

Media Release:
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330,000 Young Australians Willing and Waiting to Fix the Skills Drought

An estimated 330,000 young Australians were excluded from full-time work this year - at a time when employers are crying out for skilled workers.

According to a major new report on how young people in Australia are faring, as at May 2006, twelve percent of all Australians aged between 15 and 24 years were unemployed, wanting work or wanting more hours if they were already working part-time.¹

Australia's rising tide of full-time jobs has not yet lifted all boats. Since 1995, full-time jobs for older Australians have risen by more than one million but declined by 14,000 for teenagers and 52,000 for young adults

The new figures are revealed in the eighth annual review conducted by the Dusseldorp Skills Forum into Australian youth and their participation in learning and work.

Key findings from *How Young People are Faring 2006* include:

- **Completing Year 12 does make a difference:** 20 percent of school completers were not in full-time learning or work six months after leaving school, compared with 40 percent of Year 11 completers and nearly 50 percent of Year 10 or below completers. 48,100 early school leavers were not in full-time learning or work
- **Increasing numbers of students are working part-time:** 34 percent of school students and about fifty percent of full-time tertiary students are also working part-time
- **Almost as many school-leavers go to TAFE as university:** 26 percent of school-leavers went onto university and 27 percent went onto TAFE and other forms of education
- **Participation rates for young adults are improving:** participation in full-time learning or work was higher than at any time in the past two decades. Nevertheless 23 percent of young adults were not in full-time learning or work
- **Australia is not running out of young people:** the numbers of 19 year-olds are forecast to increase over the next decade.

Dr John Spierings, Dusseldorp Skills Forum's Research Strategist, says the report suggests several trends:

¹ 540,000 young Australians aged 15-24 years in May 2006 were not in full-time learning or work. Of these approximately 330,000, or 12 percent, were unemployed, working part-time but wanting more hours, or were not in the labour force but wanting to work.

“It is taking a significant group of young people longer to break into sustainable full-time employment. Underemployment, perhaps more than unemployment, is now the major issue for young Australians. This has major implications for their ability to meet education costs, afford homeownership, and make decisions about family life.

It’s like climate change: a strong investment in this national resource now will underpin Australia’s economic security in the future.

The national skills drought and the ageing of the workforce preoccupy public policy. Improved labour force participation and skills development of young Australians is a significant but under-recognised part of the solution.”

How Young People are Faring 2006 will be released at Slingshot Community Employment Centre, 10 Church Street, North Fitzroy on Thursday 9 November at 11am. The report’s key findings will be presented by author Mike Long of the Centre for the Economics of Education and Training, Monash University, and Dr John Spierings, Research Strategist for Dusseldorp Skills Forum.

Young people from The Island and Slingshot programs will speak about their efforts to join the full-time workforce.

The full report, **How Young People are Faring 2006**, as well as **HYPAF At a Glance**, a document outlining key findings, can be downloaded from www.dsf.org.au. Brief papers providing comment on the report are also available online from:

Mark Wooden, Deputy Director, Melbourne Institute

Rebecca Huntley, author of *The World According to Y*

Stephen Lamb, Associate Professor, Centre for Post Compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning

**RELEASE OF HOW YOUNG PEOPLE ARE FARING 2006
SLINGSHOT COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT CENTRE
10 CHURCH STREET
NORTH FITZROY
11am THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER**

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