

ATT: NEWS EDITOR/COS

YOUNG PEOPLE MADE PUNCHING BAG OF FEDERAL BUDGET

The Youth Affairs Council of WA said the youth sector had been savaged by the Federal Budget, with across the board cuts to programs and engagement.

YACWA is very concerned that the Federal Government will force young jobseekers to wait six months before they can apply for the dole.

Under an 'earn or learn' crackdown, jobseekers under 30 face an immediate six month waiting period, while others will be forced to stay on the Youth Allowance until they are 25, at a lower rate than Newstart.

YACWA CEO Craig Comrie said the plan was callous and would put many jobseekers and young people at risk of poverty and homelessness.

"Recent statistics show that youth unemployment is rising at a rapid rate," he said.

"Policies like this fail to recognise that there aren't an adequate number of jobs available for young people seeking employment."

Mr Comrie said young people were continuously targeted in measures relating to welfare.

"It is an easy political stunt that seeks to use young people as the punching bag of the budget and label them as dole bludgers," he said.

YACWA was also concerned about cuts to the highly effective Youth Connections program, which supported the most vulnerable youth in Australia.

"Youth Connections has assisted thousands of vulnerable young people to stay in employment.

"It has been evaluated as being highly successful and cost effective, and it makes no sense for the government to cut funding to the program from December 31st.

"The impact of losing this program will be devastating for some young people."

Mr Comrie said youth workers had also taken a hit from the budget, with the possible defunding of the national advocacy body the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition with the Government not giving any clear indication of the organisations future past June 30.

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