



# Try, Test and Learn Fund

Initiative: *Sisters Support Business Together*

Location: Brisbane, Queensland

## What are we trying to achieve?

Provide participants with the practical skills to start small businesses to build the necessary knowledge and confidence for increased likelihood of moving to financial independence.

## What is *Sisters Support Business Together*?

Women aged 50 and over, who are either living in social housing or are at-risk of entering social housing, will be trained and supported to start a small business in partnerships or in small groups.

Participants will complete a self-efficacy test and participate in interviews to establish what skills and knowledge they need to succeed and to identify business ideas. They will get an opportunity to meet and form groups with other women who have similar ideas.

Training will cover business, management, finance, marketing, promotion and self-development. Each participant will be mentored and provided assistance with starting a business, and access to seed funding.

## What does the evidence tell us?

- Many older Australians want to work but find it difficult to get work.
- Australians are on average living into their 80s, and older jobseekers may draw on income support payments for many years.
- If nothing changes, 75 per cent of this group will be receiving income support payments in 10 years, and 74 per cent will be receiving income support payments in 20 years.

## How is this initiative new and innovative?

This will test the effectiveness of starting micro-enterprises in a group setting, for this particularly vulnerable group.

### Fast facts

**Priority group:** Older unemployed

**Participant numbers:** 40

**Location:** Brisbane

**Trial period:** 18 months

**Total funding:** \$0.58 million

**Service provider:** Griffith University

**Potential future saving:** If around 15 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.

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.