



NEWSLETTER

St Vincent de Paul
Canterbury Area Council
Christmas 2025



From Bill Manning – Christchurch Area President

Dear Vincentians, Volunteers, Friends, Sponsors and Supporters

Welcome from Canterbury Area President – Bill Manning

Welcome to the final newsletter for 2025. While I have only been in the position of Area President for a short time, it has been a busy time. The previous President left some pretty big shoes to fill, and an area that is in a sound position thanks to his hard work and the support you gave him.

My two months have been a steep learning curve, but the amazing support I have had from all of you has made my transition into the role so much easier. I really do appreciate and thank you all for that support. The role is a big role and I became aware early on that I could not do it justice on my own.

Rather than having a Board, which I found to be quite a corporate term, we now have a Senior Leadership Team. This team will help me guide the Canterbury area into the future. I am excited at the things we might achieve in the next twelve months and will talk more about them in the new year. I look forward to meeting more of you over the coming months, and working with you on your Refounding plans as you embrace the spiritual aspect of your way forward personally and the way forward of your conferences.

I would like to wish all of you a happy Christmas as we celebrate the birth of our saviour. It is a time for celebration, but also a time to help those who are struggling to have a joyful Christmas filled with the spirit of Christ. Please take care over the Christmas period, I look forward to seeing you in the new year.

God Bless, **Bill Manning, Area President**



Get into the festive spirit at the
Vinnies Christmas Grotto

for a magical community event filled with fun holiday cheer.

**Venue: Christ the King Parish Centre,
90 Greers Rd, Burnside**

on 6 – 7 December, between 10am – 2pm

Thanks to our amazing Young Vinnies in schools, new toys are being donated ensuring local families in need have a joyful Christmas.

This year's grotto promises festive activities for children, and an opportunity to support those less fortunate in our community.

Don't miss out on spreading some Christmas magic!

We need **volunteers** to help make this event a success – if you'd like to get involved.

Please contact Cyrene: cyrene@svdpcanterbury.nz



Young Vinnies Fashion Show Fundraiser

Faith in Action on the Runway

The annual Young Vinnies Fashion Show Fundraiser was a wonderful celebration of creativity, community, and compassion. This year was extra special, as Marian College joined Villa Maria College for the first time, bringing fresh energy, friendship, and a true sense of sisterhood. The evening featured stunning performances from Marian College's Dance Club and lively music by Human Resources, the talented band from St. Thomas of Canterbury College.



Their contributions, along with the students' impressive fashion displays, made the night unforgettable. Behind the scenes, students led every aspect of the event: from planning and production to choreography and hosting, raising over \$3,000 to support St Vincent de Paul Society's Christmas projects, helping families and individuals in need.



With another school set to join in 2026, excitement is already building for what's next. A heartfelt thank you to all our students, sponsors, and community partners your support truly shows how faith, creativity, and compassion can come together to make a difference.



Update from Manager, Business and Operations

Polly Fisher

As we come to the end of the year, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all St Vincent de Paul staff, volunteers, and Conference members for the warm welcome you have given me during my first seven months in this role. It has been a privilege to work alongside you. My initial focus has been on strengthening the productivity and efficiency of our welfare dispatch to clients in need, with particular attention to the operations at our Stanmore Road branch.



I am committed to ensuring our work meets Health and Safety standards and to refining our processes so that, through our retail operations, we can support even more individuals and families seeking assistance.

In recent months, we have seen 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. Currently, we are sitting on over 8,000 welfare calls for assistance since January and may reach 9,000 calls for help by the end of this year.

Looking ahead, we have an exciting year in front of us. In January, we expect to open our new \$1 Shop, which will provide affordable support to families in need. We are also developing a partnership with **Kai for the Community**, located at the same premises. This site has great potential, and we plan to expand our outreach services there to better assist the most vulnerable members of our community.

I want to sincerely thank each of you for your dedication and compassion in serving those in need throughout the Canterbury Region.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and every blessing for 2026 as we continue our mission of helping others.

Meri Kirihimete me te Hape Nū Ia

Visit of International Vice President for St Vincent de Paul in Oceania – Paul Trezise

As a new person in the ITVP role, Paul recently visited New Zealand as he was keen to get an understanding of how the Society operates here. He attended the National Council meeting in Wellington on 8th November and with Keith Norton organised a quick tour of Society facilities and conferences on the South Island including Christchurch, Ashburton, Oamaru and Dunedin.

Paul was very grateful for the warm welcome and hospitality he received everywhere he went. He was impressed with the passion of the Society members and employees he met and with the innovative projects that had been undertaken in some areas.



(L to R) Keith Norton, Clodagh Ward,
Paul Trezise,
Mike Moore, Polly Fisher
& Cyrene Tionko

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.

