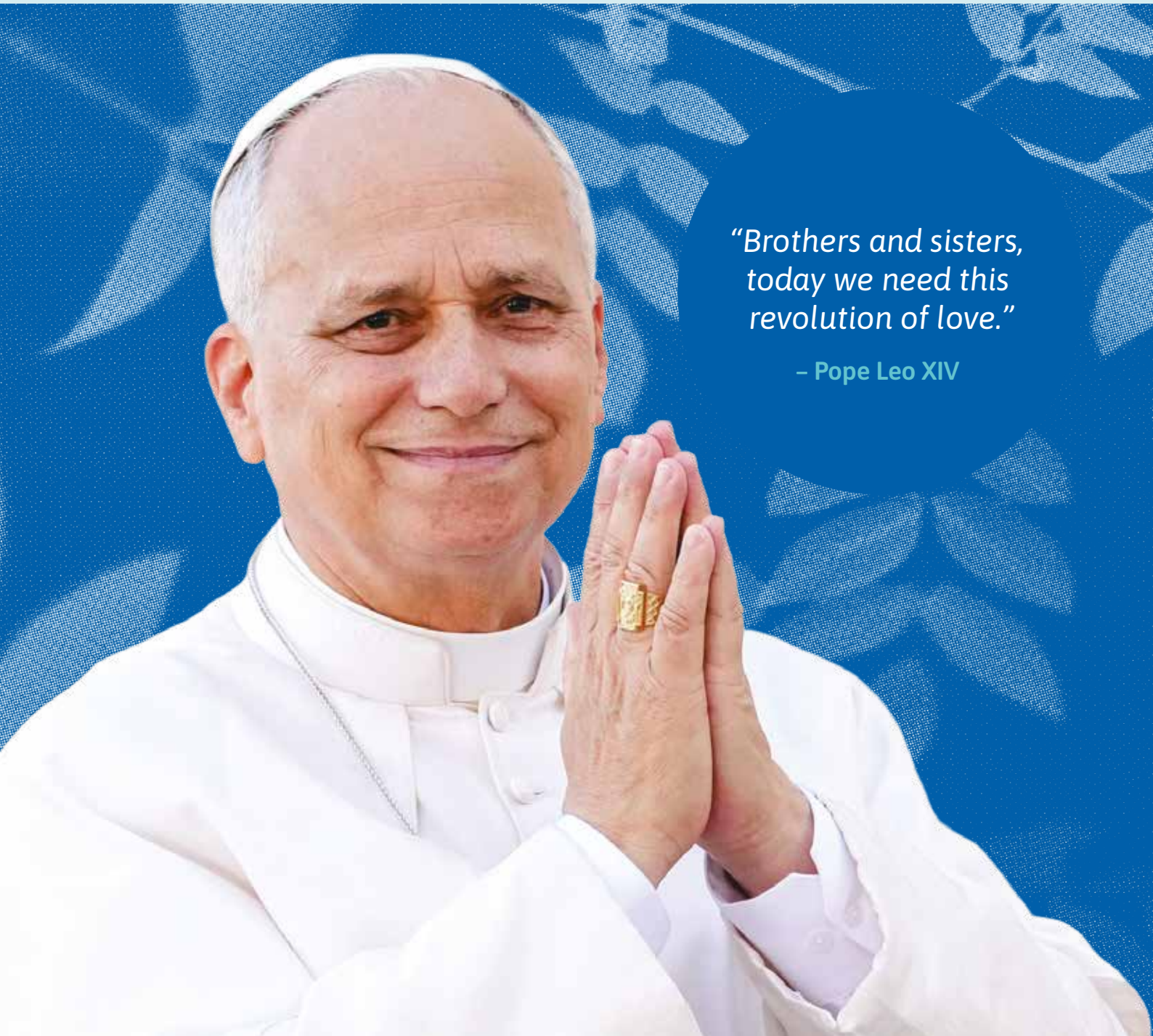




2025

SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT
DE PAUL IN NEW ZEALAND

Annual Report



*“Brothers and sisters,
today we need this
revolution of love.”*

– Pope Leo XIV



Society of St Vincent de Paul in New Zealand

Published March 2026

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Cover image: Pope Leo XIV gestures as he greets people from the popemobile while riding through St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Nov. 1, 2025, after celebrating Mass. The liturgy concluded the Jubilee of the World of Education and included the formal declaration of St. John Henry Newman as a doctor of the Church. (CNS photo/Lola Gomez) www.cathstan.org



The Society of St Vincent de Paul is an international Catholic lay organization inspired by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Vincentians work to promote human dignity and Justice through personal contact with those in need. Society of St Vincent de Paul New Zealand is a registered charity: CC34707

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“God hears the cry of the poor”

Once again it is time to sit and ponder the highs and lows of the past 12 months. So much of our energy goes into assisting those in need that we tend to forget why Frédéric and his companions founded us. When you read his life story it becomes obvious.

Frédéric was a man of tremendous love: of God, of his wife and child and very much of the poor – those who missed out, through no fault of their own, on their rightful share of life’s joys and advantages.

The death of Pope Francis in April 2025 meant that we lost a foremost champion of the poor. When he was elected, one of his Cardinal friends said to him, “don’t forget the poor” and he never did. Right from the beginning, he championed the needs of the poor, the marginalised and especially the immigrants who left their homelands to try to make better lives for themselves and their families in a different country.

His successor, Pope Leo, has also taken up the challenge and in his first letter has reminded us “God hears the cry of the poor”. Wherever there are the poor, that is where we find God. Not amongst the so-called “high fliers” but among the ordinary, everyday, real people, living ordinary lives and facing daily struggles to survive in a world that seems to be against them.

A change in Government and changes in fiscal policy has seen food assistance grants disappear and many food banks have also disappeared. Increase in food requests has rocketed in some parts of Aotearoa with people becoming increasingly anxious over food security and their ability to put food on the table. Increasing numbers of requests now come from working couples who live on a tight budget which is easily upset by an unexpected and unplanned expense such as power and vehicle costs.

It is time to seriously consider the Living Wage as a replacement for the minimum wage. If we want rising productivity levels, we need to make sure that the workers who bring about the rising productivity have less stressful levels of existence. After all, they contribute to the growth of the world’s wealth, but their share is diminishing.

As Frédéric Ozanam said many a time, our job is not just to relieve a need, but perhaps more importantly, to ask why that need exists in the first place and search out ways to fix it permanently. Food parcels

and the like are just stop-gap measures; we need to be advocating strongly on behalf of the poor for changes to enable them to improve their living conditions. We need to be delivering more than just welfare. We must deliver Love, Hope and Faith to all and we can only do that if we ourselves live a life of Love, Hope and Faith.

Regional Representation

This year we started our new venture of having six Regional Representatives from around the country to enable more communication and sharing between the Areas and National Office. It is probably fair to say it is a learning curve that may be somewhat steeper than we thought. This is not for lack of trying and good will from all concerned and all of us are still learning. Thank you to all the Representatives for their efforts and commitment.

Refounding

Last year at the AGM in Tauranga, the National Council agreed to embark on a journey of Refounding our Society. This is a journey where we seek to find and embrace our origins, understanding what Frédéric and his companions sort to achieve and how they went about it. They sought to grow their love of God through prayer and reflection and sharing that love with the poor by way of personal, face-to-face contact and simple practical assistance for their needs. Nothing big, but simple everyday things.

At our first meeting after Tauranga, the Board agreed to spend a day developing a high-level plan to put Refounding into action. With guidance from a facilitator, this was done. In August the programme was put into action with a meeting of all the Conference and Area Presidents. We are seeing good signs already which gives great hope for the future of Frédéric’s Society.

It is very much a “live” plan that will sustain us for the years ahead. As I said last year, “if we are to survive, we must change.”

“It is our vocation to set people’s hearts ablaze, to do what the Son of God did, who came to light a fire on earth in order to set it ablaze with His love.”

– Frédéric Ozanam



Health and Safety, Safeguarding

The world environment in which we now work is vastly different to that of Frédéric’s time and we can no longer ask members to put themselves at risk. The legal, employment and privacy requirements of today are such that we cannot carry out our Mission in the old, familiar way. We must protect the people we help, our members and volunteers and indeed the Society as a whole. It is one thing to have policies, but it is another to put them into practice.

With that in mind, we have employed an experienced full-time Health and Safety, Safeguarding Advisor to keep us on track and see that we meet our objectives.

Vinnies Youth

Vinnies Youth are currently going through a period of change. There is a rising demand from schools at all levels and an untapped market in the post-school range.

A new Vinnies Co-ordinator has been appointed with the charge of creating a strategic plan for the way ahead and making sure that all our Area Co-ordinators are on the same page. My hope is that in the years ahead there will be a National Vinnies Youth Council, working in co-operation with the National Council. We need to understand that Vinnies Youth is a vital part of our Mission in their own right. It is not an easy task, and I sincerely thank all our Co-ordinators for their commitment and hard work.

Our Supporters

The love and hope we bring to the poor could not be achieved without the ongoing support of so many people and organisations. Your donations of goods, services, time and monetary grants are vital to us in helping so many who find today’s world frightening and confusing. My special thanks to all those businesses, parishes, individuals, trusts and other organisations who willingly assist.

To other organisations and groups with whom we work in partnership to achieve our Mission, I offer our sincere thanks and look forward to our continuing co-operation.

To our sister Vincentian Trusts in Onehunga and Christchurch, it is a privilege to work with you, and we are proud to have you as part of the “family”.

The National Office team continues to provide unending support, keeping our Society operating in sometimes difficult circumstances. They willingly respond to all my requests, even the unusual ones, with enthusiasm and support. Thank you to our National Executive Officer and her team.

Can I also thank the National Council and Board for their advice and guidance over the past 12 months and their on-going assistance. I hope I justify their confidence.

My prayerful thanks to all the “real Vincentians” – the Conference members, volunteers and associates and their very patient partners. Your efforts and prayers make possible the Mission of Faith, Love and Hope that lies at the heart of the Society.

With every blessing,



Gerry Stevens
National President

Poverty comes in many forms

Life did not get any easier for struggling families in 2025. Persistent financial pressures led to a deepening social crisis for many vulnerable families in New Zealand over the last year.

While general inflation eased, the cost of essentials such as food, transport, rent and power rose significantly. In the year to July 2025, food prices rose by 9.9% and rents went up by more than 4%. Meagre wage increases and job insecurity added to the strain in many households.

These pressures were not felt evenly. When there is little disposable income in a household, the impact of cost-of-living price hikes is far more severe.

The effects of these pressures were seen close-up by our members in 2025. Conferences from Northland to Southland report a marked increase in demand for their services with escalating needs evident on many fronts. Some of our foodbanks had twice as many clients as previous years.

In their day-to-day work, our Conferences engage with the community in many different ways. Here's just a few examples: distributing food parcels, supporting cancer patients, furnishing the homes of new migrants, helping prisoners re-integrate back into the community, delivering firewood, providing school lunches and uniforms, helping with medical and pharmacy expenses, visiting the elderly and those in hospital. It has been very encouraging to see our Conferences try new things this year and extend their compassionate influence in local communities.

In his Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi Te*, Pope Leo reminds us that poverty comes in many forms. The Pope's Exhortation focuses on Christ's love for the poor and the call for the Church to renew its commitment to those most in need.

"We must not let our guard down when it comes to poverty," says Pope Leo. "We should be particularly concerned about the serious conditions in which many people find themselves due to lack of food and water.

"In wealthy countries too, the growing numbers of the poor are equally a source of concern. In Europe, more and more families find themselves unable to make it to the end of the month. In general, we are witnessing an increase in different kinds of poverty, which is no longer a single, uniform reality but now involves multiple forms of economic and social impoverishment, reflecting the spread of inequality even in largely affluent contexts.

"Let us not forget that doubly poor are those women who endure situations of exclusion, mistreatment and violence, since they are frequently less able to defend their rights."

What the Pope is describing is the Society's field of action. This is where we belong. Our Mission is to share the burdens of the poor, sow seeds of hope and promote self-sufficiency wherever we can. Across the country, our 99 Conferences and our thousands of members and volunteers take the Pope's words seriously and demonstrate Christ's love for the poor in many practical ways.

I am very grateful for the generosity and kindnesses that Vincentians show week in, week out. It is unsung work but it is the heartbeat of the Society, as necessary now as it was when Frédéric Ozanam and companions began the Society in Paris in 1833.

Over the past year the Society has embarked with energy and enthusiasm on the process of 'Refounding'. Refounding is all about re-capturing the original vision of our founders and returning with fresh zeal to our Mission. Area and Conference Presidents have attended national and regional workshops and resources have been created to assist them in the process of Refounding at a grassroots level.

Refounding is an ongoing process but already there are green shoots evident as Conferences review their practice, deepen their spirituality and learn



from one another. It is very encouraging to read in this report of the efforts that Conferences are making to revitalise themselves and reach out to the disadvantaged.

Our Strategic Plan sets out our priorities for the year ahead. Notable among them is our commitment to work with other like-minded organisations which greatly extends our effectiveness and allows us to reach people who we otherwise would not know about.

We are also committed to advocating on behalf of people to assist them to receive their entitlements which makes a huge difference to the lives of beneficiaries. Supporting those who struggle to keep afloat in our individualistic society – the homeless and unemployed, refugees and migrants, the sick and the lonely, families living under severe financial pressure, prisoners on the path to rehabilitation – will always be the central focus of our work.

Our Shops continue to be the visible face of the Society in many local communities, making quality clothing and household goods available at very reasonable prices. This is an excellent service to people struggling to make ends meet and also reflects the Society's commitment to recycling and caring for the environment.

My thanks to all those who support the Society in many ways. We have so many supporters, volunteers and generous donors who value what we do and are quick to support us with their time and resources.

May God bless you all and give you peace,

Anne-Marie McCarten
Executive Officer



From our Spiritual Director

Enthusiasm and open-mindedness

In the past 12 months I had the opportunity of attending the AGM and have been fortunate enough to have regular contact with your National President, Gerry Stevens. We've had much discussion about Refounding and what it could mean for the Society.

For me personally, the aspect that inspires me most after the AGM is the enthusiasm and open-mindedness I observe in so many of you. Without this, any form of re-enlivening would be impossible.

I am inclined to believe that for new growth to continue, we must first of all observe and be grateful for the signs of growth, no matter how small, which have taken place. This is the Spirit of God at work.

During the past 12 months we have managed to put my monthly reflections into a small booklet, entitled 'Called to Share'. These have been the articles written over three years. I am incredibly grateful for the many affirming comments you have sent in. Please note, if you have interesting stories to tell as a result of your involvement in the Society, I would love to hear these. They provide the inspiration for further writing. My email is

bernardweka@gmail.com Also, any articles you find particularly inspiring.

In the middle of 2025, I moved to New Plymouth to begin retirement. I've had a small involvement with SVdP up here, and hopefully this will grow as the year continues. My time in retirement has been spent fulfilling commitments made earlier in the year, so the city of New Plymouth is only just becoming familiar.

Thank you all again for the inspiration you provide me through your commitment to the poor.

Yours in Christ,

Fr Alan Roberts
Spiritual Director



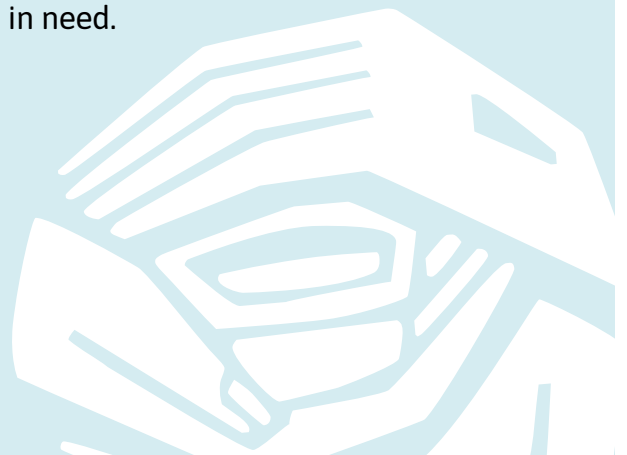
Our Mission

The Society of St Vincent de Paul is the largest Catholic lay organisation in the Church. Our members take seriously the commands of the Gospel to serve others and work for justice. We work in a caring and practical manner to promote human dignity and justice through personal contact with those in need.



Our Vision

We strive to provide person-to-person practical and effective help to those in need – sharing their burdens and joys, sowing seeds of hope and promoting self-sufficiency.





