



supporting pregnancy, children and families

Media Release

The future is looking up for depressed and anxious pregnant and new mums

A local pregnancy and family support service, the Caroline Chisholm Society, today welcomed new proposals in Victoria for depressed and anxious pregnant and new mums and their babies.

The CEO, Helen Cooney, said "I am excited by the prospect of ongoing funding for perinatal emotional health programs; a proposal for a Perinatal Mental Health Plan to complement Victoria's 10-year mental health plan; and the evaluation of the need for early parenting centres and mother baby units across the state."

The proposals have been put forward by the Victorian Parliament's Family and Community Development Committee in a report from its inquiry into perinatal services, which was tabled today.

Ms Cooney said "Of all the social services needed during the perinatal period to help avoid complex and expensive health problems, the one in most dire need of investment and coordination is perinatal mental health. The proposal for ongoing funding for perinatal emotional health programs is wonderful to help empower pregnant and new mums."

Ms Cooney also said, "Victoria can and should be the best place in the world to have and raise your baby. To achieve that, we need ongoing funding for perinatal emotional health programs. They help deal with the very treatable and far too common issues of perinatal anxiety and depression. These programs also help prevent escalation into more significant mental health issues."

Caroline Chisholm Society also welcomed the proposed redress of the rural and regional divide. Helen said, "I hope the Victorian Government does evaluate the demand for early parenting centres and mother baby units across the state. These services should be available to everyone who needs them, not just those in the city. Our experience in Shepparton suggests there is a need for one in Goulburn Valley to provide effective coverage for mothers, babies and families."

"If these recommendations are carried through, the future is looking up for depressed and anxious pregnant and new mums. Their babies and toddlers need them to be empowered and supported, from the time of conception to the time their baby is 2 years old. This is their first 1000 days and it helps set up those children for the future.

The Society looks forward to further considering the 400-page report and working with the Victorian Government on its response and implementation of the recommendations.

Media contact: Helen Cooney, 0409 668 721 (CEO)

***Background:** Caroline Chisholm Society is a pregnancy and family support service, supporting families from when they learn of pregnancy until their children go to school. Our services include Pregnancy Counselling and Support, New and Pre-loved goods and Emergency Relief for pregnant women and families, Family Services and homelessness casework support, and adjunct services like playgroups, social support groups, and advocacy. We support approximately 1500-2000 contacts (clients) per year, depending on funds. We operate at 3 sites (Moonee Valley, Caroline Springs, and Goulburn Valley). We are funded through community donations of funds and goods, by government, philanthropic supporters and local families.*

Locations

Caroline Springs
1 Darebin Place
Caroline Springs VIC 3023
Phone 03 9361 7000

Moonee Valley
977 Mt Alexander Road
Essendon 30430
Phone 03 9361 7000

Goulburn Valley
15A Andrews Road
Shepparton VIC 3630
Phone 03 5821 0826