



Annual Report Financial Year 2019 - 2020



We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we live, work and provide services, and pay our respects to their elders, past, present and those yet to come.

We acknowledge Dr Philomene Joshua, and Mrs Pat Coffey OAM, and the countless women who committed to making an impact in the lives of women and children over the past 50 years. We honour this heritage, and pay tribute to this work, as well as especially paying tribute to the ongoing and everyday labour of love we witness through the privilege of being a part of the lives of mothers and children.

Clients names have been changed throughout the report to respect their privacy.

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President's Report



We were privileged to have with us celebrating 50 years, our founder, Dr Philomene Joshua, who as a young mother and doctor was able to draw together a group of friends to create a network of volunteers, whom went on to build the legacy of outreach and support now recognised across Victoria as a specialised service for mothers and children.

On October 2nd, 2019, the Society members, supporters and stakeholders came together to celebrate 50 years with the launch of The Story So Far for the Caroline Chisholm Society.

The day was marked as a tribute to the vision of a group of women and men whom built the foundations of the work we do today in the 1960s, when the services commenced, offering material aid and pregnancy supports to women in crisis.

The celebrations continued into Shepparton, with volunteers and members coming together to celebrate with our founding member, Mrs Pat Coffey, who years later would meet with Dr Joshua to form the Caroline Chisholm Society, drawing on the inspiration of the an Australian heroine—Caroline Chisholm—as a social reformer and philanthropist—not afraid to advocate for the needs of women and children.

The Society has grown substantially since the 1960s, as a leading specialist service in Victoria, we proudly support communities across three catchments, with centres in Essendon, Caroline Springs and Shepparton, serving Western Melbourne, Brimbank, Melton and the Goulburn Valley.

Reflecting on the past 12 months and what I have shared with our members and supporters at our

AGM in 2019, the Society has faced challenging financial times over the years, and more acutely felt in recent times. This has included the end of some funding programs by the Victorian government impacting the number of clients we can support at any given time, and increasing operational costs, such as the introduction of the Portable Long Service Benefit Scheme, wage growth, and other government compliance costs, such as accreditation.

While the Society has worked quickly to find efficiencies without compromising on services, a restructure took place in late 2019 with some difficult decisions to be made on how best to structure our organisation. This was important to ensure we would continue in the future as a specialisation, working with mothers, babies, and children up to the age of 5. With these measures in place, there is still uncertainty for the sector. This includes the impact of initiatives such as the Portable Long Service Benefit Scheme that creates long-term structural cost and cash flow pressures on agencies. This is via the intention of the scheme to support workforce flexibility for staff to move around in various family services agencies, the upfront cash payment into the Scheme, along with high turnover rates and no mechanism in place to refund employers for employees who leave the sector.

President's Report

In April 2020, the Board met for their annual planning day with this year's focus on sustainability and fundraising strategies and a renewed focus on how best to support unfunded areas of the Society's work, including material aid and outreach work.

While we said goodbye to some members, and we received lovely news of babies and grandbabies being born into the Society's network, we also welcomed two new board members to the Society—Mr Mark Dohrmann and Dr Rachel Carling—who both bring with them a wealth of experience and knowledge of the for purpose sector to our Board. In these times, we are getting creative with our use of technology to connect with our members and supporters to provide updates and share news.

While this report was in the final stages of preparation, the Society was able to demonstrate its agility and responsiveness as our communities continue to be impacted by the shock of a global pandemic. The Society has been able to maintain services and support throughout government restrictions. With our priority focus on our staff and volunteers, our team of practitioners have adapted quickly to remote working, using telecare strategies—in addition to

providing the home visits that supply care and food packs to families—with online platforms such as regular Zoom, Telehealth, and social media platforms for meetings with mothers.

On behalf of the board, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our leadership team, practitioners and small band of volunteers and supporters who showed the true grit we know is the Society's DNA in times of adversity!

In Memoriam
– *Teresa (Tess) Fogarty*

On 25 April 2020, we were advised of the passing of our much-loved member, volunteer and board director, Tess Fogarty. It had only been a week since Tess had participated in a virtual board planning day, when we had learned that after a short illness, surrounded by her family, Tess passed away in the early hours of Anzac Day. Tess will always be remembered...

Dr Michael Christie
President



CEO's Report



Preparing this year's annual report is being done at a time of unprecedented circumstances as we navigate the complexities of the impact of the COVID19 pandemic. And while this occupies our time now, in putting this report together we are made very much aware of pre-COVID and COVID worlds we now navigate—and what a difference the past eight months have made!

It wasn't long ago, we were planning 50-year events, including a celebration at Government House and the launch of our history book in recognition of the Society's achievements and challenges to date. One of the very first home visits undertaken by a Society practitioner when government restrictions were imposed was the comment from a mum wanting to reassure our staff that *"everything will be ok"* as she shared her experience of coming from a war torn country where resources like food and care items were so scarce, and yet *"we managed ... and we can get through this too."*

We are always in awe of the resilience of the women we support in our programs, and as you browse through the Annual Report you will read about our regular programs and the impact that COVID19 has had on our resources and outreach in the past five months.

Behind the data are the countless stories of the experiences of mothers in need of our supports and services, who are typically referred to us by community agencies, hospitals and not for profits in the sector and often are self-referrals too, as they reach out to connect with a lifeline at times of crisis and uncertainty.

As part of our contracted work with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the plight of the unborn and their mother has come into focus as the rising number of *"unborn reports"*—a high risk cohort identified by DHHS due to the risks of neglect and abuse once a baby is born—brings a mother to the attention of services.

It struck me at the time of receiving the above advice that this cohort is the Society's work and has been for the past 50 years—a service focused on preventing women and their children from being involved with child protection services.

Would it surprise anyone to note that there are currently close to 2,000 Victorian mothers at risk of the involvement of child protection services at the time of giving birth.

CEO's Report

We call this moment of contact with the Society, the “sliding door” moment, when a hospital social worker, midwife, maternal and child health nurse, or community professionals supporting expectant women suggest to mum she might want to be in contact with the Caroline Chisholm Society or risk a report to child protection. It's in this moment, the work of our practitioners kick-in to provide the wrap around supports and interventions to mitigate the risks of child protection, and more importantly are designed to promote and enhance mum's capacity to do what she is striving to as a new mum.

