



Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Perinatal Services and Victorian Government Family Violence, Homelessness and Child and Family Services Reform

Our View? What our CEO has to say:

"... Caroline Chisholm Society thinks Victoria can and should be the best place in the world to have and bring up your baby—from the time you learn of your pregnancy to the time your baby is 3 years old and beyond.

To make that true requires those with power to :

- link health and community services more effectively,
- deal with social determinants of health—including being careful with the reform that is underway of homelessness and family services
- invest immediately in perinatal mental health,
- address the disparity between the city and the county
- help those who work with families during the perinatal to have the capacity to respond."

We're excited!

Two of our Board members, Kate Rowswell and Sarah Notaro are expecting. We look forward to meeting a new sibling in the Notaro house and to meeting the new cousin for many in the Rowswell's family.



Congratulations Karan!

Having come to us as a volunteer in 1987, Karan has been an integral part of the pregnancy and family services team.

This year, Karan clocks up 30 years of service and has decided it is time to retire.

Karan's long service will be formally acknowledge at our AGM later this year.



From the CEO

It gives me joy to report this quarter. On the other side of this newsletter, you will see details of "Children and Mother's in Mind", a new therapeutic demonstration project. For those who read this newsletter often, you will recall that we heard about Mother's in Mind in 2015, during a study tour with the Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare.



At our Mother's Day Party

With the support of Melton City Council and the University of Melbourne, we took advantage of a visit from Dr Angelique Jenney and were trained in the group work program that helps with mother-child bond. Dr Jenney was at that time Director of Family Violence Services for Child Development Institute, Toronto, and delivered the annual Len Tierney Lecture.

With the support of the Western Integrated Family Violence Partnership, we've been funded to offer the group. It is currently running from Warrigirri, located at 2 Darebin Place, Caroline Springs. The program has been successful and is making a difference in the lives of participants.

In working on that program, we identified that rebuilding the bond between a mum and their baby or toddler required us to support mothers to access therapeutic responses prior to starting and during the program (be that before or after or on another day of the week). We felt that we needed more flexibility with case support.

We had a community of practice established with Children's Protection Society (CPS) and, once the Victorian Government announced a tender for therapeutic demonstration projects, were able to work quickly with our colleagues to prepare a proposal drawing on our shared expertise. And the Government loved it, rightly so. Our shared focus on children, on mothers, and on responding to their need for empowerment and social connection was clearly important. There are sites across Victoria: two metropolitan, two rural and one regional. It is a true demonstration project with scalability.

I look forward to reporting on the project and continuing to learn from and work with mums, babies and toddlers who are dealing with increasingly complex issues. I thank my colleagues at McAuley Community Services for Women and VincentCare (Marion Community) for sharing their expertise and being willing to come on the journey with us.

Before I sign off—there is a Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Perinatal Services underway. I look forward to sharing our submission to that inquiry on our website. In this newsletter we include a summary of our view, which is informed by our experience and knowledge of reform that is proposed and underway. Reform to homelessness, family violence, and child and family services needs to be carefully thought through to ensure that children are protected and fewer of them are removed. Instead, families need support to create safe and nurturing environments for their children.

In the spirit of Caroline Chisholm,

Helen

Helen Cooney



A big thank you to the Country Women's Association of Victoria Inc. for donating nappies at their conference in Shepparton.

Spotlight on... Children and Mother's in Mind



Mums and their young children in Goulburn Valley and Western Melbourne will soon be offered a 22-week program to respond to their trauma and help them rebuild their relationship with each other following family violence.

The program includes 1) comprehensive assessment, 2) group work on responding to trauma, rebuilding their relationship (attachment) and sustaining the learnings, and 3) mother-child individualised counselling. This is underpinned by a case-work approach.

Caroline Chisholm Society is proud to be working with VincentCare (Marion Community) and McAuley Community Services for Women.



Funded by the Victorian State Government as one of 26 family violence early intervention pilots across the state, Children and Mother's in Mind (CMiM) is an Australian first program for mothers and children (four years and under) who have experienced family violence and no longer live with the perpetrator.

CMiM recognises that women who have experienced family violence often lose confidence in their ability to parent effectively, particularly if their parenting is or has been undermined or criticized by an abusive partner, leading to isolation and unhealthy coping mechanisms.

Incorporating practice elements originating from Canada, this 22-week evidence informed program

will be available at five trial sites across Victoria and will be jointly delivered by Children's Protection Society, Anglicare Victoria, Caroline Chisholm Society, Barwon Centre Against Sexual Assault/Minerva, Merri Outreach Support Services, McAuley Community Support for Women, Vincent Care and Quantum Support Services.

CMiM takes a "two generations" approach and focuses on both the mother and child(ren). Clinicians will adopt a gendered method to working with clients, fostering mother/infant bonding based on relational trauma and attachment theory. The underlying case work component throughout the program, in addition to therapeutic work, distinguishes CMiM from a mere counselling or case work model of intervention.



*CCS's Monthly Monday Knitters
Are you knitting at home? Our Essendon building is accessible. Please feel free to join us! Ring us on 03 9361 7000 for details.*

Volunteering in Melbourne

Following the announcement of Karan Grieve's retirement, we have advertised for a new Volunteer and Welfare Appointments Coordinator. We're looking for someone perfectly suited to help bring the ideas of our voluntary staff to life in Essendon and Caroline Springs. Someone who can 'make stuff happen', is suitably qualified to undertake and oversee welfare appointments and knows about compliance processes (like police checks). We're looking forward to someone vibrant filling the gap to ensure that we retain our long tradition of being volunteer-led and supported.

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