



Media Release

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## Some relief for young job seekers, but fears remain

The Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC) and the Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT) today welcomed news that the government will not require young job seekers to apply for 40 jobs a month. The announcement is part of the Department for Education's *Request for Tender for Employment Services 2015-2020* document, which was released today.

However, deep concerns remain about the government's efforts to bar unemployed people under 30 from income support for six month periods. Meanwhile, young people facing disadvantage still need greater support to become 'job ready'.

While AYAC and YNOT are pleased that the government has listened to public consultation about the *Request for Tender for Employment Services 2015-2020*, the youth peak bodies are worried that the document will still have a damaging impact upon young people if implemented in its current form. Questions remain about whether new employment services providers will have the expertise to work with more vulnerable young people, especially in smaller rural communities.

Leo Fieldgrass, AYAC National Director said, "We'd encourage the government to recognise the realities of the job market for young Australians at present. The high levels of youth unemployment mean there simply aren't enough jobs for all young people seeking work".

"Even where there are jobs, young people tell us they're stuck in a catch 22: employers won't offer them work because they have no experience, yet they can't get experience without a job. So applying for 20, 40 or 60 jobs a month won't make any difference unless a comprehensive youth employment strategy is put in place," said Mr Fieldgrass.

Joanna Siejka, YNOT CEO said, “Young people aren’t to blame for the current lack of jobs. Australia needs a youth employment strategy that supports young people into employment, rather than punishing them for simply not having jobs”.

AYAC and YNOT have also raised concerns about the loss of specialist support to help disadvantaged young people become job-ready and find work. The youth peaks recommend the government reinstate funding for Youth Connections, a program that keeps vulnerable young people in education and gives them career counselling, which has better success rates than Work for the Dole.

AYAC and YNOT also reiterated their fears that young Australians will be pushed into poverty and homelessness if the government continues to attempt to remove income support from people aged 18-30 for six months of every year.

“The federal parliament’s own joint human rights committee found the plan incompatible with young people’s basic right to an adequate standard of living and social security, as well as their right to equality and non-discrimination on the basis of age”, said Ms Siejka.

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