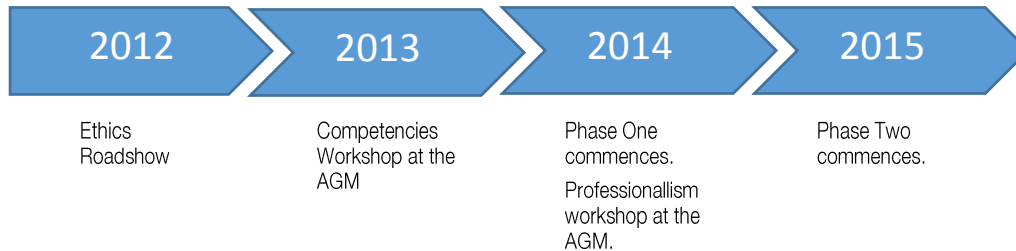# Professionalism Brief

Caroline Sandford provides an overview of the Professionalism Project in the first of a series to keep you informed and up to date.

Timeline

2012	2013	2014	2015
Ethics Roadshow	Competencies Workshop at the AGM	Phase One commences. Professionallism workshop at the AGM.	Phase Two commences.

Phase One in 2014 consisted of initial conversations, largely within the CDANZ membership, on the nature of professionalism. The project team of CDANZ volunteers comprised Val O'Reilly, Julie Thomas, Lila Pulsford, Sarah Bond, Lee Brodie, Robyn Bailey, and Hana Lambert. The team collated and analysed data from initial conversations across a range of sub-groups (including Maori, private, school and tertiary practitioners, and employers). The team also surveyed CDANZ members on professional standards and alternative pathways, culminating in the Professionalism Workshop at the AGM in November 2014.

At the 2014 November AGM a clear mandate was given from members to work towards Professional Standards.

Phase two commenced in early 2015, Project team members are Val O'Reilly, Julie Thomas, Robyn Bailey, Hana Lambert, Caroline Sandford, working on three sub-projects: Knowing Why, Knowing How, Knowing Whom, and a special sub-project in the pipeline, focussing on Ethics.

Findings to date:

1. Knowing Why- Robyn Bailey

Profession and professionalism need untangling. The most common elements in the literature on a *profession* concur that to be considered a profession an occupation needs to meet three criteria:

1. A body of knowledge based on abstract concepts and theories derived from research, with education and training to a high level
2. Credentialing and registration procedures
3. An ethic of doing good rather than harm

Clearly CDANZ meets these in part but to meet them entirely would require the association to consider what level of education would be considered "high" and whether it wanted to act as a gatekeeper to the field. It leaves a question for CDANZ of whether career development practice should be a profession and whether CDANZ wants to pursue this.

Professionalism, while linked to a profession, refers more to behaviours exhibited by people in the course of carrying out their occupation.

A separate but perhaps more relevant issue at this time is whether it is essential to be a profession in order to have competency practice standards. There are multiple benefits to having a New Zealand competency framework for career practice and it is an important step in any move towards becoming a profession. Some of the benefits of having competency standards include:

- Establish the knowledge and skills generally acceptable by the profession/occupation
- Act as guidelines for practitioners
- Enable practitioners to self-assess
- Protect clients
- Provide a benchmark for qualifications providers
- Integral to a shared professional identity
- Establish credibility in the eyes of the public and policy makers

There may however be resistance to developing a competency framework. Furbish (2010) found that NZ practitioners accept the relevance of standards but he also found that NZ practitioners leant in favour of what Douglas (2010a) calls essentialised pragmatists and Scanlon (2011) calls technicists, and correlates with the deprofessionalisation described by Halmos (1973 cited in Scanlon, 2011), in other words they were not convinced of the need for theory informing practice.

2. Knowing How [other countries implement and maintain Professional Standards for their Career Development Industry] - Caroline Sandford

With the aim of recommending the best approach forward in this project, a review was undertaken of international professional standards in the career industry. This review included an analysis of the background, challenges, format and implementation of these standards to gain an understanding of what would work best in the NZ context. The standards included were:

- IAEVG Core Competencies
- Canadian Standards & Guidelines for Career Practitioners
- Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners
- National Occupational Standards: Career Development in the UK, and the
- American NCDA Guidelines & Competencies

A number of preliminary findings suggest that success in the project will be based on:

- involvement of other stakeholders outside CDANZ in the process to ensure wider/national ownership
- through consultation with members and interested stakeholders
- regular updates for members/stakeholders
- possible employment of external resources so the work load is not onerous for volunteers

3. Knowing Whom: considering stakeholder needs and engagement - Hana Lambert

This is a large sub-project that requires engagement and understanding of internal stakeholders (members and sub-groups), and external stakeholders (associated professions, external employer/business stakeholders and policy influencers such as government, crown agencies and political influencers). The focus is to include the wider public and internal profile of CDANZ as a professional organisation that clearly benefits individuals and society *and* supports policy around economic development, education and the 'greater social good' of workforce and career development in Aotearoa, NZ.

"Knowing whom" has been divided into two distinct groups - internal and external stakeholders.

Internal Stakeholders – CDANZ members
Hana Lambert is meeting with CDANZ members from:
- secondary schools, Tertiary provider Career and Employment staff

- Maori and Pasifika CDANZ members
- Private Practitioners
- CDANZ branch and Exec members

Additional data is required from CDANZ members so we can begin to break down the sub-groups and ethnicity of our members. Once this data is gathered, we can start to engage with members in a consultative process to develop our profile on the work we do and how as a profession we influence and contribute to workforce and economic development at an individual, community and societal level in Aotearoa.

External Stakeholders

The CDANZ Executive is working hard to establish stronger relationships through MOUs with key organisations and stakeholders. Before the working party seeks to engage external organisations we need to establish clear boundaries to ensure that we manage the scope of this project within our capabilities, that we deliver on our key objectives, build strong networks and relationships in the process, and manage expectations.

Two related initiatives are underway:

1. National Forum for Lifelong Career Development- a recently developed policy forum, spearheaded by Kaye Avery and Val O'Reilly will be important in developing key contacts and organisations to bring together the external stakeholder (and influencer) component of the 'Knowing Who' working party.

2. Employers' regional pilot, Central Otago - Sarah Bond, (CDANZ Otago), is initiating a pilot project with a small group of employers (SMEs and large) in Central Otago to review workforce development and what process they use to assist employers in their career development. This project can then be used as a model to roll out with future external stakeholders within our branches so CDANZ can establish how best to engage with employers as collaborators, partners and stakeholders.

Project Next Stage:

A meeting was held in Auckland on 17th August 2015 with the following outcomes. The special sub-project *Ethics,* led by Julie Thomas, was discussed at length. The following question is being investigated: How can the CDANZ Code of Ethics be embedded into a framework of Professional Standards for Career Development? An Ethics prototype will be developed with reference to international models and feedback from Sue Mortlock's report on the CDANZ Code of Ethics. This will be discussed at the next Professionalism meeting in October, and presented to members at the November AGM.

★ Caroline Sandford – CDANZ Professional member, Career Specialist@Career Clinic.

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