

The Try, Test and Learn Fund: Support for VET Students Project Guidelines

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Commonwealth policy entity:	Department of Social Services
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, please contact: Phone: 1800 020 283 Email: support@communitygrants.gov.au
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Type of grant opportunity:	Restricted non-competitive

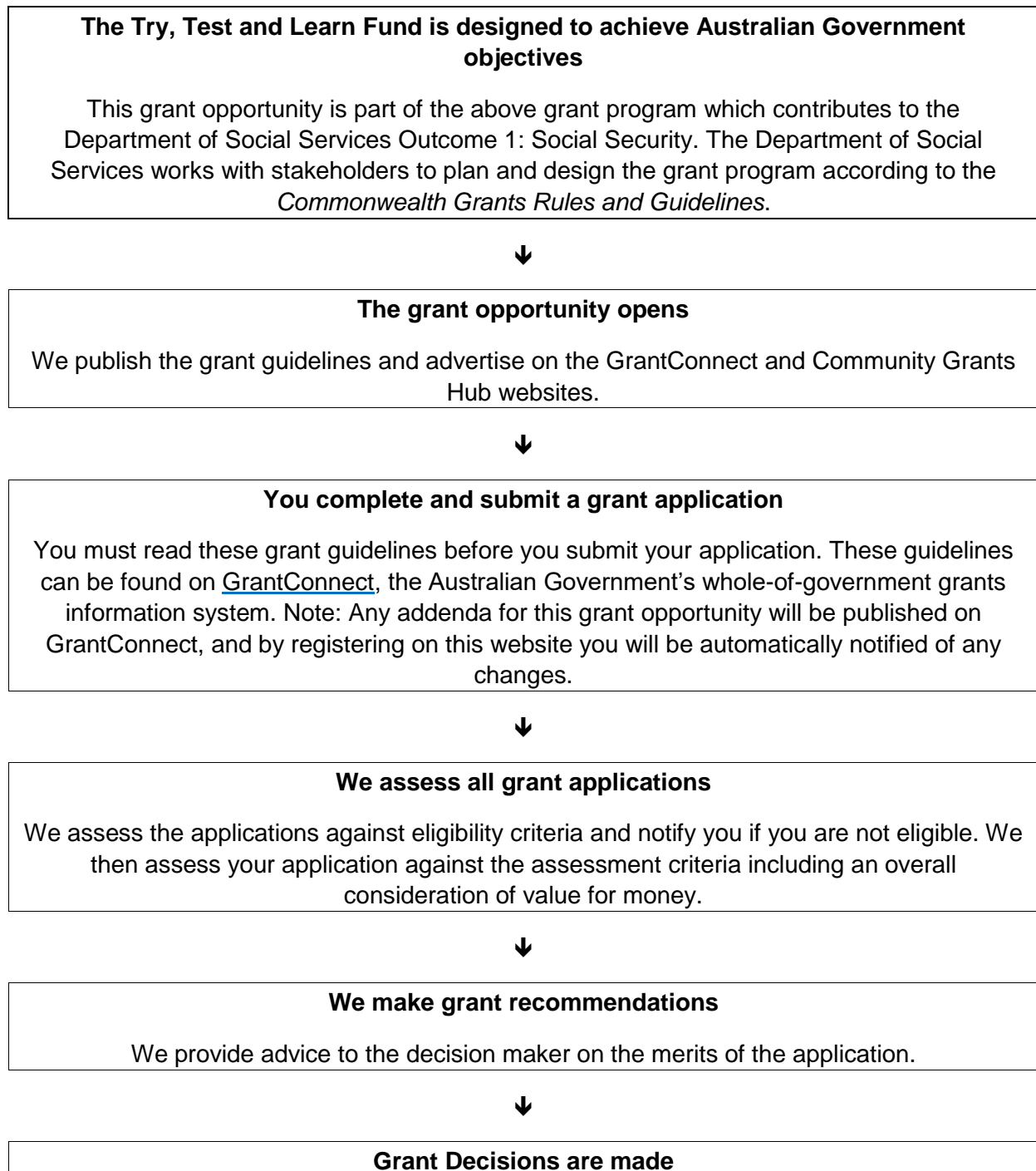
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1. The Try, Test and Learn Fund: Support for VET Students Project overview

1.1 About the grant process



The decision maker decides if the grant applications is successful.



We notify you of the outcome

We advise you of the outcome of your application.



We enter into a grant agreement

We will enter into a grant agreement with the successful applicant. The type of grant agreement is based on the nature of the grant and proportional to the risks involved.



Delivery of grant

You undertake the grant activity as set out in your grant agreement. We manage the grant by working with you, monitoring your progress and making payments.



Evaluation of the program

We evaluate the specific grant activity and program as a whole. We base this on information you provide to us and that we collect from various sources.

1.2 Role of the Community Grants Hub

This grant opportunity will be managed by the Community Grants Hub (the Hub) on behalf of the Department of Social Services, under a Whole of Australian Government initiative to streamline grant processes across agencies.

1.3 About the grant program

These guidelines contain information about a restricted non-competitive grant opportunity for the Support for VET Students project. The project was one of those developed during Tranche 1 of the Try, Test and Learn Fund. Information about this and other Try, Test and Learn Fund grant opportunities will be released on the GrantConnect website.