OUR CORE VALUES



Generosity

Giving of one's self and one's time.

Integrity

Living by the Society's values, vision and mission.

Compassion

Opening our hearts to all in need with understanding and without judgement.

Empathy

Establishing relationships with those in need by actively listening to them and striving to understand how they are feeling.

Responsiveness

Responding to the needs of the poor, the lonely, the marginalised and the dispossessed.

Respect for people

Serving all in need regardless of creed, ethnicity, or social background.

Respect for the environment

Taking action, and supporting others to take action, to reduce our carbon footprint and live sustainably.

Innovation

Embracing new ways of doing things so we can strengthen the Society and respond more effectively to the disadvantaged in our communities.

Courage

Finding the courage to be close to those who are vulnerable and lonely, and act on their behalf.

Advocacy

Helping those in need to get the support they need and secure their rightful entitlements to welfare. Working alongside like-minded organisations to address the causes of poverty and injustice.



Pope Leo XIV

In the Poor, God continues to speak to us

At its heart, Pope Leo XIV 's first Apostolic Exhortation, *Dilexi te*, is a call to Christ's disciples "to recognise him in the poor and the suffering."

Dilexi te, which means 'I have loved you', sees the love of Christ as incarnated in love for the poor, in caring for the sick, opposing slavery, defending women who experience exclusion and violence, accompanying migrants, charitable giving and working for equality.

"Christian love breaks down every barrier, brings close those who were distant, unites strangers, and reconciles enemies ... Through your work, your efforts to change unjust social structures or your simple, heartfelt gesture of closeness and support, the poor will come to realise that Jesus' words are addressed personally to each of them: "I have loved you (Rev 3:9)."

"I am convinced that the preferential choice for the poor is a source of extraordinary renewal both for the Church and for society, if we can only set ourselves free of our self-centeredness and open our ears to their cry."

Dilexi te builds on the teaching of Pope Francis' final encyclical – *Dilexit Nos*, on the Sacred Heart of Jesus – highlighting the "close connection" between the love of God and love for the poor.

Pope Leo's Exhortation calls on us to recognise the many "faces of the poor and of poverty", including "the poverty of those who lack material means of subsistence" or "who are socially marginalised and lack the means to give voice to their dignity and abilities".

He also notes the existence of moral, spiritual, and cultural poverty; the poverty of "those who have no rights, no space, no freedom".

Pope Leo warns of the emergence of new, sometimes "more subtle and dangerous" forms of poverty, and decries economic "rules" that increase wealth for a few but also increase inequality. "I can only state once more that inequality is the root of social ills," says Pope Leo.

The Pope notes that the wealth of the few continues to grow "exponentially" while the gap between rich and poor increases; and "ideologies that defend the absolute autonomy of the marketplace and financial speculation" remain widespread."

The Pope goes on to comment on the continued existence of a "throwaway culture", sometimes "well disguised", that "tolerates with indifference that millions of people die of hunger or survive in conditions unfit for human beings".



Farewell to a great supporter



by Gerry Stevens – National President

The Society of St Vincent de Paul lost a strong advocate and supporter with the passing of Bishop Owen Dolan, Coadjutor Bishop of the Palmerston North Diocese, at the age of 96. He died in April last year.

Bishop Owen was a vital part of the Society for 20 years and was the Society's spiritual advisor for many years. It was a role he cherished and we were the beneficiaries of his wisdom, discernment and deep spirituality.

He attended the International Assembly of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, held in Rome 3- 5 June 2016. There were National Presidents from well over 100 countries present at the Assembly.

Bishop Owen was much loved and respected by members of the Society of St Vincent de Paul. As many Vincentians will know, he was a bright, cheerful man with a ready sense of humour who didn't take things too seriously. Grim-faced, rule-based Christianity was not for him.

His brand of practical Christianity, applying the Catholic faith to everyday situations and challenges, fitted well with the mission and spirit of the Society. He was always willing to roll his sleeves up and help out. He was available to anybody who needed him.

His great gift was his humanity and openness which he brought to the challenging role of being a bishop. You could talk to him easily.

Nothing seemed to shock him. We were very fortunate to have him, not just as a fellow Vincentian, but as a mentor and spiritual guide for so many years.

Bishop Owen was ordained a priest in 1954 and his first appointment was to Petone parish as a curate.

As a schoolboy in Petone, I remember him coming to the parish. Everybody thought he was the bee's knees – a young man with energy, enthusiasm and a fantastic memory. I met him again some 50 years later and he could still tell me where we lived in Petone.

He went on to work in a number of parishes and served as a missionary in Peru for five years from 1973-78. His work as a missionary among people suffering extreme poverty profoundly shaped his priestly life.

On his return to New Zealand he resumed parish life and was made Vicar General to Cardinal Tom Williams. In 1995 he was appointed Coadjutor Bishop to the Diocese of Palmerston North.

Bishop Owen will be remembered as a man who thoroughly enjoyed his priesthood of more than 70 years, going on to be the oldest priest in New Zealand. He said his experience of growing older "has been a happy one, a peaceful one – no distressing things at all."

His life was one of priestly dedication and compassion. To us in the Society, Bishop Owen has been an ongoing inspiration as well as a fellow-traveller.

May he rest in peace.



Bishop Owen Dolan meets Pope Francis during his 2016 visit to Rome.

2020-2026

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

OUR MEMBERS

To ensure a spiritually-focused and fully-engaged Society committed to its vision, mission and values.



OUR FUTURE

To create and invigorate a young, innovative, unified and sustainable Society.

OUR WORK

To serve Christ in the poor, the displaced, the lonely, the marginalised and the isolated.
To recognise our responsibility to care for the earth and the poor of the earth in the way we live.





“Now is the time for us to be bold, return to our roots and engage in a radical new beginning for the Society.”

– Gerry Stevens, NZ
President of the St Vincent
de Paul Society

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES IN ACTION

1 Work with like-minded local/ community organisations

- St John the Baptist, East Coast Bays, provided winter pyjamas for children; assisted with school uniforms, extracurricular activities, and special projects; provided petrol vouchers; assisted with household repair costs; provided Christmas gifts for rest-home residents; and donated to the Vincentian Foundation to assist the elderly with the cost of hearing aids.
- St Francis and All Souls members in Devonport visited 48 households regularly and provided assistance to families in need.
- St Joseph's, Takapuna, delivered care parcels to North Shore Hospital and ran the foodbank phone line, referring 64 calls to other Conferences.
- Auckland South Area Council provided life-skills cooking classes to young people in transitional housing, following their financial education sessions on topics such as preparing to rent, setting financial goals, and smart grocery shopping.
- Worked alongside the Christchurch City Council to supply clients with firewood over the winter (Christchurch).
- Monthly cooking classes conducted by the Naenae/Taita Conference (Hutt Valley).
- Provided items to support sensory learning needs and assistance for students with specific learning requirements (Manawatū).
- Helped with medical bills and financial assistance for local schools (Marlborough).
- Ashburton provided help to clients via their helpline, which received 50–60 calls every month last year.
- Timaru Area provided ongoing help to provide dentures for people who have no other option.
- Assisted clients with the payment of hearing aids (Timaru).
- Visits to rest homes (Wellington).
- Southland reduced rents in flats for older people and offered a \$5,000 p/a tertiary education scholarship for students who may not otherwise be able to study due to financial hardship.

- Worked with Plunket nurses and Kaiawhina for home visiting (Thermal Lands).
- Worked with local schools to assist with volunteer programmes and other activities such as Duke of Edinburgh programmes (Wellington).
- Partnered with local suppliers for food needs – parishioners, businesses, local farmers, growers, supermarkets, and local schools (Nelson).

2 Train members to advocate and support those in need

Training occurs across all SVdP Areas in New Zealand, particularly through volunteers and Shops where staff are trained to assist and direct people to Vinnies services or external services that support their immediate needs.

3 Community mental health support

- The Community Lunch Programme served 3,720 meals, providing vital nourishment and a space for social connection, particularly for those experiencing food insecurity (Hamilton).
- Delivered hospitalisation and bereavement packages (Hastings).
- Provided frozen cooked meals to families of children hospitalised with heart conditions (Manawatū).
- Ashburton converted the former Anglican Church to provide a safe space for victims placed there by Police and cared for by He Waka Tapu.
- Distributed Sunday lunch for people in precarious situations (Southland).
- Through the Lest We Forget initiative, 1,799 food parcels were delivered this year, along with regular support and visits to pensioners, ensuring vulnerable elderly community members received consistent assistance and companionship (Hamilton).
- Budgeting/counselling services included assisting with pharmacy/medical centre financial support (Ōtaki – Kapi Mana Area).

4 Homelessness and housing support

- Over 400 items of household furnishings and countless items of clothing, linen, and bedding were distributed by the Auckland East Area Council. These included 160 “banana boxes” of items for Samoa and Tonga.
- Waiwhetu/Eastbourne provided supplies and bedding to Te Kāhono o te Marae in Moera to support people experiencing homelessness.
- The Healthy Homes team carried out 181 assessments, improving living conditions for low-income households with a focus on energy efficiency, warmth, and safety (Hamilton).
- Delivered 10 loads of firewood over the year (Marlborough).
- Wellbeing focus: homelessness, social exclusion, and mental wellbeing (Vinnies Hub).

5 Employment support

The Shops in Wellington worked with the Ministry of Social Development throughout the year to support unemployed young people into employment.

6 Work with like-minded Catholic organisations

- Eucharistic Ministry visits to retirement homes and homebound parishioners continue as valued spiritual outreach (Hastings).
- Assisted with sending donated clothing to Fiji and Sri Lanka (Manawatū).
- Fulfil Programme provided food for five kindergartens and three schools, including two Catholic schools. (Thermal Lands).
- Assisted with food for John Paul College breakfast and lunch programme (Thermal Lands).
- Foodbank Kai rescue food (Nelson).
- Taupō Conference continued to provide lunch to all-comers after the monthly mid-day Mass.

7 Prisoner support and rehabilitation

Work with police, hospitals, and Child and Youth Services (Western Bay).

8 Network with other businesses to reduce inequality

- Foodbank services in Hamilton distributed 2,894 food parcels, helping households in crisis meet immediate food needs.
- Financial support for corrective spectacles, travel for medical appointments, and prescription costs (Manawatū).
- Healthy Homes assessments and personalised housing support in partnership with Kāinga Ora and power companies (Hamilton).
- Dental assistance, including dentures (Timaru – South and Mid-Canterbury).
- Partnerships with local pharmacies to assist with chemist bills (West Coast).
- Dental support through relationships with local providers where clients are not eligible for WINZ support (Timaru).
- Hearing clinic support in partnership with the local hospital (Timaru).
- Medical support — assistance with subscriptions and doctor bills (Taranaki).

9 Budgeting services

- Auckland South use the Ōtāhuhu Centre, where financial mentors engage with clients.
- Stoke (Nelson) Conference continues to offer budgeting and counselling services.

10 Environmental advocacy and sustainable living

Vinnies Youth operate throughout New Zealand (all primary and secondary Catholic schools in Christchurch have Vinnies Youth groups).

11 Recycling second-hand goods and reducing waste

Operation of St Vincent de Paul shops across New Zealand.



Rolling out Refounding

In 2025, the Vinnies in New Zealand engaged in a major process of “Refounding” to bring fresh vitality and purpose to the Society.



Refounding involves a radical new beginning for the Society as it seeks to live out its mission, says National President, Gerry Stevens.

“We must be prepared to do things differently to enliven our Conferences and make them more attractive.”

“As Conferences and individuals, we have to recapture the inspiration and dynamism of those who founded the Society. Our goal is to re-awaken the spirit that inspired Blessed Frédéric Ozanam and his companions in their radical service of others.”

Refounding requires Conferences and Members to revisit the original charisms of the Society and find ways to apply them in today’s world.

The Society of St Vincent de Paul faces many contemporary challenges, says Gerry.

“Our numbers have reduced, leadership is stretched thin, and our structures and image no longer meet today’s needs. Now is the time for us to be bold, return to our roots and re-think how we live out our mission today. Seen through the eyes of faith, it is a moment of opportunity.”

“The Society is still a very active and vital organisation doing wonderful work in many New Zealand communities,” says Gerry. “But we are not just a welfare organisation. We are called to be Gospel-centred communities of faith, nourishing our members spiritually and reaching out to those in need around us – sharing God’s love for us.”

“Our mission has not changed – to give an experience of God’s love to a person in need. But the means of carrying out our mission has to change in response to the needs of people today.”

Refounding roll-out

The Refounding process was rolled out across the country in the latter months of 2025. National and local workshops were held to familiarise Presidents and members with what Refounding means in practice, and to get their feedback. These workshops were well attended. Conference Presidents have been leading the process locally since then, with support from the National Council.

Overall feedback has been very encouraging with many Conferences putting a new emphasis on nourishing the spirituality of members and reaching out to their local communities in new ways. There has been a noticeable increase in recruitment efforts.



“Yours must be a work of love, of kindness; you must give your time, your talents, yourselves.

“The poor are our masters. They are the sacred image of God whom we do not see.”

– Frédéric Ozanam



Refounding Resources

A number of resources have been created to support Conferences as they engage in Refounding.

These resources have been developed to provide practical help and guidance for Conferences. They are available on the Members section of the Society's website → members.svdp.org.nz



→ Turning Point – A Guide to Refounding the Society of St Vincent de Paul in New Zealand.

This is an essential guide to Refounding intended for all Conferences and members. It explains what Refounding is all about and includes guidelines for implementation. Print copies have been sent to all Conferences and the resource is also available on the Members' section of the SVdP website.



→ Refounding – The National President's view

A video presentation by National President Gerry Stevens on what Refounding is all about and why we must engage in it.



→ Refounding – A Guide for Conference Presidents

Conference Presidents play a pivotal role in guiding the Refounding process in their Conference. This resource has been created to help Presidents lead their Conferences effectively. It provides suggestions for a successful rollout of Refounding, tips for making meetings engaging and motivating, and ideas for the induction of new members.



→ Reflecting on the Good Samaritan Parable

The Good Samaritan parable is a founding story for the St Vincent de Paul Society. It goes to the heart of the Vincentian vocation. This resource provides reflections on the parable which can be used at Conference meetings or members can use in personal prayer.

Refunding Resources

→ Best Practice Guides

Short one-page PDF resources with techniques for developing vibrant healthy Conferences. Topics include tips for recruiting, performing a health check on your Conference, ways to create a vibrant, active Conference.



→ 'Called to Share'

A book of reflections by our Spiritual Director, Fr Alan Roberts.



→ Frédéric Ozanam – A life of faith, friendship and service

To engage in Refunding, we need to get to know our founder. How much do you know about Frédéric Ozanam? What ignited his passion for serving those in need? Can we be inspired by his example? This resource is a summary of his life and explains how he put his faith into practice.

Vincentian Foundation for the Elderly Update

22%
of New Zealanders aged 70+ have hearing loss

Hearing loss affects about one in six people in New Zealand and is commonly caused by aging (affects about one third of people over 65), loud noise exposure, genetics and can also result from illness and injury (infections, viral illnesses and physical injuries to the ear).

Studies show the prevalence of hearing loss in New Zealand is 15% for those aged 60 – 69 and 22% for those aged 70 years and over.

Currently the Foundation’s assistance is limited to a maximum of \$700 per pair of hearing aids to successful applicants who meet the criteria of being over 65 years, hold a Super Gold Card with a Community Services endorsement.

The following table shows the increased level of demand which the Foundation is struggling to accommodate.



	1 June '25 to 26 Feb '26	1 June '24 to 31 May '25	1 June '23 to 1 May '24
Number of grants made	67	67	22
Cost of grants made	\$35,325	\$38,849	\$9,735
Average cost	\$527	\$580	\$443

Help us meet the growing need

The Vincentian Foundation Trustees thank the National President for the recent National Appeal and urges Councils and Conferences to forward donations to the following National Office bank account:



Society of St Vincent de Paul
02-0528-0208598-027
(Reference: Vincentian Foundation)

Thank you for your consideration

Pat Sheehan – SVDP National President’s Representative on the Vincentian Foundation.



