



Try, Test and Learn Fund

Initiative: *Explore, Discover and Empower*

Location: Victoria

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 empower and re-engage young people in education or employment by offering them short, practical trade-taster courses so they can explore a variety of industries.

What is *Explore, Discover and Empower*?

Unemployed and disengaged young people are offered short, hands-on, free trade-taster courses in under-utilised existing facilities at the Hamilton District Skills Centre. Trade-taster courses are in industries such as hospitality, automotive, building/carpentry, hair and beauty and creative IT.

The project has established a digital learning hub at a shopping centre in Hamilton, Victoria, which is used to engage and recruit young people into the project, and for the delivery of the creative IT industries courses.

Young people can enrol in as many trade-tasters courses as they wish, at no cost to the participants. They are also connected to a volunteer mentor who will support them into pathways to employment by providing informal advice.

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.
- If nothing changes, 42 per cent of 16-21 year olds currently receiving with Youth Allowance (other) or Disability Support Pension with mental health as the primary condition will be receiving income support payments in 10 years, and 32 per cent will be receiving income support payments in 20 years.

How is this initiative new and innovative?

This project exposes young people to a range of industry experiences without the barrier of enrolment expenses. It does this at a relatively low per participant cost by using existing facilities that are not being used to their full capacity.

Fast facts

Priority group: At-risk young people

Target participant number: 112

Locations: Southern Grampians Shire

Trial period: 22 months

Total funding: \$460,000

Service provider: Southern Grampians Shire Council

Potential future saving: The purpose of these initiatives is to test whether an intervention works to reduce long-term reliance on welfare. If around 6 per cent (7) 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.

Note: Due to changes in circumstances, adjustments have been made to target participant numbers, trial period and total funding.