The Try, Test and Learn Fund was announced in the 2016-17 Federal Budget as an initial response to the Australian Priority Investment Approach to Welfare under Outcome 1.10 Working Age Payments. It will develop and fund new or innovative policy responses aimed at improving workforce participation or capacity to work for groups at risk of long-term welfare dependence.

Detailed information about the Try, Test and Learn Fund is publicly available in the Try, Test and Learn Fund Tranche 1 Handbook and the Co-development Supplementary Information document. These documents are available at the [DSS engage](#) page.

The Try, Test and Learn Fund forms part of Outcome 1.10 Working Age Payments. It will be undertaken according to the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 (CGRGs)*

This document sets out:

- the background and goals of the Try, Test and Learn Fund
- how the Try, Test and Learn Fund works, including information on the public consultation activities that have defined the project to be funded through this grant opportunity (ideas generation and co-development)
- the assessment criteria for the grant opportunity
- how grant applications will be evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

You must read this document before completing an application.

1.4 Background to the grant opportunity

1.4.1 Overview

These guidelines relate to the Support for VET Students project, which is one of the projects to be funded by Tranche 1 of the Try, Test and Learn Fund. Funding for Try, Test and Learn Fund projects will be released in multiple tranches over several years.

Tranche 1 commenced in December 2016 with a public call for ideas. Promising ideas were co-designed with stakeholders and developed into refined project proposals. From these proposals the Minister for Social Services, in consultation with the Prime Minister, Treasurer and the Minister for Finance, selected a number for funding including the project which will be funded through the restricted non-competitive opportunity outlined in these Grant Opportunity Guidelines.

The following sections provide more detail on Tranche 1 and the consultation activities that defined the project being funded.

1.4.2 The Australian Priority Investment Approach to Welfare and the Try, Test and Learn Fund

The Australian Priority Investment Approach to Welfare was a recommendation of the 2015 review of Australia's welfare system, *A New System for Better Employment and Social Outcomes*, led by Patrick McClure. It was established by the Australian Department of Social Services in 2015 and is underpinned by annual actuarial valuations of welfare payment data.

The valuations estimate the future lifetime cost of welfare payments to the Australian population and groups within it.

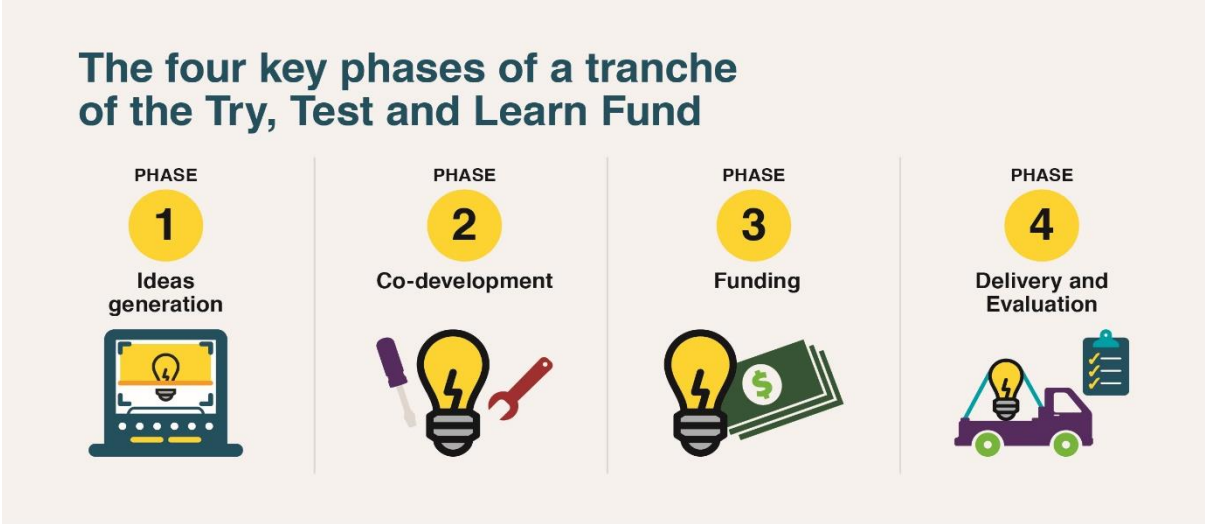
The objectives of the Priority Investment Approach are to improve lifetime wellbeing by:

- increasing the capacity of individuals to participate in social and economic life and to live independently of welfare
- reducing the risk of welfare dependence
- reducing long-term social security costs in the interests of maintaining a sustainable support system for vulnerable Australians.

The Try, Test and Learn Fund will support groups identified by the government, based on analysis of Priority Investment Approach valuations, as being at high risk of long-term welfare dependence and whose risk could be reduced with new or innovative policy responses.

Policy responses arising from the Fund are developed through an open and collaborative approach. This approach is focused on seeking new ideas from and collaborating with a diverse range of stakeholders including the social sector, business, academia and the general public in order to develop new ways of tackling complex social challenges.