According to DHHS data from 2019, there are 108 Unborn Reports in Wyndham and a total of 204 for Western Melbourne.

For many of these soon-to-be new mums, they are often not made aware of the services mentioned above until they have given birth and are visited by child protection staff, sometimes while still in hospital.

We have had cases in recent times: one of our young mums was not permitted to leave hospital with her baby until she could prove her accommodation was suitable to bring baby home; another presented at a government service due to a financial crisis and at 36-weeks pregnant, she had never attended an antenatal service to support her health during pregnancy; also, the mum, who contacted us looking for infant formula and on discussions with our practitioners it was discovered she was the mum of a six-week-old baby, sleeping on the floor in a rooming house, and with a limited income as she was on a protection visa due to family violence—and with no family support and a fixed income, wasn't sure how she was to provide for her newborn.

And sadly, there are times when every avenue has been exhausted, a child may move into out of home care— of which there are currently 600 infants living in a home that isn't their family environment. According to government accounts, once a child is removed from the care of their mother and family and is placed into Out of Home Care, the cost to the system will be \$1M until the child turns 18 years of age.

So as we browse through this report, it's important to remind ourselves that now more than ever, and in the next six months, at the heart of this is always a story of incredible adversity and resilience as our incredible team of staff navigate systems and services with our focus on keeping mums and their children together.

Jennifer Weber
Chief Executive Officer

Our Supporters

Our achievements are enabled by the generosity of our many supporters.

Our Major Donors, Grants and Partnerships:

Our grateful thanks go to:



Funded By

Our Donors and Supporters:

We thank those who have made personal and organisational contributions of funds, donations of goods and in-kind contributions.

We are extremely privileged to have the support of so many locals in our neighbourhoods, who generously donate and support us daily.

We are thankful for the continual support of our local community groups including the Country Womens Association (CWA) and Rotary Club, along with local schools including a long time partnership with Loyola College, and small businesses.

Our thanks to the City of Melton for the use of the former Wirrigirri Preschool (2 Darebin Place) as a hub for community support with outreach to local families. This site is used to host community events, hold parenting and play groups and for social and community service workers to meet with families.

Who We Are

This year we have supported 932 families across our one-off appointments program or in the longer term for family services or homelessness programs.

In Melbourne we have supported 1,946 individuals, including 1,008 children.

We know from our work here in the western suburbs of Melbourne – Generation West –

OVER 40 BABIES ARE BORN EVERY DAY; 281 A WEEK AND OVER 14,000 A YEAR.

We know from our work in Shepparton - **OVER 1,000 BABIES ARE BORN PER YEAR**

Our Beginning

Founded by Dr Philomena Joshua our story began in the 1960s, offering material aid and pregnancy counselling services. It was out of Dr Joshua's house in Box Hill, where a group of volunteers, determined to support vulnerable pregnant women and mothers with babies, set up the first Pregnancy Support Phone Service. A few years later, Pat Coffey, who lived in Shepparton, established a volunteer service that was also responding to the needs of pregnant women. Within a decade, the Society responded to the needs of the community and started providing home and family support.

Our inspiration comes from Caroline Chisholm (1808-77) who is undoubtedly an Australian heroine: an inspirational social reformer dedicated to improving the living conditions of single women and women with children arriving in the new colony. The parallels in the objectives of Caroline Chisholm and our work are many, both working in areas of homelessness, separation of families, supporting migrant families and meeting material needs.

Today, across three sites, we are a professional agency of social and community workers, service support staff and volunteers, offering pregnancy counselling and support,

material aid and family support. Our specialisation is supporting families from conception through to primary school age.

Our Why

The Society is a specialist agency working with at-risk mothers, babies and their children to foster healthy outcomes in early parenting and children's development. Our goal is to prevent the involvement of child protection services in the lives of women and children. We consider the removal of babies and children from the care of their mothers as the most invasive, least effective and most expensive public policy intervention one can consider.

We know that along with the lack of infrastructure and services to support our growing communities, increasingly at-risk and vulnerable mothers and their children are going without access to vital services and the necessary supports to improve social, emotional and economic outcomes. In addition the growing housing shortage and affordability creates a constant source of anxiety – impacting the health and wellbeing of women, families and children.

After parenting and poverty, the top issues raised with us relate to mental health, homelessness, family

Who We Are

violence and isolation. Putting mental health and social isolation together, the most pressing issue for those who come to us is perinatal mental health. The Society advocates for the Housing First principle. That is, address the

housing needs as a basic right, ensuring housing is secured to then be able to focus on working with individuals and families to address the more complex issues impacting their capacity to provide for themselves and their children.

REPORTS TO CHILD PROTECTION HAVE INCREASED BY 81% since 2011-12



1 IN 3 MOTHERS of children reported to Child Protection prior to birth are aged 22 at the time of birth

When a child is removed from their home and placed in out of home care, the cost to the state for the **CHILD'S CARE IS IN THE RANGE OF \$1M UNTIL THE CHILD TURNS 18.**



Children reported to child protection prior to birth are almost

10 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO GO INTO CARE WITHIN TWO YEARS

Our Strategy

Our Strategy is to grow into three sustainable, locally embedded sites in Moonee Valley, Caroline Springs and Goulburn Valley by 2030. Our plan is for staff and volunteers to focus on effective services delivered by skilled volunteers and staff, strong finances from a diverse range

of sources and sound governance of the organisation and its service provision. Our plan outlines tasks that will ensure we have progressed towards our goal of being 'bigger but not too big' by 2025. Our 2018-2020 strategic plan can be viewed on our website www.caroline.org.au

Source: DHHS 2019

What We Do

Our mission is to deliver a range of pregnancy and family support services that respond to the needs of families and support them to achieve and maintain a safe and nurturing environment.

