



Social Justice STOCKTAKE



Youth Unemployment

Attributable To Head of Community Engagement, Major Brad Watson

Were you surprised to see youth unemployment as an issue of concern in the Stocktake?

Although it rated quite low as a priority among survey respondents (9.1 per cent), I was not surprised that it was identified as an issue of concern.

We all know that having a job is critical for things like independence, identity, aspiration, social relations, and all the purchasing power that comes with having an income (housing, car, clothes, travel, going out etc.).

On the flipside, not being able to get a job can also lead to poverty, exposing young people to isolation and exclusion from society, and can significantly reduce the person's wellbeing and long-term potential in life.

Why are there so many young people out of work in your opinion and experience?

There are many reasons why young people find themselves out of work. Many young people are also underemployed, working in casual and part-time jobs, but wanting or needing more hours or stable, full-time work.

Unfortunately, many of the reasons for this are often due to things outside of the control of young people themselves. These may include employment barriers that are often linked to social and economic disadvantage:

- The lack of a stable home,
- Lack of training or skills development,
- The absence of entry-level employment opportunities, and
- Disengagement with education in general.

The extremely low rate of the Youth Allowance payment means that employment, or access to intergenerational wealth, is the only way to avoid poverty.

At the moment, many businesses can't operate because they can't get staff. Why aren't young people taking up these positions?

There are many reasons why businesses can't get staff and why young people aren't taking up these positions. Many of these will be specific to the individual business and others to the characteristics and nature of the unemployed young person. Some of these may include:

- The location of the business – can young people get to it (public transport etc.)?



Social Justice STOCKTAKE



- The time of day and hours required to work – can young people safely get there and back if there are early morning/late nights, fitting work rosters in with education, challenges balancing multiple part-time jobs?
- Payment – is the employer undertaking to pay at proper rates? Exploitation of young people is widely reported.
- Is experience required?
- Future prospects/opportunities for advancement?

What do you see as the long-term effects of youth unemployment?

Depending on the duration of unemployment, underemployment and the receipt of low income, the long-term impact could be felt as far ahead as retirement, when inadequate superannuation can lead to further poverty.

Youth unemployment can also be both the result of, or contribute to, the perpetuation of intergenerational unemployment and disadvantage.

How can The Salvation Army assist a young person looking for work?

The Salvation Army runs an employment service called EPlus, which works with young people to find a job which suits them and their needs and passions.

We also run volunteering opportunities to help young people feel a sense of belonging and contribute to their local community.

Our Doorways emergency relief and Moneycare financial services can help young people in hardship by assisting them with material assistance and financial management advice.

Our specialist youth services also provide a range of tailored support and assistance to vulnerable young people.

How can the public help alleviate this issue?

To help alleviate the issue of youth unemployment, members of the community can:

- Acknowledge that young people are active agents of change and key actors in society and treat them as such.
- Treat and listen to young people with the dignity and respect they deserve.
- Seek out the insights, experiences, and skills of young people, in particular of those from disadvantaged cohorts and those at risk of increased vulnerability when making decisions or choosing leaders.
- Help young people to prepare for adulthood through mentoring and life skill programs.