



VICTORIAN PARLIAMENTARY HANSARD

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Members **BATCHELOR**
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Mr **BATCHELOR** (Minister for Energy and Resources) -- I thank the member for Frankston for raising his important matter in Parliament tonight. As all members of Parliament would know, the member for Frankston is the state champion for working families in his electorate, and this is another example of his tireless work.

The member mentioned that occasionally Victorian workers are injured when they are undertaking digging activities. Although this happens very rarely, it can have a high impact. Even one workplace accident is one too many. That is why the Brumby Labor government agrees with Energy Safe Victoria's support for the Dial Before You Dig in Victoria service. Dial Before You Dig is an underground asset location service that enables contractors and others in the broader community working below the earth's surface to identify and help avoid accidental contact with underground utility services, such as electric lines, gas pipelines, water pipelines and telecommunication facilities.

These services are on public or private land. Dial Before You Dig is a not-for-profit association. It provides a very useful service, and it is free. Information is provided within two business days of the inquiry, so it is not only a free service but also a very speedy service.

Energy Safe Victoria, as part of the regulatory framework of the energy industry here in Victoria, has mandated membership of the Dial Before You Dig for gas companies and will soon require electricity companies to also become members. The service not only helps protect Victorian workers but also helps prevent disruption to the services I mentioned before. Interruption to those services can cause power outages, which can be caused by workers who might accidentally sever underground power cables. Such damage and disruption can cost millions of dollars because of the high impact. We recently saw this happen in Sydney where workers severed underground power cables, and it threw the city into chaos, costing many millions of dollars.

Recently I launched new Dial Before You Dig service guidelines. These were endorsed by Energy Safe Victoria and WorkSafe Victoria. These guidelines will assist excavators and others who are digging to make informed decisions before they begin to dig.

This will reduce the risk of injury, the risk damage and the risk of disruption. The guidelines outline firstly the responsibilities of people and companies planning to dig, including excavators, planners, engineers and the like. They also outline the responsibility of asset owners, including water and electricity companies, and provide information about Dial Before You Dig in Victoria and the service that it provides and the benefits that flow from it.

These guidelines were developed following significant and extensive stakeholders consultation. I can inform the member for Frankston that the Brumby government will continue to pursue initiatives like Dial Before You Dig. We do that in order to protect not only the working families who live in Frankston but also others who live and work throughout Victoria.