Objectives

- To operate a Pregnancy Support Service
- To provide a service of counselling and practical support to meet the physical, psychological and social welfare needs of pregnant women, parents and young children and their families
- To provide a comprehensive service of care and support that will free women from feeling compelled by physical, psychological or social pressures to choose the termination of a pregnancy
- To help alleviate poverty and distress through the provision of financial support, material aid and shelter
- To provide programs of health education
- To develop a greater awareness and understanding of the welfare rights and needs of all people, including the unborn child
- To assist those who seek and use the services of the Society to function independently



Our Approach

Our service will utilise approaches that are characterised by the following:

- Positive pregnancy support
- Child focused and family centered
- Connecting families with communities
- Flexibility and responsiveness
- Promoting safety
- Acknowledging the expertise of families
- Material aid and emergency relief

In Memoriam - Teresa (Tess) Fogarty



The stall ladies, new and old, loved a chat with Tess. Rain, hail or shine, Tess would arrive in her station wagon laden with potted hydrangeas and cuttings from her garden for sale on the stall. She loved standing out the front of the stall enticing the passersby. In her quiet manner, she gave so much to CCS and made the volunteers feel part of a team helping the community and mothers and babies.

Tess Fogarty (25 April 2020, aged 94). Tess was a life member, active volunteer and board member of the Caroline Chisholm Society and a passionate advocate for women and children.

There are countless stories of her incredible determination, only matched by her quiet but resolved actions to improve the conditions and outcomes in which women were able to provide not only for themselves, but to be able to care for and nurture their children.

Tess served her community and the Society to the very time of her passing – as she was an active member of the Society’s board and has just participated in a board planning day via phone a week prior to her brief illness. Even at the Society’s board planning day, Tess participated in being a part of the board’s focus to work through the various challenges as a result of government enforced restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Front of mind for Tess was to ensure the Society was focussed on its mission and vision to keep the needs of mothers and children as our priority in supporting them through the crises.

Tess’s work on the “Bonnet and Shawl” street stalls raised funds to purchase new baby goods, new clothing and nursery equipment for the 1000s of babies who have been the recipients of this work over the course of the Society’s 50 year history.

“Tess will be remembered as a strong and passionate supporter of the Society. She really was a feisty woman” – Caroline Chisholm Society Member

God bless you Tess. A life truly lived in the spirit of Caroline Chisholm.



In The Spotlight - Housing First

Parliamentary Inquiry into Homelessness

In January 2020, the Caroline Chisholm Society was one of twenty agencies to make a joint submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Homelessness as a member of the Western Homelessness Network (WHN).

The Parliamentary Inquiry into Homelessness was commissioned to inquire into the state of homelessness in Victoria, and in particular:

- Provide an independent analysis of the changing scale and nature of homelessness across Victoria;
- Investigate the many social, economic and policy

factors that impact on homelessness; and

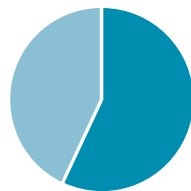
- Identify policies and practices from all levels of government that have a bearing on delivering services to the homeless.

The submission put forward two key demands in ending homelessness in Melbourne's West.

- Increase the supply of long-term affordable housing; and
- Work to prevent homelessness from occurring.

The WLASN submission identified the need for sufficient long-term

OVER 300 WOMEN AND 350 CHILDREN are on temporary visas experiencing family violence in Australia.



57% had at least one child or dependent.

Due to the barriers to accessing long-term housing and financial assistance, almost **ONE-THIRD OF THE WOMEN** had been supported by a service for over six months, and nearly **10% NEEDING SUPPORT for up to two years and more.**

Source: National Advocacy Group on Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Violence (2018) Path to Nowhere: Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Violence and Their Children.

In The Spotlight - Housing First

Katie contacted the Society seeking emergency relief for formula and nappies. During her consult with a practitioner, Katie revealed her situation that she was in fact homeless and sleeping on the floor in a rooming house with her 6-week-old son. On a bridging visa due to having escaped violence, Katie at the time of being discharged from hospital returned to the rooming house she had been living in prior to giving birth. Due to her residence status, Katie's experience is not isolated, as the Society comes into regular contact with women who have limited access to income supports, not qualifying for social housing, Medicare or Centrelink Health Care Cards.

affordable housing, which will both prevent homelessness occurring and will provide the most essential component in responding effectively to homelessness when it does occur. The WLASN strongly advocates for a Housing First model—providing people with safe and appropriate housing as a priority in order to provide the safety and security for people to address, with support, other factors that may affect the stability of their housing.

The Caroline Chisholm Society Response to Women and Homelessness

In its 2017 submission to the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Perinatal Services, the Society argued for the need to address the social determinants of health with good social services, including

the need to target social housing and homelessness support funds towards.

Current investments into housing and homelessness supports, compared to pre-2017 are not addressing the immediate needs of at-risk and vulnerable women and their children. There is an urgent need for a renewed focus on vulnerable women and their babies, infants and toddlers who are under increasing risks due to homelessness.



24% OF WOMEN

on temporary visas with dependents are living in crisis accommodation and around 10% living in temporary accommodation.

Source: National Advocacy Group on Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Violence (2018) Path to Nowhere: Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Violence and Their Children.

Our Programs



Our practice model is designed to achieve a common approach for professionals working with mothers to identify the most appropriate pathways into their local communities, resources, and services.

The Society grounds its practice and services model in a strength-based approach with a focus on building adult capability. By identifying and building on existing strengths, abilities, and assets, we are able to work more effectively on active skill-building to achieve more sustainable changes through improved confidence in parenting, increased community connections and greater social and emotional resilience. All of which are aimed to improve the social, emotional and health wellbeing for mothers and their children.

Our practice model is developing as we need to remain flexible and responsive to the needs of clients and the demands of meeting our requirements through government regulatory frameworks, including accreditation standards.

In 2016, the Victorian government embarked on a plan of reform with a shared vision of *“all children reach their full potential by living and thriving in safe and supportive*

families, where they have strong attachments to parents, kin, carers and community and can embrace their cultural and spiritual identity.”

Our programs are aligned well to this vision and are designed to provide pathways to the appropriate resources and services for families.

