



Jobless rate soars in city's west, north

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THE unemployment rate has hit 7.4 per cent in Melbourne's western and outer north-western suburbs, the highest rate in the state and double that being recorded in the city's east.

The outer east, an area extending from Wantirna to Warburton, averaged the state's lowest jobless rate of 3.5 per cent in the three months to February, according to the latest snapshot from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The ABS breakdown of the west covers an area bordered by Footscray, Bacchus Marsh, Werribee South and Sunbury and the outer northwest is a triangle marked by Brunswick, Kalkallo and Sunbury.

Unemployment hit 6 per cent in the city's southeast,

5.5 per cent in inner Melbourne, 5.1 per cent in the north east, 5 per cent on the Mornington Peninsula, 4.9 per cent in the south and 4.4 per cent in the inner east.

The jobless rate being recorded on the west and outer north-west is the highest since early 2009.

Across Victoria unemployment sits at 6.2 per cent in the Barwon-Western district, 6 per cent in the Goulburn Ovens-Murray, 5.2 per cent in the Loddon Mallee and 4.7 per cent in the Central Highlands and Wimmera.

Victorian Liberal senator Scott Ryan said the unemployment rate in western and outer north-western suburbs was of critical concern and needed a federal response.