

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Visionwest and Foodstuffs North Island partner to open first of its kind Social Supermarket for Auckland**

Visionwest, a well-established West Auckland-based community trust, and Foodstuffs North Island, the 101-year-old New Zealand owned co-operative behind PAK'nSAVE, New World and Four Square stores across the North Island, are proud to announce their partnership in bringing the first of its kind social supermarket for Auckland. This innovative collaboration aims to address food insecurity and provide affordable, quality food options to the local community of West Auckland.

Known as Manaaki Kai, the new social supermarket is an extension of Visionwest's longstanding commitment to supporting individuals and families who are finding things tough. Visionwest has been operating a food bank service for over 30 years, assisting approximately 400 whānau each week. Visionwest supports around 60,000 people a year and has a large team who provide a wide range of wraparound services including budgeting and counselling.

Social supermarkets are a new approach to providing food support in New Zealand, enabling individuals experiencing food insecurity to select their own groceries in a supermarket-style environment, providing dignity of choice. Unlike traditional food parcels that may not cater to specific dietary, cultural, and personal preferences, social supermarkets offer a wide range of food and grocery products. Through a points system, individuals can choose the items that best meet their needs, ensuring a personalised and respectful experience.

Foodstuffs North Island, as part of its 'Here for NZ' initiative, has made a promise to ensure all New Zealanders have access to healthy and affordable food, with each New World and PAK'nSAVE partnering with a local community partner to achieve this. Following the introduction of a first of its kind social supermarket in collaboration with Wellington City Mission two years ago, Foodstuffs has continued to expand its social supermarket footprint. The addition of Manaaki Kai in Auckland marks the sixth social supermarket under its partnership umbrella.

PAK'nSAVE Lincoln Road are proud to be the buddy store for Visionwest, ensuring ongoing support and training. The collaboration between Foodstuffs and Visionwest demonstrates the co-operative's commitment to being 'Here for NZ' and supporting local communities.

The social supermarket model in West Auckland has been trialled and proven successful through the implementation of a pop-up social supermarket by Visionwest. Building on this, Manaaki Kai will provide a sustainable and permanent solution to food insecurity in the West Auckland region. By offering a wide range of groceries, including fresh produce, pantry staples, and household essentials, Manaaki Kai aims to uplift and empower the community.

Nathan May, General Manager of Community Services at Visionwest said: "Foodstuffs North Island are such a great partner to establish Manaaki Kai, the first of its kind social supermarket for Auckland. . This partnership allows us to leverage Foodstuffs' expertise in the retail sector, while expanding our reach to provide a more dignified and inclusive food shopping experience for individuals and families facing food insecurity."

Foodstuffs North Island is committed to supporting Kiwi communities and has been actively involved in opening social supermarkets across New Zealand. Current community partners include Wellington City Mission, Te Kahu Oranga Whānau in Kaitia, Butterbean Motivation (BBM) in Tokoroa, 155 Whare Āwhina in Whangārei, and Linkt Trust in Otūmoetai. The addition of Manaaki Kai further strengthens its efforts to ensure every New Zealander has access to healthy, affordable food.

Chris Quin, Chief Executive of Foodstuffs North Island said: "We're excited to expand our social supermarket programme with the opening of Manaaki Kai in Auckland. Through our partnership with Visionwest, our goal is to create a positive impact by addressing food insecurity and supporting the wellbeing of the community. We know that by working together with great partners, we can make a real difference right across the North Island."

In addition to providing food support, community partners like Visionwest offer wraparound services to help individuals access additional support. Services such as social workers and financial mentors are available to provide comprehensive assistance, addressing the underlying causes of food insecurity and promoting overall wellbeing.

The need for social supermarkets has become increasingly apparent due to the current cost of living crisis. Many hardworking New Zealanders are struggling to make ends meet, resulting in a growing demand for food support nationwide. Foodstuffs North Island is committed to addressing this need by opening more social supermarkets, enabling individuals and families to access nutritious food with dignity.

## **ENDS**

### **About Foodstuffs North Island (FSNI)**

Foodstuffs North Island is a 100% New Zealand owned co-operative, with 323 owner operated stores in communities across Te Ika-a-Māui operating under the Four Square, New World, PAK'nSAVE, and Gilmours brands. With 2.7 million customer visits in our stores and online every week and 24,000 Foodies across the North Island, we play a big role in Kiwis' lives. Our purpose is to make sure New Zealanders get more out of life and we aspire to be one of the most customer driven retailers in the world.

As part of its commitment to be HereforNZ, Foodstuffs North Island has made four social promises:

- We support every New Zealander to access healthy and affordable food.
- We create meaningful and safe work for our people
- We support our local communities to thrive.
- We are sustainability leaders in our operations and how we source our products.

### **About Visionwest**

Visionwest exists to address homelessness, reduce poverty, support older persons and those living with disabilities, and ensure young people have hope for the future. Based in West Auckland, Visionwest has branches in Bay of Plenty, Waikato and Canterbury.

Alongside its provision of food support, Visionwest provides community housing, counselling, budgeting and financial mentoring, in-home healthcare, training and mentoring for young people, and early childhood education.