

# Awahina

AUTUMN 2025

PRESBYTERIAN SUPPORT SOUTHLAND MAGAZINE

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# Autumn Update

The leaves are turning and the temperature is dropping, indicating the first quarter of 2025 has come and gone.

We recently celebrated the official opening of the D6 extension at Peacehaven. The facility has increased its capacity by six beds, providing more Southlanders with dementia the ability to remain in the region close to their families. This fabulous project was funded entirely by the community, which made the celebration even more special, providing an opportunity to acknowledge the generosity of our wonderful Southland community.

Government funding for aged care continues to be an ongoing focus for the organisation and across the country. The Aged Care Association (ACA) is engaging with Health NZ regarding the annual ARC funding and contract renewals. Providers up and down the country are hoping for a more substantial uplift than previous years in a bid to bridge the gap between increasing costs and funding provided. These negotiations are key for enabling investment in our care delivery and facilities over the next 12 months and beyond.

Minister for Seniors, Casey Costello recently visited our Resthaven care home in Gore. Minister Costello took a tour the facility and discussed the various challenges and opportunities for the aged care sector, with

a particular focus on service provision in smaller regional areas where access to specialist services can be limited. We will continue to look for opportunities to engage in these discussions and advocate for our sector and seek collaborative solutions to secure sustainable service provision for our elderly into the future.

A highlight of the year so far is the recent confirmation of lending from BNZ to enable the redevelopment of our Peacehaven Retirement Village. We are excited to be progressing the development in the coming weeks and will update on progress at key milestones moving forward.

As we look to finalise the budget for the upcoming financial year commencing July 1, we have been taking the opportunity to review the way in which we operate to ensure we are maximising our efficiency with a key focus on quality service delivery and positive outcomes for our residents and clients.

We have recently secured funding to enable investment in technology improvements within our Enliven directorate. We are rolling out technology which will assist with identifying and quantifying pain for our residents who are unable to reliably self-report their pain. This technology has previously been trialled and implemented with good success and positive outcomes. We are also investing in pneumatic compression pump therapy. This therapy can enhance circulation, reduce swelling, and promote lymphatic drainage, making it useful for several conditions.

With our Family Works directorate, we are seeing an ever-increasing demand for services, particularly with an aggregate reduction in services both

nationally and locally following funding and contract cuts. Our social workers, counsellors and service delivery staff are true heroes, supporting a significant number of tamariki, rangatahi, and whānau through some very challenging times. Many families are doing it tough, and the increased cost of living is growing the number of those living below the poverty line. While Family Works does receive some government funding, it does not cover the full cost of service provision and so we are only able to offer these services thanks to the support and generosity of our communities. Together we are making a difference.

We will continue to lobby for fair funding and support across both the aged care and social services sectors. PSS has been supporting and empowering communities for over 100 years and we plan to be around for as long as the need exists.

**- Matt Russell, PSS chief executive**





# Fighting the good fight

Invercargill solo mother and Family Works advocate Casey Howat bravely walks into the ring surrounded on all sides by an extremely vocal and enthusiastic crowd.

She positions her red gloves in front of her face, plants her feet firmly, grounding herself to the space, and with a steely gaze, faces off against her opponent.

The fighters trade blows in three 90 second rounds, although it seems significantly longer to Casey whilst in the throes of it.

"I felt like I was in a dream," she said. "It was a bit surreal really."

The evenly-matched fight results in a split decision, with Casey's opponent Laurizelle Coles ultimately taking out the win.

This was Casey's experience competing in the Ōtepoti Boxing Club's Punch with Purpose 4 corporate and professional charity boxing event at the Dunedin Town

Hall on May 3.

"I am really proud with the split decision. And I am really proud I was able to make myself stay calm in the chaos [of the fight]."

She had enjoyed the experience, from the gruelling 10-week training camp to her performance on the night.

"It has been an amazing journey.

"There are so many lessons and blessings - making quality connections [with the other competitors and coaches], and I learned so much about the skill of boxing."

Casey had been inspired to compete in the charity boxing event after seeing it advertised on social media.

"I wanted to be an advocate for solo mothers and show them physical fitness is key to the mental game.

"I also wanted to be a positive role model for my son. [I wanted him to see] first-hand what determination, resilience and discipline looks like."

Boxing was not new to Casey. She had boxed for fitness over the years and participated in a Contenders Club Series exhibition fight in Christchurch eight years ago.

Family Works Southland was her chosen charity to support through the event, raising a phenomenal \$1255 through a Givealittle page and raffles.

