

Monday, 14 August 2017

MEDIA ALERT

Thought leaders join forces to break the cycle of long-term youth unemployment

yourtown with government, businesses and other thought leaders will join forces to tackle breaking the cycle of long-term youth unemployment through social enterprises and procurement today Monday, 14 August.

It is estimated that more than 50,000 young people aged 15 to 24 years across Australia are in long-term unemployment - that is they have been out of work for at least a year.

Thought leaders will combine forces at the 'Social Procurement - Good for Business, Good for Community Lunch Symposium' to discuss how social procurement and enterprises can be the lever to deliver much needed jobs, skills and build stronger communities by breaking the cycles that lead to long-term youth unemployment.

The Honourable Minister for Regional Development and Local Government, Geoff Brook MP will be a keynote speaker at the event along with **yourtown** CEO Tracy Adams.

"Social enterprises represent an untapped opportunity and an innovative way for the government and the organisations they employ to engage with communities," Ms Adams said.

"They specialise in working with communities and in measuring social value and many bridge the critical gap between welfare and work by providing 'job ready' training for marginalised groups who may not otherwise be qualified to take up jobs."

According to Ms Adams, long-term unemployed young people do want to work but face numerous barriers to employment, which include but are not limited to a lack of work experience and skills.

"Young unemployed people have a particularly difficult time in the labour market due to their low social capital, that is not having established contacts in the workforce, as well as a lack of opportunity to develop knowledge about employment and work practices gained from work experience," Ms Adams said.

"A recent **yourtown** survey of 285 young people experiencing long-term unemployment across Australia found that 73% believed a lack of work history was a barrier to employment, making it the top reason young people said they were unemployed.

"Other common barriers included: low levels of qualifications (66%), practical issues such as a lack of a driver licence (66%), not enough available jobs (61%), and psycho-social issues such as low self-esteem (47%)."

Over 2,500 young people have benefited from paid work experience through **yourtown's** Work (Social) Enterprises over the last 16 years. This includes young people employed by **yourtown** Enterprises in Northern Adelaide and Port Pirie.

"Our own experiences tell us that social enterprises are of a great benefit to business and the community," Ms Adams said.

"Work Enterprises not only provide quality services at comparable rates but can contribute to the achievement of corporate social responsibility commitments in areas such as providing entry level jobs for local young people, Indigenous specific employment initiatives, workforce diversity, skills development and employment.

“Broader social and economic benefits include:

- reduced unemployment among disadvantaged groups
- decreased welfare dependency
- provision of local employer led training and skills development
- reduced crime and anti-social behaviour; and
- a positive impact on community health and wellbeing.

“We recognise that if we’re going to create effective interventions and strategies that help long-term unemployed young people get jobs we need an all of community approach.

“The Symposium on Monday will bring together key thought leaders to talk through how we can best work together to achieve long-term employment outcomes that assist young people, business, government and ultimately our society.”

Buying from a social enterprise is one of the easiest and most effective ways of breaking the cycle of disadvantage and strengthening Australian communities.

The power of buying socially means that every time goods and services are bought from a social enterprise, positive social change is also created. Buying Social is something that can be done by consumers and by government and business through responsible social procurement strategies.

yourtown works with young people to find jobs, learn skills, become great parents and live safe happy lives. The organisation delivers services in the states that have higher than average incidence of long-term youth unemployment - South Australia (19.5%), Tasmania (29.2%), Queensland (18.7%) and New South Wales (18.7%). For more about **yourtown** visit www.yourtown.com.au

ENDS

WHERE AND WHEN?

Monday, 14 August 2017, 12pm-2pm

The Wyatt Trust Boardroom, 100 Pirie Street, Adelaide

KEY SPEAKERS

Honourable Minister for Regional Development and Local Government, Geoff Brook MP
Tracy Adams, **yourtown** CEO

OTHER PARTICIPANTS

Include the Honourable Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion Zoe Bettison and representatives from: The Wyatt Trust; Lendlease; Renewal SA; City of Playford Council; Anglicare SA; Uniting Care Wesley Bowden; Don Dunstan Foundation; SYC; and Habitat for Humanity.

INTERVIEW/FILMING OPPORTUNITIES

Tracy Adams, **yourtown** CEO

Brendan Bourke, **yourtown** Head of Client Services

Michael Starr, **yourtown** Southern Area Manager – SA, NSW, TAS

yourtown Enterprises story about the young people: <https://youtu.be/8IAzaxDWJc> (high resolution video available on request)

NOTE: Interviewees will be available for comment either prior to or after the Symposium.

MEDIA CONTACTS

Regan Flor rflor@yourtown.com.au 0423 843 786

Tracey Gillinder tgillinder@yourtown.com.au 0434 077 478