



DAVID MORRIS MP

**Member for Mornington
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Environment
Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Local Government**

Mental Health Services at Crisis Point Legislative Assembly 10th November 2009

Mr MORRIS (Mornington) — If there remained any doubt that the mental health system is at crisis point, it must surely have been eliminated by a recent incident at the Mornington community information and support centre.

A little over two weeks ago a person arrived at the centre to seek assistance. He indicated to the staff and volunteers on duty that he needed help. Indeed he said that he had behaved in a threatening way on the bus trip to the centre. The staff contacted the Frankston Hospital and were initially told that there would be a 45-minute delay before an ambulance could be made available.

Given that immediate help was needed the police were contacted and attended promptly. Unfortunately this caused a tremendous reaction from the man, who immediately ran off. A search failed to locate him, and the police returned to their duties.

During the course of the afternoon the man returned four times, creating considerable disruption to the centre and concern for the staff and volunteers.

Repeated attempts were made to get assistance. When the crisis and assessment team was contacted the centre was told to ring an ambulance. The ambulance refused to attend unless there was a guarantee that the man was there, which of course could not be given.

The man sought help, and the information centre tried very hard to assist, but the Victorian mental health system failed them.

The Minister for Mental Health must take immediate action to ensure not only that basic services are available to those in need but also that innocent bystanders in the community are not again placed in such an unfortunate and potentially threatening situation.