

## Media Release

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### Teens left behind by economic recovery, new report finds

A major research report released today by The Foundation for Young Australians (FYA), reveals that young people continue to feel the negative impacts of the global financial crisis, despite Australia's economic recovery overall.

*How Young People are Faring* (HYPAF) is the pre-eminent national report on the learning and work situation of young Australians. The 2010 report shows that the number of teenagers not in full-time education or work remains as high now as in 2009, when it spiked as a result of the global economic downturn. The proportion of 'disengaged' teenagers has stayed at 16.4%, meaning that around 246,000 teenagers are not in full-time education or work.

The report also shows that:

- for 15 to 19 year-old males, the level of 'disengagement' rose from 15.3% to 16% in 2010;
- the unemployment rate for teenage males not in full-time education rose from 18.2% in 2009 to 18.8% in 2010, this compares with the current adult unemployment rate of just 5%;
- the number of teenagers starting apprenticeships and traineeships dropped by more than 15,000 between 2008 and 2009, with two thirds of these being in male-dominated trade occupations;
- the teenage unemployment rate fell slightly from 18.5% in 2009 to 17.9% in 2010, but remains well above the 12.2% level seen before the financial crisis in 2008;
- almost one quarter of 20 to 24 year-olds are not engaged in full-time work or full-time education in 2010, a slight improvement over the situation in the previous year.

Dr Lucas Walsh, Director of Research at FYA, said, "This report tells us that while Australia leads the global economic recovery, there remain far too many young Australians who don't reap the rewards of education or employment. It can take 15 years for the teenage unemployment rate to recover from a recession, so urgent action is needed to make sure young people benefit from our current economic growth."

"Teenage males have been hit particularly hard by the ongoing affects of the financial crisis, with a spike in unemployment and a drop in apprenticeships," Dr Walsh said.

"The Australian Government should be commended for recent policy initiatives, such as Apprentice Kickstart and the new National Trade Cadetship. These and other measures can provide many young people with opportunities to stay engaged in learning and gain vital vocational skills. However, this report is a stark reminder that community, business and government leaders must continue to develop diverse training and employment pathways for young people in this country."

HYPAF also indicates how well Australia is progressing towards the government target of 90% Year 12 or equivalent participation and attainment by 2015, agreed to by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG).

Professor Stephen Lamb, lead author of the HYPAF report and Professor of Education at the University of Melbourne, said, “While there is a positive long term trend in Australia’s rate of secondary school completion, we still lag behind several OECD countries on this measure. The apparent retention rate of 76% suggests that more will need to be done if Australia is to reach the COAG target of 90% attainment by 2015.”

HYPAF 2009 was commissioned by FYA and prepared by the Centre for Post-compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning (CPELL) at the University of Melbourne. The HYPAF report draws on the latest data from a range of sources including annual Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) surveys of education and work, monthly ABS national labour force surveys, and data from the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER).

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**Dr Lucas Walsh and Professor Stephen Lamb are available for interview**  
A copy of the 2010 report is available for download at [www.fya.org.au](http://www.fya.org.au)

*FYA is a national, independent, not-for-profit organisation. We work to improve the way young Australians learn, the way they lead and the way they live.*

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