they encourage work intensification. Classroom teachers are at less risk of this happening because their work roles tend to be more proscribed by their teaching load. Training is provided as an aspect of career management provision by the NSWDET for these new
school-based programs, but the same problem is always present for careers advisers—organising the time to engage in the training and continue with other duties.

Dividing this chapter into historical segments has provided the opportunity to create the background to careers advisers’ work and career management so the reader may better understand the territory yet to be explored. Issues that arose were the potential for work intensification, career path uncertainty and increasing prescription over the work of people who are supposed to be professionals. This last matter is not unsurprising given that careers advisers have often transferred from a full-time teaching role in which there is generally less autonomy in the completion of work tasks. Thus the exercise of greater autonomy in their work and career is a skill that often needs to be developed. It can be seen, as noted in Chapter 1, that NSWDET careers advisers have indeed experienced an extemporised journey during the period they have been present in the NSW Government secondary school system— their role has changed and their work load increased as the NSW and Australian economies have become further engaged with the global capitalist system.

The next two chapters explore the secondary careers advisers’ perceptions of the career issues facing them in the present and the future and the career management that they experience. The issues discussed in Chapter 3 are revisited and illustrated in Chapters 4 and 5 by the findings of the study on which this thesis is based. In Chapter 4 a generally descriptive account is provided of the interviewees’ perceptions and in Chapter 5 an analytical stance is adopted to link these perceptions to the issues that have emerged.
Chapter 4

Career Management in Times of Change: Current and Future Career Issues

A plea from the heart of a former careers adviser:

_I was fortunate to have a principal who recognised what I was doing [as a careers adviser], and recognised the importance of the role. He recognised that the role could encourage student retention rates by engaging students who were behaviourally very poor at school. He saw the role as pivotal to student engagement and to successful transitions from school to work. He also realised that for students with learning difficulties, issues at home or problems at school, that sitting in a school classroom wasn’t going to help them to plan effectively for their future. To have a careers adviser organising a program for them that kept them meaningfully occupied and happy and at the same time developed them was really important. The principal recognised that, but there are many principals who don’t_ (Liz, 30.1.2008).

4.1 Introduction

The statement above describes a positive work experience for this careers adviser. It also hints that all is not well for careers advisers in NSWDET secondary schools. The research questions posed in this study and the answers that they bring forth reveal support for both sides of this statement and the complexity of the work environments that careers advisers inhabit.

Q1. What are the perceptions of careers advisers and other relevant stakeholders about current career management practices provided for secondary school careers advisers by the New South Wales Department of Education and Training (NSWDET)?
Q2. What are the current careers issues facing NSWDET careers advisers in view of social, political and economic changes in the last few decades and the way in which these impact upon their careers?

Q3. What are the views of careers advisers and other relevant stakeholders on future issues that may be faced by NSWDET careers advisers?

In conducting the interviews for this study, a number of issues emerged that showed careers advisers and some of the other respondents had concerns about their work, their role and the career management they received. More specifically, the career issues raised by the participants in the study included job expansion and work intensification, heavier workloads and image problems. The importance of self-management and education and training opportunities was also noted in the interviews. Most of the issues are typical products of the current social, political and economic context. These issues are examined and illustrated below through the voices of the various career management stakeholders interviewed for this study. However before this can be done, it is necessary to describe the methods used to obtain this data.

4.2 Methodology

As explained in Chapter 1, the research method used in this thesis is qualitative. The rationale for the current study is three fold: first, qualitative methodology suits the core objective of this thesis which is to examine the perceptions or lived experiences of a given population, in this case NSW NSWDET careers advisers; second, qualitative methods generate rich data, as they encourage the participants to reflect deeply in their personal experience, prompting more spontaneous and complex responses to the questions. This creates the possibility of a more in-depth understanding of the phenomena under investigation; third, from the researcher’s perspective, qualitative methodology enables a more reflective approach to data analysis, as it leads researchers who use this methodology to engage in ‘reflective brainwork (Stake, 2005: 4) to ponder the impressions arising from the interviews and to deliberate on recollections and records of their research’. The methodology used allowed for the use of a range of data collection techniques— ‘historical
surveys, interviews, questionnaires, official data that permit(ted) the researcher to draw up a detailed set of relationships’ (Plowman, 1991:41). The study identified interviewees who are stakeholders in the career management of NSWDET secondary school careers advisers.

As noted in Chapter 1, the following groups were identified for the study as stakeholders: secondary careers advisers, the industrial union, professional associations with interests in the activities of such careers advisers, NSDWETVED staff with a responsibility for career education and vocational courses in secondary schools and/or careers advisers; and NSWDET, Human Resources, Staffing and Retraining officers. The selection of stakeholders was based initially on informal discussions with a former NSWDET officer who had had long and extensive experience as a school careers adviser and then as career adviser consultant in the NSWDE and NSWDET. Her input was used to both (i) locate the relevant current parts of the NSWDET that dealt with careers advisers and (ii) identify key stakeholders in the career management of NSWDET careers advisers. Her advice led to the identification of two NSWDETVOCED officers. A similar process was used to follow up on advice that was provided by (i) a current NSWDET secondary careers adviser and (ii) a former NSWDE careers consultant. The latter provided access to the representative from the AACC.

Subsequent informal discussions with the two NSWDETVOCED officers (who were later interviewed for this study), provided further contacts in the PCFNSW, NSWTFC AANSW and NSWDET. Also these NSWDETVOCED officers provided a contact within the NSWDET Human Resources section and this in turn led to a interview being restructured as a small focus group with three NSWDET officers representing Human Resources, Staffing and Teacher Retraining functions. Contact with the NSW Secondary Principals Council (NSWSPC) was more problematic in that its senior officer was not able to meet for an interview. However the researcher was given permission to approach any NSWDET Secondary Principal who was a member of the NSWSPC to seek an interview. Thus, the researcher approached the Principal of a local NSWDET secondary school and this person agreed to be interviewed.
The selection of the three careers adviser stakeholders was conducted at ‘arms length’ via an anonymous invitation in the newsletters of the AACC and CAANSW (see Attachment 5). A total of eleven representatives of these various groups were interviewed.

The three careers advisers who volunteered came from (i) an inner city school, (ii) an outer metropolitan school and (iii) a secondary school that drew part of its intake from semi-rural areas. This varied demographic was chosen by the interviewer in order to provide a broad range of responses. While three careers adviser interviewees was a small sample of practitioners, contributions made by two of the three NSWDET Vocational Education Directorate representatives, the CAANSW representative and one of the NSWDET representatives were also informed by their past experience as secondary careers advisers in NWSDET schools.

The data presented in Chapter 4 and analysed in chapter 5 is generated from the interviews with these various respondents as listed in Table 8. The anonymity of these interviewees has been enhanced through the use of pseudonyms (see Table 8). Some stakeholders did not respond to all interview questions and this was expected as it reflected their differing level of involvement with secondary careers advisers.

In order to undertake these interviews with stakeholders, human ethics approval was sought and obtained from both the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (attachments 6 and 7) and the NSWDET Planning and Innovation Directorate (attachments 8 and 9). This double process required revisions to both applications to meet varying criteria and delayed the commencement of the interviews. The research findings were obtained during 2007 via a series of one-on-one, face-to-face interviews conducted in the workplaces of the respondents and were undertaken within their normal working hours with the permission of the interviewees’ supervisors. In one case, a revised interview transcript was received in January 2008 and it and the summary responses to questions received in December 2007 were used rather than the original interview transcript based on the June, 2007 interview (see Table 4.1 below).
Table 4.1: Stakeholders associated with the career management of NSWDET secondary careers advisers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional/Individual Stakeholders</th>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Interview date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australian Association of Career Counsellors (AACC)</td>
<td>Joan</td>
<td>25.1.07.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents and Citizens Federation of NSW (PCFNSW)</td>
<td>Jill</td>
<td>8.2.07.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Teachers Federation (NSWTF)</td>
<td>Marsha</td>
<td>22.2.07.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Department of Education and Training Vocational Education Directorate (NSWDETVED)</td>
<td>Lyn, John and Pam</td>
<td>Lyn- 2.5.07.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Careers Advisers Association of NSW (CAANSW)</td>
<td>Liz</td>
<td>15.6.07.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Secondary Principals Council (NSWSPC)</td>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>9.8.07.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW Department of Education and Training (NSWDET) representatives with responsibilities for human resources, staffing services and retraining</td>
<td>Mona, Melissa and April</td>
<td>Mona, Melissa and April were interviewed together in a small focus group on 22.8.07.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to obtain consistent responses, the same set of questions (see Attachment 4) was used as the basis for the interviews. A slightly modified version (see Table 1.1) of Arnold’s schema of career management interventions in organisations (1997:46) was used as a component of the questionnaire. The modification removed career ‘succession planning’ from the list of interventions. This was done because previous research had indicated that this particular career management process was not used in a planned or structured sense, as there was no formal career path for secondary careers advisers in NSWDET schools (Kossy, 2004 and Gambley, 2005).
Responses from a number of the interviewees confirmed this lack of a set career path (Lynne, Nadine, and Liz, 2007 and 2008). As Arnold’s schema was used as a point of reference—a tool with which to think, it was not considered useful to provide a set of specific matches between this schema and what the NSWDET does in the way of career management. To do so, would in view of this writer, have detracted the reader’s attention from what was seen to be the core purpose of the thesis—to explore the career management experiences of NSWDET careers advisers.

Where interviewees’ responses were seemingly too brief or led onto new and interesting topics, a limited number of supplementary questions were asked. The intention was to both obtain comparable data and stay within the negotiated timeframe for the interviews of approximately fifty minutes and this was generally achieved, except where the interview format was altered (as explained above). In the case of one of the interviews with officers from the NSWDET Vocational Education Directorate, two interviewees attended (John and Pam). The interviewer did note a general strong congruence in the answers given by these two participants and this on reflection would generally be expected, given that they demonstrated a close working relationship and had had similar career backgrounds as secondary careers advisers.

The interview with the NSWDET representatives whose work responsibilities were in the areas of human resources, staffing and retraining respectively comprised three interviewees (Mona, Melissa and April). Given this situation, the interview was reformatted as a focus group. This last interview was in some ways, the least fruitful, as the participants’ responses to some questions were quite limited or discursive. Such problems may have been created by the participants’ caution in giving responses in the company of others whose work roles were significantly different from their own or which may have been interpreted as criticism of staff working in other sections of the NSWDET.

Interviewees’ willingness to share their knowledge and insights was valued by the interviewer. A number of the interviewees were contacted by email or phone to follow up on aspects of their responses to the various questions or clarify the
meaning of their responses. This follow up process was foreshadowed in the interview documentation. All interviewees were sent electronic transcripts of their interviews to allow them to make any modifications that they viewed as necessary. Where modified transcripts were returned, these were the versions used as the basis for description and analysis. If no modifications were received, then the original transcript was used as the data source.

Once the interviewees had had the opportunity to review and amend if necessary the contents of their transcripts, these documents were then colour-coded to more easily identify the specific responses to the questions contained in the interview questionnaire (Attachment 4). Material from these interviews is used in this and Chapter 5 to answer the research questions (as reproduced above in 4.1). Dates for interviews with respondents have been omitted from the in-text citations as almost all took place in 2007. For the one respondent who supplied an amended response in 2008, this is noted in the citations used. The findings of the study are explored in the sections below which have been organised around the three core questions of the study.

4.3 Views on current career management provisions provided by the NSWDET

4.3.1 NSWDET career management provisions

Using the career management interventions provided in Table 1.1 (Arnold, 1997:46) as a guide, the major career management interventions provided by the NSWDET for its secondary careers advisers are: electronic job listings accessed through the NSWDET web-based portal (this site is also used to provide information for RVECs to pass on to careers advisers); formal preparation for merit selection to other positions (Lyn); careers adviser training via the RMIT Graduate Certificate in Career Education and Development; support from RVECs who also have the role of facilitating regional careers adviser networks; resources available through the School to Work Program that can be used by careers advisers to ‘organise and manage their work’ and the Program itself which gives ‘… them a way to structure their work in their school’; and provision of scholarships to undertake further training (although this has become a Federal contribution) (Lyn).
Pam noted the following provision made by the NSWDET for its careers advisers: an eight day session in Sydney, with a four day induction course that covers various aspects of the School to Work Program, work experience, legalities, as part of the Graduate Certificate in Career Education and Development. This is provided so that careers advisers are actually orientated to work in the NSWDET. Pam also viewed this Program’s reporting writing requirement, as an opportunity to reflect on careers advisers’ own practices and thus be a ‘… point of reflection for future (work) planning’. The Teachers in Business Program (mentioned in Chapter 3), is available to provide various industry experiences for any teacher who is successful in applying to do the Program. The NSWDET also has active links with the CAANSW, provides presenters for its professional development activities and actively encourages careers advisers to attend the CAANSW’s professional development opportunities (Pam). School principals also have a role to assist all their staff to undertake appropriate professional development opportunities. Mark identified personal development plans as a part of this role of school principals.

4.3.2 Stakeholders’ perceptions

The views on current career provisions provided by NSWDET given by the participants were mixed. For example, Jill did not view the NSWDET practices as being particularly effective. Rather she felt that the provision of information for careers advisers was ‘quite limited (and) … reasonably vague … sometimes’ (and added as an anecdote that for at least one careers adviser of her acquaintance) ‘…he’s had to do a lot of his own development in order to ensure that (the material) he’s delivering to the kids that he works with (is relevant and up-to-date)’. She attributed a lack of support of careers advisers to the fact that being a careers adviser:

... is not necessarily seen as a key position in a school ... So often (they are) left on the outside, often their welfare is not supported.... and I don’t see the actual professional support that they should have.

Liz expressed her opinion that careers management of careers advisers is not a major role in job description of RVECs. ‘It’s only (because) they also manage the Vocational Learning agenda that looking after careers advisers has become part of
their role.’ Moreover, she said, the quality of career management practice support given to careers advisers depends on the background of the RVECs and the attitude of the regional managers to vocational learning. Liz claimed that some consultants do not come from a careers adviser background and that is part of the problem because they do not recognise what a careers adviser does. She went on to point out that:

... sometimes the consultants are actually very negative in their attitude towards careers advisers. Because they don’t understand the role they can be quite damning. That’s the sad thing and trying to change that perception is very difficult.

Liz further explained that many careers advisers have to rely on the CAANSW or their own local careers adviser networks for their professional development and support. She noted that although there was indirect career management by the NSWDET through the fostering of careers adviser networking and industry contacts, she believed that this was not an active intervention. She commented that the effectiveness of the career management practices provided by the NSWDET for careers advisers was incidental rather than direct in most cases. In other words, there was uncertainty about the likelihood that such practices would be offered or useful.

