



# Try, Test and Learn Fund

Initiative: *Care Plays NT*

Location: Northern Territory

Using insights from the Priority Investment Approach, the Try, Test and Learn Fund is gathering evidence on new or innovative approaches to addressing barriers to work.

The Try, Test and Learn Fund will help achieve the objectives of welfare reform—that is, to develop a modern welfare system that increases the capacity of individuals, reduces the risk of welfare dependency and maintains a strong welfare safety net.

## What are we trying to achieve?

This project seeks to attract young Northern Territory jobseekers, particularly Indigenous young people, to work in the aged care and disability services sector.

## What is *Care Plays NT*?

Through a Virtual Reality (VR) multimedia game, young people are introduced to care sector work. The VR game is culturally appropriate, featuring local Indigenous talent acting out some typical scenarios of work in a care sector role.

Young people are referred by schools, youth programs, jobactive and Transition to Work providers, the Community Development Program and word of mouth. They are initially given the opportunity to try the VR game, and those that express interest are screened for suitability for work in the sector.

Participants can then enter a six-week training program, based on the Get SET—Skills, Employment, Training Program. This comprises a suite of resources, specifically tailored for entry-level care sector work in the Northern Territory. Training prepares participants to enter the care workforce as a support worker. It also provides an understanding of what skills would help them embark on a career within the sector.

After completing training, participants are supported to seek a traineeship, go on to further study, or be placed in available jobs. They can also receive support to address transport, licenses, housing, health and lifestyle issues including any cultural considerations that may act as barriers to employment.

## What does the evidence tell us?

- The barriers to further education and employment for young unemployed people are varied. While some will face minimal barriers to engaging in further education or taking up employment opportunities, others will face a number of challenges to making a successful transition.
- There is a growing need for people to work in the care industry.

## How is this initiative new and innovative?

This project features a VR experience specifically for young Indigenous jobseekers in the NT that immerses the young people in typical care sector work scenarios. Those who signal interest in working in the sector are supported onto a training program that is also designed specifically for working in the NT context.

## Fast facts

**Priority group:** At-risk young people

**Target participant number:** 130

**Locations:** Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek

**Trial period:** 21 months

**Total funding:** \$1.27 million

**Service provider:** Workforce Plus with Industry Skills Advisory Council NT, Karen Sheldon Group, National Disability Services.

**Potential Savings:** The purpose of these initiatives is to test whether an intervention works to reduce long-term reliance on welfare. If around 9 per cent (12) of participants move off income support because of this project, the savings to the welfare system are likely to outweigh the costs of the project.