



**Caroline  
Chisholm  
Society**

# Newsletter

Spring Edition - Oct 2016

## Moonee Valley

### Are we there yet?

Here are some progress photos of our new service hub at 977 Mt Alexander Road, Essendon



Want to volunteer? Join us!

Our contact details are overleaf.



Caroline Chisholm Society  
Annual Report 2015-16  
is now available!

Check it out at:

[www.caroline.org.au/aboutus.htm](http://www.caroline.org.au/aboutus.htm)

## From the CEO

After the 2016 Annual General Meeting of Caroline Chisholm Society, I was grateful and excited.

Grateful because it's been a year of great change in an operational sense, but we've still achieved great things for expectant and new mothers and families. Our IT infrastructure has been upgraded, a change one should never underestimate. Our physical spaces have changed—taking up more space in Shepparton, expanding in to the former Wirrigirri Preschool and consolidating the Moonee Valley team into the Caroline Springs office. And, our key staff have changed (namely, our manager of pregnancy and family services, our volunteer coordinator, and our senior and lead practitioners at each office).

With all that at play, we still helped about 1300 families with new and pre-loved goods, in home family and homelessness support, volunteer mentors and helpers with maintenance and parenting and play groups. 50% of those families were from a background other than Australian, and the majority live in western Melbourne and Shepparton. And the families we're helping are under pressure. Most have financial pressure and challenges due to the new arrival or young children they're raising. And many mix those concerns with housing stress, mental health issues, social and physical isolation, and family violence. Both current and historic. It's encouraging though, that our data and our clients are telling us that we're making a difference—helping them to create safe and nurturing environments for their children.

I was excited after the AGM because the year ahead includes plans to more effectively help families in Shepparton, make use of our new genuinely Mum, Dad and child friendly space in Caroline Springs, and open a new hub of services for expectant and new parents in Moonee Valley.

We're not sure how the Commonwealth's new welfare approach will impact. The fall out from the Royal Commission into Family Violence in Victoria will surely be good news for children so we'll need to be responsive to the 'Roadmap to Reform: strong families, safe children', the Homelessness and social housing reform and 'The Education State'. Given our knowledge of local impact, the municipal Early Years Plans will also be important for planning. Whatever comes our way, I'm sure we'll be able to remain true to our tradition of neighbourly good will and keep positive about parenting.

In the spirit of Caroline Chisholm,

Helen Cooney



## Are you a friend of Goulburn Valley Pregnancy and Family Support Service?

### Make it official!

We've launched a group called 'Friends of GV Pregnancy and Family Support Service'. If you would like to become a 'friend', you will get a bumper sticker, regular newsletters about what's going on in Shepparton and invites to local meetings, events and activities.

To become a friend, email us at [gv@caroline.org.au](mailto:gv@caroline.org.au) and we'll send you an application form.



## Spotlight on... Engaging Wyndham Families!

Caroline Chisholm Society has a new role in the City of Wyndham working with Early Years services such as Maternal and Child Health nurses, Kindergartens, and Hospital Social Workers to better engage with families as early as possible—to prevent families getting into crisis and entering into Child Protection system.

We are doing this in a co-ordinated way with other agencies focussing on the growth area of Wyndham Vale. ISIS Primary Care and Catholic Care are working with primary schools, VACCA with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and Anglicare to help with the central intake system.

We're calling the project 'Engaging Wyndham Families' and are aiming to 1) support in a more timely and efficient manner—manage demand, 2) offer outreach services for families directly, 3) undertake secondary consultations with those working with families—MCH nurses, teachers and others, 4) build partnerships with Wyndham Council and other services in the area 5) run parenting and play groups or community education ses-

sions and 6) offer information and resources.

The project was a result of the 2015 Budget, in which the Victorian Government announced \$283 million in funding over four years for programs and services targeting Victorian families, children and young people. The funding supports early intervention services for vulnerable families.

This was, in part, a response to recommendations from the Victorian Auditor-General Office (VAGO) which led to a review of Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) funded programs for vulnerable families.

DHHS provided the extra funding state-wide to Child First and Integrated Family Services Alliances to trial different ways to meet families' needs in Victoria's fastest growing areas. Especially where population growth was faster than growth in infrastructure (buildings, roads, transport etc.) and community services.

We plan to measure outcomes of the interventions so that we know if and how the project makes a difference.

### Case Studies Engaging Wyndham Families

A new parent was referred to ChildFIRST to Engaging Wyndham Families where there had been family violence incident. Assessed as benefiting from early intervention support, the key worker engaged with both parents. Advocacy and support were provided to address social isolation, parenting strategies and relationship issues.

An Enhanced Maternal and Child Health Nurse referred a father to EWF after he attended the community centre for support in caring for 3 children now in his care. Engaging Wyndham Families key worker did the intake and assessment, and provided the single father support to navigate Centrelink, access to other services such as Playgroup, Paediatrician and material aid.

## Contact us ...

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