This approach is often referred to as a continuum of supports and services, as families and practitioners are either entering, transitioning through, or being referred to a pathway that best meets their general and specific needs. Hence, the importance for our flexibility and responsiveness to best support our staff and the families as they navigate the systems that are often made challenging due to various pressures or unintended consequences as a result of public policy.

Our Programs

Continuum of Supports and Services – and the need for a common approach.

When we talk about our work, we will often describe it in terms of building adult capability, the need for active skill building and how we work with a common approach for practitioners to align outcomes and objectives to best meet the needs of clients.

The Society's continuum of supports and services has evolved over time

with key tenets underpinning the foundations over 50 years of never a wrong door for the mother and child. Regardless of where a mother and child live, our services are open and available from prevention through to intensive support, navigating on behalf of families as well as actively advocating in their interests.

Victorian Government Road Map to Reform

EARLY HELP PATHWAY

Emerging needs & vulnerability

TARGET & SPECIALISED

Needs with increasing vulnerabilities or risks.

CONTINUING CARE

Children in enduring care arrangements who have experienced significant harm and will not be returning to their birth family.

Caroline Chisholm Society

Early Help Pathway

- TeleCare & Telephone Support
- Brief Family Contact
- Drop in
- Outreach
- Mentoring

Targeted

- Maternal Wrap Around Approach
- Integrated Family Services (IFS)

Specialised

- Homelessness
- Family Violence
- Intensive Support (200HRS)

Our Programs



Telecare Approach
- The impact of COVID19 has been felt across the sector and has had a significant impact on practice.

TeleCare and a global pandemic

Just as the Society was settling in for a busy 2020, the COVID19 crisis was upon us. Within days of government restrictions being announced, our staff transitioned to remote working. During this time, the Society encountered challenging moments in its need to move to remote work for staff. Front of mind has been how to be as responsive and flexible to the needs of support to clients, including maintaining much needed outreach through home visitations.

An emerging new practice for the Society is the use of the telehealth in developing a telecare approach supporting home visits and community services. Many are familiar with the use of telehealth as a healthcare appointment scheduled through video or phone connecting a patient to their health practitioner. In the work of home visits and family services, a telecare approach is using the video or phone platform for practitioners to deliver interventions to support at-risk and vulnerable mothers and their children, with much needed contact with external connections due to being further isolated with the impact of government restrictions.

While home visitation is always the primary delivery mode for family services, the use of both telehealth and social media platforms have meant practitioners can use the technology to reach women and children being impacted by the COVID19 crisis.

The technology has enabled practitioners to provide a range of supports and interventions including welfare checks for high-risk families, including children under the age of three; early childhood activities involving parents and children in real time; as well as parent education discussions on early parenting strategies, including the importance of developing and maintaining routines as a way to mitigate the impact of mental health issues.

Over 4 months, there has been an estimated 540 TELECARE APPOINTMENTS AND OVER 700 PACKS and other items have been given out including emergency food relief and early childhood development packs

Our Programs



Getting creative at home during Stage 3 restrictions

Mums Online was a unique way for our practitioners to connect and support mums, providing an online mum's group to meet regularly and discuss early parenting strategies and early childhood activities.

Whether through a WhatsApp chat or Zoom time for mums – the use of technology has had an impact on service delivery and practice that is yet to be fully understood. While maintaining our attention to the importance of home visits and the critical nature of the in-person visit to assess and work on strategies, the use of technology in practice will be better understood and with shared learnings to better inform further service and program interventions.

Outreach - Pop Up Clothing Swaps

In 2019, the Society built on its partnerships with local governments including Hobsons Bay, Wyndham and Melton by offering place-based services. This innovation in our services involves the Society's practitioners and students to provide pop up clothing swaps in vulnerable communities as a way to connect sooner with parents, including the provision of material aid and supports.

This place-based approach is designed around cross-sector collaboration to better align service delivery within local communities targeting interventions specific to the needs of the local community.

Feedback from families and service partners highlight the barriers of access to services including transportation and social isolation, and often the stigma attached to seeking out supports.

With the growing popularity of clothing swaps, the Society draws on this experience and that of local community invitations to support already existing services bringing to the partnership decades worth of experience in material aid into vulnerable communities.

Through this sharing of resources, mums have the opportunity to drop in on a pop up clothing swap, have immediate access to material aid and discuss any concerns with practitioners. Practitioners and students are also able to provide onsite referrals and navigating systems and services with other onsite professionals designed to prevent or mitigate the risks of further barriers impacting the health and wellbeing of young children and their families.

Our Programs



“A by-product of the Pop Up Sessions has been making great community connections to support families in both Wyndham and Ascot Vale including connections with Moonee Valley Legal Service and local childcare centres”

*“We were blown away with the demand in the community for our Outreach Program – within weeks there were 18 families attending each session at the Wingate Community Centre in Ascot Vale”
– Caroline Chisholm Program Co-Ordinator*

Outreach – Engaging Wyndham Families (EWF)

EWF is an innovation in program design for the Early Help Pathway as it enables practitioners to connect through community networks with health and community professionals, including childcare programs and kindergartens, and maternal and child health nurses. Through

these networks, parents are able to connect in a more immediate way to provide them with a brief intervention targeting what might otherwise be an issue with the potential to create more serious problems for the health, safety and wellbeing of their babies and young children.

Embedded in this practice is a pathway designed to avoid working with complex child protection cases by receiving referrals for early parenting support from universal services.

The benefits have been experienced not only by families but also by community practitioners, whom are able to identify a greater understanding of the issues through preliminary assessments aimed at mitigating the need to draw on more targeted or specialised interventions in high demand and not necessarily available to the family in a timely manner.



Our Programs

Maternal Wrap Around Approach

The traditional wrap around approach is a strengths based intervention guided by 10 principles including a multi-disciplinary team, drawing on the immediate and natural supports of family and community networks.

Over 30% of the women seeking support from the Society identify past trauma of sexual exploitation, assault, and family violence, as well as recounting their own experiences of child protection involvement as children, including out of home care.

The Society is recognised for its 50 years of intervention work, preventing the need for child protection services involvement in the lives of 1000s of women, babies, and their children. We view the removal of babies and children from their families as the most invasive, least effective, and most expensive public policy intervention one can consider.

