

*** MEDIA RELEASE ***

Shepparton's Spring Babies to get free Baby Box

13 September 2016 (Under EMBARGO)

Local charity, Caroline Chisholm Society, will tomorrow start to distribute free Baby Boxes to all of Shepparton's Spring 2016 babies as part of the "Shepparton Collaboration for Expectant and New Mothers".

The Society, known as Goulburn Valley Pregnancy and Family Support Service, will also launch a competition to design the box for the future so that Shepparton locals can participate in the project and set the service up to apply for funds so that the pilot can continue.

Centred around the free provision of a Baby Box—which is lined with a mattress and is used as a child's first bed—the Collaboration is designed to promote the importance of preparedness for parenting, reading and promote services available, including antenatal classes and maternal and child health appointments. It will also reinforce safe sleeping messages.

Helen Cooney, Chief Executive of the Caroline Chisholm Society, said

"We believe this simple, safe and supportive idea is right for us in Shepparton. We love its simplicity; it's a box that's recyclable and can become a toy box. We love its safety; it's a great way to encourage safe sleeping practices. We love its model of support; it's a way to engage with families to prevent social isolation, family violence, the impacts of homelessness and engagement with child protection."

Working in partnership with several social and community service agencies and funded by the Helen McPherson Smith Trust, Goulburn Valley Pregnancy and Family Support Service decided it wanted to distribute the Boxes.

On Wednesday 14 September, the Goulburn Valley Collaboration Co-ordinator, Belinda Guilmartin, will give out the first boxes and co-design with local mums a parenting survey. Soon after, a total of 250 Baby Boxes will be available.

Aneta Moody, Goulburn Valley Lead Practitioner, said

"Other options included parenting groups, increasing our kindergarten support work and volunteer mentoring, but the message from our clients, volunteers and colleagues was clear – Using the Baby Box as a tool would help us to avoid duplication, to work together, and to provide information at the time families prepare for parenting."

Caroline Chisholm Society, Goulburn Valley Pregnancy & Family Support Service is affectionately known as "Preg Support" by many locals.

Want a Baby Box? Pregnant families wishing to collect a baby box should call or email: Caroline Chisholm Society, Goulburn Valley Pregnancy & Family Support Service, Tel: 03 5821 0826, Email: gv@caroline.org.au

Want to help us design the box for the future?

Those wishing to contribute artwork should go to www.caroline.org.au to download the form.

Media Contact:

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Also available: Aneta Moody, Goulburn Valley Lead Practitioner



To learn more about GV Pregnancy & Family Support Services
Caroline Chisholm Society, see www.caroline.org.au.