

**John Graham**

Acting Minister for Roads, Acting Minister for Regional Transport, Special Minister of State  
Minister for Transport, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Music and the Night-Time Economy

**Tara Moriarty**

Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional NSW, Minister for Western NSW

**Steve Kamper**

Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sport  
Minister for Jobs and Tourism

**Janelle Saffin**

Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, Minister for the North Coast

**Media Release****Financial support for small businesses impacted by the closure of the Great Western Highway**

**Thursday, 21 May 2026**

The NSW Government is rolling out a \$3.5 million support package to assist small businesses and councils across the Blue Mountains and Central West region impacted by the closure of the Great Western Highway at Victoria Pass.

Since the closure of the road due to serious cracking and safety concerns, the NSW Government has been working with businesses, local councils and communities to understand the nature of the impacts and determine the most practical way to support those most acutely affected.

The Government recognises the prolonged closure and detour routes have caused significant disruption for businesses in the direct vicinity of Victoria Pass.

This support package will provide financial assistance in the immediate short-term, and advisory services to help businesses manage ongoing disruptions while the closure remains in place.

These measures have been developed with input from the Small Business Commission, following consultation with local business owners so assistance is provided where it is needed most.

The package will also provide funding to a wider range of councils in the Central West to drive visitation and tourism.

The region remains open for business, with detour routes via Chifley Road and Darling Causeway adding around 12 kilometres to journeys.

The support package includes:

- \$10,000 grants available to eligible small businesses in Mount Victoria, Hartley, Little Hartley, and Hartley Vale. More information on eligibility criteria and application process, through the NSW Rural Assistance Authority, will be available shortly.
- \$15,000 each to eight councils - Cabonne, Forbes, Oberon, Dubbo, Blayney, Hawkesbury, Mid Western and Orange Councils to strengthen their visitor economies with local activations and promotional activities that drive visits to local businesses. This is in addition to \$15,000 already provided

- \$5,000 community event grants to Blue Mountains, Lithgow, Bathurst, Cabonne, Forbes, Oberon, Dubbo, Blayney, Hawkesbury, Western and Orange Councils to support local events aimed at promoting tourism and longer stays in the region.
- Specialised Business Advisory Service – Impacted business owners across the region will be able to access dedicated one-on-one specialist advice focusing on managing business disruption, alongside local support sessions. Businesses will be able to register through the Service NSW Business Bureau from 1 June.
- Business workshops will be held in Blackheath, Mount Victoria, Hartley, Oberon, Lithgow and Orange in June to advise on support services, cash flow, cost management, diversification and marketing. Delivered in partnership by the Service NSW Business Bureau and the NSW Small Business Commission with local organisations.

Transport for NSW continues to accelerate the process to safely reopen the road and is currently working with two consortia, Seymour Whyte and Gamuda, to develop solutions in parallel before announcing a final option and delivery partner who will undertake the restoration work.

Since the closure of the Great Western Highway, the NSW Government has committed \$50 million towards improving the safety and resilience of detour routes through the Blue Mountains and Central West, with more than \$15 million worth of work already complete.

Transport for NSW has a 24/7 on-ground presence in the area, helping traffic move through key locations including Mount Victoria, Bell, and Lithgow. Transport is using traffic monitoring drones and has installed additional mobile CCTV units, and traffic behaviour monitoring cameras at pinch points and locations where risky driving has been identified.

An uplift in public transport services, including extra rail, coach and bus services for Blue Mountains and Central West communities is in place and will continue for the duration of the closure.

Destination NSW has also been encouraging visitation to the Central West through targeted marketing on its Visit NSW channels and social media.

The Great Western Highway Community Taskforce has been meeting weekly with councils, industry, business and community stakeholders to work through the impacts of the closure and inform Government decision making.

For the latest updates on the Great Western Highway closure visit:

<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/current-projects/great-western-highway>

**Acting Minister for Roads and Regional Transport John Graham said:**

“We know local businesses have been hit hard by the closure of the Great Western Highway and direct financial support, along with a range of other targeted support measures, are much needed.

“We are moving as fast as possible on the road repair, with safety our top priority.

“This support package will help business owners who have been most acutely impacted by the closure navigate this difficult period as work continues to reopen the road as quickly as possible.”

**Minister for Regional NSW, Tara Moriarty said:**

“Regional communities are the backbone of NSW, and this package ensures businesses across the Blue Mountains and Central West have the support they need while the highway repairs are underway.

“These grants, workshops and advisory services are practical investments to help local industries get through a difficult time.

“This support will help our regional communities continue trading, welcoming visitors, and driving the agricultural and economic activity our state depends on.”

**Minister for Jobs and Tourism, Steve Kamper said:**

“While the ongoing closure of the Great Western Highway at Victoria Pass has created real challenges, this \$3.5 million package provides practical, immediate assistance to help businesses stay resilient, keep their doors open and protect local jobs.

“This funding builds on the support already being delivered by Destination NSW to drive visitation and economic activity across the region.”

**Minister for Small Business, Janelle Saffin said:**

"Our immediate priority is getting targeted financial relief into the hands of the businesses most impacted by this closure, providing a much-needed buffer to help ease the pressure during this challenging time.

"By backing our local councils with dedicated tourism funding, we are sending a loud and clear message: the Blue Mountains and Central West are open for business. We want visitors to pack their bags, hit the detour routes, and see firsthand what these amazing communities have to offer."

**Member for the Blue Mountains Trish Doyle said:**

“Having worked closely alongside our struggling small business community, particularly in Mount Victoria, I am heartened that my requests for a support package have been heard.

“The closure of Victoria Pass has been tough on many, but this much-needed grant will go some way to alleviating the pressure they’re under.

“I am very hopeful that now we have two construction firms deciding by June on the best solution for repairing Mitchells Causeway, that everything will continue to be thrown at addressing the impacts of this road emergency.”

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