

Unemployment is the No.1 concern for young Australians today

In a report to be released by the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference today, three years of research has identified youth unemployment, drug & alcohol abuse and identity & the search for meaning as the top three most-pressing issues for young people in Australia today.

Since 1995 the Catholic Bishops of Australia have been talking with and listening to young people around Australia, including ethnic groups, indigenous communities and youth at risk.

"It is very alarming that so many of our young people do not feel that Australia's future is a hopeful one, let alone secure", said Bishop Kevin Manning, Convenor of the Organising Group for the Bishops' Consultation on Young People and the Future. "As a nation we must face up to the fact that 25 per cent of young people aged between 15 and 24 are unemployed. Although this includes students still studying, how many of these students have chosen that path simply because a job does not exist?"

The suggested actions of the Report, coming from young people themselves, are endorsed by the Bishops' Conference. Although they are specific to each of the three categories essentially they aim to give great emphasis to education, advocacy and resourcing.

"Education is essential to allow people to be agents of change; advocacy is important especially at the national and regional levels because young people, individuals or grassroots groupings often have little power to effect change; and financial and human resourcing need attention because new programs and incentives demand it," said Bishop Manning. "The Bishops commit themselves to continuing to work towards a just society with fuller participation by young people."

The Report entitled, "Young People and the Future" will be launched today, 17 September, at 10:00am by Archbishop Francis Carroll in the Mural Hall, Parliament House, Canberra.