



Try, Test and Learn Fund

Initiative: *The Coach Project*

Location: South Australia

What are we trying to achieve?

This project aims to assist people who have recently moved into work after a period of unemployment of at least a year. It aims to increase the likelihood that they will remain in work.

What is *The Coach Project*?

This project provides participants with customised intensive support through coaching, mentoring, and developing soft-skills to address immediate barriers to remaining in or increasing employment. The project will support and mentor participants and their families to better understand and overcome their barriers.

This support is provided to participants over an 18-month period in two stages:

1. Intensive support for up to six months including developing and reviewing a solution-focused individual plan, implementing training, coaching, mentoring, skills development, and referrals to existing specialist support services.
2. This is followed by ongoing support for 12 months to help transition participants to independence through a support program that will provide positive reinforcement for achievements and encourage participants to implement new skills.

The support provided focuses on six key domains: social and emotional wellbeing; building finance resilience; life skills development; the culture of employment; cultural wellbeing; and community connectedness.

What does the evidence tell us?

- The longer someone is reliant on income support, the more difficult it is for them to get off that support.
- Former long-term unemployed people who move from employment back onto income support payments are expected to have an average future lifetime cost of \$326,000. This compares to an expected average future lifetime cost of \$188,000 for previous welfare recipients who remain in employment.
- If this group moves back onto income support payments, 52 per cent will be receiving income support payments in 10 years, and 44 per cent will be receiving income support payments in 20 years.

How is this initiative new and innovative?

The provision of post-employment support for recently employed people, their families, and others close to them, is a service offer that differs significantly to those currently available.

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.

Fast facts

Priority group: Other

Participant numbers: 100

Locations: Whyalla and Port Augusta

Trial period: 24 months

Total funding: \$1 million

Service provider: Centacare Catholic Country SA

Potential future saving:

If around eight per cent of participants remain off income support because of this project, the savings to the welfare system are likely to outweigh the costs of the project.