



supporting pregnancy, children and families

25 March 2014

## \*\*\* MEDIA RELEASE \*\*\*

### Keep Caroline Chisholm Society in Moonee Valley Campaign Launched

Caroline Chisholm Society has launched a 2014 campaign 'Keep Caroline Chisholm in Moonee Valley' designed to help them raise \$1.6m for a new home for the pregnancy and family support service.

Chief Executive Officer, Helen Cooney, said "Caroline Chisholm has been supporting mothers during and after pregnancy from an old house in Moonee Valley for over 40 years. Given the need for public transport by our clients, we're really keen to stay but we need help to achieve that."

Located at 977 Mount Alexander Road, Essendon, the former Precision Mower Shop will be renovated to become two-storey, and will include:

- a large multifunctional space for social support groups, cooking classes, volunteering and storage, sorting and cleaning of new and pre-loved goods.
- secure and private office space for counsellors and case workers to meet with clients, and
- a warm and welcoming reception space with space for volunteer administrators,

The Society plans to offer the space to other community organisations needing space of this kind.

Chief Executive Officer, Helen Cooney, said "It's a very exciting proposal for community development through volunteering, for capacity building for community organizations and – most of all – for supporting mothers with their pregnancy, children and families."

#### About the need for funds

The Society is seeking help from locals, philanthropists and government to achieve the remaining \$550,000 needed to reach \$1.6m.

- Philanthropic supporters are being asked to match significant donations committed by other donors.
- The State Government is asked finish its review of community support fund grants so that the Society can apply.
- With regard to locals, Ms Cooney said"

If you can do nothing else, please just ask your local candidates for the State Election if they're planning to offer help to locally embedded organisations with community infrastructure.

We've had tremendous support of locals who have raised about \$40,000 through raffles, trivia nights and other general donations. We've also been supported by the Members of Caroline Chisholm Society, Essendon Rotary, the Lions Club of Doutta Galla, Strathmore Community Bank and Nelson Alexander Foundation to achieve over \$1m toward the project.

Maggie and Glenda are yarn bombing a park bench. Others are having friends around for tea and ask for donations. The Society Board had dinner at my home, and I was amazed that I raised \$600 by just having people around for tea!"



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About Caroline Chisholm:

Caroline Chisholm Society supports pregnancy, children and families in Western Melbourne and the Goulburn Valley. We offer support from the moment a woman learns of her pregnancy to the time her youngest child goes to school. We help women to achieve a safe and nurturing environment for their children.

We offer 1) new and pre-loved baby and maternity goods to families to alleviate the impact of poverty, 2) one-off appointments for counselling and support to empower families, and 3) ongoing casework to support good parenting while at risk of or facing stress including homelessness, family violence and mental health issues.

We see 1500-2000 per year, depending on funds. The majority of clients come to us for goods. Those closest to our hearts are seeking our counsel when unsure of their pregnancy and we offer them advice about services suitable to their circumstances. Over 1600 one-off appointments were given last financial year to women from across the state at our offices in Moonee Ponds and at Shepparton. Those we spend the most time with are our casework clients. We worked with over 200 ongoing clients in the last financial year, helping them to care for themselves and their children effectively. Those casework clients live in the municipalities of Moonee Valley, Melton, Brimbank, Wyndham, Hobsons Bay, Melbourne and Maribyrnong.

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