

VINNIES



7 AFFORDABLE AND
CLEAN ENERGY

Reduce the number of people experiencing energy hardship in the Waikato from 18,000 in 2019 to zero by 2030

MEET OUR MANU TAKI MIKE ROLTON

The power of St Vincent de Paul

St Vincent de Paul is a Catholic charity helping the needy through food, hardship, and budgeting assistance.

But it is the Vinnies' foray into power retailing which has seen it really make a difference to people's back pockets, by connecting them with cheaper power.

In doing this Vinnies has helped with people's wellbeing – taking away the stress of huge power bills, while freeing up cash for other living expenses.

St Vincent de Paul Hamilton's General Manager Mike Rolton says it all started with a partnership with the cheaper power retailer, OurPower.

"We went out to our customer base and signed up people who trusted us. We have a good brand, and we are trusted in a community, and we just built things from there."

"The original idea was if we could save someone 20 or 25 dollars per week, that meant they could

feed their family for a whole week and would not have to rely on us all the time for food. So, for me it was a really good fit."

The idea is to offer consumers an alternative to the dominant power retailers in the market. It also meant there could be a shake-up of the power retailing business – and in turn, effect some systemic change.

The power scheme is one way Vinnies' feels it can make inroads in improving wellbeing. "It means at least people are taking notice of what is going on in our area."

"If it is just purely power it means that we are delivering a product that is really affordable so we can make a difference in lots of people's lives, within the whole scope of wellbeing."

Rolton – who is a Manu Taki for SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy, says it is an ambitious target to meet all of the SDGs set by the project. "But if some of those SDGs can make it, we will really make a

huge difference, once we have set targets and achieved our targets."

St Vincent de Paul's main income stream in Hamilton is through a network of 5 charity stores. The charity's turnover has increased substantially in recent years and is now more than \$2m annually. "The shops are our business side of it, and that can only enhance our charity work – the foodbank, the school lunches, the community lunches, family assistance and budgeting advice."

Vinnies' also has a number of high-profile corporates backing it with sponsorship. "If they can give us product and or time it is equally as good in my view."

"I can give them a guarantee that the money is always going to be spent in Hamilton. We are very locally focused."