If the level of demand continues at the current rate the Foundation will need to finance 89 grants at an approximate cost of **\$47,100 – a 21.2% increase!**

2025 - A SNAPSHOT

THE SOCIETY IN NEW ZEALAND

21

AREA
COUNCILS

99

CONFERENCES



53

SHOPS

69

FULL-TIME
PAID EMPLOYEES

1,199

MEMBERS

280

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

53

PART-TIME
PAID EMPLOYEES

1,489

VOLUNTEERS

61,359

FOOD PARCELS
DISPATCHED



3,656

HOUSEHOLDS
FURNISHED

28,624

BUDGETING / COUNSELLING
SERVICE SESSIONS





SUPPORTING PEOPLE, STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES

Advocating for those vulnerable

Actively speaking up for those experiencing hardship, ensuring their voices are heard in social policies, housing issues, and access to essential services.

Running Vinnies Shops

Operating charity shops that provide affordable clothing, furniture, and household items, while also using proceeds to fund community welfare initiatives.

Providing Emergency Relief

In times of crisis, whether due to natural disasters or financial hardship, St Vincent de Paul provides immediate assistance such as food, shelter, and financial aid.

Organising food banks

Through the collection and distribution of food parcels, St Vincent de Paul ensures that individuals and families facing food insecurity have access to nutritious meals.

Visiting people in home, hospital and in prison

Volunteers offer companionship, comfort, and practical support to those who are isolated, unwell, or incarcerated, reinforcing a sense of dignity and belonging.

Assisting people in need through community outreach

Whether through financial aid, support services, or social programmes, St Vincent de Paul reaches out to individuals and families struggling with hardship, helping them regain stability.

Supporting migrants

Helping newcomers to New Zealand settle by providing essential resources, language support, and a welcoming community to ease their transition.

Supporting families under stress

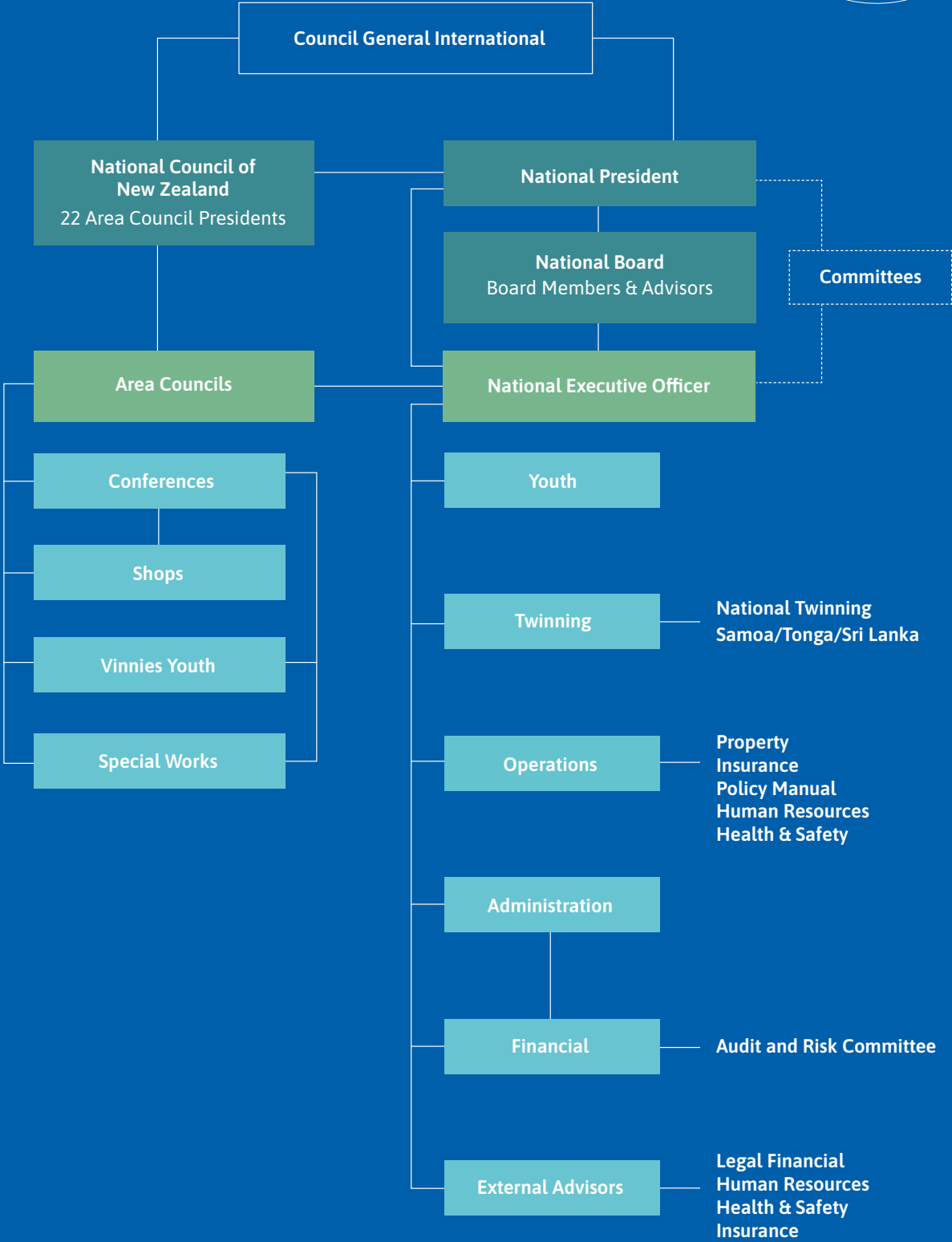
By offering counseling, financial assistance, and emotional support, St Vincent de Paul helps struggling families navigate difficult circumstances and maintain stability.

Mobilising Vinnies Youth to care for others

Equipping young volunteers to engage in charitable works, fostering a culture of compassion and service among the next generation.



Organisational Chart



some of
WHAT
we did

Re-housed families

Prepared and dispatched 61,359 food parcels

Organised loads of firewood

Provided community and home delivery meals

Provided financial support for school uniforms

Provided bedding, bikes and kitchen materials for refugees

Provided bedding, bikes and kitchen materials for refugees

Made more than 6,000 rest-home and hospital visits

Visited prisoners and helped them re-integrate back into the community

Provided low-cost goods and clothing through 53 Vinnies stores nationwide

Did chores around the home for elderly people

Operated and supported local food banks

Numerous hearing aid grants to elderly people throughout New Zealand

Provided funds to help with doctor and pharmacy expenses

Helped families pay school fees

Called on families who had suffered bereavements

Provided thousands of counselling and budgeting sessions

Christmas meals for those who wanted to share the day with others

Paid for school uniforms for needy families

Provided Christmas grocery boxes and presents for families

Met regularly in 99 Conferences to support the spiritual growth of members

Helped tutor adult learners

Raised funds to support Twinning Projects in Samoa, Tonga and Sri Lanka

Converted a property into a laundry for the homeless

Ran a food appeal for donations at the local supermarket

Provided low-cost clothing and household goods via a network of 58 Shops

Took elderly people shopping

Harnessed the generosity of nearly 1,500 volunteers

Provided funds to assist people access dental services and hearing aids

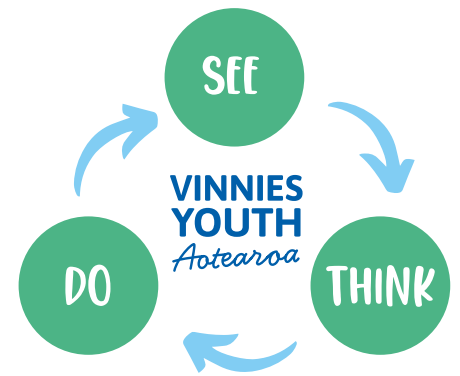




From our National Youth Advisor

Expanding the reach of Vinnies Youth

Vinnies Youth is all about getting young people involved in the Society and expanding Vinnies Youth programmes in Catholic schools across New Zealand.



National Youth Advisor role

Young members keep the Society young. They see with new eyes and often look far ahead. Young people are not only the future of the Society but they are also part of its present. The work of all is judged by its outcome and motivation, not by the age of a Vincentian.

I took on the role of National Youth Advisor in May 2025. I live in Mount Maunganui and am also the Youth Coordinator for the Bay of Plenty area which goes from Waihi to Gisborne. Since I have taken up this role, I have visited or contacted all the schools within the Bay of Plenty and have engaged them in starting Vinnies Youth next year, if they do not already have a group running.

Growing Vinnies Youth nationwide

The goal is to contact all Catholic schools within New Zealand to promote and establish Vinnies Youth groups. My next step is to spread the net further throughout the country. In order to do this I will be contacting not only schools but also Area Councils to discuss how they can establish Vinnies Youth in their schools and areas.

Youth Activity Day brings schools together

In November I ran a Youth Activity day for six schools in our region. Sixty-four students attended and it was a great opportunity for students to share what they are doing in their schools and get new ideas. One activity was looking at what schools are currently doing and brainstorming what they could do in the future to help those in need.

Resources are available for Area Councils to use – job descriptions for Youth Coordinators, key performance indicators, goal-setting information and also appraisal forms. I am happy to travel to areas to help organise if needed.

Where we are now

There are 188 primary Catholic schools in New Zealand and 49 secondary Catholic schools, a total of 237 Catholic schools. The goal is to have Vinnies Youth in all our Catholic schools. To date we have active groups in 33 primary schools and 26 secondary schools. It's a good start but there is plenty of scope for expansion. This is only 25%; we can do much better.



“Young people are not only the future of the Society – they are part of its present.”

Pictured: St Bede's College students helping SVdP Christchurch to box up \$10,000 worth of food.



Kapi Mana (above) and Auckland (right) Vinnies Youth members.



These figures are based on figures that the Youth Coordinators have given me. However there are probably other schools that have Vinnies Youth that are not being run by Youth coordinators. I would like to hear from schools that have Vinnies Youth groups running and I would ask that Area Councils let me know where Vinnies Youth groups are operating in their areas. This would allow me to get an accurate picture of where I need to target my efforts.

Youth Coordinator network

Currently we have five paid Youth Coordinators based in Auckland (Onehunga Trust), Hawke’s Bay, Kapi Mana and Christchurch. We also have a volunteer in Hamilton working with youth. Youth Coordinators are employed by Area Councils and work between 20 – 40 hours per week.

Looking Ahead

At a workshop of Youth Coordinators, we have set some goals for the next 12 months. One goal is to develop the youth between the ages of 16 to 35 with a view to establishing a National Youth Board. This Board will provide assistance and guidance on issues directly relating to youth development within the Society.

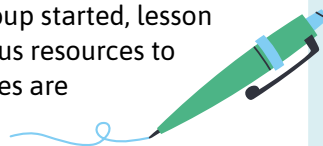
Carol Zilonis

National Vinnies Youth Advisor



Resources for Schools

There are many resources on the Vinnies Youth website for those wanting to start up Vinnies Youth programmes within schools. These include information on how to get a group started, lesson plans for meetings and numerous resources to engage students. These resources are being continually updated.



Examples of the many resources available on our website vinniesyouth.org.nz



Twinning Report

The generosity of Area Councils and Conferences in supporting Twinning and Twinning Projects continues. Your support assists in many ways those in need across our twins – Sri Lanka, Samoa and Tonga. We thank you.



2025 FUNDING SUMMARY

Twinning funds remitted to Sri Lanka totaled NZD\$64,740. This is a small increase on 2024. We are now the sole donor country to them.

Approved project support for our Twins in 2025 was NZD\$111,059. Support for the 'Assist a Student' programme was NZD\$30,000.

We need to recognise the support of Del and James and their team at the Vinnies Hub in Onehunga. Their help with storage and loading of containers and pallets, and the supply of material aid items, was greatly appreciated.



Our total contribution to twinning in 2025

\$220,799

SAMOA

The housing project – repairs to fales – was completed during the year.

Other projects, which include the Paul VI College Library and the establishment of a shop/welfare centre, were generously supported. Both projects were due for completion in January 2026.

The Paul VI project provides nine double-bay, free-standing shelving units. Currently all library records – the books register and borrowing and returns records – are handwritten, so we are evaluating the best computer programme to allow full IT management. Books are still very much utilised, as IT use is very limited. Education funding is challenging as the government does not support church schools, and the church has ceased support also.



Students and staff at Chanel College, Samoa.

Chanel College, which has no external funding, is the focus for 2026. We will be supplying school desks – 100 are needed.

The shop/welfare project is underway and will be fully operational in 2026. Shelving, display units and storage has been supplied so that all goods can be sorted and displayed. Signwriting for the frontage is also being addressed.

As mentioned, school desks and chairs are needed at three schools – Paul VI, Chanel and John Bosco. I have written to the Auckland Area Councils to ask them to contact their local colleges to ascertain whether suitable furniture is available. We are also approaching businesses in Samoa to quote on the supply of chairs.

We also sent a container of material aid early in the year.



The Society supported the St Paul College Library Project.

SRI LANKA

Active conferences in Sri Lanka number 346. The number of Councils/Deaneries is 25. Our twinning funding supports around 175 active Conferences.

Thank you for your response to the Sewwanthivu Community Centre project this year. It has allowed us to release funding for the first two stages of the project. Once completed, the benefits to this community will be huge.

Major flooding during late November and early December affected many of the areas we are twinned with. The hardest hit districts include Gampaha, Colombo, Puttalam and Mannar, as well as Trincomalee and Batticaloa, while deadly landslides in the central hill country have devastated Kandy, Badulla and Matale. NZD\$10,000 was sent to the National Council in Sri Lanka.

TONGA

Western Bay of Plenty Area Council donated a van they no longer needed which we have sent to Tonga. It has wheelchair hoists so can be used to transport those in wheelchairs, the aged and those with no transport to doctors and hospital appointments.



Van donated by Western Bay of Plenty Area Council for use in Tonga.

The Shop/welfare project, which was finished in 2024, has had a small extension – a Coffee Corner. This provides a space for those in need of friendship, those in need of help or those who just want a good coffee. These sales contribute to the Shop's income.

We have also covered the three storage containers with a weatherproof roof. One of the containers holds food and tools which will be utilised if the region is hit by cyclones.



Weatherproof storage containers installed to protect vital supplies.

'ASSIST A STUDENT'

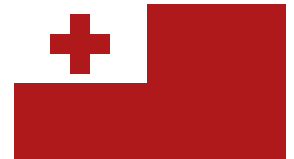
We provided NZD\$30,000 for the 'Assist a Student' programme during 2025. This was distributed to 300 students – 200 in Sri Lanka and 50 in both Tonga and Samoa. The allocation of NZD\$100 per student assists in many ways – for example, uniforms, fees, footwear and stationery.

OCEANIA

Relationships between twinning countries and donor countries, New Zealand and Australia, continue to be strengthened. We are facing some challenges with the change of Presidents, which may result in the appointment of office-holders in other roles. The ITVP for Oceania, Paul Trezise, is planning to address these possibilities. The meeting of the Oceania countries in Auckland in April 2026 will offer the opportunity to address any challenges and move forward in a positive manner.

Many thanks for the generosity of all our donors.

Arthur Schultze
NZ Twinning



Health and Safety, Wellbeing and Safeguarding Report

Over the past 12 months, the Society has continued to strengthen Health and Safety, Wellbeing and Safeguarding (HSWS) across all areas of our work. This progress has been made possible through the invaluable support and commitment of the SVdP leadership, who continue to champion HSWS as a core priority of the Society.

With increasing activity in Shops, foodbanks, home visits, community programmes and special works, it remains essential that our people, our companions and our visitors are safe and protected at all times.

To support this renewed direction, the Society appointed a National Health and Safety, Wellbeing and Safeguarding Advisor in August 2025. This role was created to provide national coordination, and support consistent HSWS processes across Area Councils, Conferences and Shops, and strengthen safeguarding practices.

Developing a HSWS Strategy for the Society

One of the first actions undertaken in this new role was to develop a clear and practical SVdP Health and Safety, Wellbeing and Safeguarding Strategy. The Strategy was completed and presented to the National Council on 8 November 2025. It provides a simple, people-focused direction for the next three years and builds on earlier health and safety works and safeguarding reviews.

The Strategy sets out our HSWS vision:

“Safe people, safe places, safe culture – protecting the dignity of all we encounter.”

It also reaffirms our core HSWS values, which highlight the importance of:

- protecting life and human dignity
- acting with compassion and integrity
- safeguarding the vulnerable
- supporting the wellbeing of all volunteers, staff, members, clients and visitors.

These values reflect the Society’s mission and guide our actions in every region.

Strategic Outcomes 2025 – 2028

The HSWS Strategy identifies four key outcomes the Society will focus on from 2025 – 2028:

1. **Safe People** – supporting, training and protecting volunteers, staff and members.

