



# 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 illicit drug use on individuals, families and the broader community.

Illicit drug use 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 use among some welfare recipients.

### How will the trial work?

The two-year drug testing trial will take place in Canterbury-Bankstown (New South Wales), Logan (Queensland), and Mandurah (Western Australia). Under the trial, 5,000 new recipients who claim JobSeeker Payment or Youth Allowance (other) 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.

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 referred to a local case manager and required to participate in treatment activities designed to address their substance use 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 use 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 drug use will improve their chances of finding a job and reduce their risk of ongoing welfare dependency.

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

### What additional funding is the Government providing for treatment under the trial?

As part of the drug testing trial, the Government is committing up to \$10 million to create a dedicated Treatment Fund to assist job seekers in the trial to access the treatment they need. The Treatment Fund will consist of:

- \$1 million for case management services to help people who return more than one positive drug test result during the trial to access the services and treatment identified in their treatment plan
- \$3 million to boost drug treatment capacity in the three trial sites and respond to any additional demand
- approximately \$6 million in an individual funding pool for accredited treatment support for individuals identified through the trial, in the event state or Commonwealth funded services are not able to be accessed in a timely manner.

### 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 measures has the Government put in place to help address this problem?

The Government introduced a range of measures in the *Social Services Legislation Amendment (Welfare Reform) Act 2018* 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 use issues and support them to access appropriate treatment in order to gain employment.

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 2019 National Drug Strategy Household Survey shows that unemployed Australians were 2.3 times more likely to use ice and other amphetamines than those who were employed.

- The Australian Government has committed more than \$800 million over four years (from 1 July 2018) to reduce the impact of drug and alcohol misuse on individuals, families and communities through the overarching Drug and Alcohol Program.