



### 977 Mt Alexander Road, Essendon Officially opened!



*Sarah Notaro, Tess Fogarty, James Merlino, and Rose Piper unveiling the plaque.*

On 4 March 2017, the Caroline Chisholm Society – Moonee Valley was officially opened by The Hon. James Merlino MP, Deputy Premier of Victoria with the assistance of Life Members of the Caroline Chisholm Society and pregnant mothers and their families.

The building was made possible by contributions from the Victorian Government, Noel & Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation, the Noonan Family, the Beck and Fox Families, Essendon Fields, Strathmore Community Branch Bendigo Bank, Australian Lions Foundation, Lions Club of Doutta Galla (Quilt – Esprit de Corps Project), Schiavello Group, Nelson Alexander Charitable Foundation, Chisholm House – Loyola College Watsonia, Essendon Branch of the Country Women's Association of Victoria Inc. and community fundraising by volunteers.

It would not have been possible without support from the Moonee Valley City Council, the Rotary Club of Essendon and volunteers and members of the Society.

For over 40 years, the Caroline Chisholm Society was located at 41 Park Street, Moonee Ponds.



*A busy front of house*



*The building filled with people*



*Julia Di Cosmo, Loyola College*

Check out more photos online at:

[www.caroline.org.au/moonee-valley/moonee-valley-official-opening](http://www.caroline.org.au/moonee-valley/moonee-valley-official-opening)



### Mother's Day Appeal

Donate by the end of April to fund lunch on Friday before Mother's Day

Help us ensure more Mum's hear the word 'thanks'

### From the CEO



*Our CEO, Helen Cooney, and 4x great grandson of Caroline Chisholm, James.*

As I did on the day of the official opening of our new building in Essendon, and on behalf of the Caroline Chisholm Society, I would like to gratefully acknowledge the Wurundjeri Tribe of the Kulin Nation. Caroline Chisholm Society recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

Personally, I thank Aunty Di for welcoming us on behalf of the Wurundjeri people and sharing part of her story with us. And for bringing one of her daughters.

Together, they prepared the space so that it is in fit condition to support expectant and new mums—whatever their background. It was lovely to see ceremonial ways of working that started long ago continue.

At CCS, we also remind ourselves that we are inspired by Caroline Chisholm. Caroline, with the support of her husband Archibald and their children, supported women and families, argued their cases before employers and the law, and advocated on their behalf for social change.

James Chisholm, 4x great grandson of Caroline and Archibald, was a very special guest at our opening. His presence reminds us of being inspired by Caroline to be strong, determined, compassionate and gentle. I thank James for taking the time to get to know us better.

From the Moonee Valley office, we are now offering appointments for baby and maternity goods, pregnancy counselling, homelessness support and family support. We hope to soon have playgroups and parenting groups operating. We already have a knitters circle of volunteers.

I look forward to offering many more updates from Essendon, but also from our Caroline Springs and Shepparton teams. A big welcome to Maree Chin who recently started as our Goulburn Valley Lead Practitioner.

'What next?' We are focusing on quality. For the first time this year, Shepparton will be included in the scope of our three-yearly quality review. We will also be focusing on data and working towards a service record system. We hope to make it easier to know and let others know that we are helping pregnant and new mums, how we are doing that and how well. We are one of the few agencies to publish so openly our data and I look forward to ensuring that we remain at the forefront of transparency and quality service provision.

In the spirit of Caroline Chisholm,

Helen Cooney

New website now launched:  
[www.caroline.org.au](http://www.caroline.org.au)  
Send feedback to [secretary@caroline.org.au](mailto:secretary@caroline.org.au)

## Spotlight on... The Victorian Parliament!

Lizzie Blandthorn MP and Danny Pearson MP, the Members for Pascoe Vale and Essendon, reflected on their experience at the opening of our new Essendon office in the Legislative Assembly on 7 March 2017.

### Ms BLANDTHORN (Pascoe Vale) —



*Former Caroline Chisholm Society Board member, Lizzie Blandthorn MP, with her colleagues Danny Pearson and Ben Carrol at the Official Opening of Caroline Chisholm Society—Moonee Valley*

Thank you, Deputy Speaker. Congratulations on your appointment.

On the eve of International Women's Day, I am very pleased to report to the house that the member for Essendon, the member for Niddrie and I joined the Deputy Premier to open the new home of the Caroline Chisholm Society on Mount Alexander Road in Essendon on Saturday. **This is an important service, and it serves women and families in our local community. From its humble beginnings in Park Street, Moonee Ponds, where it simply delivered material aid, it now is a service that works right across the western suburbs, into Caroline Springs and up to Shepparton.** It provides essential family services for women and particularly their unborn and newborn babies and their small children.

The Caroline Chisholm Society has respect for life, it is compassionate and caring, it values social justice, it believes in the empowerment of women and families, it recognises diversity and it operates accountably, according to best practice. As they say in their motto, they are inspired by Caroline Chisholm and acknowledge the traditional owners of the land in the communities in which they work. Indeed on Saturday it was particularly inspiring to have one of the descendants of Caroline Chisholm, James Chisholm, join us for this occasion. Also joining us was a student from Loyola College, the captain of Chisholm House at the school. They often raise money for the Caroline Chisholm Society. I congratulate the president, Paul Webster, the dynamic CEO, Helen Cooney, the volunteers and the board for their work.

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*Victorian Parliamentary Debates, Legislative Assembly, Tuesday, 7 March 2017, 498*

### Mr PEARSON (Essendon) —

Congratulations on your election, Deputy Speaker.

I was delighted to recently join the Deputy Premier and the members for Niddrie and Pascoe Vale at the opening of the Caroline Chisholm Society community centre on Mount Alexander Road, Essendon. **This purpose-built facility will provide a range of services and assistance for families in need, including counselling, housing, aid and in-home family support.** The Victorian government contributed \$950 000 towards this \$3.2 million project alongside community funding. The funding has allowed the Caroline Chisholm Society to set up specific spaces that cater for the different services provided — comfortable rooms for client meetings, a spacious bathroom with changing facilities and adequate space for the sorting and processing of clothes, prams, toys and food.

The Caroline Chisholm Society is a charitable organisation that was established in 1969 with a mission to provide services that respond to the needs of families and support them to achieve and maintain a safe and nurturing environment. I would like to acknowledge Paul Webster, president of the board, and board members Michael Christie, Phil Gatens, Frank Smit, Stephen Mullins, Gavin Kempin, Wendy Hunt, Sarah Notaro, Kate Rowswell, Tess Fogarty and Stuart Rowland. I would also like to thank the very formidable CEO, Helen Cooney, and her management team, Mo Connolly, Marie Panzera and Sylvana Romagnano. **I would also like to single out Margaret Christie, who shared the vision of creating a fit-for-purpose facility for the Caroline Chisholm Society and then proceeded to raise a significant amount of money to turn her dream into a reality.**

Thank you to Mark Anderson, the O'Brien family, the Noonan family, the Beck and Fox families, Essendon Fields, the Lions Club of Doutta Galla, Rose Piper and the quilters, the Strathmore Community Bank Branch of Bendigo Bank, the Schiavello group, the Nelson Alexander Charitable Foundation, Chisholm House at Loyola College in Watsonia, the Essendon branch of the Country Women's Association of Victoria, the Rotary Club of Essendon, Playgroups Victoria, Rohin Adams, the Rotary clubs of Brimbank central and Caroline Springs, the Lions Club of Essendon, Julia Di Cosmo and Sarah Notaro.

*Victorian Parliamentary Debates, Legislative Assembly, Tuesday, 7 March 2017, 500*

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