Who is Paul Trezise? Paul has recently been appointed to the role of International Territorial Vice President (ITVP) for Oceania (June 2025) succeeding Frank Brassil. He is assisted by a small team including Christchurch's Keith Norton and represents the International President General of the Society in 11 Oceania countries. The role provides support and advice to national councils, facilitates communication and collaboration between Oceania countries and seeks to grow & strengthen the Society's presence in the region.

Paul is a member of the Yass Conference in rural NSW, and is a former Australian National Council treasurer and CEO of the Society in the Canberra / Goulburn region.

Report from Regional Representative – Brian Hutching

A Year in Review and Looking Forward 🌟



Brian has now been in this role for 12-months. The role was a new and designed to facilitate communication from the Conferences, through the Area President, up to the National Board, and back down again. At a recent National Council Meeting, the 6 Regional Representatives met with our National President, Gerry Stevens, to review the role after its first year. The feedback was positive—the role has been both important and worthwhile. It was agreed that another 12 months would be needed for the role to truly settle in.

Over the past year, there has been three items that have stood out for me:

1. Festival Day Success: The Festival Day was very well-run, and I extend thanks to the Kaiapoi and Rangiora Conferences for a great programme. A particular highlight was the feedback from the students of Catholic Cathedral College on why they joined the SVdP group—their passion was inspiring!

2. Oceania Vice-President's Address: The address by the new SVdP Oceania Vice-President, Paul Trezise to National Council, made a significant impact. He discussed the early Letters of Frederic Ozanam, suggesting passages from them can be a powerful resource for the Refounding work.

3. Refounding Momentum: The energy and enthusiasm Conferences have been exhibiting around the Refounding process is truly heartening. Excellent resources are available to help Conferences workshop and advance this important work.

God Bless and have a Blessed Christmas and New Year.

Vinnies Holiday Closure December 2025 – January 2026:

Welfare Line Closing dates-

- For Vinnies Welfare line: Thursday, 18th December 2025 - 4:00pm
- Walk-in clients at Vinnies Stanmore Rd: Assistance available 19-22nd December
- For Welfare Furniture: cut-off date Thursday, 11th December 2025 - 4:00pm

Welfare Line Re-opening dates-

- For Vinnies Welfare line: Thursday, 15th January 2026 – 9am
- Walk-in clients at Vinnies Stanmore Rd: Assistance available from Monday, 05th January 2025



Christchurch Retail Shops:

- Closing date: Tuesday, 23rd December 2025 - 4:00pm
- Reopen on: Saturday, 03rd January 2025 - 10:00am - 3:00pm

An update from Holy Name Conference, Ashburton – Trevor Wall

The Holy Name Conference in Ashburton is in good heart, with 35 members plus associate members in Methven and Rakaia. Several new members have joined this year.

The past few months have been very busy for the conference with 249 families (921 people) being helped in the period July to October. Most of these cases involved members visiting the home. But over the winter months, there was a large increase in rural calls. We are fortunate to have associate members in Methven and Rakaia who help with these rural calls. Need has been growing and with no members in the Hinds to Mayfield areas, we have had to ask some people to come to Vinnies in Ashburton. Rural demand has now slowed with the start of milking.

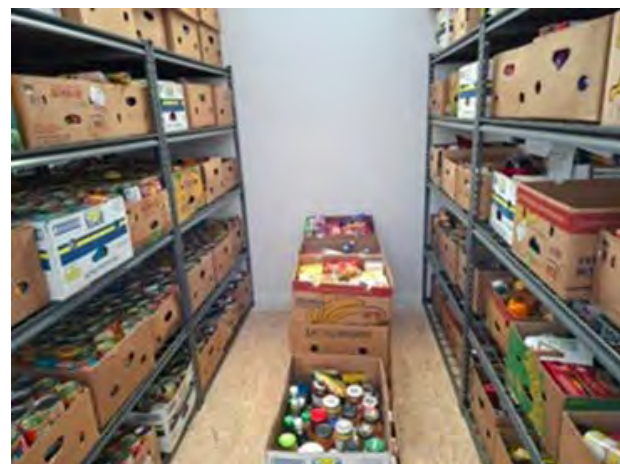


Many of the requests have been for food, although other needs have included dental expenses, fuel, furniture, accommodation, section cleanup and financial support.

