



Drug Testing Trial

FACT SHEET

The Commonwealth Government plans to introduce a drug testing trial in three locations across Australia.

Why is the Government trialling drug testing?

The trial is designed to help curb the devastating effects of the abuse of drugs on individuals, families and the broader community.

Drug abuse is a known barrier to employment and can contribute to people not getting into work or holding down a job.

That's why the Government is committed to trialling new approaches to tackle drug abuse among some welfare recipients.

How will the trial work?

The two-year drug testing trial will take place in three locations, and include 5,000 new recipients of Newstart and Youth Allowance (Other). Those who claim these payments in the trial locations may be selected for random drug testing.

Welfare recipients who test positive will be placed on Income Management for a period of 24 months or the duration of the trial.

A second drug test will be scheduled within 25 working days of the positive result.

After a second positive test, the job seeker will be referred to a medical professional who will assess their circumstances and identify treatment options.

Based on the recommendations of the medical professional, the job seeker may be required to participate in activities designed to address their substance abuse as part of their Job Plan. This participation will count towards their mutual obligation activity requirements.

What is Income Management?

Income Management limits the amount of money people can withdraw as cash, with the remaining funds quarantined for the purchase of essentials for themselves and their families.

People will still be able to buy items at approved merchants and pay bills with their quarantined funds.

Income Management does not reduce people's income support payment amounts.

How does Income Management support people to overcome drug abuse issues?

Income Management can make it easier for people affected by drug use to make sure their income support payments are spent caring for themselves and their families - on essential things such as

rent, childcare, food, school uniforms and household needs.

Supporting job seekers to overcome substance abuse will improve their chances of finding a job and reduce the risk of ongoing welfare dependency.

Without assistance, many people with substance abuse problems can't or won't take action to help themselves.

How were the trial locations chosen?

The trial locations were carefully considered based on data available regarding drug use, crime statistics, income support utilisation and the availability of appropriate treatment and supports for drug abuse.

In order to make this a robust trial, the locations were chosen for their varying profiles. They are not necessarily locations with the highest number of welfare recipients or incidence of drug use in Australia.

What other welfare measures is the Government putting in place to help address this problem?

The Government is introducing a range of measures designed to increase compliance and offer more encouragement and support for people to meet their mutual obligations as an income support payment recipient.

The drug testing trial will be used to identify job seekers with drug and alcohol misuse issues and support them to access appropriate treatment.

These measures are designed to better support people into work and ensure the welfare system continues to provide a safety net for those who need it most.

They also acknowledge that tax-payers have a right to expect that their taxes aren't being used to fund illegal activity.

Does the trial need new legislation?

Yes, legislation for the drug testing trial will need to be passed by Parliament.

Key facts:

- The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's 2016 National Drug Strategy Household Survey shows that those who were unemployed were 3.1 times more likely to use ice and other amphetamines than those who were employed.
- In 2016-17 there were 22,133 temporary incapacity exemptions given to 16,157 job seekers because of a drug and/or alcohol dependence issue.
- Australia's expenditure on alcohol and other drug treatment services in 2012-13 was \$1.2 billion, with about a third of this coming from the Australian Government.