Casey said she had chosen Family Works because she wanted to



Casey Howat and her son Taimana (5) with Family Works Incredible Years Parenting Programme tutors Julie Tippett (left) and Chris Broere (right).

promote the Buddy Programme and the parenting programmes which had been so beneficial to her family.

"I wanted to get the word out there that these programmes are available.

"I believe in them. They were so helpful for me."

When she and her son moved

"I wanted to be an advocate for solo mothers and show them physical fitness is key to the mental game."

from Nelson to Southland about 12 months ago, life had been "a bit unsettled". They had lots of friends but no family support close by.

"It was the moment when you realise you need a village [to raise your child] and start building one."

Casey reached out to Family Works for support and signed up for the Incredible Years Parent and Parenting programmes.

Casey pulls no punches when she talks about her experience doing the parenting programmes.

"All of the tutors were so supportive and encouraging. When I felt like I had no one in my corner, I had them."

Casey said she had learned a lot from the programmes, including the importance of regular child-led play, creating a calm-down space and when to use it, following through with consequences and providing her son with opportunities to make choices for himself.

Family Works director Judith McInerney said – "we feel very proud of what Casey has achieved

for herself in her life, and feel so humbled she chose Family Works as a recipient acknowledging the support she received from Family Works for herself and her son."

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Casey may not be done with boxing yet. She has been invited to compete in the Fight For Rangatahi 3 corporate boxing event in Motueka in August.

"I'm 95% sold on it," she said.

Casey's son Taimana with boxing gloves donated by Nelson-Dixons Boxing to be raffled off to raise money for Family Works.





# Vital funding

Community Trust South (CTS) has confirmed a grant of \$140,000 a year for three years to support community-funded Family Works' services and programmes.

CTS has been supporting Family Works' services and programmes since 1996, contributing more than \$3 million in that time.

Family Works director Judith McInerney said the ongoing support from CTS was greatly appreciated and needed to assist Family Works to deliver vital services to families in Southland.

"Without their assistance we would need to reduce services in Southland which would have a significant impact on our community given the recent reduction to services following significant funding cuts from Oranga Tamariki (OT) last year."

CTS chief executive Jackie Flutey said the Trust was a proud supporter of Presbyterian Support Southland (PSS) and Family Works.

"The services offered by PSS help to build a stronger, more connected community and closely align with the Trust's purpose of empowering communities to fulfil their aspirations. We are proud to play a part in supporting the services offered by Enliven and Family Works and appreciate how instrumental these are for caring for our most vulnerable communities.

"By nurturing wellbeing, fostering resilience and helping to ensure

everyone has access to the care and support they need – PSS is encouraging people to make the most of their strengths and ultimately build a thriving future for us all."

Some Family Works services are delivered under government contracts while others are reliant on community funding. For instance, the Incredible Years parenting programme is run under a contract with the Ministry of

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Community Trust South chief executive Jackie Flutey (left) and Family Works director Judith McInerney.



Education and the Family Start programme and Foster Care service are run under OT contracts. Services reliant on community funding include the Buddy Programme, Parenting Programme and some clients in the Social Work and Counselling Service.

Family Works is fortunate in that other community funders also recognise the value of its services. Among them, Lottery Community Grant run by the New Zealand Lotteries Commission, ILT and ILT Foundation and Olive Hutchins Charitable Trust.

An estimated 1100 individuals and families have been supported by Family Works in the past financial year.

"Families continue to present with complex needs and often come to us in crisis, with an urgent and immediate need for support," Judith said.

"These are increasingly complex situations, which can require lengthy involvement, and more often than not families will need to access more than one of our services.

"These grants and donations mean those who need support are able to continue to access our services and programmes free of charge."

An example of this is Tū Manawa Active Aotearoa which recognises the value of the Buddy Programme. Thanks to recent funding from Tū Manawa, a group of Invercargill Little Buddies and their Big Buddies went on a memorable day trip to Te Anau to explore the glowworm caves.

Judith said these types of activities give the Little Buddies experiences they might not otherwise have the opportunity to experience as well as building community, friendship and camaraderie amongst everyone involved in the Buddy Programme and those who support it.

Family Works is not only backed by community funders, but also receives support from individuals, community groups and businesses throughout the year.

The community's support for Family Works' annual Christmas gift and hamper appeals is a prime example of this, with their success

solely reliant on the community getting behind them.

