



Try, Test and Learn Fund

Initiative: *Meeting the Youth Gap*

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?

To increase the employability and life skills of Indigenous young people living in the Central Desert region, by providing on-the-job training and paid work experience as youth workers as a pathway to available jobs in the region.

What is *Meeting the Youth Gap*?

Through this project, participants are provided paid work for up to 12 months within one of two organisations delivering youth services in Warlpiri communities in the Central Desert region. Participants, who are local Indigenous young people, work alongside senior youth workers, providing the support that youth workers would ordinarily deliver. This involves activities central to these young people's lives: sport, music, computers, new media and cultural activities.

The project is flexible and responsive to the challenges faced by Indigenous young people, allowing them to fit work experience around cultural commitments, for example. Participants are also provided professional development training that they complete at their own pace. Topics include financial literacy, mental health, alcohol and other drugs challenges, and personal goals and aspirations. Participants gain the skills, knowledge and experience required to fill available positions in the region enabling a new generation of local employed young people.

What does the evidence tell us?

- Young unemployed Indigenous people face a variety of barriers to further education and employment, particularly those living in very remote areas.
- Indigenous people living in very remote areas are 1.4 times more likely to be unemployed and 1.5 times more likely to receive government allowances as their main income source than Indigenous people living in major cities (AIHW, Australia's Welfare, 2017).

How is this initiative new and innovative?

The project tests whether flexible, meaningful work, specialised training and support will improve the confidence, life skills and employability of young Indigenous people in remote communities.

Revised February 2021

Fast facts

Priority group: At-risk young people

Target participant number: 87

Location: Central Desert region

Trial period: 21 months

Total funding: \$1.61 million

Service provider: Tangentyere Council Aboriginal Corporation

Potential future saving: The purpose of these initiatives is to test whether an intervention works to reduce long-term reliance on welfare. If around 16 per cent (14) 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.