



## Welcome to this month's newsletter

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Please share this newsletter with other local businesses, become a member of the Hawkesbury Business Hub (it's free!) and please tell me what you think by contacting me on 4560 4437 or 0418 296 579 or email [Amanda.Kearney@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Amanda.Kearney@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au)

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## From your Mayor

Welcome to 2022 and our first newsletter for the year. Whilst we have not necessarily started the year in the way we'd hoped, I continue to marvel at the spirit and work ethic of the Hawkesbury business community.

I am honoured to have been elected your Mayor once again and will continue to build on the great work this Council achieved during my previous term.

My priority will be continuing to make Council an organisation that is focused on its customers - our rate payers and residents - so that the Hawkesbury continues to be a great place to live and work.

We are also committed to continuing to connect with and support our business community during these challenging times.

To this end, I encourage all affected businesses to access the various financial and health supports being offered, itemised in this newsletter.

Stay safe and well,

Mayor Conolly



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## COVID-19 Update

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### Isolation exemption for critical workers expanded

Some critical workers from certain sectors who are isolating as close contacts will be permitted to leave self-isolation to attend work if they have no symptoms of COVID-19.

This only applies to critical workers who are specified in the [exemption](#), and who would otherwise be required to self-isolate for 7 days as 'close contacts' under public health orders.

Workers will only be eligible to leave isolation if their absence is determined by their employer as posing a significant risk of disruption to the delivery of critical services or activities, and they are unable to work from home. Their exemption is subject to the following conditions:

- They must wear a mask at all times and comply with risk management strategies put in place by their employer, including daily rapid antigen testing
- They must travel directly to and from their home and their workplace(s). They cannot leave home for other purposes
- They must immediately self-isolate for 7 days if they test positive to COVID-19 following a RAT
- They must immediately self-isolate if they develop any symptoms of COVID-19, even if they receive a negative result on a RAT. They may only return to work with evidence of a negative PCR test taken after the onset of symptoms



### Information on Rapid Antigen Testing for Businesses

Rapid antigen tests are a quick way for businesses to detect COVID-19 and protect their workers and customers.

Two types of rapid antigen testing have been approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) for workplaces:

- Point-of-care testing which is implemented on-site and requires the supervision of a health practitioner. A guide for businesses on understanding point-of-care testing has been published by the TGA and is available [here](#)
- Rapid antigen self-testing kits which can be done at home and do not require medical supervision. You can find out what self-testing kits have been approved for use in Australia by visiting the [TGA website](#)

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## Financial Assistance & Funding

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### COVID-19 rent relief extended for small business owners

Small businesses affected by COVID-19 will now be able to seek rent relief until 13 March 2022.

The Retail and Other Commercial Leases (COVID-19) Regulation 2022 rent relief provisions has been extended and will continue for eligible tenants with a turnover of less than \$5 million.

Under the regulation, landlords are required to negotiate rent relief with eligible commercial and retail tenants that are experiencing a turnover decline of 30 per cent, or would have met the eligibility criteria for Jobsaver or the Microbusiness grant.

Landlords can access the Commercial Landlord Hardship Fund, which currently provides small commercial or retail landlords with a monthly grant up to the value of any rental relief provided, to a maximum of \$3,000 per month per property.





## Small business fees and charges rebate scheme

Small businesses are encouraged to take advantage of the NSW Government's \$2000 rebate scheme to help cover the cost of NSW and local government fees and charges. Available to small businesses with a total wages bill below the new 2020-21 \$1.2 million payroll tax threshold, the rebate will help businesses recover from the impacts of COVID-19 and encourage growth.

Eligible businesses will only need to apply for the rebate once, but can submit multiple claims until the full value of \$2,000 is reached.

The rebate is available until 30 June 2022, for [eligible fees and charges](#) due and paid from 1 March 2021. For more information on how to apply and the eligibility criteria, visit [apply for the small business fees and charges rebate](#).



## Grants for loss of perishable stock

Eligible small businesses will be able to apply for a grant of up to \$20,000 to compensate for loss of perishable stock between 1 December 2021 and 31 January 2022 or claim \$10,000 for reduced capacity to sell non-perishable items.

More information will be available soon.





## Assistance for Indigenous businesses

Indigenous Business Australia (IBA) is offering a business relief package for eligible Indigenous businesses who have been impacted by COVID-19, including those that are not existing IBA customers. Assistance may include loan deferrals, grants or a combination of both. For more information, visit [Indigenous Business Australia supporting COVID-19](#).



## NSW Event Saver Program

The NSW Government is providing financial support to organisers of major events through their Event Saver program as part of the NSW COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan. Intending to boost organiser confidence and allow for continued planning, the program will provide support for organisers of events scheduled to be held between December 2021 and December 2022 where an event is cancelled or significantly disrupted as a direct result of Public Health Orders.

Expressions of interest are now open and will close 30 September 2022. Read the [NSW Events Saver Guidelines](#) before submitting your interest. More information can be found [HERE](#).

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## Training & Courses

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### Register your interest for Subsidised Government Training Programs

To help small businesses bounce back from the recent social and economic upheaval caused by the pandemic, TAFE NSW is offering a range of Australian and NSW Government subsidised training opportunities.

Whether you're an employer looking for an apprentice or trainee, are thinking about upskilling yourself and your employees, or are interested in furthering your career and business, there are options available to suit all needs.

Visit [TAFE NSW](https://www.tafe.nsw.gov.au) for more information on what government-subsidised training programs are available to you.

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## Mental Health Support

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Owning a small business can be a rewarding experience. However it can also involve long hours, stress, unpredictable cash flow and multiple responsibilities, which can impact your health and well-being.

There are mental health resources and support available to small business owners and operators to help them cope with challenges and uncertain times, and help them support their staff.

### Beyond Blue

Beyond Blue have partnered with [Mentally Healthy Workplace Alliance](#) to create Heads Up. [Heads Up](#) provides information for employers, employees, managers and small businesses with free, practical information and resources to create mentally healthy workplaces and respond to mental health issues in the workplace.

Beyond Blue has also developed a free and confidential 6-week mental health coaching program for small business owners to provide them with the support they need. The [NewAccess for Small Business Owners](#) program focuses on supporting small business owners, including sole traders, to overcome a particular problem, while managing any presenting issues around anxiety or depression.

### NSW Government Mental Health at Work



The NSW Government's [Mental Health at Work](#) website has important information on mental health for businesses, offers [free training and coaching](#), and provides general health and safety advice. You can also access a [COVID-19 Mental Health at Work Resource Kit](#), which offers information to business owners and leaders on providing a mentally healthy workplace.

### One-On-One Business Coaching


The NSW Government has partnered with Assure Programs to deliver a pilot initiative which provides free one-on-one mental health coaching programs to help your business or not-for-profit create a mentally healthy workplace. Coaching services are available for up to four hours delivered online, or over the phone, seven days a week from 7am to 7pm.

For more information or to register for the program, see [One-On-One Business Coaching](#).

## Mental Health Support

### Beyond Blue

 [beyondblue.org.au](https://beyondblue.org.au)

 1300 22 4636

### Mensline Australia

 [mensline.org.au](https://mensline.org.au)

 1300 789 978

### Mental Health Line

 1800 011 511

### Lifeline Australia

 [lifeline.org.au](https://lifeline.org.au)

 13 11 14

### Headspace

 [headspace.org.au](https://headspace.org.au)

 1300 789 978

### Suicide Callback Service

 [suicidecallbackservice.org.au](https://suicidecallbackservice.org.au)

 1300 789 978

**If you or someone you know is at immediate risk of harm, call triple zero (000)**