



MEDIA RELEASE

DAVID MORRIS MP

Member for Mornington

19th November 2009

LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AT CRISIS POINT

A recent incident at the Mornington Community Information and Support Centre has again proved that local Mental Health services are no longer sufficient to meet the needs of clients nor to ensure the safety of our community.

In Parliament last week I called on the Minister for Mental Health to take immediate action to ensure that basic services are available to those in need and innocent bystanders in the community are protected.

Despite repeated requests for assistance the Frankston Crisis and Assessment Team (CAT Team) were not able to attend, and there was a 45 minute delay before an ambulance could be obtained.

Staff and clients at the Centre were needlessly exposed to potential risk from a person who knew he needed assistance, but was not able to obtain it.

Such incidents need an immediate and appropriate response, not the lengthy delays and ineffective service so evident with this incident.

As the Auditor-General noted in a recent report to Parliament:

The responsiveness of CAT Services to mental health crises was an issue frequently raised by police, paramedics and consumers. Police often do not request assistance from CAT services because of long waits for a response....Without performance data and clear expectations for CAT service responsiveness, it is impossible to assess CAT service crisis responses..."

Peninsula residents have long understood the inadequacy of local of mental health services. The Minister must immediately set appropriate response times and provide the necessary resources to meet those standards.

A repeat of recent events is simply not acceptable.