

more tip which would have otherwise ended up as scrap metal.

They were welded onto a

The mayor also hinted that the natural Christmas tree was set for a makeover with a new set of decorations.

Jobs plan for the Northern Rivers gives unemployed a 'champion'

ALL many unemployed people in our region need is a "champion and a chance" according to the NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS) deputy chief executive officer John Mikelsons.

Mr Mikelsons was in Lismore yesterday to trumpet the benefits of a three-part plan he hopes the NSW Government will fund in the next Budget cycle.

The plan proposes \$83 million be spent each year for

three years across the state resourcing local councils and community organisations to work with the most disadvantaged jobseekers to get them into work.

Richmond-Tweed is being specifically targeted because it has an overall unemployment rate of 8.8% compared with the state average of 6%. It also has the fourth highest rate of youth unemployment at 17.1% and the Aboriginal unemployment rate for

disadvantaged job seekers everyone benefits.

"Essentially what the program gives them is a chance and someone to champion the skills they need to be a good worker."

Regional Development Australia Northern Rivers (RDANR) has identified the tailoring of education and training programs for school leavers, particularly those experiencing disadvantage a priority for the Richmond-

Tweed area.

"We are targeting four specific groups of people and these are all people identified as having a higher level of unemployment or long term unemployment," Mr Mikelsons said.

NCOSS is proposing the jobs plan as part of its pre-Budget submission.

Mr Mikelsons said if it was given the green light by the state government it could be rolled out very quickly.

"Our estimates are that the total effects for the decade subsequent to a project like this completing could be an additional \$8.9 billion in Gross State Product and Gross Domestic Product; an additional \$2.46 billion in consumption; and an additional \$1.64 billion in state tax receipts," he said.

"The implementation of a plan like this would be a win-win for the people of NSW."

CYCLES RECYCLED: Dan Kubelka, fabrication and sign shop supervisor at Lismore City Council, with their gift to the people of Lismore.

PHOTO: CATHY ADAMS