"Each year, the generosity of the community is overwhelming and leaves us as an organisation feeling very humbled and supported. We know we are not alone in the work we do as we have a community team behind us and our clients," Judith said.

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"These grants and donations mean those who need support are able to continue to access our services and programmes free of charge."

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**The positive impact these initiatives have on our client families cannot be understated. Here are examples of the feedback the Family Works team received from clients who were given gifts and food hampers for Christmas last year:**

"Thank you for this hamper. Words can't thank you enough. We had nothing and now we have Christmas."

"Our babies loved the toys so much. It was a blessing for them as we didn't have much, and we want to thank you."

"We're grateful for the food and treats our family received, which brought some much-needed cheer during a tough year and made our Christmas special."

"Thanks for the presents. This takes a huge stress off my shoulders as I was worried about my kids not getting much."



# Ground-breaking trial

New Zealand first: pilot project trialling pneumatic pumps in Enliven Southland care homes.

With backing from the Stewart Family Trust, Enliven Southland is kick-starting a wound treatment pilot project, one which is expected to be ground-breaking for the country's aged residential care sector.

Over a 12-month period, clinical nurse specialist: wound care for the Southern district Mandy Pagan and senior managers in Peacehaven and Vickery Court care homes will identify patients they believe would benefit from pneumatic pump treatment, prescribe and carry out the treatment and compile data around its effectiveness in the care home setting.

Mandy has more than eight years experience working with pneumatic compression in clinical practice.

The therapy had advanced over the years and was now accessible for use in people's homes, including rest homes, she said.

"Whilst working with Dawn Acker, Enliven Southland nurse practitioner, it has become evident to me the high need for this therapy at point-of-care to improve resident wound healing and reducing symptoms associated with oedema.

Vickery Court manager Janet Stevens (left) and clinical nurse specialist Mandy Pagan connect resident Peter Shepard to a pneumatic pump for treatment.

"I am very excited to work with the Enliven team and residents, their families, and whānau to improve resident outcomes."

Enliven Southland director Carol Riddle said working collaboratively with nurse specialists from Te Whatu Ora was essential to share skills and learnings.

"This gives me great confidence in achieving clinical excellence as we navigate increased clinical complexity in our resident population."

Pneumatic compression pumps are electric devices which gently massage a limb for a period of time.

They are used to treat conditions such as oedema (fluid retention), lymphoedema, neurovascular impairments, lipodema (abnormal fat build up usually in the buttocks, thighs and hips), and the treatment of wounds and ulcers associated with diabetes and other chronic illnesses.

The benefits of the pneumatic pump include faster wound healing, reduced swelling, softening of the skin, improved

mobility due to reduced leg pain and swelling, reduced incidence of cellulitis and therefore reduced need for antibiotics, reduced hospitalisations and less nursing time spent on wound care.

Currently, pneumatic pumps are not provided or routinely used by any aged care facility providers in New Zealand.

Carol said an increasing number of people were entering aged care with complex and multiple health concerns requiring a high level of expertise and care. This included an increasing number of presentations of upper and lower leg oedema with complex wounds that were difficult or unable to heal if oedema was not managed effectively.

At present, the use of pneumatic pumps in Southland is prescribed by the specialist wound service. Pumps and sleeves are rented by patients, including a small number of elderly people living in aged care homes, but for many aged care residents, the cost is prohibitive, she said.



# Dementia unit opens

Within a week of Enliven Southland's refurbished dementia unit opening, three of the six beds in the new D6 wing had been reserved.

"It is evident already the expansion of our dementia unit was needed to meet the increasing demand for dementia care and address the lack of D6 beds in the region," Presbyterian Support Southland (PSS) chief executive Matt Russell said.

"Residents will be more likely able to access psychogeriatric care in Southland and remain closer to their families."

The unit was officially opened with a blessing from Joe Wakefield of mana whenua on March 7 attended by funders and supporters.

"We are thrilled to report, thanks to the generosity of a significant number of contributors, the project has been fully funded," Matt said.

The \$400,000 project involved establishing six additional psychogeriatric beds and other improvements to the dementia unit at Peacehaven Village for the most vulnerable of Southland's elderly population.

"We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the community for recognising the need and lending their support to this vital project."

Contributions from funders include ILT Foundation (\$120,483), Hugo Charitable Trust (\$50,000), Stewart Family Charitable Trust (\$26,300), PH Vickery Trust (\$26,300), Guy Anson Waddell Charitable Trust (\$26,300), Aotearoa Gaming Trust (\$29,900) and several smaller trusts and individuals.