The Try, Test and Learn Fund entails multiple stages of consultation (see diagram below). It seeks new ideas and then co-designs promising ideas with relevant stakeholders including potential service users. After co-design, selected projects are funded, delivered and evaluated. An overview of each phase as it occurred in Tranche 1 is provided in section 2.2.



The approach to ideas generation and co-development aligns with the principles of robust planning and design, and collaboration and partnership. It ensures that officials can work closely with potential grant recipients and beneficiaries on designing activities that will achieve the outcomes of the Try, Test and Learn Fund in alignment with public needs.

Another central feature of the Try, Test and Learn Fund is the generation of new insights and empirical evidence into ‘what works’ to reduce long-term welfare dependence. Projects will

be robustly evaluated to produce high quality policy evidence regarding whether the interventions are effective, for whom and under what circumstances. In this way, the Fund will allow Government to identify what approaches work and use this evidence to transform our investment in existing programs or make the case for new investments.

1.4.3 Tranche 1 priority groups

The priority groups for Tranche 1 of the Try, Test and Learn Fund were informed by the 2015 Priority Investment Approach Baseline Valuation Report and additional analysis of Priority Investment Approach data. These initial priority groups are:

- young people aged under 25 who started receiving Parenting Payment at age 18 or under and who are still receiving an income support payment
- young people aged under 25 who are in receipt of Carer Payment or at immediate risk of going onto the payment
- young people aged under 25 who have moved, or are at risk of moving, from study (post-secondary or tertiary and been in receipt or receiving a student payment) to an extended period on an unemployment payment.

The initial priority groups were chosen by the Minister of Social Services based on advice provided by the Department of Social Services and the Priority Investment Approach Inter-departmental Committee.

These priority groups are among a number identified in the Priority Investment Approach Baseline Valuation Report as groups of interest who have relatively high lifetime costs but for whom there is potential to reduce these likely costs and improve likely lifetime outcomes.

1.4.4 Tranche 1 project development and selection

The process for the development and selection of Tranche 1 projects entailed:

- **Ideas generation (9 December 2016 to 24 February 2017)** – In the initial ideas generation phase, ideas were broadly sought from community groups, government, academics, business, other groups and the general public through an open forum on the Department of Social Services consultation platform, DSS Engage.
- **Ideas shortlisting (late February to March 2017)** – After idea submissions closed, eligible ideas were assessed against the following criteria: effectiveness and impact of the idea; a new or innovative approach; and appropriateness for trial and evaluation. More detail on selection criteria used at the ideas generation stage is available in the [Try, Test and Learn Fund Tranche 1 Handbook](#). Each submission was assessed and moderated before being scored. Senior departmental officials undertook additional research on high scoring ideas before selecting an initial shortlist. Additional ideas that were similar or complementary to key ideas were also

selected to include different stakeholders with diverse perspectives and foster a collaborative co-development process.

- **Co-development (March to May 2017)** – Shortlisted ideas entered a co-development phase, in which stakeholders collaboratively developed and refined the shortlisted ideas from initial concepts into detailed project proposals. This co-development stage was an important step in seeking new and innovative solutions, and focused on fostering:
 - genuine collaboration with a meaningful impact on program design, including a focus on collaboration with representatives of the priority groups
 - more creative and innovative program design
 - new opportunities for collaboration between the Commonwealth, the community sector, business and other stakeholders, and the chance to learn from each other.

Co-development involved a series of workshops led by independent design facilitators. In some cases single ideas were workshoped; in others a group of ideas that were complementary or similar were workshoped together. Key co-development stakeholders included proponents of the idea or ideas and potential services users (priority group members). Other stakeholders included members of the Try, Test and Learn Fund Expert Advisory Panel,¹ relevant Commonwealth government representatives and peak body representatives.

At the end of the co-development phase, design facilitators prepared proposals for each project with some input from co-development participants. More information on the co-development process is available in the [Co-development Supplementary Information document](#).

- **Project recommendation and selection (May to August 2017)** – At the conclusion of the co-development phase, project proposals were considered to determine which projects should proceed to funding and delivery. Each project was considered independently against a range of parameters by the Department of Social Services in consultation with the Priority Investment Approach Inter-departmental Committee.² Considerations included how likely the project was to achieve intended outcomes, any major risks or challenges in delivering the project and whether the project had a viable approach for delivery and evaluation. Following these considerations, recommendations were put forward to the Minister for Social Services who made final project selections in consultation with the Prime Minister, the Minister for Finance and the Treasurer.

¹ The Expert Advisory Panel is a group of academics and research leaders with expertise across various fields including labour market economics, inequality and disadvantage, intergenerational welfare dependency, social research methods and service delivery and implementation. Panel members are called upon for advice to assist with the implementation of the Investment Approach and the Try, Test and Learn Fund.

² Members include the Departments of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Employment, Education and Training, Finance, Health, Human Services, and Social Services; the Treasury; the Australian Bureau of Statistics; and the Australian Government Actuary.

1.4.5 Tranche 1 project funding (August 2017 onwards)

These Grant Opportunity Guidelines cover the Support for VET Students project for which a restricted non-competitive grant process has been determined to be the appropriate funding approach.