This work continues to this day as a professional organisation as our practitioners play a key role in navigating the systems through local services, medical and health networks, as well as social and housing supports.

Our work in developing a practice framework identifies emerging evidence of a maternal wrap-around approach identifying key elements in the design, including: the need for the family voice, the role of multi-disciplinary teams in shaping the intervention, the importance of seeking out and engaging the family's network of interpersonal and community relationships, and the importance for mothers and children to participate in family and community life.

Highlights

Learning & Development

In 2019, we reported on the significant investments being made into learning and development to build workforce capacity in the specialisation of prenatal and early years programming supports for at-risk and vulnerable mothers and their children.

This investment continues to build on how we deliver supports during pregnancy; designing interventions responsive to the growing concerns for unborn reports and the need to mitigate the risks of mothers having their babies removed from care at birth; and improving outcomes in children's development with practitioners being trained in parenting education programs including Bringing Up Great Kids.

Outreach with impact

Jay, 22 years of age and 26-weeks pregnant presented to a welfare appointment in financial crisis, including not having any material items ready for her baby. During the assessment with a practitioner, mum

Our Programs



Out of the work of the Society in supporting the complex needs of women and their children is the importance to consider an emerging 11th principle - trauma informed care.

revealed never having attended prenatal healthcare supports during pregnancy as she herself had been a child in out of home care, and she did not want to run the risk—as some of her friends had mentioned child protection “won’t leave you alone” and they may want to take your baby from you.

Through local intake, the Society was able to work with mum in designing the right intervention that best addressed her concerns, while at the same time ensuring she receive much needed prenatal healthcare, putting supports in place for a safe delivery and having commenced work with mum on the health and safety of bringing home a baby. During this time, the work with mum also meant a focussed intervention involving re-establishing contact with family networks and identifying local community assets to support mum.

Integrated Family Services (IFS)

IFS involves a strength-based approach, including assessing for risk and needs. Through the Society’s home visitation program, outreach work and single session contact through welfare appointments, interventions can be

designed based on the risk and need assessments undertaken at the time.

This approach targets vulnerability in families, who are impacted by the experiences of risk factors, including family violence, alcohol and drugs, homelessness and in more recent times, increasing risks of women and children being exposed to sexual exploitation.

Our local intake work, either through referrals from Child FIRST, community and education agencies, and self-referrals provides a key opportunity to connect with a family as an early-intervention approach to mitigate the risks of the need for child protection involvement.

Highlights

Sexual exploitation and human trafficking

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) reports on human trafficking between 2013-2017 identify close to 500 referrals.¹ According to Anti-Slavery Australia, a research and policy centre providing legal services and advice to victims of modern slavery, the cases referred to the AFP represent a fifth of the iceberg* (Anti Slavery Australia, 2019).

1. Federal Government - Inquiry into establishing a Modern Slavery Act in Australia 2017

Our Programs

In 2016/17, 47% OF MODERN SLAVERY referrals made to the Federal Police were forced marriage and 13% of referrals involved sexual exploitation.

Growing evidence since 2013 strongly indicates that the Australian marriage visa program is being used in some cases to traffic women into Australia for the purposes of forced or servile marriage.

According to the AFP, human trafficking includes a wide range of exploitative purposes including forced labour, forced marriages and servitude.

Over the past year, the Society has encountered instances where women presenting for support have revealed details requiring further investigation including a victim as young as 15 years of age.

We can't underestimate the value of the welfare appointment and drop-in approach offered through the Society's work now for 50 years as a no "wrong door" approach and regardless of a woman's residence status and demographics, the first point of contact to access supports and the work of a practitioner are significant in detecting and assessing the risks to the safety and wellbeing of women and children.

Leah contacted the centre seeking clothing for her 15-month-old. On arrival she had been dropped

off at her appointment to meet with a practitioner. During her appointment, details revealed regarding her situation including no family, having arrived in Australia 16-months-ago, now with an infant and no means of transportation.

Cases like Leah often present where a mum is living on her own with a baby, infant or toddler—either in a shared house or alone in a flat—typically with no social or community supports in place and dependent on the limited income of the father. His family of origin may have control over the mother's movements in her community.

The complexities in these cases are further exacerbated by the impact of no access to entitlements including income support and housing options, causing further risks, and forcing mothers into further isolation and exploitation.

Our Programs

Homelessness

The Society notes an increase in the complexity of cases from women presenting for assistance that is largely the result of longer periods of homelessness, unstable and unsafe housing arrangements and a greater reliance on short-term emergency accommodation with significant impacts on women's mental health, the safety and wellbeing of babies and young children.

Of increasing concern is women experiencing family violence, who are reluctant to leave a home where the perpetrator continues to reside. In these instances, it is often the case that a mum considers if she leaves the family home that this will leave her and her children at risk of homelessness, citing limited income and isolation as impacting her capacity to keep safe for herself and her children.

For women to leave family violence requires access to housing that is secure, affordable, and immediately available. This is a critical factor in securing a way forward for a mother and her children.

Housing First

The Society continued its advocacy for the Housing First principle. That is, address the housing needs as a basic right, ensuring housing is secured to then be able to focus on working with individuals and families to address the more complex issues impacting their capacity to provide for themselves and their children.

In December 2019, the Society along with several agencies and as part of our partnership with the Western Homelessness Network, made a joint submission to the Parliamentary

Inquiry into Housing with a specific focus on homelessness in the West.

Melton and Wyndham are growing faster than any other area of Melbourne, with insufficient housing supply to support the growing population. The lack of supply has also resulted in an all-time low in private rental affordability as the Society experiences requests for support from women on bridging and protection visas unable to find safe and affordable housing.

The Productivity Commission reported this year that Victoria spends less on public housing, per capita, than any other State (Victoria allocates half the national average to public housing).¹

At the time of collating and reporting for this year's annual report, the impact of the COVID19 crisis was reverberating through our communities and across the country. Clients have reported increased stress and anxiety that they are experiencing due to the uncertainty of income and housing supports in place. As reported in other sections of our report, the Society continues to advocate for women and their children on temporary visas—protection and bridging—who are

1. The Report on Government Services - Part G Housing and Homelessness. Productivity Commission January 2020

Our Programs



particularly vulnerable, as their visa status means they do not have access to Centrelink, Medicare and social housing—all preventing homelessness and mitigating the risk of being exposed to COVID19.

