

BRAYBROOK

Home for service

CENTRE GOES TO BRAYBROOK

Bridie Byrne

A LEADING women's health service will stay in Maribyrnong, relocating to Braybrook this year.

Women's Health West had been based in Footscray for the past 25 years, providing crisis support and counselling, yet in a major setback its lease couldn't be extended.

Maribyrnong Council voted last week to lease the former Howard Kingham Lodge in Darnley St to the centre under a 21-year agreement.

The service's chief executive Robyn Gregory said she was relieved after two years of uncertainty.

"We had to find accommodation that was accessible, affordable and large enough for Women's Health West to continue to deliver services to women and children," she said.

"The council decision has

secured our future and we can use the funds that we would have otherwise had to put towards rent to fitting the building out."

The centre will spend \$1.5 million on upgrading the site and will hold fund-raising events in the coming months.

Dr Gregory said they hoped to move into the building by December.

The new location would allow the service to take on at least 500 family violence referrals every year, offer more specialist family violence services, deliver 10 health programs biannually and eventually provide a community meeting space.

A Women in the City of Maribyrnong report showed the area's women had the worst health in the west.

Residents had the highest rates of diabetes, depression, asthma, and osteoarthritis in the western suburbs.