2. **Safe Places** – keeping shops, warehouses, kitchens and pastoral settings adequately managed and minimising risks of harm.
3. **Safe Culture** – speaking up, consistent expectations, and visible safeguarding practices.
4. **Safe Systems** – building consistent HSWS processes, reporting and assurance across the Society.

These outcomes provide a practical framework for strengthening everyday safety and safeguarding.

Putting the Strategy into action

Early work includes integrating health and safety, wellbeing and safeguarding as part of one Health and Safety Management System (HSMS), and ensuring this system is practical and easy to use across the Society. Ongoing works involve updating existing procedures, developing safe work instructions, and creating standard templates and training resources. The aim is to give Area Councils, Conferences and Shops the tools they need to apply HSMS confidently in their daily activities and to ensure consistent practices throughout the country.

Key areas of focus in 2026:

- developing consistent induction and refresher training
- strengthening safeguarding practices, including the Two-Adult Rule
- improving incident and concern reporting processes
- supporting mental health and wellbeing
- strengthening inspections, maintenance and emergency readiness in shops and warehouses
- developing standardised risk registers, safety checks and pastoral safety guidance.

Edmund Cuevas

National Health and Safety, Wellbeing and Safeguarding Advisor



Focus on Oceania

International Vice-President visits New Zealand

A valuable overview of the work and structure of the Society of St Vincent de Paul in Oceania was presented by Paul Tresize at the National Council Meeting in Wellington on 8 November 2025.

Paul serves as the International Territorial Vice-President (ITVP) for Oceania, one of 13 global zones. The Oceania team includes two New Zealanders – Keith Norton (Coordinator) and Arthur Schultz (Twinning).

In his keynote address, Paul highlighted the strengths of the Oceania region, the opportunities for growth, and the challenges it faces. His presentation was warmly received by those present.

Paul also spoke about the vision of the Society's founder, Frédéric Ozanam, reflecting on the Society's origins and continued growth. He referenced Frédéric's prolific and eloquent letter writing to family, friends and Society members.

Who is Paul Tresize?

Paul was appointed International Territorial Vice-President for Oceania, succeeding Frank Brassil. In this role, he supports national councils, fosters communication and collaboration across Oceania, and works to strengthen the Society's presence in the region.

He is assisted by a small team and represents the International President General across 11 Oceania countries.

Paul is a member of the Yass Conference in rural NSW and previously served as Australian National Council Treasurer and CEO for the Canberra/Goulburn region.



Pictured above - After the November meeting in Wellington Keith Norton organised a quick tour of Society facilities and conferences on the South Island including Christchurch, Ashburton, Oamaru and Dunedin. (L to R) Keith Norton, Clodagh Ward, Paul Tresize, Mike Moore, Polly Fisher and Cyrene Tionko.

Communications Report

People are the best communicators and in any organisation it is the people – the staff, the members and volunteers – who communicate what an organisation is all about. The members of our 99 Conferences and the many volunteers who support them, as well as those who staff our Shops, are the front line of the Society’s communications efforts.

In 2025, that vital person-to-person communication was supported by advertising and media coverage of significant events in the life of the Society. Catholic media and general media provided good coverage of the Vinnies’ day-to-day work, particularly around meeting an escalating demand for food assistance from those struggling to make ends meet. Over the last year there has been greater use of social media to bring the Society’s message to younger audiences.

2025 saw a strong focus on internal communications. In addition to regular e-news newsletters, Refounding resources have been created to support Conferences in their efforts to reconnect with the original dynamism of the Society.

A new advertising campaign and video resources are planned for this year to inspire people to join the Society and to spread the message about the great work the Society is doing. While members are slow to ‘blow their own trumpet’, it must be remembered the Society needs a strong profile to attract new members.

Building the profile of the Society as a spiritually alive organisation which is really in touch with the vulnerable and disadvantaged in the local community is an essential part of Refounding the Society.



JOIN THE VINNIES

SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL HELPS PEOPLE

Young and old, town and country. Vinnies harness the generosity of Aotearoa NZ – whānau, churches, community groups, schools. Get involved and help those who are going through tough times.

St Patrick’s School fundraiser – 800 cans donated to the Vinnies Annual Food Drive in Christchurch.

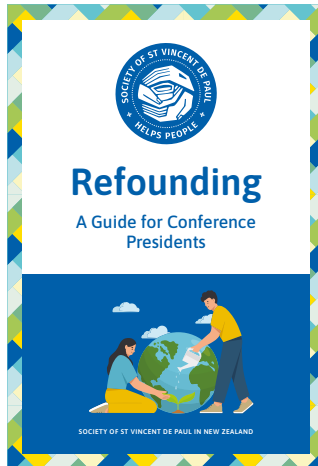
Join up with your local Vinnies or make a donation:

Society of St Vincent de Paul
BNZ 02-0528-0208598-027

Please use your name and email address as a reference and we will send you a receipt.

www.svdp.org.nz

Advertisement



REFOUNDING 2025

How to recruit members for your Conferences

Refounding requires a strong focus on recruiting new Members to the Society and retaining them. Our future depends on this. Here are some ideas to boost your recruiting efforts.

- Recruitment needs to be an ongoing process throughout the year.
- Appoint a member of your Conference to lead recruitment. Encourage them to invite other Conference members to assist them.
- Recruitment needs to be a regular agenda item at Conference meetings.
- Encourage a ‘shoulder tap’ approach by the meeting members and challenge them to reach identify and invite a number of colleagues or relatives to join. This could begin by inviting them to be your ‘jan’ when meeting members calls.
- Plan for a major promotion and recruitment drive at least once per year. This could coincide with our feast day month of September or during Lent.
- Invite your Parish Priest and Leadership Team at the general meeting to be involved.
- Develop a promotion and recruitment plan well in advance of the date you wish to launch.
- Follow up a phone call to all attendees within a week of the meeting inviting them to join.
- Run an induction meeting for new members within a month of their joining. Make sure they are given a ‘jan’ and ‘jan’ from with an existing member to help them feel comfortable.
- Give the new member a ‘jan’ to do. This will ensure they feel valued and an important part of the Conference team.

RECRUITMENT PLANNING TIPS

- Provide newsletter information about Vinnies.
- Invite them to bring food and clothing to Mass for our welfare needs.
- Have a Vincentian speak after Mass, telling of our work, our mission, and our need for new members to carry out the mission.
- Invite prospective members to come to an introductory evening to learn more about Vinnies, the work and the special character. Invite existing members in the church to help to collect names and to plan responses to those that are interested in attending this introductory meeting.
- Make contact within a week of this collection of names, and invite to the meeting.
- The introductory meeting should be no more than 1 hour and should include a well-prepared PowerPoint or video about being Vincentian, our mission, and our work. Ensure that there is plenty of time for questions and discussion. Finish with tea and coffee.
- Encourage diversity. Look to engage with the wide diversity of cultural groups that make up your parish community and proactively remove any potential barriers, eg language, literacy.
- Take steps to ensure the work of joining is visible and well understood within your parish community.

Refounding resources



Ozanam Apartments – making a big difference



Ozanam Apartments, a social housing project in Pavitt Street Christchurch, completed its second full year of operation last year.

The facility was opened in March 2023 and provides six two-bedroom units and one three-bedroom unit – safe, warm accommodation for seven families. The project was undertaken by SVdP in Canterbury in response to a critical need to provide transitional housing for young, homeless mothers.

A charitable trust named the Ozanam Canterbury Charitable Trust was formed to manage the project. The facility was designed with young, vulnerable families in mind who find it difficult to obtain secure rental housing. The Ozanam Canterbury Charitable Trust is partnering with the St John of God Hauora Trust (SJGHT) who provide wrap-around services for these families. These services enable these families to develop parenting and life skills while also providing a vital tenancy reference to assist them obtain rentals in the future.

Tenants pay approximately a quarter of their benefit toward rent. The units are managed by a property manager who regularly inspects the units, arranges for repairs and maintenance, and also provides a reference to the tenant when they move to their own rental.

Nineteen young families have been supported in this way since the facility opened. Of the young families who have accessed the service so far, four



Ozanam Apartments – safe, warm accommodation for vulnerable families.

young families have been supported into private rentals, four families have secured longer-term social housing, three families have moved into accommodation supported by extended family, two families were transferred to alternative housing that best suits their individual safety needs and six families are current tenants.

The collaboration between St Vincent de Paul and St John of God Hauora Trust has been a very successful model of an essential service provision for the young parent community in Otautahi-Christchurch.

“We have seen young people make significant generational changes in the way they raise their children and keep their little ones safe and thriving,” says Daniella Marra from the St John of God Hauora Trust.

“Young parents, like all parents, prepare their children for the world they live in and when they are supported to create worlds that are safe and secure and full of life, their children get to experience the full reality of these worlds. It starts with a safe place to rest your head and it grows into a life filled with new opportunities.”



Mike Moore, Sarah Hillier, Mike Daly and Philip Brady, together with St John of God staff, Kath Prins and Daniella Marra.



“What we do to the poor,
we do also to God. The way
we look at them is the way
we look at God.”

– Saint Oscar Romero

FEEDBACK FROM THE REGIONS



Auckland East Area Council

We have been consistently busy this year, supporting families in our area with food, vouchers and visitations. We have also been able to provide a steady supply of clothing that's been given directly to families or our Onehunga shop.

East Auckland is made up Councils in Glendowie, Glen Innes/Panmure and Meadowbank. I've been President for Glendowie and East Auckland for the last 18 months so I've been building strong relationships with my Council members and Presidents. Learning where the need is in each area is a challenge as it is a diverse area.

Glendowie has always been a strong Council with very committed members who share the workload, whether it be delivering food or goods to people in need, running raffles and baking for fundraising, or visiting the lonely and sick.

I've introduced the use of name-tags by our members and volunteers at the shop. This was done to raise awareness of the Society in our communities so people can contribute, contact us directly with help or let us know if support is needed.

Councils have been encouraged to have regular notices in their parish newsletters to request material assistance, such as winter and summer clothing for families in areas where there is a lot of poverty and unemployment.

Libby in Meadowbank is well-known and is well supported by wonderful donors of clothing, money and appliances that she passes on to those in need.

Our area also supports Sister Marie at Te Waipuna and the St Ignatius Outreach Programme.

In July we took part in the Auckland Festival Mass, which gave us an opportunity to discuss Refounding of the Society and share ideas and experiences. It was a great opportunity to strengthen our relationships with one another.

I've enjoyed mixing with Del's team at Youth Vinnies and presenting Certificates at the

beautiful and moving Youth Masses. She is such an inspirational leader.

The Onehunga Shop team run by Wanda is like a big family and it was lovely to share their Christmas celebration. The great work they do enables us to help so many in need.

Our goal for the year ahead is to move forward as a strong team and encourage more people to join us and share the load. It has been a privilege to work alongside so many lovely, caring and respectful people in our area who really live the spirit of St Vincent de Paul.

Kathleen Ward

– Auckland East Area President

Auckland North Area Council

The Auckland North Area Council consists of six Conferences, all of which are active. The primary mission of the Society is to visit and to care for those in need, and all six Conferences are actively engaged in this mission.

Retail activity

To support the Conferences in this work, North Auckland Area operates two Shops, one in Ellice Road, Glenfield and one in Barry's Point Road, Takapuna. Profits from the Ellice Road Shop have steadily declined over the past four years and the Shop is barely breaking even. The Barry's Point Road Shop opened in October 2023 and is steadily growing, though it has not yet made a profit.

We have had a number of staff changes and now have a team in place to turn the situation around for us. As part of this initiative, we are developing a multi-platform retail approach to sell the donated goods as swiftly and effectively as possible.

St Mary's Northcote Conference

Northcote has remained fairly quiet this year. We have seven members and five associate

members. We continue to provide our area with food parcels and bread deliveries, make visits to rest homes and hospitals, and help our friends in need. We have a few generous parishioners who regularly contribute each month, but we are not a wealthy group. We do try and make our supplies go as far as possible, making contributions to, and good use of, the DePaul House Foodbank. We have been referring some of our families who need more regular and ongoing support to a local North Shore organisation called The Good Works Trust, which is a social supermarket. Their rules about supplies are much stricter than ours, but they give a hand-up, not a hand-out. Support from our Northcote parish of St Mary's is always welcome.

St Thomas More Glenfield Conference

We have 11 members and one associate member. A steady demand for food parcels from those in need in the community keeps us busy and uses our resources. At Christmas, thanks to the generosity of parishioners, we delivered Christmas hampers to families in need in the Glenfield area.

Maria Assumpta Beach Haven Conference

We have five members and nine associate members. We provide food parcels in our areas and also have a weekly bread run, which keeps us in regular contact with some of the more needy and lonely folk in the area. We also provide gift vouchers for use at Woolworths and we distributed around 30 vouchers at Christmas.

We have been working with The Good Works Trust to provide assistance to those with ongoing needs through use of their social supermarket. At Christmas we provided around 40 presents to children under the age of 16 and mobilised parishioners to support this.

St Joseph's Takapuna Conference

We have 12 members and three associate members. Thanks to a generous donation, we maintain a foodbank hotline for the North Auckland Conferences. We have been consistently busy, supporting people in need. We supply the North Shore Hospital with care packages for patients in need who are returning home and we are exploring ways to arrange visiting and care packages for a large rest home in our area. We have a core base of generous parishioners, though a significant benefactor died this year. May they rest in peace and be rewarded for their generosity which has enabled so much to happen. We have

been financially assisting the Area Council and other Conferences in need as we are able.

St Francis de Sales and All Souls Devonport Conference

We have six members and one associate member. We continue to visit households and assist those in need with food support, as well as school needs support and bill payment support. Our Conference is active and well supported by the parish community.

St John the Baptist and St Francis de Sales East Coast Bays Conference

We have 10 members. We continued to visit those in need and provide food assistance as required. We had special appeals this year, provided children with winter pyjamas and provided Christmas gifts for rest home residents. We assisted struggling households with school expenses, especially for extracurricular activities and school uniforms. We also provided assistance with household repairs when needed.

Charles Grinter

– Auckland North Area President

Auckland South Area Council

The St Vincent de Paul South Auckland Centre is developing services in response to community need. This year we continued to support people struggling with the cost of living. Increasing rent and high food and petrol costs impact the poorest people the most. Our centre is supporting more working families that cannot afford both rent and food, choosing to pay rent and use a foodbank and KiwiSaver hardship applications to make ends meet in the short-term.

The empowering area of our work is providing financial mentoring services. This year we have bedded in our renewed government contract for Building Financial Capability with Vinnies Tāmaki Makaurau. Our service involves working closely with our networks and other Catholic social service organisations to alleviate poverty in South Auckland. Our team, in consultation with the Auckland Catholic Diocese, has identified a pressing need for a safe, affordable and supported hostel in South Auckland for homeless people.

The centre has a team of committed staff and volunteers. We have been fortunate to

increase our volunteer base to provide more comprehensive reception and booking services. Throughout the year we welcome Catholic school students who need to do service hours, or work groups that cook single-serve meals for foodbank clients living in boarding houses.

The Op Shops (Papakura, Manurewa and Māngere Bridge) have committed Managers who create inviting, well-presented Shop environments that bring in donations and customers to ensure our sustainability. We are sourcing more furniture to go into the Op Shops as this helps with increasing revenue, which supports the foodbank and furniture for families in need.

FROM 1 JAN 2025 – 28 NOV 2025 WE PROVIDED OVER:

- 3160 food parcels
- 200 pieces of furniture donated to families
- 1180 financial mentoring sessions
- 24 hardship scholarships for fee support to secondary school students.

THIS YEAR WE OFFERED NEW SERVICES TO FURTHER HELP OUR COMMUNITIES:

- Our financial mentors provide outreach in Ōtara, Māngere and Manurewa suburbs.
- A kai class teaches basic cooking skills for young people in transitional housing.
- MoneyMates programme supports financial literacy in a peer group setting.
- A savings incentive scheme was introduced to help develop a saving mindset.

The generosity of Conferences, individual donations, philanthropic grants and national appeals keep the Ōtāhuhu centre alive and able to help as many people as we do. We are so grateful for the ongoing support.

Marjorie Crisp (Pakuranga Conference) retired from the Board after long and dedicated service. It was with immense sadness that Jim Barnes (Otahuhu Conference), a stalwart of St Vincent de Paul, was honoured and laid to rest.

Case Study 1

Auckland South

Client, an older woman boarding with family and on government support for some years, came to the foodbank for the first time. Triaged to understand her financial situation and need, and noted she had two car debts for cars she no longer owned.

