

5<sup>th</sup> August 2009

## **Geoff Howard MP Calls on Ballarat East Electorate Employers to get Free Workplace Safety Help**

Geoff Howard MP today called on Ballarat East Electorate small business employers to help maintain Victoria's record as the safest place to work in Australia.

Mr Howard said that Victoria's workplace safety record is the envy of Australia with highlights including last year's lowest number of workplace fatalities on record as well as record low injury rates.

"That's great news for the whole Victorian community and a proud achievement of the Brumby Government but we can't let our guard down," Mr Howard said.

"It is also good for business because safe workplaces without injuries don't face additional costs for recruitment and training and they don't suffer a loss in productivity.

"It is a reflection of the commitment that employers and workers in Ballarat East and all of Victoria have taken to making workplaces safer.

"Victoria has a workplace safety record that is the envy of Australia, but every workplace death or injury is one too many.

"We have a great record on workplace safety but there is always more that can be done to make sure that every worker goes home at the end of the day healthy and in one piece."

Mr Howard said that small business employers in Ballarat East who are having difficulties meeting their safety obligations or simply wanting help in making their workplaces safer should apply for a free 3 hour session with an independent health and safety consultant.

"Ballarat East businesses with up to 50 employees can get the consultancies for free through a WorkSafe Victoria funded project that involves a consultant coming to the workplace, helping to identify safety issues relevant to the business as well as providing useful advice on how to go about addressing the issues."

Mr Howard said all consultations are carried out by independent health and safety experts and were strictly confidential.

"The consultants put together a safety action plan for the business to put into practice.

"Once that is done the business can apply for 'recognition' which involves the consultant checking to see that the actions have been carried out and then either WorkSafe or a relevant industry association issuing a Certificate of Recognition."

Mr Howard said that small businesses in Ballarat East can get an application form from the WorkSafe Victoria website at [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/smallbusiness](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/smallbusiness)