



Vinnies set to open new inner-city welfare hub

The St Vincent de Paul Society says the new concept store it will open this week will become a welfare hub to support people in need in Christchurch's CBD.

Vinnies Manchester will open on Saturday, February 7 – following the grand opening and blessing of the building two days earlier.

Catholic Bishop Michael Gielen, mayor Phil Mauer, deputy mayor Victoria Henstock and St Vincent de Paul national president Gerry Stevens are among those who will attend the opening.

As well as joining the city's thrift shop circuit, where people can find bargains on linen, clothing and household items, the centre will offer services like budgeting and counselling at a location that is easily accessible.

"The store will definitely be a thrifting paradise and a recycling hub in the city centre full of treasures, but we are pleased to be able to provide those additional supports for people who are struggling," said St Vincent de Paul business and operations manager Polly Fisher.

One unique feature of this new Vinnies location is the partnership with Kai for the Community, which has for several years been feeding the homeless and vulnerable in Christchurch.

Kai for the Community provides a sit-down, two-course meal on Sunday evenings. The group operates with support from Catholic parishes and other Christian organisations, who provide the food, serve it and clean up afterwards.

"This partnership with St Vincent de Paul is a significant step forward for Kai for the Community and what we can offer into the future," said Kai for the Community founder Verity Verster.

"We are deeply grateful to St Vincent de Paul for their support and collaboration, which will allow Kai to expand our services and provide stronger, more connected support to the people and whānau we serve."

St Vincent de Paul Canterbury president Bill Manning said as Vinnies Manchester settles into its new home, more agencies will be invited to join the list of providers supporting those in need.

Mr Stevens said, as national president, there is great pride in seeing St Vincent de Paul continuing to respond to local need.

"We have seen enough headlines to know how many Kiwis are doing it tough at the moment," he said.

"Vinnies has been providing practical assistance to such people for 150 years and we will continue to do that to meet the needs of local communities."

Vinnies Manchester, located at 35 Manchester St, is the first new St Vincent de Paul shop to open in Christchurch since 2018.