Alyssa raised further concerns regarding the effectiveness of RVECs in the provision of career management for secondary careers advisers in NSWDET schools. She expressed her view that the ‘meetings organised by RVECs (were) not frequent enough, or productive, nor well-targeted for (her) needs’. She stated that there was a need for ongoing mentoring of new careers advisers by experienced careers advisers even if it was only in the nature of information provision, as she did not have enough time to seek out what she needed by herself.

For Mark, the practices of the NSWDET were ‘… not as satisfactory as (they) might be’, and careers advisers often have to rely on their own personal networks for information. In his own words:

\[
\text{If you (have) got a careers adviser who takes the initiative, they will follow up their own sources of support, and I see the careers adviser (as)}
\]

71
being someone who makes links and networks; that’s (their) job and if they (have) got good networks operating within their area, that in itself becomes the basis upon which they are growing.

Similarly, Ali could not see any effective provision of practices by the NSWDET for its careers advisers. As she put it:

**In terms of what the department does, you know having that VET consultant (RVEC) there, as I said, it’s an information thing…. I think the Department is terribly remiss in the absence of professional development for anybody below the deputy… People in support, the support areas like careers advisers tend to not get thought of, because there’s that stigma, people still see support people as not being part of the school (emphasis added).**

Alyssa’s response to this topic was also negative:

**I don’t think they (career management practices) are that effective. And, as I said other people might feel differently, but I don’t think that I do. They haven’t been very useful to me. Put it that way.**

Ali believes that career management practices provided by the NSWDET ‘… could be effective, if there was a greater awareness within department schools or within education generally in NSW … of what it is careers advisers actually do’. She went on to add that if the NSWDET could provide ‘… the mentoring, the professional development or, like, more of it… I think the profile (of careers advisers) would be lifted. People would have a better understanding and there will be more acceptance (of them) as well.’

However such negative views need to be balanced by observations made by other stakeholders. For example, Lyn, one of the NSWDETVED officers, noted that there was a range of career management practices to help careers advisers achieve their professional and organisational objectives. She commented that ‘…all of the things
that we provide are only as effective as their (the careers advisers’) willingness to take them up’ (Lyn). In a similar way, she noted that careers advisers:

... are in a role that we believe is changing rapidly, is one that is unique, and so here is a pretty clear need for them to engage with the opportunities that are provided, so you know that the ones that do, I think they are highly effective (as careers advisers).

Nadine also commented favourably on the effectiveness of management practices provided for careers advisers by the NSWDET such as the RMIT Graduate Certificate course (teach.NSW, 2008c), industry presentations, and university information days. Ali favourably mentioned private provider sessions, such as the course run by Bright and Associates, a company that also offered professional development workshops, conferences and seminars. (The NSWDET distributed information about such activities and funded attendance by careers advisers.) Ali also spoke positively about the operation of her local careers adviser network and the annual conference of the CAANSW as aids to the professional development of careers advisers. She also mentioned positively the actions of her RVEC who had assisted her in careers programs that she was running (Ali).

While an analysis of the findings of the study is provided in Chapter 5, it can be suggested at this point that the career management offered by the NSWDET to its careers advisers has mixed support from the interviewees. The support was not simply on the basis of the position or role of the interviewees, that is, in schools, in the NSDETVED or the NSWDET.

4.4 Current career issues facing careers advisers

4.4.1 Job expansion and work intensification

Two significant career management issues identified by interviewees were those of job expansion and work intensification. John for example noted that careers advisers have to prepare students for a ‘…future (that) is increasingly unknown. Students will need an additional range of skills and helping to provide students with such skills is part of an expansion of careers advisers’ role; in particular, (he added), such a role
expansion involves driving the process of change management … that (has) been the key aspect of the School to Work Program. (It has required)... change management, leadership skills … and the ability to negotiate with their Principal.’ And, as Lyn put it, the work of careers advisers had changed because they are now advising students about workplaces and jobs that have changed quite dramatically over the last ‘5 to 10 years’. The expansion of the careers advisers’ role in turn has led to work intensification, with a marked increase in their workload. In Marsha’s view, work role expansion is the most significant factor affecting the current work of secondary careers advisers in NSWDET schools.

The need for careers advisers to manage their time figured prominently as an issue in the interviews. For example, Lyn points out that time management has become an important issue in the work of careers advisers. In her own words, how careers advisers manage their time presents itself (as a) challenge ‘…especially as other classroom teachers may think that their careers adviser has it easy, because they are not ruled by the tyranny of the school bell’. She suggests that to overcome this perception, careers advisers need to be ‘proactive about how (they) use (their) time’.

While the ‘solution’ of managing time more efficiently is an easy one to offer, its implementation is problematic. As Alyssa noted in relation to time management, in her school, she had to take ‘three playground duties a fortnight plus sport supervision for three hours per week’. Following up on student inquiries (for example, verifying the existence of particular university courses) was another task that took unpredictable amounts of time, she noted. Such additional activities took time away from her careers adviser role and reduced time for student contact. Alyssa also discussed the trade-off between self-initiated professional development (e.g. industry visits, seminars and presentations) and keeping up with other time demands in her work.

Other interviewees also raised the issue of a lack of time for careers advisers to carry out their work. Pam mentioned the additional time pressures created by the identification of personal issues in the process of career counselling, and the challenge for careers advisers of how best to manage this effectively and ethically. In her words, careers advisers do not want to ‘… dump… the kids (for example with
the school counsellor) and (feel) like the student(s) (were) actually not being supported (by them)’.

She also drew attention to the additional time pressures imposed by using ‘Career Advice Australia’ (CAA), a Federal Government sponsored initiative to provide a multi-focused website targeted at people between the ages of 13 and 19. This careers-related website is comprised of four segments that are respectively addressed to young people, parents, schools, and business and industry. Understanding and using the services offered was, according to Pam, quite time consuming.

Pam commented on local community partnerships and how the career and transition strand of this initiative has required careers advisers to decide how they can ‘fit in’ with this new priority. She noted that the change in emphasis from job matching (i.e. trying to slot students into a job profile) to careers development and lifelong learning to facilitate resilience and adaptability has had a significant impact on careers advisers’ work, making it more complex and intensive. As Pam noted:

.... for a lot of our careers advisers, who may have started out in the early days ... certainly focussed around job matching.... there is a whole change of perspective now in regards to (students’) career development and the skills required for self-management.

Pam also noted the time pressures created by additional administrative tasks that careers advisers are required to do in their work. As she put it, careers advisers ‘… find that the administrative duties are something that they are constantly swamped by and trying to manage’. In relation to this issue, Ali suggested that there was a need to provide establishment-based clerical support for the careers adviser’s role in secondary schools.

From the viewpoint of the NSWDET, Mona indicated that the introduction and implementation of VET in NSWDET secondary schools had placed additional pressures on careers advisers to cover a broader range of matters and has considerably increased their workload. Marsha argued that for many careers advisers, the increase in VET courses and the management of work placements associated
with these courses has, in recent years, added greater levels of complications and problems with time allocation to the initial practice of work experience programs for Yr 10 and 11 students in NSW secondary schools.

According to some respondents, the problem of increased workloads is aggravated by insufficient staffing allocation. For example, Mark commented that there was insufficient staffing allocation for what careers advisers have to do with regards to the requirements of being up-to-date, dealing with the expansion of School to Work and VET (in Schools and TAFE) Programs, and responding to the ever-growing complexity of students’ needs. As he put it:

\[(A)\] careers adviser is dealing not just with giving out a pamphlet about what university you go to; they (are) actually dealing with very complex, personal, family, sociological issues, societal issues that need to be addressed.

Information overload was another issue that created work intensification, especially with the advent of the Internet and associated email communications (Liz and Nadine). Pam also commented on the growth in volume of electronic communication (emails and attached documents) from students, employers, governments and other organisations. She said that this has led the NSWDET to introduce its own email system—‘DET Access’. As a consequence, many careers advisers who had previously used the Internet had to shift over their contact details to the new NSWDET medium, which inevitably impacted on their workload at least in the short-term.

Mark identified as a current factor causing job expansion and work intensification, the Federal Government’s agenda in relation to apprenticeships, traineeships, trade schools and responding to skills shortages. He argued that careers advisers had to ‘… be … up-to-speed (and) up to date with current policies and know that the apprenticeships and traineeship side has been expanded’. A second impact was that of the increased importance of occupational health and safety for students undertaking work placements (as part of VET courses) and the more traditional
work experience programs. For careers advisers ‘… Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) is a significant part of their work now’ (Mark).

In conclusion to this section, there does appear to be a generally strong perception that careers advisers’ work has become more complicated over the last decade. There has been a growth of NSWDET and Federal Government-funded programs (for example the ABCD at the federal level and the School to Work Program at the NSW level), policies and organisations (for example, LCPs) that impact on the workload and careers of careers advisers. At the same time, there have been considerable changes in job and career opportunities and further training and education options for the students whom careers advisers help. These changes have required a rethinking, reorientation and redirection of careers advisers’ work with students. Dealing with vastly increased volumes and sources of information through the Internet has also added to the work role and intensity being experienced by NSWDET careers advisers. They have and continue to experience both work intensification and role expansion.

4.4.2 Role expectations and lack of a clear career path

Other issues that NSWDET careers advisers face in the career management that they experience are that of their expected roles and the lack of a clear career path for them. As noted in Chapter 3, the NSWDET does have a statement about the expected roles of its careers advisers in secondary and central schools (see Box 3.2 below) but the actual duties that they perform in schools vary considerably.
Box 3.2: Role expectations of careers advisers in NSWDET secondary and central schools

- assisting students to identify their abilities, skills and interests through a range of activities including computer-assisted guidance programs and Internet sites
- designing and developing a career education program that includes the implementation of vocational learning through the school curriculum
- playing an integral role within the school welfare team by providing high quality advice and guidance regarding student transition issues
- providing workplace learning opportunities
- providing and clarifying information for students and their parents regarding the school curriculum, the HSC and further education and training
- providing a wide range of opportunities for students to learn and continue to learn about careers, industries and appropriate work/life roles and the world in general.


In discussing this issue, the respondents provided the following views. Marsha argued that there was a link for NSWDET secondary school careers advisers between the lack of a specific job description (as distinct from role expectations) and work intensification. She indicated that the lack of a specific job description for NSWDET secondary school careers advisers could increase the variability and uncertainty of their role (as perceived by school principals) and the subsequent potential for careers advisers to experience task expansion and work intensification, both over time in one school and between different secondary schools at the one time. She gave the example of a careers adviser being approached by his or her School Principal and being asked to ‘to start organising all the work placements for the VET courses’; given the lack of a specific role statement such a careers adviser would, Marsha said, need to ‘sit down with the Principal and negotiate what it is they are currently doing that they would not now do (so as to not overload themselves with work)’.

Pam drew attention to this variability of careers advisers’ roles in schools when she stated that such duties could be linked to functions such as managing the timetable, managing the Board of Studies entries and even managing the whole school.
She noted that this variability of roles is ‘... a two edged sword because careers advisers don’t have a job description as such. And that can be advantage or disadvantage (for them) or both at the same time.’

Another major theme that emerged in the interviews was the lack of a clear career path for careers advisers. As explained in Chapter 3, this has been an unrealised goal for careers advisers in NSWDET schools for a number of years. For Liz, while the career management practices provided by the NSWDET did succeed in enhancing careers advisers’ ‘... professional knowledge and experiences’, they were not effective in assisting careers advisers to develop career pathways for themselves. Mark noted that the lack of a clear career path for careers advisers was an obstacle to their promotion. He stated that while subject discipline teachers had the opportunity to apply for positions as a Head Teacher and then Deputy Principal, followed by Principal, careers advisers did not have a clear career pathway.

Lyn viewed the issue of career paths for careers advisers in terms of them being aware of and willing to take on relieving positions as RVECs within the NSWDET. She thought this enabled them to ‘... build (their) capacity to, you know, consider other career paths’. She believed nevertheless that this practice was not as effective as it could be, given the relative lack of relieving positions, the short time frames for submission of expressions of interest and the often short duration of the relieving positions. Lyn also mentioned another factor—the occasional need to appoint such people on the basis of their previous experience, rather than as a career development opportunity for untried careers advisers. While she agreed that there is a lack of a formal or specific career path for secondary school careers advisers, she pointed out that they could apply for in-school, Head Teacher positions related to Vocational Education Training. She explained nevertheless that, in this case, applicants would need to have a VET qualification, in addition to their original academic and teacher training qualifications.

In summing up this issue, it needs to be emphasised that the NSWDET has been made aware of the lack of a career path for secondary careers advisers as it had been included in the recommendations provided in the ‘Report of the Working Party on
Careers Advising and Career Education in N.S.W (Dec, 1983)’, (Doherty 1983: 99-100). Davis and Brathwaite (1990) and Ramsey (1991) also examined this issue and advocated that such a path should be created. McKenzie (2005), fourteen years later, noted that there was a considerable loss of careers advisers from the profession because they could not access a direct promotion pathway. Thus careers advisers have an active interest in resolving this issue.

4.4.3 Image issues

Another issue that emerged from the interviews was negative perceptions of the careers advisers’ job. For example, Ali, Liz and Nadine drew attention to the unfavourable perception of careers advisers held by classroom teachers in their schools. As Liz put it:

I know there is an attitude among some regional and school staff that the role of the careers adviser in a school is a worthless one. Sad but true… Sometimes the Regional Vocational Education consultants are actually very negative in their attitude towards careers advisers. Because they don’t understand the role they can be quite damning. That’s the sad thing and trying to change that perception is very difficult.

Negative perceptions of careers advisers, according to Nadine, may discourage classroom teachers from looking at careers adviser positions. She was not sure whether classroom teachers would look for careers adviser positions on the NSWDET intranet site because she felt that careers advisers had a poor image amongst these teachers. In her own words:

I gather that there’s a perception among careers advisers that those members of staff who are not careers advisers, think we do nothing…. So I think people (classroom teachers) could very well be deterred from looking at careers advising as a career online when (such positions are) notified, because they think, I don’t know anything about it… so I think (there) may be (a) lack of utility (in) that some people are deterred
because they don’t understand the role and maybe even undervalue the role so why would they want to get into it.

