To:	Labour Market Ministers Group		
From:	Tim Fowler, Chief Executive, Tertiary Education Commission		
Date:	9 April 2025		
Subject:	***National Careers System Strategy (NCSS) Action Plan monitoring and progress update***		
For:	Update		

Purpose

1. To update you on the monitoring and quarterly progress of the National Careers System Strategy (NCSS) cross-agency Action Plan for Q3 2024/2025.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended that you note progress of the NCSS actions in the attached quarterly monitoring framework.

3. Also, to note the cross-agency Careers System Steering Group has agreed to focus on delivering Action 3.1 (Workstream 3) as their current priority. The outcome will be to identify high-quality career interventions as well as gaps that may require future prioritisation.

Background

4. In September 2024, the Labour Market Ministers (LMM) endorsed the continued implementation of the NCSS Action Plan and agreed to an oversight role, recognising the NCSS Action Plan supports labour market priorities and the Employment Action Plan.

5. The LMM recommended Labour Market CEs should nominate appropriate representation to a newly formed Career System Steering Group (CSSG). The CSSG would strategically lead out and champion the NCSS Action Plan and drive implementation across their agencies and wider sector.

6. Membership of the CSSG includes the Ministry of Education (MoE), the Ministry of Social Development (MSD), the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), Te Puni Kōkiri (TPK), the Ministry for Pacific Peoples (MPP), and the Ministry for Women (MfW). The CSSG also includes New Zealand's two career peak bodies: The Career Development Association of New Zealand (CDANZ) – supporting career professionals across government, private and community practice; and the Careers and Transition Education Association (CATE) – supporting the careers workforce in schools and kura.

7. The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) plays a lead role in the careers system and hosts the CSSG. It also delivers its own career products including Tahatū Career Navigator[1], Inspiring the Future, and Pacific Work Connect, while leading out Action 11 in the Employment Action Plan.

8. The first meeting of the CSSG was held in December 2024, with a subsequent meeting February 2025. The CSSG will meet 6 weekly for the next 12 months.

The NCSS monitoring framework is built around three key objectives

9. The vision of the National Careers System Strategy (NCSS) is to ensure people are empowered to understand themselves and their aspirations and can navigate **career opportunities** that fit throughout their lives.

10. To successfully navigate career opportunities requires people to be able to access high quality, responsive and future focused careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) to help.

11. High quality CEIAG is underpinned by career development theory and practice that supports people at all stages of life to make **career decisions** (eg. pathway, education and employment decisions) and navigate **career transitions** (for example from secondary school into the tertiary system, or from job loss into re-employment).

12. Evidence shows that career development (including opportunities for career experiences such as seeing role models or undertaking work experience) impacts the quality of transitions from school into tertiary or work, skills alignment, return to work opportunities and workforce development.

13. The purpose of the NCSS Action Plan is to support this vision and help deliver quality career development experiences for New Zealanders. It provides the building blocks for a lifelong, integrated careers system through a series of actions across eight workstreams. These will deliver three key objectives:

    - **Strengthen system connections** to improve the leadership, visibility, coordination and connectedness of the careers system for all New Zealanders.

    - **Support equitable access** to help people with their career decisions and transitions across all stages of life.

    - **Grow quality careers support** to build the capability and diversity of those who deliver careers education, information, advice and guidance.

The initial focus of the CSSG is to strengthen system connections

14. The careers system encompasses a broad range of stakeholders from community to business and across government. It sits at the intersection of major government strategies, systems and settings, including the education system, employment system and employment support system.

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[1] Tahatū Career Navigator will be rolled out to schools March 2025, with a national launch later in the year.

15. During strategy development we were told by stakeholders from across business, community and government that the careers system needs better visibility and leadership, and to better connect with users and those who support them to ensure they are aware of the availability and benefits of careers support.

16. Given the breadth of the system, the early meetings of the CSSG have focused on connecting across partner agencies, and prioritising actions that can have immediate impact.

17. With this in mind, the initial focus of the CSSG is on building visibility, connectedness and awareness of the current system through the workstreams that underpin **objective 1: strengthening system connections**.

