

# The great work divide

**John McCarthy**

QUEENSLAND has been ripped in two by unemployment.

Stark contrasts between the haves and have-nots have emerged, with the state home to the community with the nation's worst unemployment rate, as well as a town with the lowest unemployment.

The indigenous community of Woorabinda, west of Rockhampton, has 39.7 per cent unemployment while only seven people are unemployed in Taroom, south of Roma.

Urban areas are also divided, with the number of jobless jumping almost 50 per cent in one Brisbane suburb, while the issue is virtually non-existent in the city's leafy western corridor of privilege.

But despite some poor performing areas, Queensland has 57 locations where unemployment is below 2 per cent and dozens more below 5 per cent, the level regarded by economists as full employment.

The booming gas, mining and energy towns of Dalby, Millmerran and Roma have

jobless rates below 2 per cent. Taroom tops the list with 0.4 per cent, while McKinley, near Mount Isa, runs second at 0.6 per cent followed by Pittsworth on 0.7 per cent.

But in the old gold town of Mt Morgan, south of Rockhampton, the jobless level has spiked to 22 per cent.

Queensland Council of Social Services president Karyn Walsh said many people in areas of entrenched unemployment had little education and risked the issue spreading through the generations.

She said problems in cities like Brisbane had been caused by dumping public housing in one area and not providing a transport link to jobs.

"If they (Governments) don't target it, these people will be put into the too-hard basket," Ms Walsh said.

Brisbane's southern suburbs of Kingston (17.7 per cent), Woodridge (17.6), Richlands (14.1), Durack (13.8) and Inala (13.8) have become centres of entrenched unemployment where jobless levels are more than double the state average of

6.1 per cent and getting worse.

Anthony Steen, 17, of Springwood in Brisbane's south, is among an army of jobless in the area, despite what he believes to have been good year 12 exam results.

He has applied for apprenticeships in plumbing, tiling and panel beating but his age and the fact he can't get a driving licence until mid next year won't help his chances.

"They don't take people until they have that. It's pretty hard," he said. Until he can get the licence he will join the long list of people on part-time work.

His chances may have been better if he lived in the belt of suburbs from Moggill to Kenmore, St Lucia and Seventeen Mile Rocks, where the number of unemployed in individual suburbs is often less than 20.

Alice Mansfield, 17, of Chapel Hill, had little trouble picking up a part-time job in retail at the nearby Indooroopilly shopping centre, which she hopes will lead to full-time work.

"It's a great area to find a job because they can see on your

résumé that you're not far away. I'm not sure it's a contributing factor, but it doesn't hurt," she said. However, many of her friends were still struggling to get work.

Local MP Bruce Flegg said the reason was not so much privilege, but demographics and housing options, which meant there were more professionals and small business people who had not been heavily hit by the financial crisis, except for their superannuation accounts.

The entrenched unemployment in southern suburbs was a historical fact, said employment expert Kevin Ayres from Sarina Russo Group.

He said immigrants often gravitated to these suburbs because of the cheaper housing and family reunion reasons. An example was Woodridge which had a heavy concentration of Pacific Islanders.

Most of these areas had programs to help the unemployed but one of the key problems for many of them was the lack of transport.

# QUEENSLAND SPL

## Brisbane's western suburbs

	per cent
Anstead	1.31
Brookfield	1.1
Chapel Hill	1.1
Fig Tree Pocket	1.1
Jamboree Heights	1.5
Jindalee	1.5
Kenmore	1.1
Moggill	1.4
Bellbowrie	1.4
Pinjarra Hills	1.1
17 Mile Rocks	1
St Lucia	1.5

## Alice Mansfield

Hopes her part-time retail job turns into something more substantial

## Low rural unemployment per cent

Barcoo	0.7	Clifton	1.6	Peak Downs	0.7
Belyando	1	Crows Nest	1.4	Rosalie	1.3
Bendemere	0.9	Currumbin	1.7	Roma	1.2
Booringa	1.3	Dalby	1.8	Tambo	1.8
Bulloo	1	Goondiwindi	1.5	Taroom	0.4
Bungil	0.9	Jericho	1.7	Toowoomba	1.8
Pittsworth	0.7	Jondaryan	1.8	Taroom	0.4
Booringa	1.3	Millmerran	1.5	Vincent	1.1
Chinchilla	1.4	Murilla	1.5	Waggamba	1.7
Cambooya	1	Nebo	1.1	Warroo	1.1



## Brisbane's southern suburbs

	per cent
Acacia Ridge	13.1
Durack	13.8
Inala	13.8
Kingston	17.7
Margate	10.1
Redland	14.5
Richlands	14.1
Willawong	12.9
Woodridge	17.6

### Anthony Steen

Performed well in year 12 but is struggling to find an apprenticeship

## High rural unemployment

	per cent
Woorabinda	39.7
Wujal Wujal	19.5
Pormpuraaw	12.4
Lockhart River	12
Mt Morgan	22
Herberton	14.4
Hope Vale	19
Croydon	12.4
Aurukun	12.3