- First car loan of \$9,200 – identified issues in the lending, and finance company has written off entire amount owing.
- Second car loan of \$6,400 – identified issues in lending and finance company have written off entire amount owing plus refunded \$1,000.
- In total \$15,600 debt written off and refund of \$1,000.

Case Study 2

Auckland South

Client, a woman in her mid-30s, came for help as her car was due to be repossessed. She owed \$35,000 on one loan and her husband had recently left the relationship. She works 20 hrs per week in hospitality and has an 11 year-old daughter. Surrendering the car was the only option as she had already applied for hardship with the finance company and could not afford the loan.

The balance owing was \$29,807 after the finance company sold the car. Issues were identified with the loan contract, particularly with an incorrect income assessment. The finance company refused to acknowledge the error and their dispute resolution service was involved.

The Ombudsman agreed with our assessment and the finance company wrote off \$14,000, leaving a balance of \$14,900 with no fees or interest applied.



Client, a man in his 30s, was referred for a budget report for social housing. He had taken out a loan a fortnight earlier for a \$46,000 vehicle, to be repaid over five years with a total \$21.5k in interest (16% interest rate). He was not working and had little opportunity to gain work due to his past. The loan was clearly unaffordable. The finance company accepted their error and refunded all payments to date (\$792) plus varied to an interest and fee-free loan. The client has saved \$22,299.

Auckland South Area Council photos



Scholarship recipients – Sancta Maria School students. Supported by Pakuranga Conference.



Thanking our Otahuhu Volunteers in Volunteer Week.

Papakura Conference

At Papakura, 2025 saw a continued year of outreach from the Conference. Members continued to support our endeavours through their work in the local Shop, running the foodbank, and reaching out to the elderly isolated in the pensioner flats in Papakura and Takanini.

In 2025, 88 families received Christmas hampers and gifts for their children. Through our local

Catholic Schools and a range of social agencies in our community, families were identified who face particular challenges in providing even the most basic necessities. Gifts were sought from our parish community. Hampers were made up of a combination of donated fresh and non-perishable items from supportive suppliers and a \$100 grocery voucher.

For over 20 years the Conference has awarded scholarships on the basis of economic need to two students at each of the local Catholic primary schools – St Mary's and Holy Trinity. These scholarships assist with costs as the students enter their first year of secondary education. These are presented by Conference members at the school's end-of-year ceremonies.

– David Tennent

Pakuranga Conference

The core of the Pakuranga Conference are its six members, supported by dedicated volunteers and the generosity of St Mark's parishioners. The foodbank remains the primary focus, operating weekly on Fridays from 10.30 am to 1:00 pm. It distributed 332 food parcels in the past 11 months, helping 1,310 individuals (625 adults and 685 children). There was an Easter food donation drive early in the year and Christmas hampers were distributed in the three weeks prior to the big day.

The Conference continues valuable community engagement. An example is attendance at the East Auckland Community Network Hui, which provides a chance to share the work of the Society and keep informed of other activities in the area.

Financial assistance of \$1,500 was paid for school fees for a Year 13 Sancta Maria College student who was being cared for by his grandmother after his mother passed away. The Conference also contributed to the yearly hardship scholarships paid to Sancta Maria College students.

– Grace Cheah

Howick Conference

Although small in numbers, the Howick Conference has a big heart. Needs have been met, even with disruption when our space in the parish was undergoing a renovation. A weekly foodbank operates – items for the foodbank are provided by our very generous parishioners. Their financial support enables us to purchase meat, cheese, eggs and frozen vegetables to supplement the staple tinned and dry goods in our food parcels.

In the lead-up to Christmas, families who came to us were given gift vouchers from either Kmart or The Warehouse so that they could get presents for their children. \$50 supermarket vouchers were also distributed.

We are very fortunate to have a wonderful reciprocal relationship with Our Lady Star of the Sea, our parish school. We donate an annual amount to the school for them to use as they see fit to help families who are struggling financially. During Lent we are supplied with large amounts of tins and dry goods which the students bring to school in response to drives like 'We Can Bring A Can'. We also receive fresh fruit and vegetables as and when these are harvested from the school garden.

– Libby Giddey

Renewal and Refounding in the Auckland Region

In July the Conferences of Auckland, North, West, East, South and Tamaki Makaurau gathered for a Festival meeting at the Columba Centre, Vermont Street, Auckland. Sunday Mass was celebrated nearby at Sacred Heart Church, followed by a luncheon and then a meeting. A key focus of the Festival was Refounding.

Mention needs to be made of the amazing work being done by Sue (Otahuhu Centre Manager), who was very successful with funding applications. These funds do make a difference and go some way to enabling South Auckland to be self-sufficient and independent. In this last quarter, added to these extra funds, for the first time since Covid, the three South Auckland shops have shown figures slightly over budget. Are we finally in a shop trading post-Covid era?

Rosanne Wills

– Auckland South Area President

Auckland West Area Council

Often referred to as the Wild West, we've been working on Refounding for most of this year and wild we've been! Refounding for us is about realigning our focus and projects to best reflect our core mission. I'm lucky to have some great Conference Presidents who have embraced the challenge. We planned amongst ourselves at our

Area Council meetings, and some ran with ideas immediately while others took a more cautious approach to change. After several Area Council meetings, we scheduled a Festival meeting with our wider group of Vincentians.

We had a wonderful Mass at the St Mary of the Immaculate Conception Chapel in Avondale. After Mass we had morning tea and a two-hour workshop on Refounding. Each of our Conference Presidents took part in presenting a section of the workshop. This worked well as it gave buy-in to them but also made it personal for their members.

SOME KEY OUTCOMES OF THE WORKSHOP WERE THAT:

- United we can make a difference. Conferences have asked that we meet in a similar forum (as an area) on a quarterly basis. Our first of these forums is in February, hosted by another Conference where we will plan our next few years and also assist one another with projects or events currently happening in each Conference.
- We made a commitment to having Refounding discussed at monthly meetings.
- A WhatsApp group has been created for Conference Presidents to ask questions, share ideas etc. For an old girl like me, that's progress!
- Many ideas were shared, some failed, some needed fine-tuning, and some were successes. We agreed it was important to share all of these! We also agreed it was ok to fail. The important thing is we keep trying.



The buzz of the workshop carried over to our annual pre-Christmas lunch. Normally, each person would bring a secret Santa gift but this year I decided to give everyone a geeky gift, being a Refounding Survival Kit. I was apprehensive at first, but they were well received and everyone loved them. Funnily enough, the highlight for most was the mirror and minties. If you refer to the photos below, you'll understand why.

Thanks again to the National Staff for their patience and assistance to us – you are all amazing!

Paula Betham

– Auckland West Area President



Presidents at Mass



Refounding Survival Kit

Bay of Plenty Area Council

2025 was a year marked by significant changes for the Bay of Plenty Area Council. This report outlines the key developments, transitions, and achievements within our area, reflecting the dedication and collaborative efforts of our members.

Leadership transition

In September 2025, Des Mulhern completed his term with the Council. Des has been an integral part of St Vincent de Paul for 25 years, having originally established the Waihi Conference. Throughout his time with the Society, he has held a variety of roles, many at the President level, including serving three years as National President. Des remains a highly valued member, and his ongoing support and experience will continue to be an asset to the Council moving forward.

Key meetings and organisational changes

In May, a pivotal meeting was held with National President Gerry Stevens and Executive Officer Anne-Marie McCarten. At this meeting, the Shops in Thermal Lands, which had been facing difficulties, were discussed. Gerry requested that the Western Bay take over the management of the two Shops in Rotorua and one in Whakatane. Additionally, it was proposed that the two areas merge, in alignment with a broader national policy under consideration.

Amalgamation process

The merger of the two areas was approached through a thorough consultation process, involving all Conferences from both regions. As a result, the amalgamation was completed and the new entity is now known as the Bay of Plenty Area Council. Over the latter part of the year, numerous visits were made to Conferences within the former Thermal Land area. These visits focused on meeting members, discussing operational systems, and ensuring that everyone felt comfortable and supported as part of the new structure.

Administrative updates

This year also saw a change in our banking arrangements, which required considerable effort to implement successfully. Lorna, our Area Administrator, devoted significant time and diligence to ensure a smooth transition for the nine Conferences within the Area. Her commitment was instrumental in facilitating this change with minimal disruption.

Ongoing mission and activities

Despite these organisational changes, our day-to-day mission serving the community through St Vincent de Paul has remained steadfast.

Key support provided during the year:

7,584	food parcels distributed
609	households furnished
142	baby packs provided
67	school uniforms supplied
309	budgeting and counselling sessions

The above figures represent only a portion of the vital work carried out by our dedicated team.

This year has witnessed an increase in demand for support, driven by rising living costs and more families struggling to meet their basic needs. The Bay of Plenty Area Council remains committed to responding to these challenges and supporting those in need throughout our community.

Carol Zilionis

– Bay of Plenty Area President

Canterbury Area Council

Festival Day

It was another busy year in Canterbury with some very important achievements. One of the highlights was the annual Festival Day which was held again at Marian College on the Feast Day of St Vincent de Paul. The event was very well organised by Jenny Carter (Rangiora Conference) and Maryanne Brown (Kaiapoi Conference) with the key speaker being Gerry Stevens, our National President. Over 80 Vincentians attended this amazing event that included members from our Ashburton, Temuka and Timaru Conferences.

The day commenced with Mass celebrated by Fr Chris Orr who spoke of the work of St Vincent de Paul. National President Gerry Stevens spoke on the Refounding of the Society. His vision was for a strong, vibrant, spiritually-focused and culturally inclusive Society that was committed to growing the love of God with our neighbours and those in need.



Mass with Fr Chris Orr

So why is Refounding needed? Our membership numbers have declined significantly over the eight years to 2025 while the number of Conferences has declined by 25% over this same time. There is much to do if our Society is to survive and thrive. Our Mission is “to bring the love of Christ to people in need.”

Later in the morning, Cyrene, our Young Vinnies/ Adults Coordinator, introduced three passionate Young Vinnies members who shared why they joined the Society of St Vincent de Paul, and most importantly, what keeps them inspired and hopeful for the future.

Their voices brought a renewed sense of hope and purpose to the theme of Refounding. Their stories reflected a deep desire to live out the values of compassion, service, and justice, not as distant ideals, but as real, everyday actions that make a difference.

After lunch, Verity Verster, founder of ‘Kai for the Community’, spoke about how the organisation supports vulnerable people, including the homeless, those with mental health and addiction challenges, single-parent families and the elderly who are living in poverty. Each Sunday evening K4TC collaborates with partner organisations across Christchurch to provide a two-course meal that is provided by a dedicated team of volunteers.

Refounding update

Refounding has become a priority for the Canterbury area and Area President, Bill Manning, has stated that this will be an ongoing focus during his Presidency. Within Canterbury Conferences, there is a range of levels of uptake of Refounding. Some are doing exceptionally well, with many reporting good engagement, while a minority

have yet to change or begin the process. Our Membership committee has been actively assisting Conferences in the Refounding process with excellent feedback.

Young Vinnies Commissioning Mass

A highly successful Commissioning Mass for our Young Vinnies and Youth was held at the auditorium of Catholic Cathedral College in Christchurch in April. This annual event was presided over by Bishop Michael Gielen with the assistance of Fr Chris Orr. This splendid occasion saw the attendance of Young Vinnies and Youth from some 15 primary schools and five high schools. They were supported by their teachers, Vincentians, parents and supporters with total attendance being over 500 people.



Ozanam Apartments

Since the opening of the doors at Ozanam Apartments in August 2023, 19 young families have been supported through the service. The collaboration between St Vincent De Paul and St John of God Hauora Trust (SJGHT) has been a very successful model of essential service provision for the young parent community in Ōtautahi-Christchurch. Of the young families who have accessed the service so far, four families have been supported into private rentals, four families have secured longer-term social housing,

three families have moved into accommodation supported by extended family, two young families were transferred to alternative transitional housing that best suited their individual safety needs and six families are current tenants.

The challenges faced by young families in need of transitional housing are complex and varied. SJGHT Waipuna Young Parents Development Service has been providing holistic, wrap-around support including home-based social work support and advocacy, counselling services, parenting education and community development. There has been substantial growth and change in the lives of the young families accessing the service, including the development of skills that broaden and strengthen opportunities for long-term accommodation stability.

Regional Representative

Brian Hutching was appointed as the Regional Representative for the Canterbury and West Coast region – one of six Regional Representatives appointed across New Zealand, collectively forming an integral part of the St Vincent de Paul National Board.

Throughout 2025, Brian has attended meetings in Wellington as designated by the National Board. These sessions have been an educational and informative process. It also provided an opportunity to meet Vincentians from other regions. The exchange of valuable insights and information has been beneficial, allowing Brian to bring successful ideas back to our local Conferences in Christchurch and the wider region. In addition to attendance at Area Council meetings, Brian has visited several Conferences, with a particular focus on the West Coast, as well as Kaiapoi, Sumner, and Ashburton. He was also present at the inauguration of the North Christchurch Conference. This significant event marked the amalgamation of the Burnside, Papanui, and Holy Trinity Conferences. Brian will visit the remaining Conferences in our region over the next year.

Given the vast geographical spread of the Canterbury and West Coast region, physical travel is not always feasible for frequent communication. To bridge this gap, digital tools such as Zoom and WhatsApp groups are being utilised to maintain regular contact with Conference Presidents.

THREE KEY MESSAGES THAT BRIAN AIMS TO SHARE WITH OUR MEMBERSHIP:

- **Finding God in the margins:** We must constantly remind our Conferences and volunteers of Frédéric Ozanam's core message – that we find God in those on the margins of society.
- **The Refounding initiative:** Spiritual renewal goes hand-in-hand with the Refounding initiative, which has already seen a promising start.
- **Non-judgmental service:** Although it can be difficult, we must strive not to judge those requesting help. Emulating the Good Samaritan, we are called to give without counting the cost.

New Manager

Polly Fisher commenced her role as Manager, Business Development and Operations, in late June following the departure of Robyn Casey.

Polly has significant previous experience at Vinnies, holding the roles of Shop Manager at Papanui and more recently, Retail Manager for all three Canterbury shops. Polly noted that Vinnies have an exciting year ahead with our new \$1 Shop opening in later January. This will provide affordable support to families in need. In addition, Polly is developing a partnership with *Kai for the Community*, that will be located at the same premises. The site has great potential and it is hoped to expand our outreach services there to better assist the most vulnerable members of our community.



New Area President

Bill Manning, currently the President of the Selwyn Conference, joined Vinnies late in 2023 after he retired from a successful business career. Born and bred in the Hawkes Bay, Bill attended St John's College in Hastings and on reaching the senior forms became a member of Vinnies Young Adults Conference at this secondary school. One of their



roles was to visit the retired people at the Little Sisters of the Poor home in Hastings. Many years later, Bill decided to rejoin Vinnies after hearing about the work of Vinnies at his parish church in Lincoln. He was only there a year or so and put up his hand for the Conference President role when the then-President decided it was time to step down.

Recently, Bill and his Conference members have been keen to establish a retail store plus foodbank at Rolleston. Bill, with input from several Vincentians, successfully developed a business case that was subsequently approved by National Board in Wellington.

International visitors

Alfons and his wife Mirjam visited Canterbury in mid-October, following an international Vincentian Conference in Singapore. Alfons holds the post of International Treasurer General for the Society of St Vincent de Paul.

Alfons and his wife Mirjam, with our Manager, Polly Fisher. Alfons and Mirjam used the opportunity to visit New Zealand whilst in the Southern Hemisphere. Whilst in Christchurch, he was most interested in our Shops. He indicated that there was nothing like them in the Netherlands. He was also very keen to learn about the Ozanam apartments and our relationship with the St John of God Hauora Trust.



Alfons and his wife Mirjam, with our Manager, Polly Fisher.

Paul Trezise, International Territorial Vice President (ITVP) for Oceania was also a recent visitor. He is assisted by a small team, including Christchurch's Keith Norton. Paul was keen to get an understanding of how the Society operates here. He attended the National Council meeting in Wellington and with Keith Norton, organised a quick tour of Society facilities

and Conferences in the South Island, including Christchurch, Ashburton, Oamaru and Dunedin. Paul thought that the level of engagement with the Refounding initiative was admirable, as were the working relationships built with other charities and community organisations (See page 31 for more).