18. This includes a focus on the implementation of the first three workstreams and their corresponding 10 actions:

    - Workstream 1: Establish Leadership function
        - Building the leadership mechanisms and quality foundations for the careers system.
        - For example, the CSSG is building visibility and connections of careers and employment services with the aim of improved transitions for users and clients at a system level.
    - Workstream 2: Develop and share quality information
        - Connecting stakeholders and users to high quality, responsive and future focused careers information to support career decisions and transitions.
        - For example, on national launch, Tahatū Career Navigator will become the public channel for career information and guidance for all New Zealanders. Launch will be supported by a marketing campaign targeting awareness for users and career enablers of what it is and how it can be used.
    - Workstream 3: Support awareness and usage of the careers system
        - Raising awareness and visibility of careers support through understanding what services are currently available, where the gaps exist, and connecting stakeholders and users more effectively to the current system.
        - For example, we are identifying gaps and opportunities to drive content through Tahatū Career Navigator that can target skill shortages, training opportunities and spotlight industry needs.

19. The focus on these workstreams will also support delivery of Action 11 in the Employment Action Plan, and other LMM work including, for example, MSD's persistent disadvantage work.

20. Immediate work will commence on finalising Action 3.1 which aims to map current cross-agency career services and initiatives, and bring to the attention of Labour Market Ministers existing high-quality career interventions and what gaps may exist, including insights into high-quality practice.

21. By strengthening existing system connections through this analysis we can build on work across the remaining workstreams, many of which are already in progress; and support a more efficient and effective use of current careers information, programmes, and services.

The quarterly NCSS Action Plan monitoring process will provide accountability

22. The aim of the quarterly monitoring report is to maintain accountability and show progress across all eight workstreams, with an initial focus on the first three.

23. The monitoring report is also a stocktake of actions to date, and points to our goals over the next three months. It has five categories to show the status of actions:

Completed	Underway and on track	Early progress	Scheduled to commence at a later date	Delayed

24. As the monitoring report highlights, the foundations for strengthening system connections have been laid.

25. To date, we have already completed a number of actions across workstreams with others underway, including:

    - Established the CSSG, to replace the Advisory Panel at a higher level of representation (Workstream 1).
    - Published the Careers Quality Framework, a system-level framework to improve the delivery of careers education, information, advice and guidance (Workstream 1).
    - Mapped current state careers information, tools and resources (Workstream 2)[2].
    - Mapped current state careers programmes and initiatives (Workstream 3)[3].
    - Identified through careers audience research insights to more effectively connect workers to careers information (with a focus on low paid workers) (Workstream 8).
    - Commenced the build of Tahatū resource hub to share and connect to quality career resources (Workstream 2 and 8).

26. Next steps have a focus on delivering insights to support more effective and efficient use of existing services, resources and careers support, prioritising Action 3.1:

    - Action 3.1: Conduct a map and gap analysis of current careers support and access points.
        - Update the current mapping approach and apply an evidence-based quality and gap analysis to identify high performing careers services and gaps for user groups (including key transition points).
    - Action 1.5: Identify and establish communication platforms to enable resource and knowledge sharing.

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[2] Careers information, tools and resources are materials and (web) platforms like Tahatū Career Navigator that support people to make career decisions. For example, labour market insights, occupation information, pathways and training information, CV tools, interview preparation tools.

[3] Careers programmes and initiatives are services supporting individuals to make informed career choices, transitions or decisions, or raise awareness of career pathways. For example, the Direct Career Service (MSD) or Inspiring the Future (TEC).

        - Develop a communications strategy that will build awareness and visibility of existing careers information, advice and guidance.

- Action 2.2 Identify career information needed by system users, including gaps and opportunities

    - Use existing research and user insights, including careers audience research, to support new or refreshed careers information (and the avenues through which to support them).

27. The CSSG remains focused on finalising actions that build system connections, bringing relevant information and recommendations to the Labour Market Ministers, prioritising Action 3.1 map and gap analysis.