

In the weeks leading up to Christmas members of the Sydney Australia Greenwich Stake (similar to a diocese) of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have been engaging in a service project for the Wayside Chapel, a religious organisation helping the needy and homeless. The initiative is called the S.O.S. (Streets of Sydney) Wayside Chapel Backpack Appeal.



Reverend Long, the Pastor of the Wayside Chapel explained: “In the past year alone Wayside has provided, amongst other services, 7500 meals, clothing for 2688 people and 2924 counselling sessions with over 2300 referrals to services and agencies.”

He continued: “Some people are fortunate to have supportive families, friends and neighbours, good physical and mental health and inner strength even in the face of great adversity. For those that don’t, there’s the Wayside Chapel.”

Latter-day Saint volunteers filled four hundred backpacks with clothing, toiletries and essential items for distribution over the Christmas period. They will go to individuals who are homeless and those in emergency accommodation. A copy of the Latter-day Saints' Ensign Magazine was included in each backpack to provide some uplifting reading material.



Members of the stake rallied to the cause and with fervour gathered up the required items which were then placed into the backpacks on a special night allocated for the purpose.

Approximately 100 youth attended the Stake Centre on Friday evening (4 December) and enthusiastically sorted and packed the items. As the youth filled the backpacks they were asked to think of the young people, many of similar ages, who were living on the streets. It was a sobering thought for them.



Sister Cyndee Hamilton (Stake RS President), Reverend Graham Long (Pastor of The Wayside Chapel) and President Rohn Rigby (Stake President).

In presenting the backpacks to Reverend Long at a Stake Christmas Fireside last night (6 December), the Stake Relief Society President, Sister Cyndee Hamilton, said that as Church members, “we have gained so much more from this experience than we have given, and we feel truly blessed for having been provided with this opportunity to be of service.”

As a final comment, Reverend Long stated: “We are blown away by the goodness of your community toward us and appreciate more than we can say, the helping hand that you are giving us at this time of year.”