Welfare

Since winter, there has been a noticeable increase in welfare requests, especially for furniture. Many families moving from transitional housing into permanent homes have turned to us for help, and the need continues to grow. In 2025, the Society received nearly 9,000 welfare calls for assistance. Over the past 15 months, Vinnies has delivered furniture to over 1,400 homes. This has ranged from a couch and lamp or dining table to a full household of furniture, bedding and homeware. Many of the requests were referred to Vinnies by social service agencies.

Changes in Conference Leadership

Over the past year, there have been several changes of Conference President at Beckenham (Rob Kent), Cathedral (Maurice Lawlor) and Hoon Hay-Halswell (David Taylor). Robert Tait has also taken over the reins at Addington following the Conference going into recess for six months. Big 'thank you's to retiring Presidents Denise Holling, Bruce Mayhew and Pat Watson for their leadership and contributions to each Conference.

Conference mergers

The Conferences in the former Mid-South Canterbury Area Council merged with Canterbury Area Council from mid-year. The merger followed meetings with the National President and Vice President and later the Canterbury Area President with the four Conference Presidents. At the Area Council meeting held in August, the Conference Presidents from Mid-South Canterbury were welcomed to the Canterbury Area Council and advised that our resources were available to assist them in the delivery of our mission.

In the latter part of 2025, the former Burnside, Holy Trinity and Papanui Conferences merged to form a new Conference, Christchurch North. The new Conference recently held a recruitment weekend in the parish.

It is pleasing to report that a number of Conferences have been busy recruiting new members. There have been positive outcomes for using soundly-based information and induction

programmes in Stella Maris, Cathedral, Addington and recently the Christchurch North Parish Conferences.

Christmas Grotto

This year's Grotto, held at Christ the King Centre over the 6-7 December, truly came alive with the spirit of giving. Each gift shared, each smile sparked, and each moment of gratitude reflected the heart of our Vinnies mission: to serve with love, uphold dignity, and bring hope where it's needed most. Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of our schools, organisations, community members, and Conferences, we were able to support close to 450 children with Christmas presents filling hearts with excitement, relief, and pure Christmas joy.



Young Vinnies at Our Lady of Victories School and Marian College presenting their gifts for our Christmas Grotto.

Long service to Vinnies

During the year, Canterbury celebrated the services of two long serving Vincentians – Dave Mallia and Paul McErlain.

Dave completed 50 years as a volunteer with the Society of St Vincent de Paul. He joined up in 1975 at St Patrick's Parish, Wainuiomata in Wellington. During 1979, Dave and his family made the move to Christchurch, and he immediately joined the St Paul's Conference at Dallington. A few years later he was instrumental in getting a Conference at Holy Family Parish, Burwood up and running.

Following the amalgamation of parishes, Dave joined the St Francis of Assisi Conference in Mairehau before moving over to the current Cathedral Conference where he continues to be an active member.

Over the 50 years as a volunteer and member, Dave has held several roles within these Conferences including President at Dallington, Burwood and Mairehau.



Dave Mallia with his wife Robyn and National President, Gerry Stevens.



Paul and Pat MacErlain

Paul MacErlain grew up in Riccarton and later was transferred to Invercargill where he was introduced to SVdP. On returning to Christchurch in 1973, he joined St Matthew's Parish where he again joined SVdP. Conference work included delivery of food parcels plus visits to the prisons, hospitals and rest homes. Paul was blessed to have the support of his wife Pat in his SVdP work. Pat still volunteers in the SVdP shop.

Bill Manning

– Canterbury Area President

Dunedin Area Council

This year has been an extremely busy one for us. The demand for our help has grown considerably, with the ever-increasing need for the necessities becoming a real burden on families.

We saw a dramatic increase in the need for firewood over the winter. In Dunedin we started to deliver supplies in February. The referrals and requests kept coming in and our \$10,000 budget for firewood went up to \$15,000. Luckily, we have a great supplier of firewood, and we were able to get it at a greatly reduced rate, so 62 families received three cubic metres of very dry wood, enabling them to supplement their heating for the winter. Oamaru have a wonderful contact at the local golf course and a Vincentian who would chop and deliver around town. They supplied wood to 20 families around their area. We are also very appreciative of the donation of jam from Oamaru for our foodbank. Each month they deliver 108 jars of jam.

One of our regular benefactors is very generous and his request is that we identify children at school in need of school uniforms, sports uniforms, sports fees, camps etc. We spend the \$25,000 he gives (in his words, "allowing children to go to school looking like all of the other children"). We work with our schools to identify these families and then a local Vincentian makes contact with them.

Our Dunedin foodbank is currently giving out 20 parcels a day (100 a week). This is done by appointment and interview with our foodbank. For the past 11 months we have supported 24,027 people with food assistance and various other needs. Our Conferences are also delivering on average 35 food parcels a week. Two of our Conferences have been providing toiletry care packages for 80 men, just released from prison, and one Conference every Christmas makes up parcels for Moana House, a drug and alcohol rehabilitation centre. Oamaru Conference has also supported the Auckland Food Hub by way of two very generous donations for food help. Oamaru also supplies petrol vouchers for emergency transport for families having to visit either Dunedin or Christchurch hospitals.

A highlight for us all was having a lovely meal at Burns Lodge in Mosgiel for our end-of-year gathering and having volunteers and Vincentians

all socialise together. We are blessed to have 120 volunteers working in our centres.

A huge thanks must go to Jacqui who joined us at the start of the year. We are very grateful for the multiple types of experience that Jacqui has brought with her, and this experience is proving invaluable when dealing with the multi-faceted nature of our centre. Thank you to our staff, Shop Manager Kylie and Van Driver extraordinaire Arkie for the day-to-day running of Dunedin and thanks to Renee in Oamaru for what she does there.

Mercy Parish in South Dunedin provides a Friday lunch every week for 35 to 40 individuals. This year we were asked to supply BBQ food and a dessert for their Christmas meal. In total 67 people from the South Dunedin area came to dine and Vincentians helped to serve and provide treats.



We are constantly in awe of the generosity of our donors, and we wish them all to know that their donations are used to help those in need of support.

Finally, we are pleased to report that our Refounding is going well and we now have a new Conference in Mosgiel with six new members.

Lynlea Forbes
– Dunedin Area President

Hamilton Area Council

2025 Service Overview

This report outlines the key services delivered by St Vincent de Paul Hamilton from June 2024 to July 2025, highlighting the positive impact our programmes have made for individuals and whānau across our community.

In 2025, our foodbank continued to be one of our most relied-upon services. We distributed 2,894 food parcels, an increase of 11%, providing the equivalent of 23,152 meals. This support ensured households experiencing unexpected hardship had access to essential kai during difficult times. Our Lest We Forget programme also saw significant growth, with 1,799 pensioner food packs delivered, an 18% increase. These regular visits offered both practical help and social connection for elderly community members who often face isolation.

Our Community Lunch Programme served 3,720 meals, reflecting a 7% year-on-year increase. The Rolton Community Centre kitchen has now become our primary venue, allowing us to welcome more guests into a warm, supportive environment where they can share a meal and connect with others. While demand for some services increased, our Family Assistance programme recorded 94 interventions, a 22% decrease following our transition to a crisis-only model from 1 April. This shift ensures resources are focused on urgent, high-need situations.

Our Good Power initiative experienced remarkable growth, supporting 384 customers, a 64% increase. Households saved an average of \$187 per year, offering real financial relief during a time of rising living costs.

Finally, our Healthy Homes team completed 168 interventions, improving warmth, safety, and energy efficiency for families living in sub-standard housing.

Across all services, Vinnies Hamilton remained steadfast in our mission to uphold dignity, reduce hardship, and walk alongside those who need us most. Our 2025 results reflect a community-led effort grounded in compassion, resilience, and hope.

2024 – 2025 Statistics

Foodbank 2894 parcels

Lest We Forget 1799 pensioner food packs

Community Lunch 3720 meals served

Family Assistance 94 interventions

Good Power 384 customers

Healthy Homes 168 interventions

Jim Nolan

– *Hamilton Area President*

Hastings Area Council

The St Vincent de Paul Hastings Area Council comprises 37 members and 12 associate members across four Conferences: St Peter Chanel (Flaxmere), Sacred Heart (Hastings), Our Lady of Lourdes (Havelock North), and St Pius (Central Hawke's Bay). While current membership numbers remains stable, we recognise the importance of succession planning to ensure the continued strength and growth of our Society.



The Council continues to successfully operate two retail Shops, one in Hastings and one in Flaxmere, under the leadership of two full-time Shop managers who co-ordinate more than 50 Shop volunteers. These Shops provide an essential service and receive outstanding support from their local communities. The income they generate, together with contributions from generous donors and funding grants, has enabled the Council to meet every request for assistance to date.

During the past year, requests for support from both the Council and affiliated Conferences have continued to rise significantly, particularly in relation to food insecurity. The Council's Food Pantry has experienced constant demand, and without the ongoing financial support of local donors, we would not have been able to sustain this vital service.

Across the region, our outreach programmes have remained strongly focused on providing practical assistance. Support has included food parcels, firewood deliveries, bereavement packages, furniture, kitchenware, bedding, and clothing. Additional financial support has also been provided to help cover essential living costs such as electrical and medical bills, transport and fuel.

The Council remains deeply grateful to our four Conferences, whose members represent the face of Saint Vincent de Paul and continue to serve the most vulnerable in our communities. Members have provided ongoing support to elderly, sick, and socially-isolated individuals through weekly visits to rest homes and private homes to deliver Communion, as well as regular home visits and phone calls offering friendship, encouragement, and pastoral care. Throughout the year, bereavement packages and Easter and Christmas cheer parcels were distributed to those in need. Members have also assisted with the collection, on-selling, and redistribution of donated furniture and household goods to families and individuals facing hardship.

We are also immensely proud of the Vinnies Youth programme operating in our region. Under the leadership of Hawke's Bay Vinnies Youth Co-ordinator Joylene Whibley and two volunteer leaders, approximately 100 students from the two Catholic secondary schools and four Catholic primary schools within our area have been actively involved in fundraising, service, and hospitality initiatives supporting their local communities.



In turn, the Council has continued to support students attending our Catholic schools by providing a \$1,000 scholarship to a Year 9 student studying at St John's College, Hastings, and by offering financial assistance towards school fees, uniforms, transport, and camp costs for families facing financial hardship. The Council also remains committed to supporting the increasing number of Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) workers in the region by providing free clothing and other essential items upon their arrival and departure — a cost fully absorbed by the Council.

While the year has presented challenges due to the growing demand on the Council's financial resources, the gratitude of those we assist continues to inspire and strengthen our commitment to carrying forward the legacy of Blessed Frédéric Ozanam.



Jim Leogreen
– Hastings Area President

Hutt Valley and Wairarapa Area Council

Nau mai haere mai e te whānau!

Our mahi

I am keeping this short and sweet as I want to acknowledge all the great work that has been happening in my area Council by way of photos.

We started the year with one of our taonga/ treasures, Margaret Benge, passing in February at 92 years of age. Margaret dedicated years of her life to the Society of St Vincent de Paul and helped

so many people in need over the years in Woburn and Wainuiomata. She is a total legend and her legacy will live on in the people that knew her well, including me.

This year has been the most challenging in my role as Area Council President. There has been a lot going on in the Shop space with changes in staff and the recruitment of new staff and volunteers. I have some dedicated volunteers who have provided ongoing support and help during times of transition and change. A massive thank you to them.



Mike Driscoll (St Josephs Upper Hutt Conference President), Bernice Smith (HVW Area Council President) Chitral Silva (accountant).

Highlights

There are nine Conferences and three Shops in my Area Council who all work towards the shared goal of helping people in need and helping those in the community who need a hand up.

Waiwhetū and Eastbourne Conference continue to partner with Te Kakano O Te Aroha Marae and provide clothing to the homeless from our Petone Shop which donates goods on a regular basis to people and families in need.

Wainuiomata Conference had a monetary donation from St Claudine Thevenet School to help families in need with food.

The Petone Shop celebrated World Day of the Poor – 'You are my hope' – on 16 November with free items for customers and those in need.

The three Shops continue to provide a hub for people to connect, buy items at reasonable prices and are an avenue to help people in need. The Shops are a destination and recent changes we have made have seen a marked increase in donations and customers.

I am very thankful to all the Vincentians, volunteers and paid staff who continue to promote the vision of St Vincent de Paul and be there for people and families who need a hand up.

Mauri ora

Bernice Smith

– President, Hutt Valley and Wairarapa Area Council



World Day of the Poor - 16/11/2025
Middle - new shop manager Kath Delahunty.
Back row - Duke, Gerry, Zannah, Alina.

Kapi Mana Area Council

Otaki Conference

There are five members in the Otaki Conference, who are busy with a range of activities.

Bread continues to be collected from Countdown Waikanae every Friday morning and is distributed to the Otaki Catholic Workers Community, along with tins of food, and bread is also distributed to the Thursday Soup Kitchen lunch and the remainder to our Levin colleagues.

We continue to financially support those who can't pay their pharmacy prescription or medical costs. We also assist in meeting the costs of children in respect of their attendance dues. We recently targeted our monthly collection towards the purchase of pajamas for children at the school.

Visits continued from time to time to those who are sick, lonely and those who live on their own. Visits also continue to War Veterans who live on their own and those who live in the War Vets Home in Levin.

Members continue to be involved with other organisations, such as the Returned Services Welfare committee and Cobwebs, the Otaki Shop run by volunteers from several church groups. Our Treasurer is also the Parish Secretary and our Secretary is heavily involved with Parish Liturgy activities. We also assisted in the preparation of the Anointing Mass for parishioners.

Peter Mohan

– Otaki Conference President

Kāpiti Conference

Our Lady of Kāpiti Conference continues to thrive with 32 active members, including six new members this year. All members, including the new ones, are kept very busy thanks to a strong induction programme. We are organised in such a way that we are able to spend time with our 'companions' – the name we give to the 133 families we helped this year – as we deliver food or just visit. On average we spend 15 - 20 minutes with each companion each time we see them.

We also work with other organisations – with Birthright for furniture and used goods; with Mary's Guest House providing a meal once a month, with the local Cancer Society supporting patients and their families, with Vinnies in Levin and Otaki supporting refugees arriving in Levin, with local schools to provide help with food, uniforms and stationery, with the local Council in supporting rough sleepers.

It is important to note, in this year of Refounding, we are striving to be an intentional faith community. Our meetings last two hours and the first 25 - 30 minutes is spent in prayer and reflection. We have conducted a self-evaluation according to the values listed on pages 10 and 11 of the Turning Point Refounding resource and realise that we have work to do in improving our inclusivity and our connection within the Conference. Currently every second meeting we focus on Refounding.

Peter Ryan

– Kāpiti Conference President

Plimmerton Conference

Our Conference has 31 active members and 20 associate members, with a number of other parishioners assisting us at events such as funerals, if required.

At the time of writing this report, 552 food parcels have been delivered to families or individuals in need. These have benefited 2,060 people. We have noticed an increase in requests for food parcels since one of our members reached out to kindergartens in the Porirua area.

Another of our members liaises with the contact person for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren and provides them with non-perishable goods when required. Christmas Hampers for 100 families or single person households were distributed in December. It is a huge undertaking, but one which benefitted many people.

Visits to parishioners and local residents in rest homes, care facilities, hospitals and private homes are a core aspect of our Conference. To date, 403 visits have been made by our members. People are also contacted by phone, when we hear of someone who would appreciate a phone call, but doesn't want a visit.

Our parishioners continue to be very generous in their giving throughout the year to our pantry and to our Christmas Hamper appeal, whether it be in grocery or food items, or financial donations. We also have an excellent relationship with our local New World supermarket. They have an onsite donation bin, collecting donations from customers, and they also donate bread to our pantry and to the local schools we support. They nominated our SVdP conference as the recipient of their National Foodbank Drives in May and November. This has been of great benefit to us and to those in our community whom we serve. Kiwi Community Assistance (KCA) donates fresh produce and grocery items which are excess to supermarket requirements.

The residents of Aotea Summerset continue to contribute to our foodbank with food and monetary support and we are grateful to Father Maurice for his initiative and support. The Whitby Lakes Village Committee once again organised a "personal care" collection of donated goods from residents, which went into the Christmas Hampers, and were also used as gifts for the residents of Ribbonwood at their Christmas party. Te Kōhanga Reo o Horouta Marae also supports us with food that is surplus to their requirements.

Our commitment to Ribbonwood (a MASH Trust Residential Home for 18 residents) continues with a weekly service of prayers, hymns, bible or saint stories and inspirational poems. Two members lead the service. Attendance varies between four and 12 residents. There are 17 members and associates involved with this ministry. A Christmas party was held for the residents.

