

Media Release

Strictly embargoed until Thu 8 October

Recession worsens 'earning and learning' conditions for young Australians new report finds

A major research report released today by The Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) reveals a sharp rise in the rate of youth 'disengagement' from work and study. The 2009 *How Young People are Faring* (HYPAF) report shows that the proportion of teenagers not learning or earning full-time has jumped from 13.4% a year ago to 16.4%, the highest level since the recession of the early 1990s.

HYPAF is the pre-eminent national report on the learning and work situation of young Australians. This year's report focuses on the global economic downturn and the subsequent impact on young people's aspirations, employment opportunities and education pathways. HYPAF 2009 was commissioned by FYA and prepared by the Centre for Post-compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning (CPELL) at the University of Melbourne.

Dr Lucas Walsh, Director of Research at FYA is candid in his assessment of the report's findings, "In the wake of both recent economic instability and longer term structural challenges, there is no doubt the conditions of earning and learning for young Australians have deteriorated in 2009," says Dr Walsh.

The report also highlights that:

- The rate of unemployment among teenagers who were not in full-time education has risen from 12.2% in 2008 to 18.5% in 2009, one of the largest annual increases for teenagers over the past two decades;
- the proportion of teenagers not in full-time education or employment varies widely across states and territories, with the ACT having the lowest rate followed by Victoria and NSW;
- the last 12 months has seen reduced rates of entry into full-time work for school leavers;
- those young people living in the wealthiest areas are three times more likely to gain a university degree by the age of 24 than those in the poorest areas;
- females are nearly twice as likely as males to complete a university degree by the age of 23.

"These are concerning signs about the declining wellbeing of young Australians," says Adam Smith, CEO at FYA. "In these turbulent times, the challenge for all of us is to provide innovative pathways and new opportunities for young people so that they can realise their full potential."

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 the Census of Population and Housing.

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The Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) is an independent organisation that supports and empowers young Australians to become successful learners and creative, active and valued citizens.

Media Enquiries

Jon Myer, Communications Manager: P 03 9604 6232 | M 0408 082 066 | E jon.myer@fya.org.au

A copy of the 2009 report will be available for download from Thu 8 October at www.fya.org.au