Where a restricted non-competitive grant process has been selected, the original idea proponent is considered to be in a unique position to deliver the project, and has therefore been selected as a sole eligible applicant. In these cases, the idea proponent's idea has been co-developed into a specific project with the Department of Social Services and other stakeholders but retains features which make the idea proponent uniquely qualified as a potential delivery partner. Where idea proponents have not demonstrated specialised expertise or are not in a position to deliver projects, restricted competitive or open competitive grant processes will be pursued.

1.5 Grant opportunity objectives and outcomes

The Support for VET Students project will take a location based, early intervention approach to reduce the barriers to educational engagement for at-risk VET students by the provision of a coordinated and individualised suite of support services. The focus of the project will be around a caseworker who considers the individual needs of the participant, establishes and maintains strong relationships early on and throughout their study, and then connects student to relevant existing support services. The complex needs of this cohort require an early and individualised intervention in order to prevent their disengagement from study which in turn increases their future employability.

This project will address the fragmentation of current services that are available to at-risk VET students. The project will meet an identified need for individualised support that considers the spectrum of need for the student and then better connects them to available services.

The project will be aimed at young people aged 17-24 years old and who are currently enrolled in VET study but are at risk of disengaging from their education (these will be referred to as at-risk VET students). These young people are also to be in or have been in receipt of Youth Allowance (student) or ABSTUDY. The combination of factors that increases their risk of disengaging from study includes but is not limited to:

- limited social/support network or advice (compared to secondary school)
- lack of exposure to work, workplace experience, and employers (even within VET education)
- lack of direction and/or clarity of labour market opportunities relating to course
- complex mental health issues or needs
- unstable accommodation and/or household circumstances
- financial difficulties – including potential loss of existing part time work

- inadequate transportation or other means of accessing education
- family violence
- poor course selection and/or quality of course
- carer/parenting responsibilities overwhelming their study commitments.

The project will involve recruiting at-risk VET students through referrals from service providers. The providers will target existing or new VET students who present with risks of disengaging from study as indicated by student information on enrolment, low attendance rates or low grades. Once recruited, the project will help participants by connecting them to appropriate services during study and at transition to employment. This will involve an individualised package of services that may include group sessions, one-on-one mentoring, vocational support such as teaching study skills, and high intensity support which may include group therapy. Those transitioning to employment will be provided with employability readiness assessments and training to develop work search and work placement skills.

The project would assist up to 400 young students across four sites: one in regional New South Wales, one in regional and one in metropolitan Queensland, and one in metropolitan South Australia. The project will be trialled over 15 months, and comprise a three month implementation phase and a 12 month operational phase.

It will be evaluated to assess its success in achieving the specified outcomes and the appropriateness of the approach for a broader rollout. The project will be evaluated against a number of outcomes, including the following:

- increased engagement, attendance and attainment in education for participants, which may be measured using data including type and duration of study; enrolment, attendance and completion data; and qualitative reporting from participants and staff
- increased engagement by participants in the pursuit of employment, which may be measured using data including qualitative reporting from participants and staff
- increased employment of participants, which may be measured using data including participation rates, type and duration of employment, and social security administrative data
- reduced time for participants to transition from education to employment relative to their peers, which may be measured using data including participation rates and social security administrative data
- reduced reliance on unemployment benefits by participants, which may be measured using social security administrative data
- improved social and emotional wellbeing of participants, which may be measured using data including qualitative reporting from participants and staff.

2. Grant amount

The Australian Government has announced a total of \$79.6 million to projects supported by the Fund over four years for the Try, Test and Learn Fund. Individual grant amounts will be guided by project design and budgeting conducted during the co-development process and captured in project proposals.

The approximate budget for the Support for VET Students project is \$1.6 million. The project will be trialled over 15 months, and comprise a three month implementation phase and a 12 month operational phase.

3. Grant eligibility criteria

We cannot consider your application if it does not satisfy all the eligibility criteria.

3.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

To be eligible you must be the listed organisation and have received an invitation to apply through GrantConnect.

3.1.1 Eligible applicant

To be eligible you must be the listed organisation:

Name of Organisation	Rationale for Invitation
Mission Australia	See rationale below

The project was co-developed by a group of organisations that submitted conceptually similar ideas to the Try, Test and Learn Fund: Mission Australia, Youth InSearch and selected participants from the Try, Test and Learn Fund Policy Hack including Marist Youth Care and Max Solutions. These organisations brought a specific variety of skills and experience to the co-development process. This variety of skills and experience will be critical to the successful and efficient delivery of the project. These skills and experience include working with vulnerable students in particular to provide case management through a range of support mechanisms that could include group therapy sessions, one-on-one mentoring and the provision of vocational support such as teaching study skills. This project will test the effectiveness of delivery of a project with using this specific combination of skills, infrastructure and experience.

The unique design element of this project will be linking up all of the above services for this cohort, and giving individualised attention to vulnerable students to ensure they receive the support that they require. It is for this reason that a consortium of delivery partners with extensive experience in delivery of the spectrum of services indicated above is required. Mission Australia as the lead organisation will bring their extensive experience and

participation in the co-development process to the consortium, which has given them intricate knowledge of the project and left them uniquely placed to deliver it.