Highlights

Homelessness and Unborn Reports

Gee was referred to the Society having herself experienced out of home care as a young child and when she was removed from her family. Having recently given birth, Gee was reported to Child Protection and a referral made to the Society for assistance.

On assessment, Child Protection had determined mum was not able to take her baby with her at the time of discharge due to concerns regarding her housing. With a history of Child Protection, her situation was deemed to be high-risk with the return of herself and baby to a large household.

The work of the Society involved advocating for the importance of keeping mother and baby together at a critical stage of attachment, as well as focusing on resolving the immediate issues for secure and stable housing.

Typically, in cases like Gee's, the Society's multi-disciplinary team approach will provide maternal supports, housing liaison services and early-parenting resources to improve the outcome for the family, including mitigating the need for Child Protection's involvement.

Homelessness and Family Violence

Jay, from a Sudanese heritage, was a young mum with a nine-month-old. Her referral included concerns around housing, parenting, and social isolation.

During the intervention, mum soon revealed her experience of family violence with the two perpetrators identified within her immediate family circle. With her own history of homelessness, including couch-surfing, prior to the birth of her son, and government restrictions in place, mum's concerns for the health and safety of her son were now being flagged.

Through the advocacy of our practitioner, enhanced maternal and health services were requested to undertake a home visit to include the first weigh and check for Jay's son since his birth.

Our Programs

By working with maternal and child health services, housing supports, and with the additional support of family violence brokerage, the Society was also able to secure funds for furniture, goals focussing on gaining greater autonomy by learning to drive and plans to find suitable child care for mum to undertake some studies.

"I am very grateful for your support. You have encouraged me and I can make positive changes for me and my baby. I just wanna say, you have saved my life. You took so much stress for me. Thank you so, so much. I really appreciate you."

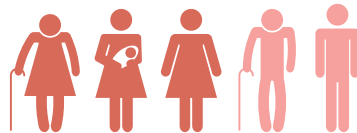
Intensive Family Support (200HRS)

In December 2019, the family services sector was advised by the Victorian Government of the end of fixed-term funding, impacting services that includes Intensive Family Services (200HRS) with 2019/20 the final year of this service.

An intensive intervention through 200HRs is an approach to work with families and children subject to repeated prior involvement with statutory child protection services.

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare Victorian data indicates

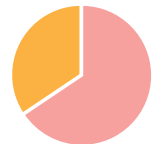
40% ATTENDING HOMELESSNESS support services have experienced FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



Women made up the majority of clients seeking specialist homelessness support with over 60% at risk of homelessness.

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2018-2019)

63% ARE WOMEN; and 33% are one parent with children.



Our Programs

The intent is to work in partnership with Child Protection to achieve case plan goals focussing for an intense period of time with the aim to improve parent capacity, family functioning, achieve child safety and enhance condition for child development.

Highlights

"Your going to be so proud of us.... We just bought a new car outright. A 2008 Holden Epica. We pick it up next week after it's had the roadworthy done. It comes with rego, RWC, 1-year warranty and 1-year roadside assistance. Still kicking goals, you helped us get to."

One of the joys of working intensively with families is when they provide regular updates about how their lives have changed following getting the support, they needed to get their lives back on track. Over the past 12-months, Rebecca has provided regular updates about her family's milestones and has also contacted when she has needed advice about accessing mainstream supports.

A lot has changed for this family over the past year! Their newest addition arrived in September 2019, taking them to a family of five. A new baby in any family can be challenging; however, this family has worked so hard to establish themselves in the community, develop linkages with their community and also to strengthen the relationships with each other.

The family are now in a very different position to where they were two-years-ago. They have safe and stable housing and the father has maintained full-time employment, which during Covid-19 has been a great achievement. Their eldest child started school this year, which has been a challenge, as Rebecca has needed to, not only be a mother, but also a teacher for her son. Like many families, 2020 has been a year like no other, with all families experiencing new stresses and challenges and needing to be resilient and resourceful. For this family, the news of their continued growth and acceptance of change is an enormous motivator for us to continue doing what we do.

Our Clients in Melbourne

This year we supported over 932 families

Brief Family Contact & Outreach Program

We have supported 1,946 people including 1,008 children.

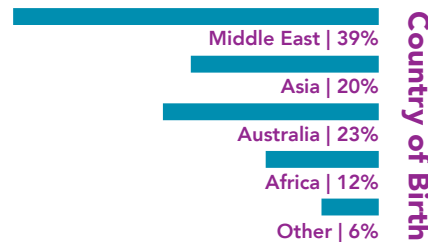
Our clients most prevalent issues are associated with maternal needs, poverty, parenting and isolation. Many of whom face challenges associated with being a migrant or refugee –

47% OF ISSUES reported fall into these areas



299 families were supported

in our Brief Family Contact sessions with pregnancy counselling, support with new and pre-loved goods and linkage to support services.



77% OF CLIENTS

were not born in Australia

Items given out this financial year

Given out 3,158 items or packs with total value of \$273,619

In Melbourne for approximately 2,460 hours, volunteers contributed \$103,000 worth of their time

Integrated Family Services

"I thought I would let you know that with all that time you helped us and supported us, while applying for houses – we finally got approved for our very first house. We pick up our keys Wednesday".

"I'm like a little girl starting a new life. All I want from the strong women in Australia is to teach me and you are doing that. You are teaching me".

Our Clients in Melbourne

Integrated Family Services

340 CLIENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES WERE SUPPORTED



for the longer term in our family services, homelessness and intensive programs. We work with these families for approximately 6 months to help them set and achieve goals.

