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Premier of New South Wales

Paul Toole
Deputy Premier
Minister for Regional NSW
Minister for Police

Matt Kean
Treasurer
Minister for Energy

Eleni Petinos
Minister for Small Business
Minister for Fair Trading

MEDIA RELEASE

Sunday 30 January 2022

COVID BUSINESS SUPPORT PACKAGE RELEASED

Businesses, workers and the performing arts across NSW are all set to benefit from a major financial support package of more than \$1 billion to help those that have been hardest hit by the Omicron wave.

The package includes financial support for small business to buy rapid antigen tests (RATs) to help keep their workers safe and a new Small Business Support Program to assist businesses to help keep their workers employed.

Premier Dominic Perrottet said while case numbers are now declining, the NSW Government is determined to support those businesses that have been most affected during this wave of the pandemic.

“As part of the package, we are introducing the Small Business Support Program to help support businesses that experienced the worst effects of the Omicron wave,” Mr Perrottet said.

“We are also providing support to business to help reimburse the cost of rapid antigen tests for their workers, extending the Commercial Landlord Hardship Grant and delivering additional funding for the performing arts sector.

“This targeted package provides support for businesses who experienced cashflow issues and the immediate economic impacts of the Omicron outbreak.

“NSW is tracking better than expected and confidence is returning. And as we did with earlier recoveries, we will come through this recent challenge stronger than ever.

“We’ve got the backs of businesses, as we have throughout this entire pandemic.”

Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional NSW Paul Toole said the support package would provide a statewide response to the Omicron wave of the pandemic, targeting those businesses that need it the most.

“Our regions have felt the impacts of Omicron, and it’s critical we give them a helping hand to recover and get local economies humming again,” Mr Toole said.

“This package shows that the NSW Government continues to have the back of residents and businesses in the bush with practical measures to ensure they keep their workers safe and businesses open.”

Treasurer Matt Kean said we know some businesses in NSW have faced challenges and it is vital we get them the support they need to stay afloat and keep their workers in jobs.

“As we continue to protect the health and safety of our community, we have to ensure our economy is resilient and our businesses are supported so they bounce back from this most recent phase of the pandemic,” Mr Kean said.

“The Small Business Support Program helps those businesses with annual turnover of between \$75,000 and \$50 million with a decline in turnover of at least 40 per cent by providing a payment covering up to 20 per cent of their weekly payroll.

“By ensuring businesses keep their doors open and their employees paid, we are confident our economy will bounce back strongly as it did last year.”

Small Business Minister Eleni Petinos said the program was important to ensure small businesses have the resources and cash flow they need to survive this outbreak and bounce back.

“We know that the over 800,000 small businesses in NSW are the lifeblood of local communities and that many of these businesses experienced challenges due to the Omicron wave of the pandemic,” Ms Petinos said.

“This package will help relieve some of the costs of small business including keeping workers safe, assist with cash flow and support small businesses to continue trading.”

The Small Business Support Program provides eligible businesses a lump sum payment of 20 per cent of weekly payroll with a minimum payment of \$500 per week and a maximum payment of \$5,000 per week.

In addition, the existing Small Business Fees, Charges and RAT Rebate will be increased by 50% from the current \$2,000 limit to \$3,000 and employing businesses will be able to use the rebate to obtain RATs. This will support worker availability by helping reduce costs to small businesses and enabling healthy staff who have been exposed to COVID-19, but test negative, to return to work.

For more information please visit nsw.gov.au.

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KEY FACTS

• Small Business Support Program

- Includes support for eligible businesses that:
 - had an aggregated annual turnover of between \$75,000 and \$50 million (inclusive) for the year ended 30 June 2021; and
 - experienced a decline in turnover of 40 per cent or more due to Public Health Orders or the impacts of the Omicron COVID-19 strain during the month of January 2022, compared to January 2021 or January 2020; and
 - experienced a decline in turnover of 40 per cent or more due to the impacts of the Omicron COVID-19 strain from 1-14 February 2022, compared to the same fortnight in February in the comparison year used for the above criterion; and
 - maintain their employee headcount from the date of the announcement of the scheme.
- Eligible businesses will receive 20 per cent of weekly payroll as a lump sum for the month of February, with a minimum payment of \$750 per week and a maximum payment of \$5,000 per week. Non-employing businesses will receive \$500 per week (paid as a lump sum of \$2,000).
- The 2022 Small Business Support Program is for the month of February. Businesses will be able to apply through Service NSW from mid-February.

• Small Business Fees, Charges and RAT Rebate

- The rebate has been increased from \$2,000 to \$3,000. In addition, eligible employing small businesses will be able to use the rebate to cover half the cost of Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs).
- The funds can be used not only to offset the cost of RATs, but also other Government fees and charges such as food authority licences, liquor licences, tradesperson licences, event fees, outdoor seating fees, council rates and road user tolls for business use.
- Already registered businesses will receive an automatic top up of \$1,000 and newly registering businesses will receive a rebate of \$3,000.

• Commercial Landlord Hardship Grant

- The protections under the *Retail and Other Commercial Leases (COVID-19) Regulation 2021* (the Regulation) for small retail and commercial tenants will be extended for an additional two months, until 13 March 2022.
- Grants of up to \$3,000 per month (GST inclusive), per property, are available for eligible landlords who have provided rental relief waivers to affected tenants. Rent relief waived must comprise at least half of any rental reduction provided.

- Program is expanded in 2022 to landlords who claimed the 2021 land tax relief.
- The Regulation prohibits certain actions by landlords (such as lock out or eviction) unless they have first renegotiated rent with eligible tenants and attempted mediation.

- **Performing Arts Package**

- This package provides financial support to relaunch the performing arts sector in line with the NSW Government roadmap to recovery, which has been extended to April 2022.
- To be eligible for funding, the applicant **MUST** be one of the following:
 - An eligible venue (list published by Create NSW)
 - A producer of an eligible performance scheduled to perform at one of the eligible venues
 - A promoter of an eligible performance scheduled to perform at one of the eligible venues.
- Eligible venues have been identified through sector-wide consultation, review of online marketing material of venues, and through assessment of tickets on sale through major ticket selling agencies
- Eligible performances must be evidenced by marketing collateral (website, social media etc) and have ticket sales managed through one of the eligible ticketing systems (list published by Create NSW)
- Funding is then provided to eligible performances staged between 19 September 2021 to 30 April 2022
- The funding amount per performance will be calculated using a formula of average ticket price multiplied by the number of tickets available for sale (capped at **10,000**) and a specified percentage ("**Agreed Percentage**") as detailed below (up to a maximum of \$12.5m).

<i>Venue Type</i>	<i>Type A</i>	<i>Type B</i>	<i>Type C</i>	<i>Type D</i>	<i>Type E</i>
Support 19/9 - 31/10/2021	40%	35%	50%	50%	50%
Support 1/11 - 16/12/2021	20%	15%	25%	25%	25%
Support 17/12/2021 - 14/3/2022	40%	35%	50%	50%	50%
Support 15/3/2022 - 18/4/2022	20%	15%	25%	25%	25%