Moreover, a number of the consortium members have established relationships with one another which will help with the efficient and effective linking of services to provide project participants with seamless, individualised support. In combination, the skills, networks and existing infrastructure of a group of organisations led by Mission Australia will provide value for money that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Mission Australia is invited to apply for this grant opportunity as the lead partner of a consortium, to help ensure delivery consistency and coordination of support across the trial locations. Mission Australia is a trusted organisation which has been invited to submit an application as it has been assessed to have:

- capability to deliver the project activities in the project locations
- existing infrastructure and relationships to support the project activities
- knowledge of and capability to deliver to the project objectives and outcomes

The project will tap into the experience of Mission Australia staff who work with young people facing multiple barriers to employment. Further, it will also engage with consortia partners who specifically work with young students at risk of unemployment.

The project will require the delivery of case management support, community liaison and the establishment of working relationships with educational institutions. Through their current work, Mission Australia has established connections with educational institutions and vulnerable students in trial locations that will help ensure this project value for money in the delivery of this project, particularly given the short-term nature of the project. The potential consortium partners have also delivered similar but disconnected services on an ongoing basis for many years, often funded through DSS programs. Their capability and capacity to deliver and connect these services and work quickly to establish relationships with relevant educational institutions will be an important requirement for the project to operate successfully. The delivery of the project by Mission Australia as lead partner will benefit substantially from input from the delivery partners. The partners will provide localised expertise and existing relationships with the community in the trial sites, reducing the time required to start the project.

The project will be trialled in four sites across Australia and will require close oversight by one organisation to ensure consistency of approach and delivery. This consistency is critical to ensuring delivery of a trial project that can be robustly evaluated. Robust evaluation of this project will be necessary to test the hypothesis that the intervention will increase the likelihood that at-risk students receive the support they need to complete their education, and attain employment. Mission Australia's nation-wide service delivery footprint is therefore critical to meeting these objectives.

For the duration of this trial, the lead organisation will need to effectively manage the relationships of the consortium. During the co-development period, Mission Australia has emerged as the lead agency among the involved parties, and will be able to work quickly to

manage governance arrangements, approach and delivery. This will be important to ensuring that the trial keeps to the given timeline and budget. Mission Australia have significant proven expertise in the management of subcontracted organisations, such as their role in the delivery of Communities for Children - Facilitating Partners, a program which requires this kind of collaborative delivery and management of subcontractors.

Finally, the project will operate as a trial with constrained financial and time parameters. The most effective method of delivering a trial of this nature is to utilise the skills and knowledge of existing providers. This approach will provide the best value for money for conducting the initial, limited trial stage of the project and to collect policymaking evidence under the auspices of the evaluation-driven policy intent of the Try, Test and Learn Fund. There is no guarantee of continued funding for the successful applicant once the trial is completed. If any decision were made in the future to consider expanding a similar project concept for a broader rollout, broader-based and competitive funding processes would be considered.

4. Eligible grant activities

4.1 What can the grant money be used for?

The grant can be used for the following grant activities:

- staff salaries and on-costs which can be directly attributed to the provision of the grant activity in the identified service area or areas as per the grant agreement
- employee training for paid and unpaid staff including Committee and Board members that is relevant, appropriate and in line with the grant activity
- operating and administration expenses directly related to the project as per the grant agreement, such as:
 - telephones
 - rent and outgoings
 - computer/ IT/website/software
 - insurance
 - utilities
 - postage
 - stationery and printing
 - accounting and auditing
 - travel/accommodation costs
 - assets as defined in the Terms and Conditions of the grant agreement that can be reasonably attributed to meeting agreement deliverables.
- payments to sub-contractors to perform eligible grant activities.
- part of the grant can be used for evaluation of the funded project and/or to explore options for future sustainability and ongoing viability of the funded project.

4.2 What can the grant money not be used for?

The grant cannot be used for the following grant activities:

- purchase of land
- major capital expenditure³
- subsidy of general ongoing administration costs such as rent, electricity and phone not directly related to the project being delivered as part of the grant agreement
- costs to attend and travel to conferences
- overseas travel
- the covering of retrospective costs.

Please note the grant cannot be used for the costs incurred in the preparation of your grant application or related documentation.

5. The project development and grant selection processes

5.1 Project development

The Support for VET Students project underwent the Tranche 1 project development process outlined in section 1.4. In brief, this project entailed public ideas generation; shortlisting; intensive co-development with a variety of stakeholders including service providers and priority group representatives; and project recommendation and selection.

The project was co-developed from ideas submitted to the Try, Test and Learn Fund by Mission Australia, Youth InSearch, and selected participants from the Try, Test and Learn Fund Policy Hack. The project expands upon an original idea submitted by Mission Australia. As such, they have intricate knowledge of the project and how best to implement it. Mission Australia is invited to apply for this grant opportunity as the lead partner of a consortium including the above organisations.

5.2 Grant selection process

If an eligible application is received, it will be considered through a restricted non-competitive grant process.

We will assess your application against the criteria set out below. Your application will be considered on its merits, based on:

³ See glossary.

- how well it meets the criteria
- whether it provides value for money.

When undertaking a selection process we will consider the proportionality of scale, nature, funding amount, complexity and risks involved in the funding round. We will consider proportionality to inform the choice of the application and selection process, the type of grant agreement to be used and the reporting and acquittal requirements.