Echoing Nadine, Lyn drew attention to the perception by other teachers in schools that careers advisers ‘have it easy’ because they do not have a full-time teaching load like themselves. She saw the challenge for careers advisers in such a situation to be proactive in their work, rather than reactive—thus demonstrating the value of what they do. She concluded that the work role of careers advisers was impacted by the value attached to what they do in schools. That is, if the individual functioning and actions of careers advisers in their schools were viewed in a positive light, then those careers advisers would experience greater job satisfaction.

Some interviewees believed that these negative perceptions might stem from a lack of understanding of what careers advisers do. Liz pointed out that this was a problem in both schools and to some extent, in the NSWDET as a whole. She expressed her view that being a careers adviser is:

a dead-end job because the teaching fraternity don’t recognise it. It’s really interesting, because careers advisers’ CVs for the most part read very well. The role requires good organisational and time management skills as well as good communication and people skills and numerous other skills which would tend to put them ‘ahead of the game for promotional positions. Yet they don’t tend to get jobs they apply for within schools owing to the poor image careers advisers tend to have. I have had industry people who have read my CV say, “Wow that’s fantastic”. It’s more likely for careers advisers to gain a management position outside of the DET. However in a school situation, the questions tend to be ‘Well what have you done?’ ‘What have you taught? What management roles have you had within the school?’ Teaching to them is standing in front of a classroom and managing roles within defined areas whereas a CA has managed many more roles apart from the usual ones.

In closing, it does appear that career advisers in NSWDET secondary schools may have a negative image amongst their colleagues. This may stem from the lack of knowledge of such colleagues about the complicated and skilful nature of the work
that careers advisers are called upon to perform. But this raises the question of why their colleagues may be lacking in this knowledge. An answer could be that they have no interest in what careers advisers do, or are too busy in their own work, or do not want to know because they have a negative view of careers advisers and the role they perform. The advice given by Lyn seems very apt in such circumstances, that careers advisers need to be active in demonstrating the value of what they do within their school and for its students, so as to create a positive image of careers advisers and the work they perform.

4.4.4 Self-management

In relation to the need for the career self-management\(^{10}\) and the facilitation provided by the NSWDET to help achieve this for its secondary careers advisers, the respondents gave the following views.

Joan provided a very strong argument in favour of such a self-directed set of actions for individual employees. She felt that such a strategy was ‘crucial’. She did however point out that allocation of time to engage in this practice is essential, because such a process requires time for reflection. In her view, careers advisers (and teachers in general) are unlikely to have ‘… much time left to think about (themselves) and (their) own career development’. Self reflection is important, in Joan’s view, because:

\[ ... unless the careers adviser sees a connection between what they are doing in their work (i.e. advocating career self-management) and what they are doing for themselves, then it’s a bit problematic that they are doing that kind of work. So it needs to be in some ways, almost a prerequisite that goes with the job, if you are doing that kind of work. \]

Jill viewed career self-management for careers advisers as important as it is for any employee who is ‘… seeking out … opportunities to enhance (their) skills’. Yet she

\(^{10}\) The issue of career self-management was included as a topic for discussion in the interviews because of the concept’s presence in current career development theory (as explored in Chapter 2, see Boyatzis et al., 2002; Komisar, 2000; Drucker, 1999 and Inkson, 2004b). The ability for careers advisers to self-manage their career is supported by both current career development theory and by most of the respondents interviewed for this thesis.
saw a problem in such a process for careers advisers because of the above-mentioned problem of lack of a career path. In her view the RVEC position was the only (direct) movement available for careers advisers.

Liz also thought that career self-management was essential for careers advisers. She thought that careers advisers should be able to manage their own careers, as this is necessary given they are ‘… trying to educate students to self-manage their own career pathways’. However, this does not necessarily mean that all careers advisers self-manage their careers well, and she laid the responsibility for a lack of this facility in some careers advisers with the NSWDET. In her view, ‘…the education department is worst of all, and the culture is the worst of all in dealing with it’. When asked to suggest why, she stated that the NSWDET had not facilitated career self-management, attributing this shortcoming to the ‘…bureaucratic environment in (its) workplace culture, that is so entrenched and particularly (so) in the school culture’. Indeed, Liz was quite concerned about the negative impact of the school work environment upon the capacity of careers advisers and teachers in general to develop their own careers, stating that ‘… no one (including school and NSWDET managers) thinks that it is necessary to develop employees by giving them opportunities to develop themselves, their knowledge and their skills’. She felt that this lack of insight derived from a ‘bullying culture’ in schools.

Like many of her counterparts, Lyn also viewed career self-management as essential. However, she acknowledged that such actions were not easily conducted or achieved and suggested that the employer should support such actions. She noted that the NSWDET regional and state levels had the capacity to support careers advisers in such endeavours, but she pointed out that more could be done if more resources were available. This lack of NSWDET resources had, in recent years, been balanced to some extent by the provision from the Federal Government of website materials and information that:

*has made it a lot easier for careers advisers to find the information and be able to pick up resources, pick up ideas that other people are using … (so) no careers adviser could say, ‘I don’t know where to find it or*
I can’t, there isn’t anything, and just about everything you could think of to do with their work (is available).

Lyn also highlighted the need for careers advisers to find out what they needed through their own actions. She was concerned, for example, that some of her colleagues would not ‘… engage with the Internet’ to develop their own careers.

According to April, careers advisers ‘… really have to be role models don’t they?’ She based this view on the fact that these practitioners work with students and that ‘… career self-management is something that you are actually suggesting to your students’ to pursue’. Similarly, Melissa felt that if careers advisers do not practise career self-management, then their own credibility is at stake.

Mona expressed her view that ‘everybody’s responsible for their own career management’. She added that while career management ‘might be in partnership with the employer, if you choose (this action) everyone has a responsibility (to manage their own career)’. In the same vein, Marsha stated that careers advisers ‘…should take a fair amount of responsibility for (career self-management); after all, they are all professionals’. She believed, though, that career management was a responsibility that should be shared with the employer.

Pam explained her view on careers advisers’ self-management as follows:

... careers advisers should ... be expected to undertake the initiative to manage their own professional development. And you know, we are advocating that for our kids, and I should think they should also practise what they preach; or practise hopefully what they preach. And that includes professional reading, attending career network meetings, and just being proactive in terms of their own professional needs....

Pam expressed the view that there are some careers advisers who could be ‘… still hanging on to those old paradigms (i.e. reliance on employer-generated career management), and we have got a need to support them in that way’. However, she emphasised that careers advisers’ careers are not linear, and thus they can choose and
'need to assess their own positions’. Then, they can seek support from the NSWDET. She provided an example of this support as study leave and ETIS (a library resource that can be accessed anywhere for texts, research papers and topics. The research is done for the enquirer and the results are provided in a timely fashion).

To sum up the responses of the participants to the issue of career self-management, most of the stakeholders viewed the capability and opportunity for secondary careers advisers to engage in their own career development as both positive and desirable. This consensus both reflects and appears to be partly an outcome of the acceptance of contemporary career theories, such as that proposed by Inkson (2004b) which views a career as being self-driven and a somewhat unpredictable ‘journey’. Also this generally united viewpoint reflects the theoretical elements of career adaptability and ‘planfulness’, as expressed in Savickas’s career adaptability construct (Savickas, 1997) and is supported by the definition of career development proposed by Hartel et al., 2007 (see Chapter 2 above). However the main stumbling block that lies in the path of achieving this outcome for careers advisers is the lack of specific time allocation.

4.4.5 Education, training, and mentoring programs

Education, training and mentoring programs provided by the NSWDET for its careers advisers appeared to meet with satisfaction from the stakeholders who were interviewed. General approval was given to broad training such as the Graduate Certificate course in Career Education and Development (teach.NSW, 2008b), which is required as the basic professional training standard. Also specific training programs such as that provided for careers advisers to implement the ‘School to Work’ program in NSWDET secondary schools were seen as satisfactory.

Liz identified the training and educational opportunities provided by the NSWDET as being potentially ‘highly effective’ because they gave careers advisers the chance to look at ‘…opportunities beyond their immediate role’. In addition, this stakeholder expressed the view that ‘any training and development opportunity is
usually received very positively by careers advisers’. In particular, Liz cited a
training course offered by Jim Bright that dealt with Career Counselling, which had
been offered ‘a number of years ago to careers advisers in NSW’. Her enthusiasm
for this course is reflected in the excerpt below:

That course was just mind-blowing for some of them. Because they
hadn’t had a lot of formal training and it gave them a different
perspective from someone who had done research in the area at
university etc. The careers advisers found it excellent to be talking to
somebody who was lecturing at university and also working in the
industry in his own business. It was a fabulous opportunity for them to
see other opportunities. I think it was one of the better professional
development events I’ve seen.

Lyn noted that the NSWDET provided millions of dollars in professional
development learning funds and that most of this funding went directly to schools.
In her words, ‘there’s about 60 million dollars that goes into schools each year for
professional learning for staff’. She argued nevertheless that careers advisers should
‘…be ensuring that…they are getting their share of that…I don’t mean share in term
of dividing up the money, but their share of the plans, the planning that’s happening
at the school level’. Mark also viewed NSWDET training and educational
opportunities as an effective intervention for careers advisers in its secondary schools
as it allowed a lot of opportunities for careers advisers to go and do courses.

Pam expressed her view that the practice of providing training and educational
opportunities was effective only if people turned up for such opportunities. As she
put it, professional development programs ‘…can’t be effective for people who don’t
actually make the effort to engage. So that’s also a personal decision, (but) certainly
the opportunities (are) there.’ Pam also emphasised the importance of retraining for
new careers advisers, in particular the strategies of networking and mentoring that are
facilitated by and are a part of that retraining. In her own words:
.... when (careers advisers) go back to their school and they are left
alone again, ... they (have) ... a local person within (their) region or
within (their) area that ... has become their mentor and they connect ...
them up to other careers advisers to support them.

Nadine spoke favourably about the Graduate Certificate course, but questioned the
need and usefulness of the theoretical component of this course, and was not tempted
to upgrade her qualification to the Diploma level. On the other hand, she had found
the practical components of the Graduate Certificate (i.e. organising work experience)
‘very valuable’. Nadine also noted the advantages of having experienced careers
advisers doing the course while she was studying it, and in particular the access this
provided to a wide knowledge base.

In equally positive terms, Melissa praised the effectiveness of the retraining program
for careers advisers. She thought ‘the quality of the training is high, it’s both
academic and practical and in a sense it’s based on, grounded on the work (the
careers advisers) are doing’. In closing her comments on the effectiveness of
retraining courses, Melissa stated that:

(this training) generally gives them a strong basis and a strong
theoretical basis against which to make decisions and you know develop
their practices as time goes on. So I think it’s a quite strong training in
that respect. I think yes, (it) stands (the careers advisers) in good stead,
not just developing their practice but (helping them in) applying those
things to their own career development.

April also appreciated the theoretical underpinnings in the retraining program for
teachers to become secondary careers advisers. In her words, ‘I think that’s the really
critical part of developing the skills and practice of a careers adviser. And that’s
something that’s been a really strong part of the programs.’
However, not all interviewees viewed the NSWDET retraining program in positive terms. For example, Alyssa recounted that two careers advisers whom she had been informally mentoring had done this program, but were not happy. They had commented that:

…. (the course) didn’t teach us things like, running work experience programs, dealing with counselling students, the whole UAI process and how to administer all that with students (to advise).’

This led Alyssa to conclude that ‘…. apparently, the … course (run by the) RMIT (is) not preparing people for the … classroom—for the schools’.

With regard to specific training programs, Lyn believed, for example, that the School to Work Program had provided considerably opportunities for careers advisers to ‘… engage with professional development around that program’. She was of the opinion that more careers advisers needed to take advantage of the ‘Teachers in Business’ Program. Marsha identified the ‘Teachers in Business’ Program as being possibly useful or effective for careers advisers because it did provide some industry experience for these practitioners, many of who may not have worked in the private sector.

Nadine too, was quite enthusiastic about the ‘Teachers in Business’ Program, noting that it:

… could be extremely advantageous, almost in a therapeutic way. (for) teachers who’ve been in the job a long time and (were) wondering why they (were) still here…. (To) actually go and have to do something quite meaningful and learn new skills and relate in a different way to a different set of clientele, I think that could be quite stimulating if you (were) getting a bit jaded … (and try) to keep good people in the profession by giving them this time away to reinvigorate themselves.
Liz (2007) commented favourably on the existence of the mentoring program provided for careers advisers as a part of the retraining program.

_The mentoring program is especially useful for new carers advisers and assists them to gain knowledge quickly and effectively about their role and responsibilities. At the same time it allows them an opportunity to discuss some of the negative aspects of the job with an experienced carers adviser._

Lyn saw formal mentoring taking place as a part of the retraining program for new careers advisers (the RMIT Graduate Certificate course mentioned above). She said that this mentoring was arranged ‘… at the state level by the NSWDET and was for the year in which they take this course. Such relationships often continue on an informal basis after the year of the training.’ Lyn also noted that if a careers adviser’s performance were viewed as problematic, then mentoring would be instituted as a ‘formal’ part of an improvement program. For her, ‘…the best support is a good careers adviser in another school that’s near by. So that’s usually been part of a formal mentoring program.’

Like Lyn, Pam viewed the mentoring component of the NSWDET retraining program for careers advisers as effective because it ‘… gives (careers advisers) a connection to a local practitioner, that practitioner often identified as being a good practitioner’. Pam also saw effective mentoring taking place through the local careers advisers’ networks. In her view, the running of the networks varied: ‘Sometimes it’s a mixture of independent Catholic and DET careers advisers, and in others it’s very much just a DET group’. This interviewee argued that the existence and continued operation of such networks was very significant for careers advisers because:

_... they are really alone in their school. And no one really comprehends or understands the work or the workload or the provision that they are trying to uphold. So I think that the mentoring network, that connection is really important. ...we (the NSWDETVED) do encourage that networking and professional development._
Jill felt that the RVECs’ role in mentoring careers advisers has improved through the careers advisers’ networks, but admitted that she did not know if such networks existed or not. She pointed out that careers advisers:

... need some sort of debriefing opportunities and the counselling program that is provided by the DET, which is the EAP program.... It’s very minimal, and the person that would be supporting you (as the careers adviser) has probably no idea of your job. So I think, you know, that some of those positions in schools and particularly the careers adviser, it’s a bit of a lone ranger job. You do feel isolated.

Mona believed the mentoring program that was part of the careers advisers training program (RMIT Graduate Certificate) was an ‘…outstanding start’ for (usually) new practitioners’ careers.