Kainga Ora have also opened in recent times, a large number of houses in Ashburton that has resulted in requests for household items, especially from people arriving from outside the district. A sign of how well known our Conference has become in the local community shows that 47 of the clients we helped over the 4-months to October were referred by 17 different community agencies, that included *MSD, Oranga Tamariki* plus the *local hospital* and even a Member of Parliament. Greater awareness of Vinnies in wider Ashburton area has resulted in donations of food from many sources. People have given us vegetables, meat, eggs and the like. In the last four months, we have received food donations from the *Masonic Lodge, Anglican and Presbyterian parishes, Hinds and Mayfield Lions, Toy Library, Altrusa, Rural Women NZ* and other service clubs. Plus, we receive weekly deliveries from *Food Rescue Aoraki*, regular deliveries from *Meat the Need* and we have a very good relationship with *Ashburton New World*. Today, our St Vincent de Paul Conference is the busiest food bank in Mid Canterbury.

The County Lions annual ‘Toot for Tucker’ food drive was also held recently, our share of the total collection being 211 banana boxes of food.

A huge shout out to the County Lions for this amazing initiative – thank you!



Our community coming together for ‘Toot for Tucker’.

Our food pantry that has been restocked ready for run by county lions with service clubs helping Christmas demand for those in need

Fundraising:

Over the past 15 months, Vinnies has delivered furniture to over **1,400 homes and families** in Canterbury - this has ranged from a couch and lamp or a dining table to a full household of furniture, bedding and homewares.

Many of these requests have been referred to Vinnies from social service agencies such as *Early Start, Plunket, The Loft, MSD, St John of God and Comcare* to name a few of the dozen agencies that refer their clients to Vinnies for help.



Can you help?

Today, Vinnies need to raise **\$50,000** so we can replace our ageing and damaged truck!



Our truck is an essential part of our mission allowing Vinnies to deliver bulky items such as furniture. But it has become unreliable with gearbox issues plus a damaged hoist.

Having a manual gearbox that is damaged, has also posed a barrier and limits the number of drivers capable of operating the vehicle. This impacts on our schedule to efficiently deliver when the need arises. We are currently delivering 5 days a week to keep up with demand.

Upgrading to an automatic vehicle will allow more drivers to use the vehicle and Vinnies to provide a more reliable service. A newer vehicle will allow Vinnies to be more efficient in our work and ideally, to become more environmentally friendly by acquiring a hybrid or electric vehicle.

[Click here to donate](#)

<https://givealittle.co.nz/org/svdpchch>

Obituaries

Let us pray for past members of the St Vincent de Paul Society who have died recently.



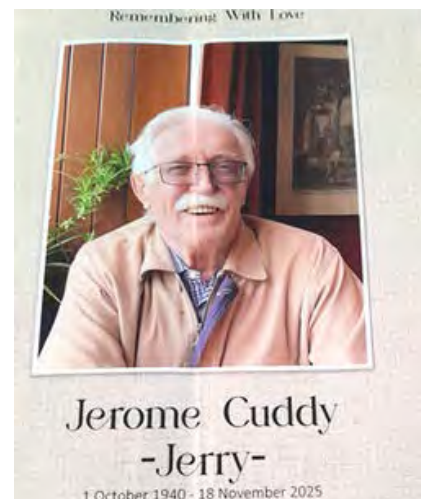
Mary Theresa Brown

The funeral for Mary was held at the Basilica in Timaru on 25th November – she passed away a few weeks short of her 90th birthday. Mary was an amazing volunteer for Vinnies contributing over 30 years' service to the Society. We pray to the Lord that her good works now reap her rich rewards. RIP Mary



Jerry Cuddy

Jerry passed away aged 85 years. He was a quiet and humble man and served as a Vincentian for over 50 years. Jerry was a member of the OLV Sockburn Conference in his active days. He emigrated from Donegal in Ireland at a youngish age and was a highly skilled worker. Jerry contributed much to his Conference including the delivery of food parcels and visiting the prison to spend time with the prisoners. During the autumn, he used his trailer to collect firewood for delivery to those needing heating during the winter. Jerry married Veronica Jolliffee, who sadly passed away in 2020. They have a number of children & grandchildren. Our sympathies are extended to Jerry's family. We ask the Lord to take care of Jerry given all his good works. RIP Jerry.



Blessing As we go on our way, May God go with us. May he go before us to show the way, Behind us to encourage, beside us to befriend, above to watch over, And within to give us his peace. Amen

For all our fellow Vincentians, who were laid to rest in 2025

**Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May the souls of the faithful departed,
through the mercy of God, rest in peace.**

Amen

Acknowledgements: The contributions from Bill Manning, Paul Trezise, Polly Fisher, Cyrene Tionko, Myola Mendoca, Brian Hutching and Trevor Wall for the Christmas Newsletter are acknowledged.

Editorial Team: Mike Moore and Trish O'Keefe.





Wishing you all a
Happy and Holy Christmas
from
SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL - CANTERBURY
and thank you for your support in 2025!

