

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

ACT - Simplistic solution to increasing youth unemployment

Mr Williams refutes as simplistic the solution of the reintroduction of a youth wage offered by Sir Roger Douglas to improving New Zealand's economy. "First and foremost, the solutions lie within communities themselves working closely together with the guidance and leadership of locally elected mayors to create and capitalise on opportunities that spell real aspiration to success for young people."

"It's easy to criticise our hard-working taskforce, but as a group of mayors from across New Zealand we are directly elected to represent our communities because we understand our local issues far more so than many party list MPs such as Sir Roger. We are connected to all aspects of activity within our areas and therefore have the knowledge, contacts and motivation to make durable local changes," he says.

Mr Williams does agree that youth unemployment has skyrocketed since 2008. "Our economy is severely constricted in direct response to a global recession. Manufacturing, retailing and the production sector are hard hit with our high currency value and low wages. When there are jobs young people are working!"

The major issue for all communities is the growth of social dysfunction with much of this caused by bored youth with no goals or hope of improvement in their circumstances. "We have to pull out all the stops to activate and engage our youth. We need to be creative with solutions and education so they don't choose to fall back on welfare benefits because they are in dead end, low paid jobs," he says.

"The Mayors Taskforce for Jobs has rolled its sleeves up and is tackling this problem with some outstanding results around the country. We don't have the luxury of sitting in lofty positions making generalised, populist statements in election year, we get our hands dirty every day in our communities and probably have them shaken in appreciation a lot more too," says Dale Williams.