



Hon Stuart Nash
Minister for Small Business

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Backing Small Business as economy recovers

A new digital training, advice and support service will enable small businesses to take advantage of opportunities in e-commerce as they recover from the global economic impact of COVID-19.

Greater use of digital technology will be a hallmark of commerce in the future, yet many small and medium enterprises (SMEs) struggle to embrace new tools because they are so busy focusing on their core business.

“Supporting small businesses is a key plank in our five-point plan for our economic recovery and this programme delivers on our manifesto commitment,” Stuart Nash said.

“Aotearoa New Zealand is consistently ranked as one of the easiest places in the world to do business. However, there is more we can do to back small businesses in their work.

“Over the next two years this Labour Government will invest \$44 million in continuing the Digital Boost – business training courses for SMEs, and providing new digital business advisory services to help Digital Boost graduates adopt digital ways of working in their businesses. The training, advice and support services will be delivered by private sector specialists and are modelled on the Digital Boost (<https://digitalboost.co.nz/>) programme.

“The Digital Boost Training Programme will assist 30,000 SMEs, and the new advisory service will support 15,000 SMEs to change their businesses per year. It will grow the digital skills and capabilities of the workforce, improve productivity and create more resilient businesses.

“Greater adoption of digital skills and processes will help businesses and their staff to keep working safely through potential future disruptions or civil defence emergencies.

“Digital commerce also contributes to a higher wage, higher productivity and lower carbon economy and builds our brand as a safe and secure place to live, invest, trade, visit and do business,” Stuart Nash said.

The digital commerce initiatives follow an announcement last week that the Government is reducing merchant service fees for small businesses. This is estimated to result in savings of approximately \$74 million each year for New Zealand merchants.

In the past year, direct COVID-19 recovery support to the SME sector has been extensive. It has included the wage subsidy, interest-free loans, free business advice through the Regional Business Partners network, grants and loans for tourism businesses, resurgence support payments for alert level changes, the flexi-wage, the leave support scheme, apprenticeship boosts, and a wide range of tax changes affecting depreciation, low value assets, and provisional tax thresholds.

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