4.5 Future career issues facing careers advisers

Future career issues that will face careers advisers in their careers include a range of new programs, strategies, and processes and raised professional development standards. These changes are to be introduced into secondary schools to enhance the career prospects and guidance of students. However they are very likely to intensify and expand careers advisers’ work and roles in the future.

Examples of these changes included the following: the creation of ‘trade schools’ in the NSWDET secondary school system (Jill, Marsha and Pam) and dealing with the creation of apprenticeship courses in these schools (Marsha). This interviewee noted that with work placements for students who are still at secondary school, there are OH&S and risk assessment requirements that must be done before these students can be placed and that careers advisers could be called upon to conduct such assessments. She also commented that the introduction of national curricula in English, History, Mathematics and Science (Rudd, 2008) may be an added burden for careers advisers. Finally Marsha added that it is likely careers advisers’ workloads may be affected by the introduction of industry-specific syllabi into Years 9 and 10 that would be linked to the HSC program.
According to Liz, the School to Work Program and the impending retirement of the ‘baby boomer’ generation who comprise the majority of the current cohort of careers advisers will also impact on the workload of those who remain in this role. The first factor has highlighted, for school executives and staff, the connection between students’ career development and learning across the curriculum. The second factor is likely to lead, in her words, to a ‘gap in the corporate knowledge that exists’ compared to that which careers advisers currently enjoy. She further noted that:

*These careers advisers have set up effective networks both within the careers advisers’ circles across government and non-government schools and also in the broader circle of tertiary advisers. Most of these careers advisers had come from a background with a varied and broad experience both within schools and in the broader workplace.*

A third area of impact is that which has been created by parental pressure ‘…for careers advisers to do as much as they can for their children’ (Mark). In schools where the socio-economic environment of its students was poor, careers advisers ‘…become the advocate for the family became they are so disempowered. More specifically, ‘… in many of those schools in the western … and south western suburbs (of Sydney), the careers adviser is very much the person who’s taking the lead role in the family, to get these kids work’ (Mark).

John and Pam identified both the ABCD and the NSWDET School to Work Program (K to 12) as facilitating a changed emphasis for careers advisers and factors that in the short to mid-term would impact on the work of careers advisers. The level of work intensification and role expansion that would occur as a consequence of these changes would depend on the ability of careers advisers to divest themselves of some existing roles within schools in order to be involved in these newer programs.

Pam added that changes brought by Career Advice Australia to provide a range of services and programs for schools and students, and the NSW Institute of Teachers for professional standards for teachers would impact on careers advisers’ work. Ali also noted the latter item as one that now and in the future would add to careers...
advisers’ workloads. John too, saw the need for careers advisers to achieve levels of professional standards (as set out in the ‘Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners’ document created by the CICA in 2006-2007 [CICA, 2007]) to become and remain careers advisers in the future, as a factor that would add to their work. Nadine suggested that there was probably a case for providing a process of recognition of prior learning for those careers advisers who had a number of years of experience, if not current formal training to be a careers adviser. Pam identified a further addition to the work role for careers advisers— the rollout of an on-line self-efficacy student pathway survey that would require them to develop skills to administer and support students using this survey tool.

A further factor identified by Pam that will increase the workload of career advisers was ‘…the engagement of students’ parents in supporting students’ career and transition (to work or further studies)’. She believes that careers advisers should be both aware of and support students’ investigation of the concepts of enterprise and innovation as ways of viewing how their careers may develop. In addition, Pam reiterated the need for careers advisers to ‘remain up-to-date’ in their use of email and electronic sources of information and communication (Pam).

Ali identified the following factors that would impact on the work of NSWDET careers advisers in the short and medium-term: LCPs; work placements for students; and Apprenticeships and Training Expos and local careers markets. She also noted the existence of career transition processes in some NSWDET schools. Such processes involved a person within a school taking on a range of tasks usually performed by the careers adviser. As she put it:

... basically, (this would be) another person to work with the careers adviser. So that person could look ... after work experience, work placements even. Making sure they are all coordinated and maybe supervising them... helping with, you know, things like subject selection, talking to the kids about their pathways and that sort of stuff.
Ali concluded that, given the nature of secondary school students and their needs to have rapid feedback and on-going support, careers advisers needed to continue to be based in schools and remain as teachers as well as careers advisers.

When asked to comment on the topic of future factors that may impact on careers advisers’ careers, Alyssa immediately identified the then current rumours of careers advisers having their professional role replaced or changed. Also Alyssa was somewhat worried that in the future she, as a careers adviser, would have to have upgraded qualifications as a consequence of the NSW Institute of Teachers’ professional standards requirements.

John commented on the matter of career progression for careers advisers. He felt that they could continue to become more experienced in their role, apply for other positions within or outside schools or take on part-time secondments to develop a range of skills and experience, for example as a careers adviser in one school and School to Work Project Officer in another school. Pam identified a number of options for careers advisers to progress and develop in the future: they could become Project Officer, Head Teacher Subject or Head Teacher Administration, work in other educational institutions or move outside the teaching sphere altogether. As she noted:

... in the world of work now, you don’t stay within one industry and stay within one pathway. And pathways are diverse ... (careers advisers) have to make some personal decisions about whether they want to stay or move on.

Melissa acknowledged that the ageing of the workforce would have an impact on the recruitment policies and objectives for the NSWDET in the future. This impact would be because the bulk of the current careers advisers are from the ‘baby boomer’ generation, and this generation represents a large demographic bulge in both the NSW and Australian population. Therefore the NSWDET would likely have to engage in an expanded campaign to get new careers advisers to replace those who are retiring. Nadine also mentioned this possible shortage of careers advisers in the near future as the bulk of them reach retirement age.
As regards both the current and future factors impacting on the careers of NSWDET careers advisers, the picture appears to be one that shows them becoming ever more busy in their work and stretched by their need to become involved in a broader range of programs and activities, while continuing to adapt to the evolving needs of their students. The latest decline in the Australian economy and its varied impacts on different labour market segments requires continual research by careers advisers as they advise their students about both current and future career opportunities and reinforces the need for careers advisers to instill in their students the need for adaptability, openness to change and the willingness to engage in life-long learning.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the study specifically conducted to gather qualitative data for this thesis. First, it restated the research questions. It then described and explained the qualitative methodology used for data collection and then identified the career management stakeholders of NSWDET secondary careers advisers and the representatives of these stakeholders who were the interviewees. Next it explored the perceptions of these stakeholders in relation to the three research questions, which sought to identify and explore their views about current career management interventions, provided by the NSWDET for its secondary careers advisers, plus current and future issues impacting on the careers of these advisers.

In identifying the current issues that impact on the careers of NSWDET careers advisers, the respondents identified the following matters: job expansion and work intensification, role expectation and a lack of a clear career path, image issues, self-management of their careers, education and training, and mentoring programs. The findings suggested that the views about the career management offered to careers advisers were mixed and did not simply reflect the organisational positions of the interviewees. There did appear to be a division of opinion about these issues that was roughly determined by whether the respondent was responsible in some way for the provision of career management and/or the role expectations of careers advisers or was a recipient or onlooker to what happens to careers advisers. Those in the first category tended to play down the significance of issues raised and criticisms of career management provided, or in some way question the commitment of careers
advisers to taking up the opportunities offered by the NSWDET to, for example attend professional development activities, or apply for secondments or undertake project work, in order to achieve career progression. Those in the second group were to varying extents critical of aspects of the career management offered and concerned about the career issues that they identified.

Future issues that were identified and discussed by the interviewees related to the range of new programs, strategies, processes and raised professional development standards that were being introduced, refined or would soon impact upon the work and careers of these careers advisers. In most instances, the perceptions regarding these issues were that careers advisers would have more to do without the adequate time to deal with them. In the following chapter, the thesis adopts an analytic stance in relation to the findings of the study by situating them within broader contexts and exploring possible answers to the research questions developed for this thesis.
Chapter 5

Understanding the Extemporised Journey of Careers Advisers—Career Management and Career Issues

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 presented both concerns about and support for current career provisions by NSWDET. It also set out the main thematic patterns that emerged in the qualitative study on NSW careers advisers, namely, role expansion and increased workload; image issues; lack of career path, self-management and views on education, training and mentoring provided for careers advisers. Also, future career issues such the introduction of new programs and curricula for students and raised professional development standards were identified and discussed. Chapter 4 was essentially descriptive, allowing the participants to speak for themselves.

Chapter 5 adopts an analytic stance in relation to the findings of the study to explore possible answers to questions that have arisen from these findings. Such questions include: To what extent is the career provision made by the NSWDET adequate? Why has the role and workloads of NSW careers advisers expanded so considerably in the last decade? What prevents careers advisers from having a clear career path? Why do careers advisers suffer from image problems? Why is self-management important? In order to address these questions, Chapter 5 will both link these issues to the current context of rapidly changing social, economic and political forces and their impacts on the career management of careers advisers and it will re-visit relevant theoretical models discussed in Chapter 2.
5.2 Adequacy of NSWDET career management for careers advisers

5.2.1 Adequacy for what purpose?

To address and then analyse the adequacy of the career management provided by the NSWDET firstly requires a statement as to the purpose of the career management. In other words, what does the NSWDET want to achieve by providing career management for its careers advisers? The NSWDET appears to want them to be able to achieve the outcomes identified in its statement of role expectations (Box 3.2 below).

Box 3.2: Role expectations of careers advisers in NSWDET secondary and central schools

- assisting students to identify their abilities, skills and interests through a range of activities including computer assisted guidance programs and Internet sites
- designing and developing a career education program that includes the implementation of vocational learning through the school curriculum
- playing an integral role within the school welfare team by providing high quality advice and guidance regarding student transition issues
- providing work place learning opportunities
- providing and clarifying information for students and their parents regarding the school curriculum, the HSC and further education and training
- providing a wide range of opportunities for students to learn and continue to learn about careers, industries and appropriate work/life roles and the world of work in general.


Accepting that these are the required goals, it is argued that to achieve them—for the career management to be adequate to the task—the NSWDET should implement interventions that can reasonably be expected to provide its careers advisers with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and opportunities to reach such expectations. The issue then is to identify a suitable set of interventions to determine if the career management actions that are being taken by the NSWDET are indeed adequate for
the required tasks. Such a set has been provided by Arnold (1997:46) and is reproduced, (with the single omission of ‘career planning’ as previously noted) in Table 1.1. As mentioned earlier in Chapters 1 and 2, the rationale for using Arnold’s schema of career management interventions in the study is because it is simple and straightforward and lists a number of clearly defined employer-driven interventions that could be identified via interview questions and indeed it was used for this purpose.

Table 5.1: Career management interventions in organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal vacancy notification</th>
<th>Career paths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career workbooks</td>
<td>Career planning workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer–assisted career management</td>
<td>Individual counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and educational opportunities</td>
<td>Personal development plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career action centres</td>
<td>Development centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring programs</td>
<td>Job assignments/rotation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outplacement</td>
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5.2.2 Training and educational opportunities as the major career management intervention

Using Arnold’s career management interventions it is clear from the research study that training and educational opportunities have been the most significant intervention used by the NSWDET. In reviewing the range of interventions suggested, respondents provided the most positive responses about this particular intervention. This outcome is not unexpected given that the NSWDET has ensured that its careers
advisers have initial teaching qualifications and are currently employed as teachers (teach.NSW, 2008b) before offering them the opportunity and requirement to undertake further formal training to become a career adviser, through completion of the RMIT Graduate Certificate in Career Education and Development (DET, 2009a). As a further part of training and educational opportunities, the specific training associated with programs such as the School to Work initiative is available to careers advisers. Next, the Teachers in Business Program has relevance for careers advisers in that it can add to their contemporary understanding of work opportunities and realities that are external to teaching and schools. The emphasis that the NSWDET places on training and educational opportunities as a career management intervention is not unexpected for two reasons. Firstly, it has been and remains a traditional public service style bureaucracy that places considerable importance on structured training of its staff. Secondly, its organisational focus is the provision of education—early, primary, secondary, technical/vocational and adult and community. Thus the NSWDET continues to acknowledge the importance of such career management interventions for its own staff by providing them with such programs and opportunities.

It does need to be noted that support for training and education opportunities as an intervention was contested. Nadine questioned the need and usefulness of the theoretical component of the RMIT Graduate Certificate course, however she did express overall support for it as an educational qualification. Pam saw this course as useful because it facilitated the development in careers advisers of networking and mentoring. Melissa praised its effectiveness and April supported its theoretic aspects. Alyssa, recounting the views of a couple of new careers advisers who she was informally mentoring, indicated that they had felt the course did not provide adequate treatment of the practical aspects of being a careers adviser such as running work experience programs, dealing with counselling students, understanding the University Admission Index and time management. Positive views about this training program were provided by April and Pam and Melissa. Lyn supported specific training programs, such as that provided with the School to Work Program and Lyn, Marsha and Nadine spoke positively about the Teachers in Business Program as it provided industry experience for careers advisers (and other teachers) who completed it. While support for this intervention does not line up neatly, based on whether the
stakeholders were (i) careers advisers, part of the (ii) NSWDETVED or NSW Human Resources, Staffing and Retraining function or (iii) external stakeholders, it can be observed that there was no criticism of the training and education opportunities offered by the NSWDET that came from the second group. This perhaps indicated an organisation bias or at least caution their responses to the question about the usefulness of this intervention.

However, there appears to be a larger picture behind the use of training and educational opportunities as the major intervention to manage the careers of secondary careers advisers. Recent social, economic and political changes in both New South Wales and Australia have required careers advisers to provide opportunities for students to become more knowledgeable and have more understanding of a range of ‘…careers, industries and appropriate work/life roles…’ (teach.NSW, 2008a:2) which prepares them to be more flexible and adaptable as to the work they perform and the career they pursue. Even the OECD (2003) has advocated that nations put more resources into ensuring that young people have adequate and appropriate career guidance and this requires that careers advisers are properly trained.

That ‘flexibility and adaptability’ is required from young workers appears to be based on the view that work or employment has been transformed into a career and a career is now seen to be a changeable existence for the individual. O’Keefe (1981), Stone (2002), Dessler et al., (2004), Hartel et al., (2007) and Inkson (2007) discuss the transformation of work or employment into career and the changing meaning of career from a generally clear job path within a particular organisation or industry (McCowan and McKenzie, 2007) to a range of working and other experiences (Handy, 1995). Arthur and Rousseau (cited in Holland and DeCieri, 2006) discuss the boundary-less career. Noe (2002) provides the concept of a protean career and Bridges (1995) went as far as indicating that in the near future, people would become self-employed micro-businesses of one.

