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Caroline Chisholm Society fears losing its temporary home before new Essendon hub is ready

Linh Ly, Moonee Valley Leader

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A FAMILY support service says it is working under a cloud with fears it could be kicked out of its temporary base in Moonee Ponds before a new home is ready.

Caroline Chisholm Society chief executive Helen Cooney said while a new permanent hub for the service was due to be completed in Essendon later this year, a development application

submitted on its current leased home in Moonee Ponds had thrown the organisation's work into uncertainty.

Moonee Valley Council is expected to decide whether to approve an application for a six-storey building at 8-14 Shuter St next month.

Ms Cooney said they feared if the project was approved, they would have to vacate 12 Shuter St before the completion of the Essendon building because their lease lapsed in February.

"Timing for us is a real challenge in a couple of different ways," Ms Cooney said.

"We'd like to only have to move once not only because there's a lot of hassle, but because it sends mixed messages to our clients who sometimes don't have great English.

"A short period of notice to leave the building will have a significant impact on our families who need support.

"You've got families who may have fled family violence or had their first child or are a refugee and English is a barrier."

Ms Cooney said despite asking for a lease renewal until February 2017, the landlord had not agreed nor given them clarity over how much notice they would get to vacate.

"The uncertainty of that is impacting on clients and their capacity to know whether or not we will be there for them in the future," she said.

Lou Rendina, managing director of Lou Rendina Real Estate, told *Moonee Valley Leader* the landlord would give the organisation eight weeks' notice.

Mr Rendina said developments normally took at least three or four months to get under way after they have been given planning approval.

"He's (landlord) open to keeping a longer period of their existing lease arrangements to accommodate to their arrangements," Mr Rendina said.

Ms Cooney said while she felt more reassured upon hearing those comments, she was yet to hear it from the landlord herself and wanted it in writing.