

From: Murray Edridge <murray@wcm.org.nz>
Sent: Tuesday, 6 August 2024 11:39 pm
To: Registrar
Subject: Foodstuffs Merger

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Tēnā koe

I write in support of the proposed merger between Foodstuffs North Island and Foodstuffs South Island.

My reason for supporting this proposed merger is my desire to see South Island community organisations enjoying the same opportunities and generosity of support that are available to those of us operating in the North Island.

The Wellington City Mission in 2024 is celebrating serving the people and communities of Wellington for 120 years. For much of that time, the Mission has been a significant distributor of charitable food support to those that are struggling.

Our organisational commitment in recent years has been to treat all people with Dignity, Respect and Without Judgement. This has caused us to critique all that we do to ensure that commitment is achieved. When we reviewed our previous model of Foodbank distribution of food, groceries and household goods, we didn't believe it achieved that aspiration. We also considered that giving pre-packaged generic supplies to people in need will have resulted in excess wastage due to non-suitability for specific tastes or needs.

The desire to offer those that need our support the “dignity of choice” generated the idea of a Social Supermarket in which our shoppers could choose the food and products that were most suitable for themselves and their whānau.

We were fortunate to be able to open Aotearoa New Zealand's first Social Supermarket on 15 March 2021. This has been an extraordinary milestone for the Wellington City Mission, both in terms of the support enjoyed by our shoppers over the last 3.4 years, and the inspiration behind the development of 11 further Social Supermarkets throughout the North Island.

The Wellington City Mission was only able to open its Social Supermarket in March 2021 and operate it fully stocked ever since, with the generous and ongoing support of Foodstuffs North Island and its member store owners.

Foodstuffs North Island completely fitted out our Social Supermarket with shelving, display units, refrigeration units, and provided point of sale technology. Since commencing operations, we have been supported with product provision, logistical support and operational advice. They are also in the process of fitout and stocking of a new Social Supermarket for the Wellington City Mission as part of our new Whakamaru development which will open in October 2024.

We will be forever grateful for the generosity and commitment of Foodstuffs North Island to supporting the Wellington City Mission to effectively serve the communities we are committed to. Conservatively, we would estimate the financial support we have enjoyed in our partnership with Foodstuffs North Island to date to be worth well in excess of \$1.5 million. If you add this to the support provided to other Social Supermarkets and other community support endeavours, the financial contribution from Foodstuffs North Island to their communities is very significant!

Throughout all of our relationship, this commitment from Foodstuffs North island has been made “without strings” or any obligation on our part to acknowledge or recognise their contribution or reciprocate in any way.

In my 40+years of working in commercial, corporate, government and community activities, I have seldom seen corporate generosity to this extent before. The support and deep community commitment of Foodstuffs North Island is a very rare commodity indeed.

I believe the proposed merger of Foodstuffs North Island and Foodstuffs South Island will create the critical mass and creative momentum to extend the generosity of the North to those working in and with communities in the South. This can only serve to benefit New Zealand’s commitment to fairness, wellbeing, and equity for all its citizens!

I am happy to be contacted in relation to this support of the proposed merger as per the contact details below.



Ngā mihi nui

Rev Murray Edridge
Wellington City Missioner

DDI: (04) 245 0826 | **M:** 027 485 1896 | **T:** (04) 245 0900 | **E:** murray@wcm.org.nz
19 Gordon Place, Newtown, Wellington | PO Box 7200, Newtown, Wellington 6242
W: www.wellingtoncitymission.org.nz

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*You stand with the least likely to succeed until success is succeeded by something more valuable: kinship. You stand with the belligerent, the surly and the badly behaved until bad behaviour is recognised for the language it is: the vocabulary of the deeply wounded and of those whose burdens are more than they can bear. **Father Greg Boyle***