The emphasis placed on higher levels of education and training for the young and the incorporation of concepts of life-long learning into the message provided to employees about how to remain employed, stems in part from the popularising of
Bell’s (1976) ‘post industrial society’ thesis. His thesis requires raised skill levels as a passport into ‘knowledge-based’ employment that is allegedly better paid and more secure than the jobs in declining manufacturing sectors.

A number of the current career development theories also incorporate the complexity and randomness of peoples’ lives to provide support for the need to accept and embrace variability in careers (Patton and McMahon, 1999, Chen, 2003, Bright and Pryor, 2005). Based on such conceptualisations and theories, there is clearly a requirement for new employees coming from secondary schools (and universities) to have a flexible and adaptable approach to their careers. Such an outcome requires careers advisers’ advocacy and input that is based on their own training and education.

Moreover, such flexibility better serves the needs of new capitalism (Gee et al., 1996) in that workers are more attuned (less resistant) to changes in what they do and how they perform their work. Also they are allegedly more willing to take an active role in the quality culture of organisations (Gee et al., 1996). In addition, it is likely to encourage a more compliant attitude to managerialism (Pinnington and Lafferty, 2003) in students once they are in the workforce. Thus, it is argued in this thesis that the emphasis on training and educational opportunities for careers advisers in the NSWDET is important so as to get this evolving message, view and approach to careers clearly implanted in the minds of their students.

### 5.2.3 Adequacy of other identified career management interventions

A number of the other interventions listed in Table 1.1 are used by the NSWDET. These are: internal vacancy notification; career paths; job assignments; individual counselling; mentoring; computer-assisted career management; personal development plans. Internal vacancy notification is provided through the DET portal, however its operational effectiveness was disputed by one of the respondents (Nadine) and at least initially its use by careers advisers had involved extra time as they became familiar with its operation and transferred existing links to it (Pam). The provision of the Internet-supported delivery of information, through the DET
portal, also helps careers advisers maintain and expand their knowledge and thus be more able to help their students ‘... identify their abilities, skills and interests … provide and clarify information for students and their parents regarding the school curriculum, the HSC and further education and training (and) provide a wide range of opportunities for students to learn…. about careers….’ (teach.NSW, 2008a:2). So the DET portal provides both an indicated career management intervention and is of direct assistance for careers advisers to achieve three of the six NSWDET role expectations for its careers advisers (teach.NSW, 2008a:2).

Career paths for careers advisers are at best indirect, as noted by a number of the respondents (for example, Liz and Mark). However an informal route does exist, through a process akin to ‘job assignment’ (Arnold, 1997:46) that Lyn refers to as taking on ‘relieving positions as RVECs within the NSWDET’. However such a pathway tends to dilute a careers adviser’s involvement with careers and add that of coordinating vocational education delivery in a number of schools within his or her geographical region.

Individual counselling, through the employee assistance program (EAP) run by the NSWDET is available to all of its employees (Jill). However, as pointed out above by Lyn, specific counselling could be available through the careers adviser’s own School Principal or the RVEC. As an intervention it did not appear to rate as a significant item in the views of the respondents.

Mentoring of careers advisers is supported as (i) a component of the RMIT Graduate Certificate course (DET, 2009a; Lyn) (ii) through the creation and support of careers adviser networks by the RVECs and (iii) support for the careers advisers’ professional development organisation—the NSWCAA. In each of these forms it was generally well supported by the respondents. Lyn also mentioned that if an individual careers adviser was experiencing performance difficulties in their role, then a formal mentoring program could be established by the School Principal with a careers adviser at another school. The choice of the mentoring careers adviser would, according to Lyn, be negotiated with the careers adviser in need of the
Mentoring appears to be appreciated by those respondents who identified it as a NSWDET intervention. Its value as a mechanism for coping with workload and role expansion issues is a worthy topic for future research.

In relation to computer-assisted career management programs, Pam mentioned a pilot being trialled in the North Sydney region of the NSWDET. At the time of interview (2007), that was all that was being done to offer this type of career management intervention. Personal development plans are required to be made by individual teachers (including careers advisers) and the plan is negotiated with each staff members’ school-based supervisor (Mark). This form of career management did not elicit responses from other interviewees, so it is difficult to comment on its adequacy. What can be said is that such plans, while superficially beneficial for careers advisers and other teaching staff are a form of managerialism. As such, they can be used to contribute to the achievement of the NSWDET’s organisational goals and depending on how skilfully they are created and how much sense of ownership careers advisers feel they have in such plans, they may or may not adequately reflect what individual careers advisers may want in their own careers.

As to the adequacy of these other career management interventions provided by the NSWDET for its careers advisers, the respondents reported varying levels of support in decreasing order for: internal vacancy notification; job assignments; individual counselling; and personal development plans. It should be noted that these interventions are available to all teaching staff in NSWDET schools and colleges and as careers advisers are both teachers (for the purpose of remuneration and work conditions) and careers advisers, they experience a duality in their organisational existence.

However, it seems that the NSWDET does not see a need to provide more focused, separate or different versions of its career management interventions for its careers advisers. Such action would probably raise operational costs and may prompt concerns, especially from other teaching staff, of ‘special treatment’ for careers advisers. This last possibility is raised because of some of the respondents’

11 As a general observation, the point at which mentoring ends and counselling begins in professional relationships between careers advisers may in practice be difficult to identify.
perceptions that careers advisers already have an easy job. This issue is treated below in this chapter.

5.2.4 Adequacy of non-identified career management interventions

There were some other interventions that were not, according to the respondents, in general use at all. These interventions were career workbooks, specific career planning workshops, career action and development centres and outplacement. While it is not argued that one organisation should necessarily use the full range of career management interventions at any one time, the lack of these interventions does require some comment. Career planning workshops were not known, except by Lyn as perhaps an activity that existed within particular careers adviser networks. John did mention ‘workshops provided by RVECs that support the development and the career management practices of … careers advisers’, but it was not clear from his response if these were specific to career planning. Career action and development centres and outplacement were either unknown or misunderstood. The use of such strategies appears to be more common in large private sector organisations as respective parts of career development, performance management and downsizing programs.

The absence of the interventions of career action centres, career development centres and outplacement in the NSWDET’s career management provision was not addressed as a follow-up question during the interviews, so the following view is tentative, but perhaps these interventions were unknown or misunderstood was because of the absence of the need for them to be used to enhance productivity and/or better achieve organisational goals in the face of a competitive market place.
As noted elsewhere, the NSWDET is a large\textsuperscript{12}, long-established, state government-run bureaucracy in which process and accountability to the public and the government of the day have long reigned as the paramount concerns. The introduction of strategic human resource management processes (of which these missing interventions are but a few examples) is relatively recent and so the lack of these four interventions is not surprising.

Also, in relation to outplacement, the NSWDET does not generally have to consider the need for significant outplacement activities (that is as a consequence of retrenchments [Arnold, 1997]), rather the opposite—keeping staff, especially in some of its schools, is an on-going challenge given turnover rates and shortages of specific subject teachers (for example mathematics and science). Annual recruitment campaigns through those universities that educate and train teachers are large operations for the NSDEET. As noted in Chapter 3, drawing on McKenzie (2005), internal attrition of younger careers advisers is a challenge for the NSWDET and this appears to be related to the lack of a clear career path for them. Therefore outplacement has not, to date, being a significant need or activity.

This section of Chapter 5 has addressed the issue of the adequacy of the career management provided by the NSWDET to its secondary careers advisers. The meaning of adequacy in this matter has been linked to the achievement of specific role expectations by careers advisers (as identified in Box 3.2) through the provision of appropriate interventions by the NSWDET. The crucial role of training and educational opportunities as a career management intervention has been identified and its importance acknowledged in terms of its general approval by respondents; contribution to the achievement of the NSWDET’s expected roles of careers advisers (Box 3.2); and in the larger context of helping create new entrants into the labour

\textsuperscript{12} Lyn noted that the ‘NSWDET is the biggest system in the Southern Hemisphere. So … in terms of careers advisers, (there are) more than 500 sites where there would be a careers adviser either (on a) full time or part time (appointment). … There is certainly a commitment by the Department, that every secondary student in NSW Government schools has access to a careers adviser. And given its size, I guess what we (have as) a system … at the moment, is what we call a ‘tri level system’. There are the State Office Directors … 10 regions across the state, and (then) there are the schools. So it is important to make that distinction, … because as a system, we don’t necessarily provide all the support directly from State Office, it obviously comes through regions, and there is a whole range of responsibilities … devolved to schools.’
force (or post secondary educational institutions) who are flexible and adaptable, because these are some of key attributes (Hawkins and Winter, 1995; Harvey, 1999 and Tarrant, 2002)) that they need to have and display in the changing world of work and the new capitalist economic environment of the early 21st century. The current (2009) world recession facing Australia and most developed economies around the globe would only seem to add to the importance of such attributes in young employees.

While other career management interventions are used by the NSWDET for its careers advisers, they do not appear to have quite the same impact on or support from respondents and there are for example, even concerns about the effectiveness of the RVECs in their professional development role with careers advisers. Certainly, the introduction of the DET portal appears to help careers advisers both achieve a number of the NSWDET’s role expectations for them and provide the important intervention of internal job notification. However, one of the downsides for careers advisers can be information overload and rising student demand for rapid responses to inquiries and requests for job and/ or further education information. The next section of this chapter will analyse why secondary careers advisers in NSWDET have experienced a significant role expansion and increase in their workloads.

5.3 Role expansion and workload increase of NSWDET careers advisers in the last decade

A number of the respondents in Chapter 4 commented, in some cases quite strongly, on the expanding role and increasing workloads experienced by NSWDET careers advisers in the last decade. In fact, this situation has increasingly characterised the working experiences of careers advisers since their initial appointments in part-time roles in the 1940s. In the period since 1992, from the NSW and Commonwealth Governments there has emerged a strategic interest (as noted in Chapter 3) in the work that careers advisers do in secondary schools and as a consequence, growth in the regulation of the ways in which their activities are conducted. This interest is officially based on the need to ensure that secondary students receive the best quality
career guidance that is possible. A most desirable and worthy goal one may think, however this thesis argues that the unannounced goal is to exercise a higher level of managerial control over careers advisers’ work than has been attempted in the past.

The reason why this is being done is because this is judged as necessary by these governments to improve the desired qualities in secondary school leavers that will as a consequence, ensure Australia does not lose, but rather increase their competitive advantage through the creation of high quality human capital to work in the post-industrial society that is emerging (Bell, 1976). Examples of the emergence of this strategic interest are noted in Chapter 3, and following is a summary of the regulatory structures and assistance that have been implemented up to the present: the Careers Education Quality Framework’ (Willett, 1999); the ‘New framework for vocational education in schools’ (Groves, 2001); ‘Career and Transition Services Framework’; ‘MCEETYA Taskforce on Transition from School’, 2003; funding to ‘assist in building professional standards and career opportunities for career professionals’ (Nelson, 2004 and Bishop, 2006a); and the ‘Australian Blueprint for Career Development’ (DEEWR, 2009). The OECD has also demonstrated interest in key aspects of career guidance (OECD Review of Career Guidance Policies—Australia's Response to National Questionnaire, 2002).

Also, as a further example of this managerialism, NSWDET careers advisers are now being required to achieve accreditation under two regulatory regimes— the NSW Institute of Teachers (NSW Institute of Teachers, 2008a:1) and, from 2012 (Ali), the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners (CICA, 2007). As noted by John (one of the three NSDDETVED representatives) in his interview, the need for careers advisers to achieve these professional standards (CIGA, 2007) to become and remain careers advisers in the future is a factor that would impact on their work. If no work time allowance were given for it by the NSWDET it would add to their existing workload. The reasons for such a heightened interest in the work of secondary careers advisers and the more intensive professional development requirements would appear to be that it is now more important for them to be performing to the best of their abilities as Australia faces increasing pressure to compete in a globalised marketplace and school leavers must
have the appropriate skills, attributes and attitudes to be able to survive and prosper in workplaces that are facing more international competition.

The adoption of the Internet by the NSWDET as a means of communication, information access and delivery, record keeping and job notification has added to both the role expansion and workload of careers advisers. Keeping up-to-date with labour market and employment information, facilitating the learning of students about the world of work, responding to students’ emails regarding career matters (Pam) and recording data for OH&S (Mark), student vocational learning work placements and work experience have required careers advisers to master a wider range of computer skills and spend more time on such tasks.

However, in response to the view that careers advisers are experiencing role expansion and workload intensification, Lyn, Pam and John believed that the introduction of the School to Work Program provides a more structured approach to what careers advisers need to do in secondary schools and this could assist in the time management of their work. However, the Program carries its own annual reporting requirement (Pam), (which adds to its review complexity) and as previously noted, the variability of careers advisers’ expected roles, as interpreted by the School Principal, can take them outside the Program itself. Also a review of the NSWDET role expectations for careers advisers (Box 3.3) shows a considerable broadening in the role of these practitioners and the strong likelihood of an increasing workload if all of these expectations are to be met.

While these roles expectations are quite broad in themselves, the in-school experiences of some of the respondents indicate that there are other elements to the problems identified above. The variability in the actual roles performed by careers advisers appears to be part of the reason for the role expansion and workload increase. Careers advisers are vulnerable to being spread very thinly around the various activities that go on in a secondary school—everyday or over a longer term. Marsha for example raised the possibility of a careers adviser being asked by their Principal to organise work placements for all VET courses. Another respondent (Alyssa) reported being asked to arrange an alumni database (for which she did get some clerical assistance). Pam commented about how careers advisers may become
involved in class timetabling, managing senior student entry documents for the Higher School Certificate (HSC) or on occasion, filling in for the Principal in their absence. To the extent that careers advisers can be deployed to perform a variety of roles, and they are able to continue to work in this way, then they become both useful to their school but potentially unfocused in careers work with students. The ‘two-edged knife’ (Pam) of a job description that allows for autonomy, but does not limit what careers advisers can do in a secondary school, is a contributing factor to the likelihood of role expansion and workload increase.

In reviewing the matters of the expanding role and increased workload for careers advisers, it appears that the main drivers are the increased societal and political expectations that they should be doing more to adequately prepare secondary students for employment in a changing, more competitive work landscape. It has been argued elsewhere in this thesis that such work changes have been brought on by the forces of new capitalism, facilitated in the last decade especially (but not exclusively) by an aggressive form of neo-liberalism known as economic rationalism.

