# Australia’s declining full time employment and proposed solutions

This policy brief plan is a draft for a Final Brief on the current Australian employment landscape that has witnessed a sharp decline in full employment and possible solutions to remedy the situation.

## Context

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2017) found that unemployment increased from 5.5% in 2016 to 5.9% in 2017 representing 748,000 Australians with the employment rates decreasing by one percent to 11%. With more Australian youth gaining higher education, the situation has taken a turn for the worst with only 27% of young people employed full time during the same period. This dulls in comparison to 35% in 2007 or the 48% of young people actively employed in thirty years ago. The situation is compounded by the continued fall in internship and apprenticeship opportunities especially in non-trade occupations against a backdrop of increased enrolments in tertiary education with almost 60% youth having or on the way to attaining a bachelor’s degree.

The Department of Jobs Small Business, the department responsible for programs and policies that facilitate finding and keeping jobs for Australians, has a tough job ahead in tackling the declining full time employment opportunities.

## Critique

1. Demand for labour is not in tandem with supply of skilled and semi-skilled labour
2. With 44% of Australian jobs set to undergo automation, retrenchments have recently increased and opportunities for full time employment dwindled (Edwards and Bradley, 2015).
3. The 2008 global financial crisis slowed economic growth and thus job creation in Australia which has contributed to reduced full time employment as economy is yet to fully recover (“Executive Summary,” 2017).
4. The unemployment problem affects the youth as they transition from education from school to work and immigrants who lack necessary job qualifications.
5. With Australia’s 39 universities graduating over 300,000 students yearly, policy makers, NGOs and employers are concerned the situation will only get worse and urgent measures to create employment opportunities need to be created.

## Recommendations

Tackling the issue of reduced full time employment requires a critical overhaul of the fundamental system that prepares the unemployed for the employment market, namely the training and education. The proposals below all relate to training and job placement as a means to resolve this problem.

1. An increase in job placements would help match unemployed people to the employers and develop job-specific skills (Department of Jobs and Small Business, 2018).
2. The education curriculum should be designed in a way that gives more information on options and engagement in the workplace for students to make better decisions.
3. A critical evaluation of existing programs focused on helping the unemployed is necessary to ensure the models that work are funded and supported more.
4. It is important to provide a dependable support system for the unemployed and youth transitioning from education and training to work. This includes creating a payment system that will facilitate job seeking and enable them to take jobs when they become available (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2017).
5. The government should avail more training opportunities to young Australians and revise its funding model to accommodate even the most disadvantaged in society and align training with placement programs.

## References

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