

MEDIA RELEASE



The Hon **David Hawker** MP
Federal Member for Wannon



28 October 2009

WESTERN VICTORIANS URGED TO JOIN THE BATTLE AGAINST STROKE WORLD STROKE DAY – 29 OCTOBER 2009

Western Victorian residents are being urged to take personal action to reduce the devastating impact of stroke – Australia's second biggest killer and a leading cause of disability.

The theme for World Stroke Day 2009 on October 29 is **Stroke – what can I do?**

"This is an important question for all of us because 60,000 strokes are expected to occur in Australia in 2009 – that's one every 10 minutes," Federal Member for Wannon, David Hawker, said today.

The theme has been developed to encourage everybody in the community – individuals, groups and governments – to take action against stroke.

"I urge all Western Victorians to identify their own World Stroke Day action and join the battle against stroke. It's important we all do what we can to reduce our risk," Mr Hawker said.

Mr Hawker said lives can be saved by learning the signs of stroke, knowing what can cause a stroke, and what can be done to reduce the possibility of stroke.

"You can also get involved with stroke support groups, help stroke survivors stuck at home or become a stroke volunteer. There's a great opportunity for businesses and donors to support stroke awareness, prevention and research," he said.

Stroke costs the health system \$2.14 billion a year and its incidence is on the rise with the ageing population. Research indicates that 70 per cent of stroke patients did not recognise stroke at the onset of symptoms, and 85 per cent did not call an ambulance immediately, risking death or severe disability.

The National Stroke Foundation has developed the FAST test as a simple way of recognising and remembering the signs of stroke:

Face – Check their face. Has their mouth drooped?

Arms – Can they lift both arms?

Speech – Is their speech slurred? Do they understand you?

Time – Time is critical. If you see any of these signs call 000 straight away.

Doctors assess stroke and heart disease risk against factors such as blood pressure, age, cholesterol, gender and smoking. Other risk factors include diabetes, chronic kidney disease, atrial fibrillation (an irregular heart beat) or a family history of cardiovascular disease.

For more information contact the National Stroke Foundation on 1800 787 953 or visit www.strokefoundation.com.au.

- ENDS -

Media contact: Jane Templeton (03) 5572 1100

The Hon **David Hawker** MP Federal Member for Wannon

Hamilton Office 190 Gray St, HAMILTON VIC 3300 **Warrnambool Office** 73 Kepler St WARRNAMBOOL VIC 3280

Freecall 1300 131 692 **E** David.Hawker.MP@aph.gov.au **W** www.davidhawker.com.au