

## Jenny Aitchison

Minister for Regional Transport  
Minister for Roads



## Rose Jackson

Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness  
Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth  
Minister for Water

# Media Release

## Vacant, unused cadet's building transformed into much needed short-term crisis accommodation and community hub

**Tuesday, 17 June 2025**

The Minns Labor Government is using common sense solutions to build better communities and address short-term accommodation shortages by transforming an empty, underused public building into crisis accommodation and a community hub.

The former cadets building on Brown Street, which had sat vacant and suffered from vandalism for years, has been completely refurbished with \$1.8 million to become Trackside: a vibrant community hub that will provide essential support services to those who need them most.

This landmark project demonstrates the Minns Labor Government's commitment to practical solutions which address the demand for short-term housing. Instead of letting public assets gather dust, the Government is making them work for our communities.

We are pulling every lever to tackle this crisis, and converting vacant, unused properties is just a small part of the work we are doing.

By partnering with specialist homelessness service provider Women's Shelter Armidale (WSA), Transport for NSW has created a model for how underutilised transport infrastructure can be transformed into vital community resources.

Trackside will offer short-term crisis accommodation and comprehensive support services including training rooms, counselling spaces, chill-out zones, a commercial kitchen, and laundry facilities. The facility will help people transition toward stable, long-term housing while providing immediate relief and pathways out of hardship.

The refurbishment was expertly carried out by Bluewater Group, an indigenous-owned and operated construction company, working in partnership with Transport Asset Manager (TAM) and WSA to bring this vision to life

### **Minister for Regional Transport Jenny Aitchison said:**

"The Minns Labor Government is building a better NSW, and this project exemplifies the Government's innovative approach to regional development and community building.

"This project is a great example of how we can turn something unused into something truly meaningful for regional communities.

"We're not only making smart use of public assets – we're creating a place where people can feel safe, supported, and connected. Trackside is proof of what's possible when we invest in people and community, particularly in our regional areas where every asset and every opportunity counts."

**Minister for Housing, Homelessness, Mental Health and Youth Rose Jackson said:**

"This is a perfect example of the kind of practical, common sense action we need right now by turning empty government buildings into places that offer safety, support and a shelter.

"Right across the state, we're acting, converting vacant buildings into homes and accommodation, fast tracking repairs, and delivering the largest investment in public housing in a generation."

**NSW Labor representative for Northern Tablelands Peter Primrose MLC said:**

"This project shows the Minns Labor Government's commitment to practical solutions that transform unused public assets into community resources.

"As the government representative for Northern Tablelands, I know Trackside will make a real difference to people's lives in Armidale and demonstrates what's possible when we invest in regional communities."

**Women's Shelter Armidale CEO Penny Lamaro said:**

"The facility is designed to try to break the cycle of homelessness, violence, and generational trauma in the community.

"Trackside is a place to feel safe, be heard, and find a way forward. It will give young people and families a place to connect, learn, and rebuild their lives with dignity and support. Everyone is welcome here."