



Media release

The Hon David Davis MLC

Minister for Health
Minister for Ageing

Wednesday 7 May 2014

National award for Morwell health assessment centre

- **Recognition for actions that contribute to community protection**
- **Model of care never seen before in Victorian emergency management**
- **Victorian Coalition Government building a healthier Victoria**

The Community Health Assessment Centre established during the response to the Hazelwood open cut coal mine fire has won a national public safety award.

Minister for Health David Davis said today the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials Australasia award recognised the Department of Health and Ambulance Victoria for developing a model of care never seen before in emergency management in Victoria.

"The Victorian State Health and Medical Command swiftly established the Community Health Assessment Centre in an Ambulance Victoria building in Morwell once the need was identified," Mr Davis said.

"The Association said to establish this facility in such a short time took a monumental effort in the areas of logistics, rostering, administration, signage and public announcements."

Mr Davis said the centre complemented local services such as GP practices and the Latrobe Regional Hospital by providing another source of easily accessible health advice about the effects of smoke from the mine fire.

"To meet the criteria to be eligible for the award the teams involved demonstrated their actions had contributed to the protection of people or communities," Mr Davis said.

The APCO Australasia Awards showcase the best of the public safety sector, celebrate leaders in emergency management and reward hardworking professionals who have gone above and beyond in the pursuit of service, innovation and communications excellence.

The Community Health Assessment Centre successfully:

- Provided information, assessment and referral services to residents and visitors who had health-related concerns arising from smoke and ash from the Hazelwood open cut mine fires;
- Performed basic health checks such as blood pressure, heart rate, temperature and basic respiratory checks;
- Provided carbon monoxide testing as required; and
- Delivered medical care as needed, and referral to a local doctor or emergency department, depending on the medical condition.

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Mr Davis said the centre offered a 12 hour service running from 8am to 8pm daily, and more than 2000 people were assessed during its operation.

“The Association said the success of the Community Health Assessment Centre in protecting the Latrobe Valley community can only be attributed to the incredibly hard work, and devotion of the team of paramedics and nurse clinicians who were involved in operating it,” Mr Davis said.

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