

Monday, 15 October 2018

'Smart Skilled' program tackles Sydney's long-term youth unemployment

yourtown's 'Smart, Skilled and Hired' jobs program is tackling long-term youth unemployment in Sydney's West helping more than 250 young people get work in just a year.

According to **yourtown** Head of Client Services Brendan Bourke it's unacceptable that over 52,000 young people in Australia are experiencing long-term unemployment, but by using an intensive tailored approach to the issue and with the New South Wales Government's support **yourtown** is changing this statistic.

"There are too many young people aged 15 to 24 who are long-term unemployed that is unable to secure work for more than two weeks for at least a year," Mr Bourke said.

"Long-term unemployment can impact a young person's self-esteem, confidence, mental and physical health, and quality of life.

"**yourtown** has been running youth employment programs in Western Sydney for more than 10 years and we know the challenges young people can face. We have also undertaken significant research into youth long-term unemployment nationally, which has informed our program model.

"Thanks to the NSW Government's targeted youth unemployment initiative, we were able to put what we know works into action and create a jobs program that gets Western Sydney young people impacted by long-term unemployment into work."

The NSW Government funded program focuses on long-term unemployed or under-employed young people not receiving Government payments connect with training, mentoring, work experience and other intensive support.

"We've designed the program to not only fill the employment services gap for local industry but give young people outside the welfare system much needed help to get a job," Mr Bourke said.

"We connect young people with training and work experience and offer intensive one on one mentoring to address barriers like homelessness, alcohol or drug dependency, poor family relationships and cultural displacement."

Over 420 young people have registered with the voluntary program since it began a year ago with more than half (257) gaining employment.

Cameron Roberts, 18, is one of the young people **yourtown** helped get a job.

"I had no work experience and it was hard to get a foot in the door but **yourtown** helped me with my resume and work ready skills and get the job I'm in now. I'm a junior draftsman and practically jack of all trades for the company and I love it. **yourtown** has been a great stepping stone towards my career," Cameron said.

yourtown's Smart Skilled and Hired Manager Frankie Motilal said he thinks the program's success is down to the hard work of the young people and the support of the local community.

"We've seen some amazing transformations in young people's lives and having the opportunity to be a part of their journey has been a privilege," he said.

"We're also grateful to the volunteers who help with literacy and mentoring and share their skills with young people, the local businesses who work with us to give them jobs, schools, RTOs and government and other organisations who help support what we do."

yourtown is celebrating the program's one year anniversary event to thank the community.

ABOUT THE EVENT

WHEN: 11.30am start to 12.30pm, Monday, 15 October 2018

WHERE: yourtown, 3 Warrior Place, St Marys NSW

Member for Mulgoa and Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing The Hon. Tanya Davies MP is special guest at the event.

“The NSW Government is committed to ensuring that young people in western Sydney have the best access to opportunities for skilled employment. That is why the NSW Government has invested \$100 million towards Smart, Skilled and Hired Youth Employment program. For the first time ever in Western Sydney, unemployment is at its lowest. We will keep working with businesses and training providers to make sure we continue to invest in young people,” Minister Davies said.

The event will also welcome young people who have been part of the program, and representatives from local business, schools, government and other organisations.

Operating in Blacktown, St Mary’s and Campbelltown in Western Sydney, the **yourtown** ‘Smart Skilled and Hired’ program will run until 30 June 2020. It is estimated more than 800 young people will benefit from the program.

For more about **yourtown**’s approach to tackling long-term youth unemployment 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. The organisation delivers services in the states that have higher than average incidence of long-term youth unemployment. Last year, **yourtown** helped more than 17,000 young people gain vital skills to get a job across New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania.

For more information about the **yourtown** program contact Michael Starr, **yourtown** Southern Region Manager on 0401 673 293 or email mstarr@yourtown.com.au or visit www.yourtown.com.au

INTERVIEW/FILMING OPPORTUNITIES

Tracy Adams, **yourtown** CEO

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

Cameron Roberts, 18 year old who gained employment through the program

Michael Starr, **yourtown** Southern Region Manager, NSW, SA, TAS

The Hon. Tanya Davies, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Women, and Minister for Ageing

MEDIA CONTACT

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