

# David Koch

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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#### **More ambulance delays risk lives**

Delays in implementing the Government's promised \$12 million computer-aided dispatch system for Rural Ambulance Victoria are putting country Victorian lives at risk says David Koch, Member for Western Victoria.

He said people living in country Victoria are not getting a fair deal when it comes to calling 000 in an emergency for an ambulance.

"We have to put up with the most antiquated ambulance dispatch system in Australia and it's putting lives at risk.

"The first link to call an ambulance in rural areas across Victoria uses a manual call-taking and dispatching method, which is associated with delays or inaccuracy in dispatch time recording".

Mr Koch said a well known local identity and prominent community supporter was attending the football at Hamilton's Melville Oval last Saturday 5 May 2007 where he suffered a possible cardiac arrest.

"An emergency call was made to 000 at 1:55pm requesting an ambulance to attend. The caller was advised that an ambulance would be dispatched immediately. Then when an ambulance had not arrived by 2:10pm a further call was made to 000. Again the caller was advised an ambulance was dispatched. But when the ambulance had not arrived by 2:25pm, a third call was made to 000.

"Within 2 minutes of this third call an ambulance arrived. It took a life-threatening 30 minutes from the initial call to 000 for an ambulance to attend. A paramedic advised the call was received at 2:25pm by the Hamilton Ambulance Station and an ambulance was immediately dispatched.

"Rural Ambulance Victoria has given no explanation or apology to the patient or his family for the delay in contacting the Hamilton Ambulance Station.

"Delays in dispatching ambulances for emergency calls are becoming more frequent and there is concern that in addition to the manual dispatching system, bureaucratic questions may be contributing to the delays.

"In this instance, the problem was at the Geelong control centre and I praise the efforts of Hamilton ambulance officers for their rapid response once they eventually received the call.

"Delays in emergency response times are hurting country Victorians a lot more than those in the city. It's about time the Minister for Health, Bronwyn Pike, stopped treating regional Victorians as second class citizens and investigated poor response times in country Victoria and implemented the new computer-based ambulance dispatch system as a matter of urgency after giving this commitment prior to the 2006 State election."

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