

Media Release

Energy Safe Victoria

7 January, 2022

ESV pleads with Victorians to keep drones clear of powerlines after risky activity

Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) is calling on Victorians to keep drones and cranes clear of powerlines after a potentially life threatening incident in Keilor East this week.

Two men, in their 40s, were rushed to the Alfred hospital at 9.30pm on Wednesday, 5 January after trying to retrieve a drone stuck in 66kV powerlines at Brimbank Park.

While ESV is still investigating the incident, it is believed one man flew the drone into the powerlines before leaving to return with a flatbed truck with a crane fitted.

On his return, he asked a bystander to operate the crane to lift him up to the powerlines to retrieve the drone.

The man is believed to have made contact with the powerlines, receiving an electric shock that resulted in severe upper body burns, leaving him in a serious but stable condition.

The bystander operating the crane was taken to hospital with minor lower body burns and in a stable condition.

Under the *Electricity Safety Act*, Victorians cannot fly drones, weighing less than 2kg, within three metres of powerlines. Cranes are also prohibited from coming within 6.4 metres of powerlines without additional safety measures in place.

ESV, Victoria's independent energy safety regulator, is pleading with the community to operate drones clear of powerlines to ensure this type of incident does not occur. If any object does become lodged in powerlines please contact the relevant electricity distributor immediately – do not try to retrieve the item yourself.

ESV's *Look Up and Live* campaign has been running for a decade. It calls on workers and operators of such machinery to be aware of powerlines and plan how to safely undertake their work before they begin.

For more information go to esv.vic.gov.au/campaigns/look-up-and-live.

ESV CEO Leanne Hughson

"This is a horrific incident and my thoughts go out to these men and their families."

"While the use of drones has recently become a popular recreational activity, people need to be aware of the responsibilities associated with their use."

"It is incredibly dangerous to operate a drone near powerlines because if they become entangled, as happened here, there is a serious health risk to people and to the electricity network."

"If a personal item somehow ends up lodged in or around powerlines, please do not try to retrieve it yourself."

"You should always contact the relevant electricity company to do this for you as they have the qualified technicians to do this work."

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