



Try, Test and Learn Fund

Initiative: *UpCycLinc*

Location: Cairns, Queensland

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?

Workforce participation improvements and opportunities for self-employment or independent income generation through improved skills, confidence, work readiness, and a better understanding of the Australian workplace culture.

What is *UpCycLinc*?

Migrants and refugees work in a social enterprise to upcycle, refurbish and repurpose discarded household and commercial goods, such as furniture and textiles, and make unique items. The workshop provides participants with an opportunity to practise existing work skills and learn new work skills in a supported workplace environment. Support at the workshop includes access to tools and equipment, supervision by qualified trades people and product development and design help.

The project provides a shop front and website for marketing and sales, as well as using other online sales platforms. A percentage of sales go to the artist/producer, and a percentage are invested back into the social enterprise.

What does the evidence tell us?

- While many migrants and refugees successfully gain employment within the first few years of arrival, a small group continue to struggle and this group is at elevated risk of long-term welfare dependence.
- On average, migrants and refugees who currently receive working-age payments are likely to be on income support for some or all of 29 years over the rest of their lives
- If nothing changes, 55 per cent of this group will be receiving income support payments in 10 years, and 52 per cent will be receiving income support payments in 20 years.

How is this initiative new and innovative?

This project provides migrants and refugees with opportunities to develop and improve skills in a workplace setting, increase confidence, gain an understanding of the Australian workplace and improve employment skills as well as providing participants with links to potential work experience, employment and education opportunities. This is an innovative solution because it addresses multiple barriers to employment in one place.

Fast facts

Priority group: Migrants and refugees

Target participant number: 180

Location: Cairns

Trial period: 29 months

Total funding: \$1.64 million

Service provider: Centacare FNQ

Potential future saving: The purpose of these initiatives is to test whether an intervention works to reduce long-term reliance on welfare. If around 12 per cent (22) 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 the trial period and total funding.