

# David Koch

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### MEDIA RELEASE

*Thursday, 15 March 2007*

## **Premier must listen on rescue helicopter**

Member for Western Victoria, David Koch has again called on the Premier to listen to the pleas of south-west Victorians for an emergency rescue helicopter based at Warrnambool.

Mr Koch told Parliament this week that the Bracks Government continues to ignore south-west Victorians by not funding an emergency helicopter even after the furnishing of a thorough business plan as requested.

"The Government's refusal to listen needlessly puts the lives of more and more accident victims at risk", he said.

"Lengthy delays in transporting accident victims to trauma centres have resulted in unnecessary distress and frustration on families, emergency personnel and the community. Yet these unsatisfactory delays have not persuaded the Government to act.

"We again saw life threatening delays last week after a road accident near Port Fairy, only minutes from the Warrnambool airport. Although the accident happened at 12:40 pm, it was not until 3:00 pm that an emergency helicopter flying from Bendigo landed at Warrnambool to transport the critically injured patient to Melbourne's trauma unit.

"South-west Victorians are entitled to access the same high quality and timely emergency transport as other regional Victorians. Accident victims need to receive the best possible emergency treatment within the first hour to give them the best chance of a total recovery.

"An emergency rescue helicopter based in Warrnambool would be used to compliment air ambulance trauma recovery, police, fire and SES services with search and rescue activities on sea and land.

"Recent unsubstantiated statements from the office of the Emergency Services Minister, Mr Cameron and published in last Friday's Warrnambool Standard, would have us believe that emergency crews are "satisfied" with current air services. I have been left in little doubt that this is far from the truth.

"This is clearly blatant brick-walling from the Minister who, after ignoring repeated requests from the Standard and ABC Radio for comment, remains in denial that this is a serious issue. The Minister is also ignoring the impact of his 'do nothing' attitude towards south-west Victorians.

"The Premier must listen to community leaders and commit funding to this much-needed emergency rescue helicopter service for the only region of Victoria that has been denied this life-saving resource", said Mr Koch.

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