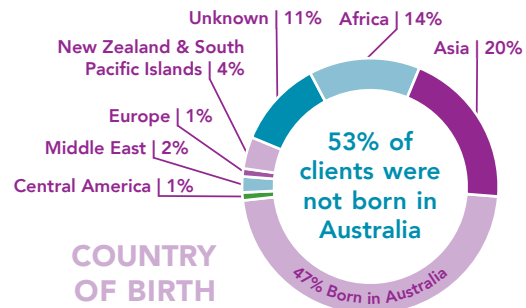
Our clients most prevalent issues are associated with **parenting skills, financial crisis, mental health and family violence**

50% OF ISSUES REPORTED FALL INTO THESE AREAS

Over 60% of families indicated an IMPROVEMENT



in their parenting skills¹



80% of families indicated their support network had improved²

1. As reported using Outcome Star

2. As reported using Parent and Baby Star

3. As reported using Family Star – Early Years



indicated their well-being had increased³



60% OF FAMILIES INDICATED their education and learning, boundaries and behaviour with their children and their home and money circumstances had increased³

Our Clients in Goulburn Valley

Known best for our community engagement, outreach support and new and pre-loved goods, our service in Goulburn Valley is an innovative service working with a range of people.

We are very fortunate with the support of a team of volunteers with diverse life and work experiences who make it possible to deliver welfare appointments, outreach support and material aid and goods. Overseen by our Lead Practitioner, our service in Goulburn Valley meets both the Human Services Standards and the QIC Health and Community Service Standards.

Highlights in the last year have included building on our outreach support model and working in partnership with the Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project at the Family Haven Mooroopna. We were pleased to strengthen our community partnership with Charles Sturt University, welcoming our first student placement completing a Masters of Social Work and that our support service remained open during the COVID19 pandemic.

Clients most prevalent issues are associated with financial crisis, challenges associated with being a migrant or refugee and isolation

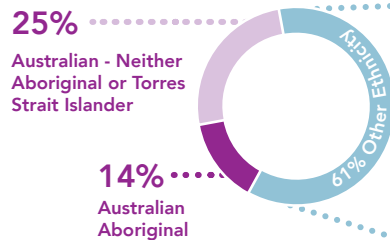
In Shepparton for approximately **1,514 hours**, volunteers contributed **\$63,000** worth of their time.

293 welfare appointments held

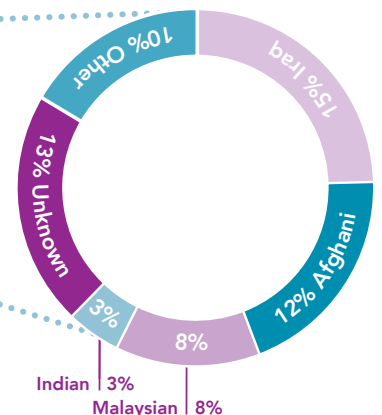
Given out 1,236 items or packs with total value of \$123,301



Goods given out include **339 PACKS OF CHILDREN'S CLOTHES**, 23 prams and 15 car seats



The families who came to our appointments were diverse



Our Clients in Goulburn Valley

“It is an honour to work so closely with the team to assist where we can to strengthen their offering to some of the most vulnerable women and families in our community. Our organisations values are strongly aligned which makes us strong partners. We see first-hand the difference they make to people who are often in a desperate situation, that is why we are determined to assist where we can to make sure this wonderful service continues in our community.”

Cheryl Hammer, CEO,
Greater Shepparton
Foundation

Outreach with impact

Bree, in her mid 20s and expecting a 5th child, fleeing family violence arrived recently at the Society having been referred by an agency supporting her and her children, but in need of material aid in preparation for her baby. The Society advocates for supports and interventions for Bree and her family, with a particular focus on advocating for her immediate health and ensuring medical needs are being met.

Jodi and her three children under 5 years of age, living in a caravan park and after rent and utilities does not have the funds to purchase personal

hygiene products for herself and her children. Without a car she is not able to move as freely in her community to purchase the basics. Through the Society’s outreach, Jodi was provided with a pram to improve her accessibility to public transport, including getting to the shops and importantly attending a local kindergarten program for her 4 year old as well as being provided with personal care packs for herself and the children.



Community Grant from RACV featured in the Shepparton news

Our People

Our Board

We are privileged to have a professional and dedicated voluntary Board who are committed to achieving our vision and mission.



Michael Christie
President & Director



Stuart Rowland
Vice President & Director



Stephen Mullins
Treasurer & Director



Phil Gatens
Company Secretary & Director



Wendy Hunt
Director



Paul Webster
Director



Penny Badwal
Assistant Company Secretary & Director



Rachel Carling
Director



Mark Dohrmann
Director



Jennifer Weber
Chief Executive Officer



Amanda Moore
Director, Corporate Services

Our Team

Led by Jennifer and Amanda, we are incredibly fortunate to have a team of hard-working staff who make our work possible. We cannot thank our staff enough for the commitment and passion they bring each day. The warmth and generosity of spirit they share with clients, supporters and our communities is admirable.

We owe enormous gratitude to our volunteers and members who make our work possible. Their kindness, generosity, dedication and unwavering support over many years never ceases to amaze us.

To the ladies of our regular Bonnet and Shawl Stall in Moonee Valley, thank you for your many years of dedication and fundraising.

To our volunteers in Shepparton, you are the foundation of our service in the Goulburn Valley and your passion and kindness in supporting the local community has no limits.

We wish to acknowledge the passing of life member Loyis Gibson on 31 December 2019. Our deepest condolences to her family, and may she rest in peace.

Treasurer's Report



In March 2018, the Board committed to invest across several areas of the Society with the expectation that we would incur operating deficits for two years until 30 June 2020 to achieve the Society's objectives.

Like many organisations, there have been revenue pressures, increasing expenses and compliance costs over recent years. We reviewed our cost base at the start of the financial year and the Board agreed that it was necessary to implement further efficiencies for the longer-term sustainability of the Society. This was a particularly difficult time for those employees impacted and challenging for the Society while change was implemented.

Managing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic created another period of significant change in meeting the needs of our clients, how our employees work as well as maintaining all of the responsibilities associated with running the organisation.

From a financial perspective, we experienced increased costs and reduced donations due to the grip of the pandemic on the broader community.