6. The assessment criteria

You will need to address the following assessment criteria in your application. Other criteria, such as innovation, the likely effectiveness of the project and the feasibility of the trial and evaluation of the project have been considered in the idea and project selection stages and do not need to be addressed as part of this grant process.

We will judge your application based on each criterion. The amount of detail and supporting evidence you provide in your application should be relative to the project size, complexity and grant amount requested. The application form includes word limits.

The equally weighted assessment criteria are:

1. Demonstrate your organisation's experience, capability and capacity to manage and deliver services for the young student target group in the trial locations.

Your response should:

- demonstrate your organisation's ability to effectively develop, implement, manage and monitor grant activities to achieve positive outcomes for the young student target group in the trial location
- demonstrate your organisation's ability to establish effective links with relevant partners and stakeholders to achieve outcomes for the young student target group.

2. Demonstrate your organisation's experience, capability and capacity to implement and deliver the project and achieve its objectives.

Your response should:

- outline the number of key staff that will manage and / or deliver your organisation's project and outline their relevant capabilities (experience, skills and qualifications)
- demonstrate your organisation's capacity and approach to support data collection and monitoring activities for project evaluation.

7. The grant application process

7.1 Overview of application process

You must read these grant guidelines, the application form, and the grant agreement terms and conditions before you submit an application.

You are responsible for ensuring that your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information will exclude your application from further consideration.

You must address all of the assessment criteria to be considered for a grant. Please complete each section of the application form and make sure that you provide the information we have requested.

Please keep a copy of your application and any supporting papers.

7.2 Application process timing

Submit your application by the closing time and date.

If an application is late or the Community Grants Hub is requested to approve a lodgement after the closing date, the Community Grants Hub may determine that there were exceptional circumstances beyond the applicant’s control that meant they could not meet the deadline. Examples of exceptional circumstances could include, but may not be limited to:

- Community Grants Hub infrastructure failures,
- natural disasters,
- power outages affecting the ability of the applicant to submit their application by the deadline, and
- death or disability of key personnel.

Information on the Community Grants Hub [late application policy](#) is available on the [Community Grants Hub website](#).

The expected start date for the granting activities will be on execution of the Grant Agreement. The expected end date will be subject to individual grant agreement. You must spend the grant by the end date.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Application period	1 week
Assessment of application	Timing will be dependent on complexity of the application received and the capacity of the Community Grants Hub

Activity	Timeframe
Approval of outcomes of selection process	Timing will be dependent on the complexity of the application received and the capacity of the Community Grants Hub
Negotiations and award of grant agreement	By the end of January 2018
Notification to unsuccessful applicant	By the end of January 2018
Activity commences	On execution of the Grant Agreement
End Date	Subject to individual grant agreement

7.3 Completing the grant application

You must submit your grant application using the application form, which is available on the [GrantConnect](#) and [Community Grants Hub](#) websites. The Application Form can only be accessed by invitees for this grant opportunity. The application form includes help information.

This is an online application form that you must submit electronically. If you have any technical difficulties please contact 1800 020 283 or email support@communitygrants.gov.au.

The Community Grants Hub will not provide application forms or accept applications for this grant opportunity by fax or mail.

You must make sure that your application is complete and accurate and submitted in accordance with these Guidelines.

If you find a mistake in your application after it has been submitted, you should contact us straight away. The Community Grants Hub may ask you for more information, as long as it does not change the substance of your application. The Community Grants Hub does not have to accept any additional information, nor requests from applicants to correct applications after the closing time.

7.4 Attachments to the application

The following document must be included with your application:

- project plan completed on the provided template
- Intellectual Property proposed special conditions on the provided template.

Your supporting documentation should be attached to the application form. There will be instructions in the application form to help you. Only attach the documents you have been asked to include.

Please note: There is a 2MB file size limit for each attachment.

7.5 Applications from consortia

Some organisations may apply as a consortium to deliver grant activities. A consortium is two or more businesses which are working together to combine their capabilities when developing and delivering a grant activity.

If you are submitting a grant application on behalf of a consortium, a member organisation or a newly created organisation must be appointed as the 'lead organisation'. Only the lead organisation will enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth and will be responsible for the grant. The lead organisation must complete the application form and identify all other members of the proposed consortium in the application.

7.6 Questions during the application process

Only the invited applicant's questions will be responded to during the application period. To submit a question please call the Community Grants Hub on 1800 020 283 or email support@communitygrants.gov.au. The Community Grants Hub will respond to emailed questions within five working days. Answers to questions will be posted on [GrantConnect](#).

7.7 Further grant opportunities

The Try, Test and Learn Fund will run over four years from 2016-17 to 2019-20. It is anticipated that ideas will be sought, and funding released, over multiple tranches.

8. Assessment of grant applications

8.1 Who will assess applications?

An assessment team will assess all eligible and compliant applications based on their merits. The assessment team will be comprised of departmental staff.

If the selection process identifies unintentional errors in your application, you may be contacted to correct or explain the information.

8.2 Who will approve grants?

The policy delegate who is the Branch Manager, Policy Strategy and Investment Branch will make the final decision to approve a grant.

The delegate's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of the grant
- the grant funding amount to be awarded
- the terms and conditions of the grant.