We make financial donations twice a year to the four Catholic schools in our area, through a discretionary fund sent to the principals. We support the Porirua Pharmacy with a discretionary grant which is topped up several times during the year, and we have a similar arrangement with the dental practice in the same area. Several of our members volunteer once a week at the SVdP shop in Mungavin Avenue.

We support bereaved families by providing a 'hospitality basket' of basic pantry items within 24 hours. We have provided practical assistance in the hall after a funeral if this is requested by the family – setting up the hall for the serving of refreshments, serving food, tea and coffee, and cleaning up afterwards. We have assisted at five funerals this year, with the number of attendees being between 100 and 200.

Two of our members work with the Young Vinnies at St Theresa's School, and support Amanda Joe, the Young Vinnies coordinator in her work.

Our President attended the Refounding meeting held on 16 August. We have always begun our meetings with a spiritual reading of some description but now take 10 - 15 mins to reflect on the reading. Members are encouraged to share how we see this relating to/enhancing our lives as Vincentians. Prayer support is strongly encouraged. Our President also attended a meeting in September on the proposed amalgamation of Wellington and Kapi Mana Area Councils.

Next year our Conference has to decide how it is going to handle the referrals of food parcel and welfare requests. Vicki Truyens, manager of the Mungavin Ave SVdP, has done this for the last 10 or more years, but with management of the Porirua store passing out of the hands of SVdP, this is something she will no longer be doing. We do have a year or more to get a suitable system up and running, and with the support of the National Council Area Representative, I am sure we will find the best way forward.

Robyn Teppett

– Plimmerton Conference President

Manawatu Whanganui Area Council

Conferences in the Manawatu Whanganui Area have continued their work in their communities and have strongly committed to the Refounding process with some interesting local initiatives.

Holy Family Conference

The Conference has 15 active members with two new members who were commissioned at Mass at the Cathedral on the Feast of St Vincent de Paul.

Our members are engaged in a range of activities. Praying for and visiting the elderly is a regular part of our service. The Conference has funds at Gonville Health Pharmacy to assist with prescription costs, provides Pak'nSave vouchers to needy families and assists with board and lodgings. It also provides tinned fish to the local foodbank on a six-weekly basis.

Over the last year we have helped St Marcellin School with the purchase of white boards, given financial support for a family relocating to the city and provided Warehouse vouchers to families at Christmas. We run two raffles annually to boost funds which are generously supported by parishioners. We provide financial support to National relief appeals.

The Conference has embraced Refounding and spiritual reflection at meetings has been strengthened, resulting in deeper discussion and sharing. The Parish Priest and President of the Parish Council attended a meeting to see how Refounding is being introduced. They were impressed with the process and information provided and are fully supportive of our journey. Fr Craig Butler actively supports us in our work. Our Conference is strengthened and more focused with the new guidelines.

St Vinnie's Shop Whanganui

We have a team of approximately 35 Shop volunteers assisting in our Vinnies Shop. The Shop provides free clothes and household items to anyone who asks for help. We are known as the friendliest and best second-hand shop in Wanganui. Thirty years of



Fr Craig Butler and Shirley Cooper cutting our birthday cake, celebrating 30 years in Victoria Avenue Whanganui.

the Vinnies shop in Victoria Avenue Whanganui was celebrated in style by local Vincentians and supporters in July. We had daily sales, lucky spot prizes, a colouring-in competition, cutting of the birthday cake and a fashion parade in our week of celebrations.

St Joseph's Dannevirke

This Conference is being proactive in Refounding by remembering the goals of the Society: to put our faith into action through developing the life of Christ in us and then bringing Christ to the less fortunate. We endeavour to serve the needy in our community through prayer and providing food, clothing and companionship where it is lacking. The St Vinnie's Shop helps equip us for the task by providing funds along with goods. We are grateful to parishioners and members of the wider community whose generous donation of goods to the Shop enables us to do our work.

Through the year we have been able to provide over 360 food parcels to people in the community and provide assistance to some of the families at our parish school.

Last December we provided 129 families with a Christmas food parcel, including gifts for 75 children. At both national and local level we have provided help to other groups who assist people in need: Caritas, Sisters of the Missions and St Vincent de Paul Feilding. We contributed to a St Vincent de Paul Samoa school and library appeal and to Philippines Earthquake assistance through Father Ralph, our Parish priest.

St Brigid's Feilding

This Conference has sustained the Vincentian spirit in St Brigid's parish in Feilding for over 60 years.

- We have 10 active members, six associate members, a number of casual volunteers and an enthusiastic group of Young Vinnies at St Joseph's school under the guidance of the Director of Religious Studies.
- Our focus over the year has been to maintain contact with the sick and elderly of our community and provide emergency food parcels to those in need.
- Reflecting the Refounding focus of the Society, we are endeavouring to initiate and maintain conversations with the people to whom we are providing assistance, as for some the conversation is more uplifting than the actual gift.
- One initiative found helpful was instead of providing our traditional prepared food parcel for the 200 Manawatu Community Trust pensioner flats, we first visited each tenant and asked whether they would prefer a food parcel, a petrol voucher or a Warehouse voucher. The option of having a choice was very well received and led to respectful and appreciative conversations with people who wanted to be listened to.
- In cooperation with the local branch of Heart Kids NZ, we provided pre-cooked meals for families with children undergoing heart operations in hospitals.
- St Brigid's Vinnies have maintained good working relationships with St Joseph's and Lytton St Schools in Feilding and St Matthew's in Marton. Individual families are assisted as considered appropriate on the advice from the school.
- St Joseph's and Lytton St Schools organise collections of canned goods on our behalf in gratitude for the food parcels we supply to needy families they identify.
- We organise anointing Masses and a light lunch for the elderly in our parish in Lent and Advent.
- We support the breakfast club at St Josephs school in Feilding.
- We visit the sick and elderly of our parish.
- We provide confidential support to women's refuge and Super Grans.

WE ARE VERY GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT WE RECEIVE FROM:

- St Brigid's parishioners with prayer, groceries, financial donations, bequests and practical assistance
- Financial donations from the St Dominics Trust
- The Meat the Need organisation for supplying frozen mince supplies and milk powder for our food parcels
- Manchester House Social Services Feilding for their help and advice.

Finally, I acknowledge with gratitude the huge contribution Phil Brady, our previous Conference President, has made in sustaining and expanding the work of our Conference over the last decade. Phil's health has forced a restriction on his activity as a Vincentian but he remains an associate member and is in our prayers.

St Patrick's Conference in Palmerston North

Our Conference has 20 active members and 17 associate members. Our community outreach in 2025 included:

- personal deliveries of 1325 food parcels – an increase of 20% on 2024
- follow-up visits to those we have contacted and helped
- deliveries of hard and soft furnishings from our Shop, as well as various other welfare assistance
- food parcels for incoming refugee families as advised by the Red Cross
- visiting and holding Liturgy of the Word and Communion services in rest homes
- help and companionship for those confined to home.

Compared to previous years, we have experienced significantly more new people asking for help, particularly from blended families and those with young children.

We are well supported by the Catholic

community with regular and generous donations of food, money and goods. Other like-minded charitable bodies also assist from time to time.

We have a committed team of volunteers at our St Vinnie's Shop. Our Catholic Schools are active in holding pupil-driven collections of food, clothing and toys to supplement our needs.

We commissioned two new members for our Conference at our festival Mass for the feast of St Vincent de Paul, celebrated by Bishop John Adams. We have another five new members to commission in the new year.

Rose Semmens

– Manawatu Whanganui Area President

Marlborough Area Council

The Picton Conference has helped the Picton community in various ways over the last year – paying accounts, providing meals and firewood, helping the local schools with events and equipment, providing clothing, school uniforms, food parcels, accommodation, petrol and help with travel.

We have provided clothing to the vineyard workers from Vanuatu and other vineyard workers. Shop Manager Marianne chairs the Community Heartland meetings which keeps the Conference in touch with the needs of the community; the Shop continues to do very well under her guidance with regular fun volunteer excursions to maintain great morale. Sadly four bored youths broke in and damaged goods in their storage facility, but it was heartening to see the community gather around for the clean-up.

The Blenheim

Conference was saddened by the death of St Vincent de Paul stalwart Pat Cairns during the year. She left big shoes to fill with her years in the community and local knowledge, not to mention her boundless energy and passion to serve.



Pat Cairns

Our clients have increased by 140% this year. We have worked with other organisations to help people in need with payments for bonds and the usual bills. We have also helped some people meet reparation payments.

Even those working are finding it tough with Government cuts having far-reaching effects. We have advocated for some clients to WINZ and Kaianga Ora with mixed success.

As in Picton, mental health is a big issue in our community, as is the P epidemic which is prevalent across the country. The Blenheim Vinnies does very well under the care of Michelle and volunteer coordinator Annette. We are fortunate to have such a valuable resource to be able to help our community.

We look forward to co-hosting the AGM in March 2026 and showing off our region.

Lorraine Walker

– Marlborough Area President

Napier Area Council

St Patrick's Conference

During the last year our St Patrick's Conference has engaged in several outreach initiatives to assist those in need, extending Christ's compassionate hand in the community and in keeping with our Refounding message.

In the Central Business District, we collaborated with the Methodist Church to provide meals for those experiencing homelessness. We helped to serve dinner there three times a week, supplying canned goods, meat and various food items. This service was facilitated at the church where tables were set up to provide a communal dining experience.

In addition to our work with the homeless, Conference members visited individuals and families facing various challenges including loneliness and mental health issues. One dedicated member provides transport for shopping and appointments, and co-ordinates food vouchers for immediate assistance. Seventeen cord of wood was delivered during the cold winter months to families identified as needing help.

A core focus of our mission is supporting local schools. We believe that all children deserve the necessary resources to thrive academically and spiritually. This year we have contributed to school camps, covered power bills, provided school uniforms, shoes and stationery. We also support a school breakfast programme for college students who arrive early. Some of the food for this initiative is generously donated by parishioners and distributed by Conference members.

Kainga Ora approached us with a request for food during the year as quite often the clients they see do not have enough to feed themselves or their children. Donated food from St Patrick's Church parishioners is delivered there by a Conference member.

We are forever grateful for the support we receive from within our community and also for those who support and donate goods to our Vinnies Shop. Without their help and the generous support we receive from our volunteers, we would not be able to carry out the work we do.

The Refounding message has reinvigorated our commitment to fulfilling God's mission and deepening our faith through action. We aim to treat all people equally and without judgement.

Christine Tong

– St Patrick's Conference President

St Mary's Conference

It has been another busy year for us at St Mary's. We have continued to assist cyclone-affected families still requiring assistance. This has been in the form of counselling, food, petrol and household goods.

We now regularly support four schools with a donation each term to their hardship funds. Those schools are now promoting us with an article in their newsletters. This has prompted more people to contact us for support. It is also a wonderful way for us to spread the good works and mission of St Vincent de Paul.



'Nourished for Nil' [food rescue service] donations from our generous parishioners average three to four bags each week. Parcels are collected from 'Nourished for Nil' weekly and delivered to WEAVE (formerly Napier Family Centre) for their clients.

Requests have also been coming to us from migrant families new to the area. School uniforms, food, clothing and household items are the essentials for these families. It is very humbling to see their faith in action.

We seem to have almost weekly requests for food from different people, directed to us from many contacts, all people with differing circumstances. It is great that we are able to assist these people in need.

With Refounding now a part of the way ahead, we pray for the future of the Society and a renewed spiritual journey for us all.

In the words of Frédéric Ozanam: "Do not be afraid of new beginnings. Be creative. Be inventive".

Marg von Hartitzsch

– St Mary's Conference President

Nelson Tasman Area Council

We are blessed by the regular and thoughtful participation of our members, volunteers, parishioners, supporters and Vinnies Youth.

THIS YEAR WE WERE ABLE TO HELP PEOPLE 2,987 TIMES ACROSS OUR FIVE BRANCHES WITH:

- household costs including repairs, power/rent, rubbish removal, furniture
- advice, emotional support, advocacy and referrals to other organisations
- education costs including school contributions, adult training courses
- visits and drop-in sessions
- food, toiletries, linen and firewood.

We suffered from major storms in May, June and July that caused flooding. The estimated cost to the region was \$260 million. Thanks to the generous support of several other Area Councils and head office, and our strong membership and community connections, we were able to respond quickly and in many practical ways. We were able to help 'our' people who already suffer from financial hardship, mental and physical challenges – made worse by the floods and effects on the local economy and employment.

Our three Shops increased their overall revenue for the third year in a row, and the Nelson Shop upgrade was completed. The Shops provide an affordable, welcoming and kind place for people from all walks of life to come and enjoy the St Vincent de Paul values. Our regular Conference meeting and events (Anointing and Commissioning Masses), picnics and group tasks helped our new members join in with our activities and enjoy a sense of belonging.

Elizabeth Owens

– Nelson Tasman Area President



Southland Area Council

Through the generosity of our volunteers and donors, and the dedicated work of Society members, we have been able to make a difference in the lives of a large number of Southland people who found themselves on the margins in society this year. Here are some areas of activity.

- **Pomona Street Rebuild:** Once again this has been the major focus of the Council in 2025. We have successfully changed the zoning of the Shop so we can go ahead with our next stage of development.

- **Nightcaps:** Sr Maria has regularly travelled out with food from Vinnies and the Foodbank and has forged a relationship with the medical centre, to continue to assist families and the elderly there.
- **Flats:** we have focused on making the flats more suitable for those with disabilities, with a new wet floor shower installed in the two flats which became vacant.
- **Shops:** Joy, Christine and Pam continue to meet the needs of their customers, often with a kind word, a sympathetic ear, a subtle gesture of support. Both volunteers and customers benefit enormously from their presence and their actions. This continual support cannot be underestimated.
- **On-line sales:** we now have a new dedicated phone for this and other areas of help.
- **Tertiary Education Scholarships:** We now have two young people benefitting from these and both appear to be succeeding in their areas of study. This year's recipient has been chosen and is absolutely delighted.
- **Holiday food vouchers for families with school children:** St Theresa's oversees this programme which is eagerly received by families. This is probably our highest-cost initiative and benefits around 40 families four times each year. On top of this we regularly distribute donated food to a range of families.
- **Refounding:** this is the process, initiated by head office, of taking the time to look at our original founding principles to see if we are still acting in accordance with this today. Bernadette attended a national meeting dedicated to this and is spearheading the process in the province. Tony from Gore also attended so we are developing closer relations with this group.
- **New members:** In response to a reported 70% drop in members, we are all actively recruiting for new members. Bernadette spoke at all the city Masses in August and gave out a flyer with phone numbers on it, including the new number of a dedicated Vinnies phone set up by a new volunteer. The response has been positive, particularly

with three new migrants offering their services. We now have business cards with the phone numbers on them so that we are more accessible. I have organised for this information to be in the parish bulletin each week so again we have a point of contact in all parishes.

- **Foodbank:** Thanks to our two Vinnies members' work with the Southland Foodbank, we are in close contact with other similar organisations and can complement what they do. Neill often brings extra food items to Pomona Street and Joy distributes them judiciously. Richard's 'Young Farmer of the Year' contact made an incredibly generous food donation which was so significant that he passed it on to the Foodbank.
- **Behind the scenes:** Tony diligently manages the books, along with the able assistance of Ann. Their work is vital and underpins all the other work we do.

Personally I would like to thank all of the members, whether named or unnamed, for their dedication and support over the past year. My report barely touches on the scope and depth of the work that we do. While the food and the food vouchers and the material items are very important at the time, it is the relationships that we forge, the respect that we show to our brothers and sisters in their time of need that display our beliefs in a loving God who calls us to humbly serve each other.

God bless you all.

Bernadette Ford

– Southland Area President

Taranaki Area Council

At the national level, elections have been held for six Regional Representatives. This was an initiative passed at our National AGM in 2024 to help ease the ever-increasing compliance issues that have put pressure on volunteer Area Presidents. It was hoped that the Area Presidents could then spend more time helping at Conference level.

I think we in the Palmerston North Diocese have been very lucky to have Steve Doohan as our elected spokesperson. He attends our area

meetings, he is enthusiastic and more than happy to take any of our ideas or concerns we have back to National on our behalf. We thank him firstly for putting his name forward and then taking up the challenge.

I attended the National AGM in Tauranga in March. The main workshop was on Refounding the Society to address an aging membership and falling numbers. Since 2018 membership has fallen by nearly 70% and Conferences down 25%. We are seen mostly as a "welfare" Society and have lost sight of our "Mission", the spiritual needs of our members and the needs of those who are struggling in our society.