The dementia unit has two separate wings, one for less severely impacted dementia patients (known as D3), and the other for those requiring specialised hospital-level care (known as D6 psychogeriatric care), the highest level of dementia care available in New Zealand. PSS is the sole provider of psychogeriatric care in Southland.

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Funders and supporters attend the opening of Enliven Southland's refurbished dementia unit in March.



# Going green

Investing in hybrid vehicles, reducing food waste and using recyclable and sustainable products wherever possible are among a raft of green initiatives implemented by Presbyterian Support Southland (PSS) in recent months as it seeks to improve its sustainability.

PSS has been reducing carbon emissions over the past 18 months by progressively upgrading its fleet of petrol and diesel vehicles to hybrid. Of the 31 vehicles in the fleet, 14 were now hybrid vehicles.

Property and procurement manager Cameron Stevens said the transition to hybrid vehicles was not only about reducing carbon emissions, but had the added benefit of reducing fuel costs, in some cases slashing them by more than half.

Minimising waste across the organisation to reduce PSS's carbon footprint had also been a big focus through improved waste reduction, waste management, recycling and food sustainability processes.

In December last year, staff in the Enliven Southland care homes participated in a food waste project. The project involved reviewing the service's food waste levels and better matching food purchases and food production to the quantity of food consumed by

the residents to improve efficiency within the organisation.

PSS food service manager Rochelle Copeland said the project had been a very worthwhile exercise.

"I was really pleased with the low level of wastage on all sites, which indicated we are not overcooking."

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PSS food service manager Rochelle Copeland (right) and kitchen manager Archana Raju prepare to serve lunch to residents at Peacehaven care home.







The main food wastage identified was the amount of food left on residents' plates in Peacehaven. Following requests from residents to reduce their meal sizes, staff had reduced the amount of food served to those residents.

Enliven staff were also using leftover food in the preparation of other dishes if possible, saving money and also reducing the amount of food wasted.

"In time, the changes will show we are saving money," she said.

Reducing waste had been extended from food waste to many other products used in the care homes.

A Clinical Managers Sustainability and Waste working group, established in February last year, identified waste generated at care homes sites (cardboard and paper; glass; plastic bottles bags, packaging and aprons; used batteries etc) and implemented simple, low-cost initiatives to reduce and, in some cases, eliminate waste.

UV sterilisers had been purchased to sterilise reusable items, such as instruments, syringes, the plastic

forceps used in dressing wounds and reusable medicine cups which had replaced single-use paper cups.

In addition, recycling bins including for batteries, had been placed in communal areas at each Enliven Southland site.

Further work is ongoing to try and reduce the consumption of unrecyclable items such as paper drinking cups and plastic gloves used by staff.

Working group member Julie Worner said staff were sceptical at first but had since embraced the initiatives, especially recycling and using flat-bottomed reusable medication pottles.

"Families have [also] reacted positively and are happy we care about the environment."

Other departments embracing green initiatives included the procurement team which was actively purchasing products with sustainability in mind and the maintenance team which was stripping broken equipment of usable parts for future repairs before being fully disassembled, with as much as possible going to

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PSS painter and decorator Ken McMillan resurfacing and repairing chests of drawers for care home bedrooms.

scrap metal recycling.

In addition, the maintenance team was donating items no longer required (such as old armchairs and appliances from decommissioned Peacehaven cottages) to local charity stores wherever possible.

The work was not stopping there.

PSS is currently investigating sustainable alternatives to the coal-fired boilers in Peacehaven and Resthaven villages for when the boilers reach the end of their lives.

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"In time, the changes will show we are saving money."

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# Together we can make a difference

Our staff work with more than 3300 vulnerable children, whānau/families and older people in Southland and the Whakatipu Basin every year. Every contribution, large or small, helps us help others.

## How to donate



**Website:** [pss.org.nz/get-involved](https://pss.org.nz/get-involved)



**Internet banking:** Our bank account number is 02 0924 0545924 00 (BNZ)



**Cash/Eftpos:** Please visit our Central Office, 183 Spey Street, Invercargill, or any of our Enliven care homes

For more ways to see how you can help through donations or volunteering your time, please visit our website.

Unemployment, poverty, family disputes, mental illness, loneliness, social isolation and social inequity are just some of the issues we see people struggling with every day.

Thank you to all those who have donated towards the work we do. Your donation will help enable us to walk alongside them, letting them know they are not alone and can get the support they need.

## Thank you to our major community funders



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