

Hon Grant Robertson

Minister of Finance



PĀNUI PĀPĀHO MEDIA STATEMENT

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Significant Government support for businesses and workers has been triggered following a rise in alert levels to combat COVID-19 in the community, Grant Robertson said.

The Government decided to move to Alert Level 4 for New Zealand starting at 11.59pm tonight, initially for three days, except for Auckland and the Coromandel peninsular, where it is likely to be at level 4 for seven days as a result of a new case in the community in Auckland.

“The Minister for Social Development and Employment Carmel Sepuloni and I have activated a number of business support measures to provide certainty to businesses and workers and ensure we get money out the door quickly to protect jobs and keep firms’ operating,” Grant Robertson said.

The measures include:

- The **Wage Subsidy Scheme** (WSS) which is available nationally when there’s a regional or national move to Alert Levels 3 and 4 for a period of seven days and helps eligible businesses keep paying staff and protect jobs. The rates have been raised to reflect increased wage costs.
- The **Resurgence Support Payment** (RSP) is a payment to help support businesses or organisations with one-off costs due to a COVID-19 alert level increase to level 2 or higher. This is available to eligible firms at the same time as the WSS.

More details on applying for the WSS will be available soon on the Ministry of Social Development’s website, while information on the RSP can soon be found on Inland Revenue’s website.

Other existing support for individuals includes the Leave Support Scheme (LSS) and Short-Term Absence Payment (STAP) rates will also be increased in line with the WSS, as each of these payments is set at the same rate:

“The Government remains well-placed to respond to COVID-19. We have over \$1 billion left over from the money set aside for WSS and RSP and if needed, the COVID-19 Relief and Recovery Fund has around \$5 billion in it. Our net debt position is much lower than forecast and well below other countries,” Grant Robertson said.

“A strong public health response has given us a strong economic response and put economic activity back to pre-COVID levels. Our response will continue to be based on those principles.”

More information can be found on the COVID-19 website: <https://covid19.govt.nz/>

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Editors Note:

- **The Wage Subsidy Scheme (WSS)** allows eligible employers anywhere in the country can apply for the WSS if **they expect a loss of 40 percent of revenue** as a result of the Alert Level increase announced today. The WSS rates have been increased to reflect the increase in wage costs since the scheme was first used in March 2020. Businesses will be eligible for \$600 per week per full-time equivalent employee, and \$359 per week per part-time employee. The Wage Subsidy will be paid as a two-week lump sum. Applications open on Friday 20 August with the first payments usually available after three days.
 - **A Resurgence Support Payment (RSP)** is available **if firms incur a loss of 30 percent of revenue** as a result of the Alert Level increase. The RSP is worth up to \$1500 plus \$400 per full-time equivalent employee, up to a maximum of 50 full-time employees (so up to a total of \$21,500).
 - The **Leave Support Scheme (LSS)** provides a two-week lump sum payment of either \$585.80 per week for full-time workers, or \$350 per week for part-time workers, who must self-isolate and cannot work from home. More information is available [here](#).
 - The **Short-Term Absence Payment (STAP)** provides a one-off (once per 30 days) \$350 payment for workers who must miss work due to a COVID-19 test and cannot work from home. Further information about this payment is available on the MSD [website](#).
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