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## **MIIC FILLS HEALTH CARE GAP ON PHILLIP ISLAND**

A number of very happy people attended the official opening of the Bass Coast Health Minor Injury & Illness Clinic at the Phillip Island Health Hub in Cowes on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> of December.

The Minor Injury & Illness Clinic (or 'MIIC' as it's now known) was opened three days ahead of schedule, following a massive effort from BCH staff to honour the Labor Government's election commitment to have it operational by Christmas.

Newly elected MP Jordan Crugnale joined BCH Board Chair Don Paproth in a ribbon cutting ceremony to proudly declare the hugely anticipated service open in front of a delighted crowd of supporters. Among the crowd were representatives from the Cowes Medical Centre, Phillip Island Medical and Health Action Group (PIMHAG), the BCH Board, the Phillip Island Community Advisory Group and Bass Coast Health's Community Advisory Committee.

The opening of the MIIC means that Phillip Island residents and visitors now have access to round-the-clock health care, just in time for the influx of summer holiday-makers. And it has already proven popular, treating its 100<sup>th</sup> patient just five days after opening and over 150 patients within the first week. These patients mostly presented with complaints such as coughs/colds, minor cuts, removal of fish hooks, sprains/strains, minor abdominal complaints and croup.

Staffed by one doctor and one nurse, the MIIC fills the 24 hour gap for people suffering from minor ailments such as minor cuts and burns, earaches, sprains and strains, fever, rashes and infections. It also serves as a back-up when local GP appointments are not available. Importantly, the service is not designed to replace a person's usual GP. GP services continue to be available on the Island and should be the first choice for people seeking this type of health care.

According to BCH CEO Jan Child, the provision of a safe service was the most important consideration in setting up the MIIC.

"Obviously the MIIC is not an Emergency Department. Patients with serious illness or injuries should continue to call 000 for an ambulance or go to the Wonthaggi Hospital", she said.

"People need to have the support of hospital-grade services such as radiology, pathology, pharmacy and specialist emergency doctors to safely treat serious illnesses and injuries such as chest pain, difficulty breathing, pregnancy complications, fractures, sudden severe headaches, severe burns, severe abdominal pain, decreased consciousness and blurred vision".

“Patient safety is our highest priority and we are very keen to make sure that people understand that the best care for serious issues will always be provided by an accredited Emergency Department such as at Wonthaggi Hospital, or by Victoria’s very skilled Ambulance Victoria paramedics”, she said.

The MIIC will remain operational until it is replaced by an Urgent Care Service, to be established in a nearby section of the Phillip Island Health Hub mid next year. BCH has already begun working with builders, architects and the Department of Health and Human Services to design the upgraded service, which will be able to deliver a broader range of services from treatment bays, a resuscitation bay and an isolation room.

Planning for the development of a community hospital on the site will commence in the new year.

People wishing to receive regular information and updates about health services on Phillip Island can join the ‘Friends of the Health Hub’ emailing list by contacting BCH Public Relations Manager Nikki Loughran at [nikki.loughran@basscoasthealth.org.au](mailto:nikki.loughran@basscoasthealth.org.au).

The updates will include information about the expanding range of allied health, nursing and specialist medical services delivered at the Health Hub and details of the MIIC, Urgent Care Service and community hospital progress.

The MIIC is located at 50 – 54 Church Street in Cowes and can be contacted by phoning 5951 2101. The MIIC is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is a free service.

Enquiries about allied health, nursing or specialist medical consulting services can be directed to the Phillip Island Health Hub’s general reception number – 5951 2100. These services are available from 8.45am – 5.00pm Monday to Friday, except public holidays.

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**Pictured:** The Hon Jordan Crugnale MP joins BCH Board Chair Don Paproth to declare the Minor Injury & Illness Clinic officially open.