



# Try, Test and Learn Fund

Initiative: *Employer-led Refugee Employment Project*

Location: Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia

## What are we trying to achieve?

This project seeks to improve employment outcomes for migrants and refugees by supporting them to develop the skills and acquire the experience to become successful employee through targeted training and mentored work experience.

## What is *Employer-led Refugee Employment*?

An employer-led, culturally customised employment program to help vulnerable refugees and migrants build their skills and capability for work in Woolworths Group.

Mentoring, work-readiness training and work experience will lead to real employment opportunities for successful participants. Cultural awareness training for Woolworths Group staff and managers will assist participants' transition to work.

## 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 income support are likely to be on income support in 30 years over their lifetime.
- If nothing changes, 56 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.

### Fast facts

**Priority group:** Migrants and refugees  
**Participant numbers:** 100  
**Locations:** Vic, Qld, NSW and SA  
**Trial period:** 18 months  
**Total funding:** \$0.6 million  
**Service provider:** Community Corporate  
**Potential future saving:** If five per cent 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.

## How is this initiative new and innovative?

The key innovation is that this strategy begins by considering the nature, number and location of employment vacancies and ensuring that participants are well prepared to meet the needs of the prospective employer, hence it is 'employer-led'. This initiative aims to improve the likelihood of participants transitioning smoothly to the workplace and maintaining employment in the longer term, by trialling the effectiveness of working with a major employer to identify real employment opportunities and then identifying appropriate migrants and refugee candidates and offering them tailored intensive mentoring and training, along with post-placement support for participants and cultural awareness training for managers and other staff.

Using insights from the Priority Investment Approach, the \$96.1 million 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.