

Thursday, 29 June 2017

yourtown tackles youth unemployment through new 'Smart Skilled' program

yourtown is joining forces with the NSW Government and industry to tackle youth unemployment in Sydney's West as part of the new 'Smart, Skilled and Hired' jobs program announced today, Thursday 29 June.

The NSW Government funded Youth Employment Program will help long-term unemployed or under-employed young people, who are aged 15-24 and not receiving Government payments, connect with training, mentoring, work experience and intensive other support to help them get a job.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Skills, John Barilaro made the announcement in Sydney Thursday night as part of the NSW Government's \$100 million 'Smart, Skilled and Hired' initiative targeting regions with the highest youth unemployment.

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.

yourtown Head of Client Services Brendan Bourke said the new program will mean more vulnerable unemployed young people who are not currently getting support will get the help they need to find work and live a happier life.

"**yourtown** has been running youth employment and works skills programs in Western Sydney for more than 10 years and we know the challenges young people can face," Mr Bourke said.

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

"This new program will not only fill the employment services gap for local industry but give vulnerable young people outside the welfare system the opportunity to get much needed help to get a job and find their place in the community."

Mr Bourke said **yourtown's** model of support is based on evidence of 'what works' in assisting young people to find and keep a job.

"Young people will benefit from **yourtown's** dual team of a case manager and dedicated employment consultant who will provide support and activities tailored to each young person's needs and interests," he said.

"We will not only work hard to connect young people with training, work experience and skills needed to get a job but offer intensive one on one mentoring and support to address barriers to employment.

"This can include working through issues like homelessness, alcohol or drug dependency, mental health challenges, legal concerns, domestic and family violence, poor family relationships, cultural displacement and cognitive learning disabilities."

Sydney Business Chamber, Western Sydney Director David Borger said **yourtown** had made a positive impact on the Western Sydney community and that this program will add to this.

"This organisation assists disadvantaged young people by giving them opportunities for training and employment," Mr Borger said.

“The new program will not only provide a pathway for Western Sydney’s unemployed young people to link up with work but will also connect employers and industry to much-needed workers.”

Operating in Blacktown, St Mary’s and Campbelltown in Western Sydney, the **yourtown** ‘Smart Skilled and Hired’ program will commence in late July 2017 and run until 30 June 2020. It is estimated more than 800 young people will benefit from the program.

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. Last year, **yourtown** helped more than 20,000 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

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