The policy delegate must not approve funding if they reasonably consider the program funding available across financial years will not accommodate the funding offer, and/or that the application does not represent value for money.

9. Notification of application outcomes

You will be advised of the outcomes of your application in writing. If you are successful, you will also be advised about any specific conditions attached to the grant.

If you are unsuccessful, we will notify you in writing.

10. Successful grant applications

10.1 The grant agreement

If you are successful, you must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth represented by the Department of Social Services. A schedule may be used to outline the specific grant requirements. Any additional conditions attached to the grant will be identified in the grant offer or during the grant agreement negotiations.

You will be required to:

- deliver the project and meet the performance reporting and financial acquittal requirements outlined in your grant agreement.

The Department of Social Services will negotiate agreements with the successful applicant.

Where a grantee fails to meet the obligations of the grant agreement, the Department of Social Services may seek to terminate the relevant agreement.

You should not make financial commitments until a grant agreement has been executed by the Commonwealth.

10.2 How the grant will be paid

The grant agreement will state the:

- maximum grant amount to be paid.

We will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra eligible expenditure, you must pay it yourself.

Grant funding will be paid:

- according to agreed milestones and performance indicators defined in the Grant Agreement and Activity Work Plan.

We recognise that unexpected events may affect the progress of a grant activity. In these circumstances, you can request an activity variation, including:

- changing an activity's milestones
- extending the timeframe for completing an activity but within the time period of the Try, Test and Learn Fund program.

The program does not allow for:

- an increase to the agreed amount of grant funds.

If you want to propose changes to the grant agreement, you must put them in writing before the grant agreement end date. Contact your Grant Agreement Manager for further information. We will not consider changes after the grant agreement end date.

You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. We will consider your request based on factors such as:

- how it affects the project outcome
- consistency with the program policy objective and any relevant policies of the Department of Social Services
- changes to the timing of grant payments
- availability of program funds.

11. Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on the GrantConnect website 21 calendar days after the date of effect⁴ as required by Section 5.3 of the *CGRGs*.

12. Delivery of grant activities

12.1 Your responsibilities

If successful you must carry out the grant activities in accordance with these guidelines and the grant agreement and activity work plan, which includes standard terms and conditions

⁴ See glossary.

and any supplementary conditions. The grant agreement will outline specific grant requirements.

You must submit reports in line with the timeframes in the grant agreement. We will provide sample templates for these reports in the grant agreement. We will expect you to report on

- progress against agreed project milestones
- contributions of participants directly related to the project
- eligible expenditure of grant funds.

You will also be responsible for:

- ensuring that your application is accurate and complete
- ensuring that the terms and conditions of the grant agreement are met and that the activity is managed in an efficient and effective manner
- meeting milestones and other timeframes specified in the grant agreement
- complying with record keeping, reporting and acquittal requirements in accordance with the grant agreement
- participating in grant program evaluation as necessary for the period specified in the grant agreement
- ensuring that the grant activity outputs and outcomes are in accordance with the grant agreement.

12.2 The Department's responsibilities

The Department of Social Services will:

- meet the terms and conditions set out in the grant agreement
- provide timely administration of the grant
- evaluate the grantee's performance.

We will monitor the progress of your project by assessing reports you submit and other agreed performance data and may conduct site visits to confirm details of your reports if necessary. Occasionally we may need to re-examine claims, seek further information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

12.3 Grant payments and GST

Payments will be made as set out in the grant agreement.

Before any payments are made, you must provide:

- a tax invoice for the amount of the payment (the Australian Government's default invoice process is Recipient Created Tax Invoices)
- evidence that you have achieved the associated milestone
- any other conditions of payment (e.g. evidence of purchase of equipment, satisfactory progress report, approvals, and any other documentation).

If you receive a grant, you should consider speaking to a tax advisor about the effect of receiving a grant before you enter into a grant agreement. You can also visit the [Australian Taxation Office](#) website for more information.

12.4 Reporting

Support for VET Students grant recipient must have systems in place to allow them to meet their data collection and reporting obligations outlined in their grant agreement.

Performance information (e.g. client characteristics and service delivery information) will be required to be collected by the service provider at the client level and entered directly into the department's performance reporting solution, the Data Exchange.

Information must be provided in accordance with the Data Exchange Protocols available on the [DSS website](#).

12.5 Evaluation

The Department of Social Services will evaluate the Try, Test and Learn Fund and each project funded by it to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. Your grant agreement requires you to provide information to help with this evaluation.

12.6 Acknowledgement

All materials related to grants under the program must acknowledge the Commonwealth as follows:

'Try, Test and Learn Fund – an Australian Government initiative.'

13. Probity

The Australian Government will make sure that the program process is fair; according to the published guidelines; incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct; and is consistent with the CGRGs.

Note: These guidelines may be changed from time-to-time by Department of Social Services. When this happens the revised guidelines will be published on [GrantConnect](#).

13.1 Complaints process

The Department of Social Services [Complaints Procedures](#) apply to complaints about the Program. All complaints about a grant process must be lodged in writing.

Complaints about the Process

The applicant can contact the complaints service with complaints about Community Grants Hub's service(s) or the application process.

