

Media Release

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Give Geraldton Youth a Go

Master Builders is asking the Geraldton Community to support its youth during the economic downturn in the building industry and the economy generally.

Master Builders Director Michael McLean said that in a time of economic uncertainty, where there are fewer jobs available for trades people, it's important we support the development of our younger generation.

"We're calling on local businesses and employers to assist the school leavers, apprentices and young tradies who are coming up through the ranks to provide them with some work experience or job opportunities," Mr McLean said.

"WA has just come off an extraordinary period of high construction activity thanks to the mining sector. However, with many of these projects now coming to an end, new jobs are in short supply."

Master Builders Regional Manager Di Gilleland is concerned that unless young people are provided with educational, training or work opportunities they are likely to leave the mid-west region.

"The housing industry is forecast to experience a 26% downturn in the number of dwelling starts, from over 31,000 in 2014-15 to about 23,000 in 2015-16," Mrs Gilleland said.

"Unfortunately we haven't seen the worst yet. Housing starts are said to drop even further over the next two years which means we need to plan ahead now to help our younger generation".

"Master Builders is aiming to engage the regional business community in Geraldton to assist in this local initiative to give young people a go. Giving them the opportunity to work at the local supermarket or fast food outlet, assist in their training and development, or taking them on as work experience students or apprentices will all help with their self esteem and encourage them to stay in the region", Mrs Gilleland said.

"Although the displacement of labour can occur during a downturn, we want to instill confidence in our youth. Even if their initial work experience might not be their first choice of career path, developing skills in communication, problem solving or customer service will assist them in being better trained and job ready in the long term."

"Although there may be harder times ahead in WA, there are many exciting opportunities available for our youth; it's just about how much they're willing to go looking for them," Mrs Gilleland said.

"We would like the Geraldton media outlets to get behind this initiative to publicize those employers who are prepared to give Geraldton youth a go".

"If this campaign is successful and embraced by the business community there is no reason why it couldn't be extended to other regions which will be exposed to the same challenges," Mrs Gilleland concluded.

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