



Navigating the waves of life together

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Open Letter from St Mary by The Sea Vestry

Dear Browns Bay Community,

Thank you to everyone who has shared feedback regarding our new initiatives at St Mary's. We genuinely appreciate the wide range of perspectives we've received—both the encouragement and the critical questions. They reflect a shared care for the future of Browns Bay.

Our Vision: A Community Eatery

To address growing cost-of-living pressures, we are transitioning to a model that prioritises food dignity and community connection. Inspired by successful social enterprises like *The Bowling Club* in Ōtepoti Dunedin, our operations will consist of:

- **Daytime Café & Evening Social Enterprise:** A welcoming space for the public by day, and a community eatery by night serving nutritious, affordable meals.
- **Local Employment:** We are committed to employing local people and paying a **Living Wage**
- **Reinvesting in the Community:** As a social enterprise, any surplus generated will be reinvested back into local community initiatives.
- **Safe Environment:** Our premises will be alcohol-free, focused on creating a safe space for families.

Why This Matters

Our experience running the local foodbank has shown us that the majority of those who need support are hard-working families facing increasing financial pressure. Many are simply looking for an **occasional, affordable alternative to cooking at home—a place where they can feel safe, supported, and belong.**

We anticipate starting small, serving up to 250 meals per week in the first six months, with the goal of growing slowly to meet local demand.

Our Commitment as Neighbours

We are dedicated to being responsible members of the Browns Bay business precinct and residential community. Any concerns or unintended impacts arising from our operations will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.

We believe that meeting needs provides harmony and safety for all. **Not addressing existing needs does not make them go away.** At the heart of this project is a simple mission: to support people in practical ways while building a sense of connection and care for everyone in our neighbourhood.

Thank you again for your engagement and your willingness to be part of this conversation.

Stay Informed:

- **Updates:** www.stmary.co.nz/replant
- **Email:** replanting@stmary.co.nz

Warm regards, St Mary By The Sea Vestry