

# Job search tougher

## Locals urged to 'pound the pavement'

Employment | Bryan Allchin

DOLE queues at Centrelink Lilydale are continuing to grow, according to figures released last week.

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations figures show 1663 people were receiving Newstart payments in Lilydale last month, up 26.5 per cent on May 2009.

The figures were also up on June 2008, when 1204 people were claiming Newstart locally.

Kevin Ryan, the assistant manager at Sarino Russo Job Access in Lilydale said the number of people looking for work had increased.

"At the moment it has steadied off a little bit, but we have a lot more people than we did 12 months ago,

but we've also got the ability to support more people," Mr Ryan said.

He said job losses were mostly being felt by factory workers, particularly the automotive parts sector.

However, there were signs that things are improving, and Mr Ryan said many jobseekers were interested in re-skilling to fill in-demand positions.

Mr Ryan said bushfire reconstruction efforts meant there were several jobs for truck drivers, and there was renewed demand for apprentices in the construction, plumbing and electrical industries, and businesses were also making inquiries about hiring staff.

In Healesville, the bushfires are

still leaving a negative impact on local employment conditions.

"The overriding experience is that while it has always been difficult to find employment in Healesville, over the past few months it has been much harder to find employment locally, because many of the businesses have been affected by the bushfires or are rebuilding from the bushfires," Salvation Army Employment Plus spokeswoman Kirrilee Trist said.

Ms Trist said local jobs were often not being advertised, and she urged locals looking for work to "pound the pavement and approach businesses directly".