The restless drive of this world capitalism has resulted in on-going changes in work opportunities and economic structures in NSW and Australia—privatisation of government business enterprises and corporatisation of other government-run operations being just two examples of such changes. Such organisations often place a high level of importance on full-time employee performance and dedication (at least until economic circumstances change and retrenchments are implemented, for example in Qantas and Telstra). Thus careers advisers not only need more information about jobs, careers opportunities and further education and training for their students, but a more sophisticated appreciation of what is driving the changes in the ways jobs and industries come and go into and out of fashion (for example hospitality and tourism in the 1990s [Liz]) and the ability and resources to prepare their students for what is expected of them out in the workplaces of NSW, Australia and the world. One way towards achieving this goal would be for careers advisers to have assistants to help them with their work (Liz).
In order to achieve such outcomes, career advisers have experienced both role expansion and increased workloads. The frantic nature and pace of life and work outside the school yard is moving into the classrooms and careers centres of NSWDET secondary schools. The expectation is that careers advisers can manage this ‘roller coaster’ of expanded information sources, career programs, vocational education courses (in some instances) and career guidance of school leavers. Also technological advances (intricately linked with facilitating the growth of global capitalism), such as the Internet, emails and mobile phones have added to the work and expanded the roles that careers advisers are expected to undertake. New professional registration and development requirements (as noted above) detract from the time that careers advisers are expected to allocate to their core activities. Added administrative tasks associated with fulfilling OH&S requirements that come with the compulsory work placements in some vocational education courses (Mark and Marsha) have the same effect. As well as these challenges that face careers advisers, the study uncovered a number of other issues that now require an analytical response. The first of these issues is the lack of a career path for NSWDET careers advisers.

5.4 Lack of a clear career path for NSWDET careers advisers

The issue of a lack of a clear career path was mentioned by a number of the respondents in this research (Liz and Mark) and has been raised as an issue in previous reports into careers advisers’ functions and in commentaries on their career prospects (Doherty 1983; Davis and Brathwaite, 1990; Ramsey 1991; and McKenzie, 2005). While it can be argued that careers advisers can progress by taking on acting roles as RVECs (Lyn and John) or temporary assignments in a regional or head office administrative role and thus build up their knowledge and experience to apply for permanent positions as RVECs or NSWDETVED Project Officers, these options result in a movement away from the core functions of being a careers adviser. It has also been pointed out (Lyn and John) that careers advisers can apply for promotion positions within secondary schools as Vocational Education and Training (VET) Coordinators, Head Teacher Administration or back in their original discipline areas as Head Teachers. While the vocational course coordinator role has some
association with what careers advisers may have been doing or are interested in following, the logic of returning to their subject discipline areas to obtain a promotion appears flawed on two grounds: (i) they moved away from it to undertake careers work and (ii) other teachers who stayed in their discipline areas would be better experienced and probably better regarded to win such promotions (Liz).

As noted above (in relation to the use of training and educational opportunities), another part of the reason for the lack of defined career path for careers advisers may be because of the duality of their institutional existence. The NSWDET perceives them firstly as a teacher because of their employment status and training level and secondly as a careers adviser. To make a clear career pathway to, for example, an equivalent Head Teacher level (as suggested by Alyssa) would cost more for the organisation and may lead to an aggravation of the image problems that, according to a number of the respondents, careers advisers have. This will be seen below.

5.5 Image problems of NSWDET careers advisers

The data that stated that careers advisers have image problems is concerning. As a former secondary social science teacher and careers adviser, I realised very quickly that the positive regard of one’s peers was vital to getting through the initial ‘survival and then acceptance’ period with students and for future times when, for example cooperative ventures, such as visiting students at work experience venues is planned. The respondents who provided this view about the image of careers advisers were Liz, Ali and Nadine. Lyn was more circumspect in her comments. While she did acknowledge that negative perceptions of careers advisers existed, she advocated a proactive approach by careers advisers towards the work they do as a strategy for them to use in order to create a positive image about their work in schools. But as has been revealed above, careers advisers sometimes have their careers work diverted by school executive staff eager to get ‘more important jobs’ done, so such a strategy could be difficult to pursue. Interestingly, the negative perceptions are provided by two of the three careers advisers interviewed (Ali and Nadine) and the CAANSW representative (Liz) who was a former careers adviser. The more strategic response from Lyn may well have been influenced by her role as a NSDETVED representative.
The nature of this image problem, according to the first three respondents, stems from the negative perceptions that some subject teachers, RVEC and even regional staff (Liz) hold about what careers advisers do in schools—‘worthless’, and their work habits—‘they think we (careers advisers) do nothing’ (Nadine) and ‘have it easy’ (Lyn). The reasons offered by Liz, Ali and Nadine to explain why some staff in the NSWDET have these negative images of careers advisers, are because they do not understand what the careers advisers do (Nadine and Liz) and they undervalue the contribution that a careers adviser can make to students’ success in the world outside the school gates. Liz also offered the view that because there is a perception that being a careers adviser was a ‘dead end job’, then this was a further cause of the negative image. This latter suggestion may have something to do with the unclear promotion path issue noted above.

Liz argued that yet another reason for this negative image of careers advisers is because there is a lack of recognition for the skills and experience developed as a careers adviser that often reflected in poor success rates for careers advisers when applying for management positions within schools or the NSWDET. By way of contrast, Liz noted that careers advisers were usually more successful in gaining such positions outside the NSWDET because the organisational and time management skills that they develop in their jobs are more highly valued in such types of employment. She added that when interviews for internal appointments are held, the key questions relate to teaching and school management roles, rather than identifying and valuing the diverse roles that careers advisers perform (Liz). Here, Liz felt that there existed a very narrow mindset within schools and the NSWDET about what experiences were relevant to management positions and that these related strongly to in-class activities. Thus careers advisers were often unsuccessful in such interviews and their lack of career progression added to the view that this role in a school was a ‘dead end’, this perception, as noted above, added to the negativity felt towards the role and the person occupying it.
5.6 Importance of career self-management

As described in Chapters 2 and 4, career self-management has been emphasised and popularised by its conceptualisation in current human resource management and careers literature (Desimone et al., 2002, Dessler et al., 2004 and Drucker, 1999, Boyatzis et al., 2002, McKee and Goleman, 2002, Komisar, 2000, Inkson, 2004b, Inkson, 2007). Some current career development theories also draw attention to the need for individuals to be adaptable and planful, purposeful, self-organised (Savickas, 1997), self-regulating and self-defining (Savickas, 2001) and yet another theory seeks to combine constructivist principles with a systems approach (McMahon and Watson, 2008). Another influential theory emphasises the role of chance and unpredictability—chaos theory (Bright and Pryor, 2005).

Careers advisers are expected to teach or impart to students an approach to their careers that is congruent with the current career development theoretical orientation espousing self-directed activity, planning, taking responsibility for one’s own actions and generally being willing and able to change one’s work direction to take advantage of unexpected opportunities to advance oneself in life.

Yet the question does arise, if career self-management is an important practice to instil in the next generation of NSW and Australian workers, by way of its inculcation through careers advisers, what is its relevance for the careers advisers themselves? To answer this question it is necessary to return to the respondents’ views on this matter. All of the respondents who answered the research question about career self-management for careers advisers were in favour of this activity. Joan’s view was that as careers advisers are advocating career self-management with and for their students, to not be engaging in this for themselves would be ‘problematic (as it seems that) in some ways (such an approach to their own careers would) almost (be) a prerequisite that goes with the job’. Jill and Liz offered a similar view about this matter—career management was important for careers advisers, but they noted the lack of time available for careers advisers to engage in such a set of actions. In addition, Jill noted the lack of a direct career path (except to the position of RVEC) as a restriction on careers advisers’ ability to manage their own careers.
While career self-management was regarded as important, even necessary, for careers advisers by all the respondents, including those from the NSWDETVED and NSWDET Human Resources, Staffing and Retraining sections, Liz felt that the NSWDET did not support career advisers in their desire or efforts to manage their own careers. She indicated that this situation was because of its bureaucratic culture, especially at the school level, that it did not believe that employees should be developed and that this lack of insight was the result of a ‘bullying’ culture in schools. Lyn noted career self-management actions by the NSWDET were something that it should support, that the regional and state levels of the NSWDT had the resources, but that it was not easy to conduct such activities. In closing, she commented that more resources could be put to good use and the Commonwealth Government had provided on-line support to help careers advisers. In closing, she drew attention to the need for carers advisers to ‘... engage with the Internet’ to manage their own careers. There was an indication that perhaps some careers advisers did not take the opportunity to do this for the purpose of their own career management.

Summing up, the findings indicate that the issue of career self-management for careers advisers appears to be an accepted, even required part of their operational working lives, both because it is the position which they teach and use to guide their students and also as it is strongly supported in the career development literature and a number of the contemporary career development theories. In addition, career self-management supports the contemporary economic and political ideology that in the new capitalist world, the individual needs to look after him or herself. In so far as career self-management is desirable for careers advisers themselves, in relation to their own careers, the study reveals some division of opinion about which major stakeholder should be more proactive in achieving this outcome and whether careers advisers are in fact as active in pursuing such a goal as the dominant paradigm may imply. Again as in the case of the image problems experienced by careers advisers in the minds of some NSWDET staff, this division of opinion was related to the stakeholder role being played by the respondent. Lyn, the NSWDETVED representative, while supportive of career self-management and acknowledging that more resources would be useful, was the one respondent to cast some doubt on the willingness of careers advisers to participate in their own career management. Other
respondents, such as Joan representing the AACC, felt that it would be a prerequisite for careers advisers to engage in career self-management and Jill and Liz, representing NSW PCFNSW and CAANSW respectively, did not question the willingness of careers advisers to engage in their own career management, but raised questions about the time being available for them to do so given their work schedules and in a further response from Liz, strongly question the commitment of the NSWDET to facilitating careers advisers’ career self-management.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the findings of the study focussing on the following issues (i) the adequacy of the career management provided by the NSWDET for its careers advisers and (ii) the impact of a number of issues upon the careers of these advisers: role expansion and workload; lack of a clear career path; image problems; and career self-management. In relation to the adequacy of the career management provided for careers advisers, it appears that the traditional career intervention of education and training opportunities is the most significant and best received of a number of career management programs, processes and activities that were or could have been offered. The use of this intervention continues the historical trend of large government-run bureaucracies to provide such types of career management, especially as this is an education provider and thus predisposed to such actions because of its main function of providing public education across the broad range of pre-school to post secondary education.

This type of intervention is being used to mould both the ‘products’ of the system (secondary school graduates) to become more flexible and adaptable to a world of work that is increasingly driven by globalisation and the needs of the post-industrial society and the careers advisers who are to provide the guidance to students about the new careers and workplaces of the early 21st century. In the case of the careers advisers, it is not only the contents of their initial career education training (DET, 2009a) that predispose them to the ‘realities’ of new capitalism, but the post-training such as that provided for them to coordinate the School to Work Program and the opportunity to experience the work world outside the classroom through the Teachers in Business Program.
In addition, because career guidance has come to be seen by governments and even international organisations such as the OECD as crucial for students, and a way to enhance their entrepreneurial skills and improve the human capital competitive edge of national economies (MCEETYA, 2003; DEST, 2002; Nelson, 2004, 2005 and Bishop, 2006a, 2007; Maguire and Killen, 2003; OECD, 2003); there are now two added external career management interventions with which NSWDET careers advisers have to cope—the NSW Institute of Teachers professional development standards and the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners (CICA, 2007). These are presented as ways to improve the quality of both teaching in general and careers guidance in particular. This may well be so, but they are also examples of managerial interventions, both because career guidance is now being seen as more important for the individual, state and nation than it was in the past and because such a task cannot be left to careers advisers who may not be presenting the appropriate messages about careers and how employees should behave in the workplace.

The issues identified by the respondents as significant in their impact upon careers advisers—role expansion and workload; lack of a clear career path; image problems; and career self-management were also analysed. In the case of the first issue, it appears that these are consequences of the wider agenda to make secondary education more ‘relevant’ to older adolescents, in order to maintain or improve school retention rates and, while this is happening, continue to ensure that they are being given the ‘correct’ message, through careers advisers and general guidance about the contemporary world of work. Careers advisers have been required to take on a wider range of tasks and certainly broaden their skill base to help achieve such goals; for example the use of emails by students seeking career-related information from careers advisers and managing the information flow available via the Internet are just two examples of how technological change has added to both work role and workload for careers advisers.

The lack of a clear career path for careers advisers is a contested matter. The dividing line as to whether this is a problem for careers advisers is apparently based on whether the respondent was part of (i) the administrative or bureaucratic parts of the NSWDET (that is the NSWDETVED or NSWDET, human resources,
staffing and retraining functions), (ii) an external party such as the NSWTF, CAANSW, NSWSPEC, PCFNSW, AACC, or (iii) practicing careers advisers. The fact that this issue had been raised in official reports about careers advisers would seem to tip the balance towards the second and third groups who claim in various ways that this is an issue. The NSWDETVED and NSWDET, human resources, staffing and retraining functions argue that careers advisers can have career progression, but it is a less clear path to follow. The argument offered that they can return to their school subject discipline area and compete for promotion positions against established and more experienced candidates appears to be flawed. As Liz notes, careers advisers are not generally successful in obtaining management positions within schools because their experience does not fit what she describes as the narrow vision of what a school-based applicant should have. The reason for the lack of a clear career path may be because creating a separate career path would be a costly exercise and doing this may well lead to further criticisms or negative images of them being held by some NSWDET staff.

Careers advisers’ image problems appear to derive from the perceptions of some NSWDET staff that careers advisers are ‘lazy’, and that they ‘do not do much of value in a school’. This perception is to some extent reinforced by the view that being a careers adviser is a ‘dead end job’ (because as noted above, it does not have a career path). There does appear to be some recognition of this as a problem in the NSWDETVED, in that Lyn suggested a strategy for careers advisers to use in order to deflect or defeat this image issue.

