

# Figures hide new jobless

## Qualified workers taking payouts

**Jobs | Shaun Turton**

A DROP in the number of Diamond Valley residents receiving unemployment benefits is masking the large number of workers made redundant during the “global financial crisis”, a jobs service says.

Alex Kaine, from Greensborough job agency Sarina Russo, said he had seen an influx in “over-qualified” workers given large redun-

dancy packages over the past several months.

“They will not really show on stats because a lot have had huge redundancy packages,” Mr Kaine said.

“Some of these people were in those jobs for 20-plus years.

“From November last year, I walked into the office and thought I’d forgot an appointment – it was full of people with suits.”

Statistics from Heidelberg Centrelink, which serves Diamond Valley residents while the Greensborough centre is redeveloped, shows the number of people on unemployment payments dropped from 1845 in August to 1797 in September.

The number of payments from Heidelberg had been rising since the start of the year, from about 1400 and peaking at 1700 in July.

Payments issued have

fallen over the past two months.

Mr Kaine said the shift in the type of job seekers posed new challenges for the agency.

Many of the workers made redundant were from industries such as textiles, automotive, steel manufacturing, clothing and footwear and were having to look in new directions for work.