

MOONEE PONDS

Support service in limbo

Linh Ly

A FAMILY support service says it is working under a cloud with fears it could be kicked out of its temporary base in Moonee Ponds before a new home is ready.

Caroline Chisholm Society chief executive Helen Cooney said while a new, permanent hub for the service was due to be completed in Essendon later this year, a development application submitted on its leased home in Moonee Ponds had

GROUP FEARS IT COULD LOSE HOME TO NEW DEVELOPMENT

thrown the organisation's work into uncertainty.

Moonee Valley Council is expected to decide whether to approve an application for a six-storey building at 8-14 Shuter St next month.

Ms Cooney said they feared if the project was approved, they would have to vacate 12 Shuter St before the completion of the Essendon building because their lease lapsed in February.

"Timing for us is a real challenge in a couple of different ways," Ms Cooney said.

"We'd like to only have to move once, not only because there's a lot of hassle, but because it sends mixed messages to our clients who sometimes don't have great English.

"A short period of notice to leave the building will have a significant impact on

our families who need support.

"You've got families who may have fled family violence or had their first child, or are a refugee and English is a barrier."

Ms Cooney said despite asking for a lease renewal until February 2017, the landlord had not agreed nor given them clarity over how much notice they would get to vacate.

"The uncertainty of that is impacting on clients and their capacity to know whether or not we will be there for them in the future," she said.

Lou Rendina Real Estate managing director Lou Rendina told *Moonee Valley Leader* the landlord would give the organisation eight weeks' notice.

Mr Rendina said developments normally took at least

three or four months to get underway after they had been given planning approval.

"He's (the landlord) open to keeping a longer period of their existing lease arrangements to accommodate their arrangements," Mr Rendina said.

Ms Cooney said while she felt more reassured upon hearing Mr Rendina's comments, she was yet to hear the arrangement details from the landlord herself and wanted it in writing.

FLEMINGTON

Cooks whip up a welcoming meal

Linh Ly

A SOCIAL movement connecting people from different backgrounds over their love of food is sweeping across Moonee Valley.

The Welcome Dinner Project will host a community dinner for about 60 people in Flemington in a bid to bring established Australians and newly-arrived residents together.

Project area co-ordinator Lien Trinh said it was about giving long-term and new residents from the same neighbourhood the chance to meet and share their experiences.

"It's a really beautiful way of connecting so many diverse people from so many different backgrounds and many different walks of life to promote understanding and to promote well being," Ms Trinh said.

"Everybody generally

leaves with a really positive feeling and the feeling we hope to achieve after every dinner is they want it to happen again."

The concept behind the project is for people to host a dinner party in their homes and offer newly arrived residents such as migrants, refugees and international students the chance to meet established Australians.

Each evening is facilitated by two volunteers.

The community dinner will be hosted in conjunction with Moonee Valley Council at the Flemington Community Centre on Sunday.

Details: joiningthedots.org



Mahir Muhammad will be among those sharing a meal at an inclusive community dinner.
Picture: CARMELO BAZZANO

MOONEE PONDS

New build still a 'no'

MOONEE Valley Council has remained opposed to the first stage of development at the old Moonee Ponds Market site, despite the developer tinkering with its plans.

As previously reported in the *Moonee Valley Leader*, Caydon Property Group appealed council's refusal of a plan to build 617 apartments in buildings of up to 26 storeys at VCAT.

The developer submitted amended plans prior to the hearings, which included an additional basement carpark, five new retail tenancies along Aspen St, adding three three-bedroom apartments and reducing one-bed apartments by nine.

At a special meeting held last week, councillor Nicole Marshall said although there had been positive amendments, the plans still exceeded planning controls.

Cr Jan Chantray said she felt "torn" about the proposal because it was within an activity centre, but she could not support a proposal that would bring the "Docklands" to Moonee Valley.

But Cr Paul Giuliano said his opinion had swayed by the developer's concessions.

The hearings are set to begin in April.

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Thinking Kids Children's Centre

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