

18 August 2018



Dear Members, Volunteers, Staff and Friends of Caroline Chisholm Society,

On Saturday 24 November 2018, Victorians will decide who forms the next State Government. When deciding who gets your vote, please consider pregnant and new mums, babies and toddlers. Caroline Chisholm Society has heard **the voice of over 1200 families** who came to see us last year. At our Mother's Day and Children's Week Parties, in private discussions with our staff, and through the data, we have been told so much about the opportunities and challenges faced by families in raising their babies and toddlers. Please ask your local candidate to hear the voice of pregnant and new mums, babies & toddlers too. Please ask your candidates:

Will you fund local First 1000 Days Supporters in our neighbourhoods for mums, dads, babies and toddlers?

After parenting and poverty, the top issues raised with us relate to mental health, homelessness, family violence and isolation. Putting mental health and social isolation together, the most pressing issue for those who come to us is perinatal mental health. A Perinatal Mental Health Plan was recommended by a Parliamentary Committee, we need it and action.

The solution: For every local government area, there should be a First 1000 Days Supporter (social worker or other health professional) who coordinates volunteers to run parenting play and education groups, so that pregnant and new mothers support each other locally during the first 1000 days of their baby's life, from conception till the child is two years old.

Will you fund more transitional housing for mums, babies and toddlers living in homelessness?

Last financial year, more than 60% of Victorians needing homeless help were female. A mother on single parenting payments looking for a two-bedroom rental in Melbourne has just 3-in-100 properties which she could afford. The solution is more housing. In our experience, mothers – from the time they learn of their pregnancy until their child is less than 2 years old, require an immediate response that can last until they have settled into life as a parent.

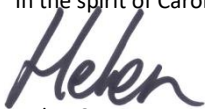
The solution: There should be more transitional housing that comes with a support worker specifically dedicated to families in their First 1000 days.

Will you redress the divide between rural and metropolitan mums, babies and toddlers?

The metropolitan centric government systems do not respond to the needs of pregnant and new families in rural towns on the fringe of Melbourne or in regional cities. A Parliamentary Committee recommended evaluating demand for Early Parenting Centres across the state. We look forward to that data. We need one in Shepparton. And, so that those services are the best they can be, we also need a centre for excellence in Melbourne's west to lead the State. In Melton, we have a city the size of Canberra moving in. We need hospitals planned now and they need to be planned for midwifery services and adjunct perinatal support services.

The solution: Fund services to match existing and growth of demand for perinatal and early years services

In the spirit of Caroline Chisholm,



Helen Cooney
Chief Executive Officer

Locations

Caroline Springs
1 Darebin Place
Caroline Springs VIC 3023
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Essendon 30430
Phone 03 9361 7000

Goulburn Valley
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Shepparton VIC 3630
Phone 03 5821 0826