Career self-management is seen as a required attribute for students emerging from school and it would seem contradictory for careers advisers to not practice what they preach, so to speak. The initial issue for them, in the view of some respondents, is finding the time to engage in career self management. A second more difficult problem was, according to Liz, changing the organisational culture within the NSWDET to one that supported career self-management. However, Lyn’s perceptions on this matter were more favourable to what the NSWDET had and could do in this area and this may reflect her stakeholder role representing the NSWDETVED, which has the responsibility for providing part of such a provision. As such, the issue of career self-management provision is a contested matter.
Chapter 6 will draw together the lines of argument presented in this thesis and examine the implications of the research findings. It will also provide recommendations regarding both the career management of NSWDET careers advisers and the career issues that they face, note the limitations of this research study and identify future areas in which to extend this initial research.
Chapter 6

Conclusions, Recommendations and Future Directions for NSWDET Careers Advisers

6.1 Thesis description

Chapter 1 of this study presented three key research questions that dealt with the career management of careers advisers in NSWDET secondary schools, the current and future career issues that these advisers face. The chapter then provided a brief overview of the research methodology to be used, justified the selection of the topic and questions and identified the core concepts to be explored in Chapter 2. Chapter 1 was then used to draw attention to the social, economic and political context within which the career management of careers advisers was being provided and their career roles affected. Chapter 1 also presented the interdisciplinary approach that had been selected and noted the use of a specific set of career management interventions, developed by Arnold (1979:460), to both frame some of the research questions and later in the thesis (Chapter 5), provide a standard by which to view the adequacy of the career management interventions provided by the NSWDET for its careers advisers. Chapter 1 also justified the use of a stakeholder approach to select the interviewees who provided the data for this study.

Chapter 2 investigated the key terms, concepts and theories that are the building blocks of this study. The meanings of work and career were explored, the changing nature of careers investigated and the underpinning career development theories and career management concepts identified. This inquiry was placed within the larger context of a post-industrial society/new capitalist environment. Next, in order to see how the current level of career management for careers advisers has changed and developed, Chapter 3 placed these processes within an historical context that examined was itself created the changing social, economic and political contexts of the period under review—1941 to 2008. This approach was taken to show how these contextual factors impacted on the career management provided.
With the groundwork now laid, Chapter 4 described the career management stakeholders’ perceptions of the career management provided for NSWDET careers advisers and the current and future issues affecting the careers of these advisers and thus, as argued above, the career guidance they provide. For this same reason, the chapter also presents its data within the social, economic and political context of the period of data collection (2007).

In Chapter 5, the descriptive data provided in Chapter 4 is marshalled into a thematic structure to answer the main questions that have arisen from the data. These questions deal with the adequacy of the career management currently offered to NSWDET careers advisers by their employer and career-related issues that include: work role expansion and workload increase; lack of a clear career path; image problems; and career self-management. As such these questions are logical recapitulations of the research questions posed at the beginning of Chapter 1.

6.2 Discussion

This thesis started with the argument that there has been increased attention given to the career guidance of students in NSWDET secondary schools. The question therefore arose as to whether those who are charged with this responsibility are themselves being given appropriate career management to achieve the goals set for them by the NSWDET. It is also relevant, in relation to the task of career guidance given to these advisers, to inquire into their own career conditions as these can have a material impact upon the quality of the career guidance that they provide for their students. Thus the following research questions were created for this study. Firstly, how do those people and organisations that are stakeholders in the career management of careers advisers perceive the career management being provided? In short, was it adequate? Secondly what are the current and future issues that impact on the careers of these advisers?

In attempting to ensure that the next generation of workers that is, those currently completing their senior high school years were prepared to participate in the emerging new capitalist world of work, greater attention has been given by both the NSW and Commonwealth Governments to the career guidance that such students
receive from their school careers advisers. While this study has only focused on careers advisers employed by the NSWDET in its secondary and central schools, it should be acknowledged that careers advisers work in both systemic Catholic secondary schools and private schools that operate within NSW. The working arrangements for such non-government careers advisers differ in terms of time allocation and remuneration from those who work for the NSWDET.

The remainder of this chapter will provide the major findings of this study; offer a set of recommendations derived from the accumulated responses of the interviewees; outline the identified limitations to this study and briefly discuss some future research directions. In doing so the extemporised journey of NSWDET careers advisers is brought into focus.

6.3 Major findings

This study has revealed that there are aspects of the career management interventions currently provided by the NSWDET to its careers advisers that are generally satisfactory, for example training and educational opportunities. Mentoring, as a part of the training required for career advisers is generally regarded as being useful, but when provided outside this requirement, its perceived quality is seen to be more variable. Another career management intervention, the DET portal, has initially caused extra work for careers advisers in adapting to its use, but fulfils three functions—internal job notification, communication and career information provision to help them with their work with students and access information to assist them with their own career management. The downside of this intervention is that its use is time consuming.

As introduced in Chapter 2, explored in Chapters 3 and Chapter 4, and analysed in Chapter 5, the provision of career management by the NSWDET to its careers advisers and the increasingly managerialist strategy of professional accreditation of them as teachers and careers advisers is best understood if it is seen in the broader context of how this meets the perceived career guidance needs of students who are the next generation of workers (Maguire and Killen, 2003). These are young people who are entering, either quickly after leaving school or more slowly after undertaking
further study, the workplaces of NSW, Australia and in some cases, other countries. These workplaces are increasingly subject to the prevailing economic winds of new capitalism—global capitalism, accelerated in its impact through rapid technological change.

Students need to be prepared for this by adopting an adaptable and flexible approach to how, when and where they work. As a consequence, careers advisers are required to promote this view of work, supported by a number of current career development theories that highlight the importance of self-direction (Savickas, 1997; Savickas, 2001 and Chen, 2003) and acceptance of chance elements in one's careers decisions (Busacca, 2007; Bright and Pryor, 2005). They are also required to undertake the training necessary to meet heightened professional development requirements and therefore they are themselves affected by it in terms of work role expansion and increased workloads.

Also, as introduced in Chapter 3, described in Chapter 4 and analysed in Chapter 5, the existence of career issues for NSWDET careers advisers (one of which has existed since the early 1980s—that of the lack of a clear career path), is problematic not only for the careers advisers themselves, but for the effective conduct of the roles that the NSWDET has set out for them. Role expansion, work intensification and a poor image of careers advisers by some NSWDET staff, are all issues that stand in the way of effective career guidance for secondary students, through their negative effects on careers advisers themselves.

In relation to the lack of a clear career path there appears to be a division of opinion on this matter as to whether it is a problem for careers advisers. The NSWDET Human Resources, Staffing and Retraining and NSWDETVED representatives viewed this not be an issue as careers advisers had the opportunity to apply for in-school promotions in their previous academic teaching areas, management positions and REVC positions (and build up their skills and experience for this position by taking short-term relieving positions). Careers advisers had mixed feelings on the seriousness of this matter, but did not see a clear career path for them. The CAANSW representative was critical of this view about careers advisers’ promotion prospects because of the NSWDET’s organisational culture that was too narrow and
thus did not understand or value the skill sets and work experiences of careers advisers when interviewing them for promotion in school positions. For appointment to RVEC positions, the chances of success were probably better, but the CAANSW representative noted that some current RVECs did not have an adequate understanding of the careers adviser’s role.

Likewise there was a division of opinion about role expansion and work intensification based on whether the respondent was working in the NSWDETVED or external to it. The three NSWDETVED representatives believed that careers advisers had been helped to improve their time management through the introduction of the structured School to Work Program. However this position is weakened if the NSWDET’s role expectations list (Box 3.3) is consulted and one sees the extensive nature of what is expected from a careers adviser. Other stakeholders—two careers advisers, reported actual or potential role expansion and the NSWSPC representative noted work intensification because of the need for OH&S monitoring and documentation when students were on work placements that are a compulsory part of some vocational education course. The need to meet raised professional development and accreditation standards was noted by the third careers adviser as a cause of an increased workload.

On the issue of the alleged image problems faced by careers advisers from some NSWDET staff, a similar division existed, but with a subtle twist. While two of the three careers advisers and the CAANSW representative quite strongly articulated that such problems was found within the NSWDET, one of the NSWDETVED representatives appeared to concede that this problem may exist, but as a defence, advocated a proactive approach by careers advisers to demonstrate that they are just as productive and useful in a school as other staff.

Also, the increasing importance given to career self-management for students in current career development literature and school-based career programs such as School to Work, are consistent with the respondents’ support for career self-management for careers advisers and with some of the respondents concern about the lack of time careers advisers have to be able to engage in this activity. In short, if it is appropriate and beneficial for students entering the new capitalist/post-industrial
society of the early 21st century to manage their own careers, why cannot NSWDET careers advisers be given time and encouragement to do the same? However, there was a division about whether careers advisers do pursue this goal—a question posed by some of the NSWDETVED staff, and did the NSWDET actually and actively support such actions by its careers advisers—a question raised by the NSWCAA, the AACC and NSW PCFNSW and a number of the careers.

6.4 Recommendations

Based upon the research data collected, the following recommendations are offered. They are presented as career management interventions for the NSWDET to implement for its careers advisers in order to both improve the quality of current interventions and deal with a number of career issues that, at present or in the perceived future, confront these careers advisers. For ease of reading, these recommendations are presented in a boxed format. These recommendations are the distillation of the respondents’ replies to an open-ended question that requested them to look into the future and envision what may be needed as career interventions. It was a free response and as the respondents’ identities are not to be revealed it was thought that this question would give voice to a set of positive suggestions to improve the career management currently being offered by the NSWDET to its careers advisers. As such, the recommendations range from quite minor improvements to existing interventions to more complicated and costly provisions that would require considerable planning and implementation efforts.

Box 6.1: Additional career management interventions

- Provide regular professional development activities and a reinstatement of time allocation for such activities.
- Use attendance and participation of careers advisers in professional development activities as a part of a performance management process to achieve an alignment between personal, professional and organisational goals.
- Provide ongoing mentoring for careers advisers and education of school executive so that they fully understand the roles and responsibilities of careers advisers.
• Provide more stimulating professional development opportunities and create promotional opportunities, (for example reclassifying the careers adviser position to that of Head Teacher in order to further improve the motivation and retention of careers advisers and create a career path for them).
• Include careers advisers as part of a Faculty KLA.
• Create a regional position of career adviser consultant (separate from the RVEC position).
• Provide access to quality professional learning opportunities being provided by the NSWDET and be aware of and respond to the new national career practitioner standards.
• Provide careers advisers with both specific and general information about the changing nature of the workplace and thus changes in the environment into which students are going.
• Make industry aware that careers advisers are not simply their recruitment agents to push students towards whatever jobs are currently undersupplied with applicants, regardless of individual students’ or parents’ wishes.
• Provide better support for careers advisers’ administration (tasks) and the use of e-mails (for example an e-learning training program).
• Create more networking of careers advisers to help them work towards developing strategies to meet their needs.
• Use by the NSWDET of a more hands-on structured approach for the professional development of careers advisers (and other teachers) in this educational system—centrally developed, but flexible professional development programs and activities.
• Create more local level initiatives, (rather than a statewide approach) to assist careers advisers to develop their own careers, providing guidance and a framework (for) the schools for then be able to spend their money on.
• Allocate more time to careers advisers so they can work on careers tasks.
• Create a specific job description that does not include such work roles as: playground supervision and attendance and supervision of school sports games and events, but does include classroom teaching/contact.
• Develop a specific career path.

No doubt, such an extensive list would incur considerable expenditure of NSWDET employees’ time and thus its financial resources. Thus some may feel such efforts and money should for example, go directly to schools for what may be seen as more immediate and important purposes. However, if the recent societal, governmental
and OECD interest in careers guidance has shown anything, it is the crucial importance of effective careers guidance, albeit in the context of the new capitalism, post-industrial society and rising managerialism (DEST, 2002; Sweet and Watts, 2004; Sultana, Watts and Sweet, 2004; Nelson, 2004, 2005 and Bishop, 2006a, 2007; MCEETYA, 2003; Maguire and Killen, 2003 and OECD, 2003). Therefore it is worth ensuring that those professionals whose role it is to provide this career guidance are themselves given the appropriate career management by an employer that has the history and organisational capacity to provide such a set of interventions.

### 6.5 Limitations of this study

This research can be said to have the following limitations. A general limitation was that it was conducted as a research activity to fulfil the requirements for the award of a Master of Commerce (Honours) degree and as such it was not a fully funded extensive research exercise that could have obtained data from a larger number of careers advisers who represented a broader demographic in terms of their age, gender and experience. Also it used a qualitative analysis approach, rather than the increasingly popular mixed mode that includes both qualitative and quantitative research methods. It should be noted that the study was not intended to be thoroughly representative, rather its purpose sought to discover the lived experiences of a given population using a stakeholder approach. The qualitative method used—semi-structured interviews with a sample of 11 participants, was sufficient to achieve this purpose.

A specific limitation was the absence of secondary students or parents who are stakeholders in the career management of careers advisers. While they do not have a direct role in the provision of such interventions, they certainly have a strong interest in the outcome of such interventions, that is quality career guidance. While the inclusion of such stakeholders was considered during the design stage of this study, it was decided that this would be logistically difficult in that it would have required additional permissions from parents and a decision about where such students and parents be sourced.
A second specific limitation was discovered in the use of the interview questions that identified a range of career management interventions (Table 1.1). This limitation was to not explain the meaning of three particular career management interventions that were offered for comment. These three were ‘outplacement’, ‘development centres’ and ‘career action centres’. Respondents had been given a definition of career management to distinguish it from career development, however it was not considered necessary to explain the meanings of the career management interventions to them as well. While outplacement was recognised as a term associated with employment, it was not seen as an aspect of a retrenchment strategy (as defined by Arnold, 1997), rather it was seen as something closer to job rotation, secondment or project work. The other interventions—development centres and career action centres were generally unknown. The definitions of these terms were not given, because initially this lack of understanding was not recognised by the interviewer as a problem, and by the time it was there could have been a problem in comparing the data from each respondent, if some respondents had been given the definition and others had not. Thus the definition was not given. The fact that these two interventions did not elicit responses was interpreted to mean that they did not exist as NSWDET interventions for its careers advisers.

6.6 Prospects for future research

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, career development rather than career management is a more popular description and conceptualisation of what can be done to provide help for people to unfold their careers however, a more directed career management approach does seem more appropriate in organisations that are large and often run or strongly influenced by government. So, with this approach in mind there are a number of areas in which future research could be attempted. These areas include the following: a comparative study regarding career management and career issues with other groups of careers advisers in NSW and/or other states; a comparative study of NSWDET careers advisers in the context of currently changed economic circumstances, (for example, between 2007 and 2010); and an examination of the career management and career issues of other professional groups.
In a study such as this, there arise some unanswered questions. One such question is if the NSWDET is aware of the logical contradiction that exists between placing an increased emphasis on the career guidance of secondary students without looking at the role expansion and workload implications of what this means for the careers advisers who are charged with the task of providing that guidance? A second question, also directed at the same party is whether they appreciate that their careers advisers are both specialists and are already within an existing professional group, (that is secondary teachers) and as such may require additional or more specialised forms of career management, and the potential for recognition of this position through the creation of a clear career path for them (as, for example, other teaching staff have in the NSWDET)? These questions too are possible directions for future research.

