

Man sues over late ambulance

Elissa Hunt

A GRANDFATHER who will spend the rest of his life in a vegetative state is suing the ambulance service after waiting 13 hours for help after hitting his head.

Katrina Marinovic is bringing the Supreme Court action — believed to be potentially worth more than \$1 million — on behalf of her father, Ilija, who now has little brain function and is fed through a tube.

Ms Marinovic says her father fell and hit his head at 8pm on October 26, 2006, but was forced to wait until 9.30am the next day for treatment after a mix-up meant an ambulance was sent but then cancelled.

“He was such a big character and such a strong person, it’s hard for us to see him now compared to what he was before,” Ms Marinovic said.

“Thinking that he was left for all those hours, it really affects us.

“He would give you the shirt off his back — he was that sort of man.”



Ilija Marinovic

The plasterer, 56, lost his balance outside his Preston home and fell down steps on to concrete.

A neighbour immediately called 000.

The statement of claim alleges an ambulance was dispatched then cancelled and the matter was handed over to police to investigate whether medical help was needed — which did not occur.

The Marinovic family, who are represented by law firm Arnold, Thomas and Becker, are suing the Metropolitan Ambulance Service, the Emergency Services Telecommunica-

tion Authority and the State of Victoria.

The writ alleges that the ambulance service and its dispatcher, along with the police who were contacted after the 000 call, were negligent in failing to follow up the request for help.

It claims police did not comprehend the urgency or send an officer to check whether an ambulance was needed.

Father of three Mr Marinovic, who also has two grandsons, had emergency skull and brain surgery but was left in a vegetative state, with his family claiming the lengthy delay made his injuries worse.

He is living in a nursing home near his family in South Morang, where he needs constant medical attention.

The family are seeking medical costs, damages for loss of earnings and loss of life expectancy and for pain and suffering.

A spokesman for the ambulance service said they were awaiting further details from court documents.