Details of what constitutes an eligible complaint can be provided upon request by the Community Grants Hub. The applicant can lodge complaints using the [complaints form](#) on the Department's website or by phone or mail.

Complaints to the Ombudsman

If you do not agree with the way the Department of Social Services has handled your complaint, you may complain to the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the Department of Social Services.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072

Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

13.2 Conflict of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant. There may be a [conflict of interest](#), or perceived conflict of interest, if a Community Grants Hub staff member, any member of a committee or advisor and / or you or any of your personnel:

- has a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer,
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicant from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently, or
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives funding under the Program.

You will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later identify that there is an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest or that one might arise in relation to a grant application, you must inform the Community Grants Hub in writing immediately. Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

The Community Grants Hub will be made aware of any conflicts of interest and will handle them as set out in Australian Government policies and procedures. Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff will be handled as set out in the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct (Section 13(7)) of the *Public Service Act 1999*. We publish our conflict of interest policy available on the [Community Grants Hub](#) website.

13.3 Privacy: confidentiality and protection of personal information

We treat your personal information according to the 13 Australian Privacy Principles and the *Privacy Act 1988*. This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to.

You are required, as part of your application, to declare your ability to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles, and to impose the same privacy obligations on any subcontractors you engage to assist with the grant activity. You must ask for the Australian Government's consent in writing before disclosing confidential information.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone else if you are given reasonable notice of the disclosure; where disclosure is authorised or required by law or is reasonably necessary for the enforcement of the criminal law; if it will prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to a person's life or health; or if you have consented to the disclosure.

The Australian Government may also use and disclose information about grant applicants and grant recipients under the Program in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may reveal confidential information to:

- employees and contractors of our department so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary

- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

We may share the information you give us with other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes including government administration, research or service delivery and according to Australian laws, including the:

- *Public Service Act 1999*
- *Public Service Regulations 1999*
- *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act*
- *Privacy Act 1988*
- *Crimes Act 1914*
- *Criminal Code Act 1995.*

We'll treat the information you give us as sensitive and therefore confidential if it meets all of the four conditions below:

1. you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
2. the information is commercially sensitive
3. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else
4. you provide the information with an understanding that it will stay confidential.

The grant agreement will include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the grant agreement.

13.4 Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about the Program, are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act)*.

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By mail: Freedom of Information Coordinator
 The Department of Social Services
 Government and Executive Services Branch
 GPO Box 9820

Canberra ACT 2601

By email: foi@dss.gov.au

13.5 Consultation

For information about the co-development process used to refine and develop shortlisted ideas, please see the 'Important Information' section of the [Try, Test and Learn Fund DSS Engage website](#).

14. Glossary

Term	Definition
Assessment criteria	The specified principles or standards against which applications will be judged. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive granting activity, to determine applicant rankings.
Capital expenditure	<p>Capital expenditure is spending for capital items as defined in the Department's Capital Works Policy. A capital item is any item of real estate or infrastructure valued at \$10,000 or more (including GST). Capital items include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • land • new and existing buildings, including demountable buildings that are a fixture to the land • building renovations • roads, pipelines and airstrips.
Co-development	The co-development phase involves consultation with stakeholders to collaboratively develop and refine shortlisted ideas from initial concepts into detailed project proposals.
Commencement date	The expected start date for the grant activity.
Commonwealth entity	A Department of State, or a Parliamentary Department, or a listed entity or a body corporate established by a law of the Commonwealth. See subsections 10(1) and (2) of the <i>PGPA Act</i> .
Completion date	The expected date that the grant activity must be completed and the grant spent by.
Cost shifting	Involves 'substitution of effort' by the Commonwealth for activities of another organisation or level of government. For example, cost shifting occurs where the Commonwealth provides a grant for an activity that would usually be paid for by a state, territory, or local government, such as municipal services.
Date of effect	This will depend on the particular grant. It can be the date in which a grant agreement is signed or a specified starting date. Where there is no grant agreement, entities must publish information on individual grants as soon as practicable.

Term	Definition
Decision maker	The person who makes a decision to award a grant.
Double dipping	Double dipping occurs where a grant recipient is able to obtain a grant for the same project or activity from more than one source.
Eligibility criteria	The principles, standards or rules that a grant applicant must meet to qualify for consideration of a grant. Eligibility criteria may apply in addition to assessment criteria.
Grant	A grant is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth: a) under which relevant money or other CRF money, is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth b) which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.
Grant activity	The project / tasks / services that the grantee is required to undertake with the grant money. It is described in the Grant Agreement.
Grant agreement	Sets out the relationship between the parties to the agreement, and specifies the details of the grant.
Grant Agreement Manager	Monitors performance against agreed objectives within grant agreements and ensure accountability requirements are met.
Grant opportunity	A notice published on GrantConnect advertising the availability of Commonwealth grants.
Grant program	May be advertised within the 'Forecast Opportunity' (FO) section of GrantConnect to provide a consolidated view of associated grant opportunities and provide strategic context for specific grant opportunities.
Grantee	An individual / organisation that has been awarded a grant.
Selection criteria	Comprise eligibility criteria and assessment criteria.

Term	Definition
Selection process	The method used to select potential grantees. This process may involve comparative assessment of applications or the assessment of applications against the eligibility criteria and / or the assessment criteria.