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| **MEDIA RELEASE** |

**Monday March 4, 2019**

**WA’s youth unemployment hotspots uncovered**

**Anti-poverty group’s new report smashes the ‘avocado’ generation myth**

A report released today maps unemployment “hotspots” for young people in Western Australia to find the highest youth unemployment rate is in the Perth – North West region, where more than 16% of young people in the labour force are unemployed.

The state’s youth unemployment rate was 14.5%, well above the national rate of 11.2%, says the report published by national anti-poverty group the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

Youth unemployment rates for the five worst youth unemployment “hotspots” in the state – also all above the national 11.2% rate are (from Australian Bureau of Statistics data using the 12-month average to December 2018):

* 16.7% in the Perth – North West region, including Joondalup, Yanchep, Wanneroo, Scarborough
* 15.9% in the Western Australia – Wheat Belt region, including Albany, Denmark, Northam, Mount Barker
* 14.9% in the Perth – South East region, including Victoria Park, Kalamunda, Armadale, Serpentine
* 14.6% in the Perth – North East region, including Bayswater, Midland, Mundaring, Ellenbrook
* 14.3% In the Mandurah region, including Pinjarra

An estimated 34,900 young people aged 15 to 24 were unemployed in Western Australia in December 2018.

The Brotherhood’s disturbing analysis, Smashing the Avocado Debate, finds that across Australia the youth unemployment rate is stagnating at the levels seen in the early 2000s, despite 28 years of economic growth.

The 11.2% national youth unemployment rate is more than twice Australia’s overall unemployment rate (5%), at December 2018, and almost three times the unemployment rate of those aged 25 and over. Across Australia, this translates to a quarter of a million young people who are still unemployed.

In the lead up to a federal election, the Brotherhood’s Executive Director, Conny Lenneberg, challenged policymakers to give Australia’s young people a fair go, including advancing solutions for the unprecedented challenges the emerging generation faces in the world of work in the 21st century.

“Young people come out of education and training with high hopes and aspirations for independence. It’s devastating that despite 28 years of continuous economic growth, too many young Australians are locked out of the prosperity dividend,” Ms Lenneberg said.

The [report](http://library.bsl.org.au/showitem.php?handle=1/11134) maps the 20 worst “hotspot” regions for youth unemployment across Australia – including the Perth – North West, Western Australia – Wheat Belt, Perth – South East and Perth – North East regions – and confirms many regional and outer suburban areas bear the heaviest burden.

Ms Lenneberg said the latest “hotspots” revelation smashed stereotypes about young people and called for a more sophisticated public debate about the emerging generation’s challenges.

“These figures belie stereotypes about young people. We know from our research and the experience of our services that many young people are doing it tough,” she said.

“Yet young people are too often depicted in simplistic terms of consumers of overpriced smashed-avocado toast with a fascination for selfies, and that’s plain wrong.”

The Brotherhood’s report says young Australians are moving into adulthood while the nation is also navigating a period of testing social and economic change due to the interconnected challenges posed by globalisation, technology, climate change and demographic change.

“We remain especially concerned at how young people without qualifications and skills or family networks are tracking in this rapidly changing economic and social environment,” Ms Lenneberg said.

“To secure the future labour force and create opportunities for decent work, we need structural solutions that drill down to local job markets and infrastructure challenges.”

“We also know from our practical experience that all young jobseekers in Australia need to have access to a specialist youth employment service, a one-stop-shop dedicated to their needs, whereas currently we still have a fragmented response to employment services for young people.”

**Read the report ‘Smashing the avocado debate: Australia’s youth unemployment hotspots’:** <http://library.bsl.org.au/showitem.php?handle=1/11134>

**“In my town there’s not a lot of jobs for the amount of people”; watch this video of Jayda’s story:** <https://youtu.be/VGDY08qKcbw>

**Media contacts: Sharon Lee – 0499 300 982 /** [sharon.lee@bsl.org.au](mailto:sharon.lee@bsl.org.au) **– or Jeannie Zakharov – 0428 391 117 /** [jzakharov@bsl.org.au](mailto:jzakharov@bsl.org.au)

The worst youth unemployment hotspots for each state and territory

