

Youth unemployment the real tragedy behind unemployment rate

A celebration of South Australia's falling unemployment rate must be tempered by concerns about the State's near-20 year high in youth unemployment, Master Builders SA says.

Data released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows the state's unemployment rate dropped from 6.7 per cent to 6.6 per cent on a trend basis in July, and 6.6 per cent to 6.2 per cent on a seasonally adjusted basis.

But unemployment among 15-24 year olds remains persistently high at 17.5 per cent – far outstripping all other States, Master Builders SA Chief Executive Officer Ian Markos says.

"The building industry is pleased to see an improvement in South Australia's unemployment rate this month, although of course we're concerned about the looming impact of the closure of Holden's in October," he said.

"This will impact our industry through reduced demand but the real killer will be another blow to consumer and business confidence.

"But behind this headline rate lies a real concern – South Australia's youth unemployment rate continues to be the highest in the country at 17.5 per cent; the next highest is in Tasmania at 14 per cent.

"The last State Budget started to make moves to help young South Australians begin a new career as an apprentice, but frankly, more is obviously needed.

"The proposed Labour Hire Licensing Bill needs to explicitly exclude organizations that deliver real jobs to young South Australians including Group Training Organizations. This would be a worthy first step if the Government is seriously concerned about this issue.

"The last thing we need is more red tape creating a disincentive for the employment of young South Australians."

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