

Welcome to the Caroline Chisholm Society

Founded on the principles of care, support and empowerment, the Caroline Chisholm Society is a vital part of the community in Melbourne's North-West. We are committed to making a difference in the lives of those in need, particularly women, children and families facing difficult circumstances in their parenting and early childhood journey.

The Society is dedicated to the legacy of Caroline Chisholm, a pioneer of social welfare who helped women and families in need. In the late 1960's, a small group of volunteers gathered to offer material aid and pregnancy counselling services to women in need. It didn't take long to uncover a greater demand for further care and compassion throughout the early years of a child – a demand which continues today.

Our Purpose

To support women in their pregnancy and early parenting, by creating safe and nurturing environments for infants and children.

We work with the whole family to improve child outcomes. We work to prevent and alleviate the impact of poverty, homelessness, mental health issues and family violence, on parent and child wellbeing.

We advocate for keeping families together.

Who We Help

Each day we help those who may be experiencing a range of interconnected social and financial barriers, impacting their ability to create a safe and nurturing environment for themselves and their children. For example, they may be:

- experiencing poverty
- experiencing homeless
- experiencing or at risk of issues with mental health, including perinatal depression or anxiety
- socially isolated
- new migrants, refugees or asylum seekers struggling to navigate our systems

What We Do

1. Pregnancy counselling and early parenting support

- general counselling and support for families
- referral to maternity services, including support with maternal nutrition, breastfeeding, and child development
- referral to specialist community services for issues related to homelessness, family violence, mental health and drug and alcohol services

2. Material aid

- goods and services, especially new or quality, pre-loved baby items

- other essential emergency relief, such as food and vouchers

3. Family support

- social support including mentoring support and peer groups to encourage parents to be child-centered and family-focused, as they tackle common challenges such as parenting strategy, challenging behaviours and post-natal depression
- support services for families including case management and in-home support
- housing support including advocacy to landlords and government and assistance with priority housing applications
- assessment, planning and action as part of Family Services for families and children at risk of entering or re-entering the child protection system

Our Members

Members of the Caroline Chisholm Society are vital as their donations help ensure expectant mothers and families with at least one pre-schooler, learn parenting skills and self-confidence creating the foundation for their family life. Caroline Chisholm Society's ongoing work relies on the strength of its members. The Board is elected from the membership. The Society has a skilled Board committed to continuing our work with families and ensuring corporate governance obligations are met.

By becoming a member of the Caroline Chisholm Society, you will be contributing to making women and children's lives better, and also have the opportunity to volunteer your individual skills. The Society can help you give back to the community as skills of all sorts are valued whether they be an ability to 'test and tag' electrical equipment, assist with vehicle trade-ins and purchases, knitting and crocheting baby clothes, cleaning donated prams and other baby equipment, gardening at the Caroline Springs site, or offering financial advice and identifying corporate sponsorship opportunities. The possibilities to create a difference are almost endless.

Anyone can register their interest in becoming a Member of the Society. Once registered, your application will be reviewed and approved by the Society's Board of Directors.

Society members contribute to the society's ongoing mission and will receive:

- personalised updates on the impact of their support, including how all donations are used and the success stories of those we assist
- exclusive access and early invitations to our AGM, events, programs, and community gatherings
- authority to exercise one vote at the Annual General Meeting
- eligibility for election or appointment to the Board as a director
- ability to nominate (or second or endorse) eligible candidates for election as a director
- opportunities to volunteer for the society

Individual full members must be over the age of 18 and reside within Australia. Annual membership commences on 1 October and runs until 30 September the following year. Membership cost is \$50 per year.

Why join us?

In supporting the Caroline Chisholm Society, you are empowering vulnerable families to navigate out of their difficult situations. Together, as Members, we can build a stronger, more compassionate community where every family is given the chance to thrive.

Thank you for your interest in joining the Caroline Chisholm Society. We look forward to working with you to continue Caroline Chisholm's legacy of service, care, and compassion for pregnant mothers, children and families.

For more information visit our website www.caroline.org.au or contact our office at:

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