



LINING up ... Andrew Epelu, 18, of Kingston, is desperately looking for work.

Picture: Jeff Camden

# Generations join jobless

Struggling families are being crippled by multiple job losses, writes Jobs reporter **John McCarthy**



**STARTING** over ... Chris Scott has a new job.

UNEMPLOYMENT has become so severe in parts of Brisbane that three generations of the one family are jobless.

In Woodridge, the unemployment rate hit 14 per cent in December, three times the national level, and that was before major job losses.

Kingston is almost the same, while Redlands is only marginally better despite its bayside and

canal mansions. A Core Data survey this week revealed that 10 per cent of Australian households were affected by unemployment.

Andrew Atwill, a 49-year-old IT professional from Greenslopes, says each job he applies for has at least 300 other applicants.

He gives himself another six weeks before he gets a forklift licence and looks for factory or warehouse work.

Last month, another 7000 Queenslanders registered as unemployed, boosting the state's unemployment rate to 4.8 per cent, or 109,000 people.

Forecasts indicate that thousands more were likely to lose their jobs this year.

Logan City councillor Darren Power said a bit of enthusiasm from Labor politicians would help.

"These are some of the safest seats and there's no incentive for them to do anything. It's like it's forgotten," he said.

The State Government has promised to create 100,000 jobs in the next three years, but Treasurer Andrew Fraser said none would be created this year and there was a risk that unemployment could peak at more than 7 per cent, higher than previously forecast.

But for all the complex solutions from politicians and economists some of the answers are as simple as having a current driver's licence.

"We have so many people who we find that if they just had a licence they would be working," Susan Watson, who heads up Sarina Russo Job Access at Wynnum, said.

Andrew Epelu, 18, of Woodridge, is second-generation unemployed and without a licence.

His father stays at home looking after his sick mother. None of them have a job except for Andrew's occasional shifts at McDonald's.

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**HIT hard . . . Logan is one of the areas being hit hardest by rising unemployment.**

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Mr Epilu wants construction work, but doesn't have transport to for jobs outside his area.

He's been job hunting since February but the construction market is dead and leaving Brisbane and his family is not an option because he's still struggling to get a driver's licence.

Job placement agen-

cies say getting a licence is not as easy as it sounds when you don't have a car or the money to pay for lessons.

This combined with other problems means the job often is the loser.

Ms Watson found that some don't even know to ring the boss if they have a sick day and will just never show up again.

She said the three gen-

erations of unemployed is now more common.

Her counterpart in Woodridge, John Bridges, said transport was a major barrier, but there were other issues such as child care and English skills.

Mr Atwill said business should be telling people there was light at the end of the tunnel.

And while job place-

ment agencies are helpful, they were geared more for people in middle management or professionals, he said.

Mr Atwill said job seekers needed to maintain perspective and confidence.

Chris Scott, 33, of Cleveland, was made redundant from the assembly line at Fisher and Paykel this month when

the company shifted production to Asia.

"I thought it would be weeks or even months before I got a job because I had heard all these horror stories," he said.

However, within the space of a day of registering with Max Employment, he received two job offers and accepted one.

"It was good. It was the first job I looked at."

**"I thought it'd be weeks before I got a job . . . I had heard all these horror stories"**

Chris Scott