

## Job fightback campaign

March 14, 2012, 6:18 pm Jackie Quist Today Tonight

With 15,000 jobs lost last month, Australia's official unemployment rate is at 5.2 per cent, and the employment market appears to be in a major slump.

Big banks are shedding jobs, and there are those ready to read the last rites of Australian manufacturing.

But it's not all doom and gloom, and there are industries flying the flag for Australian workers.

Aussie bosses are fighting back in an attempt to buck the trend of sending local jobs overseas.

Stitching up the competition, Lisa Nouh is determined to not only keep, but create, local manufacturing jobs. She's a breath of fresh air in a gloomy jobs market.

Unemployment is tipped to reach 5.5 per cent by June. While the jobs market is booming in Western Australia, and adding 5,500 workers per month, the rest of the country is hemorrhaging – with 4,500 jobs lost per month.

Jobs set to go

- ANZ: 1000 jobs going
- Westpac: 679 jobs going
- Alcoa: 600 jobs going
- Qantas: 500 jobs going
- Toyota: 350 jobs going
- CGU: 600 jobs going
- Air Australia: 300 jobs gone

***But at the Border Express transport company the job scenario couldn't be more different. In fact, managing director Grant Luff is putting out the call for workers.***

***Luff wants forklift drivers, truck drivers, salespeople, a credit officer, warehouse supervisor and a team leader - just for starters. All are full time positions, in his fast growing, family-owned business. And best of all, experience isn't always necessary.***

***"If we think they're a good fit, and they fit the values of the business, then we're happy to go and train them. We've got our own registered training organisation," he said.***

Helen Souness is a senior executive with the job site Seek.com and says the job market is changing rapidly.

“Some of the industries that are growing a lot are obviously mining, at 44 per cent, but also science and technology. Scientists are really in demand – fourteen per cent up year on year. So is education, so trained teachers, but also childcare workers are in huge demand,” she said.

Sam Stynes of Pelican Childcare says “from carers in the room, to directors, to management - we definitely have a lot of fantastic opportunities.”

Pelican Childcare are always after good people to help staff fourteen centres in Victoria and Queensland.

“Service is the new economy. It’s really clear it’s obviously an ageing population, so health is a huge sector, and is only going to continue,” Souness said.

Predictably though, mining is the fastest growing industry, recording 44 per cent growth in the past year. This is followed by sport and recreation, community services, science and technology, education and training.

When it comes to jobs, the biggest call is for IT security workers, then engineers, mining surveyors, industrial relations lawyers and retail managers.

According to Souness, “despite messages of doom and gloom in retail, they need store managers; a lot of downstream services, and the more skilled areas there’s very strong demand.”

Now there is also a new demand for unskilled workers.

Pizza anyone? “First of all, it’s fun. Second of all, it’s flexible,” Domino’s chief operating officer, Andrew Rennie said.

They are desperate to sign 1,000 employees right now.

“Predominantly they are casual jobs at the moment. There are fulltime jobs available as well, and predominantly delivery jobs, but also pizza-making jobs and managerial jobs. There are no age restrictions - if you can drive a car, you have a licence, we’ll take you,” he said.

At age 27 Lisa Nouh is trying to prove manufacturing is not a dead loss. After manufacturing giant Pacific Brands closed ten factories, sacked 1,850 workers and moved production to China, Nouh swung into action.

She rehired ten sacked Bonds workers - including her mother, and bought discarded Pacific Brands sewing machines, setting up her own Australian owned and made underwear brand -- Tuffies and Tuffettes

She is keeping costs down by only selling online.

“I’m really excited and passionate to keep jobs in Australia. I feel like it is something we should all be doing,” Nouh said.

Ken Covington's story has turned from one of despair to one of hope.

"No one wants to sit home on benefits - we all want to work," he said.

After Heinz closed its tomato sauce factory in Girgarre, in northern Victoria, Covington and 145 workmates lost their jobs. Now he and a band of workers have formed the Goulburn Valley Food Co-op and they're determined to buy the processing plant - and that means jobs.

"This will be a blueprint for the whole of Australia if we get this going. There has never been a co-op in Australia that has been formed like this. It's going to encompass the farmers to the distributors, we're going to encompass everyone, so it's going to be an Australian first," he said.

"We've got backing. It is amazing how much support we're getting Australia wide. We have a backer from WA - he's put in \$2 million subject to our feasibility study coming back positive, which we're sure it will."

It is about moving and changing with the times, and Souness insists jobs are there for those flexible enough to consider retraining.

"There are a lot of online courses that can really put you in a very good position in IT, in health, in education, to get assistant roles and start to grow a whole new skill set. It's really important to remember it is never too late to add some skills."

Contact details

- Seek - [www.seek.com.au](http://www.seek.com.au)
- Pelican Childcare - [www.pelicanchildcare.com.au](http://www.pelicanchildcare.com.au)
- Tuffys and Tuffetts - [www.tuffys-tuffetts.com.au](http://www.tuffys-tuffetts.com.au)
- Domino's jobs - [www.dominosjobs.com.au](http://www.dominosjobs.com.au)
- Border Express - [www.borderexpress.com.au](http://www.borderexpress.com.au)
- Friends of Goulburn Valley Food Hub - [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

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