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\$1.2 million fund announced for businesses affected by Parliament occupation

Kate Green • 08:19, Mar 25 2022



LAWRENCE SMITH/STUFF

Businesses affected by the sprawling anti-mandate occupation of Parliament will be able to receive a one-off payment of \$30,000 thanks to a new fund, a collaboration between Government and the Wellington City Council.

Businesses that lost revenue because of the anti-mandate occupation at Parliament grounds will have access to a new \$1.2 million business relief fund.

The joint fund created by Wellington City Council and the Government means each business will be eligible for a maximum of \$30,000 as a one-off payment.

Businesses in the area surrounding Parliament that experienced a drop of 50 per cent or more in their revenue during the period of the occupation can apply.



STUFF

Anti-Covid mandate protesters were cleared from Parliament grounds in Wellington by NZ police. (Video first published on March 2, 2022)

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He said that businesses in the area had the double blow of the occupation and the impacts of Omicron.

Research by the council showed revenue for those businesses dropped by more than half on average during the three-week occupation.



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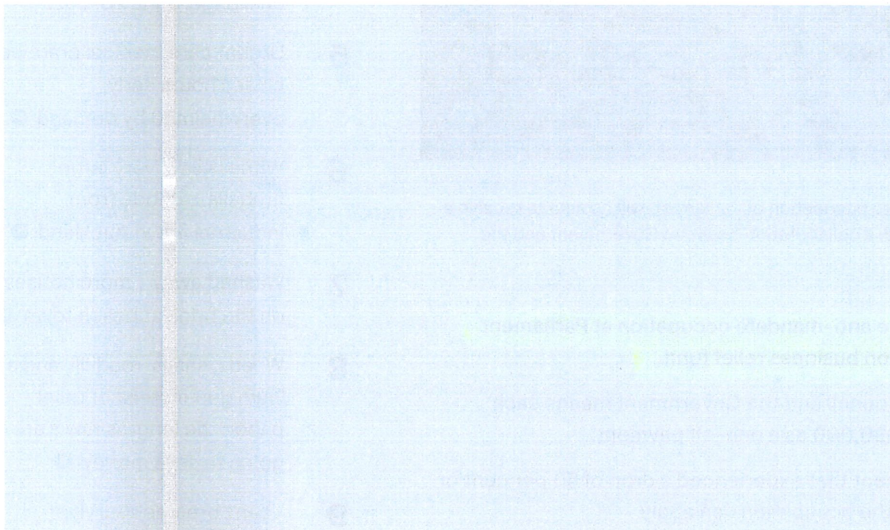
KATE GREEN • WELLINGTON REPORTER

kate.green@stuff.co.nz

Many were still struggling to recover due to the decline in people visiting the central city because of Omicron.

Economic and Regional Development Minister Stuart Nash said in a statement he had "a great deal of sympathy for the plight of businesses".

"This targeted fund will be a welcome relief for those businesses most impacted by the occupation, who are already doing it tough in these challenging times."



MATTHEW TSO/STUFF

Alistair Boyce, owner of the Backbencher Gastropub across the road from Parliament says the fund is a welcome band-aid for their struggles. (File photo)

Alistair Boyce, the owner of the Backbencher Gastropub, which is across the road from Parliament, said at this point, "anything will help".

This payment would be a gratefully received band-aid, he said.

"At the moment we're trying to retain our staff, and we're paying out thousands a week.

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"We are hugely appreciative of anything we can get."

However, it wasn't a solve-all. "I feel hugely for the wider CBD and hospitality businesses, and retail businesses, all the suppliers... they've been operating on less than 20 per cent of turnover," Boyce said.

"We're still, as an industry, in a really dire situation," he said. "The real fix is getting the micro-economy of Wellington going again."

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33b Amaru Road, One Tree Hill, Auckland

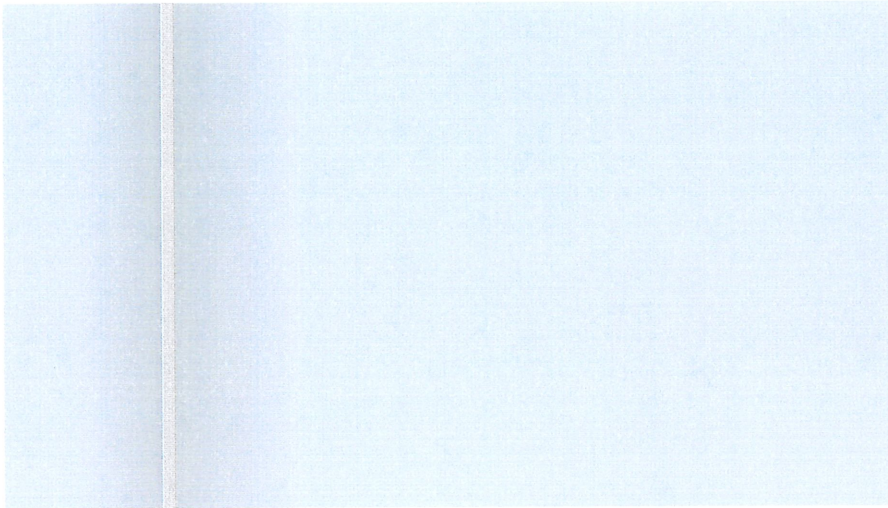


Mark Leaver

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office Nevada Lee-Mariu said.



STUFF

Food stalls blocked the entrance to the Backbencher, which closed for the duration of the protest.

The amount given by Government was on a par with what had been offered following other events that had negatively impacted local businesses; flooding in Napier, Canterbury, Marlborough and Buller, a South Auckland tornado, and the Far North Waiharara fire.

This comes after a \$2.3m pandemic response package was released by the council last month, which included \$1 weeknight and weekend parking, and launched this week, free outdoor parklet dining licences, \$1 alcohol and food annual licence fees and rent relief for businesses in Council-owned buildings.

The [Covid-19 support payment](#) was established in late February and the latest statistics show it has already supported about 5800 Wellington businesses with payments of more than \$39.4 million, as at March 17.



STUFF

A Stuff photographer/visual journalist shares his video footage of what it was like to cover the protests on Wednesday, March 2.

No news is not good news, Wellington

Do you remember where you saw the jubilation of same-sex marriage being legalised in Aotearoa, or got minute-by-minute updates after the Kalkōura earthquake rocked Wellington?

Chances are, here.

And do you recall where you first heard of a convoy headed to Parliament in 2022, and where you watched a blow-by-blow account of the following 23 days?