The career journey of NSWDET careers advisers from: the threatening days of 1941 to the uncertainty of a world economic recession in 2009; from part-time to full-time; from trained to untrained and from almost incidental to the focus of attention to front and centre stage has indeed being extemporised. The challenges for them now include being able to assist and guide such a diverse clientele, while retaining the time to treat them as individuals. For though secondary students are often superficially wise about the ways of the world and of the workplace, when the gentle probing questions are asked about their intended future work, it can be quickly revealed that they have doubts and lack vital elements of the knowledge and understanding that is needed to achieve their potential.

The introduction of new career programs is welcome and it is often careers advisers who have had the ideas or worked on the concepts and documents to get such programs into existence. Career management for these professionals is as important as for any other such group. The current career development theoretic orthodoxy may change as the underlying economic system comes under review, but these practitioners need a better set of career management interventions and they have in this research been given a voice, along with the other stakeholders, to subsequently state what they need. It is the hope of this writer that their ideas will be read and actions taken to improve what they are offered by way of career management interventions and that their identified career issues will be addressed.
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133
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Information Statement for School Principals

INFORMATION STATEMENT FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS:

Research Project

Title: Career Management in the NSW Public Service-
A Case Study of Secondary School Careers Advisers

(Insert Principal’s Name)

Dear Principal,

Your school careers adviser has agreed to participate in a research study designed to investigate the nature of and potential need for career management of school careers advisers in NSW Department of Education and Training (NSWDET) secondary schools. A separate information sheet, semi-structured interview question sheet and consent form (copies attached for your reference) will be sent to your careers adviser. Permission for this research project has been granted by the NSWDET (SERAP 2006134). I would seek your permission to, during work time: (i) interview your careers adviser and if necessary (ii) make one phone call or request an email reply from your careers adviser as a follow up to the interview.

No research data will be stored or used without interviewees’ consent. Once the recordings of interviews have been electronically transcribed, the transcription will be sent to the interviewees for them to review. The period of review for interviewees will be four weeks. This will allow them to make any changes or additions they wish or request the deletion of any section of the transcript or withdraw their permission for the use of their data. The recordings and transcripts of these interviews will be kept securely in a locked cabinet for a period of no less than 5 years.

Electronic data will be stored under password control in my office within the School of Management and at my home for the same time period. Any commercial in confidence information will be respected. Consent forms will be treated as private documents and stored separately (and in a locked
drawer) to any data captured. Specific individual identifiers will not appear in the final version of this research or any subsequent reports or academic papers written using the data contained in this research. After 5 years all recordings and transcripts will be destroyed.

The reason for interviewing your school’s careers adviser is to determine their views regarding the following matters:

- What is the context of their own career management?
- What career management practices are currently provided for them by the NSWDET?
- To determine the adequacy of career management activities and processes for secondary school careers advisers?

The primary research is to be undertaken by Mr Ron Kelly, a student in a Master of Commerce (Honours) degree and lecturer at the University of Western Sydney (UWS). Dr Ben Imbun will supervise the research in conjunction with Dr Fernanda Duarte. Dr Imbun is a Senior Lecturer, and Dr Duarte a Lecturer in the School of Management at UWS, based at the Parramatta and Blacktown campuses respectively.

The research will be undertaken using the method of a face-to-face structured interview and the option, subject to mutual consent of one phone call or email to follow-up on details provided in the interview. The interviewing will include a range of stakeholders: secondary school career practitioners; the Careers Advisers Association of NSW (CAANSW); the Australian Association of Career Counsellors, Inc (AACC); secondary school principals through the NSW Secondary School Principals Association- (NSWSSPA); the NSW Teachers Federation (NSWTF) and the NSW Parents and Citizens Association (NSWPCA).

The individual interviews will be semi-structured and will take approximately fifty (50) minutes to conduct and these will be recorded. Strict confidentiality and privacy of any views expressed is assured as it is recognised that any breach of confidentiality in a work context would be potentially harmful to participants. There will not be any identifiers used on the transcriptions or in the final report. All participants will be asked to sign a consent form that will clearly set out these conditions of consent.

Participation is entirely voluntary. Any participant may withdraw his/her contribution at any time during the course of this research without explanation. The decision to participate or not participate will not affect participants’ employment status. Participants will be informed of the research conclusions and participants will be involved in authenticating the data gathered from them.

The potential benefit of the research is to offer an opportunity to discover from a range of stakeholders, their views on the current nature and needs for development of the career management of NSWDET secondary careers advisers.
If you require further information please feel free to contact either myself, or one of my Supervisors using the contact details below:

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<th>Contact Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Ron Kelly</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tel. (02) 9852 4228</td>
<td><a href="mailto:r.kelly@uws.edu.au">r.kelly@uws.edu.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Ben Imbun</td>
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<td>Chair Supervisor</td>
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<td>Dr Fernanda Duarte</td>
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<td>Tel. (02) 9852 4238</td>
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<td>Co-Supervisor</td>
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Mr Ron Kelly,
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NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval Number is HREC 06/114. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee/Panel through the Research Ethics Officers (Tel: 02 4736 0883 or 4736 0884). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Appendix 2: Information Statement for Research Project Participants

INFORMATION STATEMENT FOR RESEARCH PROJECT PARTICIPANTS:

Research Project

Title: Career Management in the NSW Public Service-
A Case Study of Secondary School Careers Advisers

Dear

You are invited to participate in a research study designed to investigate the nature of and need for additional career management of school careers advisers in NSW Department of Education and Training (NSWDET) secondary schools. A separate semi-structured interview question sheet and consent form are attached.

Permission for you to participate during work hours in this research project (i.e. respond to the semi-structured interview questions and if required, as a follow up activity, be contacted once by phone or email), has been granted by the NSWDET (SERAP 2006134) or your supervisor (as appropriate).

No research data will be stored or used without interviewees’ consent. Once the recordings of interviews have been electronically transcribed, the transcription will be sent to the interviewees for them to review. The period of review for interviewees will be four weeks. This will allow you to make any changes or additions you wish or request the deletion of any section of the transcript or withdraw your permission for the use of their data. The recordings and transcripts of these interviews will be kept securely in a locked cabinet for a period of no less than 5 years.

Electronic data will be stored under password control in my office within the School of Management and at my home for the same time period. Any commercial in confidence information will be respected. Consent forms will be treated as private documents and stored separately (and in a locked drawer) to any data captured. Specific individual identifiers will not appear in the final version of this research or any subsequent reports or academic papers written using the data contained in this research. After 5 years all recordings and transcripts will be destroyed.
The reason for interviewing you is to determine your views regarding the follow matters:

- What is the context of secondary school careers advisers’ career management?
- What career management practices are currently provided for secondary school careers advisers by the NSWDET?
- To determine the adequacy of career management activities and processes for secondary school careers advisers?

The primary research is to be undertaken by Mr Ron Kelly, a student in a Master of Commerce (Honours) degree and lecturer at the University of Western Sydney (UWS). Dr Ben Imbun will supervise the research in conjunction with Dr Fernanda Duarte. Dr Imbun is a Senior Lecturer, and Dr Duarte a Lecturer in the School of Management at UWS, based at the Parramatta and Blacktown campuses respectively.

The research will be undertaken using the method of a face-to-face structured interview and the option, subject to your consent of one phone call or email to follow-up on details provided in the interview. The interviewing will include a range of stakeholders: secondary school career practitioners; the Careers Advisers Association of NSW (CAANSW); the Australian Association of Career Counsellors, Inc (AACC); secondary school principals through the NSW Secondary School Principals Association- (NSWSSPA); the NSW Teachers Federation (NSWTF) and the NSW Parents and Citizens Association (NSWPCA).

The individual interviews will be semi-structured and will take approximately fifty (50) minutes to conduct and these will be recorded. Strict confidentiality and privacy of any views expressed is assured as it is recognised that any breach of confidentiality in a work context would be potentially harmful to participants. There will not be any identifiers used on the transcriptions or in the final report. All participants will be asked to sign a consent form that will clearly set out these conditions of consent.

Participation is entirely voluntary. Any participant may withdraw his/her contribution at any time during the course of this research without explanation. The decision to participate or not participate will not affect participants’ employment status. Participants will be informed of the research conclusions and participants will be involved in authenticating the data gathered from them.

The potential benefit of the research is to offer an opportunity to discover from a range of stakeholders, their views on the current nature and needs for development of the career management of NSWDET secondary careers advisers.
If you require further information before you make your decision whether to agree to participate, please feel free to contact either myself, or one of the Supervisors using the contact details below:

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<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr Ron Kelly</td>
<td>Tel. (02) 9852 4228</td>
<td><a href="mailto:r.kelly@uws.edu.au">r.kelly@uws.edu.au</a></td>
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<td>Researcher</td>
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<td>Dr Ben Imbun</td>
<td>Tel. (02) 9685 9624</td>
<td><a href="mailto:b.imbun@uws.edu.au">b.imbun@uws.edu.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chair Supervisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Fernanda Duarte</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:f.duarte@uws.edu.au">f.duarte@uws.edu.au</a></td>
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<td>Co-Supervisor</td>
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Thank you, in anticipation of your early favourable response. If you choose to agree to participate, please complete and sign the Consent Form attached and return to:

Mr Ron Kelly,
School of Management
University of Western Sydney
Building U9 Rm U9.06
Blacktown
Locked Bag 1797
Penrith South DC NSW 1797

NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval Number is HREC 06/114. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee/Panel through the Research Ethics Officers (Tel: 02 4736 0883 or 4736 0884). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.
CONSENT FORM

Research Project

Title: Career Management in the NSW Public Service-
A Case Study of Secondary School Careers Advisers

I have read the enclosed Information Statement on the above project and I understand what my involvement will be in the research project as a participant, and wish to give consent for my involvement in the following components:

Tick the appropriate box/boxes or delete unaccepted activities:

1. FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW: Yes ☐
2. ELECTRONIC RECORDING OF INTERVIEW Yes ☐
3. OPTION OF ONE FOLLOW-UP PHONE CALL OR EMAIL TO CLARIFY INTERVIEW RESPONSES: Yes ☐

I understand that all participants will remain anonymous, as there will not be any identifiers used on the transcriptions or in the final report. I also understand that the interviews will be recorded with my permission (see item 2 above). Participating is entirely voluntary. I understand that I may withdraw my contribution at any time during the course of this research without providing an explanation. Your decision to participate or not participate will not affect your employment status. Participants will be informed of the research conclusions and participants will be involved in authenticating the data gathered from them directly in interviews.

I hereby give my consent for my involvement in the research in the components indicated above:

Signed ___________________________ Date ______________

Name ___________________________

Contact Tel. No/Email ____________

Please return to: Mr Ron Kelly, School of Management, University of Western Sydney, Building U9 Rm U9.06, Blacktown, Locked Bag 1797 Penrith South DC NSW 1797.
Appendix 4: Semi-structured interviews for participants in the Career Management* in the NSW Public Service- A Case Study of Secondary School Careers Advisers- Research Project

* For the purpose of this research project, the term ‘career management’ is defined as a *range of employer-provided activities or ‘interventions’ which can help employees achieve organisational objectives*. However, the role of career self-management of the practitioner group is also acknowledged and will be investigated in the following interview.

Questions

1. What are the important factors which impact on the current work of secondary school careers advisers in NSW Department of Education and Training (NSWDET) schools?

2. Could you please identify any future (short or medium term) factors which may impact the work of secondary school careers advisers in NSW Department of Education and Training schools?

3. Can you please provide a list and brief description of career management practices currently provided by the NSWDET for secondary careers advisers in NSWDET schools?

4. Could you comment on the effectiveness of such practices in assisting secondary careers advisers to achieve their professional and organisational objectives?

5. Using the following list of career management interventions, please identify any which are not offered for secondary careers advisers in NSWDET schools?

   - Internal vacancy notification
   - Career paths
   - Career workbooks
   - Career planning workshops
   - Computer –assisted career management
Individual counselling
Training and educational opportunities
Personal development plans
Career action centres
Development centres
Mentoring programs
Job assignments/rotation
Outplacement

6. Of the career management interventions listed above in Q.5 and which are currently provided by the NSWDET, what makes them (i) effective or (ii) ineffective in helping practitioners to achieve their professional and organisational objectives?

7. Of the career management interventions listed above in Q.5, and not currently provided by the NSWDET, could you please list them in decreasing order of importance for careers practitioners to achieve their (i) current and (ii) future career goals?

8. Given the current and expected roles and demands placed of secondary careers advisers in NSWDET schools, can you suggest what else in the way of career management activities and processes is needed to be provided by employer interventions?

9. What role should career self-management play for secondary school careers advisers in NWSDET schools?

Thank you for your time, energy and commitment.
Appendix 5: Newsletter text

RESEARCH PROJECT

CAREER MANAGEMENT IN THE NSW PUBLIC SERVICE -
A CASE STUDY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL CAREERS ADVISERS

Dear Secondary Careers Adviser,

Greetings!

My name is Ron Kelly. I work as a lecturer in Employment Relations for the School of Management, College of Business at the University of Western Sydney. Currently, I am undertaking a research project. The topic as you can see is about the career management of secondary school careers advisers in NSWDET schools.

Therefore I would like to interview three careers advisers, one from each of the following types of secondary school: (i) a regional secondary school, (ii), an inner-city secondary school and (iii) a suburban secondary school). This research project has been approved by the New South Wales Department of Education and Training.

The reason for interviewing you is to find out secondary careers advisers’ views regarding the following matters:

• What is the context of secondary school careers advisers’ career management?
• What career management practices are currently provided for secondary school careers advisers by the NSWDET?
• To determine the adequacy of career management activities and processes for secondary school careers advisers’?

If you are interested in being interviewed, could you please contact me at the following email address: r.kelly@uws.edu.au or phone me on (02) 9853 4228 and I can send you a copy of the semi-structured interview question sheets and consent form. If after reading this information you are still interested in participating, we can set a time and date to meet so that I can ask you the research questions.

Permission for this research project has been granted by the NSWDET (SERAP Number 2006134)
If you require further information before you make your decision whether to agree to participate, please feel free to contact either myself, or one of the Supervisors using the contact details below:

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NOTE: This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval Number is HREC 06/114. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee/Panel through the Research Ethics Officers (Tel: 02 4736 0883 or 4736 0884). Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

P.S. As I am only requesting that 3 practising careers advisers be interviewed, I would envisage that I may fill my quota quickly. If this is so, please accept my apologies in advance, if you are not selected to be interviewed. A time limit of two weeks after publication of this information is set for acceptances.