Notwithstanding the challenges over the last year, I am very pleased to report that the Society generated a net surplus of \$201,940 for the year ended 30 June 2020.

The Society has a strong net asset base of approximately \$3.7 million, underpinned by our two fully owned properties at 977 Mt Alexander Road, Essendon and 1 Darebin Place, Caroline Springs.

Thank you to the organisations which, and individuals who, support the Society by generously giving financial support to the Society. Thank you to our volunteers who assist with fundraising and other work that supports us. This enables us to help mothers and families with young children in need in areas that are in addition to the support that is funded through our government contracted commitments.

Treasurer's Report

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish to present the audited financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2020. The full set of audited financial statements can be found on our website at www.caroline.org.au. Our Statement of Income and Position is contained on the next pages.

Thank you to the Finance Committee and the Society's Leadership Team for your support and service during the year.

Stephen Mullins
Treasurer

Our team and supporters at State Parliament in November 2019 in special acknowledgment of the Society's 50th year



Donation from the students and families at Loyola College



Our Financials

Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2020

	2020 \$	2019 \$
Income from Operating Activities		
Revenue From Funding Bodies	1,991,758	1,910,429
Other Income	130,147	83,749
Total Operating Revenue	2,121,905	1,994,178
Expenditure from Operating Activities		
Employee Expenses	1,583,946	1,728,665
Program Expenses	91,536	92,550
Depreciation	107,803	107,069
Occupancy Expenses	49,220	53,871
Communications and IT	85,405	83,379
Travel Expenses	36,041	35,151
Other Expenses	73,645	131,198
Total Operating Expenses	2,027,595	2,231,883
Net Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year from Operating Activities		
	94,309	(237,705)
Finance Income	6,631	9,901
Government Subsidies	101,000	-
Total Comprehensive Income/(Loss) for the Year	201,940	(227,804)

A complete copy of Caroline Chisholm Society audited financial statements are distributed at our AGM. The full set of audited financial statements can be found on our website at www.caroline.org.au

Our Financials

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2020

	2020	2019
	\$	\$
Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	943,033	597,282
Other Assets	27,044	26,899
Total Current Assets	970,077	624,181
Non-Current Assets		
Property, Plant and Equipment	3,024,193	2,949,134
Total Non-Current Assets	3,024,193	2,949,134
Total Assets	3,994,270	3,573,315
Current Liabilities		
Trade and Other Payables	54,745	99,108
Deferred Income	178,949	54,774
Hire Purchase Liability	-	-
Employee Benefits	87,341	66,238
Other Liabilities	-	-
Total Current Liabilities	321,035	220,120
Non-Current Liabilities		
Employee Benefits	5,369	41,038
Hire Purchase Liability	-	8,556
Total Non-Current Liabilities	5,369	49,594
Total Liabilities	326,404	269,714
Net Assets	3,667,865	3,303,601
Equity		
Reserves	281,277	118,953
Retained Earnings	3,386,588	3,184,648
Total Equity	3,667,865	3,303,601

Supporting Us

Every Mother Matters and Every Child Counts

There are many ways you can help us make a difference.

With your generous support we can continue to deliver on our promise to be there for vulnerable mums, bubs, children and their families as they seek our pregnancy counselling, outreach and support appointments, ongoing family support services and new and pre-loved baby and maternity goods.

Make a Donation

No matter how small or large your generous donation will make a difference to the lives of vulnerable mums, children and their families as we support them through homelessness, family violence and mental health crises. Donate online at caroline.org.au/donate-now Donations greater than \$2 are tax deductible.

Become a Monthly Donor

Sign up as a regular donor and make an ongoing difference throughout the year. It is simple and straightforward online at caroline.org.au/donate-now

Join us as a Corporate Partner

Our Corporate Partners are critical to our service. There are many ways to get involved such as corporate volunteering, sponsorship of specific support programs and in-kind donations.

Leave a Bequest

Leaving a bequest is a special and generous way of supporting Caroline Chisholm and makes a lasting impact in our work. Bequests will go directly to delivering our longer-term vision of creating respite care for mums and bubs in the West.

Donate New and Pre-loved Baby Goods

We rely on the very generous donations from individuals and organisations of new and pre-loved baby goods. Our website contains details of donation drop off points and times, along with the pre-loved goods we can accept. If you are an organisation please give us a call to discuss beforehand.

Supporting Us



Invite us to Speak

We love nothing more than being asked to speak at local schools, events and community gatherings about the need in our community and the ways we can all help.

Fundraise on our Behalf

Please consider fundraising on behalf of the Society. Get involved, get creative and have fun. This year our supporters have held barbeques, morning teas, pamper days, community events and movie nights. Celebrate a special event by donating instead

of accepting gifts. We greatly appreciate local community groups and schools creating gift packs and donating new baby goods. If we can help, get in touch.

Give the Gift of Your Time

The gift of your time is invaluable to us. Caroline Chisholm Society materialised from the generous offering of one person's commitment and compassion to walk along-side and support pregnant women and young families. Get in touch online at caroline.org.au/volunteer or give us a call.



1. Dr Philomena Joshua at the launch of The Story so Far
 2. The Linfox team
 3. Community Appreciation Wall at Shepparton

4. Christmas Party Celebrations
 5. Members and Society Supporters at the launch of The Story so Far

Contact Us

HELPLINE

Statewide – 1800 134 863

SUPPORTS

(including pregnancy support, brief family contact sessions, outreach programs and new and pre-loved baby and maternity goods)

Shepparton – 03 5821 0826

Essendon – 03 9361 7000

Caroline Springs – 03 9361 7000

SPECIALIST HOMELESSNESS SERVICE

03 9361 7000

Western Melbourne

INTEGRATED FAMILY SERVICES

03 9361 7000

Western Melbourne

Brimbank / Melton

Engaging Wyndham Families – Early Intervention Program

Intensive Family Services

Thank you for supporting Caroline Chisholm Society.



1800 134 863
secretary@caroline.org.au
www.caroline.org.au

The pattern of this cover is inspired by the concept design for a quilt celebrating 50 years of Caroline Chisholm Society from the Lions Club of Quilters Victoria.