

# David Koch

## Member for Western Victoria Opposition Whip (Council)

46 Brown Street, Hamilton 3300  
Tel: 5572 3377 · Fax: 5572 4945

### MEDIA RELEASE

*Thursday, 27 September 2007*

#### **Cemetery trusts get reprieve**

Smaller cemetery trusts that feared they would be abolished under recommendations by the State Services Authority have been given a reprieve, said David Koch, Member for Western Victoria.

He said the State Services Authority recently undertook a review of cemetery trusts, initially looking into the management of Victoria's 14 major cemeteries.

"Recommendations following the review included the forced amalgamation of all smaller cemetery trusts into one large authority that would have seen the demise of long established local country cemetery trusts", he said.

"The more than 500 cemetery trusts operating in Victoria are made up of nearly 3,000 local volunteers and I'm sure they all welcome Minister for Health, Daniel Andrews' announcement this week that he has no intention of merging them into one entity.

"I am delighted the Minister took notice of the many submissions country cemetery trusts presented to the inquiry and that he rejected the proposal to deny local stewardship of our many historical cemeteries.

"Although the Government undertook little direct consultation in this process, the backlash from cemetery trust members state-wide openly demonstrated that the Government had misread the important role that these community members undertake.

"Not only have local cemetery trusts been successful in influencing the Minister to maintain the status quo, but he has seen fit to announce small grants to assist some cemetery trusts in further looking after their cemeteries.

"Most of the grants are for small rural cemeteries that have little maintenance money and will be used for essential items like equipment, general upkeep, facility renovations, fencing and tree and weed control.

"It is heartening to see the Minister recognises that our volunteer country cemetery trusts are well run entities which undertake an important and necessary service for our local communities, having previously done so for many generations.

"I thank the many trust members for raising their concerns allowing me to present this significant issue in the Parliament", David Koch said.

**Media inquiries: David Koch 0418 723 031**