

Monday, 2 July 2018

New yourtown initiative offers solution to long-term youth unemployment

yourtown's new 'your job your way' program, which commences today, Monday 2 July, will provide a practical, scalable solution to long-term youth unemployment, an issue the Australian community cannot afford to ignore.

According to **yourtown** CEO Tracy Adams **your job your way** will provide much needed intensive support for young people aged 15-21 who have been unemployed for over 52 weeks and at high risk of social exclusion and permanent detachment from the labour market.

"Current employment policy does not adequately recognise long-term unemployment as a significant barrier to youth employment but with youth long-term unemployment more than doubling in the last decade, Australia urgently needs to find a solution to this issue - young lives depend on it," Ms Adams said.

"Over 52,000 young people in Australia are experiencing long-term unemployment - that is they are aged between 15 and 24 and unsuccessful in securing work for more than two weeks for at least a year.¹

"Australia needs an intensive, individually tailored and holistic program model if we are to effectively address the barriers faced by long-term unemployed young people, find them jobs and reconnect them with the community.

"We believe **your job your way** does this and **yourtown** is putting our money where our mouth is by funding two demonstration pilots of the program over 24 months in two of Australia's top hot spots for youth unemployment - Elizabeth, South Australia and Caboolture, Queensland."

yourtown's more than 15 years as a youth employment specialist along with evidence-based research has informed the development of the new employment program.

Research revealed one size definitely does not fit all for long-term unemployed young people. Long-term unemployed young people deal with a range of highly complex, multifaceted and often very different issues to each other but all were at risk of social exclusion and permanent unemployment.

"Our analysis included what we'd learnt from more than 5,600 young people in our own youth employment programs, a literature review as well as survey responses from close to 300 long-term unemployed young people," Ms Adams said.

"Seventy-three per cent (73%) of young people surveyed saw a limited work history as the top reason they could not get a job. Other barriers included limited education and qualifications (66%), practical issues such as a lack of a driver licence (66%), and psycho-social issues such as low self-esteem (47%).

"**your job your way** will complement the Federal Government's **jobactive** service and offers strength based individualised client support, targeted employer engagement strategies and intensive 'in work' mentoring.

"Sustainable employment outcomes resulting from the program are anticipated to be significant. What's more, this will also generate substantial welfare savings by significantly reducing the number of long-term unemployed young people at risk of remaining on welfare benefits for life.

"We'd like to see the Federal Government invest these savings in a national solution to address long-term youth unemployment and believe **your job your way** is this solution."

yourtown has engaged the Centre for Social Impact to provide an independent assessment of the initiative, its outcomes and potential cost-savings to Government. A collaboration of three universities - UNSW Australia, Swinburne University of Technology, and The University of Western Australia - the Centre has completed over 30 research projects aimed at catalysing positive social change.

“**yourtown** stands for practical positive change – we have invested in this program and its evaluation to back our belief in a more youth focussed, intensive, strengths-based and collaborative approach to working with this vulnerable group,” Ms Adams said.

Working in partnership with MAX Employment, **yourtown** provides **jobactive** services in 26 sites nationally delivering free recruitment services for young people aged up to 30 years.

For more about **yourtown**'s approach to tackling long-term youth unemployment and **your job your way** program see the **Tackling Long-term Youth Unemployment Position Paper** and research at www.yourtown.com.au/advocacy.

yourtown is a registered charity and public company limited by guarantee providing services young people can access to find jobs, learn skills, become great parents and live safe, happy lives. For over 56 years we've been tackling the issues impacting young people in Australia - like youth unemployment and mental health, and we take on issues like family and domestic violence. The community with **yourtown**'s Art Unions funds most of what we do.

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INTERVIEW/PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES

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| Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2018). 'Labour Force, Australia, Detailed – Electronic, April 2018', 'Table I. Unemployed persons by age and duration of job search, January 1991 onwards', data cube: Excel spreadsheet, cat. no. 6291.0.55.001, viewed 15 June 2018, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6291.0.55.001Feb%202018?OpenDocument>