In August Area and Conference Presidents attended a Refounding meeting in Wellington to see how we can better serve the needy in a modern world which has very much changed since the Society was founded by Frédéric Ozanam in 1833 in France.

A small group of members represent their Conferences at our Area Council meetings held four times a year at Stratford. Most have held multiple positions within their Conferences and work very hard to uphold the true spirit of being Vincentians. I wish to thank the Stratford ladies for their wonderful hospitality, setting up the room and providing afternoon tea at the conclusion of our meetings.

Each of our three Conferences meet monthly. Meetings always start with a prayer and reflection which can challenge us in our thinking and lead to some lively debate on occasions.

Membership numbers at year-end were 32 full members, (five less than last year), 61 associate members and 54 volunteers/Shop workers. This reflects where we are at as a Society with few younger people prepared to take up the mantle. When our two city Conferences amalgamated less than two years ago, their combined full membership was sitting at 18 but now it is only seven. It is also unfortunate that having purchased a new van, they have had to finish deliveries of furniture due to a lack of men able to carry out this work. The van will be put up for sale.

All Conferences are active in charitable and social justice works within their communities and continue to support the needs of individuals and groups with both their time and financially. A huge thanks to the Toi Foundation for \$20,000 towards community meals again this year.

Just a special mention here of the Stratford Conference. They are a small group, with no Shop to support what they do, but their work in the community is huge. I think our founding members would be proud of what they are achieving in our changing world.

Our four young Vinnies groups, two in New Plymouth and one in Stratford and Hawera, are attached to four Catholic primary schools. The children help with community meals, morning and afternoon teas and entertainment on special occasions. St Pius School parents provide soup during the winter months at the New Plymouth community meals. Students from our two New Plymouth Catholic secondary schools have helpers setting up tables and serving meals. St Joseph's School Hawera had a multi-day to bring a blanket or some wool for our knitters. These items were then donated to our Shop.

The two Shops do well financially and provide well-presented, well-priced clothing and other small goods. This is only achievable with the support of our local communities that support us with donated items that we can then sell. The Shops are fully staffed by volunteers happy to turn up for a few hours per week on a particular day. They enjoy volunteering and the camaraderie that goes with it. With the employment of a Shop manager in New Plymouth two years ago, turnover is now double what it was before.

Social Services	
Food parcels for families	1,043
Number of meals provided	130
Meals on wheels	961
Food vouchers issued	19
Number of people attending community meals, morning and afternoon teas	2,897



Other services	
Furniture deliveries	223
Linen/bed packs supplied	205
Crockery	69
Gardening/lawn mowing/firewood/house cleaning	12
Prisoner support	93
Bereavement baskets	12
Mass cards	30
Clothing	25
Fuel vouchers	28
Medical and Health costs paying doctors/dentist and prescription fees	30
Donations and miscellaneous	147

This included a large number of banana boxes of clothes, hospital equipment and student desks which were sent to Samoa and Tonga.



Visitations	
Rest Home	1,376
Private Homes	579
Hospital	67
Phone calls	212
Transport to and from appointments, supermarket and pharmacy pickups	75

Our Vincentians who carry out this work are special people who care deeply for those they visit. They are a listening ear for our elderly, sick and those less fortunate than ourselves.

Taranaki is always generous with national appeals, hearing aids for the elderly, 'Assist a

Student', our Twinning projects in Sri Lanka and support for Samoa and Tonga.

Locally we support many other organisations with time and money. One such group 'Out the gate' is working with recently released prisoners. The Shops supply clothing, bedding and health packs. We make individual donations according to the cases presented to us. We also support students in our Catholic schools with funds for pastoral care and tertiary grants.

To my Area Council team, thank you all so much for the work you do and the support you give me. To those who attend our meetings, send in three monthly reports, get stats to me in a timely manner, thank you. To our three Conference Presidents, their team of members, associate members, volunteers and shop workers, each of you contribute to the work and spirit of our Society. We are blessed to have you all as part of our Vincentian family. God bless you all.

Annette Orchard

– Taranaki Area President

Wellington Area Council

The past year has been a very challenging but positive year, with a lot of change and learning required.

The Wellington Region has probably been the hardest hit region in New Zealand, with a high number of redundancies and reduced government funding for welfare. This has meant a number of budgeting services, foodbanks, and parent support initiatives have closed. We are very fortunate we don't depend on government funding. However, this has meant we have come under more pressure, especially our foodbanks which have had twice as many clients as last year.

Our Shops have distributed around \$30,000 of retail goods to our clients. By working with other charities, we have been able to help fill the gap. The Ohariu Conference has combined their foodbank with Challenge 2000 which has proved to be a very successful relationship. Over 170 Christmas hampers with toys were distributed to the Northern suburbs at Christmas.

Ozanam House is the hub of the Wellington Area Council. It is a three-story building in the

middle of Newtown, with the first two floors used for our Op Shop and warehouse. The third floor is the gateway to our Mission. Staff there accept 90% of all inquiries to Vinnies for assistance in the Wellington area, forwarding the inquiry to the appropriate Conference. Volunteer training is held there, teaching all the new health and safety requirements and Shop systems.

We have 200 registered volunteers in the Wellington area. The challenge now is to turn volunteers into Vincentians. The Central Conference operates a foodbank, delivering food packages to clients in the central suburbs of Wellington. The team also have a parenting shop where families can come and choose clothing for children under six years for free. Last year they also ran a Christmas shop where more than 60 families were able to choose Christmas presents for free.

Seven years ago, the Wellington Area Council operated nine shops profitably, but due to market conditions and poor decision-making, six years later we only operate five shops and not all are profitable. The Area Council decided to try and reverse this trend, which seems to be happening nationwide, by reinvesting and taking a more professional approach to op shop retailing. This is called the Wellington Pilot Project.

This Project has been a big learning curve for everyone involved – refurbishing the Shops, new computer system, new stock system, new payroll system, new HR and volunteer systems. Kapi Mana and National Office asked that their shops be amalgamated into this project. There have been good signs of progress, with all Wellington Shops now back in profit and overall sales up 15% to 18%. It's still early days, however, but the signs are encouraging. A new Shop has opened in Porirua.



A huge thanks must go to all the Shop managers, staff and volunteers who have acted brilliantly.

Paul Cameron

– Wellington Area President

West Coast Area Council

St Mary's Conference, Hokitika

I am very fortunate to have a very dedicated and experienced committee, who with their knowledge, passion and energy, make things happen in our small town of Hokitika. Our keen volunteers serve in the Shop and our creative ladies decorate our Shop front window to reflect events happening in Hokitika – be it the work of the Cancer Society, the Wild Food Festival, or penguin-themed activities, it is all about community pride, plus great friendship, fellowship and networking.

We are very fortunate that we have lots and lots of generous local people who donate their clothing and material items to us. We thank them so much for their kindness.

In 2025 New Zealanders found it hard going with cost-of-living expenses (food, rates, insurances, power etc.) having risen sharply. Mindful of this, we continued to support the needy in our district to the value of \$24,917 (\$19,493 the previous year) with food and fuel vouchers, clothing, material and furniture items.

We also provided gifts for St Mary's students making their First Holy Communion, supported St Mary's youth group and St Mary's school-leavers, and provided Christmas gifts for rest home residents. We supported a number of community-based groups, including Grey Power, Kai Puku Food Rescue, the Hokitika Lions Club, Soroptimist (an empowerment group for women) and Red Cross.

In the past year Ian and Lorraine Davidson took over 200 rubbish bags of clothing to Christchurch for the Kids for Cancer fundraising bins. In the past 10 years Kids for Cancer fundraising initiatives have raised \$3.5 million dollars.

Our Op Shop trading figures for the past year were fantastic – we had both summer and winter clothing sales to reduce our stocks.



In March 2025, I attended my first National St Vinnies Conference, held in Tauranga. The theme was 'Refounding Our Society – A Turning Point' and the focus was on getting back to the original inspiration of the Society's founder, Frédéric Ozanam. It was lovely to hear what wonderful work other St Vinnies Conferences are doing in their area.

We are blessed to have many keen volunteers helping the needy. A lot of valuable information and suggestions for improvement comes from our volunteers at our quarterly workshops. Lorraine Davidson, our Shop manager, is critical to our success with all the time and energy she puts into our Hokitika branch. We are also grateful to our handyman Ian 'Swampy' Davidson, our treasurer Chris Wright and our branch secretary, Victoria Halliday.

Finally, a huge 'thank-you' to our committee members and our keen volunteers who make it happen.



“

Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless.

”

Greymouth Conference

2025 was another productive and busy year for our operation and team of wonderful volunteers. Without this dedicated team, who generously give their time to help others, our organisation would struggle to exist. We are grateful and thank every volunteer for everything they do so selflessly.

In terms of membership, it seems we have a missing generation. It is becoming challenging to engage and attract younger members and volunteers. This is a point for consideration and discussion within our organisation moving forward.

Nevertheless, much was achieved in 2025. Over the last year we assisted approximately 1,300 people.

Our help extended to schools, groups and families in need in our community. Schools received assistance with vouchers for food, clothing, school camps and Christmas vouchers to ensure all children received a present for Christmas. The schools advised of children who were in need of shoes or had no swimwear, and we provided what was required.

The Greymouth Youth Group was given fuel vouchers to help with travel costs to go on a group camp. Sister Mercy Outreach received \$600 per month, which assisted in supporting individuals in need.

A local family whose daughter was terminally ill, received vouchers. Two families were helped to provide refreshments following the funerals of their loved ones. Another man was helped with accommodation and meals; we helped one of our members with lawn-mowing and gardening when they were ill.

Our terrific volunteers work hard throughout the year, using their creative talent to decorate our shop window frontage on significant days, such as St Patrick's Day, Daffodil Day and The Marist Rugby reunion, to name a few.

Generous donations of clothing were made and sent in a container to Fiji and Tonga.

Our volunteers rock! I sincerely thank you all.

Mike Keenan

– West Coast Area President



“It is evident that all of us must let ourselves be evangelised by the poor.”

– Pope Leo XIV

Vincentian Membership – A way forward!

We are all aware of the trend of falling membership. Those involved in leadership have identified this trend as one of the biggest threats to our Society's future.

During the past five years I have looked at the problem and analysed data from successful Conferences within New Zealand. I have also participated in an international membership forum to share ideas. In 2023 I attended the Australian SVdP Congress and have contributed to subsequent Congress working groups to develop resources.

On a local level, I formed a membership committee for the Christchurch area, which has developed guidelines and resources which are being shared with our New Zealand Conferences to strengthen membership.

Key findings

A survey of six New Zealand Conferences, selected on the basis of strong membership and vibrancy, provided us with an insight into why these Conferences were doing so well. This survey involved a comprehensive questionnaire and then a one-on-one interview with each President to fully understand the dynamics of each Conference. The common features were as follows:

- 1) Strong leadership from the President
- 2) Care for members – with social activities and a strong inter-connectedness among Conference members
- 3) Spiritual reflection and prayer time an important part of meetings
- 4) Good communication channels to members, parish and community
- 5) Active member recruiting, "shoulder tap" and promotion techniques
- 6) Diversity of help given, more than just food.

The positive message from this exercise is that it is possible to grow our Conferences, to create a vibrant group that provides effective help for the vulnerable and also creates a rewarding environment for its members.

The Refounding initiative fits well with our work on strengthening membership. A sharper focus on our Vincentian founding principles puts an emphasis on the growth and development of the Vincentian charism.

FAITH IN ACTION

"Volunteering for St Vincent de Paul's Society is something I truly enjoy because it allows me to make a positive impact in my community while putting my faith into action. I appreciate the opportunity to help those in need, as it reflects the teachings of compassion and love that God encourages us to embody. Whether it's through providing food, clothing, or support to individuals facing tough times, I feel that I am fulfilling a calling to serve others"



– Luci Palepoi, mother of four, Vincentian for eight years, Stella Maris Conference, Christchurch

Taking the key features that were common among our strongest Conferences, combined with the learnings from other countries, we have put together a set of resources to help Conferences boost their membership.

The resources comprise a Best Practice series (1-2 pages), which provide clear practical guidance for Conferences to follow.



My suggestion is for Conferences to introduce this series one at a time, starting with *Creating a Vibrant, Active Conference*. Another set of resources which are great for promoting membership are our video testimonial clips, which provide personal reflections on being a Vincentian. These clips have a powerful impact and can be used as part of parish presentations on the work of the Society.

A link to all of these resources can be found on the home page at → members.svd.org.nz

Mike Daly

National Vice-President



Summary Financial Statements

Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Revenue and Expense
For the year ended 30 June 2025

	Notes	2025 \$	2024 \$
OPERATING REVENUE			
Revenue from sale of goods	2.1	9,077,462	9,224,553
Revenue from fundraising activities			
General donations, appeals, and other fundraising	2.2	1,632,188	1,491,093
Government grants	2.3	1,112,041	750,366
Other grants	2.4	2,096,135	1,302,092
Bequest revenue	2.5	508,722	3,276,384
Total revenue from fundraising activities		5,349,086	6,819,935
Other revenue			
Rental revenue	2.6	394,794	329,494
Historical GST refund	2.7	-	528,654
Other revenue		176,552	52,892
Total other revenue		571,346	911,040
Total operating revenue		14,997,894	16,955,528
OPERATING EXPENSES			
Wages, salaries and other employee costs		6,501,658	5,936,022
Shops operating expenses		1,596,338	1,556,037
Rent and rates		2,052,845	1,863,715
Depreciation of property, plant and equipment	3.5	1,055,161	1,027,018
Amortisation of intangibles		1,985	1,095
Other overhead and administration expenses	2.8	1,427,583	862,405
Repair and maintenance expenses		610,283	509,833
Loss/(gain) on sale of property, plant, and equipment		36,766	9,072
Total operating expenses		13,282,619	11,765,197
OPERATING SURPLUS		1,715,275	5,190,331
INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Interest Revenue		381,696	414,689
Gain/(loss) on Hay Estate Investment Fund	3.8	175,040	91,313
Other gains/(losses) on investments	3.9	(269,234)	14,788
Total surplus/(deficit) from investing activities		287,502	520,790
SURPLUS BEFORE PROVISION OF SUPPORT TO THOSE IN NEED		2,002,777	5,711,121
PROVISION OF SUPPORT TO THOSE IN NEED			
Service delivery costs		730,644	776,649
Grants and donations paid (welfare support)	2.9	2,589,729	2,675,223
Total costs related to provision of support to those in need		3,320,373	3,451,872
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR		(1,317,596)	2,259,249
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE REVENUE AND EXPENSES			
Revaluation of land and buildings		(46,173)	882,333
Total other comprehensive revenue and expense		(46,173)	882,333
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE REVENUE/(EXPENSE)		(1,363,769)	3,141,582



Consolidated Statement of Financial Position
As at 30 June 2025

	Notes	2025 \$	2024 \$
ASSETS			
Current			
Cash and cash equivalents	3.1	5,207,446	9,071,125
Current term deposits	3.2	6,095,088	3,822,261
Debtors and other receivables	3.3	290,939	311,942
GST Receivable		177,729	264,074
Inventories	3.4	7,791	6,328
Total current assets		11,778,993	13,475,730
Non-current			
Property, plant and equipment	3.5	33,335,727	32,661,025
Non-current term deposits	3.7	50,000	50,000
Hay Estate Investment Fund	3.8	2,114,965	1,984,926
Other investments	3.9	-	269,234
Intangible assets	3.6	-	28,453
Total non-current assets		35,500,692	34,993,638
TOTAL ASSETS		47,279,685	48,469,368
LIABILITIES			
Current			
Creditors and other payables	3.10	425,252	548,504
Employee entitlements	3.11	573,827	549,129
Deferred revenue	3.12	414,390	141,750
Total current liabilities		1,413,469	1,239,383
TOTAL LIABILITIES		1,413,469	1,239,383
NET ASSETS		45,866,216	47,229,985
EQUITY			
Accumulated funds		10,017,518	11,864,331
Property, plant, and equipment reserves		33,335,726	32,661,025
Hay Estate bequest reserve		2,114,966	1,984,926
Other restricted funds reserve		398,006	719,703
TOTAL EQUITY	3.13	45,866,216	47,229,985

These financial statements have been authorised for issue by the Society's National Council.

APH-efee

10/12/25

National Treasurer

Date

Attitude

10/12/